

**THE HARRY POTTER PHENOMENON:
LITERARY PRODUCTION, GENERIC
TRADITIONS, AND THE QUESTION OF
VALUES**

By

Jayne Ashleigh Glover

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**THESIS
submitted in fulfilment of the
requirements for the Degree of
MASTER OF ARTS
in English Literature at Rhodes University**

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May 2003

Abstract

This thesis is a study of the first four books of J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter series. It accounts for the widespread success of the novels by examining their publication and marketing histories, and their literary achievement as narratives including a sophisticated mix of generic traditions.

Chapter One looks at the popularity of the novels, comparing their material production and marketing by Rowling's English language publishers: Bloomsbury in Britain and Scholastic in the United States of America. The publisher's influence on the public perception of each book is demonstrated by comparative study of its mode of illustration and layout. Further, the design of the books is linked to their strategic marketing and branding within the literary world.

The second chapter considers Rowling's debt to the school story. It concentrates first on the history of this relatively short-lived genre, briefly discussing its stereotypical features and values. Traditional elements of setting and characterisation are then examined to show how the Harry Potter novels present a value system which, though apparently old-fashioned, still has an ethical standpoint designed to appeal to the modern reader.

Chapter Three focuses on the characterisation of Harry as a hero-figure, especially on how the influence of classical and medieval texts infuses Rowling's portrayal of Harry as a hero in the chivalric mode. The episodes of "quest" and "test" in each book illustrate specifically how he learns the values of selflessness, loyalty, mercy and fairness.

Chapter Four surveys the contribution of modern fantasy writing to the series. It shows how Rowling creates a secondary world that allows us to perceive magic as a metaphorical representation of power. This focus on the relationship between magic and power in turn has a bearing on our assessment of the author's moral stance.

The thesis concludes by suggesting that Rowling's unusual mix of genres is justified by the values they share, and which are inscribed in her work: the generic combination forms a workable, new and exciting mode of writing that helps to account for the phenomenal popularity of the series.

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Note on References and Abbreviations

I have generally followed the MLA guide to referencing in this thesis. The lack of critical material on the Harry Potter series means that much of the material used, especially in my discussion on book production, was accessed on the internet. Consequently, I have followed the MLA guide to internet referencing, referring to a shortened version of the title and including “n.pag.” to indicate where information was not paginated. Full versions of all references can be found in the Select Bibliography and are listed alphabetically under title where no author is given. I have also used abbreviations in my parenthetical references: the *Concise Oxford Dictionary of English* is referred to by the shortened *COD*. The following abbreviations are used when referencing works by J. K. Rowling:

<i>PS</i>	<i>Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone</i>
<i>CS</i>	<i>Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets</i>
<i>PA</i>	<i>Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban</i>
<i>GF</i>	<i>Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire</i>
<i>SS</i>	<i>Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone</i>
<i>FB</i>	<i>Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them</i>

Within the text, I refer only to the second part of each title, dropping “Harry Potter and”: the titles become *The Philosopher’s Stone*, *The Chamber of Secrets*, *The Prisoner of Azkaban*, *The Goblet of Fire*, and *The Sorcerer’s Stone*. *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* similarly becomes *Fantastic Beasts*, and *Quidditch Through the Ages*, *Quidditch*. I have used the British editions of all of Rowling’s works, as published in South Africa, unless otherwise indicated.

Acknowledgements

The financial assistance of the National Research Foundation (NRF) towards this research is hereby acknowledged. Opinions expressed and conclusions arrived at, are those of the author and are not necessarily to be attributed to the National Research Foundation.

I would like to express my gratitude to the following people:

To the members of the Department of English at Rhodes University, past and present, who have fostered my love of literature and supported my academic endeavours. In particular I wish to thank Professor John Gouws not only for helping me find the funding without which I could not have completed this project, but also for championing my choice of topic from the start. I should also like to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor, Dr Ron Hall, a truly gifted teacher, for giving so freely of his time and energy, particularly during the final stages of editing and rewriting: I will miss our Friday chats.

To my friends, too numerous to mention, for providing me with opportunities to travel and to explore my soul, for sharing their joy, for making me laugh and for letting me cry. Your support over cups of tea, email or telephone – from all across the globe – has meant the world to me. I am especially indebted to several friends who helped me particularly: Maureen Ewing who provided me with copies of the American editions of the Harry Potter books (and with tips for battling the “thesis-elephant”); Romi Fuller and Dan Wylie, for providing me with shoulders to weep upon, and for reading earlier drafts of chapters – and being unflinching in their criticism and generous in their compliments; and Tibby Bennett and Diana Gardner, librarians at the Diocesan School for Girls and Victoria Primary respectively, for allowing me free use of their bookshelves, for discussing literature with me, and for their good advice, love and encouragement. I am also extremely thankful to Diana and her son Sean Gardner for being such prompt and professional proof-readers.

To my family, near and far, for giving me so much love and strength. I am particularly appreciative of my father, Brian, for instilling in me the greatest respect for education, for the supportive phone-calls that became the pivot of my weeks, and for introducing me to wonderful new people and places. Most of all, however, I would like to thank Graham, brother *extraordinaire*, for introducing me to the Harry Potter books in the first place, for contributing to endless discussions on Harry and friends, for being more enthusiastic about my thesis than his own, and for providing me with a home filled with laughter and friendship.

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my mother, the late Corlette Velma Glover, who not only taught me to read, but to see past the words to the realms beyond.

Introduction

“Written by J. K. Rowling, the Harry Potter books are an unprecedented literary phenomenon – a series of magical children’s school stories with wizard characters – which fly out of bookshops, outselling all other children’s books combined by a ratio of five to one.” Tina Jackson, “Harry Potter and the Lady in Red” (15).

The primary aim of this thesis is to consider why the first four Harry Potter books, written by J. K. Rowling, have had such a widespread effect on the publishing world and reading public that their accomplishment has inspired the phrase the “Harry Potter phenomenon”.¹ The series has been translated into fifty-five languages (Ripley 43) and over 195 million books have been sold globally (Jardine n.pag.). It has been claimed that the series is responsible for engendering a delight in reading in children previously unwilling to read (Briggs 21). More remarkable, perhaps, is that the series is read not only by children but by adults. This has led to each of the four books reaching the top position on best seller charts around the world, and each has remained on the top ten lists for lengthy periods of time. The first book in the series, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone*, had been on the best seller list for over four years by June 2001 (“Press Release: AGM Statement” n.pag.). Children’s books do not normally reach the top position on adult best seller lists, but every one of the Harry Potter books has done so.

Why has the series been so popular? Some critics see the novels as examples of positive, value-centred and refined writing. Others have claimed that Rowling’s success is due not to her narrative skill but to an astute marketing campaign on the part of her publishers. It has also been implied that the series has limited literary merit because its widespread popularity indicates that it lacks sophistication and complexity.

The submission that the popularity of the series proves it lacks “literary value” must be placed in the context of the debate as to whether high culture can be defined in opposition to popular or mass culture. The relationship between high and popular cultures has been contested for generations. In the Victorian era the rise of an educated middle class and literate working class changed the face of book history. As Peter McDonald points out in his book, *British Literary Culture and Publishing Practice 1880 – 1914*, there

¹ This thesis does not take a psychoanalytical approach, although it is clear that it could sustain a Freudian or Jungian reading.

was a perception on the part of the intellectual elite that the mass of newly literate people were unable, by virtue of their class, adequately to determine the value of what they read. It was maintained that “cultural democratization necessarily entailed devaluation” (6), and that a distinction should be made between high art and low, or popular art. John Carey argues that modernism was a reaction to the rise of mass culture and that modernist writing was meant “to exclude these newly educated (or ‘semi-educated’) readers, and so to preserve the intellectual’s seclusion from the ‘mass’” (Carey vii). As recently as 2000, Thomas Shippey has entered the debate by outlining the horror with which academics treated the numerous polls that ranked *The Lord of the Rings* as the greatest book of the twentieth century. Shippey suggests that no book could achieve such enormous popularity without some kind of virtue and that “critical reluctance even to look for these virtues says more about the critics than the popular authors” (xxiii-xxiv).

This debate on the merits of high culture and mass culture clearly has relevance to the assessment of the Harry Potter series as a literary phenomenon. Pierre Bourdieu has argued that any analysis of a work of art should take into account its production and reception (xvii). He considers the debate over high and mass cultures through his theory of the literary field: the area of cultural production concerned with the creation, dissemination and criticism of any form of literature. He proposes that “the credit attached to any cultural practice tends to decrease with the numbers and especially the social spread of the audience” because there is a perception that the larger the audience, the less competent they are in recognising the value of the work of art (115). In economic terms, “immediate success has something suspect about it, as if it reduced the symbolic offering of a priceless work to the simple ‘give and take’ of a commercial exchange” (Bourdieu 148). McDonald, drawing on Bourdieu’s theory of the literary field, suggests that at one end of the hierarchical spectrum are the “purists”, who only believe in “art for art’s sake”, and at the other, the “profiteers”, whose ideas of value are measured in strictly economic terms (13-14). McDonald goes on to point out that “in practice, things are not as neat as this idealized opposition between the purists and profiteers makes out. Between these two extremes there are any number of positions which combine the two perspectives in various degrees” (14). It is too simplistic to assume that authors and publishers who make a profit out of a text only see the text as a commodity and are incapable, in the process, of

producing a “pure” work of art (whatever that may mean).² The assessment of any text on the basis of its economic success alone is fundamentally inaccurate: there is no logic to the argument that because a text is popular it has either more or less literary merit than something with a highly restricted audience. A complex, layered text can be read by a large variety of people precisely because it is complex and layered. The surface “story”, the plot and the characters of a text can be enjoyed at surface level by a large number of people. This does not prevent it from having nuances which only a limited audience could appreciate. Even if most readers only see one aspect of the text, missing the greater and possibly more “meaningful” part, this would not preclude the text from becoming popular any more than popularity precludes the text from being “literary”.

It is in the context of this debate that the Harry Potter phenomenon must be analysed. The popularity of the series can be measured economically by the high sales figures it has enjoyed, and this thesis argues that the marketing of the series and creation of Rowling’s text into a saleable product has had *some* impact on the numbers of copies sold. But the fact that the books appeal to a large variety of readers, of all age groups and genders, and in all parts of the world, suggests their success is more complex than simply the result of good publicity: the series does have literary significance because the combination of various genres, or literary kinds, within the narratives contributes to its success, as well as to its complexity.

This complexity has several aspects. First, the series can be seen as following firmly in the tradition of the school story that thrived from the late Victorian era. The school story was usually designed to appeal to children and was often characterised by its stereotypical nature. Secondly, the series has very strong links with both the epic and the romance genres. This is evidenced not only in the wealth of allusions to, and echoes from, classical and medieval texts, but also in the way Rowling uses these to inform her hero’s character. Harry’s actions are given a particular moral reference through Rowling’s employment of the chivalric notions of Arthurian legends. Thirdly, the series has important connections with modern fantasy. Of specific relevance in this regard is Rowling’s creation of a fantasy world imagined in the utmost detail, which works to emphasise her didactic intent through symbolism. Identifying these generic traditions is important

² Certainly it could be argued that two of the major representatives of the English canon, Shakespeare and Dickens, were as interested in making a living for themselves as they were in producing “art”.

because they can help us analyse and explain how Rowling's narrative works. As Alastair Fowler argues:

The processes of generic recognition are in fact fundamental to the reading process. Often we may not be aware of this. But whenever we approach a work of an unfamiliar genre – new or old – our difficulties return us to fundamentals. No work, however avant-garde, is intelligible without some context of familiar types. (*Kinds of Literature* 259)

The combination of so many different genres is effective primarily because of the use to which Rowling puts elements from each. The school story, medieval romance, and modern fantasy often include a didactic element: notions of chivalry in particular influence the type of morality displayed by the hero or protagonist. One of the leading characteristics of the school story was the value system underlying the plot, often manifesting the Victorian interest in the chivalric ideals of medieval romance. The notion of the knights of the Round Table who fought on the side of Christian faith against the heathen, and for the honour of their women, found favour with a society committed to the model of the perfect gentleman. Similarly, a good-versus-evil or black-versus-white morality is often used in the modern fantasy novel. Here, again, medieval images are employed to signify the archetypal battle between “good” and “evil” epitomising the fantasy tradition. What links these genres is their morality, and what is most significant about the moral traditions they uphold is that they can, on one hand, be regarded as stemming from a particular myth of “Englishness” apparent in English literature, while on the other hand, they can also demonstrate an underlying universal nature.

The myth of Englishness has been seen as “a nexus of *values, beliefs and attitudes* which are offered as unique to England and to those who identify as, or wish to identify as, English” (Giles and Middleton 5, my emphasis). As this definition shows, Englishness is by its very nature a construct: Langford notes that “Whoever defines or identifies it is at best selecting, sifting, suppressing” (14). Nonetheless, critics have identified some peculiarly English characteristics such as “Fair play, magnanimity, good nature” (Langford 157). In particular, the notion of English “good manners” (Giles and Middleton 23, Langford 88) has a literary antecedent in the association between chivalry and gentlemanly behaviour. Girouard's *The Return to Camelot: Chivalry and the English Gentleman* examines the impact on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries of the Victorian appropriation of medieval chivalric values. He traces chivalrous behaviour back to the

code of conduct practised by medieval knights, who “accepted fighting as a necessary and indeed glorious activity, but set out to soften its potential for barbarity by putting it into the hands of men committed to high standards of behaviour” (16). This idea was revived in the Victorian era by Kenelm Digby’s *The Broad Stone of Honour*, which “enabled modern gentlemen who had never been near a battlefield to think of themselves as knights” (Girouard 60). Added to this was the influence of popular writers like Sir Walter Scott and the “muscular Christians”, Charles Kingsley and Thomas Hughes (Girouard 142). The impact of Hughes and Kingsley on English children’s literature was far-reaching, and they in turn influenced the Religious Tract Society (RTS). Mackay and Thane point out that both the *Boy’s Own Paper* and the *Girl’s Own Paper* were produced by the RTS and that there was

an almost total congruence, in contemporary eyes, between conceptions of ‘Christian behaviour’ and ‘gentlemanly behaviour’ and of both with ‘behaviour becoming in an Englishman’. To educate the young to be gentlemen and ladies was assumed to ensure that they would be sound Christians. (194)

Therefore, by the early twentieth century the connection between Englishness and honourable behaviour was firmly entrenched. English society was such that

All gentlemen knew that they must be brave, show no signs of panic or cowardice, and meet death without flinching. They knew it because they had learnt the code of the gentleman in a multitude of different ways, through advice, through example, through what they had been taught at school or by their parents, and through endless stories of chivalry, daring, knights, gentlemen and gallantry which they had read or been told by way of history books, ballads, poems, plays, pictures and novels. (Girouard 7)

This comment of Girouard’s takes cognisance of the importance of literature in inculcating the values seen to be implicit in the identification of Englishness.

While critics interested in the concept of Englishness have emphasised such values, fairness, honour, courage and loyalty are as characteristic of the general hero figure as of the “English gentleman”. Jackson, for example, argues that the archetypal hero must possess certain qualities that set him apart from others, including “bravery” (3). Indeed, many of these so-called English values are universal. Although the type of morality put forward in certain areas of English literature was not English alone, the appropriation of these ideals of moral behaviour often became entrenched in such texts through the

particular use of chivalric imagery. Significantly, the adoption of chivalry into Victorian ideals of conduct heavily influenced the value systems written into the school story. Likewise, fantasists like Charles Kingsley and George MacDonald created a bridge between the Victorian culture of the English gentleman and the ideas of honour and justice that became implicit in the writings of C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien, the first of the modern fantasy authors. Consequently, while medieval romance, the school story and modern fantasy seem to be very disparate genres, they are connected through the particular morality that informs Rowling's writing.

This thesis, therefore, attempts to show that the success of the Harry Potter series, while being influenced by the design and marketing of the books, is mainly due to Rowling's ability to create a layered text, the complexity of which emphasises her didactic intent: Rowling is concerned with instilling in her work an appreciation of chivalric values such as honour, magnanimity and justice. Chapter One contextualises the success of the series by discussing the design and marketing of each book, and so assessing the impact of a "Harry Potter brand" on the overall popularity of the series. In the remainder of the thesis I examine the series through the lens of various genres. Chapter Two outlines how Rowling has utilised the various stereotypes associated with the school story to provide an underlying structure to her series. Chapter Three looks specifically at how Rowling alludes to episodes from classical and medieval texts in order to create Harry in the model of a chivalrous hero-figure. The fourth and final chapter identifies how Rowling has used the fantasy feature of world-creation in order to emphasise the particular morality of the series.

Chapter One

The Production and Marketing of the Harry Potter Series

“... every published book represents a team effort, with the author the central, vital person, providing the creative idea, while the publishing house offers the skills of editor, designer, typesetter, printer and sales force, to bring the creative idea into a reality and, finally, into the hands of the reading public.” Anne Bower Ingram, “From Manuscript to Marketplace” (339).

The widespread success of the Harry Potter series has often been called a phenomenon¹ – a fitting description considering that by May 2003, world-wide sales were over 195 million books (Jardine n.pag.). While much of this has to do with the type of narrative J. K. Rowling has created, book production and marketing also influence a novel’s success.² The publication of a text is not merely its editing, printing and binding, but also the way it is presented to the public – how it is designed and marketed. This chapter examines the production of the series as a set of books that have been designed and marketed in a particular way to make them attractive to purchasers.

Robert Darnton’s Communications Circuit, a model he produces in his article “What is the History of Books?”, outlines how texts come into being in the socio-economic world (12). He highlights several steps traceable in the history of any book’s production. The author, who creates the text, passes it on to a publisher who oversees the production of the book itself (how it is printed and bound), and thereafter its shipment to the bookseller. The bookseller makes the text available to the reader and the reader completes this circuit or “life cycle” because “he influences the author both before and after the act of composition” (11). Darnton’s Communications Circuit is complicated in the case of Rowling: the narrative she produces is affected first by a literary agent and then by a publisher. Moreover, Rowling’s work has been published in various forms all over the world. The two publishers in English, Bloomsbury in Britain and Scholastic in the United States of America (US), have taken Rowling’s texts and produced very different looking

¹ For examples see Ram (n.pag.) and Shapiro (10).

² Throughout this chapter I refer to the finished, printed and bound object as the *book* and the actual story that makes up the original manuscript as *narrative*, *work* or *text*. Obviously publication can take many forms and today the internet is becoming a primary method of distributing texts into the public sphere, but as I am looking at the Harry Potter series, which is published in the traditional book form, I shall be looking only at the production of the text as book.

books out of them, though the actual story they contain remains the same. Furthermore, they have taken the books and, certainly in the case of the later ones, marketed them in a particular way. Their presentation of the texts, therefore, is capable of changing the public's perceptions of Rowling's narrative, although such changes may sometimes be very subtle.

This chapter aims to show how book production and marketing have affected the success of the Harry Potter series. Its first part contains a chronological discussion of the production of each book in both Britain and the US, taking into account both design and marketing strategy. Secondly, the continued success of the series (after the release of the fourth book, the most recently published of the envisioned series of seven) will be examined through the companion books, *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* and *Quidditch Through the Ages*. The effects of the films and subsequent merchandising agreements will then be related to how the "concept" or branding of the Harry Potter series is perceived within the market. Finally, I will consider how the financial and literary accomplishment of the series has affected the publishing world as a whole.

* * *

The creation of any book begins with the transformation of the author's manuscript into a marketable product. The idea that formed the Harry Potter series came to Rowling in 1990 and she completed the first novel in 1995.³ While she has claimed that she wrote it for herself, not for children, she nevertheless decided to try to publish it (Shapiro 70), sending examples of her work to two agents (Shapiro 71); one was the Christopher Little Literary Agency. Sean Smith's biography of Rowling highlights Christopher Little's association with Patrick Walsh, "the respected literary agent" (Smith 132),⁴ but suggests that the agency was equally renowned for its choice of authors who would be good business value: Little's client list includes writers who enjoy high sales in Britain, such as thriller writer A. J. Quinnell, Alistair MacLean's estate, and the "less prestigious but highly lucrative" Anna Pasternak⁵ (133). Although Little did not usually handle children's books because he did not believe they made sufficient money (Smith 131), his company's contract with Rowling has certainly been profitable, accumulating "15 per cent of gross earning for the home UK market and 20 per cent for film, US and translation deals" (Smith 135).

³ This information is well-documented: see Smith (96-129), "Timeline of Events", Bouquet (53-54).

⁴ Smith's information stems from an interview with Bryony Evens [*sic*] of the Christopher Little Literary Agency.

⁵ Pasternak wrote *Princess in Love*, the book about James Hewitt's affair with Princess Diana.

What emerges from Smith's description of Little's agency is that its emphasis on good business practice extends to how Little and his staff influence the manuscripts that they represent. Little's two assistants, Bryony Evens and Fleur Howle, thought the chapters Rowling had submitted were sufficiently unusual to warrant his interest, and both Little and Walsh were impressed by the manuscript of *The Philosopher's Stone* (Smith 134). They did, however, insist on two changes they felt would enhance the narrative. Evens felt that the character of Neville Longbottom should be developed more and Little felt that the wizarding sport Quidditch should play a greater role, believing it "would not appeal to boys as a game unless the rules were in there" (Smith 134). This change is significant because of what it indicates about how the agency saw the narrative. Sport plays a major role in school novels, and Little's focus on sport and the necessity of including details about it suggests he saw *The Philosopher's Stone* primarily as following in the school-story mode.⁶ Little had also had his doubts about the book's saleability – not on account of its contents, but because his research had indicated that "whereas girls would read books by male authors, boys would not pick up a book if the author was a woman" (Smith 148). Boys are not as avid readers as girls (Rustin 12), which does indicate that the need to attract boys was strong. Consequently, Rowling agreed to take on a second initial, K, for her grandmother Kathleen, and publish the books under the name J. K. Rowling, less obviously female than Joanne Rowling. These changes indicate that the agent's concern is to make the text more attractive to as varied an audience as possible; they also begin to show how the author's original text is altered in the process of book production.

Once the Christopher Little Literary Agency was satisfied with the manuscript, it was sent to various publishers, including Bloomsbury. Bloomsbury's recently established children's division was managed by Barry Cunningham who was struck by the sense "that the book came with a fully imagined world. There was a complete sense of Jo knowing the characters and what would happen to them" (Smith 136).⁷ This persuaded Cunningham that children would respond to the story, despite Bloomsbury's concern about its length and complexity (Smith 136, Bouquet 54). While other publishers rejected the manuscript on those grounds, as well as for being "too literary" (Shapiro 74), Bloomsbury promotes itself

⁶ See Chapter Two for a discussion of the extent to which sport figures in traditional school stories.

⁷ This is created through the technique of sub-creation used by authors of high fantasy. See Chapter Four for a complete discussion of sub-creation in the Harry Potter series.

as being willing “to take risks with formats and subject areas and authors” (Twist 2). Thus, despite its concerns, it offered Rowling a contract worth £1 500 (Smith 137).

Rowling’s acceptance by Bloomsbury is important since the publisher influences the finished product in various ways. While Rowling did insist that the complexity of the narrative was not to be compromised (Bouquet 54), it is the publisher’s role to edit manuscripts as well as suggest improvements. More importantly for the purposes of this chapter, the publisher is also responsible for the creation of the manuscript into a book, and, once it has been produced, its primary objective is to ensure the book sells. The children’s book market is a notoriously difficult one, and Cunningham famously told Rowling that she would “never make any money out of children’s books” (Smith 138). Given this competitiveness, the design of the book – particularly its cover, size, and use of fonts and illustrations – can have as much influence on its success as the marketing strategy the publishing house employs.

The design of the British edition of *The Philosopher’s Stone* is significant: it shows how Bloomsbury appears to have seen the narrative. Cunningham, who commissioned the picture from illustrator Thomas Taylor (see Figure 1),⁸ wanted the cover to be “approachable and charming – not too slick – but funny, reflecting the humour of Harry Potter” (Smith 151). *The Philosopher’s Stone* was seen as a children’s book first of all: the cover uses very bold, primary colours (see Figure 1). The words “Harry Potter” are printed in yellow on a reddish background. The font is very simple and uses block capitals. The title does not form part of the illustration but is blocked off by a clear line noting the author as “J. K. Rowling”. The title, therefore, stands out and is eye-catching – important in attracting the attention of children. The illustration (Harry in school uniform, standing in front of the Hogwarts Express) demonstrates that Bloomsbury, like Little, saw Rowling’s work in the school story tradition. The cover of a book is often a useful indication of the kind of story it will contain, and this picture emphasises Harry’s journey to Hogwarts, an aspect of the narrative that links it to this genre. Yet the picture suggests it is more than a school story by juxtaposing the Hogwarts Express, an old-fashioned steam train, with the more modern, streamlined train in the background; the platform number is the whimsical “9¾”; and brightly coloured stars scatter from the funnel of the Hogwarts Express. An ostensibly ordinary picture of a boy boarding a train to school thus gains a flavour of the fantastic. The blurb on the back of the book also stresses that “Harry Potter is a wizard”

⁸ All illustrations to this chapter appear in Appendix A.

alongside the fact that he “enrols at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry”, reflecting Bloomsbury’s sense of the crossover potential of the narrative: it is both a school story and a fantasy story about witches and wizards. Rowling has admitted that “The fact that it was set in a boarding school was very un-PC as far as most publishers were concerned” (quoted in Bouquet 54), but, in the cover illustration and blurb, Bloomsbury emphasised the blending of the two genres.

The first print-run of *The Philosopher’s Stone* was only 7 000 and of this, only five hundred were hardback copies (Ram n.pag., Smith 151). Such a modest first run indicates Bloomsbury’s uncertainty about how the novel would be received. The launch confirms this:

There was no great fanfare to accompany the publication of the first book. The combination of unknown author and a plot involving a boarding school for wizards was not one likely to get literary editors buzzing with excitement. Barry [Cunningham] had a very small budget – so small in fact he was unable to bid for US rights – and was unable to ‘hype’ the book at this stage. (Smith 151)

Although Cunningham did contact some reviewers, Bloomsbury did not actively market the first book. It did not feel it could warrant spending the money on a book that was unlikely to be a best-seller, given what Cunningham felt was an unusual combination of genres. Despite this, the few reviews that did take notice of *The Philosopher’s Stone* were complimentary.

Unusually for a children’s book, it took only a few months to sell over 150 000 copies of *The Philosopher’s Stone* (Shapiro 82-83).⁹ Analysts have admitted that this amazing success has to be attributed mainly to “word-of-mouth” advertising, rather than the effects of the somewhat scattered reviews. Susan Ram, who is openly critical of the marketing campaigns of the later books, concedes that the release of the first book was different as “from child to child and school to school, the phenomenon began to take shape and grow” (n.pag.). It is likely that the early success of *The Philosopher’s Stone* was a result of readers recommending the book to one another, especially considering Bloomsbury had not marketed the book, and (bearing in mind the size of the first print run) had not believed that it would be very successful.

⁹ Shapiro does not give exact information on the number of months and Bloomsbury were only prepared to provide me with access to their financial statements, which give neither exact statistics on the numbers of books sold during this period, nor the dates and amounts of print runs subsequent to the first.

Some outside publicity may have boosted British sales: soon after its release on 26 June 1997, the rights for publication in the United States were auctioned off to Scholastic Books for one hundred thousand pounds.¹⁰ An ex-employee of Bloomsbury, Janet Hogarth, had moved to Scholastic, and she asked the editorial director, Arthur A. Levine, to read *The Philosopher's Stone*. Levine claims that he wanted to publish it because he “read the book and fell in love with it. It made me laugh, it made me turn the pages, and in spots it genuinely moved me. I saw in it the work of a tremendously talented author with whom I knew I’d want to work for years to come” (“‘Harry Potter’: Arthur Levine” n.pag.). Although he felt that it had “enormous potential”, Levine still felt he was taking “a great risk” to pay so much for it: children’s books normally make low profits (Smith 152-153). But other American buyers had expressed their interest, showing that Levine’s attention was not only as a result of the Bloomsbury connection. The vast amount of money that Scholastic paid for the rights is, however, significant because it demonstrates Levine’s belief that the book would succeed in the US market. It was also sufficiently newsworthy to make the first Harry Potter book stand out in the literary world, and so, although there was no campaign to launch *The Philosopher's Stone*, the media interest threw the book and Rowling into prominence.

It is hard to tell how far Rowling’s agent and publisher were responsible for establishing her “rags to riches” image at this stage. Bloomsbury certainly set up her first newspaper interview with Nigel Reynolds of the *Daily Telegraph* and Rowling was accompanied to the interview by Bloomsbury’s publicist Rebecca Wyatt (Smith 155). The information given about Rowling at this interview, however, was sensationalised by the British tabloids. She was depicted as “an impoverished single mother living in a rat-infested studio flat, working as a substitute teacher and scribbling her way to wealth in an Edinburgh coffee shop” (Bouquet 53). The media perpetuated the idea that she had to write in caf  s because she could not afford heating in her one-roomed council flat, exaggerating the tale of a near-destitute woman who rose above her situation.¹¹ Even Christopher Wilson’s review of Smith’s biography succumbs to exaggerated biographical details: he uses purple prose such as “the ills she has suffered”, “Poverty and melancholy”,

¹⁰ There is some discrepancy in the various sources as to exactly when the Scholastic bid occurred. In an interview, Rowling claims it was “three months after British publication” (Weir n.pag.). Smith claims that the bid happened “within three days” of publication (152). The story is mentioned in the press for the first time on 7 July 1997, indicating that it must have occurred within 10 days of publication, which was on 26 June 1997 (Reynolds, “£100 000 Success Story” n.pag.).

¹¹ See, for example, articles by Alan Jacobs and Paul Gray.

“flight from the hellish exile”, and describes “a life of poverty in Edinburgh, warmed only by the bright hope that flickered over her schoolboy creation” (37). This story has some truth, but also leaves out many salient details. Rowling did have to claim income support and housing benefit when she first arrived in Edinburgh (Smith 121), but soon registered for her postgraduate certificate of education and then found a job at Leith Academy (Smith 128-147). The press has also seized upon her move to Oporto (where she taught English to Portuguese speakers), dramatising her marriage to and divorce from Jorge Arantes, and the birth of their daughter Jessica (Shapiro 51-62, Smith 97-129). The media have characterised her relationship with Arantes as a “whirlwind courtship” (Shapiro 58), a “passionate, mercurial affair” (Smith 106-107), and a “volatile and tempestuous relationship” (Smith 111). They suggest Rowling “was becoming anorexic” and had to flee her husband because he had used physical force on her (Smith 115). Rowling has expressed strong irritation at the sensationalised account of her life, saying “the early stories neglected to mention that I come from a middle-class background, I have a degree in French and classics, and that working as a teacher was my intended bridge out of poverty” (quoted in Bouquet 54).¹² Smith points out that Rowling’s media status is “unusual in that she is a prime subject or target for both the serious broadsheets and the tabloid press. While the former are interested in her as a writer and literary phenomenon, the popular tabloids are more impressed by her celebrity status and wealth” (Smith 169). Ultimately, the high publicity the media have given Rowling, whether or not it has projected the kind of image she would have liked, has been useful in marketing her work. Early sales figures show that *The Philosopher’s Stone* was likely to be a success in Britain, but the media interest probably stimulated later sales.

Despite the publicity surrounding *The Philosopher’s Stone* in Britain, it was not published in the US immediately after Levine acquired the rights. Scholastic took a year to produce its own edition, *The Sorcerer’s Stone*. It wanted to create a book with greater appeal to the US public, and did this most notably through the title change. Rowling claims Levine insisted on the title change “because he felt that the British title gave a misleading idea of the subject matter”, although “Sorcerer’s Stone” was Rowling’s idea (“An Interview” n.pag.). It must be assumed that he did not want the title to suggest to US readers (presumably unaware of the tradition of the Philosopher’s Stone in medieval

¹² See also articles by Tina Jackson and Paul Gray, and the interview with Rowling in “Of Magic and Single Motherhood” (Weir n.pag.).

alchemy) that the book was about philosophical theories. The title change shows the extent to which the US publishers wanted to re-create the text in order to ensure its success. Significantly, while Rowling was prepared to compromise on the issue of the title, she refused to change “mum” to “mom” for the Scholastic version (Smith 174). Possibly she felt that even in the US version it would be inappropriate for a British child to use the American “mom” instead of the British “mum”. Otherwise, the only difference is in the list of items needed for school, which includes “Course Books” in *The Sorcerer’s Stone* (65) and “Set Books” in the British version (*PS* 52). It could be argued that Rowling was only prepared to make changes that the publisher deemed absolutely essential, but refused to make others (like the one from “mum” to “mom”) that would not cause confusion in the new transatlantic market. The first US reviewers felt *The Sorcerer’s Stone* had “too much British dialect, and British slang” (“In Her Own Words” n.pag.), which illustrates why the US publishers did make some cosmetic changes for readers potentially resistant to non-American culture.

The changes to the title and some minor details were not the only differences between the British and the US editions. The need to attract the US public to Rowling’s work was also expressed in the overall production of the book. The US cover is far more complicated than the British one (compare Figures 1 and 2). It includes more detail and the colours show more variety. The title is incorporated into the illustration, with the words “and the Sorcerer’s Stone” appearing as an engraving in a stone archway, throwing the words “Harry Potter” into greater prominence than “and the Sorcerer’s Stone”. “Harry Potter” is also embossed in gold and is in a specially designed font. The letters are spiky and uneven, and the down-stroke of the “P” in the title forms a lightning-bolt, reminiscent of the scar on Harry’s head. This spiky “Potter font” is also used for “J. K. Rowling” across the bottom of the illustration. The complexity of the cover for the US edition, both of colour and illustrative detail, may be related to greater competition in the US book market, encouraging book-covers to be more visually stimulating. *The Sorcerer’s Stone* was published in the US in October 1998 (“Timeline of Events” n.pag.), over a year after the release of *The Philosopher’s Stone*;¹³ and the publication date might have meant that Scholastic could prepare a more elaborate cover, as it was sure it could afford to do so, given the success of the first book in Britain.

¹³ Although no reason is given for the publication of *The Sorcerer’s Stone* in October, Scholastic could have been trying to capitalise on the Halloween market.

Another major difference between the British and US editions is that Scholastic did not choose Thomas Taylor's school-story-type illustration of Harry in uniform in front of the Hogwarts Express. In Scholastic's version, the illustration is by Mary Grandpré and shows Harry flying on his broomstick (see Figure 2). He is dressed in jeans, a casual shirt and trainers or sneakers, rather than the grey school uniform of Taylor's illustration. He is made more accessible to the non-British reader because he is presented in casual clothing rather than British school uniform. He also wears a cloak and is depicted flying between old stone pillars. The background image is of the Hogwarts castle turrets, savage-looking animals baring their teeth appear in one corner, and the dark Forbidden Forest and a unicorn are shown in the opposite corner. These features make it apparent that Scholastic wanted to publish *The Sorcerer's Stone* as a fairy-tale or fantasy work.

This idea is suggested through the blurb on the back of the book:

Harry Potter has never played a sport while flying on a broomstick. He's never worn a cloak of invisibility, befriended a giant, or helped hatch a dragon. All Harry knows is a miserable life with the Dursleys, his horrible aunt and uncle, and their abominable son, Dudley. 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 a wonderful place he never dreamed existed. There he finds not only friends, aerial sports, and magic around every corner, but a great destiny that's been waiting for him ... if Harry can survive the encounter. (SS back cover).

This stresses the Cinderella-fantasy aspect of *The Sorcerer's Stone*, but crucially makes no mention of the school Harry attends, preferring to gloss over it as "a wonderful place he never dreamed existed". The British edition, in contrast, gives a brief synopsis of the story as:

Harry Potter thinks he is an ordinary boy – until he is rescued by a beetle-eyed giant of a man, enrolls at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, learns to play Quidditch and does battle in a deadly duel. The Reason: HARRY POTTER IS A WIZARD! (PS back cover)

The British blurb is not only more succinct than the US one, but also emphasises the influence of the school story on the text. Clearly the traditional British boarding-school story would not resonate with Americans, most of whom would have no cause to associate boarding-school with adventure and freedom. It is not surprising that the US editors sought to accentuate the fantasy aspect of the book as that most likely to appeal to their readers,

rather than the carefully constructed image of the British book as both fantasy and school story.¹⁴

In later print-runs, the back covers include information designed to appeal to their respective audiences. The British edition of *The Philosopher's Stone* includes quotations from various newspaper reviews under the heading "Acclaim for *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*", including "This is a story full of surprises and jokes; comparisons with Dahl are, this time, justified" from *The Sunday Times*, and *The Guardian's* comment that it is "A richly textured first novel given lift-off by an inventive wit". The longest excerpt comes from *The Scotsman*:

... *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* has all the makings of a classic ... Rowling uses classical narrative devices with flair and originality and delivers a complex and demanding plot in the form of a hugely entertaining thriller. She is a first-rate writer for children. (PS back cover)

This suggests that Bloomsbury conceived of its buyers, probably the parents of its market audience, as interested in reviewers' opinions of the novels, and so emphasised Rowling's sense of humour, originality and inventiveness, while at the same time pointing out her indebtedness to "classical narrative devices". The US edition, on the other hand, appeals to the buyer's interest in prestige rather than content, listing the following awards instead of giving excerpts from reviews.

A New York Times Bestseller • A USA Today Bestseller • A publishers Weekly Best Book of 1998 • Booklist Editor's Choice • Winner of the 1997 National Book Award (UK) • An ALA Notable Book • Winner of the 1997 Gold Medal Smarties Prize • A New York Public Library Best Book of the Year 1998 • Parenting Book of the Year Award 1998. (SS back cover)

Scholastic thus markets *The Sorcerer's Stone* not only from a specifically American standpoint, but also uses the accolades parent groups and libraries have given it. Quotations from reviews are placed inside the book and so are less prominent than in the British version.

The internal design of *The Sorcerer's Stone* further indicates the different perception Scholastic has of its market. *The Philosopher's Stone* is very plain. The title page has the Hogwarts crest and the Latin motto "Draco Dormiens Nunquam Titillandus"

¹⁴ The inclusion of the words "Year 1" on the spine may indicate that the narrative contains a school story, but also simply suggests that it is the first year of the series, which will span seven years in Harry's life.

(see Figure 9).¹⁵ Bloomsbury included the school crest and Latin motto, apparently confident that British readers would either be able to identify with these traditional elements of school life, or at the very least would not be scared off by them. In the US edition, the title page has a grey and white diamond patterned background, uses the same “Potter font” as the lettering on the front cover and includes an illustration of Hogwarts (see Figure 10). Moreover, the text is produced in 12-point Adobe Garamond, far more spacious than the British font¹⁶ which, coupled with a slightly smaller page size,¹⁷ makes *The Sorcerer’s Stone* 312 pages compared to *The Philosopher’s Stone*’s 223 (see Figures 11-14). Overall, the effect seems to be to make the US version as readable as possible.

In general, the US edition presents a more visually stimulating text than the British one. Scholastic uses the spiky “Potter font” for the headers, the right hand one stating chapter and number and the left the chapter title, and places sprinkles of stars around the headers and alongside the page numbers. There are also illustrations, again by Mary Grandpré, under each chapter heading (see Figures 11-14).¹⁸ An interesting addition to the graphic enhancement is that the letters included in the text are in fonts designed to look like handwriting in the US edition, and the official letter from Professor McGonagall includes her signature (see Figures 15.a and 15.b). In *The Philosopher’s Stone* these notes are simply printed in italics. The Scholastic setting of the *Daily Prophet* news article is indented so that it looks more like a newspaper column and has “Gringotts Break-in Latest” in a bold type to make it look like a heading, unlike the newspaper article in the British version which is merely italicised (SS 141-142, PS 105). Similarly, the change in font and layout for Albus Dumbledore’s card, which Harry finds inside a chocolate frog, sets it out against the rest of the text in the US edition, while it is merely italicised in the British (SS 102, PS 77). Even the letter Harry receives from Hogwarts is presented in a slightly more unusual and interesting manner in the US edition (compare Figures 15.c and 15.d). The

¹⁵ Rowling plays with the seriousness of the usual school motto in this case as it can be translated as “Do Not Tickle a Sleeping Dragon”.

¹⁶ Although I have not been able to gain confirmation on the font used in the printing of the British versions of the series, it seems closer to the conventional Times New Roman.

¹⁷ Although the British page size is not appreciably different (at 197mm by 125mm) from the US one (194mm by 130mm), the area of the page taken up by type is noticeably smaller in the US version (150mm by 95mm) than in the British (172mm by 102mm). There are 40 lines of text per page in the British version and only 29 in the US one.

¹⁸ Rowling’s response to the US version is contradictory. She says in an online interview “I don’t like too many illustrations in novels; I prefer to use my imagination about what people look like” (“On October 16, 2000” n.pag.). It is interesting, however, that later on in the interview when she is questioned about the different versions, she says “I love the look of the American books, especially the chapter illustrations” (“On October 16, 2000” n.pag.).

illustrations and variety of fonts indicate that the US text is concerned with making the story as clear as possible to readers, as well as making it visually enticing.

The designs of *The Philosopher's Stone* and *The Sorcerer's Stone* show the importance of packaging in book production and especially how each publisher had a certain opinion about what would appeal to its audience. Their designs for *The Chamber of Secrets* show how both were aware of the importance of branding their products so that the “Harry Potter concept” became part of their marketing strategies. Highly effective brands (called power brands in the advertising industry) are those which are instantly recognisable.

Creating a power brand involves blending all of the elements of a brand in a unique way – the product or service must be of a high quality and be appropriate and relevant to the consumer's need, the brand name must be appealing and in tune with the consumer's perception of the product, the packaging and visual identity must be attractive and distinctive and the pricing, support and advertising put behind the brand must meet similar tests of appeal, appropriateness and differentiation. (Stobart 5)

In the case of the Harry Potter series, each publisher had established a particular cover design for the product when producing the first book in the series. By repeating its initial design in its production of *The Chamber of Secrets*, each publisher created a sense of recognition. Bloomsbury's cover resembles *The Philosopher's Stone* in separating the top third of the front cover (showing the title) from the illustration (compare Figures 1 and 3). The words “Harry Potter” are in the same block capitals as in the first book, and the subtitle “and the Chamber of Secrets” is in the same italic font. The differences are in the colours used (the first book is mainly red in tone and the second mainly blue) and in the illustration. The design of the US cover also follows the same general layout as that of *The Sorcerer's Stone* (compare Figures 2 and 4). As in the case of *The Sorcerer's Stone*, the main way in which Scholastic chose to brand its product was through the use of the specialised “Potter font” with its characteristic crooked letters and the lightning-bolt shape of the letter “P”. The subtitle is part of the illustration and the letters of “Harry Potter and J. K. Rowling” are embossed. Again a clear difference between the first and second books is in the colour. The title's embossing is silver, not gold, and the main colour of the illustration is red rather than the old-gold of *The Sorcerer's Stone*. In each instance the title and general design of the book recalls the design of its predecessor and so creates a sense of familiarity for the buying public.

An important element in branding is that although there must be an immediate identification with the product, it must also be apparent at first glance that the new product is not *exactly* the same as the original. In this instance it is imperative that the books be seen as part of the series, but also that they are different books within the series. While colour plays a role in this, the illustration is more significant because it must tell the reader something about the narrative inside. In the British edition of *The Chamber of Secrets*, the school story aspect of the series was not, this time, emphasised. Bloomsbury commissioned the cover from a new artist, Cliff Wright, and chose to show Ron and Harry early in the story, flying Mr Weasley's blue Ford Anglia high above the clouds with the Hogwarts Express in the distance below them (see Figure 3). Bloomsbury was clearly happier to emphasise the fantasy element now that the series was established and readers knew what to expect. Again, the British cover was simpler than the US one, which shows the action-filled climax to the story (Harry flying out of the Chamber of Secrets while clutching the tail of Fawkes the phoenix), and is certainly closer to the fantasy tradition than the British book-cover. The US cover is again more colourful and complicated, showing the giant basilisk and the blood-smeared stone walls of the chamber (see Figure 4). The British cover shows a shift in emphasis from school story to fantasy, suggesting that the success of *The Philosopher's Stone* gave Bloomsbury greater freedom to produce a cover that would tantalise its reader's expectations, though not as dramatically as that of the US edition.

If, as it is claimed, *The Philosopher's Stone* sold mainly by word of mouth (Shapiro 80-83), the absence of direct marketing for the launch of *The Chamber of Secrets* (in both Britain and the US) indicates that the same is true of the second book. In Britain *The Chamber of Secrets* was published in a print run of 10 500 in hardback in July 1998 ("First Editions" n.pag.).¹⁹ The comparatively small size of the first impression implies that Bloomsbury was waiting to see if the market would respond as well to the second book as to the first. Shapiro suggests that both Bloomsbury and Scholastic were worried that the first book was a "fluke" and that later books in the series would not sell as well (86). Possibly because of this fear, Bloomsbury employed an unusual form of advertising for the second book by appending to it copies of fan letters from children and teachers who had read *The Philosopher's Stone* (see Figure 16). This is designed to attract the potential adult

¹⁹ In November 2002, a first edition hardback of *The Chamber of Secrets* was worth £2 000 ("Children's Books" n.pag.).

buyer of the second novel because it demonstrates how much children enjoyed the first, and takes the form of peer recommendation: incorporating such letters is the clearest way to show children that the book is enjoyed by other children. Despite an unemphatic marketing campaign, *The Chamber of Secrets* reached the number one slot in the BookTrack Best Seller list in the same month that it was released (“Timeline of Events” n.pag.), showing how successful the series was becoming in its own right.²⁰

It is clear that up until this point, the series had not been marketed as such, even if the design of the books would have publicised them to some extent. Bloomsbury capitalised on the instant success of the hardback edition of *The Chamber of Secrets* by implementing its first piece of overt publicity with the launch of the paperback. On publication of the paperback in January 1999, Bloomsbury buried a time capsule at King’s Cross containing “predictions from children on what they think will happen in book 7” (“Timeline of Events” n.pag). Not only did this publicise the launch, it also emphasised that the book was part of a series; in effect it advertised the Harry Potter concept as a whole, not merely *The Chamber of Secrets*. The promotion probably did increase its popularity: *The Chamber of Secrets* became the first children’s book in Britain to top a best-seller list (Smith 157). Furthermore, its inclusion in the conventional best-seller lists emphasises its popularity and underscores the suggestion that the books are not merely for children but have a more universal appeal.

The designs of *The Prisoner of Azkaban* followed a similar pattern to those of the first two books, indicating neither publisher wanted to risk changing an obviously successful format. The US cover again uses the distinctive “Potter font” and embossed lettering, this time in metallic green. It again has illustrations within the text, and the numbers of fonts enlivening the text are increasingly unusual (compare Figure 17 to Figures 18.a, 18.b, and 18.c). The British edition has the same plain text and general cover design as before, in keeping with the need to create a sense of recognition in the purchaser or potential reader. Significantly, the books were released only two months apart, and show the same scene (Harry and Hermione flying the hippogriff) although the illustrators were still Mary Grandpré for the US and Cliff Wright for the British (see Figures 5 and

²⁰ I have been unable to find out how many additional print runs were needed after the initial run of 10 500 to ensure this ranking.

6).²¹ By both illustrating the climactic scene, the two editions are linked in an unprecedented way.

The choice of scene also suggests Bloomsbury planned to market the series slightly differently. Compared with the bold drawing of Harry at King's Cross station (with its simple lines and bright, primary colours) used for the cover of *The Philosopher's Stone*, Cliff Wright's illustration for *The Prisoner of Azkaban* is far more refined. The colours are graded and the picture of Harry, Hermione and Buckbeak is extremely detailed. Notably, Harry is dressed in the striped shirt, jeans and trainers that were originally characteristic of the US depictions of him, though he still wears a black robe over them. His appearance suggests two things: first that the Bloomsbury covers were influenced by the Scholastic ones in illustration if not in design; and secondly, that Bloomsbury's primary image of Harry changed from a schoolboy to a teenage wizard. The British cover is also more obviously influenced by the fantasy aspect of the text, here exemplified by the fabulous hippogriff (half eagle, half horse). The detail also suggests that Bloomsbury was not only targeting its audience of children but also responding to the popularity of the books across all age-groups. The cover's sophistication would still appeal to children, but less obviously to very young ones alone.

The Prisoner of Azkaban was published in Britain on 8 July 1999. Despite Bloomsbury's awareness that the original audience had changed, its publicity was obviously intended to attract children. In an unusual move, booksellers were only allowed to sell the book from 3:45pm, given what Bloomsbury termed well-founded fears that children would play truant from school to secure a copy (Sykes n.pag.). By setting such a limit, Bloomsbury created the expectation of the novel's popularity, which in itself became the publicity. Certainly, marketing it as something for which children would play truant was a successful strategy: 64 000 copies were sold within the first three days ("Timeline of Events" n.pag.).²²

The interest surrounding *The Prisoner of Azkaban* in both Britain and the US was fierce enough to spark a publishers' war. Many internet orders were placed so that US

²¹ The various illustrators each have their own personal style, but the most marked difference between the depictions of Harry can be seen in that the American Harry has thick "Woody Allen-type" horn-rimmed glasses, which the British Harry has finer, metal frames.

²² The publication of the paperback version of *The Prisoner of Azkaban* in Britain was accompanied by advertising before the *Pokemon* and *Tigger* films in April 2000 ("Timeline of Events" n.pag.), indicating that Bloomsbury still felt that the target audience was children. The unusual method of advertising a book prior to a film was perhaps an early indication of how the Harry Potter series would become as much a multi-media phenomenon as a literary one.

buyers could obtain the British edition without waiting for the US one to be published (on 8 September 1999) (Gray 50). This shows the demand for the novel (and for the series as a whole) even before Scholastic began marketing its release. In the US, some bookshops opened at midnight as soon as the embargo ended, while others opened several hours earlier than usual (Gurdon n.pag.). Some bookshops further publicised the release by emphasising the British connection, “offer[ing] customers tea and crumpets” (Gray 50). The popularity of the series by this point could not be called into question – especially considering 6.5 million copies of *The Prisoner of Azkaban* had been bought through the internet before its release in the US (Gray 50) – but Scholastic also promoted its publication by sending to bookshops 650 000 lightning-bolt stick-on tattoos, reminiscent of Harry’s scar (Gray 54). The sticker was also shaped like the lightning-bolt of the by now very distinctive “Potter font” on the cover of the books.

The British and US brandings of the series were continued in each publisher’s production of *The Goblet of Fire*. The general cover design of both the British and the US editions was similar to earlier ones, with the usual differences in colour and illustration marking their products as different from the previous books in the series. The illustrations were again distinctive to each publishing house. The US illustration does not depict a specific event in the narrative, as Grandpré’s illustrations usually do. Instead it shows Harry with his wand, clutching the golden egg and surrounded by the three other competitors in the Triwizard Tournament (see Figure 8). As usual, it is very colourful and its design emphasises the fantasy aspect of the series, incorporating small stars, similar to those on the cover of *The Philosopher’s Stone*. The US internal design also recalls previous editions, particularly in its decorative features and fonts (as in *The Prisoner of Azkaban*) becoming more unusual than previously (see Figures 19, 20 and 21). Like the others published in the US, the fourth cover still seems targeted at the same audience, with its pastel drawing and its concentration on the fantasy element.

The British cover is far more dramatic than the previous ones in the series, perhaps because Bloomsbury used another new illustrator, Giles Greenfield. His illustration is very detailed and is also much closer to the fantasy aspect of the series than to the school story: Harry rides his broomstick past the fire-breathing dragon he faces in the Triwizard Tournament (see Figure 7). The colours are more muted and the shading and tones are more complex than in the earlier Bloomsbury covers; here Bloomsbury’s focus has shifted dramatically from that of *The Philosopher’s Stone*. The first cover was obviously aimed at

small children whereas the fourth, with its more violent and startling image, seems designed to appeal to young teenagers. Certainly, readers who would have been children in 1997, when the first novel was published, would now be teenagers, suggesting that readership was also growing alongside the series.²³

Bloomsbury's recognition of the unusually wide market for the Harry Potter books is indicated through its decision to publish adult editions of all four books, as well as through its more sophisticated design for *The Goblet of Fire*. The adult book covers are plain monochrome, which makes them less obviously children's books, saving adults the embarrassment, claims Sykes, of being seen reading children's books on the Underground (n.pag.). Moreover, the adult editions encouraged adult buyers, highlighting the crossover potential of the series. A useful way to increase the potential market of a product is to make it appeal to more than one sector of the population.²⁴ Indeed, Bloomsbury's Rosamund de la Hey says "we thought, 'How do we hoodwink them into buying it?' We took a lot of the reviews and used the part saying 'it has all the makings of a classic' and left off the part saying 'and kids will love it'" (Sykes n.pag.). De la Hey's comments show that the publishers were becoming increasingly aware of how they could promote the series.

Bloomsbury's first major piece of publicity for the series was with the release of *The Prisoner of Azkaban* and the production of adult editions of the first three books, but the publication of *The Goblet of Fire* indicates that by then its strategy had become more advanced.²⁵ Bloomsbury and Scholastic had agreed to publish *The Goblet of Fire* on the same date, 8 July 2000, to prevent the US public buying the British edition, and they worked together to manage the publicity for this. First, Rowling revealed at a press conference in March 2000 that someone would die in the fourth book ("Timeline of Events" n.pag.), causing fans to speculate over who it would be. Secondly, Bloomsbury and Rowling refused to release the title of the book, tantalising the public by their secrecy.

²³ It could certainly be argued that the content in the later books is more complex than in the earlier ones, which could also have had an impact on the cover design's potential to appeal to teenage rather than juvenile readers.

²⁴ This experiment was so successful that Bloomsbury felt it worthwhile to produce an adult edition of another children's book, Louis Sachar's *Holes*, in 2002 (Murray-West n.pag.). The Bloomsbury web-site notes that there are also special editions of the series which are "clothbound hardbacks with gold edging and a ribbon marker, and are designed as special gift editions", suggesting that Bloomsbury is aware of the market for gift editions amongst both adults and children.

²⁵ In a lucky coincidence, the release occurred soon after Rowling was awarded the Order of the British Empire in June 2000 ("Timeline of Events"), which would also have led to increased media awareness of Rowling's career.

Thirdly, late in June, Levine, Scholastic's vice-president, was interviewed for *USA Today* in a move clearly designed to build up interest. He stressed the necessity of keeping the plot secret until 8 July. International news also reported that Scholastic had published a "record first run of 3.8 million" hardback copies of *The Goblet of Fire*. The strategy seemed to work: an article published just before its release reported that Rowling's editor was

forced to guard the manuscript – the only one in existence – with her life while working on it over the past few months.... It is usually in a bank vault and she dare not even bring it to the [Bloomsbury] office to show to colleagues. She has been mugged in the street and her car has been broken into twice by people she assumes were trying to get their hands on it. This week, newspaper reporters broke into the printers where one million hardback copies are being prepared for the British market on July 8. (Reynolds, "Bloomsbury" n.pag.)

Whether this was true or simply an astute piece of publicity is hard to ascertain, but the demand for the fourth book was indicated when the web-site "E-bay" auctioned stolen copies two weeks before the release date ("Harry Potter': Arthur Levine" n.pag.). The publishers planned the release for a Saturday, 8 July 2000, "chosen to avoid children skipping school to get their copies" although bookshops were "planning to open from midnight and start selling from 12.01am" (Davies n.pag.) – a similar strategy to what had worked so well for the release of *The Prisoner of Azkaban*. Finally, they staged a massive launch at King's Cross station, the station from which the Hogwarts Express departs in Rowling's fictional world. In its press release the day before, Bloomsbury gave the following account:

Bloomsbury has recreated the Hogwarts Express, complete with red steam engine renamed the Hogwarts Express for the occasion. J. K. Rowling will be available for a press call at 11:00 am on Platform 9¾ this [*sic*] is for photographs and filming only, no formal interviews will be given. A very limited number of interviews have been arranged to take place on the train, however the schedule is now fully booked. ("Press Release: Goblet of Fire" n.pag.)²⁶

The report's emphasis on limited access to Rowling would have increased the desire of the media to interview her – a useful position for her public-relations campaigners. The launch of *The Goblet of Fire*, which entailed her attending book signings all over the United Kingdom, demonstrates a commercialism that was absent at the launch of *The*

²⁶ It seems strange that a publishing house could release such a clumsily written press statement.

Philosopher's Stone, and was so successful that 372 775 copies were sold in Britain alone on the day of its release (Bouquet 52).

The high-profile marketing of *The Goblet of Fire*, plus Bloomsbury's admission that it is preparing an extensive campaign to market the release of the fifth novel in the series, *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* (Bowers n.pag.), shows Bloomsbury's sense of the usefulness of the media, not just in promoting stories about Rowling but as a platform for wider coverage of the whole phenomenon. Bloomsbury's Nigel Newton claims "many of the biggest writers we publish were unknown when we took them on and we recognised their talent. We are brilliant at marketing such talent when we find it" (Twist 2). Certainly, Bloomsbury won The Expert Books Marketing Campaign of the Year award for its promotion of *The Goblet of Fire* in hardback ("Press Release: Book Awards 2000). It is worth mentioning, though, that the paperback release of *The Goblet of Fire* was not accompanied by any major publicity, yet it went "straight to the number one position in paperback" ("Press Release: Publishing Success" n.pag.). The publicity, therefore, works side by side with what appears to be a genuine interest in the series. The initial readers' response to the first two novels ensured the success of the series, but the intensive marketing of the third and fourth increased this dramatically.

* * *

The production and marketing of the first four books was clearly important to the success of the series up until 2000. In the years following the release of *The Goblet of Fire*, however, the series has continued to sell well and remain in the public eye. Luciano Benetton, discussing the use of brands in marketing, believes that "no idea lasts forever; you have to know how to reinvent yourself" (161), and Bloomsbury kept the Harry Potter phenomenon alive through Rowling's association with Comic Relief (a charity which funds various upliftment projects for children, both in Britain and internationally) ("In Her Own Words" n.pag.). In December 2000 Comic Relief auctioned the name plate from the Hogwarts Express train used to launch *The Goblet of Fire*, maintaining media interest in the series. Then Bloomsbury produced two books written to accompany the series: *Fantastic Beasts and Where To Find Them* by Newt Scamander and *Quidditch Through The Ages* by Kennilworthy Whisp ("Press Release: Harry Christmas" n.pag.): all profits from the sale of these companion books went directly to Comic Relief ("In Her Own Words" n.pag.). The success of this venture can be measured through the Bloomsbury financial reports, which note that Bloomsbury raised £4.7 million for Comic Relief

(“Preliminary Results: December 2001” n.pag.). But more importantly, the media interest in *Fantastic Beasts* and *Quidditch* made a valuable addition to Rowling’s marketing campaign, keeping the series prominent well after the publication of *The Goblet of Fire*.

These slim volumes are interesting in themselves from a book history point of view, as they resemble exact replicas of the books of these titles mentioned in the Harry Potter narrative, bridging the gap between fiction and marketing tool in an unusual way. The cover of *Fantastic Beasts*, for example, is made to look slightly torn and has a sticker with “Property of Harry Potter” as part of its illustration (see Figures 22 and 23). The text, supposedly written by one Newt Scamander, is supplemented by graffiti and drawings “by” Harry, Ron and Hermione (see Figures 26 and 27). Similarly, *Quidditch* has a cover made to look worn and battered, with part of the illustration featuring a wax seal stamped with the words “Property of Hogwarts Library” (see Figures 24 and 25). The interior keeps up this fiction, including a slip with the names of various pupils who have taken the book out and the dates it was due back, the last name of course being Harry’s (see Figure 28). The illustrations are Rowling’s own and add to the fiction that *Quidditch* is a real book from the wizarding world (see Figure 29). While the texts of both are imaginative and often witty, much of the humour stems from details suggesting they are facsimiles of books owned or used by the fictional character Harry Potter. Some interesting features include the publishers’ details: “Bloomsbury, in association with WhizzHard Books, 129a Diagon Alley, London” in *Quidditch* and, in *Fantastic Beasts*, “Bloomsbury in association with Obscurus Books, 18a Diagon Alley, London”. Also included are “reviews” of *Quidditch*. The companion books mimic both style and layout of the four Harry Potter books, and include quotations from characters familiar to readers of the series. In this, they not only aid the idea of world-creation which is so important in the production of a successful fantasy series,²⁷ but also help maintain interest in the series itself.

The Harry Potter phenomenon has been further affected by the films of the first two books in the series. Warner acquired the film rights at the end of 1999, and while Rowling maintained a measure of control over the script and some merchandising,²⁸ Warner had full rights over the “Harry Potter” brand (Smith 175). Although publishers traditionally have no control over the creation of the films, movie versions can positively affect book sales through increased media attention. Interest in the first film was substantial: it made profits

²⁷ See the discussion of sub-creation in Chapter Four.

²⁸ Initially Rowling refused to accept offers to make the books into films (“Author Happy” 3). Presumably this is why the contract insisted on her right to some involvement.

of \$318 million in the US alone, was ranked as the highest grossing film of 2001 and beat its rival, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, to the top box office position (Cagle 67). The film of *The Chamber of Secrets* was similarly successful: it made a profit of \$88 million in its first weekend in the US alone (Grossman 54). Nigel Newton, Chairman of Bloomsbury, believed the release of the first film would “trigger a dramatic increase in sales as a new audience is introduced to the books” (“Interim Results: June 2001” n.pag.), as would the release of the DVD and video editions of *The Philosopher’s Stone* and *The Sorcerer’s Stone*. Newton claims that all the additional media products enhance the profitability of the books:

we always greet the news that one of our books is being turned into a film with open arms because a film is effectively a two-hour commercial for the book.... The great thing is that there is one movie out there while there are four books. So you can go out and find out what happened to Harry next by as simple an act as buying *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*. (Twist 1-2)

Bloomsbury also benefited directly when its own merchandising rights to the film led to the launch of “diaries, address books and personal organisers” in March 2001 (“Press Release: Merchandising” n.pag.). Early in 2002, Bloomsbury declared that there was a “huge surge” in sales of the books after the release of the film of *The Philosopher’s Stone* at the end of 2001 (Bowers n.pag.), which confirms Newton’s perceptions.²⁹

Although the first film was only released on 16 November 2001, the first trailer appeared on the Warner Brothers web-site on the first of March, more than eight months before its release, giving plenty of time for publicity. Crucially, Warner also used the very distinctive “Potter font” that Scholastic had designed, creating an important link between the films and the books, particularly in the US. Moreover, the “Potter font” branded a huge variety of toys, T-shirts, bookends, stickers, and even sweets which appear in the books, such as Bertie Bott’s Every Flavour Beans, and Chocolate Frogs (see Figures 30-32). Warner’s use of toys, sweets and other commodities to promote the film is similar to the marketing of most children’s movies, although Warner unusually allowed Rowling some say in how they employed the Potter brand (“On October 16, 2000” n.pag.). Surprisingly, given her emphasis on children’s literacy, she allowed the production of computer and Play-Station games of Harry Potter; instead of reducing book sales, it was thought that the film’s spin-offs would merely be purchases additional to the books, by readers who wanted

²⁹ Bloomsbury do not provide details of the numbers of books sold after the release of the film.

to see more of the Harry Potter world. The fact that London's famous toyshop, Hamleys, listed the Harry Potter wizard toy as its top-selling product even before the release of the film ("Harry's a Christmas Cracker" 20), demonstrates the popularity of the Harry Potter concept and the success of its branding.

* * *

The widespread popularity of the series can be assessed, finally, through the effect it has had on its publishers. Both Bloomsbury and Scholastic have displayed a remarkable increase in profits since they released the Harry Potter books. Bloomsbury was a small fledgling company when it floated on the London Stock Exchange in 1994. Today, its growth figures show its outstanding development in both profits and prestige. By the end of 1999, its financial statements registered an increase in turnover of 36.9%; by December 2000, its turnover increase was 143%; and at the end of 2001, turnover had grown by 20.6%.³⁰ The outstanding turnover increase of 143% in 2000 corresponds with sales figures for *The Goblet of Fire*. Bloomsbury was awarded "Company of the Year" in the PLC Awards 2000 ("Preliminary Results: December 2000" n.pag.) and KPMG Publisher of the Year Award for the second year running at the British Book Awards 2000 ("Press Release: Bloomsbury Retains Title" n.pag.). Following this heightened exposure, Bloomsbury reported that *The Goblet of Fire* was the "fastest-selling book in history" ("Preliminary Results: December 2000" n.pag.). Nigel Newton has been quick to use the publicity surrounding the Harry Potter series to promote other authors published by Bloomsbury, presumably in the hope of increasing the firm's standing in the publishing world. Bloomsbury stresses that it publishes literary authors, including Margaret Atwood, Anne Michaels, Michael Ondaatje, Jane Campion, David Guterson, Ahdaf Soueif, Nadine Gordimer, Anthony Bourdain, and John Irving,³¹ implying that the Harry Potter series is produced by a literary publishing house.

Scholastic's gains from the series are more difficult to calculate, as it has so many divisions: Scholastic Press, Arthur A. Levine Books, Cartwheel Books®, Scholastic Paperbacks, Scholastic Reference™, The Blue Sky Press®, Chicken House and Orchard Books®. Like Bloomsbury, however, it "announced record results" in 2001, "with almost \$2 billion in revenues" ("Fiscal Year: 2000/2001" n.pag.). Its earlier financial statements

³⁰ Full financial statements are available at "Preliminary Results: December 1999", "Preliminary Results: December 2000", and "Preliminary Results: December 2001". Previous financial statements are not available.

³¹ This is emphasised in various sources: "Preliminary Results: December 1999", "Press Release: Hollywood Linkup", "Interim Results: June 2001" and Hill (54).

use the Harry Potter series to promote the company as a whole, but while Scholastic's 2001 financial statements certainly make mention of the Harry Potter books and their effect on profitability, they do not emphasise them to the exclusion of other ventures. Indeed, Scholastic's association with television, notably a television series entitled *Clifford The Big Red Dog*TM, seems to have been given as a reason for a large part of its financial success. Its television links indicate the growing prospect of the book trade becoming more closely associated with wider media publishing, including television and computer-based publishing, as does Bloomsbury's CD-ROM *Encarta* series (Twist n.pag.). Scholastic has also used its association with the series to highlight its reputation as an educational publisher, making education one of its main objectives in its 2001 fiscal statements ("Fiscal Year: 2000/2001" n.pag.), and in its definition of itself as

the global children's publishing and media company, [which] creates and distributes innovative and *quality educational materials* for use in schools – textbooks, magazines, technology and teacher materials – and engaging and *appropriate* products for use at home – books, magazines, software, television programming, videos and toys. Building *long-term relationships with teachers, parents, and children* since 1920, Scholastic is unique in its understanding of what kids want and need. ("Introduction to Scholastic" n.pag., my emphasis)

Scholastic's marketing strategy clearly emphasises its knowledge of what is both necessary and appropriate to children's needs; its links from its Harry Potter web-site to its educational publishing and statements of intention are designed to relieve the fears of parents who may be concerned with the quality of the Harry Potter books, as well as to advertise its other products.

The Harry Potter phenomenon has also affected the wider publishing world. Other publishing houses have issued books that could be called accessories to the novels. Two biographies of J. K. Rowling have been published (see Shapiro and Smith), as well as several reference works. In fact, a search under "Harry Potter" on the web-site "amazon.com"³² brings up 183 results including, amongst various editions of the series, Dr Elizabeth D. Schaefer's *Exploring Harry Potter* for Beecham's SourceBooks, Allan Zola Kronzek and Elizabeth Kronzek's *The Sorcerer's Companion: A Guide to the Magical World of Harry Potter*, and Philip Nel's *J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter Novels: A Reader's Guide* ("Amazon" n.pag.). In similar vein, David Colbert has brought out a reference book

³² In October 2002, Jeff Bezos, Chief Executive Officer of Amazon.com, claimed that "the Harry Potter books helped the company make its first profit in a year of dot.com disaster" (Greteman and Noble 18).

entitled *The Magical Worlds of Harry Potter: A Treasury of Myths, Legends and Fascinating Facts*. What is noticeable about the production of Colbert's book is that its cover design makes use of the scattered stars familiar as a motif in the Scholastic editions of the Harry Potter series, while using the same font for the words "Harry Potter" as the Bloomsbury editions. The words "Not Approved by J. K. Rowling or Warner Bros.", which appear in small letters on the cover, suggest that it would not have been able to use the "Potter font" with the lightning bolt on the "P" that is now associated with Warner Brothers. In other words, the film industry has taken control of the branding of Harry Potter, showing that it is no longer only a literary phenomenon, but more generally a media one.³³

The popularity of the series has had another important effect on the publishing world through its spread into publishing fields world-wide: it has been translated into fifty-five languages (Ripley 43, Jardine n.pag.), and will soon be published in Latin and ancient Greek.³⁴ Even the Chinese market has been accessed. The Chinese translation was released in boxed sets of the first three books in 2000. Not only was it published by the People's Literature Publishing House (also responsible for issuing Mao's Collected Poems) but it was also "the largest first printing of any fiction since the communists had come to power" (Smith 184). The demand prior to official Chinese publication was so high that the publication date had to be brought forward given the proliferation of independent translations that were being sold illegally before its release ("Harry Potter Magic in China" n.pag.). The world-wide attention given to the series shows that Rowling's fiction has a universal appeal despite the very English characteristics of the text.

The importance of branding is also apparent in the production of the translated editions. For instance, the Afrikaans series, published by Human & Rousseau, is an interesting mix of the US and British ones. The covers copy the US ones, but the lettering, while in the same "Potter font", is flat, not in embossed gold type, perhaps reflecting the relatively modest financial status of a South African publisher. The illustrations for the Afrikaans cover are those of Mary Grandpré, the US artist; but inside, the book is like the plain British editions with the same font and none of the illustrations or extras that the US

³³ It is interesting to note that (Children's Laureate) Anne Fine's recent books make use of a font that is remarkably close to the "Potter font", suggesting the influence of the series on the rest of the children's literature market. See *Bad Dreams* and *Up on Cloud Nine* (published in 2001 and 2002 respectively).

³⁴ Rowling's editor, Emma Matthews, announced that Bloomsbury "hired Peter Needham, who taught Latin and Greek at Eton College for more than 30 years", to translate the Latin version of *The Philosopher's Stone* to be ready for publication in 2003 ("Harrius Figulus" 6)

ones include. Other versions, such as the French, German and Japanese ones, mostly use their own illustrations. While some use the same “Potter font” as the American editions (and the films and their associated merchandising) for the lettering of “Harry Potter” on all their covers, others have only used this distinctive font for *The Goblet of Fire*. The translations of the fourth book occurred after media interest in the first film had begun, showing how its release and merchandising affected the design of the books around the world.³⁵

The series has also had an impact on the publishing world through the literary prizes it has been awarded. Bloomsbury’s web-site lists the numerous awards which the Harry Potter books have won or for which they have been short-listed,³⁶ as do the US editions, showing how important literary accolades are to the marketing of the books. Each time a Harry Potter book is nominated for, or wins, an award, the press coverage publicises the series and obviously winning an award creates a positive image for the series as a whole. One particular award greatly affected the literary world because of the controversy it elicited. The 1999 Whitbread Book of the Year Award received much attention in the media because of the strident debates entered into by the judges as to whether Rowling was more deserving of the award for *The Prisoner of Azkaban* or Seamus Heaney for his *Beowulf*. While Heaney won by one vote, there was a huge furore in the press: some of the judges said it would “send out the wrong message about a serious literary competition” to choose a children’s book rather than an epic work; others claimed “Rowling’s writing was highly original and had encouraged thousands of children to read. In contrast, Heaney’s poem, though beautifully written, was a mere translation and could not be considered truly original” (Reynolds, “Literary Judge” n.pag.). Although Rowling won the Whitbread Children’s Book of the Year award instead, the publicity over both the debate and the eventual outcome would have increased the prominence of the Harry Potter books in both the press and the literary world. Also, that *The Prisoner of Azkaban* was nominated for the award demonstrates the phenomenal success of the series in the larger reading market, and

³⁵ See for example “Pottering around France”, “Pottering around Germany”, and “Pottering around Japan”. Interestingly, the South American versions (see “Pottering around Latin America”) are produced separately from their Spanish and Portuguese language counterparts in Europe.

³⁶ These include the Nestlé Smarties Book Prize, the FCBG Children’s Book Award, the Birmingham cable Children’s Book Award, the Young *Telegraph* Paperback of the Year, the British Book Awards’ Children’s Book of the Year, the Sheffield Children’s Book Award, and the Scottish Arts Council Children’s Book Award. The books have also been shortlisted in various years for the *Guardian* Fiction Award, the Carnegie Medal, and the Whitbread Children’s Book of the Year. J. K. Rowling has also been voted author of the year at the 1999 British Book Awards and BA Author of the year in 1999 and 2000 and received an OBE for services to children’s literature in June 2000 (“Awards” n.pag.).

shows that the series is not simply perceived as appealing to children. Ultimately, awards imply that the books have literary merit and, because they have been nominated for such awards, this no doubt creates an additional market for the books among adults.³⁷

* * *

The designs of the books in both Britain and the United States of America show each publisher's awareness of the branding principle essential to successful marketing. In the case of the British editions particularly, the noticeable change in the style of illustrations indicates a growing perception that the series has a broader range of readers than first envisaged. There is no doubt that the huge marketing campaigns at the launches of *The Prisoner of Azkaban* and *The Goblet of Fire* had the effect of increasing sales. The production of *Fantastic Beasts* and *Quidditch*, plus the release of the films and accompanying merchandise, further stimulated media interest in the Harry Potter concept. But, the remarkable "word-of-mouth" success of the first two books *before* any active marketing on the part of either Scholastic or Bloomsbury, shows that the series was initially popular in its own right.

³⁷ Book awards have an effect on the reception of a text even though the requirements for entry are often spurious, or at least questionable. Magwood points out that the Booker prize, for example, allows any publisher to enter only two books, which potentially leaves many deserving books off the original lists (12). Squires, in her discussion of how literary awards indicate as well as create literary identity, suggests that through an examination of "the intersections and conflicting impulses of book awards", new light can be shed on book history (n.pag.).

Chapter Two

The School Story: Tradition and Innovation

“The Harry Potter phenomenon has been at once surprising and gratifying – surprising that the parochial and eccentric genre of the English school story should appeal to children from the world over, gratifying that it has summoned them from their Playstations back to books, and books which make few concessions to their readers.” Julia Briggs, “Fighting the forces of Evil” (21).

Julia Briggs focuses on Rowling’s use of the school story in the Harry Potter series, and suggests the genre as a whole has limited appeal. Yet she also praises Rowling’s narrative skill: situating the series at Hogwarts School, she suggests, “provides Harry with a setting where his skills command respect. He forms close friendships, and enjoys adventures and independence within a safe and structured environment” (21). It is precisely this environment that Rowling uses to her advantage in the Harry Potter series. The school story genre is highly formalised and didactic, and she uses its conventions not only for atmosphere and setting, but also to introduce her moral stance. Rowling’s use of the genre appears unusual because the traditional school story was a phenomenon of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, reaching its peak soon after the Second World War.¹

This chapter will open by outlining the history of the school story, arguing that Rowling uses its conventions to emphasise values like fair play, honour and justice, but that she also includes an idea of equality not common to the genre. The rest of the chapter is divided into two sections. The first will analyse Rowling’s employment of the standard elements of the school setting. The second will examine how she manipulates the stereotypical characters associated with the traditional school story to create a moral awareness based on both “English” values and a more modern egalitarianism.

* * *

The rise of the school story has been linked with the increased interest in chivalry characterising the nineteenth century. Girouard traces the Victorian appropriation of chivalry from various sources, including Scott’s presentation of medieval “virtues and

¹ Musgrave and Quigly argue this in their detailed accounts of the rise and fall of the school story.

characteristics” (34) and Tennyson’s interest in Arthurian myths (178). Charles Kingsley and Thomas Hughes, dubbed the muscular Christians, were deeply influenced by Kenelm Digby’s *The Broad Stone of Honour* (Girouard 132), with its emphasis on Godliness and manliness – manliness defined as including “physical manliness, ideas of chivalry and gentlemanliness, and moral manliness” (Vance 10). They encouraged English public school headmasters to engender in their pupils the belief that “the best way to moral prowess was physical prowess, in actual fighting or in sport” (Girouard 166). From the middle of the nineteenth century English public schools began inculcating in their pupils values like strength, honour and fair play; the novels based on life at these schools followed suit.

The school story is most often seen as starting with Thomas Hughes’s *Tom Brown’s Schooldays*, first published in 1857.² *Tom Brown’s Schooldays* formed the model for the genre as a whole with its emphasis on sport (65-72, 222-231), condemnation of bullying (184-5), descriptions of the school grounds (56-57), and presence of a wise and fatherly headmaster (92). The novel is overtly didactic: Tom’s school years end with the realisation that his time at Rugby school has taught him “thoughtfulness and manliness” (234). It had remarkable success: between 24 April 1857, the day it was released, and the end of that year, five impressions had been sold, and fifty editions had been published in Britain alone by the time Hughes died in 1896 (Musgrave 61). For its Victorian audience the moral tone was seen as not only appropriate, but desirable, because of the emphasis on manners characteristic of the age.

Dean F. W. Farrar’s *Eric, Or Little by Little* was published in 1858, soon after *Tom Brown’s Schooldays* and, like its predecessor, had a straightforward moral message. Watson argues that the “narrative moves along at a surprisingly brisk pace for a Victorian novel, generating a good deal of tension” (198), which may account for its popularity. Farrar’s success with *Eric, or Little by Little* led him to publish two similar stories, *Julian Home, a Tale of College Life* (1859) and *St Winifred’s, or The World of School* (1862), showing the popularity of the genre even in its initial phase. When viewed in retrospect, *Tom Brown’s Schooldays* and *Eric, or Little by Little* may seem formulaic, particularly in

² Musgrave (26-31) points out that there were several predecessors to *Tom Brown*, including Maria Edgeworth’s *Parents’ Assistant* (1796) and Harriet Martineau’s *The Crofton Boys* (1841), but, like Disraeli’s *Coningsby*, Dickens’s *David Copperfield* and Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre* (all of which merely touch on school life) these novels are not in the traditional school story mode.

their emphasis on virtuous conduct, yet together they began what was to become one of the most popular genres in the history of children's literature:

They [Hughes and Farrar] inserted themselves successfully into a niche in the social structure, which was at a time of rapid industrialisation, particularly for the middle class, characterised by a growing concern with education outside the family. These two writers, and indeed their publishers, had no idea that their books would be best sellers and would lead to a profitable trade in writing imitations of them. (251)

By the 1880s there was a growing tradition of school stories. One of the most important events in the rise of the genre was the founding in 1879 of the *Boy's Own Paper*, which was responsible for the rapid increase in the popularity of the school story: Talbot Baines Reed's famous *The Fifth Form at St Dominic's* was published serially in the magazine throughout 1881 and 1882. Reed took the pivotal elements from Hughes's novel – the cementing of friendships, the interest in detailed descriptions of sports matches, the kind and wise headmaster, bullying and fights (*The Fifth Form at St Dominic's* 182, 133-142, 212, 156-157, and 201 respectively) – and gave them a freshness through his more familiar tone and contemporary style. Isabel Quigly sums this up:

To many, *The Fifth Form at St Dominic's* seems the ideal school story, literary enough to please adults, lively enough to please boys; cheerful, unobsessed, highly readable and enormous fun. It was, indeed, the kind of book many later school-story writers would have liked to write and consciously or unconsciously imitated or actually copied. (82)

Reed's narratives were much more accessible than Hughes's and Farrar's because their publication in serial format encouraged a more diverse readership. Significantly, the *Boy's Own Paper* was started by the Religious Tract Society, specifically to combat "the excessively violent 'penny dreadfuls' of the time" and to foster the link between gentlemanly and Christian behaviour (Watson, "The Rise" 198).

The tradition started by the *Boy's Own Paper* was taken up by other boys' weeklies, like the *Gem* and *Magnet*, both of which began publication in the early 1900s: Charles Hamilton wrote prolifically for both (under various pseudonyms) about Tom Merry's and Billy Bunter's school days. During Hamilton's lifetime he wrote over seven thousand stories under twenty-eight different names (Musgrave 223), and his total output was in the region of 72 million words (Watson, "The Rise" 202). Hamilton's impact on the genre, therefore, must not be underestimated. His stories have been criticised for their

“extraordinary, artificial, repetitive style” (Orwell 463), and although this was detrimental to the image of school stories, stock characters and situations also attracted readers who wanted something familiar. Girouard claims that even though the *Gem* and *Magnet* were aimed at a more universal audience than *The Boy’s Own Paper*, which “catered mainly for public-school boys”, the heroes of all their stories “were almost universally gentlemen” (266); even the more popularised varieties of the genre emphasised Victorian manners.

Several school novels were published independently of weekly magazines in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: P. G. Wodehouse wrote a large number of school stories using the conventions of the genre, including *The Pothunters* (published in 1892). The early 1900s also saw a number of autobiographical novels about public school life,³ which led to an increased adult readership of the genre, although school stories in general were still intended for juvenile readers. Rudyard Kipling’s *Stalky & Co.* generated tremendous adult interest; it was reprinted sixteen times between 1908 and 1924, and “came to be seen as a general work of fiction, not merely as a boys’ school story, with didactic intent” (Musgrave 179). Isabel Quigly suggests that *Stalky & Co.* differed by having none of the traditional elements associated with the school story (110), but this is not strictly accurate. While it is certainly not as formulaic, it does include the usual kindly headmaster, sarcastic housemaster and bullying schoolboys, even if the protagonists are more “obstreperous” than the genre’s norm (Moss 39). Watson argues, too, that Kipling’s added twist of irony was an “attempt to subvert the genre” (Watson, “The Rise” 199) and the novel certainly offers a more realistic impression of school life than do the idealised stories generally characterising the genre.⁴ Its realistic account of the hardship of school life is reminiscent of Anstey’s *Vice Versa: Or, A Lesson to Fathers*, published much earlier, in 1882. *Vice Versa* was one of the earliest, possibly the earliest, school novel to use an element of fantasy, or magic, in its plot (Quigly 100; Musgrave 89), which turns on a father and son switching places at school through the introduction of a magical stone. Significantly C. S. Lewis, known for writing children’s fantasy, called *Vice Versa* “the only

³ Significant here was Alec Waugh’s *Loom of Youth* (1917), which Mangan describes as showing the “excessive devotion to games, immorality and idleness” (111) characteristic of the public schools of the era. Musgrave adds to Waugh’s autobiographical account of his school days several other books written from the personal experience of the author: Arnold Lunn’s *The Harrovians* (1913); H. A. Vachell’s *The Hill* (1905); and Shane Leslie’s *The Oppidan* (1922) (182-198).

⁴ It is interesting to note the sarcasm in *Stalky & Co.*, when the characters mention *Eric, or, Little by Little* and *St. Winifred’s or the World of School*, and summarize them as schools where they “spent all their spare time stealing... when they weren’t praying or getting drunk at pubs” (*Stalky & Co.* 49).

truthful school story in existence” because it did not make light of the “privations, the raw and sordid ugliness” of school life (*Surprised by Joy* 38-39).

The girls’ school story reached prominence later, beginning only in the last twenty years of the nineteenth century when tales of school life took over from traditionally home-centred novels for girls (Cadogan and Craig 44-45). Musgrave asserts that girls were reading school stories in the *Boy’s Own Paper* (231), and part of the success of the *Boy’s Own Paper* led the Religious Tract Society to introduce the *Girl’s Own Paper* in 1880. Another weekly magazine, the *Girl’s Realm*, made greater use of the school story in its serialised form and led to the stereotypical image of schoolgirls later associated with the genre. Alice Corkran, a regular contributor, was responsible particularly for portraying the “sports-loving Amazon” (Cadogan and Craig 76-77), a female variety of the traditional “muscular Christian”. Magazines were thus as important in popularising the girls’ school story as they were for the boys’ version; there were important links between the two types although they were supposedly segregated within the wider genre. Charles Hamilton, for example, famous for his prolific writing for boys, for a short while wrote “Bessie Bunter” stories under the name of Hilda Richards for the *School Friend* (Cadogan and Craig 228), affirming similar values in the girls’ version as in the boys’.

Like those for boys, many girls’ school stories took the form of serials, as in the case of the popular Dimsie series, created in the 1920s by Dorita Fairlie Bruce. Elinor Brent Dyer’s Chalet school stories began in 1925 and they have a generally sophisticated tone, unusual in the genre. But possibly the foremost writer of this kind was Angela Brazil: Musgrave comments that “the modern girls’ school story owes much of its development and character” to her (231). Quigly is less complimentary: “Whether she was the best (or at least the most energetic) of a bad lot, or whether she killed the girls’ school story stone dead before anyone else could get at it, it is hard to say” (218). Notwithstanding Quigly’s observation, Brazil’s stories were popular for a number of reasons. Cadogan and Craig point out that as cheap paperbacks, the books looked more readable than the old-fashioned volumes in which the body of children’s literature had previously appeared, and the narratives were enjoyable because the setting was more cheerful than that of earlier books. Brazil also kept the principal characters sufficiently average to ensure widespread identification and thus appeal among the readers (Cadogan and Craig 111-116).⁵

⁵ As a mark of Brazil’s influence, it is interesting to note that Lord Berners parodied her work in a novel entitled *The Girls of Radcliffe Hall* by Adela Quebec (Quigly 218)

Identification with character types is important to children's literature: it creates the sense of comfort valued by child readers and aids the didactic purpose often common to juvenile fiction. Series fiction in general uses a large range of characters; Watson points out that Hamilton's Billy Bunter series and W. E. Johns's Biggles books do this to ensure that all readers connect with at least one ("Biggles" 212). He suggests that a great number of characters allows "each reader the chance of imagining himself one of the select band" (203), and this feeds into the addictive quality of series fiction (214). Identifying with a particular character is valuable in didactic fiction as the lessons characters learn are thus more obviously relevant to readers. Certainly Cadogan and Craig see most school stories as forming part of an "osmotic process" leading to the formulation of a type of fiction in which "the basic structure, moral principles, objectives and characters were the same, and ... survived more or less unchanged until after the Second World War" (Cadogan and Craig 178-179). Many of these principles can be applied to the Harry Potter series: it features not only the broad sweep of characters associated with both school stories and serial fiction, but also many of the values associated with traditional, pre-war school stories.

Critics have suggested that the school story died in the latter half of the twentieth century,⁶ which makes the Harry Potter series particularly unusual. Quigly proposes that the "school story flourished while the public schools in their nineteenth-century form flourished. When they joined the modern world the school story died" (276). The traditional boys' boarding-school story does seem to have disappeared following the Second World War, but the girls' school story did not die out completely. Cadogan and Craig consider it "somewhat surprising to find a strong resurgence of interest in the traditional girls' school story" in the mid-1980s (375), and describe Anne Digby's Trebizon School series as "harking back in atmosphere to the pre-war School Friend" (375). Although Digby's inclusion of modern references to music and popular figures bring her work up to date, she uses settings and stock characters like those found in earlier school fiction.

Some critics suggest the genre revived in the late twentieth century, but it is more of a re-creation than a revival: these modern stories have very little in common with the *traditional* school story. Watson claims that the school story declined because the "values inherent in the school story from *Tom Brown's Schooldays* onwards were no longer

⁶ See for example discussions by Eyre (82) and Musgrave (1).

unquestioningly accepted” in the less insular, less class-conscious world of the late twentieth century (“The Rise” 204). Thus, the revival of so-called school stories could only work if there was

a clean break ... with the public school.... Hence the comprehensive day school has displaced the boarding school as the setting for most school stories, and a new realism, a new sophistication, are the hallmark of recent novels set in schools. (Watson, “The Rise” 204)⁷

The marked change in setting and content indicates, I would argue, that these works have little in common with the traditional school story: they display few of the conventions associated with the earlier type. For example, in Nat Hentoff’s *This School is Driving Me Crazy* there is little reminiscent of the traditional school story, except perhaps the bullying of Rawlings, who is attacked with a nail file (*This School is Driving Me Crazy* 33). Rather, the narrative concentrates on the family life of the protagonist Sam, and his relationships with his parents. The concern with family relationships is almost never a central matter in the traditional school story, which is by its very nature removed from home life. *This School is Driving Me Crazy* does not, therefore, belong to the *traditional* school story genre, which had very specific characteristics forming its boundaries through setting and characterisation. Modern authors have taken the modern comprehensive or government-run day school, rather than the English public school, as a partial setting for novels interested in current themes, such as gender and race equality, but without using elements associated with the earlier genre.

The Harry Potter series becomes significant in the light of the suggestion that late twentieth-century school stories do not follow in the footsteps of the traditional school story. While Rowling too is interested in modern issues, such as race and class, she chooses to use the conventions of the traditional pre-war public school story despite the series being set at the end of the twentieth century.⁸ She situates almost all of each book at

⁷ Musgrave lists modern stories like Cormier’s *The Chocolate War* (1975) and Wood’s *A Period of Violence* (1977) (257-258). Cadogan and Craig mention Gillian Gross who wrote *Save Our School* and *The Mintygló Kid*, Gina Wilson’s *Cora Ravening* and Gene Kemp’s *The Turbulent Term of Tyke Tiler* (377). Ken Watson adds such examples as Reginald Maddock’s *The Dragon in the Garden*, Bernard Ashley’s *Terry on the Fence*, Jan Mark’s *Thunder and Lightnings*, Betsy Byars’ *The Eighteenth Emergency*, Eleanor Spence’s Australian story *A Candle for St Antony*, and Nat Hentoff’s *This School is Driving Me Crazy* (Watson, “The Rise” 205).

⁸ The inclusion of television, computers and video games, for example, makes it clear that the series is set at the end of the twentieth century, even though the magical world Harry enters has a timeless quality about it. It is also clear that the action takes place in the 1990s because Nearly Headless Nick died on 31 October 1492, and celebrates his five hundredth deathday during Harry’s second year at Hogwarts (CS 99-102), allowing the reader to work out that Harry was “born” in 1980.

an ancient boarding school – Hogwarts is “over a thousand years old” (CS 114) – and includes many of the stock characters and typical situations of the school story. She uses the conventions of the genre to demonstrate her approval of the types of values these texts emphasised, such as honour, magnanimity and fair play. But, where she departs from customary elements and characterisations, she espouses gender, race and class equalities not usually associated with the traditional genre.

A notable difference between the traditional gender-segregated school story and Rowling’s series is her use of the modern co-educational system: the mix of gender at Hogwarts accentuates a gender-equal society. Significantly, one of Harry’s two best friends is female, and Hermione plays an important role in the narrative. Quidditch, the wizard sport played at the school, underscores this gender parity – three of the seven-person Gryffindor house Quidditch team are girls: Alicia Spinnet, Katie Bell and Angelina Johnson (CS 83). The norm, even in co-educational schools, is to maintain the separation of genders in sport, and this innovative game clearly indicates Rowling’s wish that, in this case, ability should not be based on gender.

Race, a more sensitive issue in modern Britain than in the Victorian era, is also updated in its treatment. Orwell points out that the protagonists of school stories normally belong to upper or middle-class white Britain and different races are usually caricatured. He gives the following examples taken from the *Gem* and *Magnet* of the early part of the twentieth century:

Inky, the Indian boy, though a rajah, and therefore possessing snob-appeal, is also the comic babu of the *Punch* tradition. (““The rowfulness is not the proper caper, my esteemed Bob,” said Inky. ‘Let dogs delight in the barkfulness and bitefulness, but the soft answer is the cracked pitcher that goes longest to a bird in the bush, as the English proverb remarks.’”)? [*sic*] Fisher T. Fish is the old-style stage Yankee (““Waal, I guess,”” etc) dating from a period of Anglo-American jealousy. Wun Lung, the Chinese boy ... is the nineteenth-century pantomime Chinaman, with saucer-shaped hat, pigtail and pidgin-English. The assumption all along is not only that foreigners are comics who are put there for us to laugh at, but that they can be classified in much the same way as insects. (Orwell 471)

Rowling’s characters are in line with the varied racial make-up of modern Britain and there is often nothing to indicate what race her characters are, except for the smallest of details. Lee Jordan, for example, has “dreadlocks” (PS 71) which indicates that he may be black;⁹

⁹ He is certainly portrayed as black in the 2001 film of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone*.

the chaser for the Gryffindor Quidditch team, Angelina Johnson, is described as a “tall black girl” (*GF* 230), but this is certainly not her primary characteristic (she appears in all four books but is only described in this way in the fourth). Harry is attracted to the Chinese-sounding Cho Chang, and he and Ron go to the Yule Ball¹⁰ with Parvati and Padma Patil. Their names suggest they are Indian, as does the description of Parvati’s “long dark plait braided with gold” (*GF* 358), although at no point does Rowling attempt to characterise them (or Cho) through a peculiar style of speech. The absence of racial stereotypes is demonstrated when Dean Thomas simply calls Parvati and Padma “the best-looking girls in the year” (*GF* 358), and the students do not seem to single out any of the pupils by virtue of colour or creed. In this Rowling again does not simply accept the value system of the traditional school story, which projected the upper-class white male as the norm (and as superior).

Rowling addresses the class issue in a particular way. She maintains that “Hogwarts school is a meritocracy. Magic comes from every walk of life. It doesn’t say anywhere that they pay fees” (quoted in Tina Jackson 15). By including anyone with magical ability, Hogwarts is unlike the genre’s normal schools: in the traditional school story pupils from the ‘lower’ classes were often excluded because a certain level of wealth was necessary in order to afford the fees (as was the case in the public schools on which the fiction was based). Even in 1939 Orwell found the enthusiasm for the upper classes in school stories disquieting:

As for the snob-appeal, it is completely shameless. Each school has a titled boy or two whose titles are constantly thrust in the reader’s face; other boys have the names of well-known aristocratic families, Talbot, Manners, Lowther. We are for ever being reminded that Gussy is the Honourable Arthur A D’Arcy, son of Lord Eastwood, that Jack Blake is heir to “broad acres”.... (466)

The Harry Potter series subverts the traditional class bias of the early school stories: not only does Rowling introduce a slightly different type of class system, but she also invites the reader to judge this system through how she positions her characters. On one hand, class in the wizarding world is based on the purity of the character’s wizard blood – any person who has magical ability, but is not from an old wizarding family, risks being called

¹⁰ Significantly, in *The Goblet of Fire*, Rowling modernises her use of the genre by including a school dance, which is not traditional to the genre. Anne Digby’s modern school story, *Boy Trouble at Trebizon*, includes the Halloween Dance, over which the girls fight for suitable partners from the local boys’ school (17), and is one of the ways in which the Trebizon series is more obviously from the post-war period.

the insulting epithet “mud-blood”. On the other hand, wealth is an important aspect of class too: although the Weasleys are pure-blood wizards, their poverty excludes them from the elite. The inclusion of children from non-magical families who, nevertheless, have magical ability is one of the hall-marks of Hogwarts,¹¹ and the plot of *The Chamber of Secrets* turns on the conflict between pure-blood wizards and so-called “mud-bloods”. Here, the plot’s outcome endorses the acceptance of all types of pupils, regardless of their magical background. In particular, Rowling’s characterisations of Ron Weasley and Draco Malfoy alter the genre’s traditional bias in favour of class and wealth, as will be demonstrated in detail later in this chapter.

Rowling, then, does not completely accept the values of the traditional school story. She takes the genre’s established value system emphasising honour, justice and fairness, but removes the inherent inequalities characteristic of the earliest stories. Where the conventions associated with the school story can be used to stress values Rowling wishes to affirm in her narrative, she follows them largely as they stand in the tradition. Where she deviates from the norm, it is to establish values associated with the more egalitarian society of today.

* * *

The most important convention of the school story is that it is set almost entirely at a boarding school. It is for this reason, as argued above, that many of the more modern stories, set as much in the home as at a government-run day-school, are not in fact traditional school stories. The creation of background and atmosphere is essential to the genre. Orwell points out that the readership of school stories normally consists of the type of child unable to attend the kind of school described in the text (467-469), and Watson notes that “the implied reader is established, not as one about to experience, or already experiencing, the life of an English public school, but as the outsider looking longingly in through the school gates and wishing he could join the privileged few” (199). As is traditional, Rowling describes the school’s physical features, its food and its sports matches in order to produce an environment that is an unrealistic and appealing rendition of actual boarding-school life. Moreover, she makes the school a magical school, and the element of fantasy aids the wish-fulfilment common to the traditional school story.

¹¹ Although many of the wizards in the stories support Dumbledore’s inclusive policy, many do not. Even the Minister for Magic, Cornelius Fudge, attaches importance to “purity of blood” (*GF* 614). However, because Dumbledore is held up as a touchstone, we are invited to agree with him.

Rowling's depiction of Hogwarts is typical of the picturesque descriptions of the school grounds common to the genre. Mangan points out that the "English public school is invariably an island of mellowed buildings in a sea of well-kept playing fields" (99), and the literature follows this convention. Hughes, for example, sets up his description of Rugby to impress the reader:

Tom's heart beat quick as he passed the great school field or close, with its noble elms, in which several games at foot-ball were going on, and tried to take in at once the long line of grey buildings, beginning with the chapel, and ending with the school-house, the residence of the head-master, where the great flag was lazily waving from the highest round tower. And he began already to be proud of being a Rugby boy, as he passed the school-gates, with the oriel window above, and saw the boys standing there, looking as if the town belonged to them.... (*Tom Brown's Schooldays* 56-57)

Here Rugby is invested with an atmosphere of wealth and distinction, and Tom's response to the school is one of pride. In the genre, the school and its grounds almost always sound appealing and distinguished. Enid Blyton sketches Malory Towers as a "great grey building, with a rounded tower at each end.... A creeper, now turning red, climbed almost to the roof" (*The Second Form at Malory Towers* 6). Even Anne Digby's modern school stories, written in the 1980s, use notions of wealth and class to impress the reader. In *Boy Trouble at Trebizon*, for example, we see through the eyes of Rebecca and her parents as they catch "a brief glimpse of the Hilary Camberwell Music School, its Spanish-style buildings fronting on to a small lake, and then they drew up in front of a rambling old house covered in Virginia creeper" (21). Timothy Shy and Ronald Searle's satirical girls' school story, *The Terror of St Trinian's*, describes St Trinian's School for Girls as "a towering and impressive pile, viewed from the south-west front, of red-brick Gothic, a landmark for some miles. In the opinions of many connoisseurs it is equalled in beauty only by St Pancras Station Hotel" (15). The ironic tone, particularly of the last sentence, emphasises how clichéd setting had become in the traditional school story.

In *The Philosopher's Stone*, Rowling's description of Hogwarts is perhaps even more romanticised than those of traditional school stories. Like Hughes's Rugby, Hogwarts dominates the landscape and has a venerable air: "The narrow path had opened suddenly on to the edge of a great black lake. Perched atop a high mountain on the other side, its windows sparkling in the starry sky, was a vast castle with many turrets and towers" (*PS* 83). Rowling is obviously indebted to the castle of fairy tale in describing it, especially as she consistently emphasises the "many turrets and towers" (*CS* 58; *PA* 69)

and describes the “sweeping drive” and castle gates “flanked with statues of winged boars” (*GF* 152). Nevertheless, Hogwarts, with its stone buildings, lake, forest and Quidditch pitch, echoes the traditional school setting, “instantly appealing and recognisable, with large trees and quadrangles, playing fields, huge chapel, unspoiled surrounding countryside” (Quigly 88).¹² The atmosphere of tradition and power fits both the school story and fantasy aspects of the novels: this impressive first view of Hogwarts creates an air of expectation and excitement.

Rowling’s descriptions of the interior of the school emphasise the unrealistic quality of the genre. An inherent ambivalence in many school stories derives from the way the attractive environment is often at odds with the sense of privation associated with the English public school. Quigly’s description of the school setting in traditional texts highlights this problem. She does not explore the inherent contrast between the opulence of the “free, enormous exteriors, all elms and limes and copper beeches” and the spartan “iron bedsteads, scratched desks, [and] chill dormitories” (88). This is partly because the first school stories portrayed schools as little more than barracks (as indeed Victorian public schools were), whereas the later worlds of the prolific and imitative school story writers were created to appeal to boys who would not normally attend a public school (Orwell 467). The creation of make-believe schools designed to attract their readers’ interest is a feature of the genre. Rowling emphasises the ‘home away from home’ atmosphere of Hogwarts: the Gryffindor house common room, for example, is “a cosy, round room full of squashy armchairs” (*PS* 96), comparable to the comfortable and homely atmosphere of Trebizon with Court House’s “common room with chintzy armchairs” (*Boy Trouble at Trebizon* 22). To engage the reader, the author presents school life as something to which the pupils look forward, rather than dread. This is certainly the case for Harry whose life at Hogwarts is contrasted with his miserable, abused existence in the care of his aunt and uncle, the Dursleys.¹³ “The castle felt more like home than Privet Drive had ever done”, Harry thinks after a mere two months at Hogwarts (*PS* 126), and when he returns to Hogwarts after the holidays he experiences a similar feeling as

¹² It is interesting to note that the one aspect of setting that Rowling does not include is the chapel. This traditional centre of the English public school would be out of place in a story which, while highly moralistic, does not dictate any particular religion.

¹³ Rowling can overdo the hardship Harry experiences at the Dursley home, such as when he is given “two slices of bread and a lump of cheese” while they dine on a “joint of roast pork” (*CS* 13).

through the portrait hole and across the common room, the girls and boys divided towards their separate staircases. Harry climbed the spiral stairs with no thought in his head except how glad he was to be back. They reached their familiar, circular dormitory with its five four-poster beds and Harry, looking around, felt he was home at last. (*PA* 74)

Even Victorian and Edwardian school stories made some aspects of boarding school life appear homely. George Orwell's description of the genre's usual paraphernalia includes "cosy teas round the study fire" (466), which were usually placed in direct contrast to the food provided by the school, such as the "quarter of a loaf of bread and pat of butter" given to Tom Brown (*Tom Brown's Schooldays* 75). Tom supplements his diet at tea, toasting "his face and the sausages at the same time before the huge fire" until "the feast proceeded, and the festive cups of tea were filled and emptied, and Tom imparted the sausages in small bits to many neighbours, and thought he had never tasted such good potatoes or seen such jolly boys" (*Tom Brown's Schooldays* 94-95). John Finnemore uses a similarly comforting and alluring technique when he sets the scene for his protagonist Teddy's study, where there "was a small fire burning in the grate, and all hands turned to and made a jolly tea ready" (*Teddy Lester's Chums* 24).

Cosiness in the traditional school story is often associated with eating: food is an important feature of children's fiction. Some critics have felt, suggests Sheila Ray, "that food replaces the interest which sex provides in popular adult fiction" (117-118), and Rowling departs from custom in not creating a marked difference between illicit eating and the paltry school meals normal in the genre. Arrival at Hogwarts is celebrated with a banquet comprising all Harry's favourite and old-fashioned English foods, "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" (*PS* 92). Similarly, the first happy Christmas that Harry experiences is celebrated in the Great Hall with a dinner of "A hundred fat turkeys, mountains of roast and boiled potatoes, platters of fat chipolatas, tureens of buttered peas, silver boats of thick, rich gravy and cranberry sauce" (*PS* 149). But there are also moments which seem to mirror the study teas of the genre, such as when Harry and Ron

had the dormitory to themselves and the common room was far emptier than usual, so they were able to get the good armchairs by the fire. They sat by the hour eating anything they could spear on a toasting fork – bread, crumpets, marshmallows – and plotting ways of getting Malfoy expelled, which were fun to talk about even if they wouldn't work. (*PS* 146)

One of the criticisms of school stories is that their conventions have become clichéd. Rowling avoids this, and at the same time makes her novels more exciting, because Hogwarts is a school for *Witches and Wizards*, and everything about it has a sense of the fabulous. Classes are not on chemistry and mathematics, but potions and arithmancy. Professor McGonagall's transfiguration classes often provide amusement for the reader: Harry "look[s] down at the pair of white rabbits he was supposed to be turning into slippers" (CS 210), and Hermione frets that the teapot their transfiguration exam required them to turn into a tortoise looks more like a turtle, while others worry about theirs having "a willow-patterned shell" or "a spout for a tail" (PA 233). Ron's detention in the trophy room is not only tiresome because he is not allowed to use magic to clean the trophies, but also because he is cursed and so belches slugs all over the Special Award for Services to the School, taking "ages to shift the slime" (CS 93). Classrooms are as likely to be in the cold dungeons of the castle as in Professor Sybill Trelawney's classroom in the North Tower:

[Harry] emerged into the strangest-looking classroom he had ever seen. In fact, it didn't look like a classroom at all; more like a cross between someone's attic and an old-fashioned teashop. At least twenty small, circular tables were crammed inside it, all surrounded by chintz armchairs and fat little pouffes. Everything was lit with a dim, crimson light; the curtains at the windows were all closed, and the many lamps were draped with dark red scarves. It was stiflingly warm, and the fire which was burning under the crowded mantelpiece was giving off a heavy, sickly sort of perfume as it heated a large copper kettle. The shelves running around the circular walls were crammed with dusty-looking feathers, stubs of candles, many packs of tattered playing cards, countless silvery crystal balls and a huge array of teacups. (PA 79)

These descriptions resemble those of the traditional school story, but become more intriguing because they turn the conventional into the *unconventional*.

Another characteristic of school stories is the prominent place given to sport. While sport at Hogwarts is unusual in that Quidditch is played on broomsticks, the series has links with the traditional genre through Rowling's treatment of it: the descriptions of sports matches add to the atmosphere of the narrative, and tie sport to values – a connection Langford argues was common in English society generally (149). As a 'muscular Christian', Thomas Hughes made emphatic use of this idea in *Tom Brown's Schooldays*. Here, Girouard comments, morality and physicality were inextricably joined: for Hughes, sport and games "are valuable ... not just because they encourage individual bravery and

determination, but because they teach leadership and fellowship” (167). J. A. Mangan argues that athleticism had a certain “nobility” and taught courage and fairness (8), and that in Victorian and Edwardian English public schools it was “a genuinely and extensively held belief that they [games] inspired virtue; they developed manliness; they formed character” (9). Vita Sackville-West’s mocking but telling description of sport in *The Character of England* links “the young gentleman from Eton and the son of the village blacksmith” through what sport teaches them:

The love of games with its attendant character-building qualities of fair play, team-spirit, generosity in victory, cheerfulness in defeat, respect for the better man, and all the rest of the platitudes is in fact responsible for many of the less offensive traits in our national make-up. The English man is seen at his best the moment that another man starts throwing a ball at him. He is then seen to be neither spiteful, nor vindictive, nor mean, nor querulous, nor desirous of taking an unfair advantage; he is seen to be law-abiding, and to respect the regulations which he himself generally has made; he takes it for granted that his adversary will respect them likewise; he would be profoundly shocked by any attempt to cheat; his scorn would be as much aroused by any exultation displayed by the victor as by any ill-temper displayed by the loser. (409-410)

Sports are a feature of the school story and the protagonist is often a sporting hero. Usually matches are described in minute detail, creating a sense of verisimilitude. Talbot Baines Reed, for example, takes a whole chapter to describe a cricket match, entitled “Sixth v. School” (*The Fifth Form at St Dominic’s* 132-142). Finnemore provides the reader with Chapter XVI, “The Big Match”, a sixteen-page description of the house-cricket final, only to be followed by a chapter on a paper chase and then one on a rugby match, resulting in nearly fifty pages of close attention to sport (*Three School Chums* 103-149). This is not uncommon in Finnemore’s work; ten pages are devoted to an almost ball-by-ball description of the cricket match between Mr Jayne’s house and the rest of the school in *Teddy Lester’s Chums* (70-79). Sport’s place in the school story was established right from the start. In *Tom Brown’s Schooldays*, one of the first incidents at Rugby is the football match between Schoolhouse and the rest of the school, with nine pages devoted to the first afternoon of the match, which is played over several days (64-72). Quigly suggests that lengthy descriptions of sports matches form a type of ritual occasion in the genre, and are used to show up qualities in the characters (88-89).

Quidditch is played on broomsticks in a stadium and is a strange combination of sports like football and basketball, adding an element of fantasy to one of the most traditional aspects of the school story. The matches form set pieces and, as is traditional,

are used to emphasise the importance of fair play, despite their sometimes violent incidents. The first way Harry distinguishes himself at Hogwarts is through his flying ability, which earns him a place as Gryffindor's youngest seeker in a century (*PS* 113). The first Quidditch match he plays is described in detail over six pages (*PS* 136-141), and although she uses Lee Jordan's commentary to create a sense of immediacy, lengthy accounts of sport become typical of Rowling's narrative structure.¹⁴ When he wins this match for Gryffindor, his response shows the importance of sporting achievement:

He'd really done something to be proud of now – no one could say he was just a famous name any more. The evening air had never smelled so sweet. He walked over the damp grass, re-living the last hour in his head, which was a happy blur: Gryffindors running to lift him on to their shoulders; Ron and Hermione in the distance, jumping up and down, Ron cheering through a heavy nosebleed. (*PS* 165)

Even Hogwarts pupils who do not play Quidditch display a keen interest in the matches. At the time of the inter-house Quidditch final in Harry's third year of playing, the "whole of Gryffindor house was obsessed with the coming match. Gryffindor hadn't won the Quidditch Cup since the legendary Charlie Weasley (Ron's second-oldest brother) had been seeker" (*PA* 221-222).

The matches become symbolic battles between the houses (most often Gryffindor and Slytherin) and it is here that Rowling's values become implicit. Gryffindor's team not only includes boys and girls, but is characteristically fair in its play. In contrast "There were no girls on the Slytherin team – who stood, shoulder to shoulder, facing the Gryffindors, leering to a man" (*CS* 85). The Slytherin team not only demonstrates a lack of equality, but also emphasises brute force. During the match between Gryffindor and Slytherin in *The Prisoner of Azkaban*, the Slytherin team does its best to foul, and consequently injure, as many Gryffindor players as possible (*PA* 225-229). Their foul play culminates in Harry's opposite number, Draco Malfoy, holding onto the tail of Harry's broom in order to slow Harry down so that he cannot reach the snitch (228). Through such events, the Slytherin team is judged negatively: physical strength does not parallel moral strength. In contrast, Harry and the rest of the Gryffindor team play with fairness and are rewarded by winning the match.

¹⁴ House Quidditch matches occur regularly throughout the first three novels (*PS* 136-141, 162-164; *CS* 126-129); *PA* 131-134, 191-194, 224-230), and the Quidditch World Cup final occurs in *The Goblet of Fire* (95-104). In the remainder of *The Goblet of Fire*, the Triwizard Tournament takes the place of the conventional house Quidditch matches.

Rowling consciously includes the conventions that best suit her purpose in creating the kind of imaginary school designed to appeal to her audience. The didactic quality of traditional school stories is enhanced by presenting the fictional world of the school as something to which the reader aspires – not merely, in the case of the Harry Potter series, through wealth and class (as was common in the earlier types of the genre) but as a homely and morally sound environment.

* * *

School stories not only feature conventional settings and situations: the genre has been censured for its “caricatures” (Quigly 87), and “predictable” (MacInnes 153) and “stereotypical” (Musgrave 223) characterisation. Such stories usually carry a large cast of characters, and at least some will become clichéd. It could be argued that certain archetypal personalities easily identifiable in real schools will appear in fictional schools as well; in any school environment there will be bullies and intellectuals amongst the children in the classroom, and strict teachers and those who are lax. More importantly, however, characterisation that tends towards the stereotypical allows the author to demonstrate his or her moral stance quickly and effectively. Bullies are judged negatively, and the character who stands up to the bully becomes exemplary. It is natural to create particular character-types in such a highly formalised genre, and Rowling’s characterisation of both teachers and pupils is often conventional, particularly where her value system becomes overt.

The school story is typically scattered with adults, who tend to play a peripheral role in children’s books in general. Since the genre is more closely concerned with the pupil’s world, their characters are usually more rounded than those of their teachers. Several of the teachers at Hogwarts are very close to the genre’s caricatures.

Nearly all headmasters, as I have said, are distantly descended from Arnold; and assistant masters are equally familiar. The hearty popular one is contrasted with the dry old stick, all droopy moustache and chalky gown; the huge, hairy games master with the nonconformist who lends his boys his books, and is thought a radical. Then there is the jabbering French master (pointed beard and two-tone shoes), the professional pedant, the sadistic whacker, the kindly dodderer, and so on down to the brisk matron, comic parlourmaid and cheeky ‘boots’. (Quigly 87-88)

Many of the teachers at Hogwarts resemble these stereotypes, particularly the minor ones, but even Professors Dumbledore, McGonagall and Snape follow the generic pattern. Nevertheless, Rowling is conscious of the dangers of stereotyping and, through her characterisation, reminds the reader of the fundamental difference between Hogwarts and

other fictional schools: it is a place of magic.

Many teachers play cameo roles in the series, and Rowling often presents them humorously, being aware that they are exaggerations. Professor Binns is introduced as a teacher who “had been very old indeed when he had fallen asleep in front of the staff-room fire and got up next morning to teach, leaving his body behind him” (*PS* 99). He is ever the “dry old stick, all droopy moustache and chalky gown” of which Quigly speaks (87), and Rowling describes him variously as reading his notes “in a flat drone like an old vacuum cleaner until nearly everyone in the class was in a deep stupor” (*CS* 113), clearing “his throat with a small noise like chalk snapping” (113) and finally “pursing his lips, looking like a wrinkled old tortoise” (114). But, by making him a ghost, a literal representation of the dull and routine-bound teacher common to the genre, Rowling pokes fun both at him and at the convention.

Other such stereotypes work similarly: Madam Pomfrey initially seems exactly like the “brisk matron” one would conventionally expect. She is similar to the Matron of the Chalet School, of whom one has “a wholesome awe” (*Ruey Richardson at the Chalet School* 62). When Harry nervously inquires about whether she can grow back the bones in his arm, which Lockhart had accidentally removed, her response is characteristically tart: “I’ll be able to, certainly, but it will be painful” (*CS* 131). Again, however, Rowling plays with the convention through the fantasy element in the story: Madam Pomfrey is, of course, a witch. So, while she bustles pupils and teachers alike out of her ward and administers ‘medicine’ to her patients, her cures take the form of “pepperup potion” (*CS* 94) and giant blocks of chocolate (*PA* 284).

In both boys’ and girls’ fictional schools, female teachers are often described as strict, and the Harry Potter novels are unexceptional in this regard. Madam Pince is the standard austere librarian, “a thin, irritable woman who looked like an underfed vulture” (*CS* 124). Madam Hooch, while not exactly “the huge, hairy games master” Quigly describes, bears some resemblance to the kind of hockey or lacrosse coach one would expect in a girl’s school story with her “short, grey hair and yellow eyes like a hawk” and insistence on barking orders (*PS* 109). Both brisk and brusque, Madam Hooch is the stereotypical sports coach, but with an interesting twist because the sport she coaches is played on broomsticks high in the air.

Servant figures in school stories are usually reviled by the students because they most often catch the pupils breaking school rules. In *Stalky & Co.*, for example, Foxy the school sergeant is certainly not popular with the students: his “business was to wear tennis-

shoes, carry binoculars and swoop hawk-like upon evil boys” (1). Foxy’s ability to sneak up on rule-breaking students is like that of “old Roach, the school janitor” in Reed’s *The Fifth Form at St Dominic’s* (11) and Miss Jane in Susan Coolidge’s *What Katy Did at School*, whom the students taunt in rhyme:

Who is our bane, our foe, our fear?
Who’s always certain to appear
Just when we do not think her near? (68)

Similarly, in the Harry Potter series Argus Filch, the school caretaker, is almost universally disliked for his ability to surprise the Hogwarts students by using his cat, Mrs Norris, as a spy (PS 99). His uncontrollable rage when faced with students is demonstrated in an accumulation of exaggerated descriptions where his “knobbly hands were twisting together” (CS 98), “his eyes were popping, a tic was going in one of his pouchy cheeks” (98), and later we see “his pouchy face purpling” (108). He thinks it a “pity they let the old punishments die out ... hang you by your wrists from the ceiling for a few days, I’ve got the chains still in my office, keep ’em well oiled in case they’re ever needed” (PS 181). These often amusing exaggerations show that Rowling, aware of the generally stereotypical nature of characterisation, is more than capable of twisting it to suit her purpose.

Rowling also varies the Harry Potter series by introducing a new Defence Against the Dark Arts teacher every year. These teachers are pivotal characters in each book, and although they seem highly conventional initially, Rowling gives them all surprising characteristics. Professor Quirrell is like the typical nervous and inexperienced teacher who is mocked by his pupils. He is timid and cannot even pronounce his subject without stuttering it out as “D-Defence Against the D-D-Dark Arts” (PS 55). But, although his lessons are “a bit of a joke” (100), he turns out to be the most dangerous teacher at Hogwarts, sharing his body with the grim remnants of the evil Lord Voldemort (213). Gilderoy Lockhart, who arrives in Harry’s second year at Hogwarts, is possibly the most exaggerated character in the series. He follows the pattern of the over-friendly teacher who wants to be chums with his students (CS 71), but he is vain (77), lies about his bravery and is a coward who takes the “credit for what a load of other people have done” (220). Alastor “Mad-Eye” Moody, the fourth teacher in the position, also turns out surprisingly. Throughout the school year he helps Harry and appears to be concerned for his safety. At the end of the narrative, however, it is discovered that young Barty Crouch, the most loyal servant of Lord Voldemort, has been posing as Moody and his attempts to keep Harry safe

have merely been to ensure that he can deliver Harry to his master.¹⁵ On the other hand Professor Lupin, who takes over from Lockhart in the third novel, is characterised as an ideal. Lupin is kind and takes time to help Harry by giving him extra lessons on the difficult Patronus charm that eventually saves Harry's life.¹⁶ Although Lupin is discovered to be a were-wolf, Harry's loyalty and gratitude to him are demonstrated at the end of *The Prisoner of Azkaban* when he rushes to say goodbye when Lupin is forced to leave the school (308). In each case, the ironies in their characterisation ensure the reader becomes aware that no one should be judged on appearances alone. Lupin, who is supposed to be dangerous, displays commendable values and is held up as an example to the reader, whereas the most innocuous-seeming characters (such as Quirrell and Lockhart) turn out to have a basic immorality. Rowling questions the values inherent in the traditional school story's use of stereotypes by forcing the reader to reassess each one.

The three most prominent teachers in Harry's experience of Hogwarts are Professors Dumbledore, Snape and McGonagall, and Rowling casts them in fairly conventional roles despite showing her ability to adapt and vary the genre. Usually the most important adult in the school story is the headmaster and most headmasters from the school story seem to derive from the famous Doctor Arnold of Rugby, on whom Hughes's 'Doctor' is based. One of the most illuminating passages in *Tom Brown's Schooldays* is the description of the Doctor as

a man who we felt to be with all his heart and soul and strength striving against whatever was mean and unmanly and unrighteous in our little world. It was not the cold clear voice of one giving advice and warning from serene heights to those who were struggling and sinning below, but the warm living voice of one who was fighting for us and by our sides.... (*Tom Brown's Schooldays* 91-92)

Like Rugby's Doctor, Dumbledore does not hold himself aloof from the students of Hogwarts. He is described as "beaming at the students, his arms opened wide, as if nothing could have pleased him more than to see them all there" (*PS* 91) and the students "couldn't help trusting Albus Dumbledore" (*PA* 71). Certainly, his characterisation as the wise and

¹⁵ Rowling's characterisation of Moody in *The Goblet of Fire* is inherently problematic: Moody comes across as extremely likeable and helpful to Harry and yet the Moody we meet in the novel is actually the evil Barty Crouch who is trying to destroy Harry. While Rowling tries to explain this by suggesting that Moody/Crouch wanted Harry to win the Tournament and thus reach Voldemort, he (surely inconsistently) teaches Harry several techniques that allow Harry to protect himself from Voldemort in their battle in the graveyard.

¹⁶ Their closeness is similar to that between Tom and the unnamed "young master" who sits with Tom during the final school cricket match against the players from Lord's cricket club, and invites him to tea at his house (*Tom Brown's Schooldays* 224-234).

kind headmaster of the genre is enhanced by Rowling's use of a set of stock words to describe him. He is portrayed positively: he speaks not loudly and aggressively, but "gently", "thoughtfully", "calmly", "quietly",¹⁷ "soberly" (*PA* 310), "softly" (312) and with a "low, and very clear" voice (288). These adverbs are characteristic of the attentive headmaster in Finnemore's *Three School Chums* (57), the just Headmaster in Kipling's *Stalky & Co.* (35), and Wodehouse's sage and kindly Headmaster in *The Pothunters* (106). Dumbledore has a strong sense of humour,¹⁸ and takes on the role of a father-figure to his pupils, engendering respect by giving them a rational explanation when he disapproves of their behaviour. For example, when Harry quite literally sticks his nose into Dumbledore's *Penseive* while waiting to speak to him and mumbles an apology, the headmaster responds judiciously: "'Curiosity is not a sin,' he said. 'But we should exercise caution with our curiosity...'" (*GF* 520).

Dumbledore's kindness is not meant to demonstrate laxity: his character is often awe-inspiring. He gives "searching" (*CS* 110, *GF* 505), "penetrating" (*CS* 156), and "sharp" (*GF* 523) looks, showing how perceptive he is. Towards the end of *The Goblet of Fire* his power is obvious and the respect he engenders in his staff and students is once again noticeable when Snape and McGonagall turn "at once" to carry out his instructions (*GF* 591). Even Harry, who has a special relationship with Dumbledore, is not immune to his severity. When Harry pries into Professor Snape's private life, for example, "Harry knew that the interview was over; Dumbledore did not look angry, yet there was a finality in his tone that told Harry it was time to go" (*GF* 24). Again, when Harry and Ron crash Mr Weasley's car at Hogwarts and Dumbledore asks them to explain themselves, Harry's feelings are made very clear: "It would have been better if he had shouted. Harry hated the disappointment in his voice. For some reason he was unable to look Dumbledore in the eyes, and spoke instead to his knees" (*CS* 64). As this incident shows, it is apparent that Rowling intends Dumbledore to command respect through admiration rather than fear in both Harry and the reader.

¹⁷ Some examples of Rowling's constant use of these words can be found in the following places: "gently" (*PS* 156 *CS* 156, *PA* 311, *GF* 601); "thoughtfully" (*CS* 244, 246); "calmly" (*CS* 245, 248; *PA* 286, 306); and "quietly" (*PS* 157; *PA* 287, 306, 310, 311; *GF* 520, 521, 601, 606).

¹⁸ When Fred and George try to enter the Triwizard Tournament by using Ageing Potion and are punished by instantly growing long white beards, Dumbledore's response is described as "amused", "his eyes twinkling" (*GF* 229). This is reminiscent of the moment in *The Fifth Form at St Dominic's* when the headmaster is described as "suppressing a smile by a very hard twitch" (50) when Stephen Greenfield is given a hoax exam paper.

Another model character is Minerva McGonagall. McGonagall is Harry's strict house-mistress and is described as "stern" and "not someone to cross" (PS 85); she is also considered to be just and is treated with great respect by all the pupils at Hogwarts. In line with traditional strict female teachers she wears "her hair in a tight bun; her sharp eyes were framed with square spectacles" (PA 69). She is scrupulously fair and is not afraid of punishing the pupils in her own house when they break bounds (PS 178), although she shows a less severe side on occasion. When Hermione is attacked in *The Chamber of Secrets*, she tells Harry and Ron "in a surprisingly gentle voice" (190) that Hermione is the latest victim of the Heir of Slytherin. Later, when they want to visit Hermione in the hospital wing, McGonagall gives permission in "a strangely croaky voice" and Harry and Ron see "a tear glistening in her beady eye" (CS 214). McGonagall must display a strong moral sense because she presides over Harry's house at Hogwarts and is thus a touchstone for the values that the author perceives as important.

In contrast is Professor Snape. He is as close to "the sadistic whacker" (Quigly 88) of the Victorian school story as modern writing will allow. Almost every description of Snape reminds one of such stalwart sarcastic schoolmasters as King, a master in *Stalky & Co.*, who constantly scowls and insults boys who need encouragement and sympathy rather than severity and derision (68). Like Kipling's Mr King, Snape specialises in sarcastic remarks; his first words speak volumes: "'Ah, yes,' he said softly, 'Harry Potter. Our new – celebrity'" (PS 101, original emphasis). He almost becomes a caricature: his "lips curled into a sneer" (PS 102); "Snape spat at Seamus" (PS 103); he has what the Gryffindor students see as a "sudden, sinister desire to be a Quidditch referee" (PS 159); at the start of *The Chamber of Secrets* we are reminded that he is "Cruel, sarcastic and disliked by everybody except the students from his own house (Slytherin)" (CS 61); during a class in his dungeon "Snape prowled through the fumes, making waspish remarks about the Gryffindors' work while the Slytherins sniggered appreciatively" (CS 140); he "seemed to have attained new levels of vindictiveness over the summer" (GF 185); when blaming Harry for entering the Triwizard Tournament illegally his "black eyes were alight with malice" (GF 242); and, when he reads out an article on Harry and Hermione from the *Witch Weekly*, his "black eyes glittered", "an unpleasant smile curled Snape's thin mouth" and, as a result of his usual sarcasm, the article "sounded ten times worse" (GF 446-447). Snape's sarcasm is a form of bullying and recalls one of the masters in Wodehouse's *The Pothunters*, Mr Ward, who is deeply disliked because of his "unpleasant habit of 'jarring', as it was called. That is to say, his conversation was shaped to one single end, that of

trying to make the person to whom he talked feel uncomfortable” (28-29). This is often evident in Snape’s dealings with Harry, but reaches a peak in his acerbic treatment of Neville Longbottom who “regularly went to pieces in Potions lessons; it was his worst subject, and his great fear of Professor Snape made things ten times worse” (*PA* 95-96). Snape’s treatment of Neville is in marked contrast to Professor Lupin’s understanding and encouraging approach.

Professor Snape was sitting in a low armchair, and he looked around as the class filed in. His eyes were glittering and there was a nasty sneer playing around his mouth. As Professor Lupin came in and made to close the door behind him, Snape said, ‘Leave it open, Lupin. I’d rather not witness this.’ He got to his feet and strode past the class, his black robes billowing behind him. At the doorway he turned on his heel and said, “Possibly no one’s warned you, Lupin, but this class contains Neville Longbottom. I would advise you not to entrust him with anything difficult. Not unless Miss Granger is hissing instructions in his ear.’

Neville went scarlet. Harry glared at Snape; it was bad enough that he bullied Neville in his own classes, let alone doing it in front of other teachers.

Professor Lupin had raised his eyebrows.

‘I was hoping that Neville would assist me with the first stage of the operation,’ he said, ‘and I am sure he will perform it admirably.’

Neville’s face went, if possible, even redder. Snape’s lip curled, but he left, shutting the door with a snap. (*PA* 100)

The primary emotion that we feel for Neville is one of pity and so characters who do not treat him compassionately are judged negatively. Just as we instantly feel a warm regard for Lupin’s belief in Neville’s ability, so our usual dislike of Snape’s caustic comments is increased through his unnecessary cruelty to Neville.¹⁹

The depiction of Dumbledore, McGonagall and Snape emphasises the values inherent in the series: compassion and fairness are placed in stark contrast to prejudice and malice. But Rowling also uses invention to ensure that the reader takes nothing for granted, as in the case of the minor characters and the Defence Against the Dark Arts teachers. She similarly varies her technique in characterising the Hogwarts pupils. Certain stock characters occur amongst the schoolboys and schoolgirls of fiction to give “every type of reader a character he can identify himself with” (Orwell 469). Orwell describes the “normal, athletic, high-spirited boy”, adding to this standard a “slightly rowdier version of this type”, a “more aristocratic version”, and a “quieter, more serious version”. In addition there is the “reckless, dare-devil type of boy”, the “‘clever’, studious boy”, “the eccentric

¹⁹ Snape is a problem character too: Rowling seems to overdo his depiction as mean and bullying, yet Dumbledore trusts him. See Chapter Four for a more detailed exploration of Snape’s character.

boy who is not good at games but possesses some special talent”, and finally the “scholarship-boy” who is important because “he makes it possible for boys from very poor homes to project themselves into the public-school atmosphere” (Orwell 469-470). Raven also points to the standardisation of character in the school story when he suggests that the best recipe for a school story is to take “a juvenile athlete as your chief ingredient, add a wit, a bully, a persecuted fag, an awkward scholar, a faithful friend, a dangerous rival, and a batch of distorted pedagogues” (quoted in Musgrave 219). Because there is a large cast of characters in the Harry Potter novels, many of the pupils follow these stereotypes. Oliver Wood, for example, is the enthusiastic athlete, the Weasley twins are the pranksters and Colin Creevy is the eager new boy who dogs Harry’s every footstep.

Her main characters do seem at first to fit these categories too – Harry as the “normal, athletic, high-spirited boy”, Hermione as “‘clever’ [and] studious”, Ron as the “faithful friend”, and Malfoy as the “dangerous rival” and “bully”. But where Rowling differs is in how she assigns values to these character types. As suggested earlier, she uses the class issue particularly to challenge the conventional use of the stereotypes: typically, the main protagonist in school stories belongs to the English upper class and the antagonist shows his lower class through his actions. Orwell criticises traditional school stories because “Each school has a titled boy or two whose titles are constantly thrust in the reader’s face” (466) and “who always turns up trumps in the moment of emergency” (470), whereas working class characters are usually portrayed as “comics or semi-villains” (472). In Wodehouse’s *The Pothunters*, for example, the protagonist is “the son of a baronet who owned many acres in Wiltshire” (10), and even in Digby’s modern school stories, she feels somehow compelled to give “Lady Edwina Burton” her full title when mentioning that she is made a prefect (*Boy Trouble at Trebizon* 44). In *Tom Brown’s Schooldays*, the issue of class extends even to teachers as the authorial voice criticises two of the ushers at Tom’s first school for not being gentlemen (40). Talbot Baines Reed also characterises the bully and cheat Loman through his association with the lower classes (*The Fifth Form at St Dominic’s* 58). In contrast, Rowling overturns preconceptions of class in making her antagonist the rich, aristocratic Draco Malfoy, and her protagonists from decidedly middle-class or humble backgrounds, particularly in the case of Ron Weasley.

The contrast between Ron Weasley and Draco Malfoy is important to Rowling’s moral stance. Malfoy comes from the wizarding aristocracy: his family is described as “rolling around in wizard gold” (CS 28) and he has a “bored, drawling voice” (PS 60). Ron, on the other hand, wears hand-me-down robes and seems embarrassed that his family

cannot afford an owl for him. It is a mark of Harry's make-up that he immediately puts Ron at ease by explaining that "he'd never had any money in his life until a month ago" and telling him "all about having to wear Dudley's old clothes and never getting proper birthday presents" (PS 75). Ron's home is described as a run-down, ramshackle house.

It looked as though it had once been a large stone pigsty, but extra rooms had been added here and there until it was several storeys high and so crooked it looked as though it was held up by magic (which, Harry reminded himself, it probably was). Four or five chimneys were perched on top of the red roof. A lop-sided sign stuck in the ground near the entrance read 'The Burrow'. Round the front door lay a jumble of wellington boots and a very rusty cauldron. (CS 29)

While Ron is ashamed of his parents' house, Harry sees past the poverty to a wonderful warm and loving home, responding to Ron's embarrassment with "It's *brilliant*" (CS 29, original italics). Ron's modesty is contrasted with Malfoy's behaviour: his arrogance is immediately apparent when he first introduces himself to Harry on the Hogwarts express:

'You'll soon find out some wizarding families are much better than others, Potter. You don't want to go making friends with the wrong sort. I can help you there.'

He held out his hand to shake Harry's, but Harry didn't take it.

'I think I can tell who the wrong sort are for myself, thanks,' he said coolly. (PS 81)

What Rowling sets up through Malfoy's attitude is a class system within the wizarding world based on wealth, the purity of the wizard's family line, and power within the magical world. Thus while there is the obvious difference that the class system in this case is based on magical heritage, within her fantasy world Rowling identifies the same concerns that seem important in real English society: name, wealth, and power.²⁰ By choosing to make Draco Malfoy and his family the arch-proponents of this system, then, she attacks the order that gives certain people power because of their inheritance rather than their ability and moral worth.²¹ Because her protagonist chooses to associate with Ron rather than Malfoy, the reader is naturally biased towards Ron. By insisting that he is judged on merit, not on status, Rowling undermines the perception common in the genre as a whole that class and

²⁰ In fact, Rowling provides an indirect comment on the traditional public school image when Justin Finch-Fletchley introduces himself by saying "My name was down for Eton, you know, I can't tell you how glad I am I came here instead. Of course, mother was slightly disappointed..." (CS 73).

²¹ Significantly, when the epitome of evil in the series, Voldemort, changes his name from plain Tom Riddle, he adds the title "Lord" to the name by which he is known.

worth run parallel to one another.

The morality underlying Rowling's political statement that class and wealth do not necessarily lead to gentlemanly behaviour has its greatest emphasis in Malfoy's characterisation as both the aristocratic boy *and* the bully. The bully figure usually sparks the incidents that allow the protagonist to take the role of hero. In *Tom Brown's Schooldays* Slogger Williams, who "reckoned himself king of the form, and kept up his position with the strong hand" (183), beats up Arthur for construing more than the allotted forty lines of Greek for homework and Tom rushes in to protect the smaller boy, earning the reader's admiration (184). Malfoy is slightly different from the archetypal bully: he uses his sharp tongue and his magical ability rather than brute force. In this he is unlike the asinine Flashman in *Tom Brown's Schooldays* who picks Tom up and literally roasts him in front of the fire as a demonstration of his physical power (117), or the bully Big Bill Baldwin who beats Teddy Lester with a cricket stump after a cricket match Baldwin had lost for the school (*Three School Chums* 14-15).

Nevertheless, like the standard bully of the genre, Malfoy is usually flanked by his henchmen, the caricatured Crabbe and Goyle. They are described as only seeming "to exist to do Malfoy's bidding. They were both wide and muscly; Crabbe was the taller, with a pudding-basin haircut and a very thick neck; Goyle had short, bristly hair and long, gorilla arms" (*PA* 63). Part of Malfoy's talent is his ability to use their physical presence to his advantage: he shines as a verbal bully when he knows that Crabbe and Goyle can protect him. He is able to identify and attack the other children's weakest points, as when he discusses how Gryffindor chooses its Quidditch team: "It's people they feel sorry for. See, there's Potter, who's got no parents, then there's the Weasleys, who've got no money – you should be on the team, Longbottom, you've got no brains" (*PS* 163). Like his house-master, Snape, Malfoy constantly picks on Neville Longbottom, who is possibly the most vulnerable character Rowling presents. He practises the Leg-Locker Curse on Neville knowing full well that his lack of magical skill will certainly mean he has no means either to retaliate or protect himself (*PS* 159-160). In making Malfoy's character follow so many of the features of the school-story bully, Rowling constantly emphasises that wealth, power and class are no indication of morality.

Malfoy, as the "bully" and "dangerous rival" typical of the school story, is meant to stand in direct contrast to Harry, as is conventional. Harry is the hero of the series, and is characterised by his bravery in the school context, as well as in relation to the greater evil of Lord Voldemort. Harry demonstrates kindness and loyalty, turning on Malfoy for

insulting not only Harry's own family, but also Ron's (PS 82), and standing up for Hagrid and Buckbeak when Malfoy tries to have Hagrid fired and Buckbeak killed (PA 216).

Within the school context, Harry's character shows a close similarity to that of the archetypal school-story protagonist, but it is important to remember that his role is more complicated because he is as much the hero of the entire wizarding world as he is of the smaller Hogwarts community.²²

Rowling complicates her characterisation also through Hermione Granger: first of all, by making Hermione a close friend of Harry. Obviously the traditional school story was not co-educational and by giving Hermione equal status to Ron as a friend of Harry's, Rowling accentuates the gender inclusiveness of her value system. Hermione's character is also that of the intelligent, pedantic 'good' student, usually mocked in the genre. In P. G. Wodehouse's *The Pothunters*, for example, a boy is condemned by his classmates for his intellectualism.

'He wears spectacles, and reads Herodotus in the original Greek for pleasure.'
'He sneers at footer, and jeers at cricket. Croquet is his form, I should say.
Should doubt, though, if he even plays that.' (*The Pothunters* 38)

Hermione's skills are most apparent in the classroom, and her loyalty to Hogwarts and to Gryffindor house is unquestionable, as is shown when she tries to stop Harry and Ron from sneaking out to engage in a midnight duel with Draco Malfoy, whispering angrily "Don't you *care* about Gryffindor, do you *only* care about yourselves, I don't want Slytherin to win the House Cup and you'll lose all the points I got from Professor McGonagall for knowing about Switching Spells" (PS 116). But when Snape calls Hermione an "insufferable know-it-all", all her classmates react in her defence, although we are told that "every one of them had called Hermione a know-it-all at least once" (PA 129). This indicates that deep down they respect and like Hermione, and shows Rowling's opposition to the convention of making the intellectual a figure of fun. Ultimately Hermione's high-profile role in each book makes her much more rounded than the usual intellectual stereotype and forms a statement of its own: she is valued and appreciated because of her work-ethic as well as for her loyalty and good principles.

This discussion of Harry, Ron and Hermione seems to show them as model school-children, but they are far from perfect. Dumbledore is abundantly aware of what he terms

²²

Harry's heroic character is explored fully in Chapter Three.

Harry's "certain disregard for rules" (CS 245), and Harry often finds himself in trouble. In *The Philosopher's Stone*, Harry and Hermione sneak out of bed so they can deliver Hagrid's baby dragon to a group of wizards who will take it to a dragon reservation in Romania and are given detention by Professor McGonagall because "*nothing* gives [them] the right to walk around school at night" (178, original emphasis). As well as using his invisibility cloak to wander around illicitly, Harry finds himself in plenty of other scrapes, such as when he and Ron not only crash into the Whomping Willow, but, as they rush up to the school directly afterwards, enthusiastically hoping that Snape's been fired, are caught – by Snape himself (CS 61-62). On this occasion, Dumbledore warns the boys that a repeat offence will mean he has "no choice but to expel [them]" (64). Harry, Ron and Hermione also, like any children, fight with one another on occasion, such as when Hermione's cat appears to have eaten Ron's rat (PA 186-187), or when Ron believes that Harry did not trust him enough to tell Ron that he was going to enter the Triwizard Tournament (GF 252). Perfect characters are not necessarily particularly appealing, and although it could be argued that readers (particularly juvenile readers) do seek role-models from fiction, Rowling adds excitement and realism by making her protagonists as naughty and silly as real children can be.

* * *

Rowling uses school-story conventions to create a world that draws the reader into the narrative. Quigly points out that English public schools often took the place of the home, provided stable environments and gave children access to social, cultural and educational skills (10), suggesting that the typical boarding school of fiction followed this ideal. Rowling's creation plays a similar role: Hogwarts provides Harry with a home and is described in such detail that readers also feel they belong in some part to the world of Harry. This is comforting and is partly why the books are so successful: Hogwarts, its environs, its teachers, and its pupils become as familiar to the modern reader as, in their own time, did any other of the traditional school stories.

The genre is not simply about the setting, however. Stereotype plays a role in creating characters that are easily recognisable. Consequently stereotypical characters can be used to demonstrate a particular morality – either as role-models or as examples of taboo behaviour. The danger lies in suggesting that personality in real life is as uncomplicated as such characters suggest. Rowling's attempts to challenge this perception are evident in characters like Quirrell, Lockhart, Moody and Lupin who have the potential to be judged as nervous, brave, helpful or monstrous, when in fact they are the exact opposites. The

conventional characterisation of Dumbledore, McGonagall and Snape provides moral stability, but, in order to ensure that the narrative does not descend into preaching, Rowling gives the protagonists a more rounded nature. The occasional naughtiness of Harry, Ron and Hermione adds an excitement and sense of fun that is appealing because it is closer to the complexities of human nature. If readers could not detect something of themselves in the characters Rowling produces, her attempt to endorse exemplary behaviour would not work; the narrative would be too distant from the problems of everyday life.

While the traditional school story can be criticised for forming an “enclave of privilege” (Cadogan and Craig 179), the pupils attending Hogwarts are privileged only because of their magical abilities. Rowling constantly challenges the attitudes that biased the original school stories towards a certain class, race and gender, making the narrative more acceptable to a modern readership. Hogwarts is not a perfect world or a perfect school, but, thanks to the recognisability of the elements she takes from the school story genre, Rowling is still able to affirm the values of honour, fair play and equality in the text.

Chapter Three

Episode and Adventure: The Influence of Epic and Romance

“Humanity does not pass through phases as a train passes through stations: being alive, it has the privilege of always moving yet never leaving anything behind. Whatever we have been, in some sort we are still. Neither the form nor the sentiment of this old poetry has passed away without leaving indelible traces in our minds.” C. S. Lewis, *The Allegory of Love: A Study in Medieval Tradition* (1).

Rowling manipulates stock situations, settings and characters taken from the school story to link a more contemporary value system with the traditional Victorian idea of Christian manliness associated with the genre. Much of the emphasis on honourable behaviour in the Harry Potter novels, however, derives from her use of other genres to characterise Harry. This chapter shows how she draws on a combination of the epic and romance modes for both structure¹ and morality in her series. The influence of classical and medieval texts is evident through her use of the episodic structure common to epic, but the adventures themselves often allude to romance writing.² By echoing episodes from epic and romance literature, Rowling portrays Harry as an archetypal hero, a modern Aeneas or Arthur. Ultimately, romance literature has the greater influence as Rowling links Harry with the knightly heroes of medieval mythology and their chivalric codes of conduct.

Harry’s depiction as a heroic figure is inherited from both classical and medieval mythology.³ He has various adventures that echo those of Hercules, Odysseus and Aeneas. But, unlike the hero of myth who is “superior in *kind* to other men” thanks to his divine or partly divine origins (Barron 2, original emphasis),⁴ Harry is closer to the romance hero who is human and flawed but “superior in *degree*” to others because of his “superlative,

¹ Both romance and epic are characterised by episodes or peaks of action, but romance uses *entrelacement* to complicate the narrative structure of the text. The use of *entrelacement* is discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

² C. B. Lewis, in his full-length study of the influence of classical mythology on Arthurian romance, argues that many of the themes found in Chrétien de Troyes derive from classical literature rather than Celtic folklore. W. R. J. Barron also points out that features of romance stem from Grecian story matter (2).

³ Rowling’s knowledge of these genres can be traced to her days as a student of French and Classics at Exeter University (Smith 83, Bouquet 54).

⁴ The classical hero was often half-human, half-divine: Aeneas, for example, was the son of Anchises and the goddess Venus, and Hercules the son of Alcmena and the god Jupiter.

even supernatural, abilities” (Barron 2, original emphasis). It is fundamental to the purposes of romance that the hero’s superiority “in degree” stems from his personal qualities rather than his rank (Barron 2).⁵ Throughout the series Harry’s successful completion of the various trials he faces depends on his ability to pass the moral test that is invariably linked with the physical challenge; the ethical message in each adventure makes Harry’s heroism comparable to that of a knightly figure whose successful completion of trials depends on his virtue.

The influence of Arthurian material on the series is evident from the first novel when Dumbledore places Harry in the care of his aunt and uncle after the brutal murder of his parents by the Dark Lord, Voldemort. Harry is raised in their care and kept ignorant of his power and parentage. This has parallels in the myth of the rearing of Arthur.⁶ Malory, whose *Morte Darthur* is perhaps the most authoritative of the Arthuriads, and the most influential on modern literature (Drabble 43), describes the birth of Arthur to the King Uther, and the need to remove him from the court into Sir Ector’s protection. As a young squire, Arthur pulls a sword from a stone standing in a churchyard and, because the ability to do so signifies his royal status, Arthur discovers his origins as Uther’s son: Sir Ector tells “hym all how he was bitaken hym for to nourisshe hym and by whoos commandement, and by Merlyn’s delyveraunce” (*Morte Darthur* I 14). As Arthur discovers his royal lineage, so Harry discovers that he is a wizard. More importantly, it appears he has a special destiny: the curse of death, laid on him by the evil Voldemort, rebounds off him and almost destroys Voldemort, linking the two forever.⁷ From the moment he discovers the truth about himself, Harry begins to grow in stature as a person and as an Arthur figure. Rowling engages our attention in the same way that writers of Arthurian romances do:

The unknown child, reared in obscurity, later asserts his unique claim to his title, to his kingly function and to the instruments of his power. Consciously or unconsciously we can ourselves identify with the boy who steps forward to show his newly acquired adult competence and status, to claim his place in society, and to move into the wider world of struggle and responsibility. We recognise the story of the birth of the hero as myth, placing Arthur beside those biblical and classical characters for whom also prophecies decreed a special destiny which no

⁵ The issue of rank and character is explored in Rowling’s treatment of class and the school story.

⁶ This is a traditional pattern in folktale and romance where, as Julie Burton points out, children are often born in exile or are separated from their parents to be reared by animals or strangers (177).

⁷ The link between Harry and Voldemort is explored more fully in Chapter Four.

human contrivances could frustrate, singled out to fulfil a unique purpose. (Taylor and Brewer 6)⁸

Harry's purpose is to thwart Lord Voldemort's quest for world domination. But in order to defeat him, Harry must develop the strength of character and moral purpose of the young Arthur, who is warned, in Layamon's *Brut*, that he should "halden la3en rihte"⁹ (410).

This chapter shows how, as a young knightly hero, Harry is involved in various incidents that form part of the larger action or quest of each book; each book will be discussed in a separate section. These adventures often reflect conventional romance motifs: "the mysterious challenge or summons to a mission; the lonely journey through hostile territory; the first sight of the beloved; the single combat against overwhelming odds or a monstrous opponent" (Barron 4-5). More importantly, each episode tests Harry's skills and moral worth in the same way that each book concentrates on a particular virtue, particularly the concerns of loyalty, chivalry, friendship and destiny found in Malory (Taylor and Brewer 5). In the first book, *The Philosopher's Stone*, Harry's major quest is to find the Philosopher's Stone and save it from falling into the hands of Voldemort, who needs it to regain his powers. To do this Harry must accomplish various initial tasks, ultimately showing the virtue of selflessness. In the second book, *The Chamber of Secrets*, the title again points to Harry's main quest: he must discover what lies in the Chamber of Secrets and save Hogwarts from its attacks. His success in this venture relies on the strength of his loyalty. In *The Prisoner of Azkaban*, Harry's task is more complicated. Ultimately he is required to save his godfather (the erstwhile prisoner of Azkaban fortress, Sirius Black) from being killed. But before he can do this, Harry must learn to withstand the evil effects of the Dementors, discover the truth about the death of his parents, and, perhaps most importantly, learn the value of mercy. This shows the importance of self-knowledge and self-control in making decisions worthy of his status as a hero. The fourth book, *The Goblet of Fire*, is the most obviously episodic as the narrative is divided up into three sections according to the three tasks Harry must execute as a competitor in the Triwizard Tournament: first he must steal a golden dragon's egg, secondly he must rescue his most beloved from the bottom of a lake, and thirdly he must find his way through a maze until he reaches the Triwizard Cup. The cup takes him to his final adventure of the

⁸ While this thesis does not attempt a psychoanalytic analysis of the series, Harry is linked to the hero of the Jungian archetypal journey. See Colbert (155-166), Campbell, and Geils.

⁹ Translated by Madden as "hold right [good] laws".

book where he must engage in a duel with the newly revived Voldemort. In order to reach the cup and do battle with Voldemort, however, Harry must show not only the qualities he has learnt previously, but also fairness. Each episode takes the form of a trial that develops Harry's status as the knightly hero of the series.

* * *

In *The Philosopher's Stone* Harry must ultimately demonstrate the virtue of selflessness, but must complete various tests before the final adventure of the book. He faces his first trial on arrival at Hogwarts: as a first-year, he must be placed in one of the four Houses that make up the school. The magical Sorting Ceremony takes place in front of the whole school and takes the form of a comment on each new pupil's qualities as the Sorting Hat assigns them to a house according to their talents. Although the nursery-rhyme rhythm of the Sorting Song makes it appear quite simple or even trivial, it is thematically significant as it outlines the characteristics of the houses:

*There's nothing hidden in your head
The Sorting Hat can't see,
So try me on and I will tell you
Where you ought to be.
You might belong in Gryffindor,
Where dwell the brave at heart,
Their daring, nerve and chivalry
Set Gryffindors apart; ...
Or perhaps in Slytherin
You'll make your real friends,
Those cunning folk use any means
To achieve their ends. (PS 88)*

It is a defining moment when the Hat finds itself able to place Harry in both Gryffindor and Slytherin: he is shown to have the potential to be one of two very different types of people and, by selecting one house rather than the other, he chooses the path his destiny will take. He begs not to be placed in Slytherin, thus adopting as his qualities the bravery, daring, nerve and chivalry of Gryffindor rather than the cunning and ambition of Slytherin. This ostensibly minor episode is crucial because it is this first trial that determines Harry's future as a hero who will use his bravery for right and justice.

Harry's choice of Gryffindor suggests he wishes to use his ability for the greater good rather than for personal gain, and this is immediately put to the test. He begins his role as the hero of the series by rushing to the aid of the ineffectual Neville Longbottom when Neville's Remembrall is stolen by the Slytherin bully Draco Malfoy during their first

flying lesson. Rather than making it a simple decision to fly after Malfoy and save Neville's precious Remembrall, Rowling places Harry in a situation where he has to weigh up the consequences of his actions: they have been warned not to use their brooms while the coach Madam Hooch takes Neville to the hospital wing (*PS* 110). As becomes characteristic of him, Harry disobeys the prohibition on flying because he feels it is more important to defend a weaker person than to stand back. Fittingly, instead of being punished, his flying and catching skills are shown to be so superior during the rescue attempt that he is invited to join the Quidditch team as the seeker – perhaps the first indication that he is to play the role of questor in the series.

Harry finds the decision to help Neville an easy one, but does not always react immediately in situations requiring a strong moral action; he must learn how to act as a true Gryffindor. For instance, when Ron makes some thoughtless and insensitive remarks about clever Hermione, Harry does not do his duty in condemning his friend's behaviour. Hermione's hurt and embarrassment lead her to seek refuge in the girls' toilets and in her isolation she becomes vulnerable to the troll which is loose in the castle. But Harry redeems himself by remembering that Hermione is alone and unprotected, and insisting that he and Ron find her, so defeating the troll just as it is about to mount its final attack. They not only recover their honour, but also demonstrate true courage in the face of the troll's physical power. Through the threat to their lives, the three characters become bonded in friendship, and the episode shows that the weak should be protected and that comradeship is more important than brute force. The idea of fraternity becomes a significant element in the series, as Ron and Hermione join Harry and help him time and again in his fight against Voldemort. Like the Knights of the Round Table, the three become a "noble fellowship of good knights bound together by loyalty and high endeavour" (Taylor and Brewer 3).¹⁰

When Harry chooses to rescue Hermione, a damsel in distress, from the troll, he is not alone and, as is fitting for a human hero and knight in training, he learns to allow others to help him. While this often becomes a feature of his adventures, Harry as the hero of the series must also learn to face his fears alone. At the start of his next adventure he, Hermione, Neville and Malfoy are obliged to enter the Forbidden Forest in search of a wounded unicorn as a punishment for leaving their Houses after dark. Rowling manages this trial differently from the previous ones. Rather than requiring Harry to react quickly to

¹⁰ This moment is significant, but unfortunately Rowling ends the chapter on an uncharacteristically patronising note with the words "But from that moment on, Hermione Granger became their friend" (*PS* 132).

a crisis, as he did in helping Neville and Hermione, she places him in a situation where the tension develops gradually and the atmosphere becomes increasingly oppressive. First, Filch, the school caretaker, takes them to meet Hagrid on the outskirts of the forest and constantly stresses to them that they might not leave the forest alive. His talk of werewolves leaves Neville moaning and choking with fear even before they enter the forest, and Malfoy initially refuses to go into the forest, only complying under threat of expulsion (*PS* 182). Even Hagrid, their guide and Harry's friend, warns them of the danger, and the atmosphere becomes even more alarming when he confides in the children that although he is the gamekeeper and knows the forest intimately, he cannot identify the creature that has attacked the unicorn. Next, Harry and his enemy Malfoy are separated from the others, increasing Harry's genuine fear in the forest. The climax to the episode occurs when they are confronted with the mysterious being drinking the unicorn's blood, and Harry experiences a blinding pain in the scar left from Voldemort's attempt to kill him as a baby. Despite this, he does not scream and run as Malfoy does, but stands his ground: his courage distinguishes him from Malfoy. At the moment of crisis Harry is rescued from the creature by the normally neutral centaur Firenze. This is significant as centaurs, while able to foresee events, are not allowed to meddle in the cosmic battle between good and evil. Firenze, however, refuses to remain disinterested, explaining in an angry outburst to the other centaurs: "I set myself against what is lurking in this Forest" (188). While his action serves to demonstrate the gravity of the situation, Firenze also explains to Harry that the severe pain in his scar comes from being too close to Voldemort, indicating that the creature drinking the unicorn's blood is what remains of Voldemort. This episode therefore takes on a twofold significance. Not only does Harry have to face the fear of the unknown; he also has to face the realisation that the man who wrought havoc on the wizarding world and killed his parents is not dead, as he had believed. To ensure that Harry's role as the hero of the series is taken seriously enough, Rowling has to present him in contrast to a more universal threat than the school bully. The idea of the monstrous remains of Voldemort lurking in the forest introduces the element of horror and evil necessary to make Harry's heroic status significant and to emphasise the importance of his actions in the remainder of the novel.

The final quest of the first book is that for the Philosopher's Stone.¹¹ Once he realises that Voldemort has someone inside Hogwarts helping him search for the stone (which, through the Elixir of Life, will allow him to regain the power he had before his fall), there is a sense of urgency about Harry's actions. He knows a gigantic three-headed dog in the out-of-bounds third-floor corridor is protecting the stone, but when he learns that Hagrid has unwittingly jeopardised its security by telling a stranger how to lull the dog to sleep, his determination to save the stone persuades Ron and Hermione that they should join him on his quest to find it before Voldemort's servant does. The stone is protected by various enchantments – the monstrous dog; the Devil's Snare plant; a locked door for which they must find the key; a giant game of chess; a troll; a riddle test that will allow them to pass through a wall of fire; and finally the Mirror of Erised. Harry's ability to pass through each magical barrier requires him to display different skills and ultimately his moral strength: the literary allusions in this sequence of tasks emphasise his heroic qualities.

The first phase of the quest is to find a way past the three-headed dog that guards the entrance to the trapdoor beneath which the stone is hidden. This is clearly derived from the mythological three-headed dog Cerberus that guards the entrance to the underworld, and Harry's adventure too becomes a journey into the underworld. Significantly, like Hercules, Theseus, Orpheus and Aeneas before him, Harry is entering the realm of the dead and faces, for the first time since he was a baby, the barely living form of Voldemort. As befits the hero, his bravery is tested because he knows that merely the first of the dangers he must face is the monstrous dog, paradoxically named Fluffy,

a dog which filled the whole space between ceiling and floor. It had three heads. Three pairs of rolling, mad eyes; three noses, twitching and quivering in their direction; three drooling mouths, saliva hanging in slippery ropes from yellowish fangs. (*PS* 119)

The accumulation of description in this passage lends an atmosphere of terror to the occasion, although Harry, Ron and Hermione have learnt from Hagrid that "Fluffy's a piece o' cake if yeh know how to calm him down, jus' play him a bit o' music an' he'll go straight off ter sleep" (*PS* 194). It is this that makes Fluffy's name seem less ironically inappropriate: the monster dog does become merely a fluffy creature when the correct

¹¹ In medieval alchemy, the Philosopher's Stone was said to be the vital ingredient needed to create both gold and the Elixir of Life, which would make the drinker immortal (Colbert 19-23).

charm is known – an appealing blend of the comic and the dreadful. The reference to Cerberus is reinforced because Orpheus uses a lyre to lull Cerberus to sleep (*Georgics* IV 471-484),¹² and when the three characters set off to locate the stone, they find something which “looks like a harp” (200) lying discarded at the already sleeping Fluffy’s feet. The presence of the harp-like instrument alerts them to the fact that Voldemort’s helper has already passed the first obstacle protecting the stone, showing the very real danger in which they will find themselves if they choose to continue. Ron and Hermione’s willingness to follow Harry attests to his leadership as well as the strength of the friendship between the three characters. They are prepared to risk never returning to their own world because they perceive the greater importance of finding the Philosopher’s Stone before it can be used to evil effect by Voldemort.

Harry, Ron and Hermione pass Fluffy because they know how to subdue him, but their next task requires them to escape the Devil’s Snare plant; the more effort that is put into escaping it, the stronger it becomes. While Hermione remembers the plant “likes the dark and damp” (202), Harry, in his position as leader, is responsible for telling her to light a fire to combat it. This task resonates with Christian symbolism: the children must escape from the literal snare of the Devil by remaining calm and finding a way to counter its effects. The use of light to combat the Devil’s Snare recalls Christianity’s appropriation of ancient links between light and goodness: Christ is seen as the light of the world (John 8:12). This association is strong in the Christianised romances of the medieval era (Jeffrey 451), and adds to the identification of Harry with the knights of Arthurian romances and their ideals of combating evil.

Once Harry, Ron and Hermione have escaped the Devil’s Snare, the three have to find their way through a locked door. While the key is available it is, along with hundreds of others, fluttering on wings around the room. Just as Aeneas had to search the canopy of the forest for the Golden Bough that would allow him access to the underworld (*The Aeneid* VI 151), so Harry has to find the key, reinforcing the idea that he too is entering an underworld. With his “knack for spotting things other people didn’t” (203), he quickly identifies the silver key which fits the lock and by directing Ron and Hermione where to fly, he manages to trap and catch it. Although Harry has help from Ron and Hermione, it is his skill that allows him to succeed in this challenge.

¹² I am grateful to Mr Warren Snowball for helping me find and translate this passage.

The next task is to take part in a symbolic battle: the children must play a giant game of “wizard chess”. Since the animated chess pieces brutally destroy each piece they take from the opposing side, the significance of each move is emphasised, as is the seriousness of the game’s outcome. Each character takes the place of a piece, Ron as knight, Harry as bishop, and Hermione as castle. Harry displays his humility in allowing Ron, by far the better chess player, to take charge and direct the game. Ron’s role as knight possibly represents his ability to fight alongside Harry, who, as the bishop, stands as the moral leader. Hermione’s role as castle perhaps signifies her status as a protector of Harry, particularly as later it is she who deciphers which potion will give Harry the protection he needs.¹³ The game of chess not only serves as a symbolic battle, but also demonstrates the need to work together and so reminds one of the strength in unity characteristic of the Knights of the Round Table. For Harry to checkmate the opposing king, the knight Ron must sacrifice his own safety: the white queen “struck Ron hard around the head with her stone arm and he crashed to the floor” (*PS* 206). Ron’s unflinching bravery demonstrates clearly the strength of the bond between the children,¹⁴ as well as their understanding of the gravity of their task.

Ron’s help in the chess task is important for the development of Harry’s character as the human hero rather than the supernatural hero of classical epic: he is not invincible and must, with true knightly humility, learn to accept aid from his companions in the areas where his ability is not all-encompassing. The next obstacle highlights this since Harry and Hermione do not have to defeat the troll as it is already lying unconscious: because they have already defeated a troll, its presence forms a reminder of their earlier display of friendship and mutual support. Moreover, the unconscious troll demonstrates that whoever is helping Voldemort has reached this point and is able to overcome the barriers placed in his way.

The fear of what is to come overshadows the next task: Harry and Hermione are trapped between two walls of flames and must solve a riddle to find the potion that will protect them. Riddle tests have a long literary tradition as a test of the hero’s resourcefulness, and appear, for example, in the Old English poem *Solomon and Saturn* (Shippey 24) and in the question posed to Oedipus by the sphinx (Colbert 171). Hermione

¹³ Significantly, the pieces that may suggest inequalities in their friendship or position, King, Queen and Pawn, are carefully avoided.

¹⁴ The biblical echo from John 15:13, “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends”, would have informed this type of notion in medieval romance.

deciphers the riddle that tells them which potion will allow the drinker through the wall of fire, and Harry's dependence on her emphasises his role as a novice knight at this stage. But there is only enough potion for one person, and Harry's insistence that Hermione return to find help and leave him to face Voldemort alone demonstrates how strongly he considers it his duty to save the stone from Voldemort. Even more explicitly, Rowling shows that knowledge and power are not the most important aspects of life: Hermione calls Harry a "great wizard" and when he tries to turn aside the compliment, she says that "friendship and bravery" are more important than knowledge (*PS* 208). Values such as these are important: they recur in many of the trials Harry must complete elsewhere in the series.

The step Harry takes through the wall of flames signifies his final movement into Rowling's version of Hades, and his task in the underground chamber encompasses all the skills he has shown previously, as well as one more important quality: selflessness. The depiction of Harry in this episode recalls the knight of medieval romance, as it is his moral strength that leads him to the prize. In traditional Grail stories, Galahad is allowed to see the Grail only because of his complete faith and purity. In this case Professor Quirrell, who conceals the remaining life of Voldemort within himself, is unable to complete the last task necessary to obtain the Stone because he and Voldemort want the stone for their own gain. The last task involves an enchanted mirror, the Mirror of Erised, much like Merlin's "looking glasse, right wondrously aguiz'd" (*The Faerie Queene* 3.2.18), which shows an image other than mere reflection. Harry's discovery of the Mirror of Erised earlier in the narrative had taught him that it revealed "nothing more or less than the deepest, most desperate desire of our hearts" (*PS* 157), Erised being "desire" spelt backwards.¹⁵ Although when Quirrell looks into the mirror, he can see himself presenting the stone to Voldemort, he only wants it so that he can have the glory that Voldemort will bestow upon him, so Quirrell can never find the stone. Harry, on the other hand, looks into the mirror, sees his reflection putting something in his pocket and feels "something heavy drop into his real pocket. Somehow – incredibly – *he'd got the Stone*" (212, original emphasis). Harry's astonishment at acquiring the stone is only resolved when Dumbledore, the creator of the mirror, explains its peculiar magic. To pass Dumbledore's barrier, the person seeking the stone does not merely have to know how to use the mirror, but also has to have a certain kind of moral strength. Dumbledore makes it plain that the Mirror had been charmed so

¹⁵ The motto around the mirror can be read backwards as "I show not your face but your heart's desire".

that “only one who wanted to *find* the Stone – find it, but not use it – would be able to get it, otherwise they’d just see themselves making gold or drinking Elixir of Life” (217). Thus, although Quirrell tells Harry that “There is no good and evil, there is only power, and those too weak to seek it” (PS 211), Harry’s success in obtaining the stone proves Quirrell’s philosophy wrong. His selfless desire to protect the world from Voldemort is the reason why he is allowed to find the stone: he did not want it for himself as Quirrell did.

The Philosopher’s Stone, then, is not only about Harry as a young knightly figure completing various tasks and learning how to use his skills to demonstrate his heroic ability. It is about how these adventures form a rite of passage, strengthening him by giving him moral stature, and so proving his worth as the opponent of evil in the series.

* * *

In *The Chamber of Secrets*, Harry again takes on the role of knight. In this case, he is a saviour knight who must find and save a maiden (Ginny Weasley) from a monster, as well as a questing knight who must find the truth and clear his name. His success here depends on his ability to display the virtue of loyalty. At the crux of the second book is the fear that the legendary Chamber of Secrets beneath Hogwarts has been reopened. Salazar Slytherin, one of the four founders of Hogwarts, was responsible for sealing the chamber beneath the school

so that none would be able to open it until his own true heir arrived at the school. The heir alone would be able to unseal the Chamber of Secrets, unleash the horror within, and use it to purge the school of all who were unworthy to study magic. (CS 114)

Significantly “the horror” is not named, which suggests that it represents the fear of the unknown; part of Harry’s task is to discover what “the horror” is so that he can destroy it. The first indication that the chamber has been re-opened is when the un-named monster (which had killed a Hogwarts pupil fifty years before) attacks Mrs Norris, the caretaker’s cat, “petrifying” her so that she appears to be dead. Thereafter, the atmosphere at Hogwarts becomes increasingly oppressive as Colin Creevy (135), Nearly-Headless Nick (the Gryffindor ghost) and Justin Finch-Fletchley (151), and then Penelope Clearwater and Hermione (190) are petrified.

There is a strong idea of destiny in *The Chamber of Secrets* as Harry, for various reasons, is intimately connected with the attacks. Not only does he hear mysterious voices urging the creature to “... *rip ... tear ... kill ...*” (104, original emphasis), but experiences

the first opening of the Chamber when he discovers a magical diary of the pupil, Tom Riddle, who had been involved in the earlier attacks. Moreover, he discovers that he can speak the language of snakes, Parseltongue, which leads many people to suspect him of being the heir of Slytherin. Harry's determination to stop the monster is intensified when his two mentors, Dumbledore and Hagrid, are removed from the school: Hagrid is sent to Azkaban prison because he is suspected of involvement in the original attack fifty years previously, and Dumbledore is removed from office because he has been unable to stop the assaults (194-195). While Harry knows he is not involved, his loyalty to Dumbledore and to Hagrid spurs him on to find and stop the creature before it causes the death of any of the Hogwarts pupils.

The first part of his quest is to discover what kind of terrifying beast is assailing the castle. His only clue is Hagrid's parting hint: "If anyone wanted ter find out some *stuff*, all they'd have ter do would be ter follow the *spiders*" (195, original emphasis). The trail of spiders leads to the Forbidden Forest where Harry and Ron discover that Hagrid's giant spider, Aragog, is the creature suspected of the original attacks on Hogwarts, but that Aragog is innocent, as is Hagrid. They also discover that the castle's monster is feared by all spiders. But their task becomes more formidable than simply reassuring themselves that Hagrid is not the heir of Slytherin when the mass of giant spiders start to attack them. Again, Harry is called upon to become a symbolic knight as Rowling describes him as trying to stand, "ready to die fighting" (207). The seriousness of the situation is relieved when the enchanted car Harry and Ron had crashed into the forest rescues them – ending this frightening episode with a humorous twist.¹⁶

While their terrifying ordeal proves Hagrid's innocence, Harry needs to discover what the monster is in order to stop the attacks. As is often the case in romance sagas, two women help Harry find the whereabouts of the monster: Hermione and Moaning Myrtle. Before being petrified, Hermione had discovered that giant, deadly snakes known as Basilisks, cause spiders to flee and had surmised that the monster was travelling round the school through the plumbing. Moaning Myrtle, the ghost of the pupil killed by the Basilisk fifty years before, provides Harry with the second clue: the entrance to the chamber is in the bathroom she haunts.¹⁷ Harry's immediate thought on opening the Chamber is that he

¹⁶ It may be significant that the car is a Ford Anglia. Perhaps Rowling suggests it is England, or Anglia, which comes to the rescue of her endangered knights.

¹⁷ While making the entrance to the chamber a tap in a girls' bathroom could suggest more Freudian connotations, its incongruity also adds to the humour so often evident in the series.

“couldn’t not go, not now they had found the entrance to the Chamber, not if there was even the faintest, slimmest, wildest chance that Ginny might be alive” (222), and so his task becomes the archetypal romance quest to find and rescue Ginny, the young virgin or Virginia, from the terrible beast.

During the course of his quest to save her, Harry again shows his courage and his qualities as a leader. He automatically takes the place of Lockhart (who proves too cowardly and selfish to risk his life) and descends into the Chamber. Here he discovers that the heir of Slytherin is Voldemort and that, through the memory of his “sixteen-year-old self” (Tom Riddle), he is controlling the Basilisk (CS 230). Ginny is near death, not because she has been attacked by the Basilisk, but because she has been writing in Tom’s diary and he has grown “stronger and stronger on a diet of her deepest fears, her darkest secrets” (228), allowing him to regain his power and leave the pages of the diary. The appalling image of the innocent Ginny’s life pouring into the soul of the young Voldemort emphasises his evil, and resembles Spenser’s description of Amoret, before whom

... the vile Enchaunter sate,
Figuring straunge characters of his art,
With liuing bloud he those characters wrate,
Dreadfully dropping from her dying hart... . (*The Faerie Queene* III xii 31:1-4)

Harry’s task is complicated because Tom is not only in control of the dangerous Basilisk, but has stolen Harry’s wand, leaving him weaponless. Harry’s physical disadvantage at this point is again counterbalanced by his moral strength: in this case his complete loyalty to Dumbledore. He rejects Tom’s taunts, declaring Dumbledore “the greatest wizard in the world” (232) and reminds Tom that Voldemort, Tom’s future, was never able to conquer Hogwarts while the castle was under Dumbledore’s control. It is this loyalty that brings Harry unexpected aid in the shape of Dumbledore’s phoenix, Fawkes, who rewards his faith in Dumbledore by arriving with the Sorting Hat. When Tom sets the huge Basilisk on him, Fawkes helps Harry by distracting the giant snake and piercing its eyes. While this means it is unable to petrify Harry, the Basilisk can still kill him. Despite Tom’s scorn that all Dumbledore can send Harry is “an old hat” (233), when Harry dons the Hat and begs it for help, his faith in Dumbledore is rewarded: in response to his request, a large sword materialises magically inside the Hat. Like Arthur, who discovers his true heritage as the son of Uther Pendragon when he pulls the sword from the stone, so Harry discovers that he is a true Gryffindor when he pulls the sword from the Hat: the sword once

belonged to Godric Gryffindor, the founder of Harry's House. A sacred or magical object passed down to the hero is common in epic poetry, where it upholds "a continuity with the past that defines the hero in relation to his ancestors" (Dubois 11). Here, Harry's action proves his heritage as the brave and chivalrous knight ready to follow in the footsteps of "bold Gryffindor" (*GF* 156). Taylor and Brewer assert that this occasion in the Arthur myth shows Arthur's role as defender of his land, maintainer of right and establisher of justice. They continue that the sword "is a symbol of manly power attained and assumed, which involves dedication to the task ordained. The power to draw it distinguishes Arthur from his rival Kay: there can be no disputing his superiority now" (8). This incident gives Harry certainty that he is the heir of Gryffindor. Moreover, by linking the acquisition of a sword with the concept of faith (Harry's faith in Dumbledore), Rowling follows the medieval tradition linking knightly armour with the Pauline armour of God (Ephesians 6:10-18), which Spenser associates with knightly endeavour in his letter to Sir Walter Raleigh prefacing *The Faerie Queene* (17).

Once he is armed with the traditional weapon of battle, Harry waits for the right moment and as the Basilisk attacks, he throws "his whole weight behind the sword and [drives] it to the hilt into the roof of the serpent's mouth" (236). Harry's heroic status is thus maintained through the allusions to both the Proserpina myth and that of Perseus and Andromeda. As Proserpina is stolen by Pluto and kept in the underworld against her will (*Metamorphoses* V 385-567), so Ginny is taken by the heir of Slytherin into the underground Chamber of Secrets. Harry, however, can be compared to Perseus, who rescues the shackled Andromeda from the monstrous sea beast (*Metamorphoses* IV 663-752). The image of Harry stabbing the giant serpent in the mouth is reminiscent of *The Faerie Queene* when the Redcrosse knight kills the dragon by running his weapon

through his mouth with so importune might,
That deepe emperst his darksome hollow maw,
And back retyrd, his life bloud forth with all did draw. (I xi 53, 7-9).

Finally, Harry's defeat of the literal monster, the Basilisk, is repeated as he stabs the figurative monster, Tom Riddle's diary, with the fang of the defeated Basilisk, so destroying the memory of the young Voldemort.

Through the symbolism of Harry's battle with the Basilisk, Rowling presents him as the type of knight whose loyalty and faith leads to successful conquest. The image of him

standing with drawn sword recalls the association of the drawn sword with chastity,¹⁸ and thus he, in typical romance fashion, becomes the saviour of purity and innocence, embodied in the young virgin girl he rescues. His ability to fulfil his quest to discover what “the horror” is, depends on his loyalty to Hagrid, and his ability to save Ginny relies on his loyalty to Dumbledore, emphasising the importance of this virtue in *The Chamber of Secrets*.

* * *

By the third book, then, the reader has built up a picture of Harry’s character as one strongly reminiscent of a true and chivalrous knight. He has demonstrated selflessness and loyalty thus far, and is now required to acquire self-knowledge and develop self-control in order to learn the main lesson of the third book: the value of mercy.

Once again the title of the book identifies its central concern: the prisoner of Azkaban. Rather than saving the Philosopher’s Stone or finding the Chamber of Secrets, Harry’s task in this case is more complicated. For almost the entire length of the narrative it appears that his purpose is to evade Sirius Black, the escaped convict from Azkaban Prison, who the entire wizarding world assumes works for Voldemort and is trying to kill Harry. In an unexpected twist, Black is discovered to be protecting Harry from Voldemort’s real servant, Peter Pettigrew, who is masquerading as Ron’s pet rat Scabbers. Harry’s situation is even more precarious because he is strangely susceptible to the Azkaban guards, the Dementors, who have been sent to Hogwarts to find Black and to give him the “Kiss” which will suck his soul from his body. The three main tasks facing Harry in this book are to learn the Patronus charm (which will protect him from the Dementors); to save the life of Black; and, in order to achieve both of these, to learn the value of life and show mercy to Pettigrew, even though Pettigrew’s betrayal of Harry’s parents led to their deaths.

The structure of *The Prisoner of Azkaban* differs from that of the other three books in that Rowling draws on the *entrelacement*, or interlacing, of episodes common to romance. Fowler suggests that *entrelacement* allows a structure in which “separate themes and adventures are interwoven in such a way as to preclude overview from any single perspective” and which ensures that “no section is self-contained” (Fowler, *History* 8). By using this structural principle, Rowling impresses upon her reader how the consequences of

¹⁸ Barron points out that this association occurs in Bérout’s version of the *lai* of Tristan and Iseult as Mark believes that the drawn sword that lies between them is a symbol of their chastity (24).

one action affect another, and the complication that allows for this *entrelacement* derives from how she plays with time in this book. Harry's attempts to learn the Patronus charm and so stop the Dementors take place first. Secondly, Harry journeys to the Shrieking Shack, where he discovers it was Pettigrew, not Black, who betrayed his parents' whereabouts to Voldemort. This chronological movement of time is shattered, however, when Harry goes *back* in time to the moment before he enters the Shrieking Shack and relives the hours from nine o'clock in the evening until just before midnight. Harry's time-travelled self does not go to the Shrieking Shack, as his real-time self does, but goes into the Forbidden Forest, rescues Hagrid's pet Hippogriff, Buckbeak, and saves his real-time self from the attacking Dementors. He can then use Buckbeak to help Black escape from Hogwarts. All three tasks are intertwined with each other and Harry's ability to complete one task relies on the understanding he gains from another task, the intricate narrative structure reflecting the complicated nature of the morality in this book.

Because of the perceived threat of Sirius Black, Harry seems at his most defenceless in *The Prisoner of Azkaban*, and this is emphasised through the presence of the Dementors: he finds himself extraordinarily open to the effects of the strange ghost-like prison guards from Azkaban. The Dementors, which "suck the happiness out of a place" (76), have a peculiar effect on Harry as each time they approach him, he hears the voices of his dying parents echoing in his ears before he faints. Rowling claims the Dementors are meant to be embodiments of depression (quoted in Jackson 15), which makes it Harry's first task to learn how to control feelings of despair – traditionally associated with the sin of loss of faith. Thus, it is suggested early on that Harry's physical vulnerability is linked to a moral weakness.

In order to combat the effects of the Dementors, Harry asks the Defence Against the Dark Arts teacher, Professor Lupin, to teach him the advanced Patronus Charm, described as "a guardian which acts as a shield between you and the Dementor" (176). The Patronus is created by concentrating on "a single, very happy memory" (176), and takes the form of a mist (a protective one, as the stem "Patron" suggests) which stops the Dementor. Each time Harry tries to produce a Patronus during his lessons, however, his struggles are linked to his inability to control his thoughts about the moment of his parents' betrayal and death. Consequently, his usually strong set of values is challenged: believing that Black allowed Voldemort to kill his parents, he hints to Ron and Hermione that he would be willing to kill Black (159). His desperate unhappiness about the murder of his parents becomes translated

into the desire for revenge against their betrayer. He appears resolute even when Lupin tells him that, if they find him, the Dementors will suck out his soul through their deadly Kiss.¹⁹ Lupin tells Harry:

You can exist without your soul ... as long as your brain and heart are still working. But you'll have no sense of your self any more, no memory, no ... anything. There's no chance at all of recovery. You'll just exist. As an empty shell. And your soul is gone for ever ... lost. (PA 183).

When Lupin asks Harry if anyone deserves such a fate, he agrees “defiantly” (PA 183) – Rowling’s choice of adverb indicating Harry’s conscious rebellion against his usual moral code. Moreover, Lupin’s words suggest that in allowing someone’s soul to be taken, Harry himself would be losing the most important part of his “self”: his moral awareness – and, by implication, *his* soul.

Harry’s seeming inability to forgive is not only linked to his inability to produce an effective Patronus, but also creates the tension in his second task. When he follows Ron and Black (in his animagus form as a large black dog) through a tunnel to the Shrieking Shack near Hogsmeade village, the reader is not certain that Harry’s conduct will be as moral as his knightly behaviour of the first two books. During Harry’s confrontation with Black, there is a moment of suspense when he has the chance to kill him in cold blood. The narrative pauses on Harry’s thoughts: “Now was the moment to do it. Now was the moment to avenge his mother and father. He was going to kill Black. This was his chance ...” (PA 251). As his thoughts show, Harry is supremely aware of his power to take a life at this point, but at the moment of crisis, he cannot fulfil his threat. This does not, however, mean that Harry has regained his sense of values as he feels “suddenly empty” because his “nerve had failed him” (PA 252). The pivotal moment of the test occurs a short while later when he discovers that Black has been trying to protect him from Peter Pettigrew, the wizard who really betrayed his parents. In this instance, both Lupin and Black are outraged by Pettigrew’s deception, but when they move to kill Pettigrew, Harry redeems his earlier need for revenge by stopping them. This is a crucial moment in the characterisation of Harry: ultimately it shows his ability to be merciful, a traditional knightly virtue, but it also shows that he is successful in completing a trial more difficult

¹⁹ This recalls the moment in Marlowe’s *Doctor Faustus* when Faustus says to the demon impersonating Helen of Troy “make me immortal with a kiss:/ Her lips suck forth my soul, see where it flies” (V. i. 99-100).

than battling monsters – he learns to face himself at his worst. He finds himself on the cusp of evil, and his last-minute rejection of it works powerfully on the reader's perception of his morality.

It is through these events in the Shrieking Shack that Harry acquires an understanding of the power of knowledge so essential to the final episode in the book: not only enlightenment about the truth of his parents' betrayal, but knowledge about himself. The events in the shack end in disaster when Pettigrew's escape and Lupin's transformation leave Harry, Ron and Hermione with no way of proving Black's innocence. Harry cannot save Black's life in the final task of the novel unless he can save himself from the Dementors, which attack him on the way back from the Shrieking Shack. To do this, he must go back in time to save himself as he lies unconscious and vulnerable to the charging Dementors and, through his time-travelled self, produce an effective Patronus to save his real-time self from the attack of the Dementors. Only then can he fly Buckbeak up to the West Tower and release Black from his imprisonment. It is hinted that because his real-time self has chosen forgiveness rather than revenge (when confronted with first the opportunity to kill Black and then to kill Pettigrew), his time-travelled self is able to produce the Patronus that he was unable to complete in his first task. The importance of self-knowledge in this instance is given metaphorical expression through his ability to create the Patronus: Harry says to Hermione later, "I knew I could do it this time ... because I'd already done it" (301).

The display of morality in *The Prisoner of Azkaban* is perhaps the most complicated in all four books. While self-knowledge and self-control are important in allowing Harry to spare the life of Pettigrew, and to understand *why* he must do so, his mercifulness is also strongly linked to the idea of friendship so important in the first two novels. Friendship becomes a thematic undercurrent in the whole text through the conflict between Hermione and the two boys when it appears her cat has eaten Scabbers. Here, Hagrid has to remind Harry and Ron of their priorities by saying "I thought you two'd value yer friend more'n broomsticks or rats" (202) before they are able to forgive her. Betrayal, too, is important to the motif as the friendship between Lupin, Black, the traitor Pettigrew and Harry's father, James, plays a considerable role in the events of the narrative. Black connects the two generations when he says he thought Harry and Hermione would try to save Ron from him because "Your father would have done the same for me" (249). At the climax to the scene in the shack, Rowling makes her message clear. Firstly, Pettigrew begs Harry not to kill

him, saying that “James would have understood, Harry ... he would have shown me mercy” (274, original ellipses). Harry is presented with an alternative point of view, however, through the fury of Lupin and Black in the face of Pettigrew’s pitiful behaviour:

“You don’t understand!” whined Pettigrew. “[Voldemort] would have killed me, Sirius!”

“THEN YOU SHOULD HAVE DIED!” roared Black. “DIED RATHER THAN BETRAY YOUR FRIENDS, AS WE WOULD HAVE DONE FOR YOU!” (PA 275, original capitals)

When Harry decides to save Pettigrew, he specifically says to him that he will not let Lupin and Black kill him because “I don’t reckon my dad would’ve wanted his best friends to become killers – just for you” (PA 275). Significantly, when Harry finally produces an effective Patronus, it takes the form of Prongs, the stag into which his father was able to transform as an animagus. In this way, the acquired memory of his father is able to protect Harry literally from the Dementors, as well as to teach him, through the example of his own friendship, to elevate compassion above vengeance.

By linking all three tasks in *The Prisoner of Azkaban* so that the successful completion of each rests on events within the other two, Rowling makes a very important point: like any questing knight, Harry cannot choose the correct path (in this case clemency) without self-knowledge and self-control. He must know his own power in order to use it, but also in order to choose *not* to use it; he must know his capacity for evil in order to do good. While Harry does not face Voldemort directly in this book, he must face the evil of self-doubt and self-deception. The presentation of Harry as weak and needing to fight for his better nature is necessary, because it allows us to see that he is not perfect: we can more easily identify with Harry when he does do the right thing but has to struggle to do so. By growing through the tasks of the third book, Harry is also given the knowledge to prepare himself for those that face him in the fourth.

* * *

In the fourth book of the series, *The Goblet of Fire*, Rowling’s narrative returns to the chronological episodic structure of the first two, rather than the *entrelacement* style of the third: the tasks Harry must complete are presented as part of a formal competition called the Triwizard Tournament. It requires three champion wizards chosen from three schools,

Hogwarts, Beauxbatons and Durmstrang,²⁰ to compete against each other in three tasks. The tasks are designed to “test the champions in many different ways ... their magical prowess – their daring – their powers of deduction – and, of course, their ability to cope with danger” (*GF* 225). The competitive nature of the episodes indicates that the virtue of fair play will be an important concern of the book, and indeed it plays a significant role in the novel, although Harry must also draw upon the moral lessons from the previous books. Structurally, Rowling exploits the formal tournaments of medieval romance, designed as public displays of each knight’s skills, rather than the adventurous wanderings of the questing knight.²¹

It is another romance image that presides over the text: the Holy Grail. The Grail myth has an important role in the Arthurian romances forming the Matter of Britain.²² The sighting of the Grail is characterised by wonder and mystery and its usual identification with the cup of Joseph of Arimathea imbues it with a Christian significance.²³ The quest for the Grail is important because only the purest knights are able to reach it, and only the perfect Galahad is able to touch it, while Bors and Percival merely see it. The Grail quest, therefore, is the main test of the moral strength of the knights of the Round Table, and Rowling uses the image of the Grail in two different ways in the fourth book. First, the tournament can only begin once the Grail-like Goblet of Fire has revealed the name of the champion from each school in a mysterious ceremony; and secondly, the final task of the tournament is to find the Triwizard Cup, the winner of the whole tournament being the first person to reach the cup in the centre of a maze.

The selection of the champions is, strictly speaking, neither a task nor an adventure in *The Goblet of Fire*, but it is an important episode in the narrative in the same way that

²⁰ Rowling is perhaps pointing to old rivalries between England, France and Germany with the competition between the three schools. Beauxbatons is French: their Headmistress is given the French-sounding name Madame Maxime, their champion is Fleur Delacour, which means flower of the court in French, and they eat bouillabaisse, which is French (*GF* 221). On the other hand, while Durmstrang sounds German, its name playing on the German “Sturm und Drang” style of literature and music (Colbert 73), Rowling is careful to point out that Durmstrang’s location is not known and suggests that it is “somewhere in the far north” where it is “very cold” (*GF* 148). The headmaster is Igor Karkaroff, whose name has more of an eastern European or Slavic ring to it, and the Durmstrang champion, Viktor Krum, plays for the Bulgarian National Quidditch team (95). Colbert suggests that this is meant to “reflect the long-standing animosity between countries of Western and Eastern Europe” (75).

²¹ See for example Malory’s *Morte Darthur* (III 14).

²² The Matter of Britain deals with the Arthurian legends as opposed to the Matter of France, which concerns the Charlemagne myths, and the Matter of Rome, which deals with classical stories (Drabble 630).

²³ The word grail derives from the French Graal, which was a “dish or platter that was brought to the table at various stages or servings during a meal” (Lacy 257). It first became associated with the chalice or cup from the Last Supper used by Joseph of Arimathea to catch the blood of Christ in Robert de Boron’s *Perceval* (Lacy 259, Staines xxv). This idea was popularised through Malory (*Morte Darthur* II 1029).

the Sorting Ceremony at the start of *The Philosopher's Stone* is necessary to the characterisation of Harry as heroic and knightly. The Goblet of Fire is first revealed at the feast to welcome the Beauxbatons and Durmstrang pupils to Hogwarts. Dumbledore brings out a “great wooden chest, encrusted with jewels” (*GF* 224), which immediately piques the interest of those gathered in the Great Hall.²⁴ Dumbledore pulls out of the casket “a large, roughly hewn wooden cup. It would have been entirely unremarkable had it not been full to the brim with dancing, blue-white flames” (225). As in the case of the “Holy Grayle coverde with whyght samyte” (*Morte Darthur* II 865), the atmosphere of mystery engendered by the ordinary-looking goblet adds to the significance of the occasion. In keeping with this air of mystery and power, its blue-white flames turn red and “a tongue of flame” shoots out of it a piece of parchment with each champion’s name written on it. The authority vested in the Goblet is absolute, and the pupils are warned that “Once a champion has been selected by the Goblet of Fire, he or she is obliged to see the Tournament through to the end” (226). Thus, when the impossible happens and Harry, though under age, is chosen as an additional Hogwarts champion after the popular Cedric Diggory from Hufflepuff house, he must compete. Not only does this mean he must join Fleur Delacour from Beauxbatons, Viktor Krum from Durmstrang and Cedric from Hogwarts in the tasks that will lead them to the search for the Triwizard Cup; it also places him at a disadvantage in the competition. He is younger and less experienced in magic than the other competitors, and almost everyone at Hogwarts supports Cedric because they feel Harry has entered the competition illegitimately and does not deserve his place alongside the other champions. These hindrances emphasise the concern with fairness in the book.

The first task in the tournament is to collect a golden egg, and while this seems easy enough, the skill lies in being able to reach the egg. The task is supposed to test one’s ability to react to an assignment without prior preparation, but Harry discovers from Hagrid that they must evade a dangerous dragon and collect the golden egg from its nest. He also discovers that Viktor Krum and Fleur Delacour’s teachers have seen the dragons and prepared their pupils for the task. Harry’s task thus becomes twofold. Not only does he have to find a way past the dragon to complete the physical task; he also has to engage in a moral trial: whether or not to ensure that *all* the contestants begin the task on an equal basis. He faces the fact that Cedric is older and more skilled than he is, and that only by

²⁴ Compare this with the description in Malory where there is “a cheste of golde and of precious stonys that coverde the holy vessell” (*Morte Darthur* II 1034).

knowing what they must face is he at an advantage over Cedric. Cedric also has the backing of the entire school (except for the Gryffindor pupils) and so Harry could humiliate him by showing him up – possibly winning the rest of the school over to support himself. Despite these temptations, he tells Cedric about the dragons, and when Cedric asks why he is telling him, Harry replies by saying that “It’s just ... fair, isn’t it?” and continues, “We all know now ... we’re on an even footing, aren’t we?” (GF 299). Harry and Krum tie in first place upon completion of the task, but there is a strong implication that Harry’s ability to succeed is more valuable precisely because he did not have an unfair advantage over Cedric, and mastered the task on his own merit.

Harry’s actions and words in the lead-up to the first task make the subject of *The Goblet of Fire* abundantly clear, and fairness becomes important again in the second task. To discover what that second task is, the competitors must decipher the strange wailing song that emerges from their golden egg each time they open it. Harry is still unable to decipher the egg’s song when Cedric tells him to “Take a bath, and – er – take the egg with you, and – er – just mull things over in the hot water” (375), and even offers him the use of the Prefects’ bathroom. At first Harry wonders if Cedric is trying to embarrass him in front of Cho Chang (the girl both Harry and Cedric like) by giving him such a strange-sounding clue, but eventually he decides it “was time to shelve his pride, and see if Cedric’s hint was worth anything” (397). Again, in Harry’s decision to reject his pride and accept Cedric’s advice in good faith, Rowling emphasises her moral point. His humility in taking Cedric’s advice leads him to discover that the song becomes clear when heard under water, and builds up the characterisation of Cedric too as an embodiment of fair play.

Harry learns through the song what he must do:

*Come seek us where our voices sound,
We cannot sing above the ground,
And while you’re searching, ponder this:
We’ve taken what you’ll sorely miss,
An hour long you’ll have to look,
And to recover what we took,
But past an hour – the prospect’s black
Too late, it’s gone, it won’t come back.* (GF 402)²⁵

Harry’s task is to rescue Ron from the bottom of the Hogwarts lake, and with the help of Dobby, the house-elf he had freed from slavery, he manages the first obstacle – how to

²⁵ Rowling’s punctuation is sometimes unreliable in verse.

breathe underwater by chewing Gillyweed and growing gills. He takes the last line of the song seriously, however, believing that it is a life-and-death situation, and after fighting his way to the bottom of the lake and cutting the ropes that bind Ron, insists on waiting to check that the others will be rescued. His fear that Fleur's sister, Gabrielle, will not be rescued in time, leads him to allow first Cedric and then Krum to beat him to the surface, before he saves both Gabrielle and Ron. By staying to rescue Gabrielle, Harry does not complete the task in the allotted time, but the judges feel his insistence on making sure all the hostages were saved "shows moral fibre" (440), and award Harry points for the task. Rowling uses the judges' words, then, to emphasise Harry's selfless concern for others.

The third task is complicated because it involves various parts. The main task, as in the story of Theseus and the Minotaur (*Metamorphoses* VIII 152-182), is to negotiate a maze. But here, as in the quest for the Holy Grail, the ultimate winner is the first champion to reach the Triwizard Cup set at the centre of the maze.²⁶ Before they can reach the centre, various minor tasks are set and their ability to complete each allows them to come closer to the object of their quest. The first task Harry faces seems to be to defeat a Dementor, and he is able to produce a perfect Patronus because, as at the end of the third book, he knows that he can do it. He does this before realising that he is not facing a real Dementor, but a Boggart. Harry had learnt in his third year that a Boggart is a shape-shifter which takes the form of what one most fears (in Harry's case a Dementor), and that the only way to destroy a Boggart is through laughter (*PA* 101). Harry uses the Riddikulus spell to explode the Boggart: a metaphor for laughing in the face of fear and not letting it get the better of one.

After having his reactions tested, in the next part of the maze Harry's obstacle is to remain calm in a situation of which he has had no previous experience, much as when he had to escape the clinging tentacles of the Devil's Snare plant in *The Philosopher's Stone*. In this case, he enters a golden mist which turns him upside down. He is terrified, but closes his eyes and walks on as if nothing is the matter, his resolve sending him through the mist immediately. The confidence Harry displays in walking through the mist helps him when, in his next task, he is attacked by a giant Blast-Ended Skrewt. The Skrewt is a magical creature similar to a dragon in having a shell of impenetrable armour, but Harry manages to hit it with an impedimenta spell "on its fleshy, shell-less underside" (*GF* 543)

²⁶ The suggestion of knighthood is strengthened at this point because Harry, Cedric and Krum all play the position of seeker for their Quidditch teams, emphasising their roles as questing knights seeking the cup.

as he lies beneath it. Rowling's literary echo in this case is apparently of Sigurd stabbing the dragon in its underbelly in the Eddic poem *Fáfnismál* (Shippey 36), the German version of which has Siegfried at its centre.²⁷

By this point Harry has been tested on his ability to face his worst fears, to remain calm and believe in himself, and to do battle with a deadly monster. Before he can complete the next task, however, he is faced with a challenge not designed to be part of the competition: to rescue Cedric. Harry, hearing Krum use the Crucio curse which tortures Cedric with terrible pain, rushes to Cedric's aid. His compassion is greater than his desire for the glory that winning the tournament would bring, and is placed in direct contrast to Krum's unfair attempt to injure Cedric, though Krum is being forced to hurt Cedric by Voldemort's servant (588). Both boys continue after this incident, but before Harry can reach the cup he faces two more trials. First he reaches a sphinx who, like the sphinx in the Oedipal myth (Colbert 171), tells him to answer her riddle on his first guess or she will attack him. The riddle in this case is:

*First think of the person who lives in disguise,
Who deals in secrets and tells naught but lies.
Next, tell me what's always the last thing to mend,
The middle of middle and end of the end?
And finally give me the sounds often heard
During the search for a hard-to-find word.
Now string them together, and answer me this,
Which creature would you be unwilling to kiss? (GF 546)*

This recalls the first riddle Harry has to solve, which he does with the help of Hermione in *The Philosopher's Stone*. Here, however, the more experienced Harry finds the answer himself, showing his ability to stand alone in the face of a frightening situation. The answer, "spy", "d" and "er", reminds the reader of Harry's accomplishment in evading the giant spider in *The Chamber of Secrets*, and alerts Harry to the possible danger of facing a monstrous spider ahead.

The final moments in the maze during the third task are significant pointers to ideals taken from medieval romance. Harry and Cedric are both running for the cup when Harry sees the giant spider about to attack Cedric. Rather than let the spider hurt Cedric, Harry warns him and they manage to conquer it by working together, emphasising the

²⁷ Wagner took the story of his libretto, *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, partly from the *Nibelungenlied*, which derives from the *Volsunga Saga* of which the *Fáfnismál* is a part (Stapleton 809).

value of fellowship. Their exchange, as they stand just feet from the Cup, is central to an understanding of the morality underlying the series:

Cedric was standing feet from the Triwizard Cup, which was gleaming behind him.

‘Take it, then,’ Harry panted to Cedric. ‘Go on, take it. You’re there.’

But Cedric didn’t move. He merely stood there, looking at Harry. Then he turned to stare at the Cup. Harry saw the longing expression on his face in its golden light. Cedric looked around at Harry again, who was now holding onto the hedge to support himself.

Cedric took a deep breath. ‘You take it. You should win. That’s twice you’ve saved my neck in here.’

‘That’s not how it’s supposed to work,’ Harry said.... ‘The one who reaches the Cup first gets the points....’

....

Cedric took a few paces nearer to the Stunned spider, away from the Cup, shaking his head.

‘No,’ he said.

‘Stop being noble,’ said Harry irritably. ‘Just take it, then we can get out of here.’

....

Cedric was serious. He was walking away from the sort of glory Hufflepuff house hadn’t had in centuries.

‘Go on,’ Cedric said. He looked as though this was costing him every ounce of resolution he had, but his face was set, his arms were folded, he seemed decided.

Harry looked from Cedric to the Cup. For one shining moment, he saw himself emerging from the maze, holding it. He saw himself holding the Triwizard Cup aloft, heard the roar of the crowd, saw Cho’s face shining with admiration, more clearly than he had ever seen it before ... and then the picture faded, and he found himself staring at Cedric’s shadowy, stubborn face.

‘Both of us,’ Harry said. (GF 549-550)

Significantly, in this moment we see how desperately both Harry and Cedric want the glory that will come with winning the cup, and yet also how each feels the other deserves it more. Both Harry and Cedric display the knightly virtues typical of medieval writing, and that were appropriated during the nineteenth-century resurgence of interest in chivalry.²⁸ Honour and friendship, knightly courtesy and *gentillesse*, are the most important virtues displayed by the knights and do more to lend them victory than mere physical prowess. This is in keeping with the *chansons de geste* tradition where “Physical swordsmanship is the essence of knightly skill, but victory is given only through grace” (Jeffrey 743). Here both Harry and Cedric deserve the cup because they have demonstrated to the utmost

²⁸ See Chapter Two’s discussion of how the interest in medieval virtues affected the Victorian school story.

degree a commendable gentlemanly spirit. Not force but comradeship leads them to their ultimate goal as they take hold of their own Grail, the Triwizard Cup, together.

The structure of *The Goblet of Fire* itself leads to an expectation that Harry will complete various tasks because they are set out as part of the Triwizard Tournament, ending with the moment he reaches the Grail-like Triwizard Cup. Rowling adds to this with an unexpected episode once Harry and Cedric have reached the cup and supposedly completed their final task. The cup is a Portkey, so as they touch it they are transported to a deserted graveyard where Voldemort awaits them. Cedric is killed almost immediately, and while this may be an echo of the deaths of Sir Galahad and Sir Perceval after reaching the Holy Grail (*Morte Darthur* II 1035-1036), it has another purpose. The death of Cedric, brutal and unexpected as it is, serves as a reminder of the extent of Voldemort's evil. Voldemort, with one phrase, is able to kill the person Harry has risked glory and honour to save. This terrible irony accentuates the horror and unfairness of Cedric's death and shows how desperate Harry's situation is: after he watches his friend die, Harry is forced to aid Voldemort's resurrection, endure torture and finally enter into combat with him. Significantly, Harry's character in this scene is directly contrasted with that of Voldemort, whose conduct towards his supporters is markedly different from Harry's in the Shrieking Shack of the previous book: when one of the Death Eaters begs for his forgiveness,

Voldemort began to laugh. He raised his wand. "Crucio!"

...

The tortured Death Eater Lay flat upon the ground, gasping.

"Get up, Avery," said Voldemort softly. "Stand up. You ask for forgiveness? I do not forgive. I do not forget." (*GF* 562-563)

In a similar display of cruelty, Voldemort refuses to play fair during his duel with Harry, attempting to weaken him beforehand by torturing him with the Cruciatus curse. The duel is the most taxing trial of Harry's courage: his bravery in attempting to battle Voldemort after both the gruelling tournament and the agonising pain of torture, and his insistence on honouring Cedric's last request to return his body to Hogwarts, emphasise both his moral fibre and his heroism.

* * *

Harry's representation, therefore, is strongly influenced by the ways in which Rowling echoes episodes and adventures from medieval and classical literature. She draws on the structure of epic in forming her narrative around a series of tasks which Harry must

complete in order to show his heroic status, some of which directly reflect the trials of Homer's *Odyssey* and Virgil's *Aeneid*. However, Harry's literal adventures are often linked with challenges to his morality and, as is demonstrated particularly in the third book, Harry sometimes struggles to do the right thing. In this respect, he has echoes in romance literature where the hero is ultimately human. Stevens suggests that "in romance the hero goes to search for the final meaningful encounter that will crown his quest and ... enable him to *know himself*. This is why, in romance, the hero can be at a loss, can make mistakes and not understand what is happening to him" (80, original emphasis). While the links with classical texts identify Harry as the hero of the series, the depth of his character stems from the moral predicaments associated with romance: he must be selfless, loyal, merciful and fair in order to succeed in his tasks. Harry is not simply the schoolboy hero, or the hero who fights in literal epic battles against monsters and gods – he is a quasi-Arthurian knight whose adventures become moral dilemmas that shape him in his battle against evil.

Chapter Four

Rowling's Fantasy World: The Marvellous as Metaphor

“... in a world of increasing complexity, where it is difficult to recognize the causes of misery, much less fasten blame and make corrections, fantasy seems to offer a world where good can confront and defeat evil. Intrepid heroes undertake daunting quests and overcome dark lords, cleansing the land and restoring a reign of love and justice.” Raymond Thompson, *The Return from Avalon* (87).

The marvellous or fantastic has been used in many forms of literature from medieval romance to folktale to children's fairy stories. It reached prominence in the twentieth century following the publication of Tolkien's successful *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, and modern fantasy writing has become one of the best selling genres of the last fifty years (Shippey vii-viii, Pringle 17). Rowling makes extensive use of the conventions of modern fantasy in setting, characterisation and theme, which emphasises the importance of understanding her series in relation to this genre.

Fantasy writing as a whole can be defined as fiction representing “an imagined reality that is radically different in its nature and functioning from the world of our ordinary experience” (Abrams 278). Modern fantasy grew out of literature that traditionally made use of the fabulous, like epic and romance,¹ and Rowling's interest in these genres feeds into the fantasy aspect of her series. A significant difference between these earlier modes and most modern fantasy is that “the marvellous, which is *incidental* in medieval romance, is *central* in modern fantasy” (Thompson, “Comparative Study” 223, my emphasis). Modern fantasy can, additionally, be loosely divided into “high fantasy” and “low fantasy”: in low fantasy (“low” is not a value judgement here) “inexplicable supernatural occurrences intrude upon our ordinary rational world”, whereas high fantasy “offers us a secondary world in which magical or supernatural powers do operate by their own rules,

¹ See Hillegas (xi), Cornwell (45) and Sullivan (107) for a discussion of the influences of epic and romance on modern fantasy. See also Gillie, who points out that ancient Greek and Roman literature is often characterised by “heroic adventures full of magical and supernatural incidents drawn from legend” (188), and McCarthy, who emphasises that typical elements found in medieval romance are “magic, quests, adventure, [and] inexplicable events” (148); both argue that these genres have had a wide-ranging effect on modern fantasy.

however alien they may be to our world” (Thompson, *Avalon* 5-6). In other words, it is pivotal that high fantasy includes a secondary world in which magic plays a central role.²

Zahorski and Boyer have pointed out that

writers of high fantasy have dealt with the secondary world as related to the primary world in three different ways. Some have created remote secondary worlds; others have created juxtaposed primary and secondary worlds with magical portals serving as gateways between them; and still others have created worlds-within-worlds. (58-59)³

Rowling uses a mixture of the last two methods in her Harry Potter books: she creates a secondary world (called the wizarding world) that exists within our recognisably real world, but which is entered through various portals – such as the Leaky Cauldron pub in a London street or Platform 9¾ in King’s Cross Station. The successful invention of such a secondary world, a process Tolkien called “sub-creation” (“On Fairy-stories” 36), must be done in such a way that the marvellous is entirely believable *within* that world. To achieve this, fantasy authors often use an element of mythopoesis, meaning myth-making, whereby the secondary world has its own sense of history and myth. This is important to the didactic quality of high fantasy since the mythopoeic component ensures that “both triumphs and failures are rooted in the contradictory nature of humanity itself, and they express this dichotomy in terms of an eternal conflict between good and evil, waged at a supernatural level” (Thompson, *Avalon* 5). Rowling uses the marvellous in the Harry Potter series to construct a world that is both able to function effectively as a sub-creation and is also inescapably concerned with the archetypal battle between “good” and “evil”.⁴

This chapter will show first how Rowling’s fantasy world is created so that magic becomes wholly believable within her secondary world. Secondly, it will demonstrate how elements of her secondary creation allow a symbolic reading of the text, which in turn creates the setting for the conflict between good and evil characteristic of mythopoeic

² Thompson’s distinction between high and low fantasy is the conventional one – see also Wolfe (52), Sullivan (82-83), Zahorski and Boyer (56).

³ Philip Pullman’s *His Dark Materials* trilogy uses the idea of parallel worlds, as does Diana Wynne Jones’s *Charmed Life* – which also uses the idea of a castle to which children are sent to learn magic. In Alan Garner’s *Elidor*, he creates a parallel world but one linked to our “reality” through portals, as does C. S. Lewis, whose Narnia can be accessed through portals like the wardrobe and the picture of the *Dawn Treader*.

⁴ Throughout this chapter I use the terms “good” and “evil” to denote opposing sides of the value system Rowling and other fantasy writers put in place in their texts. While I am not unaware of the problematic nature of such black-and-white divisions, most fantasy authors use them, or their corollaries, “the light” and “the dark”, to identify the two opposing sides in the archetypal battle that underlies this type of didactic literature.

fantasy. The third and fourth sections will suggest two ways in which Rowling helps her readers, through the characters she creates, to identify the moral questions raised by this conflict. The third section examines the names of characters to suggest a way for readers to distinguish which characters are held up as role models and which are not. In the fourth and final section, several major characters are compared and contrasted to show how Rowling produces a morality addressing the traditional preoccupation with power in fantasy. Through these steps I hope to establish that the detail and complexity of Rowling's world partly accounts for its appeal and success.

* * *

Setting is important in high fantasy because the secondary world must become a metaphorical representation of the real world, capable of teaching us lessons about our everyday existence. Rowling's secondary world, the wizarding world, is incorporated into her fictional description of our own, modern world, but functions as a separate entity nonetheless. She introduces the wizarding world, and describes intricate details from it, to ensure that it becomes a successful sub-creation.

Sub-creation is a term coined by Tolkien, who claimed that it is not the reader's "willing suspension of disbelief" that is responsible for the success of a fantasy narrative.

What really happens is that the story-maker proves a successful 'sub-creator'. He makes a secondary world which your mind can enter. Inside it, what he relates is 'true': it accords with the laws of that world. You therefore believe it, while you are, as it were, inside. (Tolkien, "On Fairy-stories" 36)

In high fantasy the sub-created world is often entirely separate from our everyday reality: Tolkien's Middle-earth or Le Guin's Earthsea, like the worlds of the many fantasy writers who have been influenced by them, are completely new worlds, however similar they may seem to our own. They have their own languages, maps, religions and peoples. Rowling's wizarding world, however, is inextricably linked to our modern reality and she includes in her narrative the "real" or non-magic world (called the "Muggle world") as well as the wizarding world.⁵ But it is, ironically, precisely because she situates the wizarding world within the Muggle world that Rowling increases the credibility of her sub-creation. The first chapter of *The Philosopher's Stone*, for example, provides an introduction to the

⁵ In *The Prisoner of Azkaban*, for example, the Minister for Magic, Cornelius Fudge, is criticised for "informing the Muggle Prime Minister" that Sirius Black has escaped, and hastens to assure the readers of the *Daily Prophet* that the Prime Minister will keep Black's true identity secret (PA 33)

wizarding world, and Rowling's style captures the sense of disbelief in the supernatural that would be characteristic of the reader situated in the real, modern world. The first paragraph of the novel emphasises this by describing the Dursleys as "proud to say they were perfectly normal" and "the last people you'd expect to be involved in anything strange or mysterious" (PS 7). She continues building up the sense of the unusual by hinting to the reader that the Dursleys' complacency is about to be shattered: "there was nothing about the cloudy sky outside to suggest that strange and mysterious things would soon be happening" (PS 7), and when Mr Dursley sees "something peculiar – a cat reading a map", he thinks "It must have been a trick of the light" (PS 8). The description of the Dursleys' world and of the strange events intruding upon it anticipates the element of the marvellous in the novels, so that when Dumbledore arrives, as if "he'd just popped out of the ground" (PS 12), the reader's own disbelief in the supernatural has already been challenged.

In the opening chapters of *The Philosopher's Stone*, Rowling continues to juxtapose the real world with the bizarre intrusions of the wizarding world. The reader learns that "strange things often happened around Harry" (PS 23), such as his shaved hair growing back overnight, a particularly ugly hand-me-down jumper of Dudley's inexplicably shrinking, and a time when he, "as much to Harry's surprise as anyone else's" (23), finds himself on the roof of the school kitchens after trying to escape Dudley's gang. These odd events culminate in Harry's communicating with a snake at the zoo before the glass of its enclosure suddenly vanishes, allowing it to escape (25-26). This gradual intrusion of peculiar events into the apparently normal world of the Dursleys is intensified when strange letters to Harry start arriving in increasingly odd ways – "rolled up and hidden inside each of the two dozen eggs that their very confused milkman had handed Aunt Petunia" (34) and "pelting out of the fireplace like bullets" (31). Consequently, by the time of Hagrid's entrance, the climax of the first phase of *The Philosopher's Stone*, the reader has been coaxed into an expectation that certain events, usually perceived as abnormal, are normal within the realm of the novel.

The arrival of Hagrid contributes to the expository picture of the wizarding world. Although Harry is a wizard and therefore part of Rowling's sub-creation, he begins the series in the Muggle world, innocent of his wizarding status, and must learn about the world to which he really belongs. In this way Harry is like the reader, and often the questions he asks about the wizarding world are precisely those we need answers to in

order to increase our own understanding of it. It is Harry's questions that lead Hagrid to recount various aspects of wizard life: Muggles are "what we call non-magic folk" (PS 43), and in wizard money, seventeen silver Sickles equal a golden Galleon and there are "twenty-nine Knuts to a Sickle" (PS 58). Except for the first chapters of *The Philosopher's Stone* and *The Goblet of Fire*, the narration of the novels takes place from Harry's point of view and so the reader identifies strongly with his character. Thus, his initial disbelief and then surprise at the workings of the wizarding world foreshadow our own feelings. By suggesting that the wizarding world does exist within our own reality, and by showing the reactions of "ordinary" people to that world, Rowling encourages us to believe that the world of the novel is, as Tolkien offers, "true" ("On Fairy-stories" 36).

Once within her sub-creation, Rowling gives her wizarding world a life distinct from the Muggle one in ways that make the wizarding world believable within the confines of the novel. Much of its setting, for example, follows high fantasy's technique of medievalising. This technique is useful for two reasons: it marks the secondary world as different from reality; and it allows for a more natural integration of the marvellous into the secondary world (through the strong associations between medieval literature and the supernatural). Manlove claims that Victorian writers, as a reaction to industrialisation,

looked to the past, and particularly to an imagined medieval past, for an alternative society. Increasingly in the twentieth century, however, fantasy has become the main vehicle of this tradition and feeling, fuelled now by a perhaps even greater repugnance at the development of science. (x)

Manlove emphasises medieval "tradition and feeling" because the distinctions between good and evil in medieval texts suit the purposes of modern fantasy. Victorian writers of fantasy, such as Charles Kingsley in *The Water-Babies*, and George MacDonald in *At the Back of the North Wind*, used similar distinctions between good and bad to those found in medieval texts to ensure the moral of their narratives was made clear. Twentieth-century fantasy has followed on from the Victorian tradition of highlighting a particular moral lesson, and examples of the genre frequently use a quasi-medieval setting to explore topics with a modern and universal relevance – such as "the problems of power [and] the conflict between individual freedom and social responsibility" (Thompson, "Comparative Study" 223). Certainly, the medieval setting used by fantasy allows for the creation of an atmosphere in which neo-chivalric values can be seen at their most effective.

Rowling's use of the quasi-medieval is shown through the setting of her sub-created world as a place suggestive of earlier eras. Hogwarts castle, built when the school was founded over a thousand years before the action of the novels (CS 114), has many turrets and towers, dungeons and secret passageways and a large Great Hall in which banquets are held. Essays are written on parchment with quills (CS 112) and a medieval ambience is suggested through small details, such as Harry's washing his hands "under the icy jet that poured from a gargoyle's mouth" (PA 97). Light and warmth are provided by candles and fires, the pupils and teachers use "Golden plates and goblets" (GF 153) instead of modern crockery and cutlery, and, in Hogsmeade village, a tiny inn called The Three Broomsticks has witches and wizards drink butterbeer out of tankards (PA 149). Details such as these add an element of the unusual that is entertaining and attractive to some modern readers in its quaintness, but Rowling's medievalising does not exist in and for itself only: the medieval atmosphere reinforces the sense that the marvellous, an accepted part of medieval literature, is an integral part of the wizarding world.

Rowling also makes her wizarding world recognisably different from our modern reality through her use of "magic" that might have been believable in medieval times. She introduces herbs and plants traditionally associated with the kind of healing identified with historic "white witches". Asphodel (PS 102), for example, is a plant associated with the afterlife as it blooms in Elysium (COD 63), a bezoar (PS 103) is a type of stone "once used as an antidote for various ills" (COD 105), and dittany (PS 168) is a herb used in traditional medicine (COD 341). The extent of Rowling's research into the world of medieval magic is apparent when Snape tells his class that "monkshood and wolfsbane ... are the same plant, which also goes by the name of aconite" (PS 103) – it is a botanical fact that the medicinal plants monkshood and wolfsbane are both of the genus *Aconitum*, or aconite (COD 11). Similarly, the Hand of Glory, which Harry sees in Knockturn Alley (CS 43-44), is based on a legend that "a lighted candle placed in the hand of a dead man gives no light to anyone but him who carries the hand" (Brewer 574). Within Hogwarts, Rowling also includes among the lessons subjects like Arithmancy and Astronomy, and Divination classes involve methods traditional to supposedly real fortune-tellers, such as reading tea-leaves and gazing into crystal balls.⁶ Even the pets the pupils are allowed to bring to

⁶ It is worthwhile noting, however, that Rowling treats fortune-telling with wry humour, and there is general scepticism about Sybill Trelawney's abilities in the field of Divination. McGonagall points out that "Divination is one of the most imprecise branches of magic" (PA 84), and Dumbledore comments that Trelawney's prediction during Harry's examination "brings her total of real predictions up to two" (PA 311).

Hogwarts are traditionally thought of as witches' familiars: "Students may also bring an owl OR a cat OR a toad" (PS 53, original capitals). Altogether, by using elements of "real" or at least "literary" magic, Rowling encourages us to feel at home inside the wizarding world.

Rowling does not, however much she medievalises, simply try to recreate a totally medieval atmosphere within the wizarding world. Rather, she suggests that the wizarding world has merely evolved since medieval times in a different direction from the Muggle world. To demonstrate the growth and history so important to the success of sub-creation, she takes elements common to folktale and magical legends and gives them a modern twist. For example, owls are traditionally associated with magic and witches, but hers are far more than pets: they are part of the efficient and modern-sounding wizarding postal service – the Hogsmeade post office has "two hundred owls, all sitting on shelves, all colour-coded depending on how fast you want your letter to get there" (PA 119). Similarly Rowling makes the conventional witches' broomstick into a highly evolved piece of magical engineering. Like cars, they are branded according to model and number (such as Nimbus Two Thousand or Nimbus Two Thousand and One), and need maintenance in order to function properly. Harry receives a *Broomstick Servicing Kit* which includes "a large jar of Fleetwoods' High-Finish Handle Polish, a pair of gleaming silver Tail-Twig Clippers, a tiny brass compass to clip onto your broom for long journeys, and a *Handbook of Do-it-Yourself Broomcare*" (PA 15). While they are amusing additions on one hand, details such as these also make the wizarding world more fully realised, and consequently more believable.

The details of the wizarding world are not only familiar from folktale and fairy stories. Le Guin comments that to "make a new world you start with an old one" ("World-Making" 48): Rowling makes her wizarding world both strange and familiar by taking elements from the real world, like games and sweets, and making them unusual or magical in some way. Alan Jacobs uses one of these details to suggest the imaginative effectiveness of the wizarding world's particularities:

Once, when he is visiting the home of a friend from a Magical family, Harry steps over a pack of Self-Shuffling Playing Cards. It's an item that could have been left out without any loss to the narrative, but it offers an elegant little surprise – and another piece of furniture for this thoroughly imagined universe. (Jacobs n.pag.)

Jacobs could have referred to any of the games the wizard children might play, such as Exploding Snap (CS 250) or Gobstones, “a wizarding game rather like marbles, in which the stones squirted a nasty-smelling liquid into the other player’s face when they lost a point” (PA 43). In each instance, our familiarity with the Muggle equivalent helps us to imagine the wizarding game and so feel comfortable in Rowling’s secondary creation. The same is true of the list of sweets wizarding children can buy:

Droobles Best Blowing Gum (which filled a room with bluebell-coloured bubbles that refused to pop for days), the strange, splintery Toothflossing Stringmints, tiny black Pepper Imps (‘breathe fire for your friends!’), Ice Mice (‘hear your teeth chatter and squeak!’), peppermint creams shaped like toads (‘hop realistically in the stomach!’), fragile sugar-spun quills and exploding bonbons. (PA 147)

The wealth of detail in these descriptions may initially appear insignificant, but paradoxically it is their very insignificance that demonstrates the success of her sub-creation. The marvellous and the mundane combine to add a humorous touch and create the verisimilitude that makes the magical world seem more realistic (if different). As Tolkien suggests, many of the elements of a truly sub-created world do not form a necessary part of the tale, but are important in themselves: “It is precisely the colouring, the atmosphere, the unclassifiable individual details of a story, and above all the general purport that informs with life the undissected bones of the plot, that really count” (“On Fairy-stories” 22-23). Like Tolkien’s Middle-earth, a fully imagined secondary creation, Rowling’s wizarding world is a place where the magical is inextricably linked with the quotidian, and so is more believable.

While the range of this sub-creation is evident in many such details in the novels, Rowling’s ability to imagine her world as a whole is also shown through the companion books to the series, *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* and *Quidditch Through the Ages*.⁷ *Fantastic Beasts* offers details about the wizarding world that are not essential to the narratives in the four novels, but do supplement and enrich their sub-creation. It includes under the entry “Acromantula”, for example, an intricate description of a form of giant spider, along with supposed facts about the shape and size of its eggs and the potential length of its leg-span (fifteen feet). It also refers to the spiders Harry and Ron find in the Forbidden Forest (CS 204-207) when it says “Rumours that a colony of

⁷ See Chapter One for how these books add to the material and cultural production of the series as a whole.

Acromantula has been established in Scotland are unconfirmed” (2). *Fantastic Beasts* lists a variety of animals familiar from literature, such as the Basilisk (3-4), Centaur (6), Chimaera (7), Dragon (10), Griffin (20) and Phoenix (32), but adds entertaining details such as “Chimaera eggs are classified as Grade A Non-Tradeable Goods” (7), and the various breeds of dragon such as the “Antipodean Opaleye” (11) and the Common Welsh Green” (12). She also includes beasts such as the Australian “Billywig” (4-5), “Chizpurples” (7), the American “Clabbert” (8), the African “Nundu” (31), and the “Tebo” which is “native to the Congo and Zaire” (40). *Fantastic Beasts* contains descriptions of twenty-seven species and their Ministry of Magic classifications on the “perceived dangerousness of a creature” (FB xxii), giving a sense of how these animals fit into the management of the wizarding world. Other sections include “A Brief History of Muggle Awareness of Fantastic Beasts”; “Magical Beasts in Hiding”; and “Why Magizoology Matters”.

Quidditch Through the Ages similarly increases our sense of a fully imagined sub-creation. It contains ample detail on “The Evolution of the Flying Broomstick” (1-3), various wizard sports (3-6), and the history of the origins of Quidditch. The rules of the game also appear in detail,⁸ and the text is enhanced with diagrams and accounts of difficult manoeuvres like the “Doppelbeater Defence” (52), the “Parkin’s Pincer” and “Plumpton Pass” (53), the “Sloth Grip Roll” (54), and the “Woollongong Shimmy” (55).

In these two works, the alliterative and onomatopoeic names and mock-gravity of the tone show Rowling parodying zoological taxonomy and the sports terminology taken so seriously in our real world. Like the tiny details that make up the everyday functioning of the wizarding world, they also add to our enjoyment of her secondary creation. As Tolkien’s much larger and more serious *Silmarillion* produces a wealth of information on his Middle-earth,⁹ these books show the extent of the detail that could be added to the novels. This suggests the extent to which Rowling is able to sub-create, increasing our belief in the functioning of the marvellous within her wizarding world.

* * *

Creating a secondary world is not enough to make high fantasy successful: at least some of the details must increase the symbolic potential of the work. Often this type of resonance is

⁸ The rules also appear in *The Philosopher’s Stone* (124-125).

⁹ As in the case of Tolkien, the illustrations for both companion books are done by Rowling (see copyright details), indicating the breadth of her vision of the wizarding world.

achieved through literary allusion. This section examines three ways in which Rowling offers some kind of message through the symbolism attached to elements within the narrative: the mascots of the two teams playing in the Quidditch World Cup final; the juxtaposition of the castle and the forbidden forest at Hogwarts; and the opposition evident in the emblems of two of the school houses, Gryffindor and Slytherin.

At the Quidditch World Cup final, each competing team has its own mascots. Colbert argues that the Veela, the mascots for the Bulgarian team, “originate in legends of Central Europe”, and cites a Serbian folktale telling of their power and attractiveness (187). The Veela are beautiful dancing women who make Harry wonder “what could make their skin shine moon-bright ... or their white-gold hair fan out behind them without wind” (*GF* 93). Their beauty and the music they dance to, like the sirens’ song (*The Odyssey* XII 39-54), has an almost universal effect on the men watching the match: they can only withstand the desire to follow the Veela eternally if they block their ears. The magnetism of the Bulgarian mascots is destroyed, however, when the Bulgarians’ foul play earns them a penalty and the Veela become angry. Harry sees that “their faces were elongating into sharp, cruel-beaked bird heads, and long, scaly wings were bursting from their shoulders” (101). Mr Weasley, Ron’s father, says of the Veela “And *that*, boys, ... is why you should never go for looks alone” (101, original emphasis). As the Veela tempt through surface beauty, the Irish mascots are leprechauns who tempt spectators through greed. They throw handfuls of gold into the crowd (95), but being leprechaun gold it vanishes overnight (635), producing a warning against unearned wealth. Although the Veela and the leprechauns are ostensibly not more than simply entertaining mascots, their symbolism suggests the moral lessons that beauty and wealth are merely superficial.

The symbolism of the Veela and the Leprechauns contributes to Rowling’s wizarding world, but lacks the pervasive sense of symbolic value essential to high fantasy. Gary Wolfe notes that the setting in high fantasy “is more than a backdrop; it is integral to the events themselves, a kind of spiritual landscape in which even the least element might carry a moral meaning” (quoted in Thompson, “Comparative Study” 219). The atmosphere linked to specific types of setting becomes “spiritual” through elements associated with the marvellous in literature from its oral forms, through medieval romance to modern fantasy. Hence, the Forbidden Forest and Hogwarts castle embody opposing sides of Rowling’s sub-creation: chaos and order. Traditionally the fantastic mode has allied chaos with evil

and order with goodness, and so the setting becomes illustrative of the polarities essential to most high fantasy.¹⁰

The Forbidden Forest suggests the presence of evil in the narrative, although the forest itself is not “evil” as such. The first rule Dumbledore mentions when Harry arrives at Hogwarts is that the “forest in the grounds is forbidden to all pupils” (PS 94), which highlights its presence as peripheral and proscribed. Forests are traditionally places both of mystery and of dread. In Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, the wood, a magical place filled with fairies, represents the potential for chaos; Spenser’s knights do battle and rescue maidens in forests such as the “wandering wood” (I. i. 13), the name of which suggests disorder; and, in White’s *The Once and Future King*, the Forest Sauvage is populated with wonderful creatures like unicorns and frightening ones like the Beast Glatisant (134). Harrison claims that

in the religions, mythologies, and literatures of the West, the forest appears as a place where the logic of distinction goes astray. Or where our subjective categories are confounded. Or where perceptions become promiscuous with one another, disclosing latent dimensions of time and consciousness. In the forest the inanimate may suddenly become animate, the god turns into a beast, the outlaw stands for justice, Rosalind appears as a boy, the virtuous knight degenerates into a wild man, the straight line forms a circle, the ordinary gives way to the fabulous.
(x)

The forest of myth and romance, therefore, is the place of the unexpected and is perhaps meant to signify, through its associations with darkness, unknown fears.

The Forbidden Forest becomes a place of dread initially through the way in which it is described. When Harry first enters it, there is only a “narrow, winding earth track that disappeared into the thick black trees” (PS 183), and eventually he finds that “the path became almost impossible to follow because the trees were so thick” (186). It is like the “black and frowning wall” of the Mirkwood that faces Tolkien’s Bilbo Baggins (*The Hobbit* 134), and correspondingly fills Rowling’s characters with the same sense of alarm. As well as using darkness to create horror, Rowling uses trees that appear human or conscious. On the edge of the Forbidden Forest is the “gnarled” and “twisted” Whomping

¹⁰ While fantasy and Gothic are seen as different genres, Gothic novels have had an effect on the type of setting common to fantasy writing: the gothic environment is usually “wild forests, ancient castles, labyrinthine passages, ruined graveyards” (Fowler, *History* 273). It is clear that many of these elements form part of Rowling’s setting – a common link between the Gothic and children’s fantasy and adventure fiction (see Wagenaar).

Willow which attacks anyone who comes close to it with a violence bordering on inexplicable rage (CS 59-60). The Forbidden Forest and its malevolent willow tree thus recall Tolkien's Old Man Willow which tries to kill Frodo, Merry and Pip (*The Fellowship of the Ring* 156), and David Eddings's wood where "it felt as if the oaks themselves were aware of [Garion] and were passing information about his movements among themselves with a kind of vegetative communication" (*Queen of Sorcery* 217). This preternatural element encourages the perception of the Forbidden Forest as a place of disorder, and hence of evil.

The dread and mystery of the Forbidden Forest are increased because each time Harry enters it he becomes vulnerable to some form of danger. When he and Ron enter it by themselves, Harry "vividly [remembers] Hagrid advising him not to leave the Forest path" (CS 202), and when they do leave the path, they are captured and nearly killed by a colony of giant spiders with clicking pincers (204-207). The monstrous spiders are terrifying and life-threatening; moreover spiders are traditionally seen as evil through their medieval associations with "the Devil's ensnaring of sinners" (Cooper 216). They share the forest with other creatures and, while some of these are meant to be benevolent, such as the unicorns, Harry does not experience this benevolence when in the forest. Instead, in *The Philosopher's Stone*, when Harry reaches "the heart of the Forest", the unicorn he finds is dead and a hooded figure bends over the unicorn to drink its blood (186-187). This perversion of goodness together with the fact that the forest "hides many secrets" (PS 185), presents it as a place full of foreboding and danger. Even the edge of the forest is threatening: it is on its outskirts that the elder Mr Crouch emerges in his madness (GF 480), and just inside it that Viktor Krum is attacked and knocked unconscious (GF 486). The beasts that live in it, and the forest itself, consequently become expressive of forces that cannot be controlled.

In contrast to the forest is Hogwarts castle, described as one of "the only safe places left" during Voldemort's reign (PS 45). In its normal role as both school and home to Harry, it is a place of order and control. Although it contains many secret passages and stairways, Harry is always given ways to negotiate it, such as the Marauder's Map and the painting of Sir Cadogan, which helps Harry, Ron and Hermione find their way to the North Tower (PA 77-78) – its peculiarities are therefore seen as exciting rather than fearful. The castle itself is meant to recall the idea of a fortress, and its high walls and many towers provide Harry with a refuge from his former unhappiness. The only times his safety is

compromised within the castle are when he enters areas specifically described as outside its usual functioning: Harry meets with Riddle in a *secret* chamber and with Voldemort/Quirrell in an “out of bounds” area (PS 95). These moments are, however, anomalies and Hogwarts is more generally seen as a haven because of the regulated life the students live within its walls. That it is a place of harmony is also exemplified through the many feasts held in the Great Hall throughout the school year, creating an atmosphere of conviviality. The feast at the start of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* – when

Þis kyng lay at Camylot vpon Krystmasse
With mony luflych lorde, ledez of þe best...
For þer þe fest watz ilyche ful fifteen dayes,
With alle þe mete and þe mirþe þat men couþe avyse... (37-38; 44-45)¹¹

– is meant to signify both geniality and the order of the court before it is disrupted by the entrance of the Green Knight. The enjoyable atmosphere of the feasts provides a contrast to that of dread felt in the forest.

Hogwarts is also the converse of the forest because it is within Hogwarts that Harry learns to control and use his power. The introduction of pseudo-Latin spells into the text helps suggest the need to master the marvellous – to create order out of chaos.¹² Although on one level this makes for credibility, it is also important because Latin, long used by the church, is associated with knowledge and enlightenment: Hogwarts becomes a place where the initiates learn to manage their magical skills. At Hogwarts, the effort Harry has to put into controlling his talent is demonstrated through this unfamiliar language. When Professor Lupin tries to teach him the Patronus Charm, Harry struggles to control the spell:

‘Concentrating hard on your happy memory?’
‘Oh – yeah –’ said Harry, quickly forcing his thoughts back to that first broom-ride.
‘*Expecto patrono* – no, *patronum* – sorry – *expecto patronum*, *expecto patronum* –’

¹¹ Tolkien’s translation is as follows

“This king lay at Camelot at Christmas-tide
With many a lovely lord, lieges most noble...
For there the feast was unfailing full fifteen days
With all meats and all mirth that men could devise...” (26)

¹² Correspondingly, the readers’ ability to decipher the spells gives them not only some control over their understanding of the narrative, but also a sense of delight in the way in which Rowling uses Latin to give expression to what are often fairly ordinary ideas. See Appendix B for a more detailed discussion of this “magic”.

Something whooshed suddenly out of the end of his wand; it looked like a wisp of silvery gas. (PA 176)

Ultimately Harry does learn ways to control his magical ability, making Hogwarts an exemplar of order in the narrative.

The contrast between Forest and castle is echoed within the castle walls in the contrast between the two most prominent houses, Gryffindor and Slytherin. Gryffindor means Gryffin d'or, or Gryffin of gold (Cousin 202), and the Gryffin is a fabulous creature made up of the head and talons of an eagle and the body of a lion. It stands for "wisdom and enlightenment, ... strength and vigilance" and is "an emblem of the hero" (Cooper 116-117), – befitting Harry's role in the series. Moreover, when golden, the Gryffin "symbolizes the sun, the sky, the golden light of dawn" (Cooper 117), which is important because of the archetypal association between light and goodness in mythopoeic fantasies. The banner of Gryffindor is described as "red with a gold lion" as its emblem (GF 208).¹³ The lion, long associated with strength and royalty (as in the arms of England), is also, as Brewer points out, the "emblem of the tribe of Judah; Christ is called 'the lion of the tribe of Judah'" (759). In bestiaries, the lion was symbolic of God the Father and the cubs of Christ as they were supposed to be born dead and three days after their birth, the lion was supposed to breathe life into them (Cooper 150-151). The Hogwarts crest displays the Gryffindor lion in heraldic terms as *Rampant*, which is "Emblematic of magnanimity" (Brewer 760), a characteristic of Harry's approach to life particularly evident in *The Prisoner of Azkaban* and *The Goblet of Fire*.

Slytherin House, on the other hand, has connotations of "slithering" or "slither in", as is suggested by the snake, its heraldic device. The serpent or snake (the original tempter in Eden) is symbolic of evil. The snake and dragon are often seen as interchangeable (Cooper 203), but the snake is particularly "malevolent, destructive, deceitful and cunning" (207), the characteristics associated with Slytherin (PS 88).¹⁴ The conflict between lion and snake takes on additional symbolic value in the Arthurian myths, where the story of Yvain demonstrates how medieval writers perceived both creatures. Chrétien de Troyes' version of the tale is as follows:

¹³ Unusually, Rowling does not make the emblem of Gryffindor a Gryffin, just as she makes the emblem of Ravenclaw not a raven but a "bronze eagle" (GF 208)

¹⁴ The Sorting Song makes the differences between Gryffindor and Slytherin clear, and is discussed both in Chapter Three and, briefly, later in this chapter.

When he reached a clearing, he saw a lion and a serpent, which was holding the lion by the tail and scorching his haunches with burning fire. Sir Yvain spent little time looking at the strange sight. When he considered which of the two he would help, he decided to go to aid the lion, because a serpent with its venom and treachery deserved nothing but harm. The serpent was venomous, and fire was darting from its mouth, so full of evil was the creature. (ll. 3342 ff)¹⁵

Even though Yvain is aware that the lion might turn on him after the serpent is dead, he is urged by pity to “help and support the noble beast” nonetheless (297). Andrew Lang gives this task to Sir Percivale who

saw a young serpent bring a young lion by the neck, and after that there passed a great lion, crying and roaring after the serpent, and a fierce battle began between them. Sir Percivale thought to help the lion, as he was the more natural beast of the twain, and he drew his sword and set his shield before him, and gave the serpent a deadly buffet. (*The Book of Romance* 83-84)

The connotations, then, of the names Slytherin and Gryffindor, and the emblems associated with them, show that the two houses are meant to stand in opposition to each other: like the mascots and the setting, their symbolism identifies the didactic intent of the series.

* * *

The didactic nature of mythopoeic fantasy is not only found in its background or setting, but is most often given its strongest expression through characterisation. Traditionally, this type of fantasy writing expresses this fundamental opposition by presenting two groups of characters, one fighting for good (or “light”) and the other for evil (the “dark”). In *The Lord of the Rings*, Frodo is the ring-bearer, but is accompanied by Sam, Gandalf, Legolas, Gimli, Aragorn, Boromir, Pip and Merry. These champions of light are called the nine walkers and oppose the nine Black Riders (the Ringwraiths) as well as Sauron (the Dark Lord) and Saruman the White. In Susan Cooper’s *The Dark is Rising* sequence, the protagonist Bran is aided by Simon, Jane, Barney, Merriman Lyon, Will and John Rowlands, and they are countered by the Dark Lords, including the Lord of the Dark and the Black Rider (776-777). Similarly, David Eddings surrounds the young protagonist of the *Belgariad*,¹⁶ Garion, with a circle of followers, including Belgarath, Polgara, Durnik, Brark, and Silk, and also gives Garion’s enemy Asharak a group of followers. In the Harry

¹⁵ Translated by David Staines (297).

¹⁶ David Eddings’s fantasy writing is a useful example of how popular fantasy has grown out of the more literary type, such as Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings*.

Potter series, while the culmination of each battle between good and evil rests mainly on Harry's strength and ability pitted against that of Voldemort, each is supported by a larger group. Dumbledore, Hagrid, McGonagall, the Weasleys, Lupin, Black, and Ron and Hermione particularly, all form a kind of protective circle around Harry and help him in his fight against Voldemort. Hagrid especially follows in the footsteps of a long line of physically strong protective figures in fantasy fiction, such as Durnik in Eddings's *Belgariad* or the blacksmith John Smith in Cooper's *The Dark is Rising*. Hagrid's protective role is immediately apparent through his physical strength as a half-giant, but also in the role he plays as rescuer. He not only delivers Harry from the ruins of his parents' house as a baby (PS 16), but also saves Harry on other occasions, notably from Knockturn Alley, the street devoted to the Dark Arts (CS 45). Voldemort, too, is supported by various characters. Professor Quirrell gives up his body for Voldemort, and by the close of *The Goblet of Fire*, Voldemort's supporters are listed as Wormtail (Peter Pettigrew), the Malfoys, Macnair, Crabbe, Goyle, Nott and the young Barty Crouch (563-565). One of the means Rowling employs to alert the reader to where each character falls in these groups is through the allusive quality of his name.

Names can be symbolic for the reader, especially through their relationships to literary predecessors. Fowler suggests that onomastics, the study of names, is important because names often mark shifts in mode (*Kinds of Literature* 85), and the types Rowling uses indicate the variety of modes in her narrative. The comic mode appears, for example, in names such as "Dumbledore", Old English for "bumblebee",¹⁷ and "The Burrow", the rough-and-ready home of the Weasley family, which suggests the weasel-like quality of their life-style.¹⁸ The extent of her research, too, is shown in her naming the house-elf

¹⁷ I am indebted to Dr Damian Shaw for pointing out the interesting fact that both the words Dumbledore and Hagrid appear coincidentally in one sentence in Chapter XX of Hardy's *The Mayor of Casterbridge*: Elizabeth says "that she no longer spoke of 'dumbledores' but of 'humble bees'" and when "she had not slept she did not quaintly tell the servants next morning that she had been 'hag-rid,' but that she had 'suffered from indigestion'" (154-155).

¹⁸ This section provides detail about some of the names in the Harry Potter series that have bearing on the ethical purpose of the novels, but some names are appropriate to character rather than theme. For example, Argus Filch is a suitable name for a watchful caretaker prone to confiscating items from the pupils; Argus was Io's jealous watcher (Brewer 62) and "filch" means "to steal or purloin" (Brewer 461). Similarly, the divination teacher, Professor Trelawney, is named Sybill – in classical literature Sibyls play a prophetic role (Brewer 1138). The use of names calculated to inspire a feeling of enchantment as well as humour are often used in children's fiction: in Elizabeth Goudge's *The Little White Horse*, for example, some names are miss Heliotrope, Sir Merryweather, Wiggins, Moonacre Manor, and the village Silverydew (8-9). Brewer's *Dictionary of Phrase and Fable* is useful in determining the significance of the names in Rowling's series, as she used it extensively while writing (Smith 96).

Dobby: Dobby is an archaic word for a house-elf.¹⁹ Aside from indicating a shift in mode, however, fantasy writing has conventionally emphasised names as a way of hinting at a character's identity. In Ursula Le Guin's *Earthsea Trilogy*, for example, naming is central to the narrative: to know someone's true name is to control them. Ged, the protagonist of the first book, *A Wizard of Earthsea*, is known only as "Sparrowhawk" except to those whom he is prepared to trust with his life. One of the most poignant moments is when Ged's friend, Vetch, tells Ged his true name, and the narrator comments:

No one knows a man's true name but himself and his namer. He may choose at length to tell it to his brother, or his wife, or his friend, yet even those few will never use it where any third person may hear it. ... If plain men hide their true name from all but a few they love and trust utterly, so much more must wizardly men, being more dangerous, and more endangered. Who knows a man's name, holds that man's life in his keeping. (*The Earthsea Trilogy* 70)

Later in the novel, when Ged is searching for the evil spirit he has let into his world, he knows he cannot conquer it "unless [he] can learn the word that masters it: its name" (148). Le Guin's suggestion here is that names are vital to an understanding of the true nature of a person, and the same idea is important in Rowling's work. Dumbledore, at the end of *The Philosopher's Stone*, says Harry must "Always use the proper name for things. Fear of a name increases fear of the thing itself" (216). These words are a comment on the fact that almost nobody in the wizarding world dare speak the name of Voldemort, preferring to call him "You-Know-Who" or "He Who Must Not Be Named". Professor Lupin's lesson on defeating Boggarts similarly becomes a metaphor for the importance of knowing what exactly something is. Boggarts are "shape-shifters" and are capable of assuming whatever shapes will frighten their victims the most. Lupin's lesson is that, as long as you know what shape a Boggart will take when you see it, you can defeat it by forcing it into something that you find amusing. The first defence, in this instance, is *knowing* what the Boggart will become: to know what it is, is to control it. Just as Harry must know who Voldemort really is by knowing his name, so the reader is able to identify the roles of certain characters through knowing the meanings of their names.

¹⁹ Brewer also points out that "dobbies lived in the house, were very thin and shaggy, very kind to servants and children, and did many a little service when people had their hands full" (361).

The characterisation of Harry, already discussed as that of a heroic knightly figure,²⁰ is hinted at through his name. Like Arthur, Harry is little more than a child when he comes into his inheritance – in Harry’s case his magical inheritance, in Arthur’s his kingship. Harry is figured before this as a type of Everyman or nobody, any “Tom, Dick or Harry” (Brewer 1235), and his surname, “Potter”, is resonant of creativity and possibly represents his humble origins (Geils n.pag.). The unassuming nature of his name emphasises that his role is to represent the ordinary person taken out of his everyday surroundings and endowed with a special destiny and power – the archetypal situation of the hero. As in the case of Harry, the naming of his opposite, Voldemort, is significant. The fact that Voldemort’s real name is Tom Marvolo Riddle, and that “I am Lord Voldemort” is an anagram of his true name, is significant because not only does his name become the “Riddle” of who he is, but the name “Tom” is as ordinary as “Harry”. Voldemort’s obsession with the purity, or rather impurity, of his wizarding blood, is reflected in his rejection of the ordinary “Tom Riddle”. He is named after his father, but is repulsed by his connection to the non-wizarding world, calling his father “A muggle and a fool” (*GF* 560). The extent of Voldemort’s desire for power is also evident in his chosen name: it can be broken into “vol”, meaning “flight” in French, and “mort” meaning “death” (Cousin 309, 192). His name, therefore, means “flight from death” and is apt because Voldemort’s goal at the height of his power was “to conquer death” (*GF* 566) so as to give him everlasting power. Not only has he created his own name, but the majority of the characters in the wizarding world refuse to utter it. The refusal to call Voldemort by his name indicates the enormity of the fear he induces in the wizarding world, and accentuates our understanding of his power over the wizarding population.

The names of other characters in the series also suggest the role they play in the pitting of good against evil. Albus Dumbledore, for example, is the one wizard Voldemort feared during his original ascent to power at the time of Harry’s birth. The Latin “Albus” means “white” (Lewis and Short 81),²¹ a colour traditionally denoting “purity, simplicity, and candour; innocence, truth and hope” (Brewer 1295). “Albus” also refers back to when England was called “Albion” or “Albany” by the Celts (Brewer 27), and adds to the generally English flavour of the series.

²⁰ See Chapter Three for a more complete discussion of Harry’s role as a hero figure, and the impact of knightly codes of conduct on how Rowling shapes his character.

²¹ All Latin translations in this chapter are taken from Lewis and Short’s *A Dictionary of Latin*, hereafter abbreviated to “*L&S*”.

While Dumbledore is a pivotal character, the positive influence on Harry's life is first felt through his parents, Lily and James Potter. From the beginning they show Harry the right path to take: in their dying moments they resist Voldemort, refusing to bow to his evil. Instead they sacrifice themselves to save Harry. Their roles as epitomes of goodness are emphasised through their links with traditional iconography. Lily is named after the flower often associated with purity (*COD* 687) and the Virgin Mary (Brewer 755), an archetypal image of goodness in Christian mythology. It is essential to the characterisation of Harry as the ideal knightly figure that it is the purity and force of his mother's love that protect him from Voldemort's curse. Harry's father also proves to be a protective force, but in a slightly different way. James's ability to transform himself into a stag when at school earns him the nickname Prongs. When Harry manages to produce the Patronus charm that protects him from the Dementors, it comes in the shape of Prongs, a dazzling white stag (*PA* 300). Not only is it fitting that Harry's protective Patronus comes in his father's shape; it is also important that his father's animal shape was a stag. The stag is symbolic of Christ because of "the superstition that it draws serpents by its breath from their holes, and then tramples them to death" (Brewer 1172). Even in non-Christian mythology the stag trampling on the serpent "depicts the conflicting opposites, positive and negative, the final triumph of good over evil, of light against darkness and the spirit over matter" (Cooper 216). James and Lily's strong associations with traditional symbols of good are important in emphasising Harry's position in the novel's metaphorical battle.

Other characters among Harry's circle of influence and protection are also given symbolic names. Minerva McGonagall, Harry's housemistress, is linked with the virtue of knowledge: Minerva is the Roman name for the Greek Pallas Athene, the goddess of wisdom (*L&S* 1145). The name of Harry's closest friend recalls the spear King Arthur carried into battle, which was called "Ron" (Jones 76). The allusion to Arthur's weapon suggests that Ron is, in some way, one of Harry's protectors – a role Ron takes, for example, during the symbolic game of "wizard chess" in *The Philosopher's Stone*. Harry's godfather, Sirius Black, is also important as a role model and a link between the orphaned Harry and his parents. His name suggests "Black Dog" (Sirius is colloquially called the "dog star") and it is in the form of a "gigantic, shaggy black dog" that Black appears *The Prisoner of Azkaban* (224). The dog is traditionally associated with the qualities of "fidelity, watchfulness and nobility" (Cooper 74), and these are important characteristics of

Black, who is faithful to Harry's parents and exerts all his power to find and protect Harry from Voldemort and his servants.

On the side of evil, the family with the strongest connections to Voldemort is the Malfoys. This name recalls the use Spenser made of names in *The Faerie Queene* where, for example, Sansfoy (I, ii, 25) means 'without faith' and Malbecco (III, ix, 6) means 'evil horn'. Here the French 'mal', 'evil' and 'foi', 'faith' (Cousin 176, 131) are combined similarly to create a name meaning evil faith, as befits the family faithful to Voldemort.²² The Malfoy most present in the series is Harry's main enemy at school, Draco. His first name is the Latin for both 'dragon' and 'snake' (Colbert 130). This is significant since in the Middle Ages, the dragon was seen as "the symbol of sin in general and paganism in particular" because of the association between Satan and dragons (Revelations 12:9), and with the serpent in the Eden story (Brewer 378). Obviously the symbolism here presents Draco Malfoy as the opposition to the knightly Harry and as the representative of Slytherin.²³

Draco's parents also have distinctive names considering their position as the most powerful of Voldemort's supporters. His mother, Narcissa, is named after the beautiful youth Narcissus who saw his reflection in a river and wasted away with desire for it (*Metamorphoses* II 391-530). This casts Narcissa as a representative of the personal vanity that Narcissus symbolises, and is a fitting name for the mother of the proud Draco. Lucius is mentioned in Geoffrey of Monmouth and Wace, and is said to have demanded tribute from King Arthur (Lacy 342), but Arthur refused and waged war against him. This could make Lucius Malfoy a fitting name for the man who opposes Harry, an Arthur figure, in his fight against evil.²⁴

Another character ranged on the side of evil is Wormtail. Peter Pettigrew is nicknamed Wormtail because he is an animagus, capable of transforming into a rat. While initially it is thought that Peter/Wormtail is on the side of Dumbledore, it is he who

²² Medieval witchcraft is supposed to have made use of the *maleficia* curse, which apparently caused calamity to befall the person it was directed against, and Colbert has argued that the name Malfoy is related to the *maleficia* curse through Latin 'maleficus', which was an evil-doer (129-130).

²³ His name is also significant in that it echoes that of the Athenian law-maker Draco, of whom the orator Demades said that "Draco's code was written in human blood" because every offence in his code was a capital offence (Brewer 378). In *The Chamber of Secrets*, Draco Malfoy is the primary proponent of allowing only pure-blood wizards into Hogwarts and excluding "Mudbloods", or pupils from non-magical families. The harsh penalties Draco Malfoy would like to inflict on wizards stemming from Muggle families are reminiscent of the Athenian Draco.

²⁴ Colbert argues that the first name of Lucius Malfoy, Draco's father, has echoes of "Lucifer", a name of Satan (130), but I would suggest that the name has Arthurian links.

betrayed Harry's parents to Voldemort and is one of Voldemort's staunchest supporters. He seeks the weakened Voldemort in his hiding place in an Albanian forest, rescues him, and finally sacrifices his hand for the potion that resurrects Voldemort. Pettigrew is called Wormtail because he naturally takes the form of a rat (with a worm-like tail) when he transforms into an animal,²⁵ and has lived as Ron Weasley's pet rat Scabbers since Voldemort's disappearance. In the same way that James Potter and Sirius Black become animals representative of their characterisation, so Wormtail's transformation into a rat carries with it the connotations of the rat as an animal that "forsake[s] a losing side for the stronger party" (Brewer 1040), as does the name "Scabbers", which has hints of the word "scab", the name given to people who desert the popular cause during a strike (COD 1074).

In the case of Wormtail, his name echoes that of a similar character in *The Lord of the Rings*. When Sirius Black and Professor Lupin force him to transfigure back to his human form, Wormtail appears as

a very short man, hardly taller than Harry and Hermione. His thin colourless hair was unkempt and there was a large bald patch on top. He had the shrunken appearance of a plump man who had lost a lot of weight in a short time. His skin looked grubby, almost like Scabbers's fur, and something of the rat lingered around his pointed nose, his small, watery eyes. (PA 269)

Wormtail immediately starts "grovelling, his hands clasped in front of him as though praying" (PA 273) and when he is threatened with death, he starts to cry, "cowering on the floor" (PA 274). He is also described as having a "weak, pale face" (GF 556) and when Voldemort gives him a silvery arm to replace his amputated one, "He scrambled forward on his knees and kissed the hem of Voldemort's robes" (GF 563). This is a remarkably similar portrait to Tolkien's Wormtongue. Not only does Treebeard compare Wormtongue to "a Draggled rat" (*The Two Towers* 210), but he is described variously as white-faced and "cringing" (*The Two Towers* 145), and "grovelling" (146). Later, "In his eyes was the hunted look of a beast seeking some gap in the ring of his enemies. He licked his lips with a long pale tongue" (*The Two Towers* 146). When he realises that he is found out by Théoden, "His hands worked. His eyes glittered. Such malice was in them that men stepped back from him. He bared his teeth; and then with a hissing breath he spat before the King's feet, and darting to one side, he fled down the stair" (*The Two Towers* 148).

²⁵ It also suggests someone who is a follower of evil. If evil is represented by the dragon, often called the worm in medieval writing, Wormtail is the tail of the dragon (in this case Voldemort).

The flight of Wormtongue is similar to Wormtail's desperate run when he escapes from Harry in *The Prisoner of Azkaban*. Both are small, pale men whose obsequiousness and affinity for evil is disgusting to the protagonists, and whose characterisation is suggested first and foremost through their names.

The influence of Tolkien can be extended to the Dementors. Again, the name Rowling gives them suggests their role. To be demented is to be mad or driven "out of one's mind" (COD 308), which is exactly the effect the Dementors have on the prisoners they guard at Azkaban. Mythopoeic fantasy often includes such strange and sinister creatures within the circle of evil and in Rowling's case, the Dementors are Voldemort's "natural allies" (GF 564). Harry first sees a Dementor on the train to Hogwarts:

Standing in the doorway, illuminated by the shivering flames in Lupin's hand, was a cloaked figure that towered to the ceiling. Its face was completely hidden beneath its hood....

And then the thing beneath the hood, whatever it was, drew a long, slow, rattling breath, as though it was trying to suck something more than air from its surroundings.

An intense cold swept over them all. Harry felt his own breath catch in his chest. The cold went deeper than his skin. It was inside his chest, it was inside his very heart... (PA 65-66)

This figure is instantly recognisable and derives mythic proportions from its extensive use in literature. The most obvious analogue is the hooded skeleton Death, personified many times over. Milton's description of Death becomes a standard as he describes a shape, "If shape it might be called that shape had none/ Distinguishable in member, join, or limb;/ Or substance might be called that shadow seemed" (*Paradise Lost* ii 667-669). As well as drawing on this image, frightening in its very insubstantiality, Rowling also draws on the traditional incubus figure, a "nightmare, anything that weighs heavily on the mind" (Brewer 652). This corresponds with Lupin's description of the Dementors as creatures that feed upon "hope, happiness, the desire to survive" (PA 176). The echoes from Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* are also apparent. The dark, cloaked figures of the Ringwraiths (also called the Nazgûl or Black Riders) create a similar impression:

Three or four tall black figures were standing there on the slope, looking down on them. So black were they that they seemed like black holes in the deep shade behind them. Frodo thought he heard a faint hiss as of venomous breath and felt a thin piercing chill. (*The Fellowship of the Ring* 239-240)

Later they instil in Gandalf's group a "blind fear and a deadly cold" (*The Two Towers* 237), creating the same sensory impression as the Dementors do, through both their names and their description.

Just as the names of good and bad characters can represent their disposition, so the ambiguities in other characters can be seen by their names. The name Lockhart is Teutonic for "Strong Beguiler" (Brewer 766) and is fitting for the professor who, to gain fame and fortune, pretends to have defeated many monsters and evil wizards.²⁶ The Defence Against the Dark Arts teacher in Harry's fourth year is suitably named, too. While Moody suggests someone whose mood swings, more importantly Mad-Eye Moody's real first name is Alastor, which means "tormentor" (*L&S* 79) and is also representative of the "evil genius of a house" (Brewer 26), suggesting his skills are ranged on the side of evil rather than good. This is ironic because the ostensible Alastor Moody we see in *The Goblet of Fire* is really the evil servant of Voldemort, Barty Crouch ("crouch" suggesting a predatory concealment). Professor Lupin's name has links with the typical were-figure, half-man, half-beast,²⁷ of myth: Lupus is "wolf" in Latin (*L&S* 1086). The kindly Lupin becomes a violent werewolf during the full moon when unable to control himself without the correct potion, but he is one of Harry's most important mentors. His presence indicates the importance of seeing beyond appearances to the reality of his characterisation as the exact opposite of the monster the wizarding world believes him to be.

One of the most ambiguous characters in the series is Severus Snape. He does not fit neatly into either the circle of Harry's protectors or the supporters of Voldemort, but his name is still expressive of his character. Snape has a Dickensian onomatopoeia and echoes words such as "snoop", "snake", "snipe" or "snap" – certainly words that could be used to describe his characterisation as the sarcastic bullying teacher.²⁸ Rowling's constant

²⁶ As well as pretending other people's adventures are his own, he is also proud of his good looks, and is thus named after a famous handsome Scottish robber called Gilderoy (Brewer 518).

²⁷ "Wer" is Old English for man (*COD* 1394), making werewolf 'man-wolf' and were-bear 'man-bear'. Lupin follows in the tradition because he is like the were-bear of Beowulf, who directly influences Tolkien's creation of Beorn (Shippey 31-32). Beorn provides aid to Bilbo Baggins and his friends when he transforms into a bear (*The Hobbit* 127). In the *Belgariad*, Eddings uses this same idea when Garion is attacked and his protector Barak rushes to his aid. Garion sees Barak, but "Oddly, as if somehow occupying the same space as Barak, there was also a huge, hideous bear" (*Pawn of Prophecy* 201).

²⁸ Severus not only means "strict, austere or severe" (*L&S* 1686), but also imitates the word "sever", meaning "divide" (*COD* 1110), which may point to the divided nature of his character – unpleasant as he is, he does not fall easily into the categories of good or bad. It is interesting to note another link with the Arthurian chronicles: they often mention the emperor Severus who divided Britain into two halves for defensive purposes (Brewer 1125, Jones 16).

employment of negative words to describe him, such as “cold” (CS 62), “waspy” (CS 140), and “dangerous” (PA 95), becomes slightly overdone, but serves to emphasise his nature clearly. Snape constantly makes it clear that he “loathed” Harry’s father when Snape and James were at school together (PS 210), and Rowling ensures the reader knows how much Snape hates Harry:

Snape’s behaviour towards Harry over the past week had been quite alarming. Harry wouldn’t have thought it possible that Snape’s dislike for him could increase, but it certainly had done. A muscle twitched unpleasantly at the corner of Snape’s thin mouth every time he looked at Harry, and he was constantly flexing his fingers, as though itching to place them around Harry’s throat. (PA 313)

Yet, while Harry steadfastly believes that someone as malicious as Snape must be evil, he learns that when he thought Snape was trying to kill him, Snape was actually “muttering a counter curse” to the one Quirrell was using to make Harry fall off his broom (PS 209). Moreover, Dumbledore always insists that Harry treat Snape with respect (PS 217), and when Harry hints to Professor Lupin that Snape might be trying to poison Lupin, Lupin merely drinks Snape’s potion without qualm or comment (PS 118). By the end of *The Goblet of Fire*, the characterisation of Snape is less ambiguous, although there is still an element of doubt. When Voldemort goes round his circle of followers, he mentions

six missing death eaters ... three dead in my service. One, too cowardly to return ... he will pay. One, who I believe has left me for ever ... he will be killed, of course ... and one, who remains my most faithful servant, and who has already re-entered my service. (GF 565)

We learn that Barty Crouch is the faithful servant, and that Karkaroff has run away; the one person who seems truly to have renounced Voldemort is Snape (GF 616). This is confirmed by Dumbledore who says to Snape that he should work with Snape’s old enemy, Sirius Black, because Dumbledore trusts them both and they “are on the same side now” (GF 618). Normally any character who hates the protagonist in didactic fantasy is automatically ranged on the side of evil. By making Snape an ex-Death Eater who is now in Dumbledore’s service, Rowling works towards explaining the complexities of his character and leaves space for his development. But by presenting Snape in such conflicting ways, Rowling is perhaps also suggesting that human nature is, in its essence, less simple than the genre’s usual characterisations would suggest.

Our ability to distinguish how characters are placed within the archetypal battle between good and evil is important for our understanding of the narratives since how characters use their magic becomes symbolic of their morality: power is a central concern in high fantasy and in the Harry Potter series, as is typical of the genre, magic is used as a metaphor for power. Arthur Morgan states that “The over-riding theme of modern fantasy and science fiction is *power*, the ways in which each of us is tempted to impose his will on people and the world” (41, original emphasis). The use to which power can be put is demonstrated most clearly in the Harry Potter series through the characterisation of Dumbledore and through the contrast between the characters of Voldemort and Harry.

Dumbledore stems from a long line of Merlin figures. His appearance resembles that of the archetypal sorcerer:

He was tall, thin and very old, judging by the silver of his hair and beard, which were both long enough to tuck into his belt. He was wearing long robes, a purple cloak which swept the ground and high-heeled, buckled boots. His blue eyes were light, bright and sparkling behind half-moon spectacles and his nose was very long and crooked, as though it had been broken at least twice. (PS 12)

This description shows the influence of Arthurian literature on modern fantasy, as the conventional Merlin figure is almost always embodied in the descriptions of the old guiding wizards common to high fantasy. Merlyn in *The Once and Future King* has blue eyes and a long white beard and white hair (23), and wears a “flowing gown” and a “pointed hat” (22). In Tolkien’s *The Hobbit*, Gandalf is described as “an old man with a staff. He had a tall pointed blue hat, a long grey cloak, a silver scarf over which a white beard hung down below his waist, and immense black boots” (4). Cooper’s Great-Uncle Merry, the Professor Merriman Lyon,²⁹ is seen as “tall, and straight, with a lot of very thick, wild, white hair” (*The Dark is Rising* 10). Merlin figures are used in fantasy writing to provide instruction to the protagonist, and these descriptions suggest age and venerability: if the central concern of fantasy is power, there must be a touchstone who teaches the young protagonist how to use his magical powers responsibly (Sullivan 145).

This mentor figure must command respect and embody wisdom, and it is vital that he shows the extent of his power; unlike Hagrid’s, Dumbledore’s power is supernatural, not

²⁹ It is worthwhile to note that the conflation of Merriman Lyon is Merlin, as one of the protagonists, Barney, notes in *Over Sea, Under Stone* (*The Dark is Rising* 173).

physical.³⁰ Our ability to recognise the power of the mentor figure has an important effect on our conception of the protagonist. The mentor wizard must be powerful enough to teach his protégé, yet his power must not be the central one in the narrative: that power belongs to the protagonist. By showing the mentor as extremely powerful, then, the author suggests the depths of the protagonist's power. Although many characters remark on Dumbledore's power, Rowling demonstrates it most effectively at the end of *The Goblet of Fire*. Here Dumbledore discovers that the evil Barty Crouch has been impersonating Harry's teacher, Mad-Eye Moody.

At that moment, Harry fully understood for the first time why people said Dumbledore was the only wizard Voldemort had ever feared. The look upon Dumbledore's face as he stared down at the unconscious form of Mad-Eye Moody was more terrible than Harry could ever have imagined. There was no benign smile upon Dumbledore's face, no twinkle in the eyes behind the spectacles. There was cold fury in every line of the ancient face; a sense of power radiated from Dumbledore as through he was giving off burning heat. (589-590)

Even in this scene, though, his tremendous power is shown to be harnessed for the good, in order to emphasise the underlying morality of the narrative. Minerva McGonagall points out that, during Voldemort's initial rise to power, the only reason he exercised powers Dumbledore did not was that Dumbledore was "too ... *noble* to use them" (PS 14, original emphasis). Rowling's characterisation of Dumbledore as powerful, yet mindful of the dangers of power, is similar to that of Gandalf who refuses the ring when Frodo offers it to him, saying "With that power I should have power too great and terrible" (*The Fellowship of the Ring* 87). Correspondingly, Belgarath, the mentor figure in *The Belgariad*, is offered power over half the world if he allies with the evil Ctuchik, but he is strong enough to resist and claims that he does not want either half the world or the whole world, he wants none of it (*Magician's Gambit* 298-299). Belgarath could easily attempt to gain complete power for himself instead of working for the good of the universe as a whole, and, like Belgarath and Gandalf, Dumbledore never loses sight of the importance of working for the good of the world and against the power Voldemort wields.

Like Dumbledore's, Voldemort's presence in the text is pervasive, even though he is literally described on only a few occasions. The series begins with Hagrid telling Harry

³⁰ By portraying Hagrid as a half-giant and as someone who was expelled from Hogwarts as a child, Rowling emphasises his physical, not supernatural, power. Hagrid's ability to practise magic is also covert: Harry suspects that his wand, which he is not supposed to use and which was symbolically snapped in two when he was expelled, is kept inside his pink umbrella (CS 90).

that Voldemort disappeared and “Some say he died” (PS 46), but from the moment Harry enters the Forbidden Forest for the first time, it is clear that Voldemort is alive, even if barely so. On this occasion, the centaur Firenze gives Harry enough information for him to realise that Voldemort is not dead, but has “clung to life”, awaiting his chance to regain power (189). From this point in the series, then, not only is Harry aware of Voldemort’s quest to return to power, but also, thanks to Firenze’s refusal to remain neutral, the need to fear Voldemort is made apparent.

When Voldemort does appear, Rowling’s descriptions of him induce horror and revulsion as well as indicate the power he still wields. First just his face is described as he possesses Quirrell’s body (PS 212-214); then the memory of Voldemort’s sixteen-year-old self appears in *The Chamber of Secrets*; and then Harry sees “something ugly, slimy and blind.... It was hairless and scaly-looking, a dark, raw, reddish black” (GF 555-556). Finally Voldemort appears as his fully resurrected self. On every occasion, there is no doubt about his power and desire for complete control of the wizarding world. His language is commanding and he consistently uses the death of Harry’s parents as a way to try and weaken Harry’s resolve. He speaks of Harry’s mother dismissively during the quest for the Philosopher’s Stone and says to Harry “Now give me the Stone, unless you want her to have died in vain” (213). At the end of *The Goblet of Fire*, the first words Voldemort says are “*Kill the spare*” (553, original emphasis) as he commands his helper, Wormtail, to kill Cedric Diggory. The denotation of Cedric as “the spare” shows how little value Voldemort attaches to the lives of others, and the violence of Cedric’s death demonstrates Voldemort’s depravity. The description of Cedric’s murder is followed by moments of increasing repugnance: the cracking open of a grave, Wormtail’s willing self-amputation of his arm, and the forcible extraction of Harry’s blood. When Voldemort’s followers, the Death Eaters,³¹ arrive, it is apparent that they support Voldemort not out of respect but out of fear. The Death Eaters are compelled to appear in Voldemort’s presence when the tattoo of “a skull, with a snake protruding from its mouth” burns black on their arms (GF 560). The brand, known as the Dark Mark,³² is a symbol of Voldemort’s ownership of them, and their subjugation is demonstrated when they all approach

³¹ The name “Death Eater” recalls the meaning of Voldemort’s own chosen name as “flight from death”.

³² This tattoo, like Harry’s scar, indicates their allegiance – but in their case it is their loyalty to the Dark Lord. It takes on even more sinister overtones when it is linked to the “Devil’s Mark” which was believed in medieval times to have been imprinted on people involved in black magic (Colbert 55-56).

Voldemort on their knees and call him “Master”. When one of the Death Eaters asks forgiveness for doubting Voldemort’s ability to return to “the immensity of [his] power”, Voldemort tortures him until he “writhed and shrieked” with pain (562). In each case the horror of the event is exceeded only by the terror both Harry and Voldemort’s followers feel in the face of his cruelty: Rowling *must* show the extent of Voldemort’s power, and of its evil, in order for it to be a real threat in the narrative.

Harry’s power is presented in opposition to Voldemort’s, but what makes the presentation of Harry so effective is that Rowling refuses, as the previous chapter argues, to depict his acquisition of power as easy: he learns throughout the novels. Initially, though, Harry becomes a hero in the wizarding world because, as a mere baby, he is able to withstand the curse of death Voldemort lays on him, and, more importantly, because the curse rebounds, destroying Voldemort’s powers. The lightning-bolt scar on Harry’s forehead is a result of Voldemort’s attempt to curse him, and, because it throbs when Voldemort is near or when his hatred for Harry is particularly strong (*GF* 612), it becomes a symbol of Harry’s power and ability to withstand the Dark Lord. Birthmarks and scarring are common ways to distinguish the hero in literature, and are used extensively in fantasy as a symbol of the protagonist’s magical power. Garion, the young protagonist in David Eddings’s *Pawn of Prophecy*, develops a mark on his hand (54) that shows he is the heir to the Rivan Throne. It is also the channel through which his magical powers work, leaving “a peculiar warmth in the silvery mark on the palm of his right hand” (*Magician’s Gambit* 87). Similarly, the protagonist in Susan Cooper’s *The Dark is Rising* sequence, Will Stanton, bears a scar. His is in the shape of a quartered circle which he thinks “is like a brand” (*The Dark is Rising* 215). This mark becomes a protection for him later when the epitome of evil, the Black Rider, attacks him and Will throws his arm over his face, exposing his scarred wrist and warding off the Rider’s malevolence (309). In each case, the scar or birthmark becomes a symbol of the power the protagonist is, literally, marked out as bearing. For example, Cooper’s Will Stanton is told by his mentor, Merriman Lyon, that “Any great gift or talent is a burden” but since he was “born with the gift, then [he] must serve it” (*The Dark is Rising* 211).³³ Similarly, Eddings’s Garion is shocked to discover his hereditary magical ability and asks his aunt if he can “get rid of it.” She replies, “You can’t renounce it, my Garion. It’s part of you” (*Queen of Sorcery* 317).

³³ This idea is similar to that expressed in the Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14-30).

While the protagonist cannot renounce his power, it is the way he uses it that emphasises the narrative's ethical meaning.

Although Harry is marked out as different from the beginning, how he chooses to use his power is pivotal to our vision of morality in the series. It is not immediately assumed that he will use it for the common good, and its potential is given expression through the complicated relationship between Harry and Voldemort. Tom Riddle, the memory of Voldemort, points out to Harry that

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... (CS 233, original emphasis)

In addition to these likenesses, Rowling suggests a deeper link between Harry and Voldemort through the strange connection between their wands. Harry is told by Mr Ollivander, the wand-maker, that "it's really the wand that chooses the wizard" (PS 63), and, after Harry is given a wand containing a phoenix feather, Mr Ollivander recalls:

It so happens that the phoenix whose tail feather is in your wand, gave another feather – just one other. It is very curious indeed that you should be destined for this wand when its brother – why, its brother gave you that scar. (65)

Not only do their wands emphasise the connection between Harry and Voldemort; by making the link a phoenix feather, Rowling hints at another relationship. The phoenix, the bird that regenerates itself from the ashes of its own pyre, is a symbol of resurrection, and both Harry and Voldemort are strangely similar in this respect. Harry, who should have died as a baby when Voldemort cursed him, is left with nothing but a scar and Voldemort, who should have died when the curse rebounded, is able to resurrect himself using powerful dark magic. These links suggest that the similarities between Harry and Voldemort are not merely superficial. Rowling makes it clear that Harry's power itself is closely related to that of Voldemort, and expresses this through Harry's concern over why the Sorting Hat confirms that he "*would* have done well in Slytherin" (CS 155, original emphasis), "the house which had turned out more dark witches and wizards than any other" (CS 61).

The fact that the Sorting Hat sees in Harry a suitability for both Gryffindor and Slytherin is important because, as it sings to the first-years,

*There's nothing hidden in your head
The Sorting Hat can't see,
So try me on and I will tell you
Where you ought to be. (PS 88)*

The Sorting Hat tells Harry that deciding which house he should join is “difficult” (90) and, because it can see into Harry’s mind, it recognises that his power can be potentially used in two very different ways. In a later Sorting Song, the Hat relates that the founder of Slytherin, Salazar Slytherin, was “*Shrewd*” and “*power-hungry*”, and “*Loved those of great ambition*” (GF 157), suggesting the quest for self-aggrandisement and power characteristic of the people selected for Slytherin. By making Slytherin one of the founders of Hogwarts, and including within the Hogwarts structure a house closely related to evil and darkness, Rowling suggests that evil is not something separate from good, but that anything contains the potential for good or evil. Harry recognises this when expressing his concerns to Dumbledore:

‘Professor Dumbledore ... Riddle said I’m like him. Strange likenesses, he said ...’

‘*Did* he, now?’ said Dumbledore, looking thoughtfully under his thick silver eyebrows at Harry. ‘And what do you think, Harry?’

‘I don’t think I’m like him!’ said Harry, more loudly than he’d intended. ‘I mean, I’m – I’m in *Gryffindor*, I’m ...’

But he fell silent, a lurking doubt resurfacing in his mind.

‘Professor,’ he started again after a moment, ‘the Sorting Hat told me I’d – I’d have done well in Slytherin. Everyone thought I was Slytherin’s heir for a while ... because I can speak Parseltongue...’

‘You can speak Parseltongue, Harry,’ said Dumbledore calmly, ‘because Lord Voldemort – who is the last remaining ancestor of Salazar Slytherin – can speak Parseltongue. Unless I’m much mistaken, he transferred some of his own powers to you the night he gave you that scar. Not something he intended to do, I’m sure ...’

‘Voldemort put a bit of himself in *me*?’ Harry said, thunderstruck.

‘It certainly seems so.’

‘So I *should* be in Slytherin,’ Harry said, looking desperately into Dumbledore’s face. ‘The Sorting Hat could see Slytherin’s power in me, and it –’

‘Put you in Gryffindor,’ said Dumbledore calmly. ‘Listen to me, 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 the rules,’ he added, his moustache quivering again. ‘Yet the Sorting Hat put you in Gryffindor. You know why that was. Think.’

‘It only put me in Gryffindor,’ said Harry 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.’* (CS 244-245, original emphases)

Harry’s discussion with Dumbledore is pivotal because it emphasises the issue of choice as a central concern in the narrative: the human condition allows for both good and evil, and the true hero is able to make the choice that determines to what end his power is used.

* * *

At the start of the series, Quirrell, who is harbouring Voldemort inside himself, says to Harry “There is no good or evil, there is only power, and those too weak to seek it” (PS 211). Quirrell’s reward for seeking power is death. Harry’s reward, on the same occasion, is to find the Philosopher’s Stone. This incident becomes a metaphor for the kind of power that comes from eternal life and wealth and, although the stone is destroyed, it becomes a symbol of Harry’s choice in favour of a moral life, rather than the living death that Voldemort desires.

Rowling’s purpose in creating a secondary world in which the marvellous plays an integral and also symbolic role is to show that there is not “only power”. The reader is enticed into the narrative through the believability and delightfulness of the wizarding world, and it is this sub-creative skill that allows the text to become symbolic. Without the symbolic element, the marvellous would be merely extraneous detail or (albeit enjoyable) distraction. Instead, because she makes the marvellous a meaningful component of her sub-creation, she allows it to work as a metaphor for the role of power within the battle between good and evil. The morality of Rowling’s stories, which we can apply to real life, thus becomes apparent through its very fictiveness: as Ursula le Guin writes, “it is by such beautiful non-facts that we fantastic human beings may arrive, in our peculiar fashion, at the truth” (“Dragons” 36).

Conclusion

“When the ‘literary’ poets arrive they take up the extravagances of popular romance with a smile – a smile half of amusement and half of affection – like men returning to something that had charmed their childhood. They too will write of giants and ‘orcs’, of fairies and flying horses, of Saracens foaming at the mouth. They will do it with an occasional gravity, referring us to Turpin whenever the adventures are most preposterous, and it will be great fun. But they find that their pleasure is not only the pleasure of mockery. Even while you laugh at it, the old incantation works. Willy-nilly the fairies allure, the monsters alarm, the labyrinthine adventures draw you on.” C. S. Lewis, *The Allegory of Love: A Study in Medieval Tradition* (299)

The last three chapters of this thesis have consistently emphasised a moral reading of the Harry Potter series: a common didactic purpose links the genres that Rowling adapts. The traditional school story has long been associated with a peculiarly Victorian morality, even in its early twentieth-century versions presenting a set of values associated with the English gentleman. Since many characteristics of this so-called English or gentlemanly behaviour were appropriated from medieval and classical sources, it is natural that Rowling should draw also on romance and partly on epic for her characterisation of Harry as the hero. Modern fantasy, too, incorporates a chivalric world view that accentuates the depiction of the virtuous hero battling the forces of evil.

Assessing an unfinished series can be problematic. It is difficult to tell how the final three books will follow on from the first four, but Rowling’s concern with power and morality will surely feature prominently in the remainder of the series: at the close of the fourth book we are left with many questions. For instance, will Rowling resolve her ambivalent treatment of Snape, given the contrast between Harry’s perception of him as sarcastic and bullying, and Dumbledore’s insistence on his overall reliability? Will the links between Harry and Voldemort become increasingly complex? – the spell aiding Voldemort’s resurrection at the end of *The Goblet of Fire* necessitates “*blood of the enemy ... forcibly taken*” (557) and Voldemort claims that the blood had to come from Harry “for the lingering protection his mother once gave him, would then reside in my veins” (570). Harry thinks he sees “a gleam of something like triumph in Dumbledore’s eyes” when he reports Voldemort’s words (604), but why Dumbledore sees Voldemort’s acquisition of Harry’s blood as a potential victory is also left to later books. Dumbledore likewise tells Harry that by saving the life of Peter Pettigrew (Wormtail), he has “sent Voldemort a

deputy who is in [Harry's] debt" (*PA* 311). The word "debt" hints at a further complication in the relationship between good and evil, choice and power.

But how does this moral didacticism work in relation to the whole "Harry Potter phenomenon"? As this thesis implies, the teaching of values is only effective if there is some degree of identification with the text. Very few of us, child or adult, would desire to read a novel with only one attribute: its ability to instruct. Rowling's morality, while pervasive, is woven into clever and lively text, and the initial attraction of the novels is their humour. We delight in the tiniest details, such as the Weasley twins giving greedy Dudley a "Ton-Tongue Toffee" which causes his tongue to enlarge and start "lolling around like a great slimy python" (*The Goblet of Fire* 47-49). The text is also scattered with amusing puns such as Floo Powder (flue, flew) which enables the characters to fly through a system of chimneys to streets like Diagon Alley (which runs diagonally to a normal London street) and Knockturn Alley (a nasty street one would not want to visit nocturnally) (*CS* 41-46). There is, too, a more refined humour in the novels, perhaps designed for the self-deprecating older reader: we recognise and laugh at ourselves through the petty quarrels of the characters, their mischief, and their awkwardness. Such details are the building-bricks of Rowling's secondary world. Fiction, and perhaps fantasy fiction especially, relies on our ability to imagine ourselves into the author's created world: we turn to fiction primarily to be entertained, and the finer details enhance our pleasure. As Tolkien, the master of sub-creation, argues, it is the very smallest particulars that inform with life the bare bones of the plot ("On Fairy Stories" 22-23).

This does not mean Rowling's work is trivial. The text recreates familiar childhood anxieties through its believability: the child-characters experience the difficulties of growing up and there is a natural emotive response to the bully or the bullied, and to the fear of failure, both in the classroom and as a friend. The novels also reflect more archetypal, adult fears. The monsters Harry battles are the most obvious physical threats, but there are more serious spiritual terrors. The Dementors, for example, are Rowling's own portrayal of depression, and she claims that adults "find Dementors more frightening than children – adults are more likely to have brushed up against that feeling – loss, abuse" (quoted in Jackson 15). Cedric Diggory's death indicates the seriousness of Rowling's purpose, and the depiction of Voldemort, particularly his perverted resurrection in an isolated graveyard, neither panders to the sensitive reader nor patronises the juvenile one. The successful blending of this moral seriousness with the humour of the series has to do with the different genres that have influenced it. They are school stories. They are

romances. They are epic adventures. They are fantasies. They are all these things, and yet something more: the combination of elements from these genres, as different in tone as they are similar in theme, paradoxically contributes to the novels' originality and appeal.

How, then, can the question of the phenomenal popularity of the series finally be answered? There is no doubt that the design and marketing of the books, particularly the later editions, had an effect on the sales figures. The ways in which both Bloomsbury and Scholastic, the two largest publishers of the series, identified potential audiences and branded their books specifically to target those audiences, shows how important literary production is in exploiting a book's potential. But, the almost instant popularity of the books shows there was something appealing about the narratives even before Bloomsbury and Scholastic began to publicise them. The books are enjoyable, whether for their humour, enchanting details or quaint "Englishness". More importantly, they contain a moral world which is alluring in a modern, global, technological society that has largely lost touch with religion, or perverted it to its own ends. It is natural to seek role-models, and a text that produces a hero – and one who struggles with his own morality and makes mistakes – sets out to create a standard for society. Rowling's combination of genres is not, therefore, an arbitrary manipulation of elements from odd literary modes, but a complex blend of fundamentally value-centred generic traditions that make for an original expression of values like honour, friendship, generosity and, perhaps most of all, justice.

HARRY POTTER

and the Philosopher's Stone



J.K. ROWLING



Figure 9. Title Page, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (Half Size).

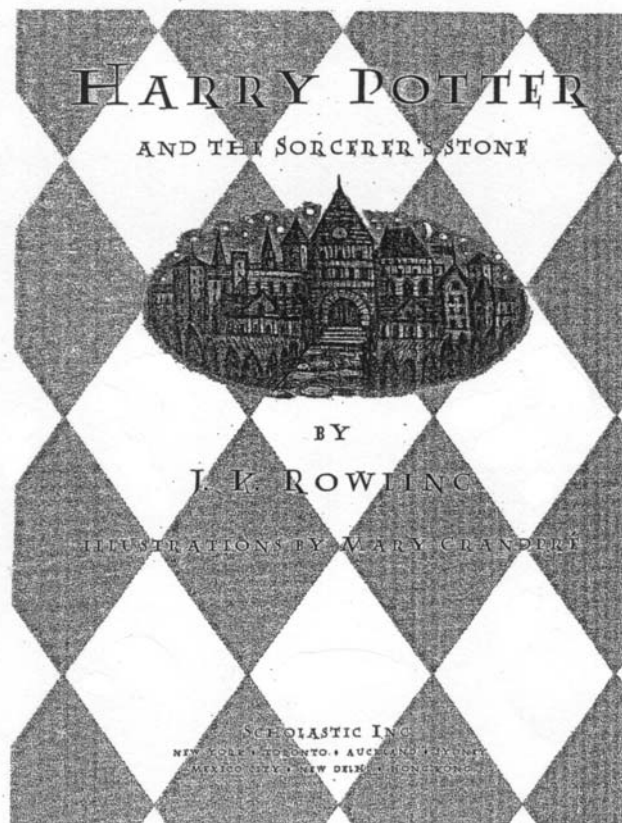


Figure 10. Title Page, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* (Half Size).

The Boy Who Lived

Mr and Mrs Dursley, of number four, Privet Drive, were proud to say that they were perfectly normal, thank you very much. They were the last people you'd expect to be involved in anything strange or mysterious, because they just didn't hold with such nonsense.

Mr Dursley was the director of a firm called Grunnings, which made drills. He was a big, beefy man with hardly any neck, although he did have a very large moustache. Mrs Dursley was thin and blonde and had nearly twice the usual amount of neck, which came in very useful as she spent so much of her time craning over garden fences, spying on the neighbours. The Dursleys had a small son called Dudley and in their opinion there was no finer boy anywhere.

The Dursleys had everything they wanted, but they also had a secret, and their greatest fear was that somebody would discover it. They didn't think they could bear it if anyone found out about the Potters. Mrs Potter was Mrs Dursley's sister, but they hadn't met for several years; in fact, Mrs Dursley pretended she didn't have a sister, because her sister and her good-for-nothing husband were as unDursleyish as it was possible to be. The Dursleys shuddered to think what the neighbours would say if the Potters arrived in the street. The Dursleys knew that the Potters had a small son, too, but they had never even seen him. This boy was another good reason for keeping the Potters away; they didn't want Dudley mixing with a child like that.

When Mr and Mrs Dursley woke up on the dull, grey Tuesday our story starts, there was nothing about the cloudy sky outside to suggest that strange and mysterious things would soon be happening all over the country. Mr Dursley hummed as he picked out his most boring tie for work and Mrs Dursley gossiped away

Figure 11. Chapter 1, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (Half Size).

CHAPTER ONE



THE BOY WHO LIVED

Mr and Mrs. Dursley, of number four, Privet Drive, were proud to say that they were perfectly normal, thank you very much. They were the last people you'd expect to be involved in anything strange or mysterious, because they just didn't hold with such nonsense.

Mr. Dursley was the director of a firm called Grunnings, which made drills. He was a big, beefy man with hardly any neck, although he did have a very large mustache. Mrs. Dursley was thin and blonde and had nearly twice the usual amount of neck, which came in very useful as she spent so much of her time craning over garden fences, spying on the neighbors. The Dursleys had a small son called Dudley and in their opinion there was no finer boy anywhere.

The Dursleys had everything they wanted, but they also had a secret, and their greatest fear was that somebody would discover it.

Figure 12. Chapter 1, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* (Half Size).

golden hooves, and throwing back its horned head.

"Boys keep back!" barked Professor Grubbly-Plank, throwing out an arm and catching Harry hard in the chest. "They prefer the woman's touch, unicorns. Girls to the front, and approach with care. Come on, easy does it..."

She and the girls walked slowly forwards towards the unicorn, leaving the boys standing near the paddock fence, watching.

The moment Professor Grubbly-Plank was out of earshot, Harry turned to Ron. "What d'you reckon's wrong with him? You don't think a Skrewt—?"

"Oh, he hasn't been attacked, Potter, if that's what you're thinking," said Malfoy softly. "No, he's just too ashamed to show his big ugly face."

"What d'you mean?" said Harry sharply.

Malfoy put his hand inside the pocket of his robes, and pulled out a folded page of newspaper.

"There you go," he said. "Hate to break it to you, Potter..."

He smirked as Harry snatched the page, unfolded it, and read it, with Ron, Seamus, Dean and Neville looking over his shoulder. It was an article topped with a picture of Hagrid looking extremely shift.

DUMBLEDORE'S GIANT MISTAKE

Albus Dumbledore, eccentric headmaster of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, has never been afraid to make controversial staff appointments, writes Rita Skeeter, Special Correspondent. In September of this year, he hired Alastor 'Mad-Eye' Moody, the notoriously jinx-happy ex-Aurore, to teach Defence Against the Dark Arts, a decision that caused many raised eyebrows at the Ministry of Magic, given Moody's well known habit of attacking anybody who makes a sudden movement in his presence. Mad-Eye Moody, however, looks responsible and kindly, when set beside the part-human Dumbledore employs to teach Care of Magical Creatures.

Rubeus Hagrid, who admits to being expelled from Hogwarts in his third year, has enjoyed the position of gamekeeper at the school ever since, a job secured for him by Dumbledore. Last year, however, Hagrid used his mysterious influence over the Headmaster to secure the additional post of Care of Magical Creatures teacher, over the heads of many better-qualified candidates.

An alarmingly large and ferocious-looking man, Hagrid has been using his new-found authority to terrify the students in his care with a succession of horrific creatures. While Dumbledore turns a blind eye, Hagrid has maimed several pupils during a series of lessons which many admit to be 'very frightening'.

"I was attacked by a Hippogriff, and my friend Vincent Crabbe got a bad bite off a Flobberworm," says Draco Malfoy, a fourth-year student. "We all hate Hagrid, but we're just too scared to say anything."

Hagrid has no intention of ceasing his campaign of intimidation, however. In conversation with a Daily Prophet reporter last month, he admitted breeding creatures he has dubbed 'Blast-Ended Skrewts', highly dangerous crosses between manticores and fire crabs. The creation of new breeds of magical creature is, of course, an activity usually closely observed by the Department for the Regulation and Control of Magical Creatures. Hagrid, it seems, considers himself to be above such petty restrictions.

"I was just having some fun," he says, before hastily changing the subject.

As if this were not enough, the Daily Prophet has now unearthed evidence that Hagrid is not — as he has always pretended — a pure-blood wizard. He is not, in fact, even pure human. His mother, we can exclusively reveal, is none other than the giantess Fridwulfa, whose whereabouts are currently unknown.

Bloodthirsty and brutal, the giants brought themselves to the point of extinction by warring among themselves during

Figure 13. Example of text layout and design, *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, British Edition (380-381, Quarter Size)

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

off around the paddock where the Beauxbatons horses were shivering. Harry, Ron, and Hermione followed her, looking back over their shoulders at Hagrid's cabin. All the curtains were closed. Was Hagrid in there, alone and ill?

"What's wrong with Hagrid?" Harry said, hurrying to catch up with Professor Grubbly-Plank.

"Never your mind," she said as though she thought he was being nosy.

"I do mind, though," said Harry bode. "What's up with him?"

Professor Grubbly-Plank acted as though she couldn't hear him. She led them past the paddock where the huge Beauxbatons horses were standing, huddled against the cold, and toward a tree on the edge of the forest, where a large and beautiful unicorn was tethered. Many of the girls "ooooohed" at the sight of the unicorn.

"Oh it's so beautiful" whispered Lavender Brown. "How did she get it? They're supposed to be really hard to catch!"

The unicorn was so brightly white it made the snow all around look gray. It was pawing the ground nervously with its golden hooves and throwing back its horned head.

"Boys keep back!" barked Professor Grubbly-Plank, throwing out an arm and catching Harry hard in the chest. "They prefer the woman's touch, unicorns. Girls to the front, and approach with care, come on, easy does it..."

She and the girls walked slowly forward toward the unicorn, leaving the boys standing near the paddock fence, watching. The moment Professor Grubbly-Plank was out of earshot, Harry turned to Ron.

"What d'you reckon's wrong with him? You don't think a skrewt—?"

* * *

RITA SKEETER'S SCOOP

"Oh he hasn't been attacked, Potter, if that's what you're thinking," said Malfoy softly. "No, he's just too ashamed to show his big, ugly face."

"What d'you mean?" said Harry sharply.

Malfoy put his hand inside the pocket of his robes and pulled out a folded page of newspaper.

"There you go," he said. "Hate to break it to you, Potter..."

He smirked as Harry snatched the page, unfolded it, and read it, with Ron, Seamus, Dean, and Neville looking over his shoulder. It was an article topped with a picture of Hagrid looking extremely shift.

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Rubeus Hagrid, who admits to being expelled from Hogwarts in his third year, has enjoyed the

* * *

Figure 14. Example of Text Layout and Design, *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, American Edition (436-437, Quarter Size).

Mr. H. Potter
The Cupboard under the Stairs
4 Privet Drive
Little Whinging
Surrey

Figure 15.a. Example of Unusual Font (Handwriting), *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, American Edition (34).

DO NOT OPEN THE PARCEL AT THE TABLE.
It contains your new Nimbus Two Thousand, but I don't
want everybody knowing you've got a broomstick or they'll
all want one. Oliver Wood will meet you tonight on the
Quidditch field at seven o'clock for your first training ses-
sion.

Professor M. McGonagall

Figure 15.b. Example of Unusual Font (Signature), *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, American Edition (164).

HOGWARTS SCHOOL OF WITCHCRAFT AND WIZARDRY

Figure 15.c. Example of Plain Font, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, British Edition (52).

HOGWARTS SCHOOL
of WITCHCRAFT and WIZARDRY

Figure 15.d. Example of Unusual Font, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, American Edition (66).

Dear J.K. Rowling I really enjoyed your book Harry Potter and the philosopher's stone. I know it all off by heart as I am first reading it for the first fourth time now. Please could you tell me when your next Harry Potter book is coming out as I so want to read it.

Daniel Houghton

Dear J.K. Rowling. I am writing to you to wish you luck in the Guardian children's fiction competition. Harry Potter and the Philosopher's stone is the best book I have ever read. I gave it to all of my friends for Christmas. I am looking forward to reading your new book.

Best Wishes, Thomas Ward

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Dear Joanne Rowling

I loved Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone

My mum loved it so much she would not let dad read any of it to me because she did not want to miss any of it as it was so exciting.

Please Please are you writing more about Harry and hogwarts soon?

Love From Alexander Benno age 7 and 9 1/2

Dear Ms Rowling

My name is Fiona Chadwick and I am nine years old. I really like the book Harry Potter. My class and I are reading it as a novel. I think all the class are enjoying it to but the only thing wrong with it is that you can't put it down.

I am a class teacher of year six children at Yorkbury Primary School in Holloway. I am writing to thank you for several weeks of joyous reading sessions at the end of the school day, where my class sat enthralled to hear Harry Potter's adventures. Several times they begged me to read on past 3:30 pm homework time, and, when Harry opened his first to reveal the snitch and seemed the quidditch cup for Gryffindor they whooped, cheered, punched the air and hugged each other. I am sure you would have enjoyed their enthusiasm and thought you would like to hear of it.

So, on behalf of my class I would like to thank you, and congratulate you for Harry Potter. For myself too it has been a great read and my captivated audience has given me much pleasure.

Yours sincerely

Vain Rosta

Your Harry Potter

Your greatest fan

and the Philosopher's Stone was great. I couldn't put it down. I put Mr. Dahl and Mrs. Blunt on and you lot.

Emily Booth

Emily Booth

Age 8

Figure 16. Fan Letters included in *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, British Edition.

KWIKSPELL
A Correspondence Course in Beginners' Magic

Figure 17. Example of Unusual Font, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, American Edition (127).

Dear Hermione,
We lost. I'm allowed to bring him back to Hogwarts.
Execution date to be fixed.
Beaky has enjoyed London.
I won't forget all the help you gave us.
Hagrid

Figure 18.a. Example of Letter, *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, British Edition (215).

Dear Hermione,
We lost. I'm allowed to bring him back to Hogwarts.
Execution date to be fixed.
Beaky has enjoyed London.
I won't forget all the help you gave us.
Hagrid

Figure 18.b. Example of Letter, *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, American Edition (291).

*Messrs. Moony, Wormtail, Padfoot, and Prongs.
Surveyors of Kids to Magical Mischief-Makers
are proud to present
THE MARAUDER'S MAP*

Figure 18.c. Example of Unusual Font, *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, American Edition (192).

THE FIREBOLT

THIS STATE-OF-THE-ART RACING BROOM SPORTS A STREAM-LINED, SUPERFINE HANDLE OF ASH, TREATED WITH A DIAMOND-HARD POLISH AND HAND-NUMBERED WITH ITS OWN REGISTRATION NUMBER. EACH INDIVIDUALLY SELECTED BIRCH TWIG IN THE BROOMTAIL HAS BEEN HONED TO AERODYNAMIC PERFECTION, GIVING THE FIREBOLT UNSURPASSABLE BALANCE AND PINPOINT PRECISION. THE FIREBOLT HAS AN ACCELERATION OF 150 MILES AN HOUR IN TEN SECONDS AND INCORPORATES AN UNBREAKABLE BRAKING CHARM. PRICE ON REQUEST.

Figure 19. Example of Advertisement, *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, American Edition (51).

**SUPPORT CEDRIC DIGGORY—
THE REAL HOGWARTS CHAMPION!**

**You are a Wicked girl. Harry Potter deSERVES
BeTTER. GO back where YOU cAME from mUGGle.**

Figure 20. Examples of Different Fonts, *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, American Edition (297, 541).

Harry Ron Hermione Molly Weasley Sirius

Figure 21. Varieties of Signatures from Letters Appearing in American Editions.

Figures 22-25 Colour Pictures (See additional documents)

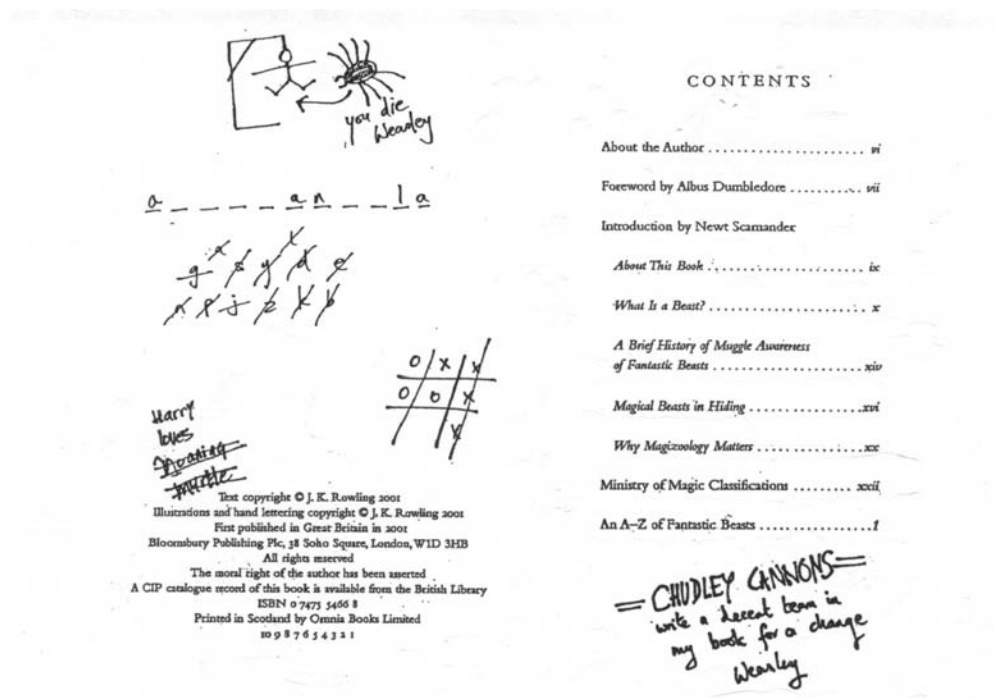


Figure 26. *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*, Example 1 (Contents).

in Southern Ireland. Covered in shaggy fur, it has a large quantity of rough hair on its head and an exceptionally large nose. It walks on two cloven feet. The arms are small and end in four stubby fingers. Fully grown Porlocks are around two feet high and feed on grass.

The Porlock is shy and lives to guard horses. It may be found curled in the straw of stables or else sheltering in the midst of the herd it protects. Porlocks mistrust humans and always hide at their approach.

PUFFSKEIN *I had one of them once what happened to it?*
Fred used it for Bludger practice

M.O.M. Classification: XX
 The Puffskein is found worldwide. Spherical in shape and covered in soft, custard-coloured fur, it is a docile creature that has no objection to being cuddled or thrown about. Easy to care for, it emits a low humming noise when contented. From time to time a very long, thin, pink tongue will emerge from the depths of the Puffskein and snake through the house searching for food. The Puffskein is a scavenger that will eat anything from leftovers to spiders, but it has a particular preference for sticking its tongue up the nose of sleeping wizards and eating their bogies. This tendency has made the Puffskein much beloved by wizarding children for many generations and it remains a highly popular wizarding pet.

QUINTAPED
 (also known as Hairy MacBoon)
M.O.M. Classification: XXXXX
 The Quintaped is a highly dangerous carnivorous beast with a

particular taste for humans. Its low-slung body is covered with thick reddish-brown hair, as are its five legs, each of which ends in a clubfoot. The Quintaped is found only upon the Isle of Drear off the northernmost tip of Scotland. Drear has been made unplotable for this reason.

Legend has it that the Isle of Drear was once populated by two wizarding families, the McCliverts and the MacBoons. A drunken wizarding duel between Dugald, chief of the clan McClivert, and Quintus, head of the clan MacBoon, is supposed to have led to the death of Dugald. In retaliation, so the story has it, a gang of McCliverts surrounded the MacBoon dwellings one night and Transfigured each and every MacBoon into a monstrous five-legged creature. The McCliverts realised too late that the Transfigured MacBoons were infinitely more dangerous in this state (the MacBoons had the reputation for great ineptitude at magic). Moreover, the MacBoons resisted every attempt to turn them back into human form. The monsters killed every last one of the McCliverts until no human remained on the island. It was only then that the MacBoon monsters realised that in the absence of anyone to wield a wand, they would be forced to remain as they were for evermore.

Whether this tale is true or not will never be known. Certainly there are no surviving McCliverts or MacBoons to tell us what happened to their ancestors. The Quintaped cannot talk and have strenuously resisted every attempt by the Department for the Regulation and Control of Magical Creatures to capture a



Figure 27. *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*, Example 2 (34-35).

Property of Hogwarts School Library	
Name of borrower	Date due back
O. Wood	9 April
B. Dunstan	16 May
M. Flint	22 June
C. Diggooy	3 July
A. Johnson	17 July
E. Macmillan	12 August
T. Boot	21 August
J. Fawcett	16 September
K. Bandy	10 October
K. Bell	19 October
C. Warrington	13 November
J. Dobby	5 December
T. Nott	22 January
S. Capper	31 January
M. Bulstrode	6 February
F. Wincey	15 February
H. Granger	2 March
H. Potter	11 March

A warning: If you rip, tear, shred, bend, fold, deface, disfigure, smear, smudge, throw, drop or in any other manner damage, mistreat or show lack of respect towards this book, the consequences will be as awful as it is within my power to make them.

Irma Pince, Hogwarts Librarian

Figure 28. Library Card, *Quidditch Through the Ages*.

the referee (or Quijudge, as he or she was then known) carried the four balls into this central circle while the fourteen players stood around him. The moment the balls were released (the Quaffle was thrown by the referee; see 'Quaffle' below), the players raced into the air. The goalposts in Mumps's time were still large baskets on poles, as seen in Fig. C.

In 1620 Quintius Umfraville wrote a book called *The Noble Sport of Warlocks*, which included a diagram of the seventeenth-century pitch (see Fig. D). Here we see the addition of what we know as 'scoring areas' (see 'Rules' below). The baskets on top of the goalposts were considerably smaller and higher than in Mumps's time.

By 1883 baskets had ceased to be used for scoring and were replaced with the goalposts we use today, an innovation reported in the *Daily Prophet* of the time (see below). The Quidditch pitch has not altered since that time.



Fig. C

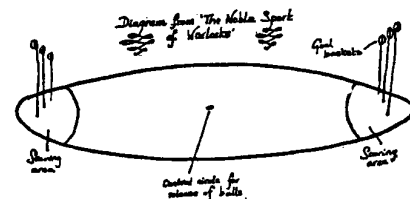


Fig. D

Bring Back Our Baskets!

That was the cry heard from Quidditch players across the nation last night as it became clear that the Department of Magical Games and Sports had decided to burn the baskets used for centuries for goal-scoring in Quidditch.

'We're not burning them, don't exaggerate,' said an irritable-looking Departmental representative last night when asked to comment. 'Baskets, as you may have noticed, come in different sizes. We have found it impossible to standardise basket size so as to make goalposts throughout Britain equal. Surely you can see it's a matter of fairness. I mean, there's a team up near Barnston, they've got these minuscule little baskets attached to the opposing team's posts, you couldn't get a grape in them. And up their own end they've got these great wicker caves swinging around. It's not on. We've settled on a fixed

Figure 29. Example of Illustrations, *Quidditch through the Ages*.

Appendix A Illustrations

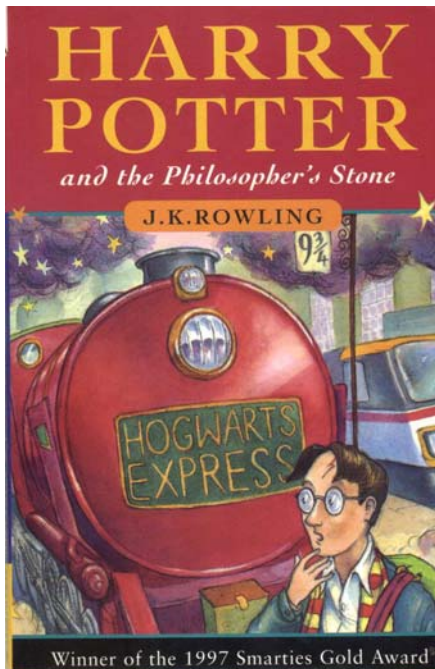


Figure 1. *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, British Edition (Front Cover).

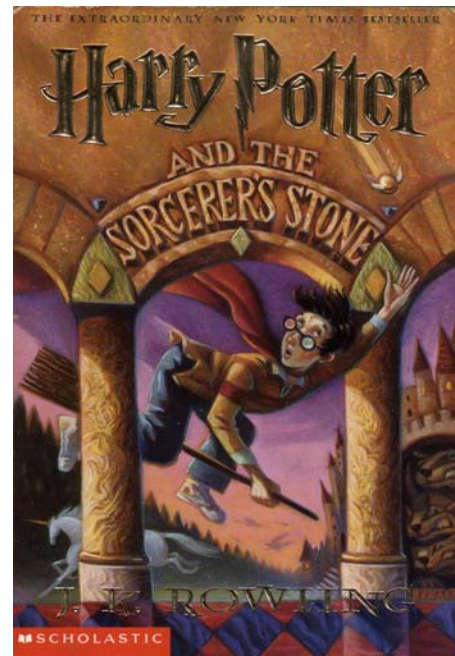


Figure 2. *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, American Edition (Front Cover).

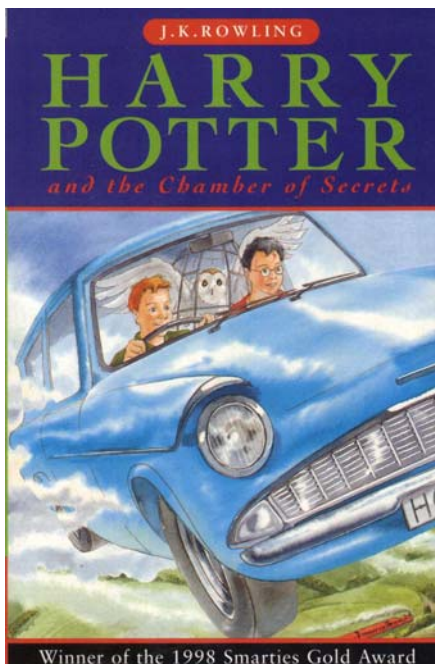


Figure 3. *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, British Edition (Front Cover).

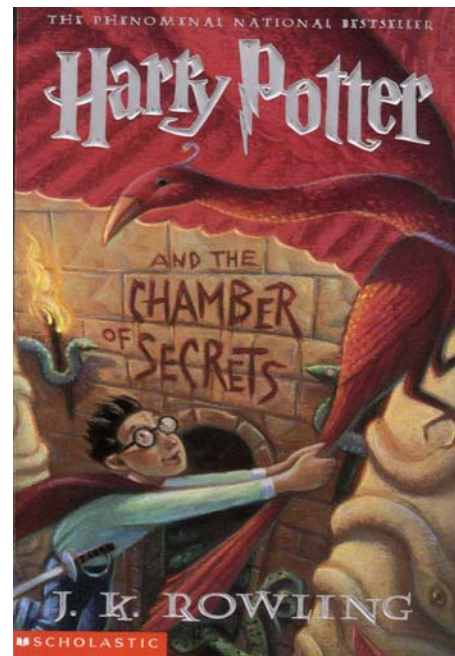


Figure 4. *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, American Edition (Front Cover).

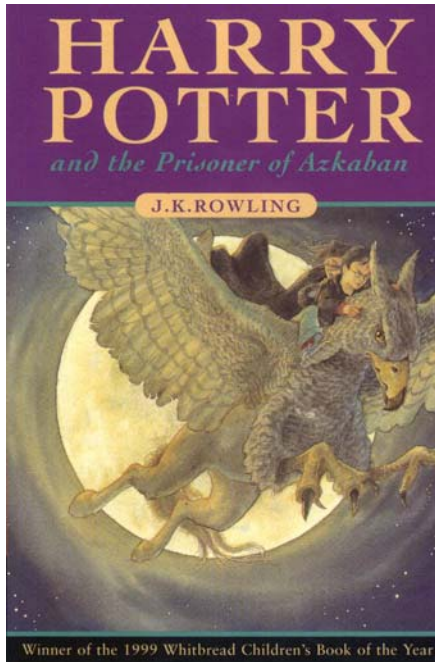


Figure 5. *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, British Edition (Front Cover).

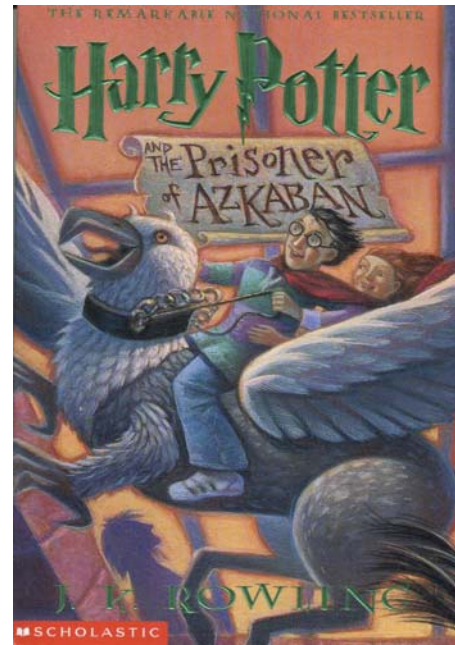


Figure 6. *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, American Edition (Front Cover).

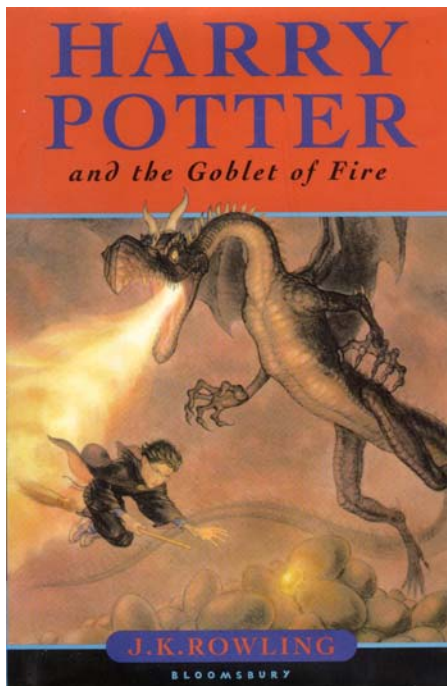


Figure 7. *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, British Edition (Front Cover).

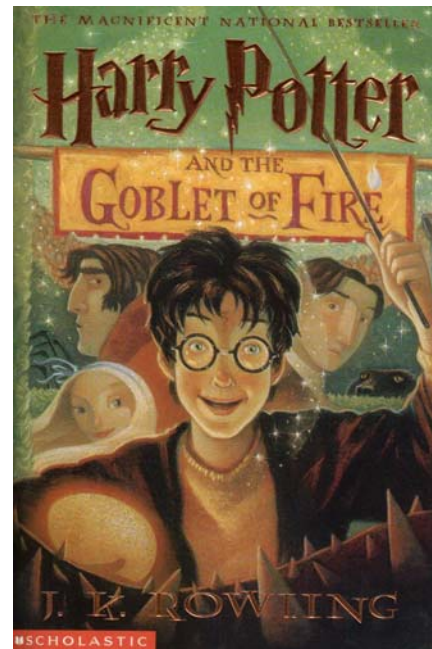


Figure 8. *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, American Edition (Front Cover).

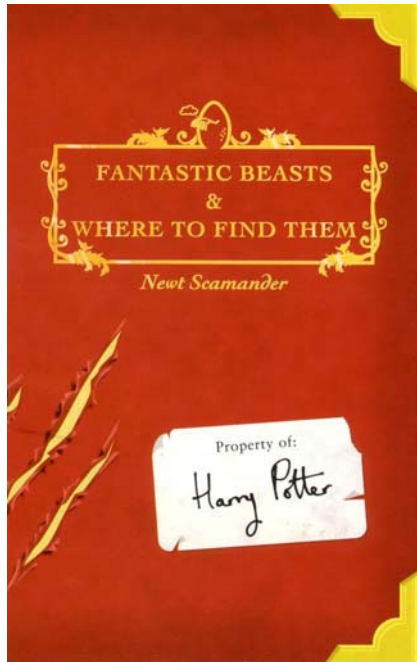


Figure 22. *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* (Front Cover).

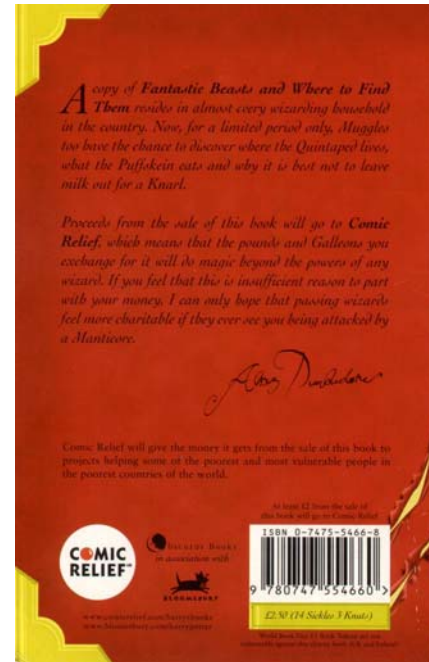


Figure 23. *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* (Back Cover).

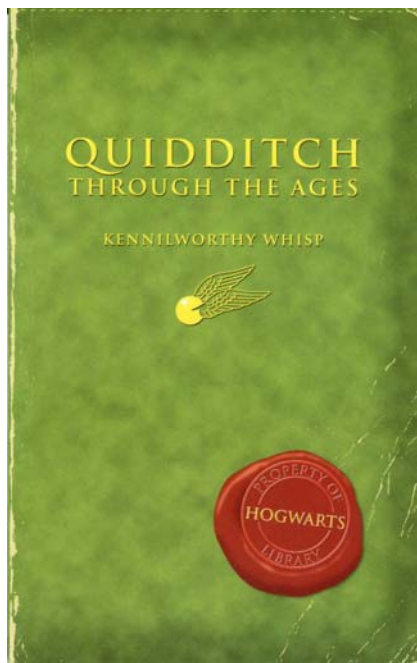


Figure 24. *Quidditch Through the Ages* (Front Cover).

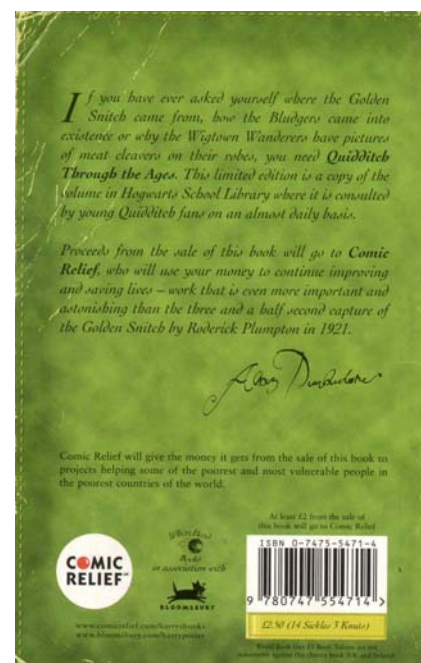


Figure 25. *Quidditch Through the Ages* (Front Cover).



Figure 30. Bertie Bott's Every Flavor Beans, American Version.

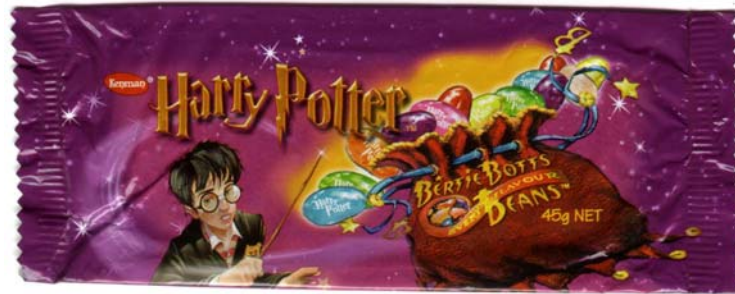


Figure 31. Bertie Bott's Every Flavour Beans, Australian Version.



Figure 32. Chocolate Frog, South African Version.

Appendix B

Spells: Their Magic and their Reality

Rowling adds to her sub-creation by introducing of a type of magic that seems believable and workable within the confines of the wizarding world – as is common in high fantasy. This is evidenced in the narratives through the complexity and difficulty of the lessons the characters learn at Hogwarts school (and the examinations they must take in their many subjects); the children also have to learn a whole new “language” in order to become fully qualified witches and wizards. A philologist like Tolkien displays his use of invented languages to greatest effect in *The Silmarillion*, but his elvish languages are more believable for being embedded in real languages – in his study of the linguistic developments of old Norse and old English, for example (Shippey 230-231). Within Rowling’s world, her magic acquires some credibility from the incantations the Hogwarts pupils learn.

Some of the spells are clear from their English names, such as the Bubble-Head Charm (*GF* 439), Four-Point Spell (*GF* 529), or the Skele-Gro potion that restores bones (*CS* 131). Others seem obvious – orchideous (*GF* 270) creates a bunch of flowers and Peskipiksi Pesternomi (*CS* 79), used to control the Cornish Pixies, sounds like “pesky pixie, pester not me”. But, in the later books particularly, the magic sounds more clearly rooted in Latin, although Rowling’s use of Latin is not perfect or even serious. The following table lists some of the spells and the Latin words that appear to be their stems.

Incantation, Spell or Potion	Place in Text	Latin Terms ¹
<i>Accio</i> /Summoning Charm – to call something to you	<i>GF</i> 64	“accio” – “to call or summon, to fetch” (17)
<i>Aparecium</i> – to make something appear	<i>CS</i> 174	“aperio” – “to uncover, make or lay bare” (135)
<i>Avada Kedavra</i> /Killing Curse – to murder	<i>GF</i> 190	“cadaver” – “a corpse, carcass” (215) [Pun on abracadabra]
<i>Avis</i> – to produce a bird	<i>GF</i> 271	“avis” – “a bird” (215)

¹ All bracketed references are to Lewis and Short’s *A Latin Dictionary*.

Confundus Charm – to confuse or “bamboozle”	GF 245	“confundo” – “to confound, confuse” (417)
Crucio/Cruciatus Curse – to cause terrible pain	GF 189	“cruciatus” – “torture, torment” (484)
Deletrius – to stop the effects of previous spells	GF 121	“deletrix” – “she that annihilates or destroys” (537); “deletus” – annihilation” (537)
Densaugeo – to make teeth grow	GF 262	“dens” – “a tooth” (546); “augeo” – to increase, enlarge” (203-204)
Diffindo – to break something open	GF 297	“diffindo” – “to cleave asunder” (575)
Expecto patronum – to conjure up a Patronus or shield	PA 176	“exspecto” – “to await, expect” (703); “patronus” – “protector, defender, patron” (1316)
Expelliarmus/Disarming Charm – to remove someone’s wand	CS 142	“expello” – “to drive out or away, to thrust out” (693); “Armo” – to furnish with weapons, to arm” (163)
Ferula – to bandage onto a splint	PA 276	“ferula” – “a splint for broken bones” (741)
Finite Incantatem – ends effects of previous spells	CS 144	“finio” – “to put an end to, to finish” (751); “incantatio” – “an enchanting, enchantment” (917)
Furnunculus – to cover with boils	GF 262	“furunculus” – a pointed, burning sore on the human body, a boil” (797); “furnus” – “an oven” (796)
Imperio/Imperius Curse – to place under total control	GF 188	“imperium” – “command, order” (900)
Impervius – to repel water	PA 133	“impervius” – “that cannot be passed through” (902)
Incendio – to create a fire	GF 46	“incendo” – “to set fire to” (918); “incendium” – “a burning, fire” (918)
Locomotor Mortis/Leg-Locker Curse – to stick legs together	PS 159, 162	“loco” – “place” (1073); “moto” – “to keep moving” (1168); “mors” – “death” (1166)
Lumos – to make light	CS 201	“lumino” – “to light up” (1085)
Mobiliarbus – to move a tree	PA 150	“mobilis” – “movable” (1153); “arbor” – “tree” (152)

<i>Mobilicorpus</i> – to move a body	<i>PA</i> 276	“mobilis” – “movable” (1153); “corpus” – “a body” (472)
<i>Morsmordre</i> – to create Dark Mark (by Death Eaters)	<i>GF</i> 115	“mors” – “death” (1166); “mordeo” – “bite” (1164)
<i>Nox</i> – to put out light	<i>PA</i> 248	“nox” – night” (1220)
<i>Obliviate</i> – to modify memory	<i>CS</i> 224, <i>GF</i> 72	“oblivio” – “forgetfulness” (1237)
<i>Petrifius Totalus</i> – to place in full body bind	<i>PS</i> 198	“petra” – “rock, stone” (1365); “totus” – “the whole, entire, total” (1881)
<i>Prior Incantato</i> /Priori Incantatem – to show last spell	<i>GF</i> 121, <i>GF</i> 605	“prior” – “first” (1446); “incantatio” – “an enchanting, enchantment” (917)
<i>Quietus</i> – to reduce volume of voice	<i>GF</i> 105	“quieto” – “to quiet” (1512)
<i>Reducio</i> – to shrink back to original size	<i>GF</i> 190	“reduco” – “to bring back” (1542)
<i>Reducto</i> /Reductor Curse – to blast away	<i>GF</i> 541	“reductus” – “withdrawn” (1542)
<i>Reparo</i> – to mend	<i>GF</i> 150	“reparo” – “to recover, restore, repair” (1567)
<i>Rictusempra</i> – tickling charm	<i>CS</i> 143	“rictus” – “the mouth wide open (esp. for laughing)” (1594); “semper” – “always” (1667)
<i>Riddikulus</i> – to defeat Boggart through laughter	<i>PA</i> 101	“ridiculus” – “laughable” (1594)
<i>Serpensortia</i> – to produce a snake	<i>CS</i> 145	“serpens” – “a snake, serpent” (1681); “ortus” – “the birth, the springing up” (1281)
<i>Sonorus</i> – to make one’s voice very loud	<i>GF</i> 93	“sonorus” – “loud, resounding” (1730)
<i>Veritaserum</i> – Truth Potion	<i>GF</i> 590, 593	“veritas” – “truth” (1974); “serus” – “watery parts, serum” (1681)

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