

*The 14th Annual
Harry Potter
Academic Conference
October 17-18, 2025*



TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABOUT THE CONFERENCE	2
ABOUT CHESTNUT HILL COLLEGE	3
CONFERENCE SCHEDULE	4
Friday, October 17	4
Saturday, October 18	7
Abstracts	10

To reach a Board member with an urgent concern during HPAC, please call or text our Google Voice number, +1 267 314 7861 (does not work with WhatsApp). You can also ping Hannah Yanow on the HPAC Slack channel. We will periodically check the HPAC email account, but these are the two fastest ways to reach us.

ABOUT THE HARRY POTTER ACADEMIC CONFERENCE

Drs. Patrick McCauley and Karen Wendling co-taught an Interdisciplinary Honors Seminar at Chestnut Hill College entitled “The Emergence of the Hero in the Epic Voyage.” We gratefully acknowledge our “Hero” students, whose excellent scholarship provided the initial spark (and ongoing inspiration) to create and continue the Harry Potter Academic Conference.

HPAC BOARD

Patrick McCauley, PhD (Chestnut Hill College), HPAC Co-Founder and Co-Chair

Patrick McCauley is Associate Professor of Religious Studies and Philosophy. He is the author of *Into the Pensieve: The Philosophy and Mythology of Harry Potter*.

Karen Wendling, PhD, HPAC Co-Founder and Co-Chair

Karen Wendling is a science teacher at a Philadelphia-area private high school and a proud alumna of Chestnut Hill College. She is the author of several presentations relating to science in *Harry Potter* and using *Harry Potter* to improve pedagogy.

Lauren Camacci, PhD, Vice Chair and Official Conference House-Elf

Hannah Yanow, EdD, Logistics Coordinator

Laurie Beckoff, MSc, Communications Coordinator

OUR THANKS

We would like to acknowledge that HPAC is part of Chestnut Hill College, which sits on the ancestral lands of the L  nape Haki-nk (Lenni-Lenape). We acknowledge the sacred and historical significance of these lands—a small gesture towards recognizing, honoring, and reconciling with the L  nape Haki-nk people, whose lands and water we benefit from today.

The Board gratefully acknowledges all the members of the Chestnut Hill College community, especially Greg Gorski and Ryan Murphy, and our Tech Wizards, without whom this online conference would not be possible.

The Board is also grateful to [45Press](#), our extremely generous Web Wizards.

And we are grateful to YOU, our HPAC community, for sharing your scholarship and fellowship with your fellow Potterheads for over a decade.



Chestnut Hill College, founded by the Sisters of Saint Joseph in 1924, is an independent, Catholic institution that fosters equality through education. Faithful to its strong liberal arts tradition, Chestnut Hill College offers academic programs of excellence in the areas of undergraduate, graduate, and continuing studies. Sponsorship of the Harry Potter Academic Conference is just one of the many ways in which Chestnut Hill College demonstrates its commitment to its mission: to provide students with a holistic education in an inclusive Catholic community marked by academic excellence, shared responsibility, personal and professional growth, service to one another and the global community, and concern for the Earth.

Chestnut Hill College is a non-profit institution. The Harry Potter Academic Conference and Chestnut Hill College are not affiliated with J.K. Rowling, Bloomsbury Press, Warner Bros., or Pottermore.

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

All times are in Eastern Time (UTC-4) and U.S. (12-hour) clock times.

 indicates a session of international speakers.

*Attendees are welcome to come and go from the event
and between Zoom rooms throughout the conference.*

HPAC XIV – Day 1 – Friday, October 17, 2025		
9:00–9:10a	Conference Welcome	
9:10–10:40a	Session 1 (Concurrent)	
	Session 1a 	Griffin Room
	Moderator: Camacci	
9:10–9:30a	A Sonic Journey Through Good, Evil, and Resistance in the <i>Harry Potter</i> Film Series	Webster (invited speaker)
9:40–10:00a	“The Order of Knowledge”: Epistemic Authority and Injustice in the Wizarding World	Rizvi
10:10–10:30a	The Villain’s Sidekick: Bellatrix Lestrange in J.K. Rowling’s <i>Harry Potter</i> Series	Grill
10:40–10:50a	<i>Break</i>	
10:50–11:10a	Environmental Discourse in the <i>Harry Potter</i> Series	Mohammadi
11:20–11:40a	Synthesis of the Real and Fantastic: A Comparative Study of Magic as a Crucial Weapon in the Battle of Good vs. Evil Between Rowling’s <i>Harry Potter</i> Series and Satyajit Ray’s <i>Gupi Gayin Bagha Bayin</i>	Mukhopadhyay & Gangopadhyay

	Session 1b “The Mirror of Rettopyrrah”	Raven Room
	Moderator: Freeman	
9:10–9:30a	A Serial Killer’s Rebounding Spell: A <i>Deathly Hallows</i> Echo in <i>Troubled Blood</i>	Freeman
9:40–10:00a	<i>The Ickabog</i> as Concordance on the Rowling Catastrophe	Whited
10:10–10:30a	Consuming Death: Voldemort vs. the Loser	McDaniel
10:40–10:50a	<i>Break</i>	
	Session 1c 🪄	Raven Room
	Moderator: Whited	
10:50–11:10a	Indian <i>Harry Potter</i> Fan Fiction and Cultural Relocations	Salini K.
11:20–11:40a	The Issue of Free Will in <i>Harry Potter</i> : A Kantian Approach	Skalidakis
11:50a–12:40p	Lunch Break	
12:40–1:45p	<i>Plenary Lecture by Eliot Borenstein, Harry Potter</i> in Russia: The Politics of Enchantment Under Putin	Griffin Room
1:45–1:55p	<i>Break</i>	
2:00–4:00p	Session 2 (Concurrent)	
	Session 2a 🪄	Griffin Room
	Moderator: Beckoff	
2:00–2:20p	They Who Must Be Named: Actors of Press Freedom in the Magical and Muggle World	Malle

2:30–2:50p	Prisons in the Wizarding World: Symptoms of Failing Democracy	M. Martin
3:00–3:20p	Queer Reparations Through Fan Fiction: How Wolfstar Heals Wounds Inflicted by Heteronormativity	Davis-Wright
3:30–3:50p	“Arithmos!”: A Spell to Conjure the Explicit and Implicit Components of the Wizarding World	Bédard, Perreault & Austin
	Session 2b	Raven Room
	Moderator: Yanow	
2:00–2:20p	Expelliarmus Nostalgia!: Teaching Critical Pedagogy with <i>Harry Potter</i>	Quintanilla
2:30–2:50p	Misperceived: An In-Depth Study of Percy Weasley’s History, Actions, and Redemption, as Supported by Theories of Developmental Psychology	D’Angelo
3:00–3:20p	The Great Wizarding World-Building	Sosa
3:30–3:50p	Marked as UNEqual: Harry Potter and the Good News of Rescue	Lee
4:00–4:10p	<i>Break</i>	
4:10–5:40p	Session 3 (Concurrent)	
	Session 3a	Griffin Room
	Moderator: Wendling	
4:10–4:30p	The Wider Wizarding World - Unraveling the Conspiracy of a Larger Fantasy World	Heffern
4:40–5:00p	Dark Times: Teaching <i>Harry Potter</i> During Trump’s First 100 Days	Corwin
5:10–5:30p	Mirror of Erasure: Reflecting (on) the Dangerous Desires of J.K. Rowling and Dolores Jane Umbridge	Ostrum

	Session 3b	Raven Room
	Moderator: Yanow	
4:10–4:30p	Harry Potter and the Process of Individuation: An Archetypal Analysis of the “Orphan” Who Lived	Reed
4:40–5:00p	To Kill a Muggle-Bird: Destructive Pride in “The House of Gaunt”	Blatcher & Lee
5:10–5:30p	No, Not Like a Pig for Slaughter	Kim
HPAC XIV – Day 2 – Saturday, October 18, 2025		
9:00-9:10a	Conference Welcome	
9:10-10:40a	Session 4 (Concurrent)	
	Session 4a 🪄	Griffin Room
	Moderator: Camacci	
9:10–9:30a	“Some Wizards Just Like to Boast that Theirs Are Bigger and Better”: Harry Potter and the Rejection of Patriarchal Power	Llompart (invited speaker)
9:40–10:00a	Spellbound Minds: Cognitive Literary Analysis of Memory and Trauma in <i>Harry Potter</i>	Desai
10:10–10:30a	<i>Harry Potter</i> with Added Protein: <i>Mashle</i> and the Magic of Muscles	Valori
10:40-11:00a	Rituals of Control: Foucault, Food, and Discipline at Hogwarts	Shruthy P
	Session 4b 🪄	Raven Room
	Moderator: Whited	
9:10–9:30a	Blibbering Humdinger and Upelkuchen: A Study of the Assertive, Powerful Yield of Muchness in Luna Lovegood and Alice	Sawane

	Kingsleigh Against Conventionalized “Sanity”	
9:40–10:00a	“Differences of Habit and Language”: Reflection of Plato and Tagore’s Pedagogical Beliefs in <i>Harry Potter</i>	Bera
10:10–10:30a	The Magical Art of Dubbing the Potterverse (Slavic Language Edition)	Semenova
10:40–11:00a	Villainous Ambitions: Voldemort, Richard III, and the Shakespearean Tragic Tradition	Nasir
11:10–11:20a	<i>Break</i>	
11:20a–12:05p	<i>Brent Satterly</i> , Hem Hem... I take Umbridge with Authoritarianism: The Queer History of Gryffindor	Griffin Room
12:05–1:05p	Lunch Break	
1:10–4:00p	Session 5 (Concurrent)	
	Session 5a	Griffin Room
	Moderator: Yanow	
1:10–1:30p	Resist and Persist: Lessons from <i>Harry Potter</i> in the Age of Trump	Matsakis
1:40–2:00p	Magical Portraits as Wizarding AI	Henke
2:10–2:30p	<i>Poignant Nostalgia for My Abandoned Faith: Leaving Some Former Interpretations of Harry Potter Behind</i>	McCauley
2:40–2:50p	<i>Break</i>	
3:00–3:20p	Undoing of the Fall?: Reading “King’s Cross” in Relation to Genesis 3	Borden Sharkey
3:30–3:50p	The Two Graveyard Scenes: Similarities, Differences, and Why There Is a Kissing Gate	D. Martin

	Session 5b	Raven Room
	Moderator: McLaughlin	
1:10–1:30p	Fan Fiction: Copyright Threat or Brand Opportunity?	Milne, Kristofferson & Goode
1:40–2:00p	Into the Floo: Rediscovering the Harry Potter Trading Card Game	Morsy
2:10–2:30p	Harry Potter and the Failings of Age: Neutrality, Hospitality, and the Librarian's Role	McLaughlin
2:40–2:50p	<i>Break</i>	
3:00–3:20p	Marcus Plautus Molesworthus: Latin and the School Story Tradition at Hogwarts	Parks
3:30–3:50p	Herbology: Fact vs. Fiction	Daneshgar
4:00–4:15p	Closing Remarks	Griffin Room
4:15–5:15p	<i>Pottteriversity</i> Live: The Best Hope We Have	Strand, McDaniel, & Beckoff
7:00–8:00p	Informal Conference Toast	Toast Room

Abstracts

*Feel welcome to continue the conversation with presenters
by email (where available), in the Zoom chat, or on our Slack workspace.*

Co-authored presentations are listed under the first author's name.

 *first-time HPAC presenter*

 *international presenter*

 *invited presenter*

Plenary Lecturer - Eliot Borenstein  

Little did newly-elected Russian President Vladimir Putin know that, as soon as he came to power, he would be sharing the spotlight with an 11-year-old British wizard. Russian Pottermania began in 2000, becoming politicized in ways both familiar and unfamiliar to J.K. Rowling's Western fans. The franchise led to soul-searching about the fate of children's literature, the legitimacy and even dangers of fantasy genres, and debates about intellectual property and Internet piracy. It also sparked moral panics about the occult, anxiety over the power of the Russian Orthodox Church, and fears that Harry Potter and his ilk were a Trojan Horse in a Western plot to corrupt Russian morals and destroy the country. All this, plus fan fiction, parodies, cheap-knock offs, and repeated comparisons between the Boy Who Lived and the Man Who Ruled.

About

Eliot Borenstein, PhD, is Professor of Russian & Slavic Studies at New York University. His recent books include *Plots against Russia: Conspiracy and Fantasy After Socialism* (winner of the 2020 Wayne S. Vucinich book prize and the 2020 AATSEEL book prize), *Marvel Comics in the 1970s: The World Inside Your Head* (2023), and *The Politics of Fantasy: Magic, Children's Literature, and Fandom in Putin's Russia* (2025).

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All of
Université du Québec
À Trois-Rivières

"Arithmos!" A Spell to Conjure the Explicit and Implicit Components of the Wizarding World

In the various editions of the Harry Potter Top Trumps card game, each card depicts a character's personality with numerical ratings in five traits, namely courage, cunning, magic, temper and wisdom. While these data are a key component to winning a game for players, they can also use them to debate about how the numbers provided by Top Trumps are reflective of the explicit and implicit components of the wizarding world. Considering this observation, this presentation attempts to show that the character statistics found in the Top Trumps card games are explicitly consistent with how the *Harry Potter* saga unfolds in the novels. To do so, descriptive statistics (e.g., means, proportions, and coefficients of variation) associated with the sequence of novels as well as character development will be presented to support this claim. Furthermore, two specific Harry Potter Top Trumps games namely "Harry Potter Heroes of

Hogwarts” and “Harry Potter Dark Arts” will be used to evaluate stereotypes related to beauty and gender. The results of statistical tests examining the impact of a character’s gender (male-female) and alignment (good-bad) as well as the combined effects of these two factors on the five character traits highlight these two implicit components of the wizarding world. The presentation concludes by discussing the study’s results of this study, considering the concept of transmedia storytelling (Jenkins, 2006) and social role theory (Eagly, 1987).

Ria Bera, MA (she) ✍️🔮

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Independent Scholar

“Differences of Habit and Language”:

Reflection of Plato and Tagore’s Pedagogical Beliefs in Harry Potter

Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry as an institution is not merely a product of independent imagination. Beneath every pillar of it lingers a memory of ancient pedagogy, especially of Plato’s “Akadēmía,” based on dialectical reasoning and Rabindranath Tagore’s Vishwa Bharati, blending Eastern and Western literary traditions, with both focusing beyond reading and memorizing. This presentation explores how Classical and Indian holistic education systems find their legacy in fantasy narratives like the *Harry Potter* series and how Hogwarts both reflects and reimagines this schooling system by amalgamating nostalgia for close-knit and ethical education and modern meritocracy for integrated development of individuals, displaying their advantages and drawbacks. This comparative analysis depicts how contemporary fantasy literature like the *Harry Potter* series both upholds the longstanding charm for inclusive and holistic education and uncovers the embedded drawbacks of such a system, allowing readers to navigate the tension between utopian models of learning and the lurking inequality and exclusions behind the system. Built upon Michel Foucault’s theory of Discipline and Power, Tagore’s Holistic and Inclusive Education, and Sara Ahmed’s Institutional Diversity Work to depict how ancient education can be mingled into modern spaces—real or imaginary—and how such spaces provide both empowerment and growth while entrenching structural inequalities.

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To Kill a Muggle-Bird: Destructive Pride in “The House of Gaunt”

“If you can convince the lowest white man he’s better than the best colored man, he won’t notice you’re picking his pocket. Hell, give him somebody to look down on, and he’ll empty his pockets for you.” – Lyndon B. Johnson

The Gaunt family, Voldemort’s ancestors whom we meet in Book 6, displays extreme poverty, pride, and prejudice often associated with white American racism. In this chapter, we also see three socioeconomic points of view—Ministry, magical family, and Muggle—each of whom view at least one of the other two with disdain. One can draw parallels between Marvolo, Merope,

and Morfin Gaunt and the Ewell family of *To Kill a Mockingbird*: proud, violent Bob Ewell; his lonely, abused daughter Mayella; and her unruly younger siblings. Marvolo Gaunt confronts Ministry of Magic official Bob Ogden with excessive Slytherin pride, although his inbred family is impoverished, slovenly, and aimless. Marvolo believes his son's magical attack on Muggle Tom Riddle, Sr., whom Merope secretly desires, shouldn't matter because Riddle is a Muggle. Both Marvolo and Morfin abuse and insult the Cinderella-like Merope in front of Ogden. Like Mayella Ewell's endangering advances toward Tom Robinson, Merope's love potion dooms her own "Tom R." through her child, Tom Marvolo Riddle, born from coercion and lovelessness. With both women, the abused becomes the abuser. "The House of Gaunt" chapter shows a family like *Mockingbird*'s Ewells, who, despite their own squalor, cleave to the belief that the worst wizard is better than the best Muggle or Mudblood.

Sarah Borden Sharkey (she) sarah.borden@wheaton.edu Wheaton College

Undoing of the Fall?: Reading "King's Cross" in Relation to Genesis 3

Chapter 35 of *Deathly Hallows*, "King's Cross," has been variously interpreted, as giving an account of imagination to portraying an intermediary state between life and death, as evidence against religious interpretations of the series to evidence for religious readings, even modeled on Jesus's death and resurrection. This presentation aims to add to the wealth and variety of readings by interpreting the "King's Cross" chapter in light of Irenaeus's recapitulation theory, with the key events following the order of Genesis 3 and the Fall but presented as "undone." After briefly introducing the notion of recapitulation and its place in theological conversations, the presentation places the "King's Cross" chapter side by side with key passages from Genesis 3, looking both at the mirroring of the events and the linguistic overlaps.

Lily Corwin, PhD (she) ✨ lcorwin@vt.edu Virginia Tech

Dark Times: Teaching Harry Potter During Trump's First 100 Days

The day after Donald Trump was sworn in for his second term as the president of the United States of America, my Spring 2025 section of The Harry Potter Phenomenon began. We finished our discussion of *Deathly Hallows* the day after his controversial first 100 days ended. Though we only occasionally made explicit mention of current events during class, the shadow of all that was changing in the world outside the classroom hung heavy over our meetings. Students encountering the series for the first time, as well as those revisiting a childhood favorite, expressed surprise at how relevant they found the novels as Trump's first 100 days unfolded, writing and speaking about how specific characters and actions mirrored those they saw in the news. This presentation reflects on the experience of teaching *Harry Potter* during that spring and, in doing so, considers the power of the novels for students in the contemporary classroom.

Alyssa K. D'Angelo, MEd
(she) ✨

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Independent Scholar

*Misperceived: An In-Depth Study of Percy Weasley's History, Actions, and Redemption,
as Supported by Theories of Developmental Psychology*

Percy Weasley was five years old when Voldemort was defeated the first time. At only five, Percy already experienced life with two older brothers getting closer to school age, responsibility over three younger brothers, family on the front lines of war, the concept of safe houses, and the constant reminder of his family's low income status. Percy's history begs the question: how does his history shape his personality, ability to form relationships, inspire ambition, and develop his future goals? A look through the lens of developmental psychology theories, which include John Bowlby's attachment theory and Albert Bandura's theories of modeling and behavior, allows readers to make sense of why Percy acts as he does, to recognize how he became so ambitious, to explore his challenges, and to analyze what led to his ultimate redemption, based on summaries of his behavior within the books.

Ped Daneshgar, PhD (he) ✨

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Herbology: Fact vs. Fiction

Are you curious about the plants taught in Herbology or Potions? Did you know that there actually is a plant called devil's snare? The real plant, which is also referred to as Jimsonweed or devil's trumpet, may not strangle its prey, but it is a highly toxic plant that indigenous Americans used as a hallucinogen.

From mandrakes and gillyweed to monkshood and Whomping Willows, there are so many plants that are part of Harry's adventures at Hogwarts. Join a botanist in Greenhouse One to examine some of the plants referenced in the *Potter* series. We'll identify which are authentic and which are fictional, what some of these real-life plants can do, and learn about a few new plants that are the closest thing we Muggles have to magic.

Katherine Davis-Wright, MA,
PGCE (she) ✨

University of Sheffield

*Queer Reparations through Fan Fiction:
How Wolfstar Heals Wounds Inflicted by Heteronormativity*

This presentation explores the popular ship "Wolfstar" (Remus Lupin/Sirius Black) through a queer theoretical lens, employing Sedgwick's (1995) concept of reparative reading to explore how fans engage in fan fiction about the pairing, alongside a close reading of the canon about the two characters. While the canon texts offer fans only oblique implications of queer

potentiality between Remus Lupin and Sirius Black, fans have persistently filled narrative gaps through transformative works (particularly fan fiction, but also through other art forms such as drawings, paintings, and multimodal offerings), and have crafted emotionally and sexually rich portrayals of a queer relationship that the books imply but do not confirm. Combining Sedgwick's reparative reading theory and Gee's (2018) work on affinity spaces, this analysis highlights how fan fiction not only responds to the affective textures of the source material but also reimagines queer kinship in the face of heteronormative narrative closure. Ultimately, the Wolfstar phenomenon, one of the most consistently popular pairings on the fan fiction site Archive Of Our Own (AO3), illustrates how reparative readings can generate queer futures from mainstream texts, allowing readers to find solace, recognition, and resistance through collective storytelling.

**Kaushalkumar Hareshbhai
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Spellbound Minds: Cognitive Literary Analysis of Memory and Trauma in Harry Potter

J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series is often celebrated for its magical allure and hero's journey, yet beneath its enchanting surface lies a rich tapestry of psychological depth, particularly in its portrayal of memory and trauma. This study employs a cognitive literary approach to analyze how memory functions both as a narrative device and a psychological marker of trauma within the series. Focusing on key characters such as Harry Potter, Severus Snape, and Neville Longbottom, the research explores how individual and collective memories shape identity, behavior, and moral development.

By integrating cognitive literary theory with trauma studies, the paper examines how the series represents post-traumatic stress, suppressed memories, and the mechanisms of coping and resilience. Elements such as the Pensieve, Horcruxes, and memory charms are interpreted not only as magical constructs but also as metaphors for cognitive processing and emotional repression. The frequent revisiting of traumatic events—such as the deaths of Harry's parents or Snape's recollections of Lily—underscores how memory in the wizarding world functions as both burden and revelation.

Furthermore, the study highlights how Rowling constructs trauma not merely as individual suffering but as a shared, intergenerational phenomenon, particularly in the aftermath of war. By doing so, the narrative fosters empathy and ethical reflection in readers, positioning trauma as a transformative element rather than a static wound.

This research contributes to the evolving field of cognitive literary studies by demonstrating how *Harry Potter* bridges fantastical storytelling with authentic psychological experiences. It underscores the importance of memory as a cognitive and emotional process, enriching our understanding of how literature can illuminate the complexities of the human mind—even within a world of magic.

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The Mirror of Rettoppyrrah: Wizarding World Reflections in Post-Potter Books

Only a subset of *Harry Potter* fans has gone on to read Rowling's later works for adults (*A Casual Vacancy*, the *Cormoran Strike* mystery series) or for children (*The Ickabog*, *The Christmas Pig*). This avoidance mostly pre-dated the Twitter controversies surrounding the author but has undoubtedly been exacerbated by them. However, some *Potter* scholars who have read and analyzed the later works have seen themes, scenes, imagery, and characters that recall the adventures of the Boy Who Lived. This panel includes three presentations that highlight some of those connections in three different works:

1. Louise M. Freeman: A Serial Killer's Rebounding Spell: A *Deathly Hallows* Echo in *Troubled Blood*
2. Lana Whited: *The Ickabog* as Concordance for the Rowling Catastrophe
3. Kathryn N. McDaniel: Consuming Death: Voldemort vs. the Loser (*The Christmas Pig*)

This panel will directly address the question of whether Rowling's non-*Potter* works are as worthy of attention and serious study as her *Harry Potter* books, especially in light of the controversy surrounding the author. The first presentation focuses on the one clearly gender-fluid character in Rowling's published works, who is ironically portrayed as a misunderstood monster, and one which the protagonists ultimately learn that they need not fear. The second and third talks compare two representations of evil (one realistic, one fantasy-based) to the best-known villain of *Harry Potter*, providing an opportunity to address the question as to how closely good-versus-evil battles in the later works induce the same sentiments in readers as Harry's struggle did.

A Serial Killer's Rebounding Spell: A Deathly Hallows Echo in Troubled Blood
Louise M. Freeman

Both *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* and *Troubled Blood* end with a showdown of sorts between the series protagonist and an irredeemably evil psychopath. Harry fights Voldemort in the Great Hall, while Cormoran Strike interviews Dennis Creed, a convicted serial killer, in the psychiatric hospital in which Creed is confined. Both encounters are one-on-one "duels"—observed by others who do not interfere. Both heroes enter the arena armed with knowledge of which the villain is unaware: Harry knows he is the master of the Elder Wand, while Strike knows the truth about the fate of Margot Bamborough, the subject of his major investigation whom Creed is suspected of killing. The encounters end with the bad guys fully defeated, with Voldemort dead and Creed manipulated into revealing both that he killed a different victim, Louise Tucker, and the location of her body, which has been hidden for over forty years. He also fails to achieve his goal of getting Strike to help him secure a transfer to a different facility. The villain's faces are described in similar terms after their defeat, with Voldemort's "vacant and unknowing" and Creed's "slack."

The Ickabog as Concordance on the Rowling Catastrophe
Lana Whited

Even as J.K. Rowling was imploding her own reputation in spring 2020, she released a new novel in installments on her personal website, a fairy tale called *The Ickabog*. The title creature is eventually revealed to be a gender-fluid entity whom citizens of the realm of Cornucopia are quick to condemn on the basis of rumor, accusation, and legend. The prejudice against the creature is spearheaded by the king himself, a self-absorbed buffoon named Fred the Fearless who is, in several respects, an obvious stand-in for then-U.S. president Donald Trump. As the country confronts the apocryphal “threat” of the Ickabog itself, the author spins a tale whose theme is synonymous with that of the *Harry Potter* series: prejudice is rampant and bad for everyone.

In *The Ickabog* as in the *Harry Potter* novels, it is difficult to believe that the author is the same person who, by June 2020, had alienated a significant chunk of her fan base with her persistent and mean-spirited tweets. But in *The Ickabog*, Rowling actually goes a step further with the theme of persecution than in the *Harry Potter* series. Voldemort must be defeated because he is incapable of redemption, despite Harry’s admonition that he “try for some remorse.” *The Ickabog*, on the other hand, is an allegory about not only the feasibility of transformation but the process necessary to accomplish it. The main characters are both indirect victims not of the Ickabog itself but of the prejudice endorsed in King Fred’s government and of a particular royal counselor willing to victimize any person or creature in his own path to power. This usurper, Lord Spittleworth, is not capable of redemption in the story’s climax, but many other characters are, most notably King Fred himself, who becomes a model of regret and repentance. It is not possible to read *The Ickabog* now without a painful awareness of similarities between the culprit in this tale and the author who, for some, shall no longer even be named.

Thus, Rowling’s fairy tale can be read as concordance to her real-life debacle, offering the irony of her simultaneously outing herself as transphobic and releasing a parable about tolerance. This is a new species of irony, not dramatic but authorial. The author misses her own point.

Consuming Death: Voldemort vs. the Loser
Kathryn N. McDaniel

The villains in the *Potter* series and *The Christmas Pig* reflect deep horror in the face of modern materialism and consumption. In valuing matter over spirit, Voldemort’s aim to extend material existence into eternity leads to the devaluing of humanity, the source of his evil actions. Imbedding pieces of his soul in objects he has acquired, Voldemort blurs the line between Being and Thing, and becomes something less than fully human in his quest for eternal life. In the different universe of *The Christmas Pig*, a boy searches for a beloved, missing toy in the Land of the Lost. The villain of this story, the Loser, similarly exists in an ambiguous state between Being and Thing, made up of bits of objects taken from lost things he has destroyed and ingested. Those living in the Land of the Lost fear him above all else; that fear is the center of his power—power over a certain kind of life and death. Yet most of the major characters in *The*

Christmas Pig are themselves objects, possessed of the sentience toys often have in children's stories. Put in comparison, the two villains in context provide a nuanced reflection on the ways we in modern society imbue things with human attributes and even put pieces of ourselves into objects. Where is that a manifestation of our humanity, and where does it obstruct our ability to connect with other people, leading to a particularly modern brand of evil?

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The Villain's Sidekick: Bellatrix Lestrange in J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter Series

This paper sets out to investigate the figure of the villain's sidekick in contemporary literature via the case study of J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series. While the classic sidekick figure in popular literature and culture has received ample attention in academic criticism of the last decades, the respective villains' sidekicks have so far been largely neglected. This study homes in on this research gap by moving away from the prototypical hero-sidekick constellation and instead shifts its focus onto the villain's sidekick, Bellatrix Lestrange, suggesting literary and filmic portrayals of this figure as an important site of cultural contestation. In so doing, it offers a nuanced reading of Bellatrix as abject sidekick at the intersection of gender discourse and monster theory, reading her highly visual portrayal—constantly bordering on excess—during the novels and films as a semiotic Carnavalesque “spectacle” of feminine and political transgression. Drawing upon the works of Mary Russo, Michail Bakhtin, Louis Althusser, Barbara Creed, and Marie Mulvey-Roberts—among others—this study thus posits Bellatrix as a darker twist on the prototypical sidekick figure, suggesting this character as an important discursive tool to explore lingering gender bias and aspects of political subversion as well as the highly problematic nature of the relationship between the villain and their sidekick.

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Independent Scholar

Magical Portraits as Wizarding AI

Magical portraits capture the likeness, character, and at least partial knowledge of a person. In other words, they generate speech and video in line with known past behavior—similar to a modern Large Language Model (LLM) trained on past written and audiovisual samples of a specific person?

Interacting with generative AI like ChatGPT answered some questions I'd been having about the role of magical portraits in wizarding society: for example, I had often wondered why wizards and witches do not cling to the magical portraits of their passed-away loved ones—until interacting with ChatGPT let me experience firsthand how emotionally unattached I would be to talking to a mere impersonation of a beloved character, no matter how convincing that impersonation may be.

This talk explores the many ways in which magical portraits (as portrayed in the original seven-book series) and modern generative AI tools are similar and different. It argues that reading magical portraits through the lens of AI opens up new perspectives through which to understand their use in wizarding society as well as offers a creative entrance for how to think through and evaluate our own usage of these new tools.

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Independent Scholar

No, Not Like a Pig for Slaughter

There are still things to figure out about this story, still (mis)readings to debunk. Ready for some old-school analysis?

Dumbledore did not raise Harry “like a pig for slaughter.” Why did Dumbledore allow that misperception, even though it meant letting Snape think Dumbledore had manipulated him?

Why did Dumbledore lie by omission about the prophecy’s meaning, letting Harry think he could avoid being killed by Voldemort? Snape is the character best known for self-sacrifice in his spycraft, dying without correcting people’s beliefs that he’d betrayed them—but Dumbledore’s achievement in that area was possibly greater and harder to see. Dumbledore never had an agenda to use Harry to defeat Voldemort, despite appearances. He allowed that misperception because his greatest concern was for Harry’s soul—and Voldemort’s.

If you would welcome a reading of Dumbledore that illuminates the generosity of his soul, this talk is for you. If you would like to marvel once again at the greatness and depth of this series, this talk is for you.

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Indian Harry Potter Fan Fiction and Cultural Relocations

The *Harry Potter* canon has already been explored in countless angles and recontextualized in multiple settings and frameworks through numerous fan fiction works. Often transformative, these works actively rewrite power and authority, along with enriching the canon by adding more complicated nuances, as it is always limited by the biased perspectives of the author. This paper is an attempted study of Harry’s story repositioned in Indian cultural and geographical landscape using select fan fiction works. In India, magic is not just limited to imagination even now. Here, myth and history overlap in fascinating and at times problematic ways, seeping its way through everyday culture while retaining a rich flavor of local and folk traditions. The various sociopolitical undercurrents that highlight Harry’s story are rewritten through Indian structures

embedded in alternative forms of knowledge. These fan fictions' fundamental function is cultural work more than just imaginative play, and the paper seeks to explore that.

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Marked as UNequal: Harry Potter and the Good News of Rescue

"The Spirit of the Lord...has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor...to set the oppressed free..." – Luke 4:18

Before Christmas at Hogwarts was released last year, I was creating a personal "board book" adaptation from the early chapters of *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* for the toddlers in my family. Then I wondered: how does the story of Harry's delivery from the Muggle world to the wizarding world relate to the Gospel of Jesus Christ? The answer: a lot.

As Lord Voldemort marked Harry as his equal, Vernon and Petunia Dursley mark their little nephew as UNequal, inferior to his cousin Dudley. Encasing Harry in poverty, they deprive him of dignity, favor, provision, and his true origin.

With the letters from nowhere and then Hagrid's arrival, Harry is delivered:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| – from nonentity to personhood. | – from slavery to service. |
| – from degradation to dignity. | – from dullness to danger. |
| – from deprivation to abundance. | – from shame to honor. |

Scholars have shown how the *Harry Potter* saga reflects Christian imagery and allegory. Carefully studied, the Christian gospel not only promises delivery from hell to heaven but from soul-death to soul-life here and now, on earth. In the same way, Harry's rescue from Muggle misery to wizarding wonder reflects the earthly possibilities of the "Good News to the poor"—dignity, honor, and abundance through sharing—plus some "good trouble." Even the youngest readers can learn that a child in unwholesome circumstances can be saved through benevolence and love.

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Independent Scholar



They Who Must Be Named: Actors of Press Freedom in the Magical and Muggle World

This presentation examines the concept of press freedom through the lens of the *Harry Potter* series. In a world where truth is often manipulated, the freedom of the press emerges as a vital cornerstone of democratic societies, and one increasingly under threat across the globe.

The wizarding world, with its centralized media system and institutional control by the Ministry of Magic, serves as a compelling fictional case study for exploring ethical dilemmas and constraints in journalism. This paper analyzes how media in the *Harry Potter* universe, especially through characters like Rita Skeeter and publications such as *The Daily Prophet*, reflects real-world tensions between journalistic integrity, state influence, and the battle for truth.

By comparing the structures and functions of magical media with those in the non-magical (Muggle) world, the work highlights parallels to modern challenges: disinformation, propaganda, censorship, and the personalization of news narratives. The analysis emphasizes that those who seek to suppress or control the press, be it Voldemort or real-world political actors, often do so to maintain unchecked power.

Ultimately, the paper argues that critical media literacy and independent journalism are as essential in fiction as they are in reality. The magical world becomes a mirror through which we better understand the value of press freedom in our own.

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ASPIC, a podcast from La Gazette du Sorcier

Prisons in the Wizarding World: Symptoms of Failing Democracy

The state of prisons of a country is a symptom of the democratic health of its regime, usually one that most people don't want to think about. In my Muggle life, I have worked for the French Ministry of Justice, at the research office of the Directorate of Prison Administration, for three years now. It made me rethink how prisons are depicted in fiction, and as a Potterhead, Azkaban was in my mind a lot. This presentation shares some of my reflections on the historical references of Azkaban in the British, U.S., and French history of prisons. It presents the basics on how to think about the prison's role in society today and how it translates in the wizarding world. It explains why Dementors are horrible prison guards (quite obvious), but also why it makes sense the Ministry of Magic used them (and what it says about the Ministry). The mental "health" (or mental damage) in prisons will be explored through *Potter* characters who were incarcerated and what it illustrates in the real world. This presentation will make attendees think for a moment of the "sense of the prison sentence" in both the wizarding world and our Muggle world and why we should all have these questions to our leaders.

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Independent Scholar

The Two Graveyard Scenes: Similarities, Differences, and Why There Is a Kissing Gate

It is well known that death is a major theme of the *Harry Potter* novels. The differences between Harry's and Voldemort's attitudes towards death are most clearly on display in the two graveyard scenes.

The graveyard scene in *Deathly Hallows* focuses on Harry's family and connections. The graveyard scene in *Goblet of Fire* focuses on Voldemort's rebirth, his family, and his "true family," the Death Eaters. Harry's graveyard scene takes place on Christmas Eve, December 24. Voldemort's graveyard scene takes place on June 24, the furthest point in the calendar from Christmas Eve. In Harry's graveyard scene, it is clear that the dead and their graves are respected. In Voldemort's graveyard scene, it is clear that the dead and their graves can be broken into. Harry's graveyard scene leads to a fight between Harry and Nagini. Voldemort's graveyard scene leads to a fight between Voldemort and Harry.

This presentation explores these two graveyard scenes—their differences, their similarities, and how they show the two opposing understandings of death present in the *Harry Potter* books.

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Independent Scholar

Resist and Persist: Lessons from Harry Potter in the Age of Trump

Since Donald Trump's return to office in November 2024, sweeping executive orders, restrictive education laws, and court rulings have accelerated the erosion of democratic norms. From the gutting of federal support for minority-serving programs to the revision of schools' curriculum to replace the truth of American history to the canceling of popular media like *The Late Show with Steven Colbert*, these policies echo the rise of Voldemort's regime in *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, where laws are rewritten, education is censored, and propaganda fuels division. Rowling's final book offers more than a warning: it provides a blueprint for resistance. Dumbledore's Army and Potterwatch show how ordinary individuals can fight tyranny through small, coordinated acts of courage.

Today, this mirrors the work of journalists exposing disinformation, teachers defending honest education, and citizens resisting censorship and fear. For the *Harry Potter* fandom, this story is also a call to action. Fandom spaces can serve as modern Rooms of Requirement: places to share knowledge about what's really going on, organize grassroots efforts to act and see change happen, and give the floor to amplify marginalized voices. Democracy is not saved by a single hero, but by networks of ordinary people choosing to act to defend courage and love again and again! By uniting our own Dumbledore's Army, we can transform this fandom from nostalgia and pain towards the creator into action in defense of the things and people we love, working together to resist authoritarianism and build a future where no one faces the darkness alone.

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Harry Potter and the Failings of Age: Neutrality, Hospitality, and the Librarian's Role

Since *Harry Potter* hit the shelves of American libraries, it has sparked waves of controversy—from early conservative claims that it promotes witchcraft to recent liberal calls to cancel J.K. Rowling over her views on gender identity. In both cases, protecting children from harm is a primary argument for censorship. How can librarians ethically and effectively address their dual responsibilities of protecting intellectual freedom while ensuring patron safety?

In order to answer this question, this presentation draws on guidelines from the American Library Association (ALA) and the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), Dumbledore's description of and confession regarding "the failures of age," and the historical model of the caravanserai—neutral, protective spaces for diverse travelers and ideas. These procedural, literary, and cultural texts reframe neutrality not as passive non-partisanship but as active hospitality allowing librarians to reclaim their role as facilitators of access, conversation, and safety, ensuring that libraries remain spaces where difficult stories and diverse viewpoints can be encountered on their own terms rather than bastions of prescriptive moral policing.

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Fan Fiction: Copyright Threat or Brand Opportunity?

Fan fiction—user-generated stories that extend the worlds of existing media franchises—has historically been viewed as a threat to brands' intellectual property rights. This presentation challenges this assumption and demonstrates that fan fiction, while sometimes infringing on brands' intellectual property, lacks key features that typically make intellectual property violation harmful to brands. Across six studies using survey, experimental, observation, and field-based methods, it demonstrates that fan fiction engagement does not decrease fans' brand attachments or consumption intent, that monitoring fan fiction communities can be used to predict brand performance and measure fan sentiment towards brands, that brands can take active steps to encourage further fan fiction production by waiving intellectual property rights with respect to fan fiction, and that early encouragement of fan fiction authors can increase their output. In doing so, this paper frames fan fiction as a strategic resource, rather than a liability, that brands can leverage to better understand and engage with their most devoted fans.

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Environmental Discourse in the Harry Potter Series

The literary phenomenon of the *Harry Potter* series can be primarily classified as a coming-of-age fantasy filled with ecological imagery. Those images include magical forests,

mythical creatures, enchanted plants, and human-nonhuman relationships, all of which are important parts of the imaginative texture of the work. However, the linguistic work with *Harry Potter* has overlooked the eco-critical implications. In *Ecolinguistics* (2015), Stibbe commits to examining language to see how it represents and frames the environment and does offer itself to our meaning-making with our environments. An eco-linguistic analysis of *Harry Potter* not only uncovers the anthropocentric character of the stories but the potential for ecological wisdom to emerge despite anthropocentrism. This paper demonstrates how Rowling's language frames connections with nature and magical creatures through a range of linguistic devices (including lexical choices, metaphors, erasure, and the positioning within narrative). In conclusion, it argues that the novels reproduce anthropocentric discourses and open space for agendas of ecological resistance, as exemplified in current environmental debates in the world today.

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*"Some Wizards Just Like to Boast That Theirs Are Bigger and Better":
Harry Potter and the Rejection of Patriarchal Power*

This paper examines J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* as a positive model of masculinity. Previous scholars have read Rowling's hero as a Christ-like figure (Murphy 2011), a revival of the Victorian gentleman ideal (Berberich 2011), a Cinderella character (Gallardo-C and Smith 2003), and a return to the romantic hero in children's literature (Nikolajeva 2009), highlighting qualities such as Harry's readiness to sacrifice himself for others, his consistent choice of mercy over vengeance, his courage, his rejection of violence, his kindness towards the weak, and "his innocence and intrinsic benevolence" (Nikolajeva 2009: 226). Building upon these existing studies, this paper argues that it is Harry's absolute lack of attraction to patriarchal power that defines him as a positive male role model. Throughout the seven novels, Harry systematically and consistently refuses to associate himself with bullies and other toxic male characters, he chooses not to use magical objects to gain or exercise power, he uses spells to protect himself but never to attack his opponent, and, most importantly, he elects to define himself in radical opposition to Lord Voldemort, the series's patriarchal villain (Martín 2020). It also contends that Harry's appeal lies in the fact that his ethical, moral, and anti-patriarchal behavior is not incompatible with other qualities traditionally associated with masculinity, such as bravery, leadership, and sportsmanship. What is more, Harry's goodness does not exclude the possibility of being flawed, which makes him all the more relatable to 21st-century audiences. Rowling thus presents her readers with a positive model of masculinity, at the same time that she avoids alienating them with an excessively perfect, archetypal hero.

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Into the Floo: Rediscovering the Harry Potter Trading Card Game

Step back in time. The year is 2001 and the world's most popular "toy" is actually a card game. Let's uncover a forgotten chapter of *Harry Potter* history: the Harry Potter Trading Card Game (HPTCG). Long before the franchise became synonymous with film scenes and actor representation in video games, Wizards of the Coast brought the wizarding world to life in a unique way that encapsulated the importance of storytelling, artwork, and strategy. This presentation explores the significance of this historical game. Although out of print, it continues to enthrall and charm its players and collectors to this day.

This talk introduces the HPTCG to all who are unfamiliar with its origins, focusing on the development under Wizards of the Coast and highlighting the unique illustrated style used at the time. While modern *Harry Potter* games lean heavily on the cinematic version of the story, the HPTCG uses the books as its creative influence. Gameplay mechanics allow for players to build decks based on Lessons, Adventures, and Quidditch Matches, with each game varying every time.

The presentation features illustrations from the game, physical cards, rare merchandise, and firsthand insights from the presenter's own journey collecting for the past decade, culminating in what is now known as the largest collection worldwide. Listeners will walk away with a sense of nostalgia and an appreciation for a game that remains as magical today as it was decades ago.

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Synthesis of the Real and Fantastic: A Comparative Study of Magic as a Crucial Weapon in the Battle of Good vs. Evil Between Rowling's Harry Potter series and Satyajit Ray's Gupi Gayin Bagha Bayin

Reality, in itself, is a subjective notion. Everything that does not fit the normative standards is often discarded, but we fail to understand that these standards are essentially arbitrary with no fixed grounds to validate them as the only truth. Magic does not imply the absence of reason and rationality, but a broadening view of the same to seek an alternative version of the truth. This paper attempts a comparative analysis of the use of magic in the defeating of the evil and the triumph of the good between Rowling's *Harry Potter* series and the *Gupi Gayen Bagha Bayen* film trilogy of the Oscar-winning filmmaker Satyajit Ray. The paper shows how, in the *Harry Potter* series, though a wizard by birth, Harry's journey into the world of magic begins when Hagrid tells him that he is a wizard. This journey, going through various phases, culminates ultimately in the defeat of Voldemort and the end of a dictatorial regime. This paper studies this journey of Harry in comparison to that of Ray's Gupi and Bagha, two simpletons

whose journey into the world of magic begins, unlike Harry, not by birth, but after three magical boons are granted to them by the King of Ghosts. Like Harry, they too have to traverse long paths to establish the triumph of good over evil. The paper studies the similarities and dissimilarities in the way the two masters have organically synthesized the real and fantastic in their texts.

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Villainous Ambitions: Voldemort, Richard III, and the Shakespearean Tragic Tradition

This presentation examines Voldemort through the lens of the Shakespearean tragic villain, focusing particularly on Richard III and Macbeth. By comparing Voldemort's rise, rhetoric, and ruin to those of Shakespeare's most infamous antagonists, the talk explores how J.K. Rowling draws upon—and recasts—the tragic tradition to craft a modern villain steeped in literary lineage.

Richard III's calculated ambition, belief in self-made power, and contemptuous manipulation of mortality mirror many of Voldemort's psychological and narrative traits. Both are charismatic yet fragile figures, defining themselves through domination, legacy, and fear. Macbeth's obsession with prophecy and power similarly parallels Voldemort's fixation on controlling fate, especially through his pursuit of immortality and the Elder Wand.

This intertextual reading positions Voldemort not as a stock fantasy villain, but as a tragic figure shaped by a Shakespearean template—imbued with hubris, driven by prophecy, and ultimately destroyed by the very strategies that bring him power. The presentation also considers how Rowling adapts these tragic conventions for a young adult fantasy context, transforming the Shakespearean villain into an instructive moral figure for contemporary readers.

Blending close literary analysis with character study, this talk deepens our understanding of Voldemort as both a product and a subversion of the tragic tradition.

Jordan Ostrum, MLIS (he) ✨

Independent Scholar

*Mirror of Erasure: Reflecting (on) the Dangerous Desires of
J.K. Rowling and Dolores Jane Umbridge*

J.K. Rowling's descent into TERFdom has elicited many a casual comparison to her fan-favorite fiendish character, Dolores Umbridge. This presentation offers an analytically oriented, deep-dive reflection of the two women. Using trans and feminist theory, particularly C. Heike Schotte's work on extinction phobia, and Jennifer Freyd's concept of DARVO (made famous by South Park), this paper demonstrates how fear of the Other colors and controls the character

and her creator. Based on an accepted work-in-progress chapter of *Potions, Powers, and Prejudice: Reassessing Harry Potter*, to be published next year by Litwin Press, this presentation demonstrates alignment between Umbridge and Rowling in six key ways.

First, both women value education and recognize educational spaces as politically powerful sites of values contestation. Second, and rather ironically, they both easily fall prey to disinformation. This is due to their third correlation, which is their attachment to extinction phobias. Such paranoia leads them both to become radicalized (four), which grants them greater power within their respective, increasingly authoritarian worlds (five). Both women's attempts to be charitable and charming belie their true and wicked natures (six).

This presentation, besides demonstrating how Rowling and Umbridge mirror each other, seeks to grapple with the question of how someone once deemed heroic can turn so hateful. Perhaps, by examining one person's tumble down the rabbit hole of transphobia, we can prevent further falls.

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Marcus Plautus Molesworthus: Latin and the School Story Tradition at Hogwarts

For a quarter of a century, readers have pointed out the ways in which the *Harry Potter* series reacts not just to the school story tradition in general but to one particular work that parodies this genre, the *Molesworth* books by Willans and Searle from the 1950s. Narrated by schoolboy Nigel Molesworth, these books are replete with names that turn up in the *Harry Potter* novels, such as Hermione, Scrimgeour, and even Hogwarts itself. This talk draws attention to how the name Hogwarts appears specifically in Nigel's description of his Latin classes: it is the title of a Latin play he writes, under the penname Marcus Plautus Molesworthus. The presentation of the study of the ancient world and of Latin in Molesworth provides a lens through which to view the copious amount of such material in *Harry Potter*. Reading *Harry Potter* intertextually with Molesworth underscores the ambiguity surrounding traditionalism in the series, especially in educational spaces and especially as symbolized through the use of Latin. Finally, this talk argues that one Hogwarts headmaster in particular can be productively read as an embodiment of the traditionalism critiqued by both series: the ghost of education systems past, as it were.

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Independent Scholar

Potterversity Live: The Best Hope We Have

Join your hosts and producer of the academic *Harry Potter* podcast *Potterversity* as they record a live episode of the popular show. Drawing on the experiences of the conference as it unfolds, Katy, Emily, Laurie, and their guests will focus particularly on the gradual encroachment of fascism in the *Potter* series in light of recent sociopolitical developments in the Muggle world.

We'll look to the *Potter* books to find messages of hope, solidarity, and resolve in our own dark times. Audience members will have a chance to weigh in during this live, participatory panel.

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*Harry Potter and the Process of Individuation:
An Archetypal Analysis of the "Orphan" Who Lived*

Orphans are some of the most at-risk populations in the field of mental health. These individuals are often dual diagnosed with substance abuse issues, mood and attachment disorders, major depression, generalized anxiety, and personality disorders. Additionally, many orphans struggle with recurring suicidal thoughts. To add to the complexity of mental health care for orphans, current treatment modalities seem to focus on current presenting symptoms instead of addressing the wound that occurred when they lost their key attachment figures. Does the primal wound of orphan souls need to be more fully studied and understood by the mental health field? Can a beloved myth, analyzed with a deep psychological lens, provide this type of understanding for both mental health clinicians and their orphan clients alike?

The purpose of this research is to bring a depth psychological perspective to the *Harry Potter* series. This well-known myth will be analyzed as though the entire wizarding world is Harry's own dreamscape. All the characters Harry meets in his "dreams" or while attending Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry will be analyzed as though they each represent various shattered parts of his grieving orphan psyche. It is this researcher's hope that through exploring the individuation process of Harry Potter, a new healing fiction for orphans will emerge. A healing tool such as this will add to the existing treatment opportunities for orphans, as it will demonstrate how to individuate their personality, leading to an increase of self-actualization and a decrease of suicidal ideation.

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"The Order of Knowledge": Epistemic Authority and Injustice in the Wizarding World

The wand might choose the wizard, but who chooses the knower?

The wizarding world flourishes on superintended truths. There are rewritten histories, half-hidden prophecies, and ignored testimonies. Dark wizards and darker epistemologies get revealed in the battles over truth. If knowledge, as Foucault reminds us, is power, then ignorance becomes politics. Reading *Harry Potter* through the theories of epistemic authority and epistemic injustice tends to reveal how knowledge itself is shaped by gender, bloodline, and institutional control and how hierarchies are produced as a result that are both magical and familiar.

By tracing these tensions, this paper situates the series within wider debates on knowledge, power, and justice. The paper focuses on specific epistemological questions: for instance, feminist epistemology asks how gender shapes who is recognized as a credible knower in the series (as with unconventional figures like Luna Lovegood), while posthumanist approaches interrogate alternative epistemic communities, such as centaurs, goblins, and elves, whose knowledge is endemically othered to destabilize the anthropocentric hierarchy that privileges wizard authority. What crystallizes these dynamics is the metaphor of “obliviation.” “Obliviate” is not merely a memory charm. It rather functions as an epistemic technology that allocates who may remember and who must forget, therefore turning silencing into a way of systematic epistemic erasure.

In showing how even magic is bound by politics of credibility and how knowledge gets stratified, the paper underscores that the fight over who gets to “know” is never just a fantasy.

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Hem Hem... I Take Umbridge with Authoritarianism: The Queer History of Gryffindor

No one hated freedom more than one Professor Dolores J. Umbridge. Armed by a lifetime of self-loathing and empowered by the Minister of Magic himself, she walked into Hogwarts to embody the Cruciatus Curse with the one tool stronger than a wand—a quill. Umbridge found herself in the position to fulfill her lifelong dream of vengeance upon those who deemed themselves better than her.

And so it was that the little girl who felt less than everywhere she went, the little girl who took her self-hatred out on her failure of a family, the little girl who was bullied and hounded by a Hogwarts brood, the little girl who neatly tucked away her own failings in pink, kittens, and a toad-like smile, came armed into her adulthood with the vicious mindset of...purity.

This session will 1) examine Dolores Umbridge’s purity mindset and the use of such authoritarian pedagogy as an exemplar of the current sociopolitical happenings of our time; and 2) the invocation and examination of Queer historical figures as the embodiment of Gryffindor to resist fascism.

Kartiki Pravin Sawane, MA 🍷

Independent Scholar

Blibbering Humdinger and Upelkuchen: A Study of the Assertive, Powerful Yield of Muchness in Luna Lovegood and Alice Kingsleigh Against Conventionalized “Sanity”

“Who’s to decide what’s proper? What if wearing a codfish on your head was proper, would you do it?” – Alice Kingsleigh

“You’re just as sane as I am.” – Luna Lovegood

Who and what is, by definition, really different between these two individuals—Loony Lovegood and the “Wrong” Alice? In essence, if it’s their assertion to stay true to what they believe is rational, their own ideas or norms, which are obviously very different from those around them, then who has the power to decide what is the definitive idea of a conventional system? What gives or powers this sense of idiosyncratic individuality? Does the word “idiosyncratic” in this case have a negative connotation? Who’s to say what’s right?

This paper delves to better explore these questions and understand the concept of “Muchness,” its impact on the character arcs of these two brilliant, eccentric personalities, their similarities and differences regarding circumstances, personality, and, above all, choices made throughout the *Potter* series and the movie *Alice in Wonderland* by Tim Burton, respectively, which includes application of Deci and Ryan’s Self-Determination Theory for a deeper understanding of the quotidian choices these two girls have made, as a result determining their narrative the way they want it, even if that brands them “erratic.”

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Independent Scholar

The Magical Art of Dubbing the Potterverse (Slavic Language Edition)

This presentation strives to explore the magical world of dubbing in the Potterverse, specifically focusing on the Russian language factor. It delves into the intricate process of translating, transforming and adapting the beloved *Harry Potter* series for Russian-speaking audiences, highlighting the intricate challenges and creative solutions involved in maintaining the original’s authentic magic and charm. Attendees will gain insights into the art of voice acting, the importance of cultural nuances, and the collaborative efforts of translators, supervisors, directors and actors in bringing J.K. Rowling’s world to life. Through engaging examples and behind-the-scenes stories, this presentation aims to celebrate the unique blend of Russian artists with well-beloved book characters that come together only to create an ideal match, which has become a rare gift for the Russian community of Potterheads. Delving deeper into the labyrinthine dubbing process will ultimately showcase how it enriches the global appreciation of the *Harry Potter* world.

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Rituals of Control: Foucault, Food, and Discipline at Hogwarts

Food and feasting are more than magical traditions in the *Harry Potter* film series—they play a key role in maintaining order and control within the institution of Hogwarts. This paper uses Michel Foucault's ideas from *Discipline and Punish* (1975) to show how the feasts in the Great Hall act as quiet tools of discipline and power.

Using Foucault's concepts of disciplinary power, docile bodies, and panopticism, the paper explores how structured dining practices—such as waiting for the Headmaster's signal, sitting in assigned places, and following repeated routines—train students to follow rules without questioning them. The Great Hall's spatial layout, where authority figures watch from the High Table, mirrors Foucault's idea of the panopticon, where being observed encourages self-discipline.

Finally, the paper discusses how the house-elves who prepare the food are never shown, which hides the labor that supports the system. By looking closely at key scenes, this paper argues that food at Hogwarts is used to create routine, manage students, and keep control, even in times of fear or change.

By closely examining key feast scenes from the *Harry Potter* films, this paper argues that food is not just a source of comfort or tradition but a carefully structured performance of institutional power. Through Foucault's lens, the Great Hall emerges as a space where discipline is internalized, surveillance is normalized, and obedience is maintained through routine. Ultimately, the feasts at Hogwarts reveal how even acts of celebration can become powerful tools of control in the hands of authority.

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The Issue of Free Will in Harry Potter: A Kantian Approach

This paper explores the concept of free will in the *Harry Potter* film series through the lens of Kantian philosophy. It begins by examining the House Sorting process at Hogwarts. Although the Sorting Hat initially considered placing Harry in Slytherin House based on his characteristics as a "homo phaenomenon," Harry ultimately managed to be placed in Gryffindor as a "homo noumenon" in line with Kantian terminology. Next, it discusses the Mirror of Erised, where Harry, having lost his parents at a young age, is given the chance—even if only illusory—to see and connect with them. While the mirror offers him the comforting illusion of a family, reason eventually triumphs over appearance, representing yet another struggle between the senses and rational thought. Finally, this paper considers Harry as a Horcrux and draws a parallel with an example from Kant's *Critique of Practical Reason* in which a ruler threatens to kill a person

unless they falsely accuse an innocent person. In both situations, the presence of Reason—and thus the existence of free will—is evident because one knows they can choose not to sacrifice oneself or to lie, even if they lack the courage to follow through; what matters is that they know they ought to do the right thing. In contrast, Voldemort, in his attempt to become all-powerful and immortal, uses himself more as a means than as an end in himself, especially if we consider that he splits his soul into seven Horcruxes.

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Independent Scholar

The Great Wizarding World-Building

When first reading the *Harry Potter* series, it is fair to say that some audiences might “miss the forest for the trees.” Readers become so enraptured by the unfolding narratives—the sea of new characters, quirky dialogue, and plot devices—that it may take several rereads to even register what each book is revealing or teaching them about the greater wizarding world. Of course, that is one of the joys of rereading (or simply re-experiencing) any good story—you discover something in the telling that hadn’t been considered before.

Thus, this presentation looks at all seven installments of the *Harry Potter* series and highlights the “big ideas,” in terms of world-building or narrative construction, that are presented in each book. This is not a critical analysis of themes, although there are undoubtedly correlations that can be addressed. Instead, it discusses how each book reveals more and more of the wizarding world, to both us and Harry, how those world-building elements are presented and their functions in the narrative (immediate or otherwise), to reinforce a more robust understanding of the series overall. And it will start with the “big idea” of *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone*: what is magic?

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Harry Potter with Added Protein: Mashle and the Magic of Muscles

The *Harry Potter* phenomenon—global, bottomlessly bountiful, curiously rubberized—crosses cultural boundaries with enviable ease. In the East, its admirers are not merely devoted but inventive, and nowhere more so than in Japan, where anime and manga (arguably the nation’s most distinctive exports) have taken to referencing, parodying, and honoring Rowling’s world, whether in amateur experiment or professional guise. The most ambitious of these, at once expansive and intricately tuned, is Hajime Kōmoto’s recent manga and anime, *Mashle: Magic and Muscles*.

As an artefact of cultural exchange, *Mashle* deserves particular notice. It dismantles, with deliberate playfulness, the structural pillars of the *Harry Potter* universe, only to reassemble them within a comic architecture of its own. The result is both homage and critique; both an affectionate nod and a knowing wink. Its protagonist, Mash Burnedead, stands as the ludicrous

mirror image of the Boy Who Lived—biceps bulging where incantations ought to be, a granite obstinacy planted exactly where there might have been destiny.

To present *Mashle* is, therefore, to demonstrate how the themes, archetypes, and elaborate scaffolding of Rowling's world have proved not just popular but resilient—strong enough to sustain reinvention, and supple enough to invite satire. It is evidence, if evidence were still needed, of *Harry Potter*'s long afterlife: a mythology robust enough to stroll gaily through the labyrinth of cultural translation and to step out the other side not diminished but with its hat at a rakish new angle, carried forward with both passion and irony.

*sākuru is a Euro–Japanese, open-access editorial project focused on popular culture

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Independent Scholar

A Sonic Journey Through Good, Evil, and Resistance in the Harry Potter Film Series

This paper explores how sound design in the *Harry Potter* film series symbolically shapes evolving interpretations of goodness, evil, and resistance within the magical world. Unique among fantasy franchises, the *Harry Potter* films present a valuable opportunity for adaptation studies, particularly due to the series' five distinct director-composer collaborations. As these collaborations progressed, each team brought increasingly individualized interpretations, gradually diverging from the literary source material.

Drawing on 21st-century metaphor theory in music—alongside 19th-century theatrical codes and 20th-century Classic Hollywood symbolism—this analysis traces how representations of evil shift over time: from a binary opposition to goodness, to a failure to reach it, to a corrupting force within it, and finally to a force that seeks to annihilate it. Similarly, sound mediates between dialogue and image to depict goodness as constancy, love, and resistance to destruction.

Turning to acts of resistance, and informed by historic resistance theory, the paper examines how sound design elevates secondary and tertiary characters through sonic metaphors of disruption, in contrast to musical tropes of compliance. This suggests a broader reimagining of resistance not as a singular heroic arc, but as a diverse, sonically supported ecosystem of opposition.

The following accepted papers were unable to be presented at HPAC 2025 as the speakers could not attend the conference:

- *“‘Too Big To Be Allowed’: What Hagrid’s Size Tells Us About J.K. Rowling and Disability” by Eddie Nicolas, MA candidate, University of Maine (francis.nicolas@maine.edu)*
- *“The Black Girl Who Lived: Using the Wizarding World to Support AfroNerd Healing” by Mercedes Samudio, DSW, LCSW (mercedes@shameproofparenting.com)*
- *“Expelliarmus Nostalgia!: Teaching Critical Pedagogy with Harry Potter” by Nancy Quintanilla, PhD (nancyq@cpp.edu)*

Thank you for for 14 years of magical scholarship ✨