

“A Thousand Mad Things Before Breakfast”:  
The Interplay of Reason and Imagination in J.K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter* Series

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## Abstract

Realism and imagination serve roles in J.K. Rowling's world creation in the *Harry Potter* series and thus will be traced through this thesis. Both rational and imaginative thinking are modes of thought and play roles in characters' responses to issues. Further, reason and imagination are used in *Harry Potter* as modes of resistance against the prejudice which shapes much of the society of the magical world and so will be examined. In the *Harry Potter* series, Rowling combines fantasy traditions with realism and in so doing ensures her wizarding world mirrors the world of the reader. Rowling enacts a re-creation of the real world of the reader through a recombination of realistic and fantasy elements. This thesis will call on fantasy theorists Rosemary Jackson and Dimitra Fimi as well as the fantasy and science fiction writer Ursula Le Guin to examine how Rowling conforms to and expands on the fantasy tradition in which she writes in her creation of the magical world. It is made evident through Rowling's treatment of Harry's friends Hermione Granger and Luna Lovegood that combining reason and imagination is more beneficial than choosing one over the other. The girls' ways of thinking, seeing and interacting with those around them are complex and he learns from their combined wisdom how to navigate challenges and trials. Criticism focusing primarily on the secondary character of Luna is relatively scarce, despite her impact on Harry's views regarding death and the afterlife. This thesis offers a new perspective on the importance to Rowling's narrative of this open-minded, idiosyncratic figure. Rational and imaginative ways of thinking are necessary modes to use in the resistance to prejudice in wizarding society since this pervasive privileging of wizards over other magical beings espoused by the magical government inspires Lord Voldemort to kill or subjugate those whose magical heritage falls short of pure-blooded wizarding ancestry. In analysing the ostensibly conflicting rational and imaginative modes of thought, I examine Rowling's unconscious use of shadow theory through her treatment of Harry's dreams and visions – a direct connection between Harry and Lord Voldemort. Harry confronts his antagonist – and addresses the prejudices pervading wizarding society – through making rational decisions that require imaginative action.

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## Note on Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used when referring to the titles of the novels within the *Harry Potter* series by J.K. Rowling:

<i>Chamber</i>	<i>Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets</i>
<i>Goblet</i>	<i>Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire</i>
<i>Hallows</i>	<i>Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows</i>
<i>Phoenix</i>	<i>Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix</i>
<i>Prince</i>	<i>Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince</i>
<i>Prisoner</i>	<i>Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban</i>
<i>Stone</i>	<i>Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone</i>

# Introduction

There are three distinct arguments regarding reason and imagination that will be examined and analysed in this thesis. Firstly, they serve roles in J.K. Rowling's world creation in the *Harry Potter* series. Secondly, both rational and imaginative thinking are modes of thought that play roles in characters' responses to issues within the magical world of the novels. Lastly, reason and imagination are used in *Harry Potter* as modes of resistance against the prejudice which shapes much of the society of the magical world. Briefly, reason is used in this thesis with the meaning of practical reason where an agent determines the course of action that she should take. Imagination, on the other hand, is defined as a mode by which one can bring about re-creation.

In this thesis, reason is defined as practical reason which is the “general capacity for resolving, through reflection, the question of what to do” (Wallace par. 1). To further define this,

Practical reason [...] typically asks, of a set of alternatives for action none of which has yet been performed, what one ought to do, or what it would be best to do. [...] In practical reasoning agents attempt to assess and weigh their reasons for action, the considerations that speak for and against alternative courses of action that are open to them. Moreover they do this from a distinctively first-personal point of view, one that is defined in terms of a practical predicament in which they find themselves (either individually or collectively – people sometimes reason jointly about what they should do together). (par. 5)

With this understanding of reason, the frequent references to realism and rational thinking are defined as follows. Realism is the expression of simulacra of real world experience in literary and other forms. Rational thinking is thinking based on practical reasoning and often depends on logic, corroborated fact or experience. Notably, this type of thinking usually results in an expected or what could be considered a normal response.

To contextualise these definitions in terms of contemporary fantasy, I will refer to Farah Mendelsohn and her rigorous taxonomic work *Rhetorics of Fantasy*. Of one type of fantasy Mendlesohn writes that “[t]he reliance on destiny in so many portal fantasies may reflect the need to create rational explanation of irrational action without destroying [...] mystery” (xviii) Further, Mendelsohn writes of intrusion fantasies that “[b]ecause the base level is the normal world, intrusion fantasies maintain stylistic realism” while relying heavily on explanation. She goes on to describe how such fantasies have intense descriptions, the

language of which exhibits uninterrupted astonishment and the continuing use of this tone “may contribute to the preference for stylistic realism in order to maintain the contrast between the normal world and the fantastic intrusion” (xxii). Further, Dimitra Fimi clarifies that fantasy literature has “a coherent system with its own internal rules” (40) so that all of the “impossible, and unrealistic elements [...] occur within a clearly defined framework” (41), in this way demonstrating the ever present realism of fantasy works. These understandings of realism and rationality in fantasy as described by Mendlesohn and Fimi find expression in Rowling’s *Potter* world and form part of the analysis of the fantasy in which our characters live, make decisions and develop as individuals.

In this thesis, imagination is focused on as a mode by which one can re-create oneself and one’s environment through seeing oneself as the other. The claim that re-creation is possible through imagination is supported by the argument from fantasy and science fiction writer Ursula K. Le Guin who describes imagination as an action that engages in “recreation, re-creation, [and] the recombination of what is known into what is new” (33). Further bolstering this definition, the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy describes how

[a]nother purported role for imagination is in reshaping innate or habitual patterns of response. [...] Empirical evidence suggests that engaging in certain types of mental imagery exercises can mitigate [...] unwanted automatic associations, that is, that imagination, properly deployed, may be a resource for the regulation of behaviors that lie beyond the range of our immediate rational control. (Liao and Gendler par. 70)

The above claim informs the thesis discussion about the new responses to long-standing issues in the magical world, such as prejudice, as is most often exemplified by Harry. These new responses, ultimately, impact the climate of the magical world at the series’ conclusion as the reader is witness to a transformation of society in Rowling’s work. Paramount to these imaginative acts is the ability to see oneself as the other, to imagine aspects of oneself and those of others as comingling in one person, and through this to choose different ways of response in favour of creating an environment in which all may be safe and secure.

Imaginative thinking, then, is defined as a mental approach that allows one to respond to usual or unusual catalysts in an unexpected or ingenious way because one responds not in terms of one’s personal attitudes or beliefs (the usual, expected response), but rather in a way not unlike that which another person with distinct, contrasting attitudes or beliefs would respond (an imaginative, unusual response). That self-re-creation and the re-creation of one’s environment are achievable through imaginative thinking is a core argument in this thesis.

Again, it is necessary to contextualise these definitions in terms of the fantasy mode. The focus on self-re-creation and the re-creation of one's environment through imagination are concerns identifiable in much of fantasy literature. Mendlesohn argues that portal-quest fantasies are built on contemplations of "sequenced adventures, journeys as transition" (2) and destinies as encountered in epic literature such as the Bible, Arthurian romance and fairy tales. Underlying this is the "idea of moral expectation" (4) since fantasy "relies on a moral universe: it is [...] a sermon on the way things should be, a belief that the universe should yield to moral precepts" (4-5). Mendlesohn goes on to claim that "[t]his belief is most true of the portal-quest narratives, and of the intrusion fantasies" (5). Therefore, the characters in portal-quest fantasies, such as *Harry Potter*, are in need of achieving a moral universe. As such, the examination of imagination as a mode through which one improves upon the self and one's society, namely through analysing the treatment of Harry and his magical community, is relevant to themes within contemporary fantasy.

Discussion of the three abovementioned arguments will be dealt with under thematic topics – the making of the Ministry of Magic, Hermione and Luna's ways of thinking, and Harry's eventual triumph over evil – and, subsequently, each of the three arguments will be examined in each of the three chapters to follow. Of this thesis's three arguments to be analysed our first focuses on an examination of Rowling's world creation in which we see her use of realism and imagination. The author combines fantasy traditions with those of realism in her structure of the magical society and the Ministry of Magic, its government. The wizarding community, despite their individual powers and their communal power to conceal their world, is depicted in a realistic fashion. In terms of her treatment of government corruption and discrimination, an oft-observed situation in real life, Rowling constructs a regime recognisable to the real world reader, even with departments such as the Department for the Regulation and Control of Magical Creatures. The examination of Rowling's creation of the Ministry of Magic and demonstration of how it functions within her novels exemplifies the role that realism plays within her writing. Interweaving this, imaginative thinking serves a function as her treatment of the magical government is a "re-creation [...] of what is known into what is new" (Le Guin 33). Rowling's government does not employ police officers, but Aurors who are empowered to use otherwise illegal spells in order to capture criminals. It does not regulate vehicles through a Department of Transport, but rather concentrates on Broom Regulatory Control. In chapter two, I will trace how part of Rowling's world creation, her character creation of Hermione and Luna, continues this intertwining of realism and imagination. In the third chapter, the structuring of Rowling's narrative reflects alchemical



symbolism and so an examination of her use of literary alchemy is useful in analysing the interplay of realism and imagination in her narrative structure.

For the second argument, I discuss how rationality and imagination serve roles as modes of response to various issues in the magical world, seen primarily through the treatment of Hermione Granger and Luna Lovegood. In Hermione, Rowling creates a character that is initially all reason and very reluctant to use her imagination in decision-making – though we see this begin to change in *Prisoner* when she befriends a werewolf that does not behave as wizarding society predicts he would. Her reluctance to support Harry in his desire to take advantage of his mind link to Voldemort is a primary demonstration of her hesitation regarding imaginative thinking. In Luna, Rowling creates a character that is so whimsical and quirky that she seems to be led only by imaginative thinking and responses – always sceptical of authoritarian versions of events. Most prominently, it is her understanding and acceptance of death that aids Harry on his journey. Her imaginative response to an often traumatising experience exhibits a broadness of thinking. Harry's responses to encountering his shadow, Voldemort, in his dreams and visions often take the form of rational decisions that require an imaginative response in order for a successful outcome to be reached.

Thirdly and finally, reason and imagination are used in *Harry Potter* as modes of resistance against the prejudice which frames much of the magical community. This thesis examines how the characters of the series use rational and imaginative thinking in order to navigate a society marked by entrenched prejudices. Due to Harry's journey from the normal world to the magical one, he views entrenched prejudice with fresh eyes. His understanding of the Ministry of Magic's unfair treatment of non-wizards, fantastic beasts and non-human beings, as well as their harmful influence on education informs how he navigates relationships with members of different groups in the magical world. He influences the ideologies of his magical society and he achieves this mainly through working with his peers and allies in developing his ways of thinking – embracing and intertwining rational and imaginative ways of thinking. Harry is able to be a new kind of wizard who develops around himself a community of new wizards, new werewolves, new house-elves and new centaurs – a community that does not conform to the ideologies espoused by the Ministry of Magic and perpetuated by its employees. Through these combined ways of thinking he is able to make decisions that support and celebrate diversity and that assist him in overcoming personal demons in order to counteract the process of othering.

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It is worth providing a brief overview of the *Potter* series plotline. Eleven year old Harry Potter lives with his uncle, aunt and cousin, having been orphaned as an infant. He discovers that he is a wizard, possessing magical powers, just as his parents before him. He attends Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, a stronghold of education and protection within the magical world. Here, he makes many friends including Ron Weasley and Hermione Granger. Immersed in his magical world, Harry learns about Lord Voldemort, a violent, murderous supremacist who killed multiple members of wizarding families, and non-magical people. Voldemort also killed Harry's parents and tried to kill him as an infant. Voldemort's body is destroyed by the attack and after a decade in hiding, he returns to the school to obtain the Philosopher's Stone in order to regain his body and his considerable power. Harry, Ron and Hermione join forces to prevent the Stone from being captured, at great personal risk. Albus Dumbledore, Hogwarts Headmaster and mentor to Harry, begins to reveal that there is more to Voldemort's attempted murder of him than Harry is ready to understand.

From Harry's second through sixth years at Hogwarts he continues to uncover more history of the magical world as well as his connection to Voldemort. He enters the Chamber of Secrets in order to defeat a beast bidden to kill Muggle-born students by Voldemort, discovers that his parents were betrayed by a friend working for the Dark Lord, triumphs in a tournament only to witness – and be unwilling participant in – the resurrection of Voldemort's body, initiates and leads a secret student group in learning defensive magic so that they are prepared to fight against Voldemort's growing regime, and discovers that Voldemort survived a Killing Curse and could return to a bodily form because he created Horcruxes – magical objects that contain and protect parts of his soul.

Along the way, Harry befriends Sirius Black, a man wrongly convicted of murder, and Remus Lupin, a werewolf who struggles to maintain employment of any kind due to his lycanthropy. Neville Longbottom, a pure-blood wizard who is believed to be largely untalented in magic, and Luna Lovegood, a whimsical witch who demonstrates a belief in the unseen, find friendship and support through Harry's development of empathy. Two magical beings, called house-elves, develop meaningful connections with the hero. Even a goblin agrees to form a precarious relationship with Harry despite his general distrust of wizards. Harry is witness to many marginalised groups of fantastic beasts and non-human beings who suffer under the Ministry of Magic's legal rule and social influence. Moreover, Voldemort and his followers, the Death Eaters, spurred by socially

accepted prejudice, seek to take over the magical world and entrench such prejudices ever more deeply. In the final novel, while Voldemort and his Death Eaters have taken over the Ministry of Magic and are actively seeking Harry, he, with Ron and Hermione, travels through the wizarding world seeking out and destroying Horcruxes. Harry and Voldemort have a final duel at Hogwarts and Harry survives.

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Although Rowling plays with both realism and imagination in her world creation, it is most obvious that she draws readers in with magic, fantasy tropes, mythological creatures and the mythological journey. The heart of the story, however, has little to do with magic and the reader sees young Harry quickly learn not to be blinded by the wonder of magic in the wizarding world. Rowling's imaginative magical inventions are of only surface importance within the narrative and so when the focus of the story is set within the magical, the magical becomes normal from the perspective of the reader. Michael Ostling claims that Harry and his friends quickly "acclimatize themselves to magic and wonder" and that the *Potter* reader does the same (16). John Rosegrant discusses the "developmental trajectory of magical spells" within the series, explaining how what is at first "a wondrous new ability to achieve marvels" becomes a "practical, disenchanted ego skill" (1406). In correlation with the "magical quality" of the series decreasing, there is "an increased focus on painful aspects of external reality" (1407). Furthermore, Terry Eagleton argues that a narrative needs disruption to be compelling and he asserts that in *Potter* such "disruption cannot arise from a clash between magic and reality"; this may suggest where the series' true literary value resides (170). We begin to see that the realism of the series becomes more prominent; specifically, Mikhail Lyubansky claims that Rowling "[provides] readers with a real-world moral framework that explicitly encompasses race-related issues" (233). Lyubansky points to the "tendency of some wizards to place a premium on pure blood (that is, on pure breeding)" as "an obvious parallel to our own society's history of oppression of Blacks and obsession about interracial sex and marriage" (237). Author and lecturer, John Granger, who specialises in iconological literary criticism, argues that "prejudice – its cause, effect, and cure – is a primary focus in the Harry Potter novels" (*How Harry Cast His Spell* 56). That Rowling's magical world serves as a parallel to the reader's real world experience further demonstrates the interplay of realism and imagination in her world creation.

Realism is most prominent in the treatment of prejudice in the series. Prejudice within the wizarding community against those without pureblood status, or prejudice against magical creatures that are not humans, as well as the unreliability and dishonesty of the

government and of adults in general, are given greater attention as the series progresses. The eponymous hero's confrontation with prejudice involves his recognition that prejudice is not doled out only by the obviously nefarious Lord Voldemort. Harry must recognise that his society's government not only condones similar actions and attitudes but, in fact, actively encourages social values that perpetuate prejudice against particular groups. How he thinks about and responds to societal issues that are so recognisable to the reader is of paramount importance.

Interplay of realism and imagination extends beyond Rowling's world creation to her characterisation of how major and relatively minor figures in the series think and respond to issues in the magical world. Hermione Granger and Luna Lovegood appear to represent rationality and imagination respectively, but their relationship with one another and their relationships with Harry demonstrate the benefits of employing both as modes of thought in response to challenges in the magical community. The girls' ways of thinking, seeing and interacting with those around them are complex and he learns from their combined wisdom how to navigate his various trials.

Hermione forms part of the series' central trio with Harry and Ron and is a favourite among readers due to her consistent displays of courage, intelligence and loyalty. For *Time*, Rowling writes that Hermione is "near enough" to being her; in fact, the author considers Hermione to be a "caricature of [her] when [she] was younger" ("A Good Scare" 31). Hermione begins the series exercising a predominantly rational outlook, giving little credence to the imaginative perspectives of others. In cases where she feels forced to see from someone else's perspective, she baulks because she is resistant to embracing her imagination (like heroines from other fantasy adventures such as Lewis Carroll's Alice and J.M. Barrie's Wendy). Hermione's encounters with Divination teacher Professor Trelawney demonstrate that when faced with a fundamentally different perspective, she is more likely to adhere to the normative behaviours and beliefs of the wizarding world; she battles against a life informed by the unconscious. Rowling, however, undermines the traditional privileging of reason over imagination in her treatment of Hermione's interactions with Trelawney. Hermione's hyper-rational disposition is, ultimately, challenged by her displeasure with the status quo of the magical community and she must embrace imaginative thinking and open-mindedness in order to discover possible paths to fundamental changes in that community. Her struggle partly informs Harry's as he learns to develop his own perspective.

Positioned in the text as a seeming foil to Hermione, Luna is whimsical and idealistic, but at the same time, is surprisingly grounded and insightful. The importance of being open

to other perspectives is emphasised through Rowling's treatment of Luna's behaviours and beliefs. Her unashamed exclamations about undocumented beasts, her emotional intelligence and lack of fear regarding death, set Luna apart from her peers. The scepticism that she inspires leads to new avenues of thought for the story's hero, and useful approaches to upending entrenched ways of seeing and being are made possible by her influence. Since Harry must acknowledge the role that death must play in his life – that of his parents, many of his friends and, eventually, himself – Luna's insights into the afterlife have lasting effects on his outlook and, eventually, his decision-making. Unusual channels of thought and effective techniques for overthrowing ingrained ways of seeing and being open up to Harry, enabling him to use the primary tool he has at his disposal – the power of love – which in this thesis is intricately connected with imaginative thinking – in his attempt to combat prejudice.

It must be noted that Harry's resistance against the prejudices of the magical community, as endorsed and maintained by both Voldemort and the Ministry of Magic, through his use of love and other imaginative responses, occurs primarily as a result of rational thinking and decision-making. Firstly, as Voldemort serves as a threat to the social cohesion of the magical community, it is a reasonable decision for Harry to work towards ousting the Dark Lord completely. Further, even when it is revealed to him that they are disturbingly and deeply connected, Harry understands that he must learn the truth about Voldemort's identity and motivations in order to effectively counter him. For Harry to live comfortably in his magical world, Voldemort and discriminatory systems must be vanquished. So beyond inciting a rebellion against the Ministry, the primary challenge for Harry is his personal development. He must encounter Voldemort as his shadow and engage in "shadow-work" which involves recognising what his shadow represents and incorporating those aspects into his sense of self to quash the shadow's need to erupt into neuroses and disturb his everyday experience. Completing the "shadow-work" will allow him to eventually face and defeat Voldemort and, very importantly, to face the part of Voldemort that is inside him. Rowling's exploration of his development can be analysed according to the psychoanalytic development theory, which Jung termed the shadow, of facing aspects of oneself that one has hidden from oneself and others. Lord Voldemort is Harry's nemesis and a proponent of blood purity. The notion of blood purity is an important aspect of Voldemort's regime, but it should be noted that racism based on blood purity within the wizarding community stems back at least a thousand years to one Salazar Slytherin. Slytherin, as well as being one of the founders of Hogwarts, is also one of Voldemort's ancestors and the former's insistence on blood purity within the wizarding community later inspires his descendant. It is

a rational decision to counter Voldemort, but it requires an imaginative response. Harry is able to resist the appeal of Voldemort's power by using his own imaginative power, love. This stereotypically feminine characteristic – that is repeatedly associated with his mother Lily and the self-sacrificial act she performed when she lay down her life – enables Harry to reject the odious allure of his brutal adversary. With love as their way of engaging with others, Harry's magical community can overcome prejudicial onslaught, not just in the form of the Ministry, but in the more extreme form of Voldemort and his Death Eaters as well. The power of love, open-mindedness and tolerance that Harry embraces through his friendships and his choice to trust his friends, appeals to Rowling's readership well after they turn the last page of the seventh *Potter* volume.

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For this thesis I will be calling upon the academic insights of a few fantasy theorists and *Potter*-focused academics that have examined the socio-political, cultural and psychological themes within the series. Chapter One will begin with an exploration of how Rowling intertwines realism and imagination in her world creation. It will examine Rowling's use of fantasy and how it adheres to or deviates from the traditional elements of the mode. Drawing on fantasy theorists Rosemary Jackson and Dimitra Fimi as well as the critical insights of acclaimed fantasy and science-fiction writer Ursula K. Le Guin, I will posit Rowling as emulating and extending established conventions and analyse the ways in which she plays with them through her additions of realist elements. Further, the realist depiction of Rowling's world is examined by a close reading of works by Benjamin Barton, Aaron Schwabach and Susan Hall who examine the laws administered by the Ministry of Magic and scrutinise the magical government's role within magical society in general and regarding Hogwarts specifically. Discussion of their findings will be used to evaluate how marginalisation perpetuated by the government increases incidents of conflict in the magic world and how responding to these conflicts requires different ways of seeing issues. All of this results in the need for magical folk such as Harry to resist prejudice by use of the modes of reason and imagination.

Chapter Two focuses on the rational and imaginative responses to issues in the magical world, the influence of which is ultimately used to confront proponents of prejudice and to support those on the margins of society. Harry's friends Hermione Granger and Luna Lovegood are closely examined here; their polarised personalities and perspectives are brought into relief by critics such as Amy Billone and Peter Dendle who discuss the blurred intersection between the real and the unreal. Further, Hermione and Luna's rational and

imaginative responses to Ministry influence and interference are considered in the light of how these responses impact Harry's perspectives. Analyses of the series by Shira Wolosky, Aaron Richmond, Andrew P. Mills and Gregory Bassham are useful in addressing the Ministry's system of control, which dominates so many of the wizarding world's ideologies to which Hermione and Luna are seen to respond.

In Chapter Three, Rowling's narrative structure is examined through the lens of literary alchemy as this enables one to see the intertwined lines of realism and imagination that thread through the *Potter* series. The alchemical symbolism – from breakdown, through purification and recrystallisation – is considered so as to examine Harry's journey effectively. Rowling's treatment of Harry's relationship with Voldemort falls under scrutiny as this tension demonstrates the interplay of rational and imaginative thought as ways in which the hero responds to issues that challenge him and magical society in general. The relationship with Voldemort most threatens the hero's ability to overcome the allure of violent power and control so that he may repudiate the systems of injustice and intolerance in the wizarding world. Drawing on Le Guin's treatment of the shadow in her handling of *A Wizard of Earthsea's* Ged, we also consider Harry's connection to his shadow – Voldemort. Further, John Rosegrant's consideration of the phallic symbolism in the series, particularly in its relevance to the connection between Harry and Voldemort, is examined. Harry's confrontation with his intimate association with Voldemort leads to his choice of a path through life which is dependent on embracing love, a reflection of his imaginative abilities. Harry's ability to love underscores an active feminine side and this is elaborated upon by Ximena Gallardo-C and Jason Smith. Supporting their assessments are analyses by Anne Collins Smith and Ming-Hsun Lin who critique the role that femininity plays in the series in relation to Harry.

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In *Harry Potter: A History of Magic*, we find a book companion to the British Library's 2017 exhibition that featured not only "many precious artefacts relating to the Harry Potter books", but also "historical and mythological antecedents" such as ancient "Greek papyri, Ethiopian talismans [...], [and] Chinese oracle bones" which were considered in the light of Rowling's creation of her magical world. These exhibits are physical demonstrations of Rowling's practice of drawing inspiration for a fantastical world from that of the real. In this book Julia Eccleshare, awarded an MBE for "services to children's literature in 2014", references the weeks and months following the first *Potter* book's publication. Eccleshare states that no one could "imagine how the series would subtly change how future publishing would engage

young people by making reading an experience of belonging and sharing” (20). This sense of belonging continues to be felt and sought after in the name of Harry Potter over twenty years later.

As Eccleshare says of Rowling and her *Potter* series,

Harry Potter became a legend not just within the stories, but across the real world, too. Rowling gave readers a whole new place to play in – one rich in imagination, vivid in adventure and deep in emotion. She offered big ideas about identity, parental love, bravery, insecurity and much more, deftly wrapping everything up with magic. Her readers were spellbound. (21)

This was “a story to grow up with, a story that kept pace with [the reader’s] own emotional development, a story [she] could own and inhabit” (21) and, through this, encouraged imaginative interaction and responses. As a reader, one is encouraged to identify with the wizards, rather than one’s supposed non-magical counterparts (i.e. Muggles), engaging not just with what we understand intimately due to the series’ realism, but with positions which ask us to use our imaginative abilities. In this way, Rowling persuades her reader to inhabit the space and identity of the so-called other. Harry, who stands as both an outsider and insider in relation to the magical world, is the reader’s first point of identification and this allows the reader to journey through that magical world as both a magical and non-magical person. At the conclusion of the series, it appears that Rowling may be suggesting that Harry’s position of holding some identification with the group, but also holding a perspective that comes from outside it, may be what is necessary to make significant impact or a change to established customs or traditions, a pursuit of many in their real world experiences.

As Harry uses rational and imaginative thinking to work on countering a status quo based on prejudice and oppression, avid readers and scholars of the series recognise not only the deep fantasy roots Rowling draws on, but her concurrent references to our modern socio-political experience. *Potter* readers practise looking through the eyes of a group to which they do not technically belong, but it is through this suspension of self, this exercise of empathy and imagination, that the readers grow to “belong” to Harry’s magical society in some sense because of their experience of relating to, recognising themselves within, or realising their inherent connections to the magical characters and personalities in the story. Should such readers exercise their imagination and attempt this sort of partial identification in their real lives, they may be more willing or better equipped to understand the motivations and decision-making of groups to which they may not ostensibly belong. Therein may lie some



groundwork for the non-magical to thwart close-mindedness, intolerance and prejudice, an achievement that surely seems a magical feat.

# **Chapter One**

## **Making the Ministry of Magic**

In this chapter, Rowling's combination of fantasy tradition and realism, in her creation of the magical world and the government that oversees it, the Ministry of Magic, is examined. To reiterate, realism is defined as an expression of real world experience. Rowling's wizarding community is depicted in a realistic fashion, particularly in terms of her treatment of government corruption and discrimination. Therefore, to examine Rowling's creation of the Ministry of Magic and to demonstrate how it functions within her novels is to exemplify the role that realism plays within her writing. Rowling's treatment of the magical world and the Ministry, however, is not purely rational and discussion thereof will reflect the binary of realism and imagination. This is particularly notable in the examination of Rowling's imaginative re-creation of a failing corrupt government through metaphor and fantasy. Rational thinking, moreover, is defined as thinking based on practical reason where an individual decides her necessary course of action; this is achieved through using corroborated fact or logic as a guide and it will produce a reasonable or expected response. Certainly, imaginative thinking serves its own function in Rowling's treatment of the magical government in that it enables her to engage in "recreation, re-creation, [and] the recombination of what is known into what is new" (Le Guin 33). The novels are focalised through Harry, so it is of significance to demonstrate how his status when he enters into the magical world shapes the way in which social ideologies and the Ministry of Magic are presented to the reader. His power of love, his ability to care for others and act on this emotion, is, in this thesis, associated with imagination as it is a suspension of oneself and one's needs for the sake of others. Love is also associated with femininity as traditionally we see femininity "aligned with intimacy" (Fournier and Smith 143), and an "emotional, [...], nurturing" spirit (Tyson 85). As such, I would argue that femininity has a strong alignment to love. We see this in the series particularly in the way the Harry uses his power of love to emulate his mother's self-sacrifice. Ursula K Le Guin's famous polemic "Why Are Americans Afraid of Dragons?" suggests that rejection of imagination is a typically masculine response as American culture defines imagination as effeminate. Imagination, love and femininity are thus in close association, and will be discussed in terms of how these concepts are used in the attempt to overthrow prejudice by way of balancing out realism, rational thinking and masculinity in Rowling's work.

## Fantasy in Symbiosis with Realism

Fantasy, a “literature of desire” (Jackson 3), is the mode by which Rowling tells Harry’s story, his hero’s journey, of encountering his flawed magical society and engaging in nuanced thinking that results in his re-imagining of this society so that all the socio-political issues recognisable to *Potter* readers, particularly that of prejudice, can be eradicated. With a view to assessing Rowling’s degree of conformity to or adaptation of the fantasy mode, one can look firstly to how fantasy is defined by literary scholars. Rosemary Jackson and Dimitra Fimi’s definitions of fantasy literature – independent of one another, though often overlapping – demonstrate the symbiotic relationship between fantasy and realism. Seemingly contradictory, these modes are shown to work coherently within fantasy. Upon examination, it becomes clear that in Rowling’s *Potter* series she adheres to many conventions that both Jackson and Fimi argue are fundamental to the mode of fantasy. Referencing Ursula K. Le Guin’s essay “Why Are Americans Afraid of Dragons?”, an assessment of those who refuse to give credence to fantasy’s merits because of how they perceive it to threaten the stability of reality, is beneficial to our discussion because similar tensions inform the volatile dynamic between magical and non-magical people in Rowling’s series.

The fantasy genre depends on a symbiotic relationship with realism. Whatever fantastic and imaginative landscapes, characterisations and quests a fantasy narrative may have, there must be an element of realism in order for the reader to relate to or become engaged by the tale. In *Rhetorics of Fantasy*, Farah Mendlesohn details the qualities of five fantasy categories – the Portal-Quest fantasy, the Immersive fantasy, the Intrusion fantasy, the Liminal fantasy and the Irregular fantasy. According to Mendlesohn, she would categorise the *Potter* series as fitting the structure of the Portal Quest. Of this particular category, Mendlesohn describes one of the defining features as having the reader riding “with the point of view character who describes fantasyland and the adventure to the reader, as if [she is] both with [the character] and yet external to the fantasy world. What [the character] sees, [the reader sees], so that the world is unrolled to [the reader] in front of [the character’s] eyes, and through [the character’s] analysis of the scene” (8). The reader requires some rational basis from which to begin her journey through the narrative, there must be some logical structure to the built world and the social landscape, even if that narrative uses the fantasy genre.

In her critical work *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion*, Rosemary Jackson focuses on the “fantasies produced within a Post-Romantic, secularized culture” (4-5), analysing the

themes and structure of several works. Jackson claims that most obvious starting point for an analysis of fantasy as a literary mode is in the late eighteenth century, when industrialisation “transformed western society” (4). Jackson discusses the “vast gap” that “opened up between knowledge (as scientific investigation and rational inquiry) and gnosis (a knowledge of ultimate truths, a kind of spiritual wisdom)” claiming that within this gap “the modern fantastic is situated” (101).<sup>1</sup> Similarly, fantasy “traces the limits” of a culture’s “epistemological and ontological frame” (23) in an attempt to “compensate for a lack resulting from cultural constraints: it is a literature of desire, which seeks that which is experienced in absence and loss”. Fantasy functions in two ways, according to Jackson: it can either “*tell of*, manifest or show desire [...] or it can *expel* desire, when this desire is a disturbing element which threatens cultural order” (3). Her critique comprises the suggestion that imagination is “in exile” (13), together with scrutiny of the real, discussions of the marvellous and mimetic, non-signification, as well as the topography, themes and myths of fantasy. While Jackson acknowledges Tzvetan Todorov’s work – *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre* (1973) – as the “most important and influential critical study” (5) on the subject of fantasy literature, she sees a gap in Todorov’s study as he neglects to consider “the social and political implications” (6) which she sees as essential. Jackson makes reference to psychoanalytic theory; William Siegfried succinctly explains Freud’s view of the unconscious mind as “a reservoir of feelings, thoughts, urges and memories that are outside of our conscious awareness” (2). Such feelings, thoughts, urges and memories are repressed in the unconscious mind and are only able to make themselves known indirectly in such instances as dreaming. Freud writes that repressed thoughts will rise from this unconscious realm during sleep, disguised through symbolism (117). Due to the inescapable connection between individuals’ unconscious, and social structures, the proliferation of “unconscious material” (6), exhibited through symbol and metaphor, in fantasy means that in order to understand the significance of this mode of fantasy one must refer to psychoanalysis. In weighing the influence of psychoanalysis, Jackson looks to the possible meanings of the uncanny, metamorphosis, entropy and the disintegrated bodies within fantasy narratives. In any event, the threat to cultural order in a fantasy narrative is a prominent aspect that calls for attention.

As demonstrated in the idea of tracing a culture’s “epistemological and ontological frame” (23) through the means of fantasy works, Jackson argues that fantasy “exists in a

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<sup>1</sup> Fantasy’s roots in ancient myth, mysticism, folklore, fairy tale and romance are also noted in Jackson’s study.

parasitical or symbiotic relationship to the real” (20). The world of the reader “is re-placed, its axis dissolved and distorted” (23) in the creation of the “superior alternate world” (2) of the text. Fantastic literature “suggests the basis upon which cultural order rests, for it opens up, for a brief moment, on to disorder, [...] on to that which lies outside [...] dominant value systems” (4). This “*opening* activity” (22) refutes the solidity of reality; it infiltrates “spaces where unity had been assumed” (23). Jackson considers the significance of the dissolving of “[s]patial, temporal, and philosophical ordering systems” (15) to be demonstrated by the additional spaces inserted in the various fantasy worlds being narrowed down into enclosures, time’s tendency towards “suspension, an eternal present” (47) and “[t]he many partial, dual, multiple and dismembered selves” (82) portrayed in the characters of fantasy narratives.

Within literary fantasies, with the dissolution of ordering systems, Jackson asserts that “[p]erception becomes increasingly confused, signs are vulnerable to multiple and contradictory interpretation, so that ‘meanings’ recede indefinitely,” and in this way, there is “trouble in representing [...] a ‘real’, absolute signified” (38). In a realistic narrative “the gap between signifier and signified is closed”, whereas in fantastic literature this gap “is left open” (40). As such, the fantastic “pushes towards an area of non-signification”. This occurs in the pursuit of “attempting to articulate ‘the unnameable’, [...], attempting to visualize the unseen, or by establishing a disjunction of word and meaning through a play upon ‘thingless names’” (41). As such, we see a break down in conventional logic and sense.

Additionally, Jackson points out that the “dismissal of the fantastic to the margins of literary culture” is “an ideologically significant gesture, one which is not dissimilar to culture’s silencing of unreason”. She asserts that fantasy “is either rejected altogether, or polemically refuted, or assimilated into a ‘meaningful’ narrative structure, re-written or written out as romance or as fable” (173) and argues that fantasy loses its subversive ability if it takes the forms of allegory or symbolism (41). Jackson is said to “[recognize] that the fantastic has often operated not as a literature of subversion but rather to reconcile the audience to ‘reality’, to the world of law and order” (Wilson 105). Jackson believed that through the fantasy mode one often achieved a resolution that involved returning to the status quo. It is important to note here that in this we immediately see a departure from Jackson’s view of fantasy to the way in which Rowling writes fantasy. Jackson’s critique is an attempt to de-mystify “the process of reading fantasies” with the intention that if critics can open up fantasy texts the way to “real social transformation” (10) may be accessible.

In Dimitra Fimi’s article “Tolkien and the Fantasy Tradition” her definition of fantasy shows further demonstrations of the symbiotic relationship between fantasy and realist

modes. According to Fimi, the establishment of fantasy and the fantastic came as a response to the rise of the realistic novel, a “counterreaction” (51) to it and its particular aesthetics. Where “[George] MacDonald exemplifies the roots of fantasy in the Victorian interest in folklore and the literary fairy tale” (53), William Morris attempts to revive the medieval romance genre:

[He] gave fantasy some of its most enduring elements: preindustrial, “medieval” settings; complex narratives with multiple characters and subplots; and a focus on northern European mythologies (as opposed to the Classical motifs that English literature had used for centuries before). (54)

Moreover Fimi, like Jackson, draws on Todorov’s foundational study and makes a distinction between the literature of the fantastic and fantasy literature. As noted above, she clarifies that the fantastic is determined by the “lack of explanation for ‘impossible’ events”, whereas fantasy literature has “a coherent system with its own internal rules” (40) so that all of the “impossible, and unrealistic elements [...] occur within a clearly defined framework”. Generally, a fantasy narrative will not try to create confusion as to “what is real in the world in which it is set”. Furthermore, “fantasy favors traditional forms of storytelling. It presents narratives with a coherent beginning, middle, and end, and in which one plot element leads consequentially to the next” (41). The use of structural coherence through chronological ordering is a fundamental aspect that is shared by both fantasy and realism and this suggests that both modes seek to tell “human” stories. In both modes the reader is not pushed to confusion or bewilderment, but offered a journey that follows rational conventions in order for focus to be given to personal growth within the characters. This recalls Mendlesohn’s claim of the reader of Portal-Quest fantasy, that she “[rides] with the point of view character” (8).

Nevertheless, Fimi argues that it is useful to discuss fantasy literature “not in terms of form or structure, but in terms of function”. She claims that fantasy “can be seen as a ‘mythical form’ of engaging with reality” as it does not utilise empiricism or try to offer scientific explanations, but rather, through telling a story, the “worldviews, beliefs, fears, and anxieties” (58) of those who tell it can be expressed. Fimi notes that fantasy authors utilise “mythical, metaphorical, symbolic ways of thinking about [...] and resolving” (58-9) concerns and anxieties; furthermore, she cites their efforts to “[satisfy] impossible desires” (47) in their creations of otherworlds or intrusions.

Fimi usefully stresses the distinction between “low” fantasy and “high” fantasy. Low fantasy “contains supernatural intrusions into our world”. High fantasy refers to any narrative

set in an “entirely invented universe” (42) and Fimi, using the work of Gamble and Yates, presents three subcategories to high fantasy. First, there is the narrative that takes place in a world which makes no reference to the reader’s world (referred to as immersive); second, the narrative takes place in a secondary world that is accessed by use of a portal; and third, the story takes place in a “world-within-a-world, marked off by physical boundaries” (Gamble and Yates qtd. in Fimi 42). Fimi agrees with Gamble and Yates’ assessment that the *Potter* series falls into this third category. Thus, her categorisation of *Potter* is different from Mendlesohn’s. She goes on to cite Brian Attebery’s theory of the “fuzzy set” where categories are defined “not by boundaries but by a center”. Attebery places J.R.R. Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings* at the centre of the “fuzzy set” of the fantasy genre (qtd in Fimi 49).

Beyond this characterisation, Fimi refers to Jackson’s recognition of the “power of ‘fantastic’ literature to subvert and challenge established norms and ideology”; however, Fimi says of Jackson that she claims that fantasy “requires ‘passive’ readers who are not encouraged to take any action or effect change in the real world” (55). In response, Fimi gives examples of fantasy writers and their specific works which have had real world impact or which have influenced perceptions of the modern condition.<sup>2</sup> The formation of the Harry Potter Alliance gives truth to these suggestions that fantasy writers’ narratives have such impact. The Harry Potter Alliance, in fact, recalls the relationship between the environmental foundation Greenpeace and Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings*. In “The Greenpeace to Amchitka: An Environmental Odyssey”, Robert Hunter describes their founding journey to protest US nuclear testing on Amchitka island, thus: “We are on our way to the dread dark land of Mordor, and Amchitka is Mount Doom ... somehow we have to hurl the Ring of Power into the fire and bring down the whole kingdom of the Dark Lord” (qtd. in Irvin par. 10). Although they were intercepted by the US Navy, never reached the nuclear testing site, and the nuclear test was undertaken despite its efforts, Greenpeace generated much public interest in this environmental matter and the US government cancelled the five tests that were set to follow. Eventually the island was “declared a bird sanctuary” (par. 17), thus demonstrating a relationship between fantasy-minded individuals and environmental activism.

Ursula K. Le Guin offers a comparable perspective in her essay “Why Are Americans Afraid of Dragons?”, in which she addresses the negative, close-minded responses to works of fantasy. She notes that many “highly technological peoples” (31) (including, but not

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<sup>2</sup> Fimi references the social and political responses to both Charles Kingsley’s *The Water-Babies* and J.R.R. Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings* (56).

limited to, Americans) have a disapproval of fantasy that she argues must stem from a fear of it. She states that such people are not only anti-fantasy, but that they are anti-fiction because they view the imagination as either “suspect” or “contemptible” (32). She describes imagination as “the absolutely essential human faculty”, as a discipline “essential” to art and science, and as free play, an action “done without an immediate object of profit” that engages in “recreation, re-creation, [and] the recombination of what is known into what is new”. She claims that when imagination is rejected it will continue to grow, but will be deformed, manifesting as “ego-centered daydreaming” or wishful thinking (33). According to her, the profit-minded individual, or the businessman, disapproves of the imagination because “if an act does not bring in an immediate tangible profit, it has no justification at all” (32). Such people would be unable to understand that the “good” of reading imaginative fiction is that it can “give you pleasure and delight” (34) and can “deepen your understanding of your world, and your fellow men, and your own feelings, and your destiny” (35). She argues that adults reject fantasy because “[t]hey know that its truth challenges, even threatens, all that is false, all that is phony, unnecessary, and trivial in the life they have let themselves be forced into living. They are afraid of dragons, because they are afraid of freedom” (36). The irony is that fantasy is no threat to reality. According to Jackson and Fimi, it is comprised almost entirely of it – fantasy is merely a disguised version of reality. The *Potter* reader will see this again and again in her reading of the series and it seems clear that Rowling intended her to experience this.

### **Rowling’s Fantasy**

Though few readers would deny that *Potter* belongs to the mode of fantasy, it is necessary to discuss how Rowling creates her magical world as the methods through which she does this seep into how this world functions. Both rational planning and imaginative inspiration influenced Rowling’s writing of the *Potter* series, and both a rational, explainable structure to her world and an abundance of the mythical, metaphorical and symbolic within that world give it life.

Rowling admitted to Elisabeth Dunn in an interview that it is “odd to speak of what [she’s] written as fantasy” (par. 6) because her interest lay in the relationships that Harry has with his friends and potential parental figures. In fact, Rowling stated in an interview with Malcolm Jones that “[i]t didn’t occur to [her] for a while that [she] was writing fantasy” (par. 14) and she only realised she was doing so three-quarters through *Stone* when a unicorn



appeared.<sup>3</sup> Human psychology was her narrative focus and as such, the novels have their roots in realism. That the depth and the significance of the story lay in Harry's relationships with other people shows that fantasy was interwoven with a realistic narrative. In much the same way that Ursula K. Le Guin describes herself as having "found" (38) Earthsea in her subconscious while she was writing, Rowling shares in an interview with Neil Matsuda that it seemed "as though, subconsciously, for years [she] had been preparing for writing Harry Potter" (par. 11). Nevertheless, her writing process was evidently a mixture of inspiration and ordered planning. She explains to Owen Jones that she recognises her good ideas when she gets "a physical response", a "sort of big leap of excitement" (par. 18). On the other hand, she plots her narrative very methodically as demonstrated in a handwritten spreadsheet that she used for planning *Phoenix*. In this spreadsheet, she has columns for chapter titles, the time of year, main plot and the subplots: the prophecy, Cho/Ginny, the DA, the Order of the Phoenix, Snape/Harry and James, and Hagrid and Grawp (*Harry Potter: A History of Magic* 240-241). This evidence highlights that realism and ordered thinking flourish within Rowling's writing process when combined with creative inspiration.

Rowling's world is a presentation of several elements from fairy tales, the medieval and the modern worlds recombining literary traditions familiar to the reader into a narrative that feels as if it is new or original. Rowling admitted:

I've taken *horrible* liberties with folklore and mythology, but I'm quite unashamed about that, because British folklore and British mythology is a totally bastard mythology. You know, we've been invaded by people, we've appropriated their gods, we've taken their mythical creatures, and we've soldered them all together to make, what I would say is one of the richest folklores in the world, because it's so varied. So I feel no compunction about borrowing from that freely, but adding a few things of my own. ("Living with Harry Potter" par. 58)

Rowling celebrates invention such as seen in the evolution of British mythology and takes her cue to solder ideas together to make something new. Folk and fairy tale influences are evident in the narrative, particularly in the archetypal orphan Harry's Cinderella (or "Cinderfella")<sup>4</sup> position in his adopted household. Rowling's novels follow the traditional form of storytelling, with beginning, middle and end, emphasised by each novel following the course of Harry's school year. Even so, she pushes beyond traditional narrative. Despite the

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<sup>3</sup> Rowling has been quoted as saying that the first pages of the story that she wrote "bear no resemblance to anything in the finished book" (qtd in Claudia Fenske's *Muggles, Monsters and Magicians: A Literary Analysis of the Harry Potter Series* 17). In that case, it appears that the early introduction of magic in the finished book did not happen in the original draft.

<sup>4</sup> Ximena Gallardo-C. and C. Jason Smith's "Cinderfella: J.K. Rowling's Wily Web of Gender" examines Harry's similarities to our modern Cinderella's progenitor, the Grimm Brothers' Aschenputtel.

complexity of plot which sees *Potter* falling into step with the fantasy staples Fimi identifies in Morris, Rowling's portrayal of the wizarding world does not entirely adhere to the convention of the "preindustrial" or "medieval" setting which writers of fantasy have tended to prefer since Morris's time. Her preindustrial wizarding world of flaming torches used as light sources, owls instead of emails and quills and parchment in place of laptops exists alongside a modern technological world to which wizards have access even if they have little experience or understanding of it. She plays on both sides of a supposed dividing line between magical imaginings and the real world. The magic system, further, functions within a "framework" (41) and consists of a "coherent system" (40) of rules in the way that Fimi describes as a feature of fantasy works. Rowling's wizarding government and schooling operates very similarly to real world governments and schools as will be thoroughly examined shortly.

Another demonstration of Rowling exhibiting an adherence to established fantasy tropes is seen in how desire can act as "a disturbing element which threatens cultural order" (3) within her narrative, a claim that Jackson makes regarding fantasy works. Rowling portrays the technologically minded Vernon Dursley and his wife Petunia, and illustrates their rejection of Harry's wizarding heritage and powers by describing their desire to "stamp it out of him" (*Stone* 43) through a combination of abuse and neglect. All the while, of course, Harry desires to know more about his familial background. For Harry, the Dursleys pose a threat to his ability to discover his true identity. For the Dursleys the wizarding world, and their relation to it through their nephew Harry, is a threat not only because of the menacing Voldemort, of whom they have but a vague understanding, but also because the wizarding world falls well outside the social and cultural norms of middle-class English life and together they feel they must adhere to the social mores or risk exclusion from it and a consequent loss of status and security. Ironically, the ideologies of the wizarding community, as espoused by the Ministry of Magic, reflect a similar rigidity and uncompromising attitude towards that which lies outside its established cultural order as it seeks to reproduce its dominant value systems. Just as the Dursleys see the wizards as suspect, the Ministry distrusts not only non-wizards but also the fantastic beasts and non-human beings of their own magical community such as werewolves, centaurs, goblins, merpeople, house-elves, giants and so forth. Indeed, the Ministry's laws seek to maintain a status quo which elevates the wizard population above all others. The issue of prejudice within Harry's magical world is a polarising one, with socially conditioned wizards sustaining unjust practices which debilitate the livelihoods of supposedly lesser magical beings while maintaining the

convenience of their own. Our hero Harry, as both outsider and insider, seeks to disrupt that tradition, bringing his perspectives of the non-magical world with him to his experiences in the magical realm.

*Potter*'s wizarding community, and its socio-political concerns, can indeed be considered to stand in a symbiotic relationship with the real world as Jackson suggests is indicative of fantasy literature. Suman Gupta considers the fact that the wizarding world is "deliberately and self-consciously used to play with, allude to, comment on, interrogate and take positions with regard to social and political issues that are relevant to our world". He goes on to argue that the wizarding world "is a repository of reflections on [the reader's] world that insidiously or overtly draw [her] in, makes [her] engage in it, while *seeming* not to" (91). Rowling admits to an intended parallel in a Carnegie Hall interview: "I wanted Harry to leave our world and find exactly the same problems in the wizarding world" (par. 45).

The Ministry of Magic – and its failing as the seat of government in the wizarding world – has been discussed by several Rowling critics (Susan Hall, Barton and Schwabach). Rowling's treatment of the Ministry is, according to Benjamin H. Barton, an "unflattering depiction of government [which] is particularly damning because it so closely resembles the British and U.S. governments" (1526). Barton discusses the "self-interested bureaucrats bent on increasing and protecting their power, often to the detriment of the public at large" particularly within the sixth novel as it demonstrates the effectiveness of Rowling's assessment of governmental policy concurrent to her novels. Barton argues that the "government misconduct seems perfectly natural and familiar to the reader" and that the reader "identifies her own government with Rowling's Ministry of Magic" (1525). Rowling may be seen to be exposing the child reader to the reality that her government may not be trustworthy and that it is her duty to rectify this societal concern by rejecting their leadership. Joel Hunter asserts that wizards "have allowed magic to diminish freedom by specializing, institutionalizing and centralizing the control and use of magic" (loc. 1877-1887) and the reader sees this in law making and law enforcement within the novels.

Aaron Schwabach, accordingly, claims the wizarding world "is governed by a detailed and deeply flawed legal regime" (310) and he analyses the legal treatment of some spells and compares them to "relevant British (Muggle) and international law" (312). With direct reference to the British government at the time of writing and its response to terrorists and terrorist action, he claims that "the current Muggle government in Britain is apparently

willing to disregard the civil rights of some of its residents to the same degree as the Ministry of Magic” (343).

A primary problem in *Potter* is the prejudice that is often encoded in the laws of the Ministry of Magic which pervades the entire wizarding community. Robin Truth Goodman asserts that the Ministry’s governance “seeps out” and affects several aspects of life in the wizarding world by way of “setting the law, overseeing the bank, controlling trade[...] [and] maintaining prisons” with the implication that it brings the entire wizarding world under “corporate management” (153). Susan Hall claims that “[t]he fact that the wizarding world’s government is so powerful means that ministry influence is, as a result, the chief basis for status and power in the magical world” (“Marx, Magic, and Muggles” 273). Any prejudices that the Ministry deems fit to espouse, thus, are all pervasive. The wizarding world’s government has several discriminatory laws – including legalised prejudice and questionable legal procedures such as the use of Memory Charms – and a rationalised schooling system which ill-prepares students to think and make decisions for themselves. Rowling’s treatment of the Ministry and of prejudice is easily read as a critique of the social and political conditions of the reader’s world and, as such, is a portrayal of typical realist concerns within the text. Her characterisation of issues within the wizarding world expresses, as Fimi writes that fantasy narratives do, several “worldviews, beliefs, fears, and anxieties” (58) to which the twenty-first century reader can immediately relate. Rowling’s creation of a magical world to present contemporary concerns – instead of just replicating the reader’s actual world for exploration within a text – lends itself to varied portrayals of subverting or undermining the status quo.

Such an undermining can occur through an exhibition of undifferentiation, one of Jackson’s categories of fantasy tropes. As discussed above, Jackson sees significance in the way that fantasy “[dissolves] structures, moves towards an ideal of *undifferentiation*” (72) and Rowling’s magic is seen to physically do this. Animagus<sup>5</sup> characters can transform themselves into animals at will, werewolves transform involuntarily at the full moon, Polyjuice Potion transforms its drinker into a completely different person and Nymphadora Tonks, a Metamorphmagus, can transform any aspect of her appearance at will. These bodily transformations temporarily disturb seemingly solid bodies. Transfiguration, one of the most difficult subjects at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, involves altering the

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<sup>5</sup> Eric Sidel poses several questions about the possibilities of Sirius’s human characteristics once he transforms into a dog by the name Padfoot. Recognising Padfoot’s body is a dog’s body, Sidel wonders if his mind is that of a dog or a man (Sirius), which suggests that the mind-body distinction is troubled by Rowling’s animagus characters.

“molecular structure” (par. 11) of an object or person as Rowling explained to Anne Simpson in an interview. Wizards’ ability to perform these kinds of magic is in sharp contrast with their often static ideologies. In fact, it is perhaps because of the nature of the magic they can perform – their capacity to manipulate natural forces, to make and unmake – that wizards believe they are superior to others – whether magical or non-magical. Furthermore, tangible representations of dissolving ordering systems are seen in the ever-changing Room of Requirement at Hogwarts; the reach towards the suspension of time in the Pensieve where you can (re)live a memory as it first occurred; and the existence of multiple or shared selves which is, most centrally, represented by Harry and Voldemort. Rowling uses metaphor and symbol to express the grand potential of change within the magical world.

Further representations of Jackson’s view of fantasy are seen in *Potter* in the gap between signifier and signified. The concepts of death, souls/minds, the differences between beings, beasts and spirits, and love as magic are unpacked, blurred and repacked in ways that make sense within the narrative if they do not in the real world. Firstly, Harry’s understanding of death is affected by his continued connection with his dead parents, his loss of his godfather Sirius and his conversation with Dumbledore after Harry has been struck by a deadly curse, all of which blur the boundaries he believes separate the dead from the living. Voldemort’s relationship with death is fraught with an attempted suspension of time; he seeks immortality through the creation of Horcruxes. A Horcrux is “an object in which a person has concealed part of their soul” and with this “even if one’s body is attacked or destroyed, one cannot die” (*Prince* 464). Unbeknownst to anyone except Dumbledore and Snape, Harry is one of Voldemort’s Horcruxes.

Secondly, citing Harry’s inability to close his mind and his “direct connection into [Voldemort’s] mind”, Snape laments how dangerous it is that Dumbledore confides important information to him. Dumbledore’s assurance that, having possessed Harry, Voldemort is afraid to share his mind again because his soul is maimed and therefore cannot “bear close contact with a soul like Harry’s”, unsurprisingly confuses Snape, who bursts out “Souls? We were talking of minds!” (*Hallows* 549). Dumbledore insists that, in the case of Harry and Voldemort, to speak of souls is to speak of minds. This blurring of soul and mind is directly connected to Harry’s status as a Horcrux, a magical intertwining that transcends regular boundaries and logic. The piece of Voldemort’s soul attached to Harry is located within his forehead scar. Rowling confirmed in an interview with Melissa Anelli that the pain he feels in his scar is “this piece of soul seeking to rejoin the Master Soul” (par. 138). Although this is never explained to Harry by Dumbledore or to the reader by Rowling, one can surmise that

Harry and Voldemort experience a mind link because of the location of Voldemort's soul in Harry's body.

Thirdly, the Beast, Being and Spirit Division within the Ministry of Magic is so briefly referenced in the *Potter* series that it serves only to highlight how little wizards have any interest in those deemed legally different from them. Perhaps in an attempt to secure their own position, wizards chose to categorise every type of being, a process explained in Rowling's companion book *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*<sup>6</sup> which gives the history as to how each category is defined. The seeming mutability of the classifications renders the exercise ridiculous, yet wizards continue to endorse the limitations imposed on particular magical races according to the category under which they fall. Newt Scamander explains in the introduction, that in 1811 Grogan Stump, the Minister for Magic, "decreed that a 'being' [is] 'any creature that has sufficient intelligence to understand the laws of the magical community and to bear part of the responsibility in shaping those laws'" (xii). This official classification follows two previous attempts to define beings, as, firstly, "any member of the magical community that [walks] on two legs" (x) and, secondly, "those who [can] speak the human tongue" (xi) which ends in failure due to goblin representatives inviting trolls and other unruly creatures who fit these descriptions to the Wizards' Council (which preceded the Ministry of Magic) in order to be granted being status. Any creature falling outside this group would thus be considered a beast. Werewolves have been oscillating "between the Beast and Being divisions for many years" with "an office for Werewolf Support Services at the Being Division" and a "Werewolf Registry and Werewolf Capture Unit [falling] under the Beast Division" (xiii). On the other hand, centaurs "[object] to some of the creatures with whom they [are] asked to share 'being' status, such as hags and vampires" (xiin3) and request beast status – a move that the merpeople follow. Ghosts, who claim that they are "has-beens" rather than "beings" (xiin2) are delegated to the spirit division. In this thesis, the term 'wizard' will be used to refer to magical humans (male or female), 'fantastic beasts' to refer to centaurs and werewolves in their transformed state and 'non-human being' will be used to refer to house-elves, goblins and werewolves in their human state.

A further concept worth noting in the series is love which, as stated above, is treated in this thesis as an emotion only possible through imaginative thinking. Love being the most

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<sup>6</sup> *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* is a book by Rowling that is supposedly from within her *Potter* universe. This volume is purported to be authored by Newt Scamander a magizoologist who studies magical creatures.

powerful magic<sup>7</sup> is not just a saccharine sentiment in the *Potter* universe, but an actuality demonstrated in many instances, not least of which is Harry's ability to survive the Killing Curse due to his mother Lily's self-sacrifice. As aforementioned, Le Guin claims that American culture defines imagination as effeminate and that the rejection of imagination is a typically masculine response which results in American men repressing imagination. Notably, Rowling's treatment of her male protagonist's feminine side is one imbued by the capacity for embracing and acceptance. Dumbledore discusses Harry's character with Snape, asserting that Harry's "deepest nature is much more like his mother's" (*Hallows* 594) than his father's. So, in contrast to the widespread cultural identification of the masculine with the rational and anti-imaginative to which Le Guin refers, Rowling's treatment of her protagonist undermines this social construction.<sup>8</sup> Harry's love for his friends and parents also enables him to escape possession by Voldemort, to produce protective magic which saves the souls of others and to allow himself, a Horcrux, to be destroyed by Voldemort. Indeed, those who reject or abuse love are seen to suffer terrible fates as evidenced by Barty Crouch Jnr losing his soul and Merope Gaunt being abandoned and dying poverty-stricken and sapped of all her magical powers. If we consider love to only be possible through imagination, imagination would appear to be of great value within the *Potter* novels. In contrast, the rejection of imaginative thinking or an open-minded, accepting approach leads to a deformity of thought, Le Guin warns (33), and this is evident in a character such as Voldemort, whose warped views of the worthiness of people based on their magical lineage drives him to commit the abhorrent acts that frame him as the antagonist of the series. Voldemort's role foregrounds an unjust, cruel society which capitalises on the marginalisation and systematic discrimination of certain groups. Harry must embark on a journey of self-discovery in order to wield his love as a magical force and so effectively counter the hatred Voldemort disseminates.

As demonstrated, Rowling's realism works in tandem with imaginative invention in her world creation. Real world aspects such as a corrupt government and disparity between races, brush up alongside bodily transformation of human to animal, and an emotion being an adequate shield against a bloodthirsty prospective dictator.

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<sup>7</sup> " 'There is a room in the Department of Mysteries,' interrupted Dumbledore, 'that is kept locked at all times. It contains a force that is at once more wonderful and more terrible than death, than human intelligence, than the forces of nature. It is also, perhaps, the most mysterious of the many subjects for study that reside there. It is the power held within that room that you possess in such quantities and which Voldemort has not at all'" (*Phoenix* 743).

<sup>8</sup> In chapter three, an examination of Rowling's purposeful use of literary alchemy will further this discussion of Harry's feminine side.

## Ways of Seeing: Outward and Inward Vision

Rowling's treatment of vision – including invisibility – contrasts physical vision with insight; this is imperative for the discussion of rational and imaginative thought as modes of responding to issues, as well as informing one of the nature of reality. According to Jackson, the focus within fantasy literature on the problematic nature of vision is a literary manifestation of the questions of knowing and seeing (31). Rowling has stated in an interview with Tim Boquet that she purposely gave Harry glasses as a symbolic expression of his vulnerability (par. 18). Poor physical eyesight notwithstanding, Harry develops both an outward and inward vision enabling him to see past the literal and physical aspects of the wizarding world to the social implications of its community. Outward vision here means one is able to observe people, places and things visually, whereas inward vision means one is able to observe people, places and things based on internal factors such as emotion (understanding or compassion, for example). This development of insight reflects the binary engagement with rational and imaginative thought. To demonstrate this, it is necessary to consider how Harry is able to recognise prejudice in the wizarding community and why he is willing to overthrow it. These are pertinent questions since there are several characters who are not cognisant of the fact that they participate in the discrimination and/or marginalisation of non-wizard groups, or they do not have any urgent drive to disturb the status quo that perpetuates these acts.<sup>9</sup> In terms of Harry developing his insight, he combines outward and inward vision to interpret and respond to the magical world. I will argue that outwardly his vision is greatly influenced by his abusive upbringing, enabling him to view the marginalised through the lens of his own experience and practical reasoning, prompting the question of, "What should one do in this type of situation?" Further, his inward vision involves his imaginative mind which is influenced by love and empathy which offers a reason for why one should act for others. Thus, we will associate outward vision with rationality, and inward vision with imaginative thought, and so the binary engagement of these two kinds of thought will be analysed.

To begin to understand Harry's outward vision regarding the magical world, one must be aware of Harry's experience of living in the abusive household of his blood relative, Aunt Petunia. When Lily Evans, Harry's mother, is accepted into Hogwarts her sister Petunia writes a letter to Dumbledore requesting admission to the school. Despite receiving a kind reply that, as she is not a witch, she cannot attend the magical school, the rejection festers

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<sup>9</sup> Ron is an example of the latter type of wizard.



into resentment towards her younger, magically talented sister and she seeks “to end her discomfort quickly by wholly committing to normality and conventionality as absolute moral duties, as the only right way for a person to be”. Thus, “[t]his commitment [transforms] the strangeness and wonder of magic into abnormality and freakishness in her mind”, turning her fears of inferiority into “hatred and contempt” (Hsieh 31). She marries a man who agrees wholeheartedly that magic is a form of “unnaturalness” (*Goblet* 35) and together they reluctantly foster the magical orphan, their nephew, Harry. Though magic bursts out of him on occasions when he is bullied – by his aunt or his school peers – he does not recognise his magic for what it is and believes himself to be completely ordinary. Uncle Vernon and Aunt Petunia’s prejudice against magical people is demonstrated in their refusal to allow Harry to learn his family history and know about his abilities as they agree that they will “put a stop to that rubbish” (*Stone* 43). Harry is constantly admonished for his curiosity with the phrase “don’t ask questions” (20). Voicing his violent desire to manipulate Harry’s identity, Uncle Vernon expresses how he and his wife think they can “squash it out of [him],” and “turn [him] normal” (*Phoenix* 40). He says Harry will “*get the stuffing knocked out of [him]*” (*Prisoner* 21) and chokes him when he sees him outside with his wand (*Phoenix* 10). Harry is made to live in a cupboard under the stairs, he is excluded from Dudley’s birthday trips, has none of his own, his opinions are dismissed and he is routinely silenced. Harry’s earliest childhood experiences then are times imbued with neglect and violent rejection, and they heavily influence his outward vision when he enters the wizarding community.

When he enters the wizarding world with Rubeus Hagrid, who delivers Harry’s acceptance letter from Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, he voices his disbelief at being a wizard. He expresses his insecurities when comparing himself to Draco Malfoy and his fear that he will be the worst student in his class, admitting a vulnerability that Rowling seeks to visualise through his need for glasses. Harry’s poor physical vision, furthermore, parallels his lack of understanding of relatively superficial matters within the wizarding world. He often laments his ignorance about Quidditch, asking others eagerly for updates about the international teams in the run-up to the World Cup, “regretting more than ever his isolation from the wizarding world when he [is] stuck in Privet Drive” (*Goblet* 59). His ignorance extends to simple spells, wizarding history and even the fairy tales wizards read to their young children. Nevertheless, Harry is hailed, respected, and revered for being “*The Boy Who Lived*” (*Stone* 7). People clamour to shake his hand in the Leaky Cauldron and his peers gawk at him on the train ride to Hogwarts. This instantaneous fame, however, holds no appeal for him. Harry demonstrates his desire to fit in, to belong, and his willingness to

conform to several superficial cultural expectations of being a wizard. He does not want to be famous or special. The decade that he spent as a “punch-bag” (20) for his cousin Dudley has cemented a status for him that is more real than the fame and adoration he is offered in the wizarding world. Despite the positive attention he receives, he still associates himself with the vulnerable and marginalised as the reader sees from his choice of friends. This is because he is quickly able to recognise abuses of power and position within the wizarding world because of his experiences with the Dursleys. He questions the status quo and gives favourable judgement to those who are oppressed by systematic discrimination.

For instance, when Draco Malfoy, a wealthy boy in the same year as Harry, insults Ron Weasley for his family’s lack of money and offers to be Harry’s friend, implying that his “sort” is better than Ron’s, Harry immediately rejects this offer saying he “can tell who the wrong sort are for [himself]” (*Stone* 81). Having been bullied by Dudley and his gang, he refuses to side with Malfoy after witnessing him bullying Ron. Ron’s family, the Weasleys, are despised for being “blood traitors” (*Phoenix* 105) – because they are pure-blood wizards, but they sympathise and associate with non-wizards or Muggle-born wizards, their lack of allegiance to pure-blood ideology marks them as traitors. A primary issue in the wizarding world is the question of magical blood and Rowling designates three groups for wizards: pure-bloods, half-bloods and Muggle-borns. Pure-blood wizards claim that they have no non-magical relatives in their family line, but “[t]o call oneself a pure-blood was more accurately a declaration of political or social intent (‘I will not marry a Muggle’<sup>10</sup> and I consider Muggle/wizard marriage reprehensible’) than a statement of biological fact” as Rowling announces on her website Pottermore (“Pure-Blood” par. 5). Half-bloods are those with a mixed family heritage of wizarding and non-wizarding or Muggle-born relations. Muggle-borns are magical people who are born to two non-magical parents; they are informed of their magical status by an authority in their local wizarding community (such as headmaster Dumbledore) and join the magical community. Harry befriends wizards from all three groups and sees the discrimination often levelled at Muggle-borns, particularly by bigoted pure-bloods.

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<sup>10</sup> Rowling discussed the term Muggle, stating that she was “looking for a word that suggested both foolishness and loveability”. Starting with the word ‘mug’ – for a gullible person – she intentionally “softened it” and believes it sounds “quite cuddly” (“J.K. Rowling’s World Book Day Chat” para. 41). The use of the term Muggle within the series is by turns affectionate or patronising (the Weasleys), neutral (Harry and Hermione) and a perjorative (the Malfoys, Voldemort and Death Eaters). Usage of the term within this thesis is undertaken with the intent of a neutral connotation unless otherwise specified, such as in the case of quotations taken from characters’ dialogue.

The Weasleys, referred to by the pejorative term blood-traitors, are Harry's unofficial adopted family. Hermione, often belittled because of her Muggle-born status, is one of his best friends. Beyond the constant mockery of supposed blood traitors and Muggle-borns, John Granger claims that "every one of the Harry Potter books reveals a prejudice against another downtrodden group of people who are different from 'normal' wizards or Muggles in big ways and small" (*How Harry Cast His Spell* 56).<sup>11</sup> Harry makes connections with members of many of these afflicted groups. Hagrid, discriminated against because he is half-giant, is supported by Harry as much as he supports him. Professor Lupin is persecuted because he is a werewolf, but Harry's trust of and affection towards him grows over the course of the series. Both Dobby and Kreacher are seen as inferior by the majority of wizards because of their status as house-elves, but Harry comes to respect both of them. Neville is considered to be weak and Luna is thought of as weird, but he sees through to their potential, skills and loyalty as friends. Owing to his relatively broad perspective, instead of by power, wealth or success, Harry judges the quality of a friend based on helpfulness, supportiveness and kindness. This then speaks directly to why Harry feels he must overthrow prejudice in the magical world; he loves and cares for members of several marginalised groups. He also witnesses the Ministry of Magic mistreat non-magical people and use abusive Memory Charms which rob people of their memories of experiences. He learns first hand that the systems of government and education are often corrupted by leadership that seeks maintenance of the status quo rather than development according to the needs of the public. His inward vision establishing itself, he considers sanctioned injustice imaginatively, not merely accepting and echoing the socialised response to reject the marginalised, but enacting his own response by building friendships with outcast groups. Harry's power of love enables him to gain a position of influence in the magical community and, through his loving actions, he exemplifies the path to a more inclusive community.

A further exemplification of Rowling's treatment of vision and the distinction between physical vision and insight is the motif of Harry's Invisibility Cloak, an item used throughout the series which can be argued to symbolise perspective in that those who are prevented from seeing him while he uses the Cloak are, more often than not, those who view the world in a different manner from him. When he wears his Invisibility Cloak others cannot see him even though he is present; they view what they deem to be reality, but there is another layer to the

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<sup>11</sup> Granger outlines the kind of prejudice being shown, their origins and recipients in a concise table. He cites not only the systematic prejudices, but also refers to the prejudices shown to "[c]lumsy, awkward" Neville, "[i]ntelligent women" such as Hermione as well as to the foreigners, non-conformists and "[r]esistance fighters" (56) of *Goblet*, *Phoenix* and *Hallows* respectively.

situation – they are just unable to access it. Harry’s Invisibility Cloak<sup>12</sup> enables him to conceal his presence from those whom he cannot trust or those who would do harm to him. Under the Cloak, he gains protection from people who would not understand the rationale behind his decision-making and from enemies who would prohibit his choices because of the potential damage to Voldemort’s regime that could occur as a result of these decisions.

He uses the Invisibility Cloak in the earlier books to break school rules – generally in the pursuit of solving the novel’s featured mystery. He avoids the caretaker Argus Filch in his nocturnal wanderings of Hogwarts by use of the Cloak. Filch is a Squib: a person born into a magical family who has no magical ability. He is presented as malicious, taking pleasure in punishing students, and so he likes to catch students out of bed after curfew. From Harry’s perspective, being out of bed after hours involves dangerous undertakings connected with his moral and social obligations to resist and restrain evil doers in his school. He believes his motives trump those of the school caretaker, a bitter man who wants to wield a measure of control and power over the students because of his lack of magical talent.

In the later books, Harry wears his Cloak to escape detection by Death Eaters, Voldemort’s followers, who strive for a homogenous society in which only pure-blood wizards are accorded rights. The Cloak conceals him when he must enter the Ministry which, by this time, has been infiltrated by Death Eaters who have placed their puppet Pius Thicknesse in the position of Minister for Magic. He uses it to protect Luna and himself from detection from Death Eaters. He puts on his Cloak during the Battle of Hogwarts when everyone believes him to be dead. While his friends fight he casts protective spells from underneath the Cloak, making his way through the fray to Voldemort. Though he does use the Cloak for other purposes, the essential function that the Cloak plays for him is to protect himself (and others) from his foes. Under the Cloak, Harry is not seen in two ways. Of course, on one level, his adversaries cannot see him because the Cloak makes him physically invisible. Further than that, though, they cannot see him because he uses this Cloak to engage in activities which aim to protect the vulnerable, protect those that his antagonists – affiliated with either Voldemort or the Ministry – have deemed either their prey or collateral damage. He uses inward vision and in so doing his choices are unfathomable because his imaginative

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<sup>12</sup> There are many types of Invisibility Cloaks in the *Potter* universe: they may be bewitched with a “Disillusionment Charm,” a “Bedazzling Hex” or “woven from Demiguise hair” (*Hallows* 333) which, over many years, will eventually lose their effectiveness. Harry’s Cloak, which has been passed down from generations before, is of unparalleled magical craftsmanship and is far superior to other invisibility cloaks. His cloak is one of the three Deathly Hallows; the Hallows are magical objects considered by “Questers” (335) to make the possessors invincible to death.

worldview, which allows for a more inclusive response to social outcasts, is fundamentally dissimilar to their own.

By developing his skills in rational and imaginative thinking, moving from outward vision to inward vision, he is enabled to be a new kind of wizard who develops around himself a new kind of community that does not conform to the ideologies set forth by the Ministry of Magic and perpetuated by its citizens. He helps others to develop new or re-created versions of themselves – ones who renounce the ideologies of the Ministry.

Hermione, Dobby and Kreacher develop their perspectives and goals through the friendship and influence of Harry. Consequently, Hermione helps Ron to become a new kind of wizard. Dumbledore's Army which Harry leads, moreover, gives Neville and Luna the opportunity to become newer versions of themselves and make effective choices that influence the marginalised, thereby re-creating their society on a small scale. In this way, Harry is not just a threat because of a prophecy or because Voldemort tells the Death Eaters that he is; he is a threat because he seeks to disrupt the entire social order through re-imagining the magical world. He is a rallying point for the resistance against Lord Voldemort, the Death Eaters and other bigots. In fact, a centaur tells Harry and Hermione that because they are proudly "a race apart" (*Phoenix* 667) they do not help humans, yet they eventually join the Battle of Hogwarts, inspired by Harry's sacrifice to contribute to the eradication of the blood prejudice that plagues the magical community.

In spite of Harry's weak eyesight and his need for glasses, Harry sees the magical world more clearly than many of his peers and superiors. Yes, Harry assimilates into the wizarding culture with considerable success – he plays Quidditch, has B-average grades at school and can perform protective spells beyond the capability of most –, but he refuses to accept many social ideologies endorsed by wizards. Through a combination of outward and inward vision, he flexes his powers for rational and imaginative thinking respectively. Having suffered the Dursleys' abuse, his outward vision is honed and he is able to see the prejudice of the Ministry of Magic quickly. His inward vision enables him to empathise, to imagine himself into the position of these mistreated, despised and marginalised members of wizarding society – in ways that many wizards are not able to do – and he is spurred to overthrow the injustice that beleaguers them. Troublingly, Harry must also look to the perpetuation of prejudice that is taught in the magical school of Hogwarts and seek ways to counteract it with his peers.

## The Ministry of Magic

Having discussed how Rowling uses reason and imagination to create her magical world, and how Harry's inward and outward vision enables him to see the magical world more clearly, let us turn to the magical community and examine the imbalance of the rational and imaginative thinking of its citizens that is so often demonstrated. In the 2016 film *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*, a narrative set within the *Potter* universe, an ordinary person gains access to knowledge of magic and goes on to develop a new perspective; his conception of reality is broadened and includes a belief in the usefulness of the unconscious mind and the imagination.<sup>13</sup> At the behest of the Ministry and its Statute of Secrecy, however, wizards do not offer non-wizards the opportunity to expand their perceptions and perspectives of reality. Further, the magical abilities, powers and livelihoods of fantastic beasts and non-human beings too are legally curtailed by the Ministry. As participants in the magical world, they too should have the ability to develop their knowledge and give nuance to their viewpoints within magical society. However, powerful wizards believe that only their peers should be encouraged to cultivate their powers and abilities. With traditional, long-standing views, they do not attempt to innovate the thinking of any non-wizard groups; they do not attempt to innovate their own thinking either. This stagnant thinking, entirely lacking in imaginative evolution, allows prejudice to fester and flourish. To understand the impact of Ministerial prejudice, and the dire necessity of a new way of thinking for the magical community, examination of the treatment of non-wizards by the wizarding government must be undertaken. Further, non-wizards are not the only group that suffers from discrimination due to the prejudices promulgated by the Ministry. Harry has friendships and significant interactions with house-elves, werewolves, giants and goblins and these groups are seen to endure the greatest prejudice under the Ministry. Centaurs have separated themselves from wizarding communities, but in the few interactions they have with adult wizards, the discrimination against this magical race is readily apparent. There is also a great need to bring these groups to a new way of thinking and interacting with one another before any real change can come about in the magical world; they must reject the Ministry's teachings

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<sup>13</sup> In the film, Jacob Kowalski – an ordinary man – is denied a loan for a bakery on the basis that such a business could not compete financially with factories producing similar pastries, (even while he pleads that the factories cannot produce the quality that he can as a small business owner). After seeing many magical beasts and ultimately being made to forget his interactions with all things magical, Jacob receives Occamy eggs (made of silver) through an anonymous wizard to stand as collateral for his bank loan. Jacob goes on to have massive success with his bakery which sells pastries that are based on the magical beasts he witnessed, making it evident that he has retained some memories of magical encounters.

through rational and imaginative thinking in order to bring about a magical world directed by equality.

One of the most overt exemplifications of the Ministry's prejudiced ideology is the Fountain of Magical Brethren. When Harry visits the Ministry headquarters for the first time he views the statues within the fountain:

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

Harry is at the Ministry because he has been charged for performing magic in the presence of a non-wizard. He had cast a Patronus Charm to protect himself and his cousin Dudley from a Dementor. Dementors are creatures that can “suck the happiness out of a place” (*Prisoner* 76), suck “every good feeling, every happy memory” out of a person leaving one with “nothing but the worst experiences of [one's] life” (140) and through the “Dementors' Kiss” (183) can suck one's soul out of one's body. Use of magic in the presence of a non-wizard is permitted in “exceptional circumstances” (*Phoenix* 135), including a situation in which any wizard or non-wizard's life is threatened – therefore Dumbledore defends Harry in the courtroom. Unsettlingly, Harry is subjected to a “full criminal trial” despite his offense being a “simple matter of underage magic” (137) and he is bullied and intimidated by the Minister Cornelius Fudge and his undersecretary Dolores Umbridge throughout the proceedings. Fudge refuses to acknowledge Voldemort's return and wants to undermine Harry's credibility since he is the person who witnessed Voldemort's rebirth and is warning the community about his restoration of the Death Eaters. Hall, who examines the class conflict of the magical world in terms of Marxist theory, describes Harry's trial as “ministerial muscle flexing” as the Minister wants to “send a message [...] that challenging the official Ministry line is a very unwise thing to do” (“Marx, Magic, and Muggles” 273). Leaving the Ministry, after being cleared of his charges, Harry looks at the statues again:

He looked up into the handsome wizard's face, but close-to Harry thought he looked rather weak and foolish. The witch was wearing a vapid smile like a beauty contestant, and from what Harry knew of goblins and centaurs, they were most unlikely to be caught staring so soporily at humans of any description. Only the house-elf's attitude of creeping servility looked convincing. (*Phoenix* 142).

His new perspective of the figures is undoubtedly informed by the treatment he receives from Ministry officials. He recognises – with the help of Dumbledore – that the Ministry is not

interested in hearing the truth when it counters their agenda. The statues' façade falls away: the seeming power and respectability of the wizard evaporates and the witch appears unthinking and complacent, undercutting the assumed superiority and intelligence of wizards. Furthermore, the supposed peaceful co-existence of wizards, beings and beasts strikes him as ridiculous since he pays attention to what the relationship between wizards, goblins and centaurs is actually like, not what it is purported or expected to be. With his inward vision, Harry acknowledges the prejudice shown to magical beings and beasts, while the Ministry refuses accountability for their part in supporting such injustice. The statue is an embodiment of a rationalised way of seeing the magical world, a justification for the Ministry's ideologies, and the Ministry is committed to perpetuating that way of thinking because it benefits wizards over all other groups.

The two Ministers that we see running the Ministry are "incompetent, unjust, corrupt, and occasionally brutal" (317). Throughout most of the seventh novel, in fact, the Minister is Pius Thicknesse, a puppet controlled by Death Eaters by use of the *Imperius* (or Controlling) Curse. Fudge, the Minister from *Stone* to *Phoenix*, is shown to be concerned with "appearances rather than justice". He swiftly disposes of Barty Crouch Jr, who holds essential information about Voldemort's rebirth, thus "preventing [him] from giving testimony that might have been politically embarrassing" (331). Dumbledore warns Fudge that his "love of the office" he holds blinds his judgement and prevents justice from reigning (*Goblet* 614). Nevertheless, threats to his power drive Fudge to harden his resolve and maintain his narrow-minded approach. In *Phoenix*, Fudge is unwilling to accept Voldemort's return as it "would mean trouble like the Ministry hasn't had to cope with for nearly fourteen years". Sirius declares that, for Fudge, "[i]t's so much more comfortable to convince himself Dumbledore's lying to destabilise him" (*Phoenix* 89) and take over his position at the Ministry. The idea of Voldemort's return and thus a presumed attempt to "overturn the entire order of things on which they depend for their sense of self-importance" (Morris loc. 2325) is so threatening to the Ministry that Fudge turns the public against Dumbledore and Harry for suggesting it. Fudge ensures the Ministry, the Wizard High Court and the wizarding community in general believe Dumbledore to be "rumour-mongering", and he "[l]eans heavily" (*Phoenix* 89) on the major newspaper the *Daily Prophet* to report this. Not only does this result in a conservative and short-sighted viewpoint being disseminated to the wizarding citizenry, but the main source of news and information is shown to be easily corruptible by the government.

In addition to such visible corruption, Ministry employees such as Umbridge abuse their position and, as well as suffering no consequences, are permitted to continue working within



the system. Umbridge, in fact, gains a greater foothold and extends the scope of the Ministry's ability to propagate prejudiced thought, by bringing into effect the quasi-racist system of categorising wizarding folk according to their blood status when she is made Head of the Muggle-born Registration Commission. Umbridge's Commission is reminiscent of many racist and fascist regimes throughout modern history, such as those of Nazism and apartheid. Those Umbridge deems unworthy have their wands taken from them and they are callously shoved aside into a life without agency. Muggle-borns, despite their powers, are denied their wizarding rights to carry wands.<sup>14</sup> As such, the Ministry dictates the lives and livelihoods of wizarding citizens and can curb unwanted behaviours in order to reproduce the status quo. The Muggle-born Registration Committee gives credence to a way of seeing Muggle-borns that has made no investigation, which makes no attempt at understanding difference or celebrating it, which does not call on any new or imaginative thought, but strengthens that which has already been established.

### **Ministerial Treatment of Non-Wizards**

The impact of Ministerial prejudice leads to the dire necessity of a new way of thinking within the magical community, and so, an examination of the treatment of non-wizards by the wizarding government must be undertaken. The wizarding community has enacted a Statute of Secrecy that demands its separation from the non-wizarding world and the maintaining of absolute secrecy about its own existence. The original purpose of the "*International Confederation of Warlocks' Statute of Secrecy*" (Chamber 21) was to protect wizards from the witch burnings of the fourteenth century. Motivations for the continuation of the Statute of Secrecy into modern times are that wizards need to separate themselves from ordinary people in order to prevent advantage being taken of the latter group, and that magical people feel it is essential to hide themselves so they can prevent being taken advantage of by non-magical people who may force them to provide magical solutions to their problems.<sup>15</sup> In this way, wizards feel a necessity to keep themselves not only separate, but secret from the non-magical community. Thus, there is a systematic prevention of outsiders discovering the wizarding world. That the majority of Rowling's non-wizards are convinced that magic does

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<sup>14</sup> Amos Diggory states plainly in *Goblet* that "clause three of the Code of Wand Use" denotes that "[n]o non-human creature is permitted to carry or use a wand" (119). Muggle-borns are seen as non-wizards due to their lack of wizarding lineage under Umbridge's Commission, and both Muggle-borns and non-wizards are placed in the same category as non-humans according to the wand code.

<sup>15</sup> Aaron Schwabach adds a third reason: that, in this decision, wizards were "protect[ing] Muggles from each other," (332) since the witch burnings often resulted in the deaths of wrongly accused ordinary people.

not exist – that their reality is one-dimensional – comments on the limitations to experience attendant on a dependence on visibility. This denial of outsiders to open up their perspectives or be in dialogue with magical people about the reality of their world is a pertinent point to which the discussion in this chapter will later return. The primary consequence of the enforcement of the Statute of Secrecy is that neither wizarding nor non-wizarding perspectives can be developed through influence from their opposite; neither side can produce new or unusual responses to issues within their world and, therefore, the status quo can be more easily maintained.

Rowling thoroughly contrasts the non-wizarding and the wizarding worlds in terms of their respective ideologies and viewpoints and, very importantly, illustrates the complexities of conflicting beliefs within the supposedly cohesive wizarding community. Rowling portrays wizards who hold differing perspectives concerning their behaviours and attitudes towards non-wizards (in general), Muggle-born wizards and non-magical people who become privy to the knowledge of magic. Discussion of the Ministry, Ministry-approved treatment of ordinary people and prejudices against them can – in many cases – be related directly to the reader’s experience of government, injustice and prejudice. In this we see a concrete example of the “parasitical” (20) motif of which Jackson writes; Rowling states that the magical world is “like the real world in a very distorted mirror” (“Harry Potter and Me” par. 56). Rowling’s fantastical creation of the Ministry does not disguise – nor does it intend to – the problematic nature of government-approved ideologies that the reader is exposed to in her real world experience. In this, we are reminded of John Granger’s aforementioned view that “prejudice – its cause, effect, and cure – is a primary focus in the Harry Potter novels” (*How Harry Cast His Spell* 56).

Harry’s earliest initiation into how unimportant outsiders are to wizards is on the train ride to Hogwarts, when he meets Ron Weasley. Ron says his mother has “a second cousin who’s an accountant, but [the family] never talk about him” (*Stone* 75). In *Goblet*, Ron’s father Mr Arthur Weasley displays a patronising view of the non-magical when explaining to Harry how they cannot see the Quidditch World Cup Stadium:

‘Seats a hundred thousand,’ said Mr Weasley, spotting the awestruck look on Harry’s face. ‘Ministry task force of five hundred have been working on it all year. Muggle-Repelling Charms on every inch of it. Every time Muggles have got anywhere near here all year, they’ve suddenly remembered urgent appointments and had to dash away again ... Bless them,’ he added fondly (*Goblet* 87).

Aside from the evident condescension, Mr Weasley has a fairly warm perspective of regular people; this is not to be taken as the norm among wizards, however. He is despised by characters such as Lucius Malfoy who believe that those with pure-blood ancestry are better than those without and, most particularly, label Muggle-borns and the unmagical as scum. From Lucius's racist, pure-blood perspective, Muggle-borns are the same as non-wizards. He describes Arthur as a "flea-bitten, Muggle-loving fool" and he also sneers at the possibility of a new "Muggle Protection Act". The insult of "flea-bitten" (*Chamber* 43) references both the Weasleys and the non-magical – the suggestion that, through both poverty and their association with outsiders, the Weasleys would pick up fleas aligns two prejudices on a fundamental level. As the series progresses, the pure-blood Weasley family are ostracised because of their so-called pro-Muggle leanings and they are often called "blood traitors" (*Phoenix* 105).<sup>16</sup> The social perception of pure-bloods is that they should shun those who are considered beneath them. Although Ron's (initial) nonchalant attitude towards non-wizards is a typical one, Mr Weasley's affection for them cannot be considered standard within the wizarding community.

Beyond these views of outsiders, the prejudice aimed at Muggle-borns by the wizarding community is demonstrated primarily through Hermione's experiences. She is incensed by the prejudgement she encounters in *Goblet* and spends part of her fourth year at Hogwarts "[retaliating] against" the journalist Rita Skeeter "for disseminating [...] racist slurs against her and Hagrid" (Macneil 554). Discrimination against Hagrid centres on his familial heritage: his father was a wizard and his mother a giantess. As a group, giants are often automatically considered to be wild and dangerous, which Hermione claims speaks to "prejudice" and "bigotry" (*Goblet* 377). Skeeter's article claims that Hagrid should not be trusted because of his ancestry and Hermione makes public criticism of these falsehoods. In consequence of this public censure, Hermione is denigrated in a Skeeter article that falsely accuses her of dating both Harry and another classmate, whereupon she is inundated with hate mail from Skeeter's fans. A notable letter references her status as a Muggle-born, but the

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<sup>16</sup> Susan Hall raises an interesting point that, though the Weasleys are poor, their social class is "second to none". Aside from being behind the proposed Muggle Protection Act, Arthur mingles comfortably with Ministers for Magic (British and Bulgarian) and other officials in the Top Box at the (international) Quidditch World Cup. She suggests that their use of their lottery winnings on an "exotic foreign" (287) holiday – rather than saving it for family purchases or emergencies – implies that Arthur and Molly were "brought up in affluent families and have never gotten used to the economic management needed to bring up seven children on a small income" (287-8). If this were the case, Lucius Malfoy's confrontation with Arthur is a "clash of social equals" (288) and Malfoy's disdain for Arthur is most particularly rooted in his belief that Arthur is betraying their shared class. For more on the Malfoys' class status, see Laura Loiacono and Grace Loiacono's "Were the Malfoys Aristocrats?: The Decline and Fall of the Pure-Blooded" in *Harry Potter and History*.

writer calls her a *Muggle* – stripping her of her magical status – and tells her to go back to where she came from (470). Although the article only mentions her blood status in passing, the depth of prejudice against Muggle-borns is clear. Her perceived social misconduct is viewed as connected to her lack of magical heritage, again bringing wizarding assumptions of superiority to the foreground of the narrative.

Ironically, in addition to this kind of unimaginative thinking being directed at those without magical heritage, some wizards mock non-wizards for their supposed inability to acknowledge witnessing magic.<sup>17</sup> The implication is that, due to lack of imagination, lack of curiosity or inattention, they do not witness magic or make efforts to access the wizarding world. Mr Weasley explains to his children that irresponsible wizards partake in “Muggle-baiting”, where, for example, they sell an ordinary person a shrinking door key so that she will return and buy a new one. Mr Weasley goes on to say that “no Muggle would admit their key keeps shrinking – they’ll insist they just keep losing it”. With fondness he says, “Bless them, they’ll go to any lengths to ignore magic, even if it’s staring them in the face”. Here is an acknowledgement that non-magical people won’t “admit” to the magic to which they are made privy (*Chamber* 34). The fact that they are perfectly aware of magic when they witness it is suggested; moreover, their choice to reject a worldview that incorporates magic is asserted. This recalls the unimaginative interaction with the world purposely undertaken by the practical, profit-minded businessman Le Guin references in her essay “Why are Americans Afraid of Dragons?” Perhaps wizards believe that, as non-wizards wilfully ignore magic, they deserve no magical gains. Notably, Mr Weasley demonstrates an attitude towards them which does not lament their ignorance. He, like other witches and wizards, is grateful for their ignorance as it is imperative in keeping the wizarding world a secret.

Harry hears another wizard discuss the outsiders’ inability to access the existence of magic in their vicinity. On the Knight Bus, which pops out of thin air to pick up magical passengers in non-magical spaces, he is curious as to how they are not aware of it:

‘How come the Muggles don’t hear the bus?’ said Harry.

‘Them!’ said Stan contemptuously. ‘Don’ listen properly, do they? Don’ look properly either. Never notice nuffink, they don’.’ (*Prisoner* 32)

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<sup>17</sup> In Rowling’s *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* there is a footnote with a reference to a fictional book from the wizarding world titled “*The Philosophy of the Mundane: Why Muggles Prefer Not to Know*” by Professor Mordicus Egg (xvii). Here again is expressed the perception that outsiders are actively choosing not to acknowledge magic.

Though expressing less affection than Arthur Weasley, Stan Shunpike betrays the same patronising perspective. Shunpike's view is that his reality of magic is purposely overlooked by non-magical people. It is not that they do not notice magic – they do not notice *anything*. There is an implication that the truths of his world are missed by ordinary people. Despite the Statute of Secrecy, it is clear that non-wizards are in contact with magical people and bewitched objects, but they are often unable or unwilling to recognise them for what they are. Their perceptions are, presumably, limited by their non-wizarding perspectives; being “afraid of dragons” (31), to use Le Guin's phrase, they cannot see them. The unmagical, it is implied, are ignorant of the truth about reality (within the *Potter* universe) due to their not using or trusting their primary senses. Perhaps more than this, they fear, as Uncle Vernon does, that other truths will challenge and threaten “all that is false, all that is phony, unnecessary, and trivial in the life they have let themselves be forced into living” (Le Guin 36). By admitting to themselves that there is another dimension to reality, they would willingly destabilise it, an exercise about which most would be exceedingly cautious. Though Jackson would frame such cultural subversion positively, constructing one's own social ideologies and perspectives creates some risk of social isolation from those who adhere to the status quo.

The implication of the fact that outsiders can see magic, but that they will “go to any lengths to ignore magic” (*Chamber* 34) suggests that only open-minded, imaginative non-wizards allow themselves to recognise it for what it is. The reader is, as it were, a Muggle herself and James W. Thomas argues that the reader is given the opportunity to look at herself from a more open-minded, imaginative perspective in reading *Harry Potter*, declaring that “Rowling has enrolled us in Muggle Studies 101”. The reader re-analyses her reality because she looks from the wizarding community's perspective as opposed to her own. The readers' non-wizarding reality becomes *a* reality instead of *the* reality because we are posited as the “others” in the series. Despite being the other, the reader is encouraged to identify with the magical characters, not the non-magical ones, complicating her perceptions of how regular people portrayed within the text may or may not parallel regular people outside of the text. By identifying with wizards the reader “[studies] Muggles from a magical point of view – with those magical views ranging from those who hate us, [...], to those, [...], who find us fascinating” (loc. 1414). Challenged by the concept that “what we have been socialized to count as real” (Matthews 184) is the greatest influence on what we believe to be real, we can ask ourselves what *could* reality be, what are the possibilities beyond what we now see? Furthermore, “these books then go on to keep our interest because we see truths in the young lives being portrayed, and in the actions of the adults in their world, that can help us all

refocus and sharpen our own perspectives” (Morris loc. 139). Just as *Potter* readers are able to evolve their understanding of their society when they look at it from a new angle, so too can non-wizards within the *Potter* universe who become privy to magic evolve their understanding of reality. However, outsiders, even ones who could be open-minded and imaginative, are denied this opportunity.

As it stands in the *Potter* universe, wizards, under the guidance of their Ministry, use two main methods to prevent their existence from being discovered by non-wizards. As already discussed, they are magically prevented from approaching wizarding institutions by Muggle-Repelling Charms and similar spells. Furthermore, they have Memory Charms placed on them when they view magic.

In denying ordinary people the opportunity to augment their perception of reality, the use of Memory Charms on them could be considered a gross violation of human rights. This is an ethical issue which Schwabach discusses in detail. He considers the use of Memory Charms, which cause a person to forget something they have witnessed or experienced, as highly concerning. When the non-magical Tom Riddle (Voldemort’s father) is attacked by the wizard Morfin (Voldemort’s pure-blood uncle), his memory is modified so that he forgets the incident. Schwabach argues that by “wiping Riddle’s memory, the Ministry has defined Riddle as an object of wizarding law” who plays “no part in the structuring of the ongoing legal discourse” thereof (325-326). The Ministry can detect the types of spells used in non-wizarding spaces, so it is possible to apprehend wizards who use Memory Charms on outsiders *illegally* and they are put to trial and punished for these acts.<sup>18</sup> However, it is also a major concern when the Ministry of Magic uses Memory Charms on outsiders in a legal capacity. In *Goblet*, Voldemort’s Death Eaters illegally levitate a non-magical family for their amusement. Bill Weasley tells Harry that, after being rescued, the Roberts family have their memories modified so that they will not remember their ordeal or the magic that was involved in it (*Goblet* 127). Here again, ordinary people are denied any say in the legal discourse regarding wizards abusing their power over the non-magical. Outsiders’ contributions are, apparently, considered to be unnecessary. Or are they unwelcome? Schwabach describes the attitude of those wielding the Charm against non-wizards as “rather

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<sup>18</sup> One has to wonder, though, how many instances of violation regarding Memory Charms occur between fellow wizards within the wizarding realm, as, generally, the Ministry does not track spells used in magic spaces. Underage wizards – wizards younger than 17 – are not permitted to cast spells outside of school and although the Ministry can trace spells cast by underage wizards in wizarding households, government officials expect parents to monitor their children on their behalf. Gilderoy Lockhart, a wizard of age whose spells are therefore unmonitored, is able to modify the memories of several witches and wizards, taking their tales of heroism and using them as his own in order to sell books and make a career for himself.

cavalier” (323). This is evident in the attitude of a Ministry official when he has to modify Mr Roberts’s memory on several occasions because he is suspicious of the unorthodox behaviours of the (unbeknownst to him) wizards he encounters at the campsite near the Quidditch World Cup stadium. That the Ministry worker claims that he “[n]eeds a Memory Charm ten times a day to keep him happy” (*Goblet* 72) is alarming, particularly in retrospect, as the reader later learns of a witch whose mind was permanently damaged by a strong Memory Charm. Charming Roberts ten times a day, even if using a mild Charm, seems an excessive number of times to manipulate someone’s brain, but the Ministry has no qualms about the procedure. Not even sympathetic, “Muggle-loving” Mr Weasley bats an eye. Schwabach states that, within the wizarding community, disapproval of this practise is never evident and asserts the problematic nature of wizards taking it, without question, “as part of the ordinary work of the Ministry” (323). However, he claims of Rowling that these sorts of “failings of the Ministry [...] are not glossed over; they are presented with concern” (350).<sup>19</sup>

It is clear that there is a lack of imaginative thinking employed by both wizards and non-wizards resulting in condescension, discrimination, abusive practise and serious violation. The continued implementation of the Statue of Secrecy prevents non-wizards from fully engaging with the reality of the existence of the magical world and so their ability to diversify their ways of thinking and responding to issues and events is denied. Without non-wizards to participate in discussions, such as wizarding legal discourse, the Ministry is not compelled to innovate their thinking, responses to issues, or laws pertaining to non-wizards. Clearly, both groups are disadvantaged by their restricted perspectives; thus, openness to unusual or unexpected responses could be the way towards facilitating more positive experiences for all.

### **Ministerial Treatment of Beings and Beasts**

In order to demonstrate the challenge of changing the perspectives of house-elves, werewolves, giants, goblins and centaurs, let us discuss their experiences under Ministry rule. The first group suffering discrimination to be discussed here is the house-elves. House-elves (or simply elves) are unassuming magical creatures who are known for being unwaveringly loyal and obedient to their wizarding families – or the households that they serve – for whom they cook and clean. Wizards argue that they are naturally subservient, but it is possible that

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<sup>19</sup> Schwabach also notes that the actions of Lockhart – who appears to use Memory Charms most frequently in the texts – are “presented as skulduggery” and that “he gets his comeuppance” (323) at the close of *Chamber*.

the elves have been conditioned over generations to be so and that their enthusiasm for work is engrained in their culture by those who benefit from it. Even when they are mistreated, abused and unappreciated they work hard and uncomplainingly. Wizards argue that it is natural to enslave them, because “[t]hey *like* being enslaved” (*Goblet* 198); but by enslaving them and indoctrinating them, wizards can be seen to be perpetuating these behaviours in house-elves, rather than simply letting them act naturally. Further, if an elf is dismissed there is no effective orientation programme to assist her in adapting to life outside a so-called family home (something that could have prevented an elf like Winky from falling into alcoholism).<sup>20</sup> Janet Brennan Croft, in her article “The Education of a Witch: Tiffany Aching, Hermione Granger, and Gendered Magic in Discworld and Potterworld”, examines the motivations behind the Ministry’s oppression of house-elves. Unlike wizards, house-elves can do magic without wands and so, by “[confining] [them] to the domestic sphere” through indoctrination, “their (surprisingly great) powers” are “hedged about with regulation, secrecy, indifference, or dismissal on the part of the larger magical community”. Croft notes:

There is pressure from both the subgroup and from society at large to conform – to allow their dangerous powers to be checked and controlled by the group in power, not to attempt to become fully participating members of society, and to resist any reform efforts like Hermione's Society for the Protection [*sic*] of Elfish Welfare that might change the status quo. (138)

By being denied freedom and agency, house-elves have very little opportunity to think critically about their powers or their position in society. They are therefore unlikely to wield their power for their own ends or attempt to gain access to wands. Voldemort sustains two serious setbacks due to his underestimation of house-elves, which is very telling in terms of just how powerful they are. Kreacher’s story, which will be discussed in chapter two, is perhaps symbolic of their ability to undermine wizards by use of their “own brand of magic” (*Goblet* 596).<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> The Office for House-Elf Relocation is never discussed in the series and only mentioned incidentally in *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* in reference to the author’s previous employment (vi). Though it can be assumed that the Office attempts to relocate house-elves who are dismissed or whose families are unable to keep them, it does not appear that they offer any counselling for elves who may be devastated by their displacement.

<sup>21</sup> Considering this approach towards house-elves, one may consider a parallel between the ways in which wizards treat house-elves and non-magical people. It appears that wizards fear that, should non-wizards gain knowledge of the magical world, they will benefit from this by using that information to think critically about their power or position in society. Armed with knowledge of the existence of magic, non-wizards may decide to disrupt the status quo with which the wizards are satisfied. Such a fear may be the root of why wizards deny outsiders knowledge of the reality of the magical world.



Secondly, let us look to the treatment of werewolves. Wizards believe that werewolves are a danger to them, but there is little education about the true nature of werewolves in the community, as the reader learns in *Prisoner*. The Wolfsbane Potion renders a werewolf fairly harmless as when they transform they retain their human faculties and simply wish to sleep. The Potion is a difficult one to brew, but if the Ministry valued the wizards of the community afflicted with lycanthropy they would make the effort to create stocks and distribute it so that werewolves could safely integrate into the community. Rowling asserted that Lupin's lycanthropy was intended to parallel the stigmatisation of those with HIV/AIDS in the reader's world (*Short Stories from Hogwarts of Heroism, Hardship and Dangerous Hobbies* loc. 413). As well as neglecting to support werewolves with magic potions, Umbridge drafts anti-werewolf legislation that makes it "almost impossible" (*Phoenix* 271) for them to find employment. In response to these kinds of legal restrictions, Fenrir Greyback – whom Lupin refers to as "the most savage werewolf alive" (*Prince* 313) – has made it his "mission in life" (313-4) to bite as many people as possible so that there will be "enough werewolves to overcome the wizards". He bites young wizards so he can "raise them away from their parents" and teach them "to hate normal wizards". A leader in the underground werewolf community, he is promised "prey" (314) in return for services to Voldemort. In denying werewolves basic legal rights and dignity, the Ministry creates a formidable enemy.<sup>22</sup>

Next, there are the giants who were heavily involved in the First Wizarding War, fighting on the side of Voldemort, so it is more understandable that the majority of the wizarding community fear and hate them. As well as the immense physical threat they pose, giants are difficult to effectively communicate with and have a very different culture from wizards. Giants are killed throughout Britain by Aurors – highly-skilled officers that protect the magical community from dark wizards – and they retreat to the mountainous regions of Europe to avoid extermination. As the Care of Magical Creatures professor, Hagrid is threatened with termination, ostensibly because of his unorthodox teaching practices. It is clear though that being Dumbledore's friend disadvantages him and threatens the stability of his position at the school. Additionally, Umbridge despises "part-humans" and Hagrid's late mother was a giantess (*Phoenix* 638). Rita Skeeter's article about Hagrid grossly misrepresents the loveable (if clumsy and somewhat careless) teacher. She writes that he is a

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<sup>22</sup> Brent A. Stypczynski analyses werewolf portrayal in literature from Ovid to Rowling, considering the individual's transformed werewolf state to function as the shadow to the untransformed human state. He argues that "Lupin personifies the positive aspects of the shape-shifter archetype and exemplifies a healthy relationship with the shadow while Greyback personifies the archetype's negative aspects and the individual that has been consumed by his shadow" (Stypczynski 191).

“ferocious-looking man” (*Goblet* 381) who maims his students, a claim readily believed by many as it is made against a half-giant.

Similarly, goblins and wizards have a well-documented bloody history; in fact, several of Harry’s History of Magic lessons and exam questions deal with goblin rebellions. But, tellingly, Harry cannot answer the question “*In your opinion, did wand legislation contribute to, or lead to better control of, goblin riots of the eighteenth century?*” (*Phoenix* 639). As a wizard he holds a position of privilege and can afford not to have an opinion on this matter. The mutual refusal to share magical secrets – wizards not sharing wandlore, nor allowing goblins to carry wands; goblins not sharing their knowledge of crafting metals – increases the competitiveness and suspicion between the two races.<sup>23</sup> Hermione affirms that wizarding history “often skates over what the wizards have done to other magical races” and avoids arguing with Griphook about “whose race is most underhand and violent” (*Hallows* 409). The strained relationship that the trio develop with Griphook is imbued with a seemingly insurmountable distrust and the usually open-minded, tolerant Harry has to hide his growing dislike of the goblin as they work together to find one of Voldemort’s Horcruxes.

Lastly, the relationship between wizards and centaurs should be noted. Of the same mind as their ancestors who rejected the offer of “being” status from the Wizards’ Council, the centaurs of the Forbidden Forest colony “do not recognise [wizarding] laws” (*Phoenix* 667) or acknowledge wizards’ supposed superiority. Their voluntary self-exclusion from the wizarding community means that they encounter very little discrimination, but when Umbridge crosses the colony’s path in the Forest, she refers to them as “half-breeds” (664) of “near-human intelligence” and attacks one of them with an *Incarcerous* (or binding) spell. Throughout this encounter with them she frequently references her status as a Ministry official and angrily reminds them that the Ministry “permits” (665) them to live there.

Wizards are aware of and participate in the discriminatory treatment of beings and beasts, but only those who are empathetic and imaginative can recognise that the legal inequalities are damaging to both sides. Dumbledore suggests that Kreacher’s betrayal of Sirius may have been merited by Sirius’s poor treatment of the house-elf. Werewolves under Fenrir Greyback’s leadership have responded to their suffering in violent ways because they feel voiceless within the magical community. The giants taking Voldemort’s side in the Second Wizarding War is also an indication of the extent to which their ill-treatment at the

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<sup>23</sup> Susan Hall laments how Ministry control of “technological innovation, [...], facilitates intellectual stagnation” in that, wizards cannot learn from other groups such as non-wizards and goblins. Furthermore, goblin research is “artificially restricted” (282) by the law preventing them from using wands.

hands of wizards ends up negatively affecting the magical community in the end. Due to entrenched ways of thinking, a dearth of imagination in these groups means that they behave in these ways and newer, more productive interactions with the wizarding population are hindered. The wilful prejudice of the Ministry must be addressed and countered or the magical world will not only never be egalitarian, but likely to destroy itself from the inside out.

### **Perpetuation of the Status Quo through Education**

One of the most powerful ways to influence a populace is through the education system. The attitude and belief of wizards that they are inherently superior to fantastic beasts and non-human beings must be instilled by a higher authority. Before the Ministry can promulgate the prejudices of wizarding society to the adult wizarding population, the students of Hogwarts are exposed to seven years of magical schooling during which the Ministry imposes its ideologies on them. In order to counter the thinking with which the Ministry attempts to indoctrinate them, students like Harry, Hermione, Neville and Luna must embrace a combined thinking – both rational and imaginative, which will be examined in chapters two and three.

As noted, the Ministry's laws seek to maintain a status quo which raises the wizard population above the other magical groups. The Ministry attempts to perpetuate that status quo through its involvement in the education of young wizards at Hogwarts. Hunter claims that wizards have "systematized magic into a compendium of practical and theoretical knowledge". This results in the existence of wizarding schools as "magic can be explained and taught to any student" (loc. 1845). Hogwarts and other schools presented in the series "represent the rationalized idea of schooling: one effective, efficient method applied to everyone" and this is "the singular path to knowledge, employment, and social advancement within the system" (loc. 1938). The career options that promise the greatest opportunities for financial stability<sup>24</sup> appear to be within the Ministry (or at Hogwarts). To a great extent, Hogwarts students are studying in preparation to be absorbed by a government department. In

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<sup>24</sup> Percy Weasley is raised in the relatively poor Weasley family who take Harry in as an honorary member. When the Weasleys defend Harry from malicious rumours spread by Ministry officials and the Ministry's mouthpiece *The Daily Prophet*, Percy completely cuts ties with his family. As an assistant to a Department Head at the Ministry, Percy has hopes of rising up through the ranks of the Ministry and is concerned with proving his loyalty to them in order to secure his good reputation and remain on track for promotion. Susan Hall claims that "[i]t is as important for a wizard or witch who wishes to rise in magical society to keep on good terms with the Ministry as being 'a good Party comrade' used to be in the former USSR" (273).

this way it can be argued that the school's curriculum, the "systematized magic" (loc. 1845) that they teach, is geared towards their seemingly inevitable incorporation into the Ministry. Whether you are then more likely to espouse the ideologies of the Ministry is down to your character – we see Arthur Weasley champion his beliefs, no matter how unpopular – but there is an ever-present influence on one's viewpoints as an employee of the magical government.

At age twelve, after no more than two years at wizarding school, Hogwarts students are expected to choose school subjects that dictate the remainder of their school years and potentially restrict their career options. Once again, as with non-wizards and house-elves, we see the wizarding community seemingly denying a group the opportunity to wield critical thinking and so make informed decisions about their futures. These students are not given formal guidance and Muggle-borns seem to be at a particular disadvantage. They do not have enough experience of the magical world to really know what career options are available. Dean<sup>25</sup> – who ends up "closing his eyes and jabbing his wand at the [subject] list, then picking the subjects it landed on" – and Hermione – who "[signs] up for everything" (*Chamber* 187) – choose without intention regarding possible future careers. Harry, because he has been raised by non-magical people, has equally little to go on and, despite Hermione's warning that the choice "could affect [his] whole future" (186), just chooses the same subjects as his best friend Ron does. All three run the risk of taking subjects that will give them no experience or skills in what they would actually like to do with their careers. In the reader's world, there are similar subject choices to be made, usually at high school level, which impact on the possibility of attending particular tertiary institutions. Entering into tertiary education, the choices students make in the first few days can have a direct impact on the type of career for which they will be able to qualify. In *Phoenix* in the chapter "Careers Advice", Professor McGonagall conducts a "careers consultation" (587) with Harry, which Hall claims is "in part, a satire on how badly schools tend to handle this important area" ("Marx, Magic, and Muggles" 289). During his consultation McGonagall informs him he needs to achieve top grades, must pass a minimum of five senior exams (called N.E.W.T.s), after which he will need to undertake a "series of character and aptitude" tests (*Phoenix* 583) in order to be accepted into the profession. Fortunately for Harry – for whom this is the first time he has been asked what he would like to do for a living – he is taking all the subjects required for his desired career path of Auror. However, it is possible that some students are

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<sup>25</sup> Dean is actually a half-blood, but he was raised as an ordinary boy by his ordinary mother. Dean's wizard father, who thought he could protect his family during the First Wizarding War by leaving them, never told his wife that he was magical. He was subsequently killed by Death Eaters for refusing to join them ("Shining a Light on Dean Thomas" pars. 5-7).

not so lucky and because they lack the qualifications to make other choices, are destined, out of necessity, to slot into a Ministry department and unintentionally bolster the system of the Ministry in order to make a living. While it is unlikely that this is orchestrated by the Ministry, this poorly thought out system of subject and career choices is not under evaluation and makes it appear that assimilation into the Ministry – even if not desired – is considered innocuous. Hunter goes so far as to say that “Hogwarts exists to produce young energetic witches and wizards to service and maintain the institutions of the wizarding community” (loc. 1975-1986).

The appointment of Umbridge, former Undersecretary to the Minister, as Defence Against the Dark Arts teacher in *Phoenix* is a tangible representation of the Ministry’s interference at Hogwarts. Fudge is incensed at Dumbledore’s reminder that the Ministry “has no authority to punish Hogwarts students for misdemeanours at school” and that it “does not have the power to expel Hogwarts students” (*Phoenix* 136); in response to this, he deposits Umbridge at Hogwarts so that his own subordinate can “represent Ministry interests” (Morris loc. 2335) and so provide him with access to the administration of the school. The Minister and his underling Umbridge enact new decrees in order to prevent disruption of the status quo. Umbridge is subsequently granted the Ministry’s newly created position of Hogwarts High Inquisitor and, ultimately, is made Hogwarts Headmistress. She has a “relentless onslaught of rules, vicious detention measures, and Gestapo-like tactics for gaining and maintaining control” (Williams and Kellner 134). Sarah Marie Bullwinkel describes the Ministry’s “careful monitoring of its citizens’ movements and alliances, as well as a stringent control of the flow of information its citizens are exposed to” as an enforcement of a Foucauldian Panoptic Gaze, used “to shape the thinking of the British wizarding world” (20) and this practice is implemented at Hogwarts during Umbridge’s reign.

Umbridge speaks on behalf of the Ministry in a speech at the start of the school year feast, intimating that she is present in order to influence the workings and ideals of the school. Her “most illuminating” speech (*Phoenix* 193) includes specific references to progress at the school:

Every headmaster and headmistress of Hogwarts has brought something new to the weighty task of governing this historic school, and that is as it should be, for without progress there will be stagnation and decay. There again, progress for progress’s sake must be discouraged, for *our tried and tested traditions often require no tinkering*. A balance, then, between old and new, between permanence and change, between tradition and innovation... (192). (emphasis added)

There is no doubt that the creators of these traditions to which she is referring are not simply the teachers and students of Hogwarts or members of the magical community, but the Ministry which reigns over all. Through her speech and her very presence as a teacher at the school, the government declares that traditions, the status quo, should be accepted. Further, her statement that their “treasure trove of magical knowledge” must be “guarded, replenished and polished” (192) hints at the reticence of the Ministry to share magical knowledge with non-wizards, fantastic beasts and non-human beings.

A consequence of Umbridge’s appointment is the change of teaching method for the essential subject of Defence Against the Dark Arts (hereafter referred to as DADA). In the students’ first lesson, she laments that their previous teachers did not appear to have “followed any Ministry-approved curriculum” leading to the students “being far below the standard *we* would expect to see” (216) (emphasis added). The emphasised “we” underscores the Ministry’s expectations of the Hogwarts students. She informs them that the class, under her instruction, will be “following a carefully structured, theory-centred, Ministry-approved course of defensive magic” (216). When Hermione queries the lack of practical work, citing how essential spell casting is within a DADA class, Umbridge asks if she is a “Ministry-trained educational expert” and since she obviously isn’t adds: “Well then, I’m afraid you are not qualified to decide what the ‘whole point’ of any class is. Wizards much older and cleverer than you have devised our new programme of study. You will be learning about defensive spells in a secure, risk-free way –” (218). She goes on to claim that in the “view of the Ministry [...] a theoretical knowledge will be more than sufficient to get [them] through [their] examination,” stating that that is “after all, [...] what school is all about” (219). The reality is that Fudge doesn’t want Hogwarts students “trained in combat” (272) as he suspects that Dumbledore will utilise his student body as an army against the Ministry; Umbridge is appointed in order to prevent this.

Under the guise of “[cracking] down on sub-standard teaching” (235), the Ministry infiltrates every Hogwarts classroom via Umbridge, who conducts assessments, weeding out teachers with supposedly unsatisfactory teaching methods (388), but in reality it is the teachers most supportive of Dumbledore that are under greatest scrutiny. Teachers are instructed not to discuss with their students anything outside of their subject, so any questions asked or answered about Voldemort are proscribed. The institutionalisation of authority goes right down to the students as seen in the treatment of the Hogwarts prefects. As well as their duties of patrolling corridors and supervising students to curb misbehaviour, prefects are allowed to dock points from students, but not from their fellow prefects. Umbridge hand

picks an Inquisitorial Squad of students who are supportive of the Ministry; they are granted greater powers than prefects – including the ability to dock points from prefects.<sup>26</sup> The prefects, all of whom have been at Hogwarts for at least five years and have earned their position through demonstrated leadership, are stripped of their ability to discipline fellow students because their authority is undermined by the new system. The Ministry thereby further undermines Hogwarts' ability to self-govern; the system within Hogwarts, at every level, from Dumbledore, his staff and his students, is rendered powerless. As well as shaping what students are taught at Hogwarts, and influencing perspectives within the wizarding world, Umbridge's regime reinforces the status quo of the Ministry's Orwellian control.

### **Conclusion**

Rowling's world creation reflects a binary relationship between realism and imaginative invention. Government corruption, discrimination and inequality are seen alongside supernatural transformations and blurring within the definitions of concepts such as death, stable bodies and love. The separation of the non-wizarding and wizarding worlds is a physical representation of the many ideological differences that are explored in the text and this segregation has consequential impact on Harry's perspectives. Harry's outward and inward vision enables him to see the magical community more clearly than many of his fellow wizards. His awareness of the dangerous social ideologies regarding non-wizards, fantastic beasts and non-human beings as endorsed by wizards encourages his need for the powers for rational and imaginative thinking. Harry is an imaginative, new kind of wizard who resists prejudices upheld by the government. Hall writes that there is a lack of competition in many areas of the British magical community: there is "one school, one hospital, one bank, and, most important, one Ministry" ("Marx, Magic, and Muggles" 288) and, as a result, changes or improvements are far from guaranteed. Moreover, she cites the Ministry as the dominant employer, administrator of wizarding examinations, regulator of international sport, among other authorities it holds over the community. Hall opines that "[t]he magical world does not seem to be good at giving people options" and, "[w]ithout constitutional or other peaceful means of changing society, people who become marginalized are likely to be forced into violent conflict with their society" which undoubtedly leads to

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<sup>26</sup> Members of the Inquisitorial Squad are tasked with reading all the incoming and outgoing mail at the school in order for Umbridge to monitor all communication.

“the rise of Dark Lords” (290) such as Grindelwald and Voldemort.<sup>27</sup> The cultural and social implications of the established close-minded thinking that leads to this treatment of non-wizards, the legislation regarding fantastic beasts and non-human beings, and interference in education reveals rampant wizarding prejudice and an insistence on acceptance of the status quo which can only be eradicated through rational and imaginative ways of re-thinking the social and cultural construction of magical society.

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<sup>27</sup> The goblin rebellions are another example of this.



## Chapter Two

### “Mudbloods” and “Weirdos”

Wizards respond to issues in the magical world through a combination of rational and imaginative modes of thinking. Hermione Granger is easily associated with rationality. Luna Lovegood is instantly viewed as imaginative. In this chapter, Hermione and Luna, who are among those who directly impact Harry’s thinking and decision-making throughout the series, will be examined regarding their ways of thinking and how they make choices in navigating the magical community. As “mudblood” and “weirdo” respectively, Hermione and Luna are denigrated and dismissed by their fellow wizards as respectively having no proper magical heritage and holding unconventional beliefs. As a result, their ideas or approaches are often seen as threatening by the community. Though initially at odds even with one another, the unlikely combination of these girls proves fruitful as the contrasting rational and imaginative viewpoints they hold work together in response to threats from both Voldemort and the Ministry. The wizarding population benefits from its government’s prejudicial laws and their society’s accepted beliefs, but our hero Harry and his allies seek to question, disrupt and undermine this unjust state of affairs; essentially they work to “threaten[...] cultural order” (Jackson 3) in the magical world. The necessity of transforming wizarding society from sanctioning the discrimination of certain groups to accepting difference seems clear to wizards who believe that all groups – wizards, fantastic beasts and non-human beings alike – should be entitled to make choices for themselves. Despite a seeming preference for reason, particularly in Rowling’s treatment of Hermione’s helpfulness and her many successes, Hermione’s attachment to reason also appears to cause her difficulty in her relationships. Nevertheless, this serves only to demonstrate the importance of balance between the ways of thinking under discussion; it is by no means a derogation of rationality in the *Potter* world. To a certain extent, Hermione can be seen to think imaginatively. However, she never adopts imaginative thinking fully – this is clearly Luna’s role. Likewise, Luna is never seen to adopt the rational way of thinking she witnesses in Hermione. Still, the combination of friends offers a nuanced perspective to Harry. Both reason and imagination as ways in which to respond to issues in the magical world are of great value within the series.

## Rational and Imaginative Ways of Thinking

At the opening of Harvard's graduation ceremonies in 2008, Rowling testified to the singular power and importance of imagination as enabling a sympathetic approach towards others.

Imagination is not only the uniquely human capacity to envision that which is not, and therefore the fount of all invention and innovation. In its arguably most transformative and revelatory capacity, it is the power that enables us to empathize with humans whose experiences we have never shared. ("Fringe Benefits" par. 24)

Taking such an approach can in turn allow us to transform society, to imagine what *could be*, and this is envisioned throughout the *Potter* series forming an ideal we will revisit throughout the following consideration of Hermione and Luna's ways of thinking.

In the reader's reality reason is the antithesis of imagination and it is no different in Rowling's wizarding world. Naturally, it is tempting to look to authoritative characters like McGonagall or Dumbledore for their views on the capacity to understand that which *is*. It is notable that, within the series, there are no direct references to reason which could be used to define the role it plays within either the series as a whole or the wizarding community specifically. The reader, nonetheless, can look to Dumbledore and examine a claim he makes when he and Harry share a conversation in a "place that resembles King's Cross Station" while it "evokes the image of Purgatory" (Jonathan L. Walls and Jerry L. Walls 250). Dumbledore and Harry exchange lines that Rowling "waited seventeen years" to write (qtd in John Granger with Gregory Bassham 185):

'Tell me one last thing,' said Harry. '*Is this real? Or has this been happening inside my head?*'

Dumbledore beamed at him, and his voice sounded loud and strong in Harry's ears even though the bright mist was descending again, obscuring his figure.

'*Of course it is happening inside your head, Harry, but why on earth should that mean that it is not real?*' (Hallows 579) (emphasis added).

Here, Rowling addresses a false dichotomy because when we "say of something that it exists in the head [this] often means 'in the head alone' and so not in external reality" (Granger and Bassham 188). The reader is reminded "that real and imagined are not *either/or* but *both/and*". This concept of "*both/and*" (Thomas loc. 1602) recalls Rowling's blending of fantasy and realist features in her narrative and, furthermore, provides guidance for the analysis of rational and imaginative ways of thinking, particularly in relation to Hermione and Luna.

Anne Rubenstein discusses the topic of history in the *Potter* series, giving particular focus to how Harry, Ron and Hermione “cannot settle for the official history” (316) of the wizarding world.

In order to overcome Voldemort’s supporters and eventually to defeat Voldemort himself, the three Hogwarts students have to know some aspect of the official history of the wizarding world, to figure out what questions to ask about the official history, to locate the evidence of what happened in the past that will allow them to understand what’s incomplete or wrong about the official history, and to revise the story they have been given into one that fits the facts they have uncovered (315).

Hermione, as the group’s *de facto* researcher, must cultivate a multifaceted perspective if she is to see the hidden truths of the wizarding world. She must question ingrained ways of interacting with different groups in order to make choices in the fight not only against Voldemort, but also against the Ministry whose laws allow the social practice of discrimination that Voldemort seeks to exploit. It is necessary for Hermione to access knowledge beyond that which is sanctioned by the Ministry and it is in her attempts to embrace imaginative thinking that she is better able to question knowledge, authority and truth.

It is difficult for Hermione to embrace imagination in much the same way as it has been a challenge for many literary heroines to navigate dreamscapes and otherworldly experiences. Amy Billone demonstrates, citing Lewis Carroll’s Alice and J.M. Barrie’s Wendy as examples, that gender has often prohibited girls “from traveling to childhood dreamscapes, where fantasy and reality completely reverse roles, and [it has prevented girls] from feeling at home there” (179). Alice finds that the supposedly “lovely Edenic garden” that she sees when she falls down the rabbit hole is only “an illusion” (178-9). Wonderland is, instead, a dystopia and, in response to such a reversal of expectations, her “resulting rage[...] causes her physically to grow out of her nightmare” (179). Alice resists the “nonsensical” (182) Wonderland at every turn because her experience is one of discomfort. Similarly, Wendy’s intended role in Neverland is one marked by the (then) traditional limits of girlhood: “[e]veryone wants Wendy for a mother, the pirates as well as the Lost Boys, and she wants more than anything to be one” (185). Alice and Wendy are both “more or less grown-up” already (Kincaid qtd. in Billone 186) and are never seen to revel in the freedom from conventionalities that their dreamscapes offer them. Billone questions whether in the twenty-first century “we have expanded our conception of childhood so that girls participate as comfortably in fantasylands as boys do” (179). She argues that, in the *Potter* books, “[u]nlike

the male characters, girls and women have difficulty moving from real life to dreamworlds and back again” (196) and she divides the female characters into two distinct categories. Hermione<sup>28</sup> is sorted with McGonagall and Umbridge who all appear not to have dreams, who dismiss Divination and who behave rationally: they are “bound to the real world” (196). The second group, Luna and Trelawney, “exist in dreamland; they never make any voyage there” (169).

The reader sees Hermione cling to rationality when encountering Professor Trelawney and the subject of Divination, Luna’s open-minded fascination with cryptids (creatures whose existence is unsubstantiated), and Harry’s dream life. Hermione is a Muggle-born witch and she finds security in learning as much as she can about wizarding history; she latches on to what is tangible and easily accessible about the magical world. By studying intensely, achieving top grades and following the rules of both Hogwarts and the Ministry, she attempts a smooth integration into wizarding society. In the process, Hermione participates in ostracising both Trelawney and Luna, women who diverge from a strictly rational approach to the world.

By contrast, Luna is so confident in her position in the wizarding world, that she frequently disputes the magical community’s conventional beliefs, primarily those regarding magical creatures. Luna – with her father Xenophilius – practises Cryptozoology (the search for and study of animals whose existence is unproven), blaming invisible Wrackspurts for moments of disordered thinking and searching for the Crumple-Horned Snorkack in her school holidays. Practically everyone else in the wizarding world accepts the authority of the Ministry and because Luna and her father do not, they are considered to be unreliable sources of information or knowledge. Luna’s peers second guess her claims because they seem unable to understand the basis for her beliefs. Peter Dendle writes about the “tensions of knowledge and authority” (414) which Rowling incorporates into the series, particularly in relation to paranormal elements like Cryptozoology and Divination. Dendle argues that Rowling uses the paranormal to “raise questions of knowledge and critical thinking, which become entwined with related issues about being able to trust a given adult, a teacher, or even an entire political administration” (420-1). Questioning authority is an essential aspect of Luna’s character and as Hermione matures she too comes to doubt and mistrust authority figures both inside and outside of Hogwarts.

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<sup>28</sup> Glenna M. Andrade argues that it seems appropriate that “Hermione’s role diminishes when the genre steers away from realism to re-enter upon the fantasy hero’s adventures, such as in *The Half Blood Prince*” (9).

Hermione and Luna are young girls growing up in a society in which approaches to reality that do not comply with the ideologies of the Ministry are seldom tolerated. The girls must acknowledge that what is socially accepted as truth is influenced by the Ministry's rhetoric of wizard superiority. They must look to other sources to uncover the multiple truths of their reality so that they can develop a foundation upon which to base their thinking and decision-making. Luna has already embraced the idea of cryptids and government conspiracies; her conception of truth has been broadened by her augmented perception of reality. Hermione must unlearn what she thinks she knows about the wizarding world and use a sympathetic imagination to help her to understand others. These characters can develop friendships with fantastic beasts and non-human beings that, historically, have been kept separate from and deemed inferior to wizards, because they are open to knowledge that contradicts the accepted rhetoric of the Ministry.

### **“Mudbloods” and “Weirdos”: Underestimating Hermione and Luna**

The derogatory term “mudblood”, used to debase Muggle-born wizards, is a “very impolite term in wizarding circles” (“Mudblood” par. 1)<sup>29</sup> considered by some readers as comparable to racial slurs in the real world. This vulgarity is directed at Hermione multiple times in the series, especially by Draco Malfoy, a pure-blood who is threatened by Hermione's prowess in the classroom. Hermione influences Harry by showing him that being born without magical heritage is not an indicator of ability or worth. Her accomplishments and strengths demonstrate to Harry that to which group one belongs is immaterial – anyone has the potential for insight and intellectual success. It is clear that Harry's open-minded view of a so-called “Mudblood” extends to members of all groups whom he sees as having the right to seek their own growth and successes without the legally sanctioned bonds to which they are subjected.

With a classmate like Malfoy, who describes Muggle-borns as “the other sort” and believes they should not be let into Hogwarts because “they've never been brought up to know [wizarding] ways” (*Stone* 61), it is unsurprising that Hermione binds herself to the ‘real world’ of magic. Arguably, it is her need to feel rooted in the wizarding world, to see that rationality is a quality to which society adheres, that results in her hostility towards Professor

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<sup>29</sup> If you enter a search for the term “mudblood” on Rowling's website Pottermore, you will be given this brief explanation as well as a chastisement for looking for its definition.

Trelawney as she is reluctant to give credence to the practises used in the subject Divination since they are often disparaged by rational thinkers within the magical community.

Professor Trelawney teaches Divination which in the *Potter* series is a branch of magic involving reading the future through different methods such as in tea leaves and crystal balls, or though dream interpretation, astrology or palmistry. That Trelawney's methods are not a creation of Rowling's but rather another example of a "parasitical" connection (Jackson 20) to the real world, allows the treatment of Trelawney to parallel the treatment of many fortune tellers who are often dismissed in the real world. In Harry, Ron and Hermione's first lesson with her, Trelawney describes Divination as "the most difficult of all magical arts" (*Prisoner* 79) in which one "[penetrates] the veiled mysteries of the future". She states that the "Sight" (80), with which one uses one's "Inner Eye" (170) to "See" (219), is "a Gift granted to few" (80). She prides herself on possession of this gift; however, she is treated as a somewhat comical character. Covered in shawls and jewellery and wearing oversized eyeglasses, she uses a mystical voice to cry out, gasp or scream and behaves otherwise "dramatically" (82), displaying many exaggerated stereotypical features of real-world fortune tellers. Though she appears to benefit from lucky guesswork and seems to only be coincidentally correct on the rare occasion, she does make prophecies of magnitude – regarding Voldemort – in a state which she cannot access consciously. Her view of Divination and how it functions is the dominant one in the series, though it should be noted that centaurs also use Divination<sup>30</sup> in Rowling's wizarding world just as is seen in C.S. Lewis's Narnia with the prophesying centaur in *The Horse and His Boy*, Glenstorm in *Prince Caspian* and Roonwit in *The Last Battle*. While most centaurs of Greek mythology "represented barbarism and unbridled chaos" (Cartwright par. 1), Chiron was a "learned and wise teacher of many great heroes of Greece" (Feder 81) such as Achilles and Jason. Lewis' star-gazing centaurs are seemingly based on Chiron and so is the author most likely to have introduced the concept of prophesying centaurs into the fantasy tradition upon which Rowling builds. Centaurs notwithstanding, it is Trelawney who becomes effectively synonymous with the subject Divination. This inextricable link means that when a character distrusts Divination, she distrusts Trelawney because she teaches the subject.

The perception of this branch of magic differs widely among characters. Rowling uses minor characters that are relatively insignificant, and "all goofy" (Granger *How Harry Cast*

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<sup>30</sup> Rowling's centaur Ronan makes a comment about Mars being "bright" (*Stone* 184) when reading the stars, which, at the conclusion of the series, can be considered to be an authentic prophesy about the "[n]ew [c]reation" (Schaubert loc. 3556) that Harry brings into being through his defeat of Voldemort.

*His Spell* 210), specifically Lavender Brown and Parvati Patil, as supporters of Trelawney. Lavender and Parvati are awed by her predictions and blindly trust the claims that she makes. They are figured as silly as they “[quiver] with excitement” (*Prisoner* 218) when she simply enters the room. Many more of her students similarly treat her with a respect bordering on reverence, much to Harry’s frustration as she keeps predicting his imminent death. In contrast, Rowling uses characters whose opinions and judgement the reader generally respects – like Dumbledore and McGonagall – as examples of those sceptical of Divination.

Doubtful of Trelawney’s abilities, Dumbledore tells Harry that before he hired her he was considering removing Divination from the Hogwarts syllabus. He admits that “[t]he consequences of our actions are always so complicated, so diverse, that predicting the future is a very difficult business indeed” (311). The Hall of Prophecy, which Harry (and some friends, including Hermione) visits in *Phoenix*, contains seemingly thousands of prophecies. Dumbledore says they don’t all come true, but their number nonetheless suggests that there are (or have been) many Seers and that Seeing must be a somewhat frequent practice. Given the complexity of human beings and all the possible motivators and deterrents to their decision-making, neither Trelawney nor any other Seer can be expected to predict the future with any degree of certainty.<sup>31</sup> Trelawney’s approach to prophecies and predictions, furthermore, suggests that “people have no choice about their lives, but are instead acting out a fate decreed by the stars” (Deavel and Deavel “A Skewed Reflection” 142). This view clashes with Dumbledore’s attitude which places great emphasis on how one’s choices determine one’s character.

Reinforcing Dumbledore’s misgivings, McGonagall quells Harry’s fear that he has seen the Grim – a Death Omen – as Trelawney proclaims. She explains how Trelawney has been incorrectly predicting the deaths of students for several years. She goes on to say that true Seers are “very rare” (*Prisoner* 84) and implies that Trelawney should not be considered such a rarity. Her frank assessment of her colleague and doubtful attitude towards her subject reinforce Hermione’s scepticism towards both. A centaur intimates Voldemort may be returning to “full strength and power” (*Stone* 189), but Hermione thinks the claim “sounds

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<sup>31</sup> On another note, Jeremy Pierce supposes that the difficulty for Seers to make accurate prophecies is because “the Seer might magically behold a fixed future without interpreting it correctly, perhaps because of partial information” (37). This is illustrated when Trelawney, while reading her tarot cards, draws the knave of Spades, which signifies “a dark young man, possibly troubled, one who dislikes the questioner” (*Prince* 185), and promptly dismisses her reading, despite the fact that Harry – whom the reader fits to the description – is standing close by, albeit hidden from her. This indicates that Trelawney does not always realise when she has read the symbols or signs accurately. The implication is that predictions made while in a conscious state can be dismissed because seemingly contradicted by the available evidence.

like fortune-telling” and dismisses it because “Professor McGonagall says that’s a very imprecise branch of magic” (190).<sup>32</sup> McGonagall’s affinity for precision is an indication of her hyper-rational nature – a claim that can also be made of Hermione – which stands in contrast to the more open mind of Dumbledore. When McGonagall questions Trelawney about her divining aptitude the latter responds: “one does not parade the fact that one is All-Knowing. I frequently act as though I am not possessed of the Inner Eye, so as not to make others nervous”. McGonagall’s caustic response – “[t]hat explains a great deal” (*Prisoner* 170) – further buttresses Hermione’s scepticism. Trelawney “rails against what she calls the ‘Establishment’” (Dendle 415) on another occasion – a clear reinforcement of the clichéd response of real-world individuals following so-called alternative lifestyles. While it may be true that Trelawney makes up excuses to cover her seeming gaps in ability, this may be her response to perceived persecution of the open-minded practitioners of Divination. McGonagall’s public undermining of Trelawney’s claim to possess the Sight serves as a model for behaviour and attitude towards her which Hermione subsequently mimics. When Trelawney tells the class that the fates have informed her that their examination “will concern the Orb” (or crystal ball) (*Prisoner* 218), Hermione snorts and “not troubling to keep her voice low” reminds her classmates that Trelawney is responsible for setting the exam and sarcastically blurts out: “What an amazing prediction!” (219).

While Trelawney is synonymous with Divination, Hermione – who can spout memorised passages with ease – is as closely identified with bookishness. Hermione is “startled” when Trelawney states that “[b]ooks can only take [one] so far” (*Prisoner* 80) in the field of Divination. To Hermione, books offer knowledge and enable scholarly success. Feeling out of her depth, she openly analyses Trelawney’s predictions’ supposed successes, resulting in looks of “amazement and admiration” (82) from Harry and Ron for whom her second-guessing the wisdom of a teacher is out of character. Trelawney, with “mounting dislike”, says that she “[perceives] very little aura around [Hermione]. Very little receptivity to the resonances of the future” (83).<sup>33</sup> She also labels her “Mundane” (220), the capitalisation of which implies that as much as there is belief in the Sight, there is also,

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<sup>32</sup> McGonagall, with her rational and rigorous character, would well suit several logical and scientific disciplines and had she been teaching in the medieval period she may have found at least one aspect of Divination quite appealing. Instead of being considered mere superstition, both Islamic and Christian scholars considered “medieval astrology [to be] a highly complex science” which was “often indistinguishable from astronomy” (Wiedl 27).

<sup>33</sup> Dendle claims that “Trelawney’s excuses for why her predictions do not seem to come true very often will be familiar to anyone who has spent much time reading paranormal apologetics; those who show signs of skepticism, for instance, are dismissed as not having intuitive insight or an open mind” (415).



seemingly, official recognition of those incapable of Seeing. Literally meaning worldly, the term Mundane implies Hermione's earthbound nature and her lack of the spiritual quality that Trelawney prefers in her students. Incidentally, "Mundane" also appears in a fictitious book title of Rowling's: "*The Philosophy of the Mundane: Why the Muggles Prefer Not to Know*" (*Fantastic Beasts* xvii).<sup>34</sup> In this we find yet another overlap with Le Guin's discussion of "highly technological peoples" (31) who reject imagination. Trelawney's slight against Hermione appears to associate the latter's obstinacy against the legitimacy of Divination with the completely non-magical. Despite hearing several inconsequential, relatively meaningless predictions come true, Hermione rejects these as coincidental, maintaining her suspicion of the intangible and further demonstrating her need to feel grounded in the generally accepted beliefs of the magical world.

In contrast to being aware of the trivial predictions that come to pass, Hermione is not aware of Trelawney's momentous predictions regarding Voldemort. Harry witnesses Trelawney prophesying with "unfocused" eyes which begin to "roll" as she relays information about a servant returning to Voldemort. Her head "[snaps] up" and she apologises "dreamily" to Harry, thinking she had "drifted off for a moment". "[T]horoughly startled" (*Prisoner* 238) when Harry explains she had made a prophecy to him, she unequivocally denies this. Harry also learns of a prophecy Trelawney made to Dumbledore which she "does not know [...] that she made" (*Prince* 400). The events referred to in these prophecies do come to pass, suggesting that, when in a state lacking consciousness, Trelawney's Inner Eye can accurately See the future. That she is unaware of making these consequential forecasts suggests that a Seer may suffer intense stress from witnessing impending disasters and that the conscious mind chooses to suppress this disturbing information in order to protect itself. This mirrors the action of a dreaming individual whose conscious mind censors the repressed thoughts that rise from the unconscious during sleep, only allowing "what is agreeable to it to pass through" and, as aforementioned, disguising the unconscious mind's desires through symbolism which then needs to be deciphered (Freud 117). Though Hermione learns of these "real predictions" (*Prisoner* 311) from Harry, he does not tell her that Trelawney is the one who makes them. As such, Hermione lacks information which indicates that Trelawney is capable of Seeing. While she continues to dismiss

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<sup>34</sup> Trelawney calling Hermione Mundane and Rowling's use of the term in the aforementioned book title are coincidental as there are no incidents of Trelawney showing prejudice towards Muggle-borns or non-magical people. Nonetheless, this coincidence may suggest an unconscious association of these two things on either Trelawney or Rowling's part.

Divination's merits, she is witness to other successful divining on the part of her peers Harry and Ron, although these successes are evidently accidental.

To avoid doing their homework properly, Harry and Ron concoct ridiculous prophecies about the month ahead of them purportedly based on planetary movements but in reality entirely fabricated. Nonetheless, several mock-predictions that they make arguably come true despite this. Harry does "[l]ose a treasured possession", when Ron is temporarily kidnapped, and he also "[gets] stabbed in the back by someone [he] thought was a friend" (*Goblet* 196) when Ron refuses to defend him from attacks on his character. Ron's prediction of "drowning twice" (197) may be a foreshadowing of his later subjection to magical sleep and submersion deep within Hogwarts lake; though he does not drown, it is uncanny that a similar event does occur in his future. Additionally, Ron can be seen to read Harry's future in his tea leaves: predicting that he will come into "unexpected gold" (*Prisoner* 81) which he does in the following year. Rather than making implications about Harry and Ron's abilities to See, though, it seems that Rowling may be making a suggestion about the nature of Divination. Though there may be more truth to Divination than the reader is initially disposed to grant it, Harry and Ron's accidental successes achieved entirely through invention, are seen, more than anything, to add to the ludicrousness of the practice.

Despite Trelawney's prophecies and Harry and Ron's mock-predictions coming to pass, Hermione's disregard for Divination remains. She vociferously foregrounds the merits of reason, feeling understandably threatened when coerced to abandon that which gives her a sense of power and security. Even if she could accept that it is possible to divine the future, perhaps what would still concern her is "whether such isolated phenomena can be harnessed into a predictive science, and therefore a teachable science" (*Dindle* 416). She cannot develop a measurable skill set, conduct research or use logic to grasp the complexities of the subject. For her, knowledge is power and the ability to understand the truth about things and how they work gives her a sense of reassurance, confidence and comfort. In short, she cannot successfully perform in the Divination classroom and so the subject only hinders her goal of becoming a competent witch. This aversion towards the unconscious and the intangible restricts her perspective and her views on reality as will become further apparent in the examination of her interactions with Luna, and to Harry's responses to his dream life. On the other hand, Luna is more receptive to knowledge from unconventional sources and is more confident in questioning the ideologies and epistemologies of the wizarding world.

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Hermione, labelled by Trelawney as Mundane, is considered a being closely connected to the physical world. By contrast, Luna's name means moon,<sup>35</sup> highlighting her unearthly and otherworldly nature. Luna is raised by her equally aptly named father Xenophilus<sup>36</sup> who loves searching out strange, undocumented magical creatures. Xenophilus's magazine *The Quibbler* is known for its dubious articles about the supposed existence of aforementioned undocumented creatures, absurd conspiracies about the government and a range of other implausible topics. Luna naïvely believes in all that her father publishes and thinks that his contributors are (or should be) honoured to write for the magazine while others, like Hermione, consider *The Quibbler* to be "rubbish" (*Phoenix* 175). Journalist Rita Skeeter disparages the magazine by claiming she "could manure [her] garden" (501) with its contents.

Her peers evidently perceive Luna to be unreliable as is illustrated when she professes her belief in Harry's claim that Voldemort has returned and Parvati and Lavender laugh at her; presumably their amusement is caused by "what looked like a pair of orange radishes for earrings" (*Phoenix* 236).<sup>37</sup> The girls never engage with why Luna supports Harry because she goes on to talk about Blibbering Humdingers and Crumple-Horned Snorkacks. Despite being grateful for Luna's support, Harry is relieved when Ernie Macmillan – "somebody who did not have radishes dangling from [his] ears" – also voices his belief that Voldemort is back. Ernie, a "pompous" boy, seems to think he is offering Harry greater encouragement than Luna is, to judge from his remark that "it's not only weirdos who support [Harry]" (236-7).

Luna's support, however, is highly advantageous. Flouting the authority of Hogwarts High Inquisitor Umbridge, Luna offers her father's magazine's services to publish an interview with Harry about the return of Voldemort. Since Umbridge prohibits him from talking about this, Hermione and Luna work together to defy her – and by extension the Ministry – deciding to offer the truth to the wizarding public. This is a notable triumph for Luna, Xenophilus and Harry as *The Quibbler* sells out in record time and several of Harry's classmates and members of the public believe his interview rather than the Ministry's cover ups regarding Harry's discovery. The magazine has been widely viewed with derision, but the Ministry's "version" of how several Dark wizards are able to escape from Azkaban prison is full of "gaping holes" (501-2). Harry's claim that Voldemort has been resurrected and so

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<sup>35</sup> Of Latin origin, it is a popular girl's name for Italian or Spanish speakers.

<sup>36</sup> The etymology given for the name on the Harry Potter Lexicon website – [hp-lexicon.org](http://hp-lexicon.org) – is as follows: "Xenophilus: derived from the word 'xenophile,' denoting a person attracted to that which is foreign or alien, and derived from the Greek root forms 'xeno,' meaning 'alien,' 'strange' or 'guest,' and 'philia,' meaning 'friendship,' 'fondness,' and 'affection'" (par. 9).

<sup>37</sup> It is later suggested that her earrings are adorned with Dirigible Plums which are purported to "enhance the ability to accept the extraordinary" (*Hallows* 327).

has been able to engineer the break out is a more plausible explanation especially because the escaped prisoners had been Death Eaters under Voldemort's regime in the First Wizarding War. Hermione states that the public is looking for a "better explanation" for the breakout and, even if published in "an *unusual magazine*" (502), they would want to read Harry's interview.

Purposely covering up the circumstances of a deeply concerning prison breakout, unnecessarily subjecting Harry to a full criminal trial in order to intimidate him and "leaning heavily" (89) on the Daily Prophet to report events to benefit his agenda, Cornelius Fudge is corrupt and this is presented by Rowling in many more ways than those mentioned here. However, Luna's beliefs about him as an untrustworthy government official do not include any reference to this evidence. *The Quibbler* features an article claiming that he is attempting to gain control of Gringotts Bank by ousting the goblins that manage it. A Ministry insider is quoted as saying that Fudge is "always talking about the goblins he's had done in; he's had them drowned, he's had them dropped off buildings, he's had them poisoned, he's had them cooked in pies" (174). The article appears alongside one concerning Sirius which claims that he is innocent – information which the reader knows to be true – but all the reasons given to prove his innocence are absurd and patently untrue. Harry's close relationship with Sirius means the readers are privy to the facts of his innocence and *The Quibbler's* version is thus recognisably baseless. Therefore, in the article detailing Fudge's power-hungry behaviour – which, again, the reader knows to be true – all of the examples of his treatment of goblins appear, by comparison, very likely to be as absurd and baseless. Luna appears to accept the veracity of these articles and, to reinforce assumptions of Fudge's deceptiveness, asserts that he possesses an army of Heliopaths (or spirits of flame) – creatures never referenced by any other characters in the series and so unlikely to exist. Although, Luna is correct in her conclusion, she reaches it through unconfirmed, seemingly ridiculous, sources. As such, the reader may believe Luna's intuitions to be accurate, even if her logic is without substance.

Unapologetically nonconformist, Luna voices her unfounded beliefs with the same confidence as Hermione does her logical ones and is branded a "weirdo[...]" (237) for doing so. "Loony" (168), a cruel play on her name and obvious abbreviation for the word lunatic, is used somewhat covertly by her peers to signify their assessment of her judgement. Though she is aware of the mean-spirited epithet, Luna does not shy away from sharing her ideas and speaking her mind. Unembarrassed by her unorthodox views, Luna is a great example to her peers – especially Harry – of championing one's beliefs in spite of popular opinion.

## Troubling Vision: Thestrals

Luna talks about many creatures and it is implied that essentially none of them are real<sup>38</sup> by the reactions of her peers to these discussions. Often no other characters mention such creatures, or they do not recognise their names or they refute their existence altogether. Rowling portrays many mythological creatures in the *Potter* series as well as discussing them in her companion book *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*. Her depictions of banshees, basilisks, centaurs, dragons, dwarves, (house-)elves, fairies, ghosts, giants, gnomes, goblins, merpeople, (wood) nymphs, ogres, phoenixes, pixies, poltergeists, sphinxes, trolls, unicorns, vampires and werewolves draw on lore, but are often metamorphosed into something specific to her magical world. Additionally, Rowling has created many of her own fantastic beasts such as bowtruckles, demiguises, doxies, erumpents, kneazles, nifflers, thestrals and dozens more.<sup>39</sup> Luna, on the other hand, references Gulping Plimpies (*Prince* 398) and Aquavirius Maggots (*Phoenix* 681), but these supposed creatures are never spoken of by any other character. She claims Fudge owns an Umgubular Slashkilter (350), but Harry trivialises this assertion by telling Cho Chang not to ask her about it. Luna's warning to him of Nargles (400) hiding in mistletoe only bemuses him and when he mentions them to Cho she has never heard of them – a hint to their probable non-existence. When Luna describes Wrackspurts as invisible creatures that “float in through your ears and make your brain go fuzzy” and she “[flaps] her hands at thin air” (*Prince* 134), Harry and Neville quickly change the subject, seemingly uncomfortable and not willing to engage with the topic. There is no evidence ever offered that any of these creatures exist; moreover, *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* – a student textbook written by a wizard who travelled the world seeking out fantastic beasts – does not feature any of these creatures. So beyond gauging her peers' reactions, diligent readers can check the Hogwarts textbook to confirm that these creatures are undocumented. Hermione directly challenges the existence of Blibbering Humdingers and Crumple-Horned Snorkacks, saying “[t]here [aren't] any such things” (*Phoenix* 236) and is equally dismissive of Heliopaths, arguing with Luna in front of their peers, insisting there is no proof of their existence (308). Nevertheless, Luna's connection to a particular set of fantastic beasts – Thestrals – is of importance as her ability to see them with Harry strengthens their bond and it is this that enables him to develop his view of death's role in his life.

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<sup>38</sup> Thestrals are the exception, but these are introduced to the reader through Harry's point of view.

<sup>39</sup> See Rowling's *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* for further examples of her invented creatures.

The magical creatures that Luna believes in seem no more implausible than any other documented beast in the narrative. One could argue that, if non-magical people cannot perceive the magical world, then it is possible that there are realms, dimensions, and creatures that wizards themselves cannot perceive. Therefore, it seems that Rowling depicts the Lovegoods as believing in unproven creatures because she wants them to represent an open-mindedness necessary for Harry to embrace in order to complete his journey. After all, Luna helps him to develop his perspective on death and Xenophilius is instrumental in his understanding of the Deathly Hallows – the central theme of the final novel and a stumbling block to which Dumbledore is determined Harry should not fall prey.<sup>40</sup>

Despite the undocumented creatures in which Luna believes, she is not alone in seeing Thestrals, the winged horses visible to those who have witnessed death. She sees them because she witnessed her mother's death. Harry sees Thestrals after witnessing the murder of fellow student Cedric Diggory and, initially, he fails to understand why Ron and Hermione cannot see them while he and Luna can. He oscillates between relief that someone else can see them and anxiety that that someone is Luna since her reality seems to be separate from that of his peers. He trusts neither the legitimacy of her vision nor his own and is more inclined to believe they are having the same hallucination. This troubling of Harry's vision recalls the problematic nature of vision of which Jackson writes as well as how this comments on questions of knowing (31). Just as Harry lacks an understanding of superficial matters within the wizarding world, yet is able to recognise the abuses of power enacted by the Ministry, his confusion at seeing the Thestrals belies the onset of his development regarding an understanding of what death means for those who have been witness to it. Luna's certainty about the Thestrals prompts him to wrestle with the possibility that if something is imperceptible to others that this does not negate its reality. However, it is when he learns about Thestrals from Hagrid, in his capacity as Care of Magical Creatures teacher, that he feels a "great wave of relief" as he now has "proof" (*Phoenix* 393) that they are real.

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<sup>40</sup> Katie Eller claims that Xenophilius' role in *Hallows* is "integral to the last of Harry's quests" (1) as he divulges to Harry the meaning of the Deathly Hallows, three items that would "make the possessor master of Death" (*Hallows* 333). The concept of the Hallows is so far-fetched, even within the magical world, that Hermione fiercely denies the possibility of their existence, despite several logical connections that Harry makes between known items and the descriptions of the Hallows – not least of which is Harry's own Invisibility Cloak. (See chapter three for a detailed explanation of the Hallows' supposed origins.) Importantly, it is Harry's choice not to seek out the Hallows that defines his character. By Xenophilius suggesting "the easiest possible method for defeating death", he offers "a logical, alternative solution to the Voldemort problem", but this is one that directly threatens Harry's path of "courageous" and "selfless" action (9). Harry must overcome this temptation and remain on the course which Dumbledore has set for him, finding Horcruxes and not Hallows, rejecting logic in favour of faith.

Even though he can see them with his own eyes and Luna is inciting deeper contemplation, Harry is not yet ready to simply reject that which goes against consensus.

Further working against general acceptance of these creatures, attitudes towards Thestrals are tainted by the superstition that they bring bad luck. Hagrid explains that people “[j]us’ didn’ understand” (396) their nature, assuming they were omens because of their connection with death. Luna is not susceptible to such superstitions in the way that her peers are because of her views about death, particularly the belief that the people one loves most do not leave one in death. Far from being afraid of them, she suggests “in the closest thing to a matter-of-fact voice Harry had ever heard her use” (670) that they should fly on them to London to save Sirius when there is no other available form of transport. On this journey, the Thestrals are distinctly calm and obliging, and even Ron, Hermione and Ginny – who cannot see them – are able to ride them with relative ease.

Harry sharing the ability to see Thestrals with a relative stranger instead of a close friend leads the reader to contemplate the differences “between the isolation of the few and the camaraderie of the many”. Harry must accept his ability to perceive Thestrals in order to “[move] one step closer to acknowledging the ‘otherness’ that will allow him to accept fully the challenge of fighting Voldemort for the last time” (Willson-Metzger 4). In fact, when Harry chooses to sacrifice his life he does not inform Ron and Hermione, telling himself “[t]his [is] a journey they could not take together” (*Hallows* 556). This inclination towards separation is also seen at the end of the Battle of Hogwarts, when Luna recognises that Harry wants to be alone and allows him the privacy to reflect on the losses suffered by his allies. Harry and Luna, then, support each other in the need for solitude and contentedly exist as jointly isolated individuals.

### **Troubling Vision: Dreams**

In stark contrast to Harry sharing perception with Luna in relation to Thestrals, he and Hermione are often in opposition regarding his dreams, the apparent meanings they offer him, and the decisions that he makes with the information that he gains from them. Hermione is vocal about her hesitation for him to act on information gained in such a fashion and her rationality challenges Harry’s beliefs, resolve and bravery, pushing him to be sure about making decisions that ultimately will result in his heroic actions. Harry’s dreams are visceral realities, but because he uses non-corroborated information from these dreams to make decisions, his thinking in response to them is imaginative. As is characteristic of fantasy,

there is emphasis given to Harry's subconscious experiences, particularly his dreams. In going to Hogwarts, he "is quite literally entering a fantasy world" (Billone 190) where the smallest of his desires are fulfilled: having always been deprived of enough food with the Dursleys, food magically appears on the tables of the Great Hall.<sup>41</sup> He is, unsurprisingly then, increasingly drawn into his fantasies, his dreams and his subconscious life. Harry's ability to see through Voldemort's eyes in his dreams (and later in visions) is due to his existence as a Horcrux and it is his responses to these dreams especially that cause Hermione to vehemently critique Harry's judgement in decision-making.

Harry often wants to tackle problems by acting on information that he obtains in his dreams, but Hermione mistrusts the reliability of the subconscious as a source of information. Billone indicates that Hermione "seems to have no dreams at all" (179), whereas Harry's dreams are frequent, detailed and significant. Her helpful categorisation of dream types portrayed in the books bears reproduction here:

Rowling calls our attention to five kinds of dreams in the Harry Potter series: *normal* dreams (which she fills with delightfully Freudian implications), *retrospective* dreams (which simply replay scenes from the past), *prophetic* dreams (which show us what will happen in the future), *factual* dreams (which mirror what is simultaneously happening in real life) and *implanted* dreams (which give every appearance of being factual but have actually been inserted in the mind by someone else). (Billone 192)

Harry experiences all the dream types mentioned. Billone claims that he can "[participate] in a dreamworld that is at once the product of his greatest joys and his most awful fears" (190-191), functioning as a fusion of Peter Pan – who controls his dreamland, Neverland – and Alice – who is at the mercy of hers, Wonderland. Hermione's attempts to engage with Harry regarding his decisions inspired by his dreamlife are marred by her reluctance to blindly trust the subconscious.

For example, Harry has a recurring dream over the course of his fifth year that he is walking down a corridor that ends in a locked door; the dream, which varies in content and length, is both puzzling and intriguing and he develops a curious longing to discover what lies behind the door.<sup>42</sup> Subsequently, he is given lessons to defend his mind against "external penetration" (*Phoenix* 458) – at Dumbledore's insistence – and Hermione demands he ignore

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<sup>41</sup> Billone offers other examples of Harry's dreamworld taking on a physical reality in her article "The Boy Who Lived: From Carroll's Alice and Barrie's Peter Pan to Rowling's Harry Potter".

<sup>42</sup> It appears purposeful that Rowling has Trelawney introduce dream interpretation in her Divination classes in *Phoenix*. Trelawney sets her class a dream diary for homework, but Harry doesn't record or analyse his dreams. Had he properly attempted to interpret his dreams, he may have been able to uncover that his corridor dream is connected to Voldemort sooner.



whatever possible meaning the dream may have. Harry's status as a Horcrux and his connection to Voldemort's mind is as yet undiscovered so he only later learns that the dream has been an indication of Voldemort's state of mind. It transpires that the dream is by turns retrospective, factual and prophetic<sup>43</sup> and the corridor leads to the Department of Mysteries in the Ministry from which Voldemort wants to procure a weapon. In a demonstration of how imperative it is for Harry to corroborate information gained through his subconscious with rational thinking, Harry mistakes an implanted dream for a factual one and the consequences are fatal.

Harry dreams that, after walking down the aforementioned corridor, he sees Voldemort torturing Sirius. Predictably, Hermione tries to establish the likelihood that what Harry has seen is real:

‘[I]t’s five o’ clock in the afternoon ... the Ministry of Magic must be full of workers ... how would Voldemort and Sirius have got in without being seen? Harry ... they’re probably the two most wanted wizards in the world ... you think they could get into a building full of Aurors undetected?’ (645)

She considers the practical implications of Voldemort getting Sirius into the Ministry and concludes that the situation Harry believes to be happening is unlikely. In order to dissuade him from leaving for London without evidence<sup>44</sup> she reminds him that Voldemort is known to invade his enemies' minds, planting horrible visions in order to make them do what he wants. Convinced that Sirius is not in any danger, she is sure that Harry is risking his life. Her scepticism of the veracity of his dream and of his decision-making based on this dream is well-founded. Their attempt to rescue Sirius ironically leads to his death when he is killed trying to rescue his would-be rescuers. Since Hermione is correct that Harry's dream about Sirius is implanted and not factual, she remains convinced that Harry can never trust anything he sees through Voldemort's eyes and that his thinking should not be based on what he sees there. Notably, Hermione's scepticism is directed at the ways in which the subconscious can be infiltrated and manipulated by magic; she is not necessarily sceptical of Harry making any

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<sup>43</sup>As a retrospective dream, Harry is dreaming about the same corridor that he had walked down before the commencement of the school year. As a factual dream, he travels down the corridor simultaneously with Nagini around Christmastime. Lastly, as a prophetic dream, Harry walks the corridor (again) at the end of the school year, after dreaming about it over the course of the year.

<sup>44</sup>During their time at Hogwarts, Hermione uses logic, observation, research and evidence to solve riddles and mysteries, assisting Harry in his heroic quest. She solves Snape's potions riddle near the close of *Stone* which allows Harry to capture the Philosopher's Stone before Voldemort does; in *Chamber*, she deduces that Slytherin's monster is a Basilisk, which enables Harry to destroy it and rescue Ginny; it is Hermione who finds out that Rita Skeeter is an animagus, illegally spying on Hogwarts students in *Goblet*; lastly, she exclaims that the Sword of Gryffindor is "impregnated" (*Hallows* 250) with the Basilisk's venom and can therefore be used to destroy Horcruxes.

decisions based on imaginative thinking altogether. In *Hallows*, she insists that Harry block visions of Voldemort from his mind; however, he dismisses her advice and takes advantage of these subsequent visions as they provide him with information necessary for thwarting Voldemort's plans and give him insight into choices he should make. Hermione's role involves her helping Harry to determine the validity of the information he receives and in this she forces him to hone his decision-making; her scepticism towards making decisions based on imaginative thinking requires him to contemplate his values and what he is willing to risk in order to commit to acting on information from his dreams.

### **Beyond the Veil**

While looking for Sirius in the Department of Mysteries, Luna and Harry are drawn to a veil hanging in an archway from which they can hear whispering. Harry has "the strangest feeling that there [is] someone standing right behind the veil" (682) and Luna claims that there are "people *in there*". Ginny and Neville are "entranced" by the veil (683), whereas Ron and Hermione are leery of it. Rowling has described this veil as "the divide between life and death" ("Ms. Rowling Talks about the Veil" par. 3) and portrayed the characters' responses to the veil as a parallel to "their degree of skepticism or belief about what lay beyond". She characterises Ron as "scared" and Hermione as "hyper-rational", conveying them, respectively, as fearful of or disbelieving in an afterlife. On the other hand, Luna "believes firmly in an afterlife" and Harry has an "uncharacteristically strong curiosity about the afterlife" (par. 4).<sup>45</sup> Though only he and Luna can hear the voices, his response to this is considerably different to his response to seeing Thestrals for the first time. He no longer feels bewildered that not everyone is able to apprehend the things that he can. In fact, Harry feels an inclination to walk through the veil, demonstrating his desire to understand the intangible. Luna later explains that the voices behind the veil belong to dead loved ones and incorrectly assumes that he knows to whom the voices belonged. She distinctly hears her mother – while Harry cannot recognise any particular voice – and this ability to recognise one of the voices suggests an understanding of death more emotionally mature than his. Some might suggest that Luna could recognise her mother's voice since her mother died when Luna was ten years old and that Harry could not recognise his parents' voices because he was a baby when they died, but this seems an unlikely reason that he does not know whose voices are speaking

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<sup>45</sup> Though she does not mention them, we can assume that Neville and Ginny are intrigued by the idea of the afterlife, but have not decided whether or not they believe in it.

through the veil. The previous year, when Voldemort's wand emits the shades or "smoky [shadows]" (*Goblet* 578-9) of Lily and James, Harry speaks with his parents, making it possible that he could recognise their voices from the other side of the veil. This then reinforces the argument that Harry's perception of death is less emotionally mature than that of Luna. This is further evidenced in his violent reaction to Sirius's death which sees him bellowing at Dumbledore while wrecking his office. Though he indicates a desire to understand the incorporeal, he does not appear to have reached the psychological development necessary to enable an acceptance of death in quite the same way that Luna can.

While Harry's anger and anguish threaten to consume him, Luna's consolation about the loss of Sirius influences his outlook on death and helps to lighten his grief. She has the ability to address the pain of Harry's loss in a way that is soothing because, unlike his other friends, she can empathise with his experience of the death of a parent. Alicia Willson-Metzger argues that Luna "provides him with some measure of comfort, some ambiguity regarding the finality of death and the possibility of seeing Sirius again" (5). Harry feels the "terrible weight in his stomach" lessen (*Phoenix* 761) by looking with empathy at Luna, and so turning away from the "anger and grief that had filled him since Sirius's death" (760). Granger recalls Harry's frequent outbursts of anger throughout *Phoenix*, juxtaposing them with this encounter with Luna:

The transformation of Harry in *Order of the Phoenix* from hot, dry, and angry to cold, wet, pitying, and even compassionate signals the most important change in him since his discovery that he was a wizard in *Philosopher's Stone*. (*How Harry Cast His Spell* 169)

Granger's claim marks Harry's response to Luna as a moment of significant personal development.<sup>46</sup> In witnessing Luna's "willingness to imagine, to encounter mystery and wonder, [which] has enabled her to approach grief with hope" (Pazdziora loc. 4417), Harry's perception of death is influenced. His hot and angry tendencies subsiding as he embraces a compassionate approach, is an essential change which will become clear in the discussion of the shadow in chapter three. Hermione has a great impact on him over a much longer period so the results of Luna's effect on his maturity seem minor in comparison. Yet it is her name Harry gives his only daughter whom he names Lily Luna. He associates his mother – who

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<sup>46</sup> That Luna is partly responsible for this demonstrates to the reader that her name is even more significant to her role within the story. Michael Ward, a C.S. Lewis scholar, cites lunar influence in Lewis's *The Silver Chair* referring to the abundance of "wetness" within the narrative. Of the moon goddess whom the Romans named Luna, Ward writes that she "drives across the heavens, marking the boundary between the constancy above and the confusion below" (153); additionally, Artemis, the moon goddess of the Greek mythological tradition, was "worshiped [*sic*] as a healer" (Feder 83). Both exhibit a calming effect redolent of Luna's influence on Harry.

sacrificed her life for his – with this friend who taught him that death does not separate us from those we love.

### **Hermione's Response to Ministry Prejudice**

As relative outsiders, Hermione and Luna are able to place themselves in the position of some of the fantastic beasts and non-human beings and that they encounter, demonstrating an ability to think and make decisions imaginatively. Despite her interactions with members of these different groups being limited in the narrative, Luna's open-minded attitude is demonstrated when she encounters them. Her responses to Thestrals and Dobby's death demonstrate how Ministry ideologies and commonly held wizarding beliefs do not limit her thinking. Unlike many wizards who are superstitious and fearful of Thestrals, Luna trusts these beasts enough to propose riding them to London. Her interpretation of Dobby's position as a house-elf is suggested by her assistance in Dobby's burial: closing the elf's eyes and eulogising him. She thanks him for saving her from the Death Eaters and hopes that he is "happy now" – her way of wishing him peace in his death. It is evident that she does not view house-elves as property,<sup>47</sup> but as beings that can be "good and brave" (*Hallows* 388) and therefore should be treated with dignity.

On the other hand, Hermione has friendships with Lupin and Hagrid – a werewolf and half-giant respectively – and she makes an effort to form connections with house-elves, goblins and centaurs. Just as it is difficult for her to embrace imagination in her personal development, so too is it difficult for different groups within the magical community to pursue re-imagined relationships with wizards. Hermione's difficulty is that she feels that what gives her stability in the wizarding world is book knowledge and the ability to rationalise her surroundings, so if she feels unable to apply logic within a situation, she is likely to disregard the viewpoints of others or pull away from them. Comparatively, the difficulty for fantastic beasts and non-human beings to pursue new relationships with wizards is probably based on wizards' exclusion of the voices of non-wizards within the Ministry. In the Department for the Regulation and Control of Magical Creatures there is an Office for House-Elf Relocation and a Centaur Liaison Office, but neither appears to have employees that are members of the groups they purport to serve. Hermione states that elves are

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<sup>47</sup> By contrast, Sirius's Aunt Elladora began a family tradition of "beheading house-elves when they got too old to carry tea trays" (*Phoenix* 105) and these heads were mounted and put on display in the corridors of the family home.

“shockingly under-represented” (*Goblet* 198) within the department and, Rowling (under the fictitious pseudonym Newt Scamander) writes, that “[a]lthough a Centaur Liaison Office exists in the Beast Division of the Department for the Regulation and Control of Magical Creatures, no centaur has ever used it” (*Fantastic Beasts* xiii). On the other hand, Hermione’s comments about goblins demonstrates a very different – but similarly worrisome – relationship between goblins and wizards; reminding Ron about goblin rebellions, Hermione claims they “don’t need protection” – by which she means that they do not need Ministry representation – as they are “quite capable of dealing with wizards” (*Goblet* 390) on their own. Moreover, she states that they are clever and advocate for themselves; by stating that they advocate for themselves, she implies that they have a need to defend themselves from wizarding interference. As such, fantastic beasts and non-human beings either have very little evidence that wizards are willing to have open communication with them, or – as in the case of goblins – they know that wizards are unwilling to compromise on their position of power. The notion of wizards committing to a cultural shift in which they would have to forfeit some of their power to other magical beings seems beyond the stretch of the imagination considering their history of domination. In fact, this is demonstrated when Ron asks Hermione to explain “how the world could get by without [the house-elves’] services, *as if the needs of those with power naturally take precedence over the needs of those who serve them*” (Cherland 279) (emphasis added).

As discussed above, werewolves are categorised as falling under the care of both Being and Beast divisions within the Ministry and as such they have a complicated identity, but Hogwarts’s syllabus doesn’t appear to touch on the reality of those inflicted with lycanthropy. The teachers neglect to inform students of the humanity werewolves maintain while in their human form and the social and financial plight they suffer as a result of being ostracised by the community. The students are taught to recognise a werewolf in her transformed state, but are not taught how to recognise her in her human form. Whether this is Hogwarts’s chosen policy or the Ministry’s guideline is not clear. Professor Lupin’s lycanthropy is known to the Hogwarts staff, but is not disclosed to the students or parents to prevent concern, or outrage, over his appointment. Hermione deduces that he is a werewolf, but she chooses not to reveal his status because, recognising his good nature and trustworthiness, she believes in the truth of her own experience over the Ministry’s truth. Here, her thinking and decision-making is imbued with imagination. However, when she realises that he is friends with Sirius, a (falsely) convicted murderer, she revokes her trust in him, giving credence to common beliefs about werewolves’ untrustworthiness. This uncritical thinking figures him as a murderous

traitor and her as an oppressive and judgemental force, perpetuating hostile attitudes towards marginalised individuals. Hermione's belief that Lupin is unsafe and traitorous is mistaken. She must hear first-hand the narrative of Sirius Black, Peter Pettigrew and Lupin – a narrative that conflicts with the official version of history – in order to understand what happened in the past and who she can trust in the present. Official history marks Sirius as betraying Harry's father James and suggests that Lupin and Sirius intend to kill Harry, but from their testimony, she learns that Sirius is an innocent man, Lupin is his only supporter and that they intend to avenge Harry's father on his real murderers. The community's negative beliefs about werewolves are demonstrated to be untrue of Lupin whose loyalty, trustworthiness and protectiveness towards others are exercised throughout the series. Hermione learns that Hagrid is a half-giant the year following her discovery about Ministry misinformation about werewolves. Exasperated at the "hysteria about giants", she dismisses it as "the same sort of prejudice that people have towards werewolves" (*Goblet* 377) and, demonstrating her increased maturity of understanding, it has no impact on her friendship with Hagrid.

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As Hermione's perspective develops, her commitment to assimilation into the wizarding world falters. She is suspicious of the credibility of established literature because she is more adept at detecting the ideologies that authors may be supporting via the information they present or omit from their texts.

She noticed them all looking at her and said, with her usual air of impatience that nobody had read all the books she had, "It's all in *Hogwarts: A History*. Though, of course, that book's not *entirely* reliable. "A *Revised History of Hogwarts*' would be a more accurate title. Or 'A Highly Biased and *Selective History of Hogwarts, Which Glosses Over the Nastier Aspects of the School*.'" (209-210)

Hermione discovers that *Hogwarts: A History*, the official publication covering the history of the school, neglects to mention the hundred house-elves working in the castle. She recognises not only the wizards' abuse of power, but that such an omission reveals the indifference they feel towards house-elves. She founds the Society for the Promotion of Elfish Welfare, or S.P.E.W., which aims to improve their legal and social status by revoking elf enslavement,<sup>48</sup> gaining them "fair wages and working conditions" (198) as well as representation within the Ministry. Gail Grynbaum claims that her "social consciousness stems from a mixture of

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<sup>48</sup> Janice Liedl cites a real-world organisation founded in 1859 that coincidentally shares the acronym S.P.E.W. According to Liedl, Jessie Boucherett "founded the Society for Promoting the Employment of Women, or S.P.E.W." which "sought to train [...] women, mostly from the lower middle class, for work beyond governing and dressmaking" (258) – a seemingly unintentional parallel between fiction and reality.

exquisite sensitivity to unfair treatment and identification with a group that mirrors her own outcast status” (40). Interestingly, this particular exercise of Hermione’s is undermined by Rowling who presents her endeavour as amusing.

The depiction of Hermione’s fervour presents her as a somewhat humorous figure, particularly as the reader is aware that house-elf slavery, as deplorable an institution as it is, is “nearer the bottom of the list of wrongs to right” (Patterson 110) with the rise of Voldemort taking place in *Goblet*. Hermione is surprised when the house-elf Winky, formerly in service to the Crouch family and newly employed at Hogwarts, vehemently disagrees with the fundamental aims of S.P.E.W. She ignores the obvious discomfort the other Hogwarts elves express when payment and freedom are discussed and attempts to free the elves who clean Gryffindor tower through trickery. Torie Wright makes the argument that Hermione’s motivation is “less about the feelings of the house elves [*sic*]” and is rather about “her own discomfort at the thought of uncompensated work” (2). This suggests the potentially comic self-righteousness of those who embrace causes. In addition to the house-elves resistance to her efforts to help them is that of Harry. A friend to the house-elf Dobby, Harry learns of his wretched existence in the Malfoys’ servitude, frees him and sees him find happiness in successfully negotiating with Dumbledore for paid employment and monthly leave.<sup>49</sup> Dobby becomes a new kind of house-elf through his increased confidence gained from Harry treating him with respect. However, Harry recognises that Dobby is an anomaly amongst the elves and is reluctant to join Hermione’s cause. The reader is amused at his feeling of “exasperation” (*Goblet* 199) in the face of Hermione’s dedication towards S.P.E.W. and understands that he only signs up as a member because he thinks it will “keep her quiet” (210).

Rowling’s representation of the house-elves’ position also allows for a more serious reading. Hermione learns of Winky’s humiliation at being dismissed and her misery from being separated from her “wizard family” and she insists that Winky acknowledge Mr Crouch dismisses her unfairly. Hermione understands the fact that the wizarding community has shaped the elves’ perspective for generations in such a way that they believe that subservience, commitment and allegiance to particular family lines are honourable characteristics of their race. Steven W. Patterson states that “their resistance to their freedom is an indication not of the depths of their hearts’ desire, but of the depth of their bondage”

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<sup>49</sup> He receives one Galleon weekly and a day off every month. Though Dumbledore offered him higher pay and longer leave, Dobby insists that he does not want “too much” freedom (*Goblet* 331).

(112).<sup>50</sup> The real challenge for Hermione is to recognise the entrenched nature of the elves' belief system and respectfully offer new perspectives through communicating with them and asking them about their needs. Luisa Grijalya Maza claims that by not asking the elves' opinions she reproduces "the view that house elves [*sic*] are inferior in that they are incapable of constructing their own meanings of freedom and happiness, in this way reinforcing the superiority of her newly adopted magical human identity" (Maza qtd in Walters 38). She attempts to force them to see things from her point of view and just as her imagination cannot develop under Trelawney's insistence that she open her mind, neither can the elves develop their view of their station by being forced to abandon the supposed truths they have been indoctrinated into accepting.

Regarding a far less sympathetic house-elf than either Dobby or Winky, Harry is galled by Hermione's repeated requests for kindness to be shown to his elf Kreacher (who played a role in Sirius's death). However, when he learns about Kreacher's torture at Voldemort's hand, he is forced to reconsider his perception of house-elf enslavement. He learns that Kreacher is told by his former master, Regulus Black, a former Death Eater, to follow Voldemort's bidding deep within a secluded cave, bewitched so that wizards cannot Apparate or Disapparate within it, and in which there is a lake teeming with the undead. The elf is forced to drink a torturous potion that causes near unendurable psychological pain and a "desperate" thirst (*Hallows* 160) and the reanimated corpses (called Inferi) "bewitched to do a Dark wizard's bidding" (*Prince* 63) are ready to drown him should he attempt to drink from their lake. Voldemort is testing a potion that is supposed to protect one of his Horcruxes and, as part of the wizarding community which condones the abuse of house-elves, what Voldemort does is not "that far out of the common way" (*Hallows* 163) for wizards, according to Hermione. Although, he has an inability to empathise with others and treats many wizards with a similar disregard, the attitudes of the wizarding community towards elves can be seen to contribute to his choice to torture Kreacher. Kreacher only escapes the Inferi because his master Regulus orders him to return home once he completes Voldemort's task. Voldemort intends for his victim to be overcome by the Inferi and so the secret of the Horcrux-locket hidden in the cave would never be shared with another. However, a "house-elf's highest law is his master's bidding" and house-elf magic allows one to Apparate and Disapparate in places where wizards cannot. The combination of these two factors is what enables Kreacher to escape and he tells Regulus about the Horcrux-locket. Disenchanted with

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<sup>50</sup> See Steven W. Patterson for his examination of Hermione's response to discrimination against house-elves in "Kreacher's Lament: S.P.E.W. as a Parable on Discrimination, Indifference, and Social Justice".



Voldemort and Death Eater ideologies, not least because of the torture of his elf, Regulus steals the Horcrux-locket with Kreacher's information. Harry is shocked that Voldemort could have made "such a mistake" (161) as to forget the special abilities of elves which allowed Kreacher to circumvent his plans and allowed Regulus to steal his Horcrux. More than this, Harry is struck by the depth of cruelty that house-elf enslavement enables, since Kreacher has no choice in participating. Hermione voices the horror they feel on hearing of his exploitation, saying, "Oh, don't you see, now, how sick it is, the way they've got to obey" (162). Nonetheless, if house-elves dislike their masters due to mistreatment, they will find loopholes in their commands and perform acts that undermine their masters. In this way, Kreacher is able to leave his master Sirius' house in order to visit another Black family member (and Death Eater) Bellatrix Lestrange and divulge information about Sirius and Harry to the Death Eaters. Hermione explains Kreacher's justification for betraying Sirius: "He's loyal to people who are kind to him[...] I've said all along that wizards would pay for how they treat house-elves" (163-4). Consequently, since Harry inherits Kreacher as his elf after Sirius' death,<sup>51</sup> he attempts to foster a genuine relationship with him because he recognises that he should treat him with respect. When he considerably asks for his help to track down the Horcrux-locket when it is in turn stolen from him, Harry "[glances] at Hermione for assistance" and "the change in his tone" appears to gain her "approval" (164). Hermione's eventual success in communicating with and respecting a house-elf who she may not entirely understand is a lesson from which Harry learns and he knows better than to simply take advantage of his wizard position, showing respect and consideration of feeling to the formerly detested Kreacher. In this interaction, the fact that Kreacher agrees to help Harry (a half-blood) and Hermione (a Muggle-born) demonstrates to the reader that Kreacher becomes a new kind of house-elf.

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Although she respects fantastic beasts and non-human beings alike, as a witch Hermione represents the ruling class and, needing assistance from a former Gringotts goblin and the centaurs of the Forbidden Forest, she finds herself in an uncomfortable position when asking

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<sup>51</sup>There are many potential complications in this arrangement that Dumbledore explains to Harry when he informs him that ownership of Sirius's house (and Kreacher) has been bequeathed to him on Sirius's death. Dumbledore is unsure whether Sirius's will can be followed because the Black family tradition stipulates that "the house [is to be] handed down the direct line, to the next male with the name of Black" (*Phoenix* 52) of whom there are none. There is the possibility that a spell or enchantment is placed on the property so that it cannot be owned by anyone who is not a pure-blood which includes Harry (who is a half-blood by virtue of Lily being a Muggle-born). In this case, it is possible that the house and Kreacher will pass into the ownership of Sirius' cousin, the Death Eater Bellatrix Lestrange. Once Kreacher is seen to follow Harry's command, though, it becomes clear that Harry is rightful owner of both Kreacher and Grimmauld Place.

for help because both goblins and centaurs are habitually resentful of wizards. In planning a Gringotts heist with Griphook, the trio must negotiate his payment; he insists on receiving the sword of Gryffindor, their primary means of destroying Horcruxes. Harry and Ron suggest chicanery in order to acquire Griphook's help and retain the sword. Hermione calls for transparency, arguing that making a false promise to him is "despicable" (410) and stating that, with such a suggestion, one should not wonder that goblins dislike wizards. She expresses her discomfort even when Harry promises to give Griphook the sword because he avoids telling him *when* he will receive it. Her fear of breaking trust with Griphook is realised when Griphook forcibly takes the sword from them and joins the other Gringotts goblins, exposing them as thieves (while neglecting to mention his assistance in their thievery). Desiring an alliance with centaurs, furthermore, is troublesome on account of their deliberate dissociation from wizards. Desperate to oust Umbridge, Hermione leads her into the forest, trying to attract the centaurs, hoping that they will drive her off. The centaurs are insulted by Hermione's arrogance, accusing her of expecting them to "do [her] dirty work" and "act as [her] servants" (*Phoenix* 666). As with Griphook, negative consequences result from this interaction, as the centaurs make unspecified threats of attack against her and Harry that they only escape by chance.

Having a werewolf and a half-giant as friends, Hermione imagines the magical community can develop its capacity for inclusivity and egalitarianism. But the house-elves protest against her attempts to free them, even well-meaning wizards cannot behave trustworthily towards goblins and the centaurs resent her assumption of co-operation. The divisions between groups within the wizarding world assert themselves in response to her attempts to disrupt them. Ironically, then, it appears that Rowling is dealing with human nature in her portrayal of the relationships between wizards, fantastic beasts and non-human beings. Nevertheless, Harry can be seen to learn from Hermione's mishaps and accomplishments in her attempts to think and make decisions based on an imaginative vision of the magical world, and he recognises and respects the complexities of interactions between magical groups, assisting his pivotal navigation of the magical community.

### **Perpetuation of the Status Quo at Hogwarts**

It is not enough for Hermione and Luna to question knowledge, authority and truth in order for the status quo to be undermined. For the magical community to undergo an ideological shift there needs to be a culture of inquiry. Hogwarts is "the central site of action" (Wolosky

285) in the texts and, being a school, would appear to accommodate the most suitable community in which a re-imagining of magical society can take place. Countering the development of a heuristic community is the Hogwarts house system and its ineffective teachers. There is undoubtedly a paucity of both rational and imaginative thinking in the lack of reflections undertaken by both teachers and students regarding their school experiences. On the other hand, Dumbledore displays rational and imaginative thinking in his choices of teacher appointments and student admissions. Dumbledore's leadership and the founding of Dumbledore's Army work towards a revolution of thought. As such, it is unsurprising that the Ministry and later Voldemort seek to gain a foothold in the school in order to affect the ideologies explicitly or implicitly taught at Hogwarts.

Hogwarts headmaster Albus Dumbledore exhibits rational thinking in how he offers the experience of equality to members of different groups. Due to his past experience of unintentionally inciting the Dark wizard Gellert Grindelwald to commit atrocious acts against wizards and non-wizards alike, he recognises that different groups should unite, not counter one another. His willingness to give opportunities to members of all groups also shows his ability to think imaginatively in that this response is different from what is expected from wizards in general. Dumbledore demonstrates a genuine respect for every Being, Beast and Spirit with whom he interacts. He "demonstrates his belief in the equality of the students [...] while also working to create positive opportunities for students from different nationalities, blood status' [*sic*], academic abilities, races, classes, and genders" (Richmond 28). His ability to think critically about others and assess people according to their individual strengths and weaknesses is evident in his choices regarding student admissions, but also when employing teachers. His actions challenge divisions often seen as natural by the community, causing his students to think critically about the practice of subordinating members of certain classifications.<sup>52</sup> Acting on these values appears to be unusually bold for a Hogwarts headmaster, as Fudge, the Minister for Magic, says that he has always given him "free reign", considering that others probably would not have "let [him] hire werewolves, keep Hagrid, or decide what to teach [his] students, without reference to the Ministry" (*Goblet* 615).

Aaron Richmond closely assesses Dumbledore's student admissions policies and compares the integration of students with different levels of abilities and genetic backgrounds

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<sup>52</sup> Wolosky argues that Dumbledore is not "intrusively coercive" about his beliefs which she claims "has its own crucial educational and moral value" (293). He does not tell his students in a school assembly that they should not discriminate against werewolves or centaurs, rather he offers Lupin and Firenze equal opportunity in the work place, employing them alongside wizards, and allows his students to get to know them at first hand and make their own decisions about how they feel about them.

at Hogwarts with the integration of students with and without disabilities in a real-world classroom. He states that integration “permits classmates with and without disabilities to interact positively with one another thus leading to the development of mutually beneficial peer relationships” (Richmond 39). Lupin is able to attend Hogwarts due to Dumbledore’s sympathy and his efforts to provide a safe space for him to transform at the full moon. In later life, after years of being rejected from employment due to his lycanthropy, Lupin is offered the post of DADA teacher “[enabling] him to be a positive role model for other socially marginalized students including Neville due to his decreased magical abilities” (36). Likewise, Dumbledore’s employment of Hagrid has positive consequences given his “desire to protect marginalized others” because of the “social prejudice that he has encountered” (42). Notably, it is Lupin and Hagrid, despite their empathy towards their students, who are disdainfully singled out by the Minister.

Richmond acknowledges the limitations of Dumbledore’s principles in that “an open admissions policy” (48) for students with lycanthropy or for Squibs – who are born into magical families, but have no magical talent – is not enacted, despite his employment of staff members who suffer from these conditions.<sup>53</sup> The marginalised in the wizarding community are still “forced to rely on the equality based beliefs of others, instead of having rights codified in law” (66). Furthermore, although Dumbledore’s personal policies are ethical, his inclusion of marginalised students and staff members inevitably exposes them to prejudice that is already present in the community – a consequence for which he can bear no blame.

Although Dumbledore is the headmaster, his administration is far from being the most influential aspect of Hogwarts’s school culture. In fact, long standing traditions such as the Hogwarts houses and teaching methodologies, as well as input from the Ministry, all have a far greater effect on the overall experience of his students. The students’ perspectives and beliefs are influenced by these aspects and their influences are often counterproductive to Dumbledore’s desire to foster an inclusive society.

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<sup>53</sup> In Terry Pratchett’s Discworld series and particularly his plot regarding the Ankh-Morpork City Watch, he sets a precedent for Rowling regarding the offering of equal opportunities to marginalised and non-human characters (such as dwarfs, trolls, golems, gargoyles, a gnome, a zombie and a vampire, to name a few) within a fantasy world. As such, Dumbledore’s staffing decisions bear comparison here. Angua von Überwald, introduced in Pratchett’s *Men at Arms* and an antecedent of Lupin’s, is a Captain in the City Watch and a werewolf. In Brent A. Stypczynski’s dissertation “Evolution of the Werewolf Archetype from Ovid to J.K. Rowling” he compares Pratchett’s and Rowling’s depictions of werewolves, demonstrating that just as with Pratchett, Rowling’s “werewolves are used to discuss intolerance, prejudice, and racism” (191). Stypczynski goes on to discuss the contrast between Pratchett’s and Rowling’s primary werewolf characters as “Angua works to shape society by catching and punishing transgressors of the social rules, Lupin works to pass those very rules on to others at a young age through his work as an educator”. In this, Angua occasionally engages in “tooth-and-claw fights” while Lupin “remains level headed and denies his violent, bestial side, at least when the audience actually sees him” (184).

The “social structure of the school” (Mills 97) is informed by the system of dividing students into the houses Gryffindor, Ravenclaw, Hufflepuff and Slytherin. This practise of partitioning a community into smaller groups parallels the Ministry’s classification system of Being, Beast and Spirit divisions. It is also an obvious “parasitical” borrowing (Jackson 20) from real-world school systems: British public schools in particular are known to use the four-house system and Hogwarts is clearly based on such a school, with the striking exception that it is co-educational. Regarding this house-system, placement in houses in the real world is random – apart from younger siblings generally following their older siblings into the same house – and at Hogwarts, as will be addressed, placement is loaded with meaning. Richmond argues that the four-house system results in “a divided educational institution based on socially constructed forms of otherness” and, furthermore, it creates a “hostile and discriminatory environment between students of different houses” (29-30). Andrew P. Mills claims that the house system “affects the way [one] [treats] other people” as one is likely to offer “preferential treatment” (97) to members of one’s house and he gives the example of Hermione “[putting] the interests of Gryffindor ahead of the interests of the other Houses” (98-99). Mills states that she would be considered a good Gryffindor because she supports the house team, works diligently and even assists Harry and Ron with their homework because success in these activities earns house points. He goes on to write that if she were to help members of another house this would be considered disloyal (97). As such, assisting someone external to your group is essentially discouraged. The school makes these house divisions especially meaningful through the practical systems within the school: “your house will be something like your family within Hogwarts. You will have classes with the rest of your house, sleep in your house dormitory and spend free time in your house common room” (Stone 85). This differs from real-world practice wherein classes are divided according to year, subject or academic stream. The students do not question this arrangement and accept the house lines as natural. Ironically, it is the very tool that separates them, a sentient Sorting Hat stuffed with the wisdom of the four Hogwarts founders, that indicates the fundamental problem of this system. The Sorting Hat questions why it “*must quarter every year*” (Phoenix 186) given that this act tends to lead to “social prejudice instead of developing a unified student body consisting of students with different but equally important abilities” (Richmond 29). Furthermore, house loyalty “divides [students] when [they] should be united” (Mills 101). The Sorting Hat even warns the school that “*Hogwarts is in danger/ From external, deadly foes/ And we must unite inside her/ Or we’ll crumble from within*” (Phoenix 186-7). Yet, the staff continues to use the Sorting Hat to create divisions within their student body,

defining the structure of the school through mimicking Ministerial separations conducted within the magical community. The Hogwarts house system gives structure to the school and allows it to run practically; as such its continued implementation is an example of practical reasoning within wizarding education. Imperatively, there needs to be a balance of the ways of thinking employed in the administration of the school and the lack of imaginative thinking is seen through the consequences of the system.

Due to the house system and the consequences thereof, it could be considered that the formation of inquiring minds within the Hogwarts environment is not considered an especially important goal. On the other hand, though, there is an overwhelming focus on the largely positive hands-on learning that takes place at the school. Gregory Bassham discusses the strengths and weaknesses in the Hogwarts school system, taking into consideration “classic philosophers of education and contemporary educational research” (212), in his chapter “A Hogwarts Education: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly”. Bassham argues that the most “effective pedagogy” (213) at Hogwarts is hands-on learning, citing Lupin’s teaching Harry the Patronus Charm and Harry’s teaching his peers defensive spells as productive lessons. Melissa C. Johnson details examples of students’ active participation in Hogwarts’ classes. The students are tasked with:

making potions in Snape’s and Slughorn’s classes; re-potting mandrakes in Professor Sprout’s greenhouses; practicing charms and transfigurations in Professor Flitwick’s and McGonagall’s classes; confronting a boggart, casting defensive spells, and re-caging Cornish pixies in Professor Lupin’s, Moody’s, and Lockhart’s Defense Against the Dark Arts lessons respectively; reading tea leaves in Professor Trelawney’s attic, and meeting Hippogriffs and feeding flobberworms in Hagrid’s Care of Magical Creatures lessons. (80)

Johnson focuses on the teaching styles of Professors Lupin, Sprout and Flitwick, stating that they “encourage cooperative learning in their lessons” and “engage students in inquiry, problem-solving, and critical thinking”. What may be just as important is that “most students learn more and most easily with Professors Lupin, Sprout, and Flitwick, because they don’t intimidate, humiliate, explicitly and publicly rank, risk serious injury to, or condemn the ideas and censure the input of their students” (87). Johnson analyses the strategies that Professors Lupin and Sprout use in their interactions with Neville: both teachers “contradict the negative messages he has received, [...] [and] validate and nurture his interests and successes” (84). When Snape warns Lupin that Neville should not be entrusted with difficult tasks, Lupin says that he is sure that Neville “will perform [...] admirably” (*Prisoner* 100) and

Sprout praises Neville's Herbology prowess to a new teacher (*Goblet* 195). These kinds of approaches enable students to learn more than just the course content.<sup>54</sup>

Of course, not all Hogwarts teachers are as effective in their teaching practice; Professor Snape's methodology and his attitudes towards his students "cripples" (Nelson 5) their ability to learn.<sup>55</sup> Snape is highly skilled, and in his youth "engaged in experimentation and critical thinking about the best way to make various potions[;]" however, "he does nothing to encourage this in his own students" (Johnson 83). There is little opportunity for teachers to reflect on their own teaching practices or learn from those of their peers because teachers are rarely evaluated, whether by Dumbledore or their peers. Snape and other ineffective teachers like Professors<sup>56</sup> Trelawney,<sup>57</sup> Binns<sup>58</sup> and even Hagrid<sup>59</sup> are not assessed until Umbridge's tenure at Hogwarts. Her inspections, "[f]ar from testing knowledge or competence", are undertaken in order to exercise "pure terrorizing control" (Wolosky 290) and to scrutinise staff members who support Dumbledore. Effectively, there is never any proper reflection expected of Hogwarts' teachers regarding their teaching practices; in this way, true incompetency cannot be efficiently expunged so that more engaging, versatile professors are given the opportunity to teach at the school.

Moreover, despite an abundance of effective hands-on learning experiences at Hogwarts, Bassham claims that the school "provides its students with the tools of power but not the wisdom to use them" (217). The students "are not taught to love reading or ideas, to think scientifically, to appreciate art and literature, or to reflect in an informed and disciplined

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<sup>54</sup> Bassham states the importance of acknowledging "what is learned [...] outside the classroom" (219) and Hunter illustrates this point in his claim that "Harry gets his *schooling* from Hogwarts; he gets his *education* from Dumbledore, his family (Sirius and the Weasleys), his friends (especially those in Dumbledore's Army), and the Order of the Phoenix" (loc. 1980).

<sup>55</sup> See Johnson (82) for her compilation of scholars' assessments of Snape's teaching, including their discussions on his favouritism, authoritarianism, monopolisation of his classroom, questioning style and approach to punishment.

<sup>56</sup> Technically, anyone who is a teacher at Hogwarts is referred to as a Professor, whatever their qualifications or lack thereof. Both Hagrid's substitute Professor Grubbly-Plank and Professor Umbridge refer to him as Professor Hagrid.

<sup>57</sup> Nelson argues that Trelawney's treatment of Hermione is an abuse of her position of power, claiming that her "cruel words are meant only to serve [...] her own reputation" (3). She goes on to state that she "abuses the fact that Hermione is the top student in her class which, due to her know-it-all attitude, creates an opportunity for the students who may envy her academic status to tease her" (3).

<sup>58</sup> Professor Binns, the History of Magic teacher, lectures his students on goblin rebellions and riots throughout their time at Hogwarts, but makes no attempt to engage the students' critical thinking about the relationship between wizards and goblins. In *Phoenix*, Harry struggles to analyse the historical events related to goblin riots while writing his O.W.L. examination and Ron's opinions on goblins, as expressed in *Hallows* (409), suggest that he is unable or unwilling to consider the world from a goblin perspective.

<sup>59</sup> Due to Hagrid's unfair expulsion from Hogwarts in his third year after being falsely accused of misconduct by Tom Riddle/Lord Voldemort, most readers would excuse his shortcomings as an educator. Particularly in contrast to teachers like Snape, Trelawney and Binns who abuse, manipulate or are completely indifferent to their students, Hagrid's kindness and genuine care for his students sets his lack of skill as a teacher in a separate category.

way about the problems of society and the human condition” (219). Their education does not encourage reflection in student or teacher and so an essential component of practical reason – the question of what to do – is seemingly never decided based on learning from mistakes. Further, the lack of reflection suggests a dearth of imaginative thinking. The fantasy setting of Hogwarts is not necessarily the bar to students receiving a reflective education as such alternative learning avenues are certainly as possible there as they are in the real world. Returning to the notion that Hogwarts’ students are likely to be absorbed into the Ministry with little consideration, it is not difficult to see that the lack of critical thinking expected of students following the Hogwarts curriculum reduces the likelihood of their questioning it with much discernment.

### **Defence and Dumbledore’s Army**

Umbridge’s appointment and the introduction of several Educational Decrees<sup>60</sup> has the aim of bolstering the Ministry’s position of authority in the community, silencing those who attempt to question the official narrative about Voldemort’s return and preventing any attempts at independent thought on the part of staff and students of Hogwarts that are unsure what to believe. Umbridge’s lessons are “a drill in submission before authority” (Wolosky 290), but perhaps most troubling is her apparent goal to “undermine any effective education at the school” (Bassham 217). In response, Hermione founds Dumbledore’s Army (or the DA) a secret practical study group where Hogwarts students self-educate, re-imagine their identities, form unlikely friendships and undermine the divisions created by the house system. For the students who join the DA, uniting in this way is a rational response to the threat of Umbridge. As an outside force, she jeopardises the opportunity for a Hogwarts community modelled on Dumbledore’s open heart and open mind, she threatens any possibility for students and teachers to learn how to think for themselves. Umbridge’s tactics seek to decrease the possibility for wizards to respond in ways other than the established norm.

Although a rational response, Hermione’s founding of Dumbledore’s army is an imaginative exercise. It “becomes not only a personal project but an explicitly social and political one” (Wolosky 286). DA members believe that they should be proficient in

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<sup>60</sup> Educational Decrees 22 through 28 allow the Ministry to appoint a teacher to a Hogwarts post should the headmaster fail to do so, create the Hogwarts High Inquisitor position, ban student organisations, overrule or alter punishments ordered by other staff members, ban teachers from discussing any topics not “strictly related” (*Phoenix* 486) to their subjects, expel students for possessing *The Quibbler* and appoint Umbridge to replace Dumbledore as the Head teacher of Hogwarts.



defensive magic not only for their examinations, but because they understand it is essential to “[thwarting] Voldemort’s return to power” (Bassham 214). As High Inquisitor, Umbridge outlaws all student groups, so the DA must operate in secret, conducting their lessons in the Room of Requirement<sup>61</sup> which conceals itself from non-members. Knowing that his peers consider him to be a leader, Hermione convinces Harry to lead the DA. This is a significant point of her influence on him. Initially, Harry does not think that he has the ability to teach defensive magic to his peers as he believes all of his triumphs in battles with or escapes from Dark wizards and creatures were ultimately caused by luck. In fact, Harry thinks of Hermione’s idea as a “far-fetched” scheme (*Phoenix* 292) and an “insane idea” (295). She reminds him though, that it is more than just his skill and magic that gives him expertise, but the fact that he, unlike any of their peers, has faced a Basilisk, a hundred Dementors and Voldemort. She inspires more confidence in him by stating that he is the only student in their year “who [can] throw off the Imperius Curse completely”, “produce a Patronus” and do “all sorts of stuff that full-grown wizards can’t” do (296). After this pronouncement, he seems more comfortable with teaching her and Ron, but becomes alarmed to learn that she has invited several other interested parties to participate. Despite Harry being disgruntled by the idea, Hermione’s calm and confident demeanour as she leads the inaugural meeting enables the formation of the group and leads to Harry’s agreement to be their teacher and leader. Beyond this influence on Harry’s decision-making, one must remember that she is the one who initially outlines the objectives of the group, organises the practice times and communicates with members using the complex Protean Charm.

According to Shira Wolosky, Dumbledore’s Army is “the most exemplary scene of education in Harry Potter” as DA members “create their own classroom as public sphere, through which they circumvent censorship, circulate materials, pass messages and ultimately, in the last book, organize an active underground revolt” (294) against Voldemort and his Death Eaters. It is a community of learning that fosters agency in its members (295). Within the DA, the students are able to obtain “the knowledge and agency Umbridge would deny them” since Harry does not believe in “controlling and withholding information as Umbridge does [and] designs his classes to share skills, knowledge, decision making and authority itself” (294-5).

The space in which the DA operates allows members to re-imagine themselves and, perhaps for the first time, write their own personal and political stories, outside of the

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<sup>61</sup> The Room of Requirement is a secret room within Hogwarts that only appears when someone is in need of it; it takes on the exact form required and is supplied with necessary resources.

prescriptions of wizarding society. That this is possible within Dumbledore's Army "suggests the possibility of positive institutional contributions to the formation of a self" (Wolosky 288). Harry, who experiences self-doubt when he is not chosen as a prefect, finds himself enthusiastically appointed the official DA leader by peer vote (Granger *Harry Potter's Bookshelf* 55). Neville's "confidence and magical abilities increase significantly" during DA meetings "due to the support of the other members" (Richmond 44). Every DA member is a political rebel, aware that they risk expulsion for participating in the group and may destroy any chance of having a career in the Ministry.<sup>62</sup>

Neville and Luna, as "square pegs in round holes[,] are redeemed by membership in Dumbledore's Army" (Granger *Harry Potter's Bookshelf* 53), developing strong friendships with Harry, Ron, Hermione and Ginny who use a sympathetic imagination to connect with them. Though Ron believes that Luna is "insane" he admits that she has "grown on" him (*Prince* 398) and he sees her idiosyncrasies in a positive light. Richmond appears to agree with Ron's assessment, asserting that "it is because of Luna's unique way of viewing the world" that she can become "an essential member of Dumbledore's Army and a close friend of Harry's" (35). Richmond cites her "ability to understand life and death from a different perspective than the other characters", her "status as an outsider at Hogwarts due to her different way of viewing the world", her choice to "fight alongside [Harry] throughout the series" and her "suggestion of Ravenclaw's Diadem as a Horcrux" (35) as examples of Luna's essential role. Luna's position in wizarding society, moreover, is no longer simply that of "weirdo"; she becomes someone who belongs through her commitment and loyalty to the DA.

The value of belonging to the DA transcends the importance its members formerly placed on their house membership.

The formation of Dumbledore's Army—which includes students from all of the Houses except Slytherin<sup>63</sup>—shows that House [...] divisions matter little when everyone is

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<sup>62</sup> Marietta Edgecombe, whose mother works at the Ministry, is reluctant to join the DA because she recognises the consequences for both herself and her mother were her involvement to be discovered.

<sup>63</sup> This is, of course, an unfortunate exception and a symptom of the fears of many in this time of uncertainty. There are two main reasons that the members of Dumbledore's Army exclude Slytherins, beyond the practised exclusion both by and of the notoriously elitist house. Firstly, there are a handful of Slytherin students (namely Malfoy, Crabbe and Goyle) whose fathers' are Death Eaters and so in league with Voldemort, a specific enemy of the DA in addition to Umbridge and Fudge. Slytherin students whose parents are not Death Eaters, but perhaps sympathisers are still likely to be protected by Voldemort. DA members are wary of Slytherins having knowledge of their group as forewarned Death Eaters will be even more formidable. Secondly, Slytherin students are known for their ambition and, since the most powerful figure in Hogwarts is Umbridge, the likelihood that Slytherins will betray the banned group to her is rather high. In fact, Slytherin students Malfoy and Pansy Parkinson, prominent in Umbridge's Inquisitorial Squad, help to expose the DA and capture its

affected equally by an external threat, and that unifying in the face of that threat can be an effective response to it. (Mills 103-4)

As the Sorting Hat asks of them, Hogwarts students unite and the “positive intergroup relationships” help to “breakdown [*sic*] the social barriers that existed between the students”. In remaking themselves as individuals, the members of the DA recognise that their characters are more fluid than their Sorting may suggest. They see this in others too, as house stereotypes are “dispelled” by characters like Luna: though she is a Ravenclaw, she demonstrates bravery and loyalty, traits associated with Gryffindor and Hufflepuff (Richmond 44). DA members learn to embrace difference and, what’s more, open themselves to information that contradicts the official stance of the Ministry. They are taught spells and jinxes, but, more than gaining “tools of power” (Bassham 217) as they do in the Hogwarts classroom, they develop critical thinking regarding the leadership of the wizarding world.

Remarkably, Wolosky claims that Umbridge’s reign at Hogwarts is “partly a micro-image of, and partly a procedural step towards Voldemort’s ultimate disciplinary, totalitarian regime” (291) which occurs primarily in *Hallows*. Voldemort inculcates his Death Eaters with the belief that in order to flourish “wizards must keep their kind free from any intrusion from the nonwizarding world” and so, just prior to usurping control of Hogwarts, he murders Charity Burbage, the Hogwarts Muggle Studies teacher, because she “[advocates] cultural mixing” (Mills 108). When his Death Eater Alecto Carrow assumes the Muggle Studies post, she teaches that non-wizards are “like animals, stupid and dirty” (*Hallows* 462). Additionally, her brother and fellow Death Eater, Amycus Carrow is the Dark Arts<sup>64</sup> teacher and he demands the students perform Unforgiveable Curses on each other as punishments. In this pernicious environment, Neville, Ginny and Luna reform Dumbledore’s Army. Many DA members return to the Room of Requirement, removing themselves from the toxic culture that Hogwarts has become. They once again carve out their own space with their own authority, rejecting the supremacist ideologies of the Death Eaters. Neville in particular stands out in his resistance to this bigotry, emerging as one of Dumbledore’s Army’s leaders and a primary instigator in the student rebellion within the school (Johnson 84). It would seem natural then that many of Dumbledore’s Army go on to fight in the Battle of Hogwarts,

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members for punishment. It should be noted that, at the close of the series, Harry names his second son Albus Severus (nicknamed Al) after Professor Severus Snape – his now forgiven long-time enemy who was formerly a proud Slytherin head of house. *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child* follows Al’s school career after he is sorted into Slytherin. In making Al a sympathetic character, Rowling perhaps attempts to atone for the altogether negative portrayal of Slytherin characters she presented in the *Potter* series.

<sup>64</sup> Obviously, under Voldemort, *Defence Against the Dark Arts* is no longer a subject at Hogwarts.

defending the magical community from the prejudiced Death Eaters and, with their victory, bringing the series to an end “with a reconstitution of both self and society” (Wolosky 296).

The significance of Hogwarts as a space in which members of the wizarding community can transform their perspective of society cannot be discounted. Yet we must acknowledge that, despite the handful of insightful adults working within the school, it is the students that revolutionise thought, choice and action in meaningful ways. It is the students who overcome the circumstances maintained by both the government and the outdated systems that impact the administration of the school in order to re-imagine their world and themselves.

## **Conclusion**

Hermione, marked by Billone as a non-dreamer (179), undergoes an evolution in thinking over the course of the series, but when she encounters a perspective radically different from her own – such as Trelawney’s or Luna’s – or when she experiences too much that is unfamiliar, she pulls back and reverts to the reason that provides her with security. In the company of fictional heroines such as Alice and Wendy, Hermione is unable to comfortably navigate a life informed by the subconscious. Hermione’s role involves her helping Harry to question the validity of the information he receives and in this she forces him to hone his decision-making. Her scepticism towards decision-making based on imaginative thinking requires him to reconsider his values and what he is willing to risk in order to commit to acting on information from his dreams. Hermione’s confidence in the validity of reason, however, is somewhat undermined by the inconvenient fact that Trelawney’s predictions are (almost) always correct. Rowling’s treatment of Hermione’s response to Trelawney thus appears to undermine the traditional privileging of reason over imagination, but it must not be forgotten that Hermione’s reasoning achieves great success in many instances. Therefore, reason is not disparaged in the series or in this thesis; I have simply demonstrated how it is balanced out by imagination. Meanwhile, Luna’s emotional strength and her ability to empathise are vitally important for an adolescent navigating the harsh realities of life. She foregrounds the importance of perspective and subtly illustrates how perceptions can differ. This is overtly shown in her preternatural senses, and covertly in her belief in undiscovered creatures and conspiracy theories. Her otherworldly nature notwithstanding, the scepticism she arouses is useful in prompting the search for more definitive and satisfying evidence. The blending of Hermione’s and Luna’s influence on Harry’s thinking offers him a synthesised

approach to the ideologies and structures of the wizarding world. Coupled with this, Hermione and Luna's participation in Dumbledore's Army illustrates their distrust of information disseminated by the Ministry and their desire to support free thinking and decision-making. In founding the DA, Hermione provides a space in which Hogwarts students can re-imagine themselves (and others) and reassess the consequences of divisions within the community. DA members like Neville are inspired to transform wizarding society into one that promotes equality, acceptance of difference and inclusivity.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Encountering the Shadow and Embracing Love**

Rational and imaginative thinkers respectively, Hermione and Luna impact Harry's decision-making as he matures, not only in response to the Ministry, but also in opposition of his primary antagonist, Lord Voldemort. He thinks and responds in both rational and imaginative ways to counter his troublesome connection to the Dark Lord as well as to thwart his designs. Encountering the shadow involves Harry assimilating repressed aspects of his psyche into his self-image. Harry embraces love through acting on his acceptance of members of all magical groups. Both of these are tasks that he must undertake and Rowling uses literary alchemy to frame these actions. In this chapter, my examination of Rowling's use of literary alchemy focuses on tracing how realism and imagination are both at play in Rowling's world creation. Further, I will trace how rational and imaginative thinking are the modes by which Harry thinks about and responds to his encounters with the shadow. These encounters are read in terms of how Harry's dream life and visions might reflect Jungian shadow theory. This reading is also informed by a consideration of the ways Harry's experience reflects that of Ged in Le Guin's *A Wizard of Earthsea*. Lastly, I will argue that reason and imagination inform the modes of resistance used against prejudice as seen in how Harry is able to embrace love as his winning power. Learning from his shadow, Harry's is able to enact a virtue demonstrated for him by his mother's sacrificial action. The importance of protective and often maternal action is notable in Rowling's treatment of significant characters in the series. Lily and Hermione's defensive and motherly interactions inform Harry's decision-making and so will be noted for the impact they make. Harry's ability to encounter his shadow and embrace love demonstrates an essential step made in the fight against Voldemort and the discriminatory values that he attempts to exacerbate within wizarding society.

#### **Literary Alchemy**

Rowling's use of literary alchemy and alchemical symbolism to structure Harry's growth and decision-making is a concept suggested by John Granger. He describes the process of alchemy, explaining how through the breakdown, purification and recrystallisation of base metal the Philosopher's Stone can be attained and the Elixir of Life "that drops from this Stone is" able "to turn other metals to gold and give eternal life or immortality to the

alchemical adept” (*Lectures* loc. 1624). Alchemy is about more than the creation of the Philosopher’s Stone, though; it is also considered to be “the science for the perfection or sanctification of the alchemist’s soul” (loc. 377). The alchemist’s endeavours “are based on the premise that he, as the subject, will go through the same types of changes and purifications as the materials he is working with” (loc. 393). Consequently, Granger compares the process with different phases Harry undergoes in the books and claims that it is through alchemy that Rowling demonstrates that “Harry’s journey is the story of our hoped-for spiritual perfection” (loc. 130). In this thesis, I will consider this perfection as the completion of Harry’s character arc. The use of literary alchemy gives order to Rowling’s narrative through which one can interpret her intended implicit meanings within the text. Imaginatively, Rowling uses the metaphorical process to structure the narrative. The nigredo stage is seen in Harry’s battle to come to terms with his relationship with Voldemort, and his experience of encountering his shadow, through rational and imaginative thinking. The albedo stage is where Harry uses all that he has gained in the nigredo, his embracing of love, to reach towards his transformation. Thus, the rubedo stage is the culmination of this transformation, Harry’s defeat of Voldemort through self-sacrifice.

In an interview, Rowling was asked whether she would like to be a witch and her response serves as a basis for Granger’s theory that she uses literary alchemy in the structuring of the *Potter* series:

I’ve never wanted to be a witch, but an alchemist, now that’s a different matter. To invent this wizard world, I’ve learned a ridiculous amount about alchemy. Perhaps much of it I’ll never use in the books, but I have to know in detail what magic can and cannot do in order to set the parameters and establish the stories’ internal logic. (Simpson Interview par. 7)

The three stages of alchemy in order are the black (nigredo), white (albedo) and red (rubedo) stages which must be completed before lead can be transformed into gold. The first stage is characterised by “dissolution”, the second by “ablution or washing”<sup>65</sup> (*Bookshelf* 233) and the third “crisis” (234) which requires a reconciliation and resolution of opposites (*Spell* 47). It is then possible for lead to be transformed into gold because “the true essence of lead is gold”, according to Titus Burckhardt (qtd. in Granger *Lectures* loc. 2090). Granger goes on to say that “[t]he alchemist, using the reagents and catalysts sulphur and mercury ([...] antagonistic complements), work [*sic*] to restore or accelerate the change of lead to its proper and natural

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<sup>65</sup> This stage is associated with the symbol of the moon and the lily (*Bookshelf* 234), bolstering the earlier discussion of Luna’s calming effect on Harry. It also further strengthens the connection between Luna and Harry’s mother, Lily (both of whom have names which are given to his daughter).

splendor as gold” (Granger *Lectures* loc. 2105). These complementary reagents of sulphur and mercury are aligned with other interconnected concepts such as “[t]he male and female tendencies, [and] yang and yin” (loc. 2090). Granger claims that Harry qualifies as “the resolution of masculine and feminine tendencies in one person” (loc. 2269) and so is transformed into gold at the completion of the *Potter* narrative.

The argument that Hermione and Ron serve as “the story symbols of the reagents working on Harry in each book” (loc. 378) in order for him to transform into gold is strengthened by several details that Granger mentions. Firstly, the name Hermione “is the feminine for [the Greek god] ‘Hermes’” whose Roman counterpart took the name Mercury. Further, Hermione’s initials – HG – “are the chemical sign for mercury” (Hg) and “her parents are dentists (who, of course, make fillings with mercury)” (loc. 894). Correspondingly, “Ron, the redheaded, passionate boy, is a cipher for alchemical sulphur” (Granger *Bookshelf* 239).<sup>66</sup> The “[h]otheaded” boy’s “middle name is ‘Bilious,’ a synonym for ‘choleric’ or hot and dry” (loc. 894). Ron as “[a]lchemical sulphur represents the masculine, impulsive, and red pole” to the “feminine and cool complement” of Hermione’s Mercury. Ron’s impulsive nature culminates in abandoning Harry and Hermione on their journey to find and destroy Horcruxes in *Hallows*. On the other hand, Hermione’s cool head prevails through the crisis of *Phoenix*, as examined in Chapter Two of this thesis, and through those of *Hallows*, as will be clarified within the course of the current chapter. Quite palpable are Hermione and Ron’s “disagreements and separation” (Granger *Spell* 35) which take place to varying extents in all of the volumes, qualifying them as the “quarrelling couple” (*Bookshelf* loc. 3102) through whom Harry can achieve his alchemical transformation.

Granger considers not only “Harry’s transformations from lead to gold” (*Spell* 32),<sup>67</sup> but also the book titles, the alchemical characters,<sup>68</sup> the organisation of the books, and “curious

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<sup>66</sup> As the Quidditch (goal)keeper, Ron is referred to as a “King” (*Phoenix* 618 and *Prince* 277) by the Gryffindor students in reference to his ability to defend his goalposts. As such, Ron is figured as a Red King in the novels.

<sup>67</sup> A transformation from lead to gold is demonstrated after the final battle, within the Hogwarts Great Hall, when previously established divisions are ignored, “the contraries are resolved and all the Houses sit down at one table” (Granger *Lectures* loc. 551) instead of at their separate house tables. Even the Malfoys – Death Eaters and Voldemort sympathisers – sit in the Great Hall with the rest, having defected shortly before the close of the battle.

<sup>68</sup> Granger suggests that Sirius Black is named in recognition of the first stage (*Bookshelf* 233). On Pottermore, Rowling writes that that names of Albus (Dumbledore) and Rubeus (Hagrid) were chosen as

“a nod to alchemy, [...], where ‘the red’ and ‘the white’ are essential mystical components of the process. The symbolism of the colours in this context has mystic meaning, representing different stages of the alchemic process (which many people associate with spiritual transformation). [...], I named them for the alchemical colours to convey their opposing but complementary natures: red meaning passion (or emotion); white for asceticism; Hagrid being the earthy, warm and physical man, lord of the forest; Dumbledore the spiritual theoretician, brilliant, idealised and somewhat detached” (“Colours” par. 4).



images” (37) Rowling uses throughout the novels to further support his argument that Rowling uses literary alchemy to structure the series.<sup>69</sup> Although Granger claims that the three alchemical stages are repeated in “the cycle of each book”, he also theorises that the series as a whole is informed by the alchemical process. He names *Phoenix* as “the nigredo of the whole series” (35), *Prince* as the albedo and *Hallows* as the rubedo.

In the nigredo of the series, “dissolution” (*Bookshelf* 233) or breakdown is evident. *Phoenix* follows the physical rebirth of Voldemort and is marked by the intensified psychic connection between Harry and Voldemort, Harry’s increased anger and frustration, and is the novel “in which everything in his world is either turned on its head or taken from him” (169). Granger states that during this period Harry’s “attachment to his ego concerns [is] largely broken” (*Spell* 186). He is branded a liar by the Ministry, passed over for Hogwarts prefectship, Umbridge denies him the opportunity to perform in his DADA classes and bans him from Quidditch, his relationship with Cho Chang falls apart, and his positive view of his parents’ relationship is brought into question by Snape’s Pensieve memory. Many of Harry’s identifying hobbies, interests and relationships are undermined and he is a “shattered person”, “unable to know who he is or what he wants” (170).

However, instead of floundering without emotional or moral guidance and carving a path to destructive power in order to gain a sense of self-worth and identity as happens in Voldemort’s personal narrative, Harry is taken under Dumbledore’s direct tutelage. This tutelage ties in with Granger’s assessment of *Prince* representing the albedo stage as *Albus* Dumbledore plays a pivotal role in Harry’s development. Further, it is Harry’s first true pursuit in encountering his shadow self. Dumbledore gives Harry private lessons in which they review and discuss memories of Voldemort as a young boy and teenager, and Harry sees first-hand the warped psychology and ideologies of his nemesis as they develop over the course of Voldemort’s life.<sup>70</sup> Dumbledore believes that Harry, with his psychic connection to Voldemort, could have been easily “seduced by the Dark Arts”, and the only capability that

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<sup>69</sup> For details see John Granger’s *Spell* (chapter four: “The Alchemy of Spiritual Growth”). His book *Bookshelf* (particularly chapter nine: “*Harry Potter* as Alchemical Reading Magic: Shakespeare, Dickens, and the Artistry Changing Readers’ Hearts from Lead to Gold”) offers further insightful analysis. Additionally, in his book *Lectures*, chapters one and two (namely “Unlocking Deathly Hallows” and “The Alchemical End Game” respectively) thoroughly enumerate and analyse examples of Rowling’s alchemical treatment of her characters, themes and plot lines.

<sup>70</sup> One of Dumbledore’s memories of Voldemort is a recollection of the latter asking for a teaching position at Hogwarts in order to “show and tell [Dumbledore’s] students things they can gain from no other wizard”. Dumbledore chastises Voldemort about whom he has heard rumours – presumably of violence and murder – and insists that Voldemort (or Tom as he calls him) is “woefully ignorant” (*Prince* 415) of some types of magic, mainly of love’s power.

he possesses that protects him from Voldemort's "lure of power" (*Prince* 477) is his ability to love.

With Albus's guidance, in *Hallows* Harry is able to enter into the rubedo stage, one which is "the revelation of the work accomplished in the previous white stage" (Granger *Lectures* loc. 1690). The final volume sees Harry acting upon the work gained through his private lessons with Dumbledore, and thereby resolving opposites within himself such as pulling his focus from his traditionally masculine, shadow self and balancing those aspects of himself with his more traditionally feminine, loving self. He can achieve this resolution through decision-making based on a blending of rational and imaginative thinking (as well as traditionally masculine and feminine traits). Symbolically, in the novel's epilogue, the bickering Ron and Hermione are revealed to have been united through marriage, a symbolic representation of the completion of the alchemical work of the series, Harry's transformation into gold.

Granger draws a connection between the alchemical process and spirituality:

The nigredo or dissolution stage is the work of "renunciation" or "repentance." It is preparatory to the work of "purification" and "illumination" that in alchemy is done in the second, so-called "white" stage," the albedo. Alchemy represents spiritual accomplishment or perfection in its rubedo or "red stage." (*Lectures* loc. 1853)

If the alchemical perfection is achieved it results in the Philosopher's Stone which can then be used to produce the Elixir of Life, the drinker of which will gain immortal life. Harry sacrifices himself to eliminate the piece of Voldemort's soul attached to his own, dying both a "death to self" (loc. 551) and a physical death, and so achieving a spiritual "perfection" (loc. 1853). Harry's self-sacrifice is modelled on the self-sacrifice his mother enacted for him as an infant and so the performance is associated with traditional femininity – a maternal protectiveness – within the *Potter* narrative. This defensive performance is the culmination of many traditionally feminine behaviours, attitudes and values that Harry exhibits throughout his journey.

Despite no true "religious element" (S. Hall "School Ties" 210) in the series, Rowling "[casts] her alchemical stages in Harry's last adventure around and in the image of the Christian holy days of Nativity, Theophany, and the Resurrection of Christ". In so doing, "she points to an orthodox belief in Christ as a valid path to spiritual transformation and fully human life, without evangelizing or excluding other faiths as somehow invalid" (Granger *Lectures* loc. 3573). These "three alchemical parts" of *Hallows* "in which Harry is broken down, illumined, and triumphant, are told in the sequence of the three principal Christian

feasts that parallel these three stages in chronological sequence”.<sup>71</sup> Harry transforms over these days of religious celebration, becoming a Christ-like figure by the close of the narrative.

A “signature” of Harry’s journey is his “annual figurative death and resurrection from the dead in the presence of a symbol of Christ” (Granger *Lectures* loc. 668).<sup>72</sup> These “deaths” are aligned with the theme of self-sacrifice which repeatedly takes central focus within the *Potter* narrative. In the final iteration of his death and resurrection, “Harry doesn’t rise from the dead in the presence of a symbol of Christ. He rises as a symbol of Christ” (Granger *Lectures* loc. 682). Harry receives a dying Snape’s memories which he views in the Pensieve, seeing a memory of a conversation in which Dumbledore asks Snape to tell Harry:

[O]n the night Lord Voldemort tried to kill him, when Lily cast her own life between them as a shield, the Killing Curse rebounded upon Lord Voldemort, a fragment of Voldemort’s soul was blasted apart from the whole, and latched itself on to the only living soul left in that collapsing building. Part of Lord Voldemort lives inside Harry, and it is that which gives him the power of speech with snakes, and a connection with Lord Voldemort’s mind that he has never understood. And while the fragment of soul, unmissed by Voldemort, remains attached to, and protected by Harry, Lord Voldemort cannot die. (*Hallows* 550-1)

So Harry learns that he is a Horcrux and that it is “essential” that he must be killed in order for anyone else to have the chance to end Voldemort (*Hallows* 551). Harry dies “to the evil within him” (233) and encourages and challenges readers to make similar choices so as to “overcome the Voldemort on the inside to get at the Voldemort on the outside” (241). Overcoming the corruption of Voldemort, the most extreme catalyst of the Ministry’s prejudiced ideologies, makes possible a re-imagining and redemption for wizarding society and the magical world at large.

Offering a valuable comparison to Rowling’s use of Christian symbolism in her series, Johnston examines the use of Christian theology in Tolkien. Her analysis of Tolkien’s treatment of Christian themes appears to have close parallels to the aforementioned examination of shadow theory in that needing to overcome an “inner temptation of evil” (5) can be viewed as encountering one’s shadow and using it as a guide. In fact, the redemption

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<sup>71</sup> See chapter three “Choosing to Believe: The Christian Content of Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows” in *Lectures* for a thorough examination of how these Christian feasts coincide with momentous moments in Harry’s final journey.

<sup>72</sup> Granger cites Harry’s “figurative deaths” suffered in all the books except the finale: he is assaulted by Quirrell, attacked by the Basilisk, threatened by the Dementors’ Kiss, tortured by Voldemort, possessed by Voldemort and nearly drowned by Inferi (*Lectures* loc. 668-682). The symbols seen at Harry’s resurrections are the philosopher’s stone in *Stone*; “Fawkes the Phoenix” in *Chamber*, *Goblet* and *Phoenix*; a stag in *Prisoner* and a hippogriff in *Prince* (loc. 678). See Granger’s *Spell* chapter nine for detailed explanations of how the stone and these creatures reflect the Christian tradition.

Harry achieves in his encounter with his shadow is reminiscent of the experiences of spiritual redemption for several of Tolkien's primary characters and Le Guin's protagonist Ged.

As before stated, Granger claims that Harry qualifies as "the resolution of masculine and feminine tendencies in one person" (*The Deathly Hallows* loc. 2269) and so is transformed into gold at the completion of his journey. The balance between traditional masculinity and femininity is seen throughout the *Potter* series among the adults who demonstrate them for the younger generation: Molly Weasley's coddling mothering of Harry often clashes with Sirius encouraging Harry towards independence and breaking rules. Then again, his peers often display gender conforming behaviours themselves. Ron's laissez-faire approach to school work due to his confidence from being raised in the wizarding world conflicts with Hermione's studiousness and tendency to badger the boys to work harder. Brian Donohue reads Hermione's warning about the veil in the Department of Mysteries as her feminine side enabling her to "correctly intuit [its] danger" and he commends her for being the only person to "[reveal] an insight into Harry's ego-obsession with the heroic act". She counters his stereotypically masculine behaviour by "[exposing] [his] more destructive and self-centered moods" (26). Donohue also recalls Harry's impulsive desire to run away from Grimmauld Place when he overhears Mad-Eye Moody's speculation that he is being possessed by Voldemort. Together Hermione and Ginny calm Harry who has an intense feeling of "being unclean" (*Phoenix* 439). Donohue describes Hermione's "feminine, or feeling-energy" and recounts how she "[prepares] the ground for renewal" by offering him "food, warmth, and non-judgmental, loving companionship". Ginny "completes this restorative gathering of feminine influences" (134) by assuring Harry that he could not have been possessed by Voldemort, since there is no correlation between her own possession and his recent experiences. Unsurprisingly, these scenes of Harry's potentially self-destructive behaviours take place in *Phoenix* – the nigredo volume of the series in which his psychic connection with Voldemort is powerful and beyond Harry's control.

Harry, a feminised hero, must confront Voldemort, an embodiment of violent masculinity. The novels invite us to question whether Harry can achieve reconciliation between himself and Voldemort, marrying the feminine and the masculine while encountering his shadow.

## Encountering the Shadow in Dreams and Visions

The examination of Harry's encountering of the shadow focuses on tracing how realism and imagination are both at play as modes of thought and response to issues. Rationally, Harry pursues information about Voldemort's background as better understanding his motivations will help him to defeat the Dark Lord. For Harry to live comfortably in his magical world, Voldemort must be ousted. For self-preservation, Voldemort must be ousted from the community. In addition to this, Harry must use his imagination, must re-imagine himself in order to succeed in ousting Voldemort. This exercise of imagination is especially important once he comes to learn of his status as one of Voldemort's Horcruxes. Harry's self-re-imagining occurs primarily through acknowledging Voldemort as his shadow and learning from him, allowing Voldemort to guide him to being the most productive version of himself. Using Jungian shadow theory, I examine how Harry recognises what part of him his shadow represents and eventually integrates shadow aspects into his self-concept. By doing so, he can eliminate the shadow's need to disrupt his everyday experience. Similar to Voldemort, Harry has humble beginnings, but unlike Voldemort who engages in self-erasure by denying his half-blood heritage, Harry embraces this as part of his identity and even champions those who are also considered different within the wizarding community. Through her treatment of Voldemort, Rowling codes masculinity as violence; Harry's shadow is linked with traditional masculinity in that anger and aggression are primary shared features between Voldemort and Harry. Simply, it is rational to figure out who Voldemort is and it takes imagination to do the shadow-work. His shared features with Voldemort threaten his ability to make suitable and effective decisions and threaten his relationships with his loved ones. Essentially, Harry's shadow threatens his ability to function as a properly socialised individual. As such, in encountering his shadow, Harry makes a rational decision to learn how to function in society effectively. This rational decision, however, requires an imaginative solution, namely Harry's uses of his shared visions with Voldemort.

In her essay "The Child and the Shadow", Le Guin examines J.R.R. Tolkien's Frodo and Gollum as an unintentional development of Jungian shadow theory. She writes that, in addition to being "bright figure[...]" and "black shadow", Frodo and Gollum are doubled: Frodo's "inferior" or lesser part is Sam and Gollum's is Smeagol.<sup>73</sup> Frodo(-Sam) is the

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<sup>73</sup> Gollum is the dominant partner in his relationship with Smeagol. The reader sees that Smeagol is one of the "lesser figures" in that he and Sam "drop away, and all that is left is Frodo and Gollum, at the end of the long quest" (Le Guin 57).

“bright side” and (Smeagol-)Gollum is the shadow (57) who literally guides the heroes to Mount Doom where the Ring of Power can be destroyed. Gollum, the shadow, is the one who completes the quest – saving Frodo from being enthralled to the ring – by destroying it and himself. It would seem that Le Guin’s *A Wizard of Earthsea* is directly influenced by Jungian shadow theory. However, in an interview concerning her later novel *The Left Hand of Darkness*, Le Guin stated that Freudian critics would find in it only “Jung’s shadow! (As I found it: having never read a word of Jung when I wrote the book)” (28).

In a similar way to Tolkien, then, it seems that Le Guin’s use of the motif of the shadow in her earlier work is unplanned. Exploration of the shadow’s role in the journey of protagonist Ged in the abovementioned novel is a useful analogue to Harry’s relationship with Voldemort. In the Earthsea universe, the entrance into adulthood commences when one receives one’s “true name”, as Ged does near the start of the narrative. He must keep his name secret from all except the few who earn his trust, for anyone to whom he gives his name will gain power over him by using it.<sup>74</sup> This principle applies to the true names of all things within this universe: from animals to rocks to drops of water, if one can use the true name of something, one has power and control over that thing. While studying at a school of magic, overcome with pride, the newcomer Ged attempts to summon a woman from the dead and in the process releases a shadow through a rip in “the fabric of the world” that he creates. This “clot” (84) of shadow attacks him – temporarily causing him blindness, deafness and lameness – but it flees when a mage comes to chase it away. Ged spends years avoiding the shadow, staying on the safe island of Roke on the recommendation of his teachers, but he is visited by the shadow in his dreams. When he leaves Roke, he is physically pursued by this shadow which draws his power and energy from him. Further, there is the threat that this shadow will work its evil will through him. Fearful of it, he runs away, despite the knowledge that “there would never be any rest or peace for [him], day or night, on earth or sea” (208). His feeling of separation from other people – “that he was set apart from them, cut off from them, that he bore a doom upon him” (215) – troubles his experience of the world.<sup>75</sup> When he meets his first teacher Ogion again, the wise old man advises him that he can only overcome this shadow if he chooses to “turn around” (178) and face it. Sailing “toward the place where

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<sup>74</sup> This motif of the power of knowing or using someone’s name is also found in folklore with characters such as Rumpelstiltskin who loses a bargain with a queen when she is able to tell him his name. Notably, the reticence of many *Potter* characters to use the title Lord Voldemort, opting instead to say You-Know-Who, is discouraged by Dumbledore who says that “[f]ear of a name increases fear of the thing itself” (*Stone* 216), reinforcing the notion that using proper names is a way to gain strength, confidence or power.

<sup>75</sup> Harry similarly feels “dirty, contaminated, as though he [is] carrying some deadly germ, unworthy to sit [...] with innocent, clean people whose minds and bodies [are] free of the taint of Voldemort...” (*Phoenix* 435).

light and darkness meet” (233), to the “edge of the world” (238), Ged appears to sail outside of time and space, beyond natural or assumed limits. He calls the shadow to him and they embrace; they “joined, and [are] one” (251) and in the same voice, they both name each other Ged. In this way, he feels he “[makes] himself whole: a man: who, knowing his whole true self, cannot be used or possessed by any power other than himself” (254). His confrontation with his shadow conforms to Jung’s theory of the shadow; the dark or evil side of himself haunts him – attacks and pursues him – until he acknowledges that it is a part of him. Tolkien’s Frodo, in like manner, needs his shadow self Gollum in order to destroy the ring and complete his quest.

In *Psychology and Religion: West and East* Jung writes of how “everyone carries a shadow” (76). According to Jung, the shadow consists of “repressed tendencies”, impulses that we restrain because we see them as “primitive” or “unadapted” (78). It is humiliating that these tendencies are one’s own as they are animalistic and, in that state, not useful, only damaging. Jung claims that if kept from consciousness, the “repressed and isolated” shadow can “burst forth” and may come to form a neurosis (76). One can only be “cured” of such an “intensified shadow” if one can “find a way in which [one’s] conscious personality and [one’s] shadow can live together” (77). According to Le Guin, “most of the great works of fantasy” are about the journey to facing one’s shadow in which one can “accept it as the self – as *part* of the self” (55).

Working within a Jungian framework, Gail Grynbaum refers to Voldemort as Harry’s “shadowy projection” (33), and Lynne Milum calls him Harry’s “Shadow Father” (par. 4). Likewise, Shobha Ramaswamy considers Voldemort a Shadow Father to Harry, noting the pair’s similarity to Darth Vader and Luke Skywalker from the *Star Wars* series (124).<sup>76</sup> Granger, furthermore, identifies the “pivotal antagonism” in the series as the “Harry/Voldemort shadow” (*Spell* 46). As such, the identification of Voldemort as Harry’s shadow in this thesis is supported by the considerations of a range of other critics.

Like Harry, Voldemort spent his early years being raised as an orphan in the non-magical world. We see a contrasting attitude in the older wizard, however. Voldemort has a stereotypical masculine aggression, manifesting in a desire to subjugate others through magical means before his entry into wizarding society. His actions and attitudes illustrate his belief in his own superiority and, on entering into the magical world, he quickly learns of wizarding prejudice against outsiders and Muggle-born wizards. Wizarding society presents

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<sup>76</sup> See Ramaswamy’s dissertation for her analysis of Harry’s relationship with his “Shadow self” (207).

him with an entrenched system of discrimination that he can exploit. Indeed, Granger declares that he is “the logical extension and symptom of the prejudice against nonwizards held by a great many witches and wizards” (*Bookshelf* 123). Having no family, friends or money, Voldemort’s “need to be accepted” (Walters 24) by members of his Hogwarts house Slytherin results in a “psychological self-loathing” (25). He eliminates his Muggle family, immerses himself in the Slytherin belief in pureblood superiority and falsely claims this genetic marker for himself in his search for self-worth, power and influence. The prejudicial ideologies legitimised by the Ministry’s legal system offers encouragement to Voldemort at the starting point of his path to a desire for power, violence, and murder within the magical community.

His response to wizarding society’s views is unsurprising to John Rosegrant who pinpoints Voldemort’s problematic “developmental history” as an “abused or deprived” child as the catalyst. Rosegrant states that a frequent reaction to abuse or deprivation from “one’s earliest love objects” is exerting “the narcissistic solution to the trials and paradoxes of life” (1414). While Harry is resurrected from death<sup>77</sup> through the attainment of spiritual perfection earned by his loving, selfless decision-making, Voldemort “[creates] an egocentric rather than spiritual immortality” (1662) through his Horcruxes. Every “act of creating a Horcrux” is “an act of idolatry and self-love” (Granger *Lectures* loc. 2829) and the undoubted culmination of his narcissism. As he can only make Horcruxes through murder, Voldemort destroys others in the service of constructing an identity in which he can exert power and violence.

Voldemort’s narcissism also manifests itself in more indiscriminate acts of violence; when he kills it is never “in the heat of passion, in response to a threat to a person he loves or a value he holds dear; rather, he kills in a cold narcissistic rage because his power is threatened, or with narcissistic disregard for someone who just happens to be in his way” (1412). In sharp contrast to this, Rosegrant claims that “[g]iven the level of violence necessary for Harry to attain heroic manhood, it is striking how little violence Harry himself actually commits” (1418). Harry does slay the Basilisk in *Chamber* with the sword of Gryffindor, but he does so to protect others, namely the Muggle-borns of Hogwarts. Otherwise, Harry seldom uses violence, even against Voldemort. At Voldemort’s rebirth, in *Goblet*, the Dark Lord insists on a duel and Harry uses the defensive Disarming spell

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<sup>77</sup> It is also implied that Harry is in fact “master of [d]eath” (*Hallow* 333), essentially immortal, when Voldemort strikes him with the Killing Curse in the Forbidden Forest, because he possesses all three Deathly Hallows at that time.



*Expelliarmus* to protect himself instead of mounting an attack against his opponent. Harry appears to Rosegrant to be “conflicted about aggression” in *Hallows* and ultimately it is Neville, whom Harry beseeches to not let Nagini survive, who dispatches the snake, the final Horcrux, using the same sword of Gryffindor. Harry’s rival is thus “castrated, but there is no blood on Harry’s hands” (1419). Harry has “a strong potential for enacting the narcissistic solution” (1414) as he enters his adolescent years, but despite him too enduring a childhood of abuse and deprivation, Harry performs a feminine passivity and defensive stance which demonstrate a deviation from Voldemort’s narcissistic, aggressive, traditionally masculine example.

Despite Voldemort’s hateful and predatory mindset, there are many overt parallels between him and Harry. As early as the second novel, the reader is presented with evidence of their similarities. Voldemort’s first Horcrux is a diary in which he preserves not only a piece of his soul, but a magical memory of himself as sixteen-year-old Tom Riddle. The Riddle memory is sentient: as Ginny Weasley “[pours] out her soul” (*Chamber* 228) with the secrets she divulges to the memory within the diary, it grows in strength and is able to leave its pages, gaining a solid form. This memory of Riddle observes:

[T]here 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 ...’ (*Chamber* 233)

Ironically, the first three characteristics he mentions – being a half-blood, an orphan and raised by Muggles – are facts about himself that he has buried in order to become the pureblood supremacist Lord Voldemort.<sup>78</sup> Although Harry is averse to recognising similarities between himself and Voldemort, the Dark Lord “is a figure of identification for Harry,” according to Rosegrant (1411). As Catherine Jack Deavel and David Paul Deavel claim, Harry and Voldemort “have similar gifts of resourcefulness, determination, [...] and even a certain disregard for rules” (“Character, Choice, and Harry Potter” 53), which is probably why the Hogwarts Sorting Hat contemplates placing Harry in Voldemort’s house Slytherin.

Harry’s fears concerning identification with Voldemort intensify when he recalls the Sorting Hat’s ruminations and he tells Dumbledore that “The Sorting Hat could see Slytherin’s power in [him]” (*Chamber* 245). Salazar Slytherin is a powerful Hogwarts

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<sup>78</sup> Interestingly, this would make it appear that Harry just as easily serves as Voldemort’s shadow.

founder, known to be cunning and prejudiced. He proposes that only pure-blood students should attend Hogwarts and creates the Chamber of Secrets which houses his Basilisk (a giant snake that petrifies those who look into its eyes) so that it can kill the Muggle-borns learning at the school. Rowling's treatment of Slytherin further instantiates an association between violence and masculinity. Although, Rosegrant finds that in the current psychoanalytical climate phallic symbols seem "old-fashioned" and are seldom discussed, he sees these symbols, such as the Basilisk, as well as the sword of Gryffindor which is used to dispatch it, are "quite prominent" in the *Potter* series. Rowling's use of phallic symbolism, moreover, "deepens our understanding of Harry's aggressions and his defences against it". Rosegrant cites snake imagery as "manifestly symbolic of the conscious identification between Harry and Voldemort" (1418) and the "dynamics symbolized by snakes are duplicated in the wand symbolism" (1419) of the series, particularly regarding the Elder Wand, one of the Deathly Hallows which deserves the direct attention it will receive later in this chapter. Slytherin's phallic Basilisk uses the dark feminine chamber deep within the school as its home and slithers through the plumbing to travel through the school. Only one with Slytherin's ability to speak Parseltongue, the language of snakes, is able to order the enormous snake's movement around the school (*Chamber* 146). Voldemort, as Slytherin's heir, inherited this gift, which he in turn accidentally passed onto Harry, his Horcrux. Voldemort uses this gift – often associated with wizards with an affinity for the Dark Arts – to communicate with his serpentine familiar Nagini. Harry's recurring corridor dream features a dangerous, attacking Nagini in the feminised dark passageway deep within the Ministry, a distinctly Freudian image. Rowling's snake imagery imbues Voldemort, and by extension Harry, with an aggressive masculinity.

Since Jungian theory suggests that the shadow is a repressed part of oneself, it stands to reason that a part of Harry unwittingly desires the aggressive and ruthless power in which Voldemort revels. In this way, Harry's generally unrestrained anger – a manifestation of his close psychic connection with Voldemort – is hardly surprising. Granger analyses Harry's "double nature, or shadow, in his link to Voldemort" (*Spell* 46), evaluating the meaning of Voldemort's birth name, Tom Riddle. Granger argues that "because *Thomas* comes from the Aramaic word for 'twin,' [it] is a pointer to how important the doppelgänger structure is to these stories. Voldemort's given name means 'twin enigma'" (47). What then are the implications of this twin motif? Is Harry, as suggested by rumours circulated around him after he survived Voldemort's attack on him as a baby, a possible new Dark Lord around

whom Death Eaters and other nefarious wizards could rally themselves? (*Prince* 35-6)<sup>79</sup> Certainly Harry's anger and the ways in which he acts upon it suggest the possibility of this. Ultimately, his rational and imaginative responses to anger, which include his embracing of his power of love and ability to co-operate with others, demonstrate how Harry can accept his shadow as his guide whereby he can integrate shadow aspects into his self-concept and complete his hero's quest to destroy evil, thereby enabling his society to re-imagine and redefine itself.

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The shadow, according to Le Guin, "stands on the threshold between the conscious and the unconscious mind" (53) and Harry's connection with Voldemort manifests itself in his dream life. His experiences in *Phoenix* are described as an "empathic sharing of Voldemort's feelings" which he encounters while in a dreaming state (Eberl 205). As stated, Harry's identifying features are undermined in *Phoenix*, he places an increased importance on his unconscious mind – an imaginative mode of response – and we see him deciding how to respond to events in the magical world through this imaginative process.

The most prominent example of Harry using imaginative thinking as a response to issues in the magical world and to Voldemort specifically is his inadvertent willingness to interact with his shadow. This is made clear in his response to his recurring corridor dream. While he believes the dream is useful<sup>80</sup> as it enables him to save Mr Weasley's life when he sees him attacked by Nagini, Hermione reasons that Voldemort's ability to penetrate his victims' minds is sufficient motivation for Harry to learn Occlumency, and so bar the connection between them. Occlumency is a learned magical skill with which a person can protect her mind from being infiltrated by another who has mastered Legilimency. Such a person – a Legilimens – is "able, under certain conditions, to delve into the minds of their victims and to interpret their findings correctly" (*Phoenix* 469). Despite taking Occlumency lessons from Snape at Dumbledore's insistence, Harry does not apply himself and continues to have the dreams. In addition to the fact that Harry sees a practical benefit to seeing Voldemort's movements and choices, it can be argued that his attachment to the dream, despite knowing that it is connected to Voldemort, is his conscious mind taking ownership of

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<sup>79</sup> In conversation with the Death Eater Bellatrix LeStrange, Professor Snape states: "I should remind you that when Potter first arrived at Hogwarts there were still many stories circulating about him, rumours that he himself was a great Dark wizard, which was how he survived the Dark Lord's [Voldemort's] attack. Indeed, many of the Dark Lord's old followers thought Potter might be a standard around which we could all rally once more" (*Prince* 35-6).

<sup>80</sup> Harry's thinking here is rational. He reasons that if he can see through Voldemort's eyes, he can see how the Dark Lord operates, and be in a better position to counteract his plans.

the contents of his unconscious mind. His response is one informed by imagination and it sharply juxtaposes the caution suggested by Hermione. Freud claimed that “the content of a dream is the representation of a fulfilled wish” (61). The part of Voldemort attached to Harry wants desperately to reach the end of the corridor, so Harry keeps dreaming about it. He eventually dreams that he walks through the door, thereby fulfilling Voldemort’s direct – and his own indirect – wish. His embracing of his dreams – and later visions – suggests an unconscious acknowledgement of the need to properly acknowledge and engage with his shadow. In so doing, Harry opens pathways to a fuller understanding of himself; Harry must not only understand who he is, but decide who he is not. If he can see Voldemort in himself, but chooses not to follow that path, then he must imagine a path of co-operative, collaborative leadership and assertiveness for himself, more positive versions of stereotypically masculine traits.

By comparison, Voldemort is frustrated by his inability to block Harry from his thoughts, feelings and visions despite his partial success in tricking Harry into entering the Department of Mysteries. When Voldemort “finally [realises] the dangerous access to his thoughts and feelings” that Harry possesses, Dumbledore suggests that it is likely that he “[employs] Occlumency against [him]” (*Prince* 61), evidently because he “fears [their] connection” (*Hallows* 549).<sup>81</sup> As a way to mask fear, often associated with weakness and femininity, a figure such as Voldemort, deeply invested in his masculinity, resorts to angry outbursts to protect himself. Voldemort is motivated by a fear of worthlessness, but, being reluctant to admit to any vulnerability, he uses anger as a defensive strategy. Ironically, Voldemort, who claims that anger “*was for weaker souls than he*” (280), is unable to recognise the power that anger has over him. Despite his skill in Occlumency, he cannot keep his thoughts from reaching Harry because their anger connects them and allows the passage of thoughts, feelings and visions even after he wishes to sever this connection.

Harry must learn to integrate the shared aspect of anger (for example, being assertive rather than aggressive), make it a useful part of his self-concept and so avoid it “[bursting] forth” (Jung 76). He snaps at Ron and Hermione and is accused of “biting [her] head off” (*Phoenix* 227). When instructed by Snape to let go of “all emotion”, he thinks he “could just as easily detach his legs” (*Phoenix* 473) as let go of his anger. As well as emphasising his tendency towards anger, this image recalls that of a snake, a further allusion to his connection

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<sup>81</sup> Notably, the period in which Harry does not share dreams or visions with Voldemort takes place in *Prince*, at the white stage of the alchemical process. The cleansing associated with the white stage is thus reflected in Harry having his mind to himself, untainted by Voldemort’s intrusions.

with Voldemort. Harry gets detention by antagonising Umbridge during lessons, feeling “so angry [at her] that he [does] not care what [happens]” (*Phoenix* 221) to him – his anger causing a loss of perspective and control. At a later stage, his anger is directed by Voldemort when the latter’s intense hatred towards Dumbledore courses through Harry:

Harry looked up at him – they were very close together – and Dumbledore’s clear blue gaze moved from the Portkey to Harry’s face.

At once, Harry’s scar burned white-hot, as though the old wound had burst open again – and unbidden, unwanted, but terrifyingly strong, there rose within Harry a hatred so powerful he felt, for that instant, he would like nothing better than to strike – to bite – to sink his fangs into the man before him – (*Phoenix* 419)

Having just awoken from a dream in which he was possessing the snake Nagini, Harry believes he still has her fangs and wishes to use them against Dumbledore. The headmaster later admits that he purposely keeps his distance from Harry to avoid their close relationship becoming privy to Voldemort, confessing that when they have close contact he thinks he sees “a shadow” (*Phoenix* 730) of Voldemort stir behind Harry’s eyes, a highly suggestive description.

In *Hallows*, Harry’s experiences of psychic connection progress beyond his dreams, occurring in his waking state where he ultimately “shares Voldemort’s first-person perspective” (Eberl 205). Hermione is “terrified” when she realises this and tells him that he “mustn’t let that connection open up again” (*Hallows* 75). When she reminds him that Dumbledore wants him to use Occlumency, he retorts: “[t]his is my choice, nobody else’s” (193). Comparable to Ged’s decision to embrace his shadow in *A Wizard of Earthsea*, Harry chooses to “allow the connection with Voldemort to strengthen so that he can use the connection against the Dark Lord some day” (Bullwinkel 36) and it ultimately proves necessary to his survival and integral to his mission.

While this connection strengthens, Harry’s experience of anger increases. At a crucial point in his journey, Harry is faced with the question of whether he should follow the advice of his mentor Dumbledore. His options are to work with his friends and continue cutting away Voldemort’s bonds to power, coercion and domination through finding Horcruxes – a rational choice that relies on co-operative, collaborative leadership – , or to track down a weapon of considerable force, the object of desire of his merciless nemesis, the Elder Wand, famed for its ability to defeat others through assault and bloodshed. The acute anger he feels towards Dumbledore in the wake of his death informs this deliberation. Harry very nearly rejects Dumbledore as a mentor when he learns of his former headmaster’s boyhood

friendship with notorious Dark wizard Gellert Grindelwald. Harry is disillusioned by his mentor's former ideas of instituting wizarding rule over ordinary people which, as wizards imbued with magical power, the adolescent Dumbledore and Grindelwald assume they have the right to do. The accidental death of Dumbledore's sister cuts off the plans for the two boys and they quickly part ways. Dumbledore is left to grieve for his sister and Grindelwald goes on to become one of the most dangerous Dark wizards in history. Though Dumbledore seems to have unintentionally inspired Grindelwald's atrocities, he never acts on these ideas of wizard domination and spends his entire adult life championing the rights and protection of non-wizards and Muggle-borns. Despite this, Harry loses faith in his mentor's previously assumed goodness as his integrity and honour are undermined by his past. Dumbledore's recommendation, an undoubtedly rational choice, derived by a highly intellectual leader, is not the only option upon which Harry deliberates. Contrary to his loving and co-operative demeanour, Harry considers a route set out by Voldemort – to seek out Hallows. Harry is furious with Dumbledore for being imperfect, for not being the pure and virtuous counsellor that he had built him up to be. Harry had “believed him the embodiment of goodness and wisdom”, but after learning about Grindelwald deems that “[a]ll [is] ashes” (*Hallows* 293). As such, he feels entitled to refuse the guidance given to him by his former headmaster.

Therefore, of all the ways in which Harry must struggle to repudiate Voldemort's example of allowing oneself to be governed by anger, the chief demonstration of this is his contemplation to seek out the Deathly Hallows, magical objects considered by “Questers” to make the possessors invincible to death (335). Harry attempts to engage in imaginative thinking in this particular response. *The Tale of Three Brothers* within the *Potter* universe is inspired by Antioch, Cadmus and Ignotus Peverell, the original possessors of the three Hallows. The brothers are said to have each been given a Hallow from Death himself and each supposedly allows one to “defy” death. According to Dumbledore, the brothers are probably the creators of the Hallows and their receiving them from a personified Death is merely a legend that arose due to the abilities granted by the Hallows. The Elder Wand allows the wielder to win duels, the Resurrection Stone allows one to recall the dead (though they are made only echoes and are not truly resurrected) and the Cloak of Invisibility allows the wearer to protect herself by hiding from attack. Harry's heirloom Invisibility Cloak originates from the third Peverell brother, Ignotus, a distant ancestor. Unlike his brothers who seek to cheat or reverse death, Ignotus merely wants to evade it until he reaches a great age – an assumption of a more passive role.

Though he only gains proof near the close of the narrative, Harry is convinced that he also possesses the Resurrection Stone; it appears to be hidden within the sealed Golden Snitch that Dumbledore leaves to him in his will. The idea of the Hallows captivates Harry. This certainly does not involve a rational thought process as he is never advised to seek the Hallows, he has no proof that they exist, and there are anecdotes that suggest it is more likely for negative consequences<sup>82</sup> to occur should he have them in his possession. Harry wishes to possess all three. He wonders obsessively if he should seek the Elder Wand to defeat Voldemort, believing that possessing a wand that “*must always win duels for its owner*” (331) is a better option than hunting and destroying Voldemort’s Horcruxes as Dumbledore has instructed him to do. Voldemort too seeks the wand, though he is not aware of its status as a Hallow; he merely wishes to possess a tool that embodies control through violence and aggression.

What Granger calls “the turning point” of *Hallows* (*Spell* 209) is the decision Harry makes in response to his disgust at Dumbledore’s youthful ideas about wizard superiority. This decision is achieved through a combination of rational and imaginative thinking. It is rational in the sense that following Dumbledore’s advice has always led to his success and it is imaginative in the sense that taking Dumbledore’s side does not appear to Harry to be as straightforward a choice as it had previously been. Harry makes the rational decision to destroy the Horcruxes, but he arrives there through an imaginative exploration of options. Ultimately, Harry “chooses to believe in Dumbledore though he lacks sure knowledge to substantiate this faith and trust” and it is through this choice that he “overcomes his internal demon and external foes” (Granger *Spell* 197). Further, he can also use the shadow as guide

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<sup>82</sup> Harry, Ron and Hermione learn from *The Tale of Three Brothers*, that the two elder brothers, Antioch and Cadmus, die relatively shortly after receiving their Hallows from Death (or, as is more likely, after creating the Hallows). The Hallows of Antioch and Cadmus don’t appear to help their possessors avoid death at all; in fact, possessing these two Hallows seems to result in a shorter life. Antioch, the eldest, who wields the Elder Wand, seeks out a wizard with whom he desires to duel. He easily slays his enemy and he goes on to boast about “*the powerful wand he had snatched from Death himself*,” avowing his invincibility (331). The same night, he is murdered by another wizard who takes the wand for his own. Notably, Xenophilius refers to the history of the Elder Wand and how it changes hands through violence, leaving a “bloody trail” through the “pages of wizarding history” (335). Cadmus, the second brother, uses the Resurrection Stone to recall his deceased fiancée, but when she returns to him, she is “*sad and cold, separated from him as by a veil*”. Unable to watch her suffer and consumed by a “*hopeless longing*,” Cadmus takes his own life (332). It is, thus, reasonable to assume that possessing those particular Hallows could cause an untimely death. Ron states that one would only be at risk of being killed for the Elder Wand if you bragged about it, but Hermione counters by asking “*could you keep your trap shut?*” about possessing the Wand. It appears that throughout the ages, wizards insisted on claiming their wands are “bigger and better than other people’s” (337), according to Hermione. Although only her opinion, this thinking seems to be based on evidence in the history books. As for the Resurrection Stone, it seems that using it would only bring one more pain and, in fact, push one to take one’s life in order to “*truly [...] join*” (332) one’s beloved. As such, a rational thinker may decide that following a quest to obtain these items is counter-intuitive, considering the possible dangers that come from owning and/or using the powers that they carry.

and integrate repressed aspects of his self into his self-image. As Joel Hunter expresses it, “Dumbledore shows that even the best, most decent human being harbors the ambitions of godhood within the deepest folds of his heart”. Hunter goes on to say that both “Dumbledore and Harry experience redemption in their respective ordeals because they choose to confront and, with help, overcome the Voldemort within them”. That both achieve this “with help” is essential here, because it is through loving or being assisted by those with whom they share love that Dumbledore and Harry overcome such a temptation (loc. 2056). Embracing Dumbledore’s instructions goes hand in hand with rejecting the example set by Voldemort. It becomes clear in the end that Dumbledore’s belief in Harry as one who can reject the lure of Voldemort’s brand of solitary power through the power of love is proven to be true through an understanding of what guides Harry to his rejection of the Elder Wand, his need for, his belief in co-operation rather than solitary power.<sup>83</sup>

Notably, there is one more event which helps Harry to decide to complete the quest set for him by Dumbledore. In addition to the rational choice to not depend on the Deathly Hallows, especially in terms of seeking the Elder Wand, Harry also makes this choice due to his imaginative thinking. This choice to reject the Elder Wand as a means by which he can defeat Voldemort is given its impetus by the death of the house-elf Dobby. Dobby performs an act of self-sacrifice, ensuring the survival of Harry and his closest friends when they need to escape the Death Eater stronghold, Malfoy Manor. He is pierced by a dagger in his chest (probably his heart) and dies moments after delivering Harry to the safety of Shell Cottage. While digging Dobby’s grave, Harry’s mind is full of ideas “both fascinating and terrible” (*Hallows* 389) as he contemplates how to proceed with his quest. Later when he is burying Dobby:

[H]e gazed down at the tiny body, and his scar prickled and burned, and in one part of his mind, viewed as if from the wrong end of a long telescope, he saw Voldemort punishing those they had left behind at Malfoy Manor. His rage was dreadful and yet Harry’s grief for Dobby seemed to diminish it, so that it became a distant storm that reached Harry from across a vast, silent ocean. (386)

His grief for Dobby, which Harry acknowledges Dumbledore would have called love, forces Voldemort to the edges of his mind and allows Harry to be the “master of the pain” that

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<sup>83</sup> The reader sees another example of this in the difference between the leadership roles that Harry and Voldemort play in their respective associations. Harry is democratically elected a leader in the DA and he is elected a leader in the fight against Voldemort and his Death Eaters. Voldemort demands loyalty and builds his Death Eater faction by choosing only those who will follow him unquestioningly.



engulfs him (387) and the master of his own mind. Harry has matured so that fear, anger and ill-disciplined retaliation do not threaten to disrupt his decision-making.

It is after this event that he makes up his mind to lay aside his indignation about Dumbledore's past, accept that he regrets and learns from his mistakes, and pursue the path he set for him, seeking the Horcruxes and dismissing the Hallows – especially the Elder Wand. He does not “race Voldemort to the wand” and cannot remember “ever before, choosing *not* to act” (406). Erin N. Sweeney writes that, when Harry makes this choice, he “[ends] up accepting the more passive choice of death (a feminine symbol) over the more active goal of possessing the Elder Wand (a masculine, phallic symbol)” (loc. 2901).<sup>84</sup> Further, Harry chooses to trust his long-time mentor Dumbledore, valuing (feminine) collaboration and seeking to arrest Voldemort's (masculine) power, not seek his own – acting upon his “different essence”, despite his “shared nature” with Voldemort (Granger *Spell* 49). Dobby's selfless act, his willingness to help others, even though it means peril for him, plays no small part in influencing Harry's outlook and decision-making in this matter. Dobby's love inspires that of Harry.

Having made such a momentous decision and displaying a confidence in himself that he has never known before, Harry exhibits a control informed – but not overwhelmed – by emotion that will assist him in his decision-making until the completion of his quest. His ability to do this demonstrates his capacity to integrate shadow characteristics into his self-concept. By contrast, Voldemort's self-discipline slackens which Harry and the reader see from a first-person perspective. When Voldemort discovers that Harry knows about his Horcruxes, he seeks them out to ensure their safety. Voldemort's “fury and fear [burns] inside him” (*Hallows* 442), causing him to inadvertently break into Harry's consciousness, as he continues to resist him and undermine his regime. “[A] wrath that [is] like physical pain [blazes] through Harry” and he sees “a basin” in which “no golden locket lay safe” as Voldemort discovers the Horcrux-locket is stolen (478-9). Harry is able to track his movements through these glimpses into his shadow's mind. Voldemort's “scream of fury [vibrates] inside [Harry's] head” on discovering the loss of his Horcrux-ring (466) and Harry is able to plan his next move based on the information that Voldemort is unintentionally giving him, his anger and aggression placing him at a distinct disadvantage to Harry.

Unsurprisingly, since Voldemort is little able to learn from the mistakes of others, believing that he can overcome any shortcomings of failed predecessors, he searches for the

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<sup>84</sup> It is also notable that Harry's relationship with Luna helps Harry to not fear a connection with death which can be seen to contribute to his choice to give up his life for the sake of others.

phallic, aggressive Elder Wand. Voldemort desires the Elder Wand because it gives him ever greater power to live an independent life. Created for (or by) the “*combative*” eldest brother, it is “*a wand more powerful than any in existence*” (331). Though the wand often changes possession by way of its owner being killed, wandlore expert Ollivander is unsure “[w]hether it *needs* to pass by murder” (402). Before his death, Dumbledore is the owner of the Elder Wand, but ownership “shifts complexly” (Rosegrant 1420) after his death, with Voldemort physically possessing the wand and believing he is its master, while Harry is its true possessor. When Harry casts his disarming spell at Voldemort, the Elder Wand recognises him as its true master and flies towards him. Harry takes the Wand, but he does not keep it; only using it to repair his original holly and phoenix feather wand, he decides the Elder Wand should be returned to Dumbledore’s tomb. He does not embrace the aggressive power of the Elder Wand but is satisfied with his natural power as represented by his holly and phoenix feather wand. Not only does he reject decision-making – as well as ways of relating to people – based on anger, he rejects the aggression that the Elder Wand represents, preferring co-operation and collaboration. With Voldemort being Harry’s shadow, our hero must acknowledge the similarities he shares with the Dark Lord; however, Harry is also responsible for integrating aspects shared with Voldemort into his self-concept, adapting his repressed tendencies, and learning from his mistakes and shortcomings. Voldemort is a model for behaviour that the hero must reject and, through encountering Voldemort’s thoughts and feelings in his dreams and visions, Harry develops into a person who can completely embrace the power of love.

### **Embracing Love: Harry’s Winning Power**

The examination of Harry’s embracing of love works towards the argument that reason and imagination are both used as modes of resistance against prejudice. Harry works to destroy Voldemort’s plans to bring the magical world under his prejudiced reign. Rationally, Harry’s countering of Voldemort enables self-preservation within the magical community. The reader sees this on one hand, in that by re-imagining a more inclusive society, the wizarding community can avoid the actions of a destructive force such as the leader of the malcontent werewolf pack Fenrir Greyback who threatens to transform wizards into werewolves and in so doing destroy the ruling class. The very identity of wizards is under threat by a marginalised group whose own identity is constantly under duress. Further, the potentially catastrophic consequences of manipulating and censoring other magical non-wizard groups –

the goblins in particular, with whom wizards have faced several violent rebellions – must be prevented for the sake of long-term social cohesion. Prejudiced thinking threatens the welfare of the community at large and so the acceptance of werewolves and other non-wizards as equals is of paramount importance. It is, in Harry’s experience, a rational decision to seek this new kind of wizarding community and it requires an empathetic, imaginative exploration of the humanity of fantastic beasts and non-human beings in order to achieve this. Imagination is used as a mode of resistance against the prejudice which shapes much of the society of the magical world. Harry, who has already integrated shared shadow aspects into his self-concept, including assertive behaviour – as opposed to aggression – and co-operative and collaborative leadership – not violent solitary power –, ultimately nullifies the negative influence of his shadow, Voldemort. Harry’s imaginative thinking is demonstrated in his capacity to love, as his empathetic decision-making requires him to think of those who are different from him as being the same as and equal to him. He also manages to inspire others to re-imagine society – including Griphook the goblin and Kreacher the house-elf. Harry’s mother Lily is a loving character, particularly in her childhood friendship with Snape which requires her to exercise her imagination. Harry’s behaviour and choices often appear to be patterned after that of Lily and the reader sees that, through imagination, Harry can approach gender roles with an open mind and perform traditionally feminine roles. Harry identifies with magical non-wizards and, as a result, can re-imagine and re-create society.

It is as a result of Harry’s imaginative and feminine power of love that he is able to accomplish this. Martha C. Nussbaum writes that love is “always a kind of generous fiction-making” (356); in this we see the role that imagination plays in the ability for one to love. Further, says Fournier and Smith,

the fluidity of gender identities gives way to enduring clichés of femininity and masculinity; multiple masculinities are all but effaced by a singular focus on a ‘hegemonic form’; *femininity becomes aligned with intimacy* and authenticity; and masculinity, through its attachment to control and rationality, becomes the embodiment of organization. (143) (emphasis added)

In a study concerning intimacy, passion and commitment within loving relationships, Peter J. Marston *et al* garnered results that suggested “love, intimacy, passion, and commitment are best conceived as related, overlapping gestalts” (15). Thus one can see how being a loving person is associated with traditional femininity. Love is thus linked with imagination and femininity. When Harry sacrifices himself, he is not only embracing love for his peers, he is

attempting to set into motion the better world that he has imagined for both the magical and non-magical communities.

In a foreshadowing example, Harry escapes possession by Voldemort at the close of *Phoenix* due to his power of love. Dumbledore explains to Harry:

That power took you to save Sirius tonight. That power also saved you from possession by Voldemort, because he could not bear to reside in a body so full of the force he detests. In the end, it mattered not that you could not close your mind. It was your heart that saved you. (*Phoenix* 743)

Anne Collins Smith notes that in this explanation of how Harry could escape possession by Voldemort, Dumbledore demonstrates a preference for a characteristic traditionally associated with the feminine – “emotion, the power of the heart” – over a traditionally masculine characteristic – “reason, the power of the mind” (88). As remarked upon in Chapter One, Le Guin infers a cultural correlation of masculinity with anti-imagination whereas Rowling’s treatment of Dumbledore and Harry undermines such a social construction. Harry in particular balances seeming opposites in his power of love. His traditional masculinity is perhaps best seen in his frequently being in a position of authority, yet his leadership is balanced with a more traditionally feminine co-operative, collaborative spirit.

Lily, Harry’s mother performs the ultimate demonstration of her love in the sacrifice of her life for his and this love resides magically within his skin, serving as protection from Voldemort specifically. Love is his “*power to vanquish*” (*Phoenix* 741) Voldemort, as well as his “only protection” against the “lure of power” that he possesses (*Prince* 476). Love enables him to block Voldemort’s visions from his mind when he deems that he has no need of them. Caught by Snatchers who are rounding up Muggle-borns and ‘blood traitors’, he does not succumb to the visions, but stays within “his own right mind” (*Hallows* 367) so that he can help his friends find a way to escape. Harry believes “it was easier, as his fear mounted, [fear for his friends’ lives, not merely his own] to block out Voldemort’s thoughts” (370).

Smith argues that “in Rowling’s creation, the ultimate triumph of love and compassion over selfishness and ambition clearly provides an overarching worldview that is [...] in line with radical feminism” (91).<sup>85</sup> In “Cinderfella: J.K. Rowling’s Wily Web of Gender”, authors Ximena Gallardo-C. and Jason C. Smith propose that “[a]t every turn the text reminds [the

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<sup>85</sup> Annette Wannamaker discusses how, in general, the men in *Potter* are feminised, in her article “Men in Cloaks and High-heeled Boots, Men Wielding Pink Umbrellas: Witchy Masculinities in the *Harry Potter* novels”.

reader] of the gendered duality of Harry's existence", marking that he is "consistently associated with the feminine" (200). In sharp contrast, they determine that Voldemort wields a "phallic, aggressive power" (197). They go on to denote that Harry's scar is "the consequence of the conflict between the male force of evil Voldemort and the passive female motherly protection [of Lily], and symbolizes the vulnerability of the allegedly firm and strong male body" (294). His emulation of his mother Lily's self-sacrifice is the ultimate illustration of his power of love and his status as a feminised hero. Moreover, Gallardo-C. and Smith and Ming-Hsun Lin examine Harry's role as a princess figure, and how his role subverts the traditional portrayal of a male protagonist. His choice to use *Expelliarmus*, a defensive spell, in his final battle with Voldemort further demonstrates traditionally feminine values.

Gallardo-C. and Smith declare that the *Potter* narrative challenges "standard constructions of gender and gender roles in several ways". They claim the series' focus on understanding "otherness" can be read as a displaced critique of gender (191). Additionally, the inclusion of feminine symbols,<sup>86</sup> feminine spaces,<sup>87</sup> and Harry's symbolically feminine actions – choosing mercy over vengeance, accepting help, sharing triumph<sup>88</sup> and expressing vulnerability – are indicated as challenging typical gender representations.

Harry continues to avert the violent behaviours that are connected to his shadow Voldemort. As one who has, with the guidance of Luna and her imaginative approach, learned to see death differently, Harry is able to enact the "virtue" of self-sacrifice just as his mother had and he surrenders himself to Voldemort in the Forbidden Forest. His death – at Voldemort's hand specifically – is essential for there to be any chance of his enemy's destruction and while he initially feels "dread" and "[t]error", he is resolved to accept it. For Harry "it [does] not occur to him now to try to escape, to outrun Voldemort. It [is] over" (*Hallows* 555). After Dobby's death, Harry physically digs the grave and climbs into it: this "willing entrance into the grave" (Granger *Lectures* loc. 2059) is a symbolic embrace of

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<sup>86</sup> Gallardo-C and Smith cite Harry's love of flying; wizards in Rowling's magical world use broomsticks to fly, using a modified housewife's tool. They argue that while the use "recodes" the broom as active and masculine, the "appropriation still operates in connection with the transgressive magic world of (female) witches" (196).

<sup>87</sup> Harry famously begins the series living in a cupboard under the stairs; Gryffindor Tower his home at Hogwarts "[t]hough phallic in appearance is identified with the feminine because of its defensive, protecting role" (Gallardo-C and Smith 197). Even Harry's rival house, Slytherin, located in the school dungeons represents "dark hidden femininity" (198). The secret passageways and chambers within the school are further feminised spaces that Harry explores through the series, leading to him "find[ing] truth—not only about the camouflaged enemies within Hogwarts's midst, [...] but also about his friendships and his own true identity." (198).

<sup>88</sup> Harry offers Cedric a shared victory at the end of the Tri-Wizard tournament, because both of them had assisted the other over the course of the third task.

death. Granger argues that what takes place there is “Harry’s death to self and discovery of remorse, repentance, faith, and love” (loc. 536) and so “Harry dies as a willing sacrifice” (loc. 3259). Approaching Voldemort, Harry tucks his wand inside his robes so that he cannot use it, as “[h]e [does] not want to be tempted to fight” (*Hallows* 563).

Due to Lily’s love, a protection that endures, Voldemort’s wielding of the Killing Curse leads not to Harry’s death, but to a sort of purgatorial King’s Cross. He “steps out of time and space, [...] and into eternity and [the] infinite” (*Lectures* loc. 751) in much the same manner as Ged sails beyond natural or assumed limits of time and space in *A Wizard of Earthsea* while seeking his shadow. In Harry’s train station limbo, he can make the decision to go to a peaceful afterlife<sup>89</sup> or return to the battle and help his friends.<sup>90</sup> His choice to return is a further sacrifice; though he undoubtedly loves his friends, he is returning to violence, destruction and the broken lives of his people. His return recalls Joseph Campbell’s view that the hero returns to his society in order to “bestow [his] boons” (30). Indeed, having done “what [his] mother did”, his sacrifice grants protection for his friends upon whom Voldemort’s spells are not “binding”; he can’t “touch them” in the final battle (*Hallows* 591). Lin claims that self-sacrifice is “almost unique to heroines in fairy tales” since heroes are often “dominators” whose motivation is justice and revenge (96). Anne Collins Smith, in discussing Lily’s protection, claims that “[l]ove is not wielded as a weapon” (87). The reader sees this too in Harry’s protection of his friends, bestowed not through wand-wielding and violence, but by his passive act of self-sacrifice. Harry is imaginative in his approach to gendered roles. He is better able to perform traditionally feminine roles because he imagines himself to be more than what socialisation may expect of him.

In support of the view of Harry as a feminised hero or, indeed, a princess figure, Gallardo-C. and Smith draw parallels between Harry and Aschenputtel, the protagonist of the Grimm Brothers’ version of the Cinderella fairy tale:

Connections between “Aschenputtel” and the Harry Potter story abound: [...] both Aschenputtel’s and Harry’s mothers are dead, and yet their love, represented as “magic,” continues to protect and guide the children. [...] Most importantly, Harry’s story, like Aschenputtel’s, operates in a cyclical pattern: from the drudgery and abuse at home, Harry progresses to the glamour of the magical world where one and all

<sup>89</sup> If the state of Harry’s purgatory is an indication of his afterlife, he is assured one of comfort, one in which he is whole, as signified by the fact that his body “appear[s] unscathed” (*Hallows* 565) and he has no need for glasses. He even wonders whether he is in is “some great Room of Requirement” (566), suggesting he will be provided with whatever he needs.

<sup>90</sup> Harry’s feels responsible for protecting Sirius when Snape taunts him with accusations of cowardice, believing “it was incumbent upon him to say something to Sirius to stop him doing anything stupid” (*Phoenix* 462). This tendency to behave protectively is demonstrated most obviously when he attempts to rescue Sirius.

recognize him as a miracle, and then back home again. [...] [T]his type of spatially recursive narrative centered in the home appears most often in tales about women. (193)

With these parallels, they claim Harry is easy to identify with Cinderella. Ming-Hsun Lin also describes Harry as aligning with the princess figure in her chapter “Fitting the Glass Slipper: A Comparative Study of the Princess’s Role in the Harry Potter Novels and Films”. Lin concentrates on the archetype and stereotype of the princess and compares these to the treatment of the characters of Ginny Weasley, Hermione and Harry, arguing that “while Rowling applies and subverts the princess stereotype and works through the princess archetype across the three characters, [...] she positions Harry – not the girls – as the primary fairy tale heroine” (80).

Lin describes archetypal princesses “[possessing] nobility from social, spiritual, or biological sources” (81), claiming that Harry’s “fundamental nobility is in his blood” (94) and – as he is singled out by a prophecy – is demonstrated in his destiny “to be the object of admiration in the wizard world”. However, like Snow White, Cinderella and other fairy tale heroines, Harry begins his story being persecuted and he “must regain the position and life that have been taken from him”. Harry, like these heroines, inherits his mother’s “beauty and virtue” (95).

Lin references the “conspicuous resemblance between Harry and Lily [which] is repeatedly stressed” in the books. Harry’s physical resemblance to his father is often noted, but always qualified by the fact that he has his mother’s eyes. Lin claims that “[h]aving Lily’s eyes signifies that Harry has inherited his mother’s soul” (95) and that she “lives on through him” (96).<sup>91</sup> Since eyes suggest vision, furthermore, Harry has seemingly also inherited Lily’s ways of seeing. Additionally, Dumbledore tells Harry that “his deepest nature is much more like his mother’s” (*Hallows* 594) than his father’s.<sup>92</sup> Lily is remembered for her kindness and friendships. The reader becomes privy to her friendship with Snape, the first magical person she ever encounters. Although Snape is bullied and shunned by his peers, Lily

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<sup>91</sup> In the Pensieve, Harry witnesses his mother standing up for Snape when he is being bullied. Having suffered bullying himself, and befriended others who are marginalised, he has emulated Lily’s attitude even before knowing of her capacity for empathising with those who are vulnerable.

<sup>92</sup> Lupin teaches Harry the Patronus Charm in which one summons a guardian to draw the Dementors’ attack to itself. Each Patronus takes a different form, Harry’s taking that of a stag, the animal into which James could transform, as he was an animagus. As his father is not present, Trites argues, it is necessary for Harry to create “a symbolic presence for his father to serve as a defence against death” (476). Harry – using Hermione’s Time-Turner – saves his past self from an attack of one hundred Dementors. The past Harry catches a glimpse of himself doing this, but thinks he is seeing James rescue him. As Trites says, “the boy has supplanted his father and become his father so that now he can save himself from evil” (476). On hearing Harry’s account of the experience, Dumbledore remarks how James is “alive” in his son and “shows himself most plainly” when he needs him (*Prisoner* 312).

considers him to be more than he appears to be and pursues their friendship over several years, despite misgivings about him and his prejudiced attitudes. She displays empathy in her friendship, using her imagination to understand his isolation and pain. She offers him an escape from a strained familial background and an aversive peer group at Hogwarts. Her son not only imitates, but improves upon her example, developing friendships with wizards, fantastic beasts and non-human beings, undermining constructed boundaries between these groups. In this he seems to have inherited her empathetic nature.

Through Harry's friendship with Dobby, he and his friends are confronted with the plight of the house-elves and he demonstrates a traditionally feminine attitude in his attempt at co-operation. Krunoslav Mikulan's discussion of Hermione's attitude towards the elves weighs "the female ethics of caring," against "the male ethics of justice," querying whether Hermione's endeavours and successes are "the attainment of an androgynous equilibrium" (293). Her determination to free the house-elves even though they oppose it<sup>93</sup> conforms to a stereotypically masculine mind-set. Harry's approach of compassion and respect, while not trying to force the house-elves' decision-making, can by contrast be interpreted as a stereotypically feminine response.

Harry's collaborative leadership is seen in other instances and he benefits greatly from co-operative efforts. His loyalty to house-elves Kreacher and Dobby leads to them assisting him in significant tasks on his quest, and, with the goblin Griphook, they all play essential roles in locating and destroying Horcruxes and, indeed, helping Harry stay alive in dire circumstances (Smith 89-90). Ultimately, Kreacher's help makes it possible for the trio to find the Horcrux-locket; their kindness to him and gaining of his allegiance are therefore necessary to their eventual success. Kreacher even leads the house-elves against Voldemort in the Battle of Hogwarts. If Harry and his allies are to prove victorious, then Rowling's wizarding community must be "*reimagined* as one that goes beyond [...] the old order's ethic of duty", with all magical beings in their so-called "proper stations" (Macneil 561). Kreacher, being treated with respect and kindness, no longer just a servant, can choose to ally with Harry and so strengthen the cause for equality.

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<sup>93</sup> Tiffany Walters argues that it is "also interesting that Rowling should choose to title Hermione's elf protection society with the acronym S.P.E.W., of all the possible titles she could have created, since the literal definition of the word "spew" means to "expel large quantities rapidly and forcibly" – perhaps she is intending to suggest that something (forceful?) needs to happen (rapidly, soon?) to the large population of under-represented house-elves?" (39). If this is the case, this supports the notion that Hermione is espousing an ethics of *justice* rather than one of *compassion* as such a rapid expulsion would make it difficult to properly and ethically re-accommodate freed house-elves.



Harry saves Griphook from Malfoy Manor and “earns” the goblin’s “admiration” for treating Dobby “as an equal” (J. Hall 80). It seems that Griphook re-imagines the magical community through witnessing Harry’s love and respect for Dobby. He sees in Harry a new kind of wizard. When Harry and Griphook discuss breaking into Gringotts, Griphook interrupts their conversation to tell Harry that he is an “unusual” and “odd” wizard (*Hallows* 393) since he saves his life and buries Dobby. When Harry proposes breaking into Gringotts, insisting that it is not for his personal gain, Griphook – who believes the worst of wizards – states that “[if] there was a wizard of whom [he] would believe that they did not seek personal gain [...] it would be [Harry]”. Most interestingly, he “[frowns] at Harry as though he had never seen anything like him” (394). This sense that Griphook begins to develop about Harry’s character and his motivations, extends to Hermione when she makes an impassioned speech about freeing house-elves. Griphook is still reluctant to work with wizards because with Voldemort’s rise in power, the race of wizards is “set still more firmly above [that of goblins]”. Hermione declares that Griphook “can’t want You-Know-Who defeated more than [Harry, Ron and Hermione] do”. This demonstrates to Griphook and the reader that Hermione is equally clear sighted about wizarding prejudice. Her statement causes Griphook to “gaze at Hermione with the same curiosity he has shown Harry” (395). Although he doesn’t outright state why he agrees to help Harry, it appears that Griphook agrees to help because he believes that Harry is not breaking into Gringotts for personal gain; he would also be aware that Harry is Voldemort’s nemesis. It seems that Griphook agrees to the scheme because he wants to see Voldemort and what he represents, a further entrenching of prejudiced attitudes, defeated.<sup>94</sup> Though Griphook is vocal about his enmity towards wizardkind, Harry undauntedly “[plunges] his hand into burning gold to save his life yet again in the Lestranger’s Gringott’s vault” (St Hilaire loc. 4789). Saving Griphook in the vault is an example of Harry’s habit of acting with compassion towards those he does not necessarily like. Additionally, he protects Dudley from Dementors “without hesitation” despite the “bitterness and competition between them” and a history of “emotional hatred” toward him (loc. 4724). In response to Draco’s impending death, Harry feels regret, horror and compassion, and risks his life to save him. Harry chooses mercy over vengeance in these and other circumstances,<sup>95</sup> acting on more traditionally feminine values. Undeniably, the

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<sup>94</sup> Of course, the reader cannot ignore that, at least partly, Griphook helps Harry in order to receive the payment of the Sword of Gryffindor.

<sup>95</sup> After Harry learns of Wormtail’s betrayal, which had fatal consequences for his parents, he asks Lupin and Sirius to spare his life.

most significant example of this is when Harry attempts to save Voldemort from his impending fate of apparent damnation.

Harry is confronted with the physical manifestation of the part of Voldemort's soul attached to him in his King's Cross purgatory:

He had spotted the thing that was making the noises. It had the form of a small, naked child, curled on the ground, its skin raw and rough, flayed-looking, and it lay shuddering under a seat where it had been left, unwanted, stuffed out of sight, struggling for breath. (*Hallows* 566).

Harry feels revulsion for it, but also great pity. Dumbledore assures him that he cannot assist the damaged being, but once Harry returns to the land of the living, he offers Voldemort an opportunity to escape the fate of that "maimed creature" (567) who "[trembles] and [chokes] in the shadow" in King's Cross (578).

During their final confrontation Harry advises Voldemort to think about his actions and "try for some remorse" (594), recognising "that this would enable him to heal" (Smith 90) and to avoid suffering the fate of the "flayed-looking" child-like form (*Hallows* 566), all that is left of his mutilated soul. Having seen this pain, Harry offers his shadow the opportunity to turn from his corruption and redeem himself, to resurrect himself as a whole person. This demonstrates the depth of Harry's ability to love and his belief in mercy rather than vengeance. Jenna St. Hilaire writes that Harry is "fully purified" following his self-sacrifice and in this can "find the last redeemable part of his worst enemy and offer hope", defining this act as one of "charity" (loc. 4820). Furthermore, it is an embracing of his shadow akin to that of Ged as discussed above. In a manner both like and unlike the way Ged and his shadow recognise that they are of one another and that they will earn completeness by accepting one another, Harry has learned from his relationship with Voldemort how to adapt his tendencies and he hopes that Voldemort can learn from him. Therefore, "when he fights Lord Voldemort in the Great Hall, Harry has achieved an understanding and perspective that is essentially all-knowing. Voldemort, in contrast, has the limited ego view" (Granger *Lectures* loc. 565) since he rejects the guidance that Harry is offering him. Harry has died to his ego, but Voldemort who "[choses] the path of ego, personal advantage, and self-advancement" (loc. 3402), who refuses to acknowledge his roots, those fundamental defining features of himself, cannot grow to be a whole man.

This offer to Voldemort, his mortal enemy, to "be a man" and "try for [...] remorse" is made in front of all battle participants – Muggle-borns, half-bloods and purebloods, house-

elves, werewolves, giants and centaurs.<sup>96</sup> It is an act that serves as an example to the various members of the magical community that no matter how damaged you may be, there can always be a “last chance” (*Hallows* 594) to reject corruption and evil, to join your supposed enemies and to re-imagine your identity and position in society.

Yet Voldemort rejects this offer. Unlike Ged’s attempt to embrace his shadow, which is straightforwardly successful and empowering, Harry’s is thwarted by Voldemort’s defiance. There is no resolution of feminised Harry and masculine Voldemort. Harry learns to be assertive, rather than aggressive and violent, and to lead collaboratively instead of through violence and subjugation. Voldemort does not integrate these same aspects into his own self-concept, but rather remains angry, non-collaborative and aggressive, holding onto traditionally masculine characteristics that Rowling has coded as violent. Voldemort forces Harry into combat. Some might argue, then, that Rowling’s Christian influences inform the climax of the series with the final confrontation of good versus evil in the form of a showdown between Harry and Voldemort, rather than a more nuanced approach to resolving the conflict between ostensible opposites. However, in this final “battle” Harry only raises his wand to defend himself – using his now signature move, the disarming spell *Expelliarmus*. Through the use of this spell, Harry wrests violent power from Voldemort, but does not use violence himself. Voldemort’s Killing Curse rebounds from Harry’s defensive spell and so, in effect, Voldemort kills himself. Again, Harry engages in feminine defensive action and rejects masculine aggressive violence.

As Granger states, “the books are largely about the resolution of contraries,” and so, despite a lack of resolution between Harry and the Voldemort “on the outside”, Harry achieves a resolution with the Voldemort “on the inside” (Granger *Lectures* loc. 565). By learning not to use traditionally masculine aggression as a mask for the traditionally feminine experiences of fear and vulnerability, and by embracing the stereotypically feminine choice of collaboration, Harry is democratically elected a leader in the DA and he is elected a leader in the fight against Voldemort and his Death Eaters. Harry is able to use his power of love to save himself and his community from a violently oppressive prejudicial regime.

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<sup>96</sup> Notably there are no goblins present. Not all conflicts are resolved in the Battle of Hogwarts.

## Conclusion

Harry develops assertiveness, a tamer masculine trait than the aggression and violence of Voldemort which Rowling codes as overwhelmingly masculine. Harry also learns to lead collaboratively instead of through violence and subjugation. Again, his traditionally stereotypical masculine trait of taking leadership – which is seen to be balanced with feminine tendencies – is an undeniably positive one within the narrative. Harry transforms from lead to gold, fulfilling Rowling's alchemical process through recognising, actively encountering and learning from his shadow, Voldemort. There is much at stake if Harry does not reject Voldemort's path and defeat him, as, if he and his allies cannot end the Death Eaters' regime, the prejudices of the wizarding world will proliferate under Voldemort's reign and so the reach for equality in the magical world will become even more difficult to attain. Rowling demonstrates a balancing of masculine and feminine, creating a feminised hero whose greatest power is love. Rejecting an aggressive masculinity, Harry embraces feminine character traits, choosing love over vengeance and offering protection to his loved ones in his-self-sacrifice. In Harry's journey to re-imagine and recreate society, rejecting socio-political regimes in which prejudice stands as the status quo for the magical world is essential, and it is traditionally feminine and masculine characteristics alike which he uses to achieve success.

## Conclusion

An interplay of reason and imagination is seen throughout J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series. The author creates her magical world based on the reality her reader lives in. The reader sees her own world and the same problems of corrupt governments, inequality and prejudice. Rowling reframes and re-imagines real world conflict in her own terms of wizards, goblins, house-elves, werewolves, giants and centaurs. These same characters respond to the issues of the magical world through rational thinking, basing their decision-making on practical reasoning, logic and corroborated fact or evidence. More than this, through the example of Harry, wizards, fantastic beasts and non-human beings evolve their thinking to embrace new, more loving and productive ways of perceiving and treating those within and without their government appointed social groups. The resistance to the prejudiced ideologies and structures espoused by the Ministry of Magic and abused by Voldemort is achievable through an imaginative response to a rational decision to restructure their society into one that can thrive on cohesion and collaboration. Dumbledore's Army, founded by Hermione and led by Harry, does not remain a secret school club, but thrusts itself to the forefront of the resistance against Voldemort's attack on Hogwarts and the free thinkers within its walls. Through imaginative thinking both self-re-creation and re-creation of environment are achieved. Harry's heroism affects not only those with whom he shares the page, but his readers too.

In a fan interview hosted by Stephen Fry, Rowling discussed the character of Luna Lovegood, a favourite among those who appreciate the ethereal, the whimsical and the dotty. The author stated that, compared to Hermione Granger, Luna was likely to believe in "ten impossible things before breakfast" ("*Harry Potter and the Magic of the Internet*" par. 128), a seeming improvement on Lewis Carroll's Red Queen who describes herself as believing in "six impossible things before breakfast" in *Through the Looking Glass* (100). Rowling was later misquoted as saying that Luna would believe in "a thousand mad things before breakfast" (Chamber Forum par. 5), an apparent manifestation of Rowling's fans' typical responses to the meanings that she disseminates in her texts. Her fans, it would appear, take her original statements and paraphrase to the point of hyperbole; they are not "silent, couch-bound consumers of media", because for these readers "[t]he culture talks to them, and they talk back to the culture in its own language" (Grossman 82). Indeed, *Harry Potter* (hereafter simply *Potter*) started as a seven-book series and it has proliferated from there: movies,

merchandise, the website *Pottermore*, a theme park, the stage play *The Cursed Child* and the *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* movie series are evidence for a fan base that constantly thirsts to engage with more from Rowling's imagination. Begley claims that "[t]wenty years after the world met Harry Potter, his influence lives on in deeply personal ways":

Character names like "Hermione" have spiked in popularity for newborns. Pets have been named Dobby and Winky and Fang and Crookshanks. Friends have gathered for their own versions of the Yule Ball, complete with homemade Butterbeer. College students have organized gravity-bound Quidditch leagues. Grand-gesture marriage proposals and lavish weddings have revolved around Harry Potter themes. Fans have tattooed themselves with icons like the Deathly Hallows symbol, or inspirational quotes from the books or movies. (77)

The Group Who Shall Not Be Named, moreover, is the world's largest Harry Potter fan group. With 2 000 members in the New York area, it holds monthly meetings which take the form of Wizard Rock shows, crafting sessions and "in-costume ice-skating", creating a "milieu of openness and positive energy, a magical atmosphere where great friendships and even marriages have been forged" (Genova 16-17).

Far beyond just participating in such light-hearted and quirky revelry, the *Potter* reader has also been seen to directly recognise her real-world experience in Rowling's fantasy world due to the author's inclusion of racial and social prejudice, corrupt authority figures, unexamined and entrenched value systems as well as family and school life, relationships and the challenges of puberty to name but a few. Based on fictional circumstances that mimic the reader's world, the choices made by the characters are mimicked by *Potter*'s notable fan base in so far as it navigates parallel challenges in their own lives. Devotees have rallied to form the Harry Potter Alliance – a real-world counterpart to the novels' revolutionary Order of the Phoenix and Dumbledore's Army – through which they have "engaged millions of fans through [their] work for equality, human rights, and literacy" ("What We Do" par. 2). Alliance Founder Andrew Slack claimed that "the world needed a real 'Dumbledore's Army' in 2005" (qtd in Weiss par. 5). Members support, educate and promote tolerance, love and community. Slack began by "[working] to raise awareness of climate change and genocide in Darfur", going on to "[raise] money to send underprivileged kids to camp and [donate] books in New York, Mississippi, and Rwanda". In 2010, they campaigned for relief funds in the aftermath of the Haiti earthquake and, "in conjunction with Partners in Health, raised \$123,000, enough to fill five airplanes with supplies" (Weiss par. 6). Furthermore, the

members telephoned in their support for marriage equality in Maine and for the DREAM act<sup>97</sup> in Maryland (par. 7). In July 2017, the fourth Granger Leadership Academy conference (evidently named for the character Hermione) was conducted; held in Arizona, the conference's purpose was to "inspire and train activist leaders". With workshop topics ranging from "feminism, [...], research skills, bystander and intervention training [and] volunteer management" as well as speakers advocating body positivity and literary representation, the target audience is "anyone who wants to become a hero in their community" (Phillips 1). In March 2018, moreover, the alliance announced its ninth annual "Accio"<sup>98</sup> Books" campaign, an "international book drive that has raised 350,000 books for dozens of communities and literacy programs since 2009", which sought to focus on donations to Puerto Rican communities (Maggiacomo 1). In these ways, readers continue to behave in a fashion comparable to the heroes of the series; they are dissatisfied with discrimination and compassionate towards the underprivileged or destitute. *Potter* fans emulate the choices Rowling's Harry learns to make with the help of meaningful peer influence.

*Potter* fans have displayed powerful responses to the complementary themes of the power of love and the love of power which are demonstrated in the text through acts of sacrifice, friendship and loyalty on the one hand and violence, hatred and corruption on the other. Harry Potter Alliance members, as established above, do this in concrete ways – working to raise awareness about those at risk of genocide, raising money for and donating books to the less fortunate, and supporting terms of equality for marginalised peoples being enacted into law. Discriminatory practices sanctioned by law can only be sustained if the community tacitly assents to, or fails to resist, them. The typical attitude of Rowling's wizards reflects a recognisable phenomenon in the reader's real-world experience. Anthony Gierzynski, a Professor in Political Science at the University of Vermont, conducted a study amongst his college students – who had come of age while reading the books – querying the possible influence of the *Potter* series on their political values and viewpoints. Gierzynski found that:

Reading the books correlated with greater levels of acceptance for out-groups, higher political tolerance, less predisposition to authoritarianism, greater support for equality,

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<sup>97</sup> The DREAM (Development, Relief, and Educations for Alien Minors) Act was originally introduced to the United States of America (USA) Congress in 2001. The Act sought to amend the prevailing Illegal Immigration Reform as well as the Immigrant Responsibility Act, and to repeal "the denial of an unlawful alien's eligibility for higher education benefits" (Hatch par. 1).

<sup>98</sup> In the *Potter* series the spell "Accio!" is used to summon an object.

and greater opposition to the use of violence and torture. As Harry Potter fans will have noted, these are major themes repeated throughout the series. (par. 3)

This, of course, begs the question: does reading *Potter* encourage you to be a more tolerant person or are people with a higher level of tolerance more likely to gravitate towards the series? One way of answering this could be found in Vezzali *et al* who conducted a research project in which “contact via story reading” (1) was evaluated in terms of whether it was an effective strategy for the improvement of out-group attitudes in students. As the researchers hypothesised, students demonstrated improved attitudes regarding stigmatised groups such as immigrants, homosexuals and refugees after reading *Potter*. Notably, the reading of fantasy stories such as *Potter* was deemed to be effective in decreasing stigmatisation because there was a lack of explicit referral to “real-world groups” and so “defensive reactions” (13) could be avoided.

In a similar vein, Kayti Burt writes of the millennial generation for whom *Potter* was “a cathartic storytelling experience where readers could live out their own fears and anxieties about a changing, uncertain, and sometimes cruel world” (par. 8). In the USA, attacks on minority groups, joblessness and threatened civil and national security in the wake of 9/11 and the Iraq War unfolded alongside the sombre course upon which Harry and his friends found themselves (pars. 7-8). In 2016, a study examined the effect of reading *Potter* on views of Donald Trump as a candidate for the presidency of the USA. Throughout his campaign Trump publicly shamed women for demanding bodily autonomy be written into law, called for a ban on Muslim immigration and declared his administration would build a wall between the USA and Mexico to prevent illegal immigration from the south. Diana Mutz demonstrates that the study showed that reading the series “encourages more negative attitudes toward Trump” (13) as readers noted “similarities between Trump and the power-hungry Voldemort” (14). Within the aforementioned research of Vezzali *et al*, it is indicated that children and teenagers who identify positively with Harry exhibit improved attitudes in relation to minorities and “stigmatized groups” (11). As such, millennial *Potter* readers appear to reject Voldemort and the love of power he attempts to wield in the name of racial purity, while relating to Harry with his power to love.

In Rowling’s *Potter* series a binary relationship between realism and imaginative invention is readily evident. Her characters are emboldened to question the status quo of racial and social prejudice, corrupt authority figures, as well as unexamined and entrenched value systems through the actions of “*The Boy Who Lived*” (Stone 7). After years of



mistreatment from his ordinary aunt and uncle, Harry enters the magical world and he is both an outsider and insider. He recognises that the cultural framework of the magical world is flawed and that his society's government, with its near-inescapable authority, actively encourages social values that perpetuate prejudice against particular groups. The Ministry resists change through laws that maintain a status quo by which the marginalised suffer so that wizards can hold onto their position of convenience and power. Through her treatment of Harry, Rowling suggests that holding a position in which one has some identification with the group, but also a perspective that comes from outside it, may be what is necessary to change established customs or traditions. It is clear that the type of close-minded thinking which assists in the continued existence of prejudice in the wizarding community can be eradicated through a combination of rational and imaginative thinking.

Hermione and Luna's polarised personalities and their rational and imaginative ways of thinking, particularly in relation to the influence and interference of the Ministry, influence Harry's thinking and decision-making. Through reason Hermione helps Harry to determine the validity of the information that he gains from his shared dreams and so forces him to hone his decision-making. Hermione's hyper-rational disposition is challenged by her displeasure with the status quo and she must embrace imaginative thinking and open-mindedness in order to discover potential avenues to fundamental changes within it. Her struggle partly informs Harry's journey as he learns to develop his own perspective. On the other hand, whimsical and idealistic Luna offers Harry surprisingly grounded and insightful life lessons about loss. Since Harry must acknowledge the role that death must play in his life – most importantly that of his own at the hand of Voldemort – her insights into the afterlife have lasting effects on his outlook and his decision-making. Luna offers a different perspective, stimulates questioning and provokes investigations for more precise and satisfactory evidence. The two girls offer Harry a synthesised approach to respond to the ideologies and structures of the magical world, such as how to counteract prejudice and how to overcome his connection and rivalry with Voldemort. Befriending the marginalised and working with his peers and allies, Harry embraces open-mindedness and tolerance.

Harry's transformation from lead to gold, understood in terms of alchemical symbolism as well as Jungian shadow theory, is achieved when Harry learns from his shadow, Voldemort, to adapt his negative tendencies – particularly his angry reactions and violent outbursts. Harry balances out violent tendencies, coded by Rowling as masculine, through asserting his feminine side. Integrating what the shadow represents into his self-concept, Harry chooses to be a collaborative, co-operative leader. This is made possible by his power

of love. He chooses self-sacrifice instead of murder. Voldemort capitalises on the established belief within wizarding society that wizards are superior to all other beings (whether magical or not) and is able to gain power by silencing or eliminating those who oppose his vision of a society in which only pureblood wizards have a voice. To ensure Voldemort's defeat, Harry sacrifices himself, standing as "a symbol of Christ" (Granger *Lectures* loc. 985), "becoming gold" (loc. 393) and demonstrating a balance of masculinity and femininity. He embraces traditionally feminine traits by experiencing suffering in order to offer protection to his allies – just as his mother suffered death in order to offer protection to him. His rejection of Voldemort's "lure of power" (*Prince* 476) demonstrates his success in encountering his shadow and learning to reject fear, anger and violence, the repressed tendencies that "burst forth" (Jung 76) from his shadow Voldemort. Harry re-imagines and re-creates society; not only is he a new wizard, but his magical community is also made anew.

It is through Harry's friendships with those on the margin of society, his leadership of Dumbledore's Army and his self-sacrifice at the Battle of Hogwarts that he demonstrates a more inclusive ideology for the wizarding world. He intends for his death to give new, inclusive life to the magical community, one that does not have to be structured by institutions or figures that desperately cling to power at the expense of others. While much scholarship focuses on Harry's self-sacrifice, Luna's role in how he comes to make this decision is not given the depth of examination that it enjoys in this thesis. *Potter* critics readily acknowledge Hermione's contributions to Harry's journey; however, this thesis establishes the necessary combination of rational and imaginative thought from two feminine influences that drives the hero's evolution of thought and decision-making. This thesis shows us that Harry succeeds through combining seemingly contradictory rational and imaginative thinking, and Hermione and Luna are instrumental in this. It suggests that we may engage in "mad" ideas such as those that Luna confidently shares. *Potter* readers can look at the institutionalised and personal prejudices that have been plaguing the real world for generations and think a little differently to find a way to counter them. It may take believing "a thousand mad things before breakfast" (Chamber Forum par. 5) – or even more – to effectively acknowledge the "Voldemort within" each of us (Hunter loc. 2056), but we must find and embrace our shadows and thereby recognise our complicity in either perpetuating or failing to counter the real-world prejudice we encounter.

Harry's acts of love demonstrate that a community's socio-political structure can be informed by co-operation and collaboration, no matter the social or racial designation of those with whom one interacts. Rowling's hero is more than just a saviour for the

marginalised; he is also a cultural revolutionary who demonstrates love and tolerance not just to the magical community, but to those in the real-world as well. He puts his belief in equality and his power of love into action, making a “*decisive victory*” (Campbell 30), and countering prejudices that had held the minds and hearts of so many in the magical community for generations. Rowling’s series, so reflective of the reader’s real world, poses this challenge to the reader. Whether it is rational or imaginative thinking that leads the reader to arrive at similar decisions and successes to those of Harry, there is no doubt that Rowling’s world creation provides her inspiration.

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