

Essay in Comparative Literature  
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# **The Secret World of Harry Potter**

**The Literary Laws of Fantasy Applied to the  
Novels by J. K. Rowling**

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## **Abstract**

My intentions with this essay has been to examine the World in which the story of J. K. Rowlings Harry Potter takes place, the structure, narrative and restrictions, in order to place the suite of novels in the tradition of the Fantasy genre. Since the release of the first book Harry Potter has become a household name, possibly more than any other contemporary literature written for children. Various readings concerning gender, etymological, linguistic aspects and so forth have been done, and in most cases the books are placed in the genre of Fantasy without distinguishing what in fact makes the novels Fantasy. I wanted to see which specific sectors of the books that place them in the genre, and, assuming that it would in fact fit into the Fantasy genre, in which ways it diverges from the tradition of the genre in means of the structure of the world/s of the story. I also looked at the faults in the logic within the novels to see if the inconsistencies in the rules of the world have an impact on the agency of the story.

I found the novels to be a part of the fantasy tradition, not only by having many intertextual relations and similar features to other fantasy-novels but also in the fundament of the story, its basic conditions such as the supernatural elements and the hidden places in the world of the books. The minor inconsistencies that I found were too small to disrupt the narrative, and the fact that some of the aspects of the books drift slightly away from the logic of the world within the story have reasonable explanations such as making the story easier to relate to.

## **Index**

1. General Introduction .....	3
1.1 Purpose and Question at Issue .....	3
1.2 A Survey of Previous Readings of Harry Potter .....	4
1.3 Theory and Method.....	6
1.4 The Definition of Fantasy, Primary and Secondary Worlds in Fantasy According to Nikolajeva and Klingberg.....	8
2. J. K. Rowling .....	9
2.1 Muggle Meets Magic - A Short Introduction to the World of Harry Potter .....	10
2.2 The Plot.....	11
3. The Wizarding Community in Short.....	12
3.1 The Ministry of Magic, Restrictions and Laws in the Wizarding Community – Keeping Magic Hidden From Muggles .....	13
3.2 Moodys Magical Eye, the Marauders Map and Invisibility Cloaks – Objects with Magical Properties .....	15
3.3 Time-Turners – Meddling With What Should Not Be Meddled By Humans .....	17
3.4 Hogwarts, Hogsmeade and other Hidden Places .....	19
3.5 Floo, Brooms and Apparition – Travelling in The Wizarding World .....	23
3.6 Magical Creatures .....	24
3.7 Advanced Magic Gifts and Controlling the Mind – When Magic Just Isn’t Enough .....	28
3.8 Money in the Magical World.....	29
4. Conclusion .....	31
Bibliography .....	33

## 1. General Introduction

The story of Harry Potter has fascinated adults as well as children all over the world for nearly a decade, since the first book was published in 1998. Over 300 million copies have been sold according to an article on CBS News webpage on October 4<sup>th</sup> 2005,<sup>1</sup> about three months after the release of *Harry Potter and the Half Blood Prince*,<sup>2</sup> the sixth book in the series. The world is waiting in suspense for the seventh and last book, and according to the author herself, she is aiming to have it out during 2007.

So what is it that makes these books so exorbitantly popular? One explanation could be that the stories, though contradicting all common sense we've been raised to believe, thanks to thorough work with every last detail, leaves no room for misunderstanding: oh, it *is* there, you muggles just simply can't see it. It is very well hidden.

But exactly how well does J. K. Rowling follow the rules? Göte Klingberg says that there are certain literary laws of the genre fantasy, which must be obeyed in order to make a story believable to its readers; the author must form a narrative logic, specific for the book or books in the series, and this logic must be kept all the way to make the world (or in some cases worlds) seem like a whole.

In this paper I am going to discuss Klingbergs and Nikolajevas "rules" or literary laws and see how Rowling measures up. Could this be the key to her success?

### 1.1 Purpose and Question at Issue

The books of Harry Potter have, except being read by children, young adults and adults all over the world for pure pleasure, also been subject to thorough research in several different disciplinary perspectives. This said, I am yet to find a reading of the novels examining the credibility of the novels, according to the logics of the world that J. K. Rowling has herself built for the setting of her story. Perhaps the question has ended up in the shadow of the intriguing references to history and myth that Rowling has injected to her world, which have been closely monitored and, I am sure,

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<sup>1</sup> [www.cbsnews.com/stories/2005/10/04/print/main907188.shtml](http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2005/10/04/print/main907188.shtml)

<sup>2</sup> Rowling, J. K., *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, London 2005, p. 11. (from here on HP&HBP)

has had a very educative function and resulted in an abundance of books with diverse target groups, from small children to adults and academics.

My intention is to redirect the attention to the logic of the fantasy narrative. I will examine the world in which the story of Harry Potter takes place through analysing different categories, such as laws, places and creatures by the facts offered by Rowling. I will examine the material (the six books about Harry Potter published to date), give a summary of the laws and logic in the world that Rowling has set up and discuss any prospective inaccuracy I find during my reading, and if there is a satisfactory explanation to the “gap” in order to repair the story to its whole. How well does Rowling follow the literary laws of fantasy, and the logic in her own imagined world? Answering this question will not only tell us something about the intratextual consistency of the Harry Potter novels, but also place them in a context of the fantasy tradition that has been examined in order to establish the literary laws of the genre.

## **1.2 A Survey of Previous Readings of Harry Potter**

Many people, ranging from literary experts to children, have made attempts to unravel the mysteries of the wizarding world in J. K. Rowlings novels.

In the first part of Julia Eccleshare’s *A Guide to the Harry Potter Novels* (2002) she gives us the background, and in the second part she explains her view on the psychology of the Harry Potter books, covering the subjects of escape and separation as well as family. I will use two chapters in this book for future reference (see list of sources) as I find her essay on Rowlings narrative technique relevant for my question at issue. *Harry Potters World: Multidisciplinary Critical Perspectives*, edited by Elisabeth E. Heilman (2003), is a collection of essays in which I will turn my attention primarily to chapter 6: “Writing Harry’s World: Children Co-authoring Hogwarts” by Earnest Bond and Nancy Michelson, who discuss children’s means of “filling in the gaps” and adding their own imagination to the world featured in fantasy, specifically Harry Potter and Hogwarts.

Books not covering Harry Potter but fantasy in general, and having relevance within the framing of my question include Tzvetan Todorov’s *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre* (1973), on how fantasy novels are structurally built up and the signification of each element in a story also in the context of the whole story. This applies to my question of how and if the Harry Potter novels are all “linked

together”, i.e. everything out of normal (everything in the novels that is “fantasy”) is explained in some way, either by the general logic of the tales or by the author injecting an explanation into the story at another point.

Some interesting analysis of the novels are made by the authors in *The Ivory Tower and Harry Potter – perspectives on a literary phenomenon*, edited by Lana A. Whited (2002), with essays on different aspects of the books, dealing with intertextual and archetypal as well as gender and political issues that come up in the reading of the novels, though there is no real tie to my reading of them.

Also scientists have been intrigued by the magic of Harry Potter, resulting in a number of books dealing with the scientific possibility of the magic in Harry Potter. One thorough work on this subject is Roger Highfield’s *The Science of Harry Potter: How Magic really works* (2002), which offers logical, scientific explanations to the “magical” properties of some of the objects and events that occur in the books. However interesting, this does not have relevance for my paper, since it is dealing with the physics of the stories rather than the narrative logic, i.e. the way Rowling mends the pieces of the story together and gives us a logical explanation to the series of events. In Philip Nel’s *J. K. Rowling’s Harry Potter Novels: A Reader’s Guide* (2001), the author offers as the title suggests, a guide to reading the books, but a very insufficient one, only briefly noting the humour in some of the characters names and the scene in which the novels are set, and seems to be more interested in elevating Rowling to the level of a saint.

As mentioned, the child fans of the series feel encouraged to learn more. Devoted fan sites are guessing the plot of the seventh and final book over a year before it is assumed to be released to stores, and in fan forums young children are discussing the intertextual relationships between Harry Potter and other fantasies, as well as the rich fauna of references to old myths and sagas. A few of these fan sites<sup>3</sup> have been helpful to me during my work, airing theories and speculations that has given me ideas of my own. Several books have been written on the subject as well, for example David Colbert’s *Harry Potters Magiska värld* (2002) and the two books J. K. Rowling herself wrote; *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* (2001), and *Quidditch Through the Ages* (2001), both under pseudonyms (Newt Scamander and Kennilworthy Whisp respectively, that appear in the books about Harry Potter), to the

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<sup>3</sup> For example <http://www.mugglenet.com/>.

benefit of Comic Relief U.K. <sup>1</sup> In the book *We Love Harry Potter! We'll tell you why* (1999), editor Sharon Moore has collected essays and letters written by children (and also a few views by adults), and she even offers recipes on food from the book and a list of rules for non-magical quidditch (I can only assume magic is added by the imagination of the players).

### 1.3 Theory and Method

The two books I will consider my primary theoretical sources are Maria Nikolajeva's *The Magic Code: The use of magical patterns in fantasy for children* (1988) and Göte Klingberg's *De främmande världarna i barn- och ungdomslitteraturen* (1980). The first provides a basis in what Nikolajeva calls "the magic code", referring to the complicated rules that apply to building up an imagined world. In the first chapter, "The Magic Law", she emphasizes the importance of following the laws first built up by the author in the early stages of inventing the fantastic world. In the latter, Klingberg similarly discusses the laws of fantasy, listing them after each other and giving examples.

In fantasy that has ties to both the regular world, which everybody knows, and an imagined, secondary world, unity between the two worlds is essential, according to Klingberg. On occasions when elements of the secondary world pass in to the "regular" world, this cannot go unnoticed by the residents of that world, but the most common way of "hiding" the secondary world, those who are not initiated will come up with to themselves rational explanations to what they have seen or heard. When a person (usually the main character) possesses an item or knowledge as of how to enter the secondary world, this must also be explained.

Also the secondary world in itself must express unity and coherence in order to be believable.<sup>4</sup> For the world to be so, it is of weight that the elements found in this world do not contradict each other, and that they are of the same nature: every event and element should feel in place in the world.

The last of Klingbergs three principal guidelines is the demand of satisfying elucidations and comprehensible contexts, by witch he means that objects, events,

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<sup>4</sup> Klingberg, p. 96 ff.

elements and characters that appear, or for that sake disappear, are satisfyingly explained.<sup>5</sup> In the case of time travel or travelling into other worlds: how does the narrator explain that the character is not missed in his or her regular world? This can be done in many ways, the most common is to stop or immensely slow down time in the persons regular world, so that even though he or she might be in the other world for several hours, days or even years, hardly any time has passed on the return to the ordinary world. Another possibility is that the person simply changes places with somebody in another time or world.<sup>6</sup>

Either the supernatural elements in the story involve time travel, objects that grant wishes, ghosts or magic, it must be clear to the reader how it has come to be there. Moving on to Nikolajeva, she has used some references to Klingberg, which will be left out of this text in order to avoid repetition and in extension boredom. In *The Magic Code* she suggests two main rules in the creating of fantastic literature: limitations and consistency. By limitations she means that the magic, or the rules of how the magic can be practiced within the frame of the book, must be limited. Unlimited magic would be the same as to say that absolutely anything can happen, and to deprive the story of its credibility through offering no rational logic, but only chaos.<sup>7</sup>

There are many ways to limit the magic; the magic is only effective for a certain period of time, for example until sundown (as in *Five Children* by Edith Nesbit); you only get a certain amount of wishes (as in most books where the magic source is an object that grants wishes), or there might be rules for how the magic may be used, as in the case of Harry Potter.

On consistency, she elevates the importance of the reality of the secondary world. The nature of the world should be comprehensible and have its own logic, and a reasonable causality. When beginning a book, the reader and author make an agreement: this is how this world works. As soon as this agreement is made, the author must stick to the logic of the world,<sup>8</sup> and any new object och magic element introduces hereafter, must be explained. The author must no the “background” of

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<sup>5</sup> Klingberg, p. 96.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. p. 100 ff.

<sup>7</sup> Nikolajeva, Maria, *The Magic Code: the use of magical patterns in fantasy for children*, Gothenburg 1988, p. 28.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. p. 33.

every new element which introduced, so as to be able to explain its presence in the world, if needed.

Nikolajeva stresses the fact that in magical struggles between good and evil, it is of utter importance that we are aware from the beginning that the good will win, that no matter how horrid the dark magic might seem, there is always a way to undo it with good magic, and that the good will eventually triumph.<sup>9</sup>

I will, of course, be using the books about Harry Potter that have been released to date, meaning all but the last and seventh that is yet to come.

#### **1.4 The Definition of Fantasy, Primary and Secondary Worlds in Fantasy According to Nikolajeva and Klingberg**

In her book, Nikolajeva has translated Klingbergs definition of a fantastic novel:

A logical narrative that takes place in two worlds which constitute a unity (usually one world is magical and the other real. Sometimes it may be two real worlds separated in space and time, while the contact between them is established in a magical way).<sup>10</sup>

This definition does not illustrate the wideness and variation in fantasy, but it does however explain simply the outlines of the genre; a novel or series of novels that contains magic, an other world or other worlds, supernatural elements and often creatures that do not exist in the real world and can not be explained rationally or scientifically.

Nikolajeva states that all secondary worlds existing in Fantasy are ““beyond” human experience”<sup>11</sup>. By that she means that we do not know of them, or how to find them: she claims the rule is that the location of a secondary world, in relation to the primary world (the world we know), is never described exactly: often we receive nothing but a poetic “hint” and sometimes not even that. Further, the secondary world may only be reached by magic, and not with the help of scientific gadgets as used in science fiction.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Nikolajeva, p. 34.

<sup>10</sup> Nikolajeva, p. 10, translation of Klingberg, p. 19.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 43.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p 35.

Nikolajeva divides the different types of secondary worlds into three different categories: the closed world is a world that does not have a notion of our world, is self-contained and the entire story is played out without interference or mention of the primary world; the open world is in contact with the primary world, and both are present in the text; the implied world is a world that somehow intrudes on the primary world, but which is never entered.<sup>13</sup>

Klingberg says that you might be tempted to define the secondary world as “unreal” in opposition to the “real” world that we recognize; but within the story, both worlds are essentially real.<sup>14</sup>

In this essay, as I can not seem to fit Harry Potters world snugly into any of the definitions offered here, I will talk of the Wizarding world or community, in opposition to the Muggle world or community. The Muggle world is the world inhabited by mainly Muggles (people with no magical powers) and non-magical creatures overall, and this is the equivalent to the primary world. When speaking of the Magic world I refer to the Magical places hidden within the Muggle world, that represent the closest equivalent to a secondary world.

## **2. J. K. Rowling**

Joanne Kathleen Rowling was born in Gloucestershire 1965, and raised, together with her little sister Diana (born 1967), by engineer Peter and lab technician Anne Rowling outside of Bristol. Peter and Anne liked reading to their children, and Rowling started writing her own stories at the tender age of six; her first story was about a rabbit named Rabbit. She grew up reading books by Edith Nesbit, C.S. Lewis and other fantasy authors, who have influenced her throughout her career.

When Rowling was fifteen, her mother was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. Even though it made a big imprint on her, this is nothing that affected her school work: being a model student, she went straight from being Head Girl her last year at Wydean to the University of Exeter. After School, she worked as an English teacher for a few years. In 1992, she met and marries Jorge Arantes and their daughter Jessica was born in 1993. not long after the birth of her daughter, Jessica left her husband in Spain and returned to Britain. As a single, unemployed mother at twenty-eight, life was hard and money was hard to come by. She decided to take a job as a French

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 36.

<sup>14</sup> Klingberg, p. 11.

teacher, and set a deadline for herself: the first book about Harry Potter would be finished before she started the job.

When Bloomsbury Publishing bought the rights for *Harry Potter and the Philosophers Stone* in 1996, Rowling quit her job and sat down to write, full time. The following years she wrote *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (1998), *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (1999), *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* (2000), *Harry Potter and the Order Of the Phoenix* (2003) and *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* (2005).

## **2.1 Muggle Meets Magic - A Short Introduction to the World of Harry Potter**

It is a bit misleading to say that the world in which the books of Harry Potter take place has a primary world and one specific secondary world; it is rather a number of magical places that are cleverly hidden within our regular world. Many of the places cannot even be entered by non-magic people. Non-magic people are called “muggles” in the books (and that is the term I will be using from here on). You can not tell simply from a persons appearance if he or she is a witch or wizard: they have no distinguishing features, except for possibly a magic wand in their pocket. The only real difference (from muggles) is that they have magical powers, and how they get there, we can not know. Since two muggle parents may have a witch or wizard for a child, it is probably not genetic.

Besides Witches, Wizards and Muggles, there is one more kind of people appearing in the books: Squibs. A squib is a person born by a witch mother and a wizard father, but who somehow turned out being unable to perform magic. Squibs are quite rare, however witches and wizards born by muggle parents are not. Naturally, the parents of muggle born witches and wizards are aware that magic exists, but other than that, the people of the wizarding community tend to prefer keeping to themselves, understandable considering the history of witch hunting and so forth.

Due to this, a lot of places inhabited by wizards and witches are protected from trespassing muggles by advanced magic. The Ministry of Magic is an entire organ devoted to making magical laws and enforcing that they are followed. For instance, they have the power to legally alter the memory of muggles who by mistake have been exposed to magical events and possess the right to prosecute anyone who does not obey their laws. More examples of laws will be used later on in this text.

Many precautions are taken to hide the magical community from the world in which it resides. In this sense, the novels of Harry Potter can be considered high fantasy, because there is only one world, and there is magic in it though most of its inhabitants are blissfully unaware of it.

In everyday life the magical characters in the series use an assortment of different spells and charms to go about daily life. They cook with the help of magic, move things or repair them, knit and so forth. Magic can't do everything, though. Most housework is still hard work; getting rid of vermin (like garden gnomes<sup>15</sup> or doxyfairies<sup>16</sup>) might take a special potion or hands on work and even regular house chores like doing dishes and mopping the floors will take somebody to keep an eye on it. This limits not the magic itself, but how it is used and how much at once you can do, which is according to the view of both Nikolajeva and Klingberg.

Nikolajeva says: "In general, in all books involving a struggle between good and evil forces the main perquisite is that good will triumph in the end."<sup>17</sup> How it will end up in the makroperspective on the books, from the first through the last (not yet published) book is for obvious reasons impossible to say, but in the microperspective of each individual book of the six to date, the good is victorious and the order is restored, which is important in the logic of the world: there must exist some means to vanquish evil, or else there is no point for the world at all. In this, Rowling has been very consistent. I will return to this matter later on.

## 2.2 The Plot

The main character of the books is, of course, Harry Potter. At one year of age his mother, Lily Potter, and father, James Potter, were killed by Lord Voldemort, the most evil wizard for over a century. Voldemorts aim was to kill the little infant, after he had been told of a prophecy saying that this boy, if anybody, would be his downfall. Lily, though, died for her sons life, and therefore provided him with the most powerful magical protection of all: sacrificing her life in order to save the life of somebody she loved. Lord Voldemort disappears, and the Wizarding community assumes that he has been killed; however, he is reduced to almost nothing, but he is alive and goes into hiding, making plans of how to re-obtain his body.

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<sup>15</sup> HP&CoS, p. 33.

<sup>16</sup> HP&FO, p. 125 ff.

<sup>17</sup> Nikolajeva, p. 34.

Ten years later, Harry, growing up with his aunt, uncle and cousin who are muggles to the bone, Harry is completely oblivious to the fact that he has any powers at all; he has been told that his parents were killed in the car accident that got him the lightning-shaped scar on his forehead. The truth about his past is uncovered only when he receive a letter accepting him to Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, and in the first book, he comes face to face, for the second time, with Lord Voldemort, but manages again, to escape. At the end of every book (except for the third, in which he rescues Sirius Black, his godfather who is unfairly sentenced to lifetime in Azkaban for the murder of a man who is not dead but only in hiding) Harry encounters Lord Voldemort under different circumstances, and every time slips away, just in the nick of time. It is all leading up to the final moment, for the prophecy says that one of them will kill the other.

Who ends up surviving will be revealed in the, not yet released, seventh and final book.

### **3. The Wizarding Community in Short**

The Wizarding community is not totally different from our world, except for the fact that there is a lot of magic in it. The community is mostly controlled by the Ministry, an organ rather like any democracy: a lot of minds, a little action, some corruption. Besides the politics of legislation, though, the issues the Ministry of Magic deal with are quite unlike the ones that the politicians in the Muggle world are accustomed to; most of the laws set up by the Ministry of Magic are for the safety of witches and wizards, but also for the safety of muggles and the secrecy of the Magic community. Contrary to the Muggle community, though, the Ministry of Magic itself sees to the enforcement of their own laws. For this, they have a large amount of departments, which will be discussed further in the following chapter.

Wizarding families are quite like muggle families as well: children under eleven are not allowed to use magic, although they might play slightly different games; instead of football and chess, for instance, they might play quidditch<sup>18</sup> on toy-brooms of wizard chess: chess with living pieces that you direct verbally. At eleven, they attend school. there are no universities or higher educational levels; in their fifth year,

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<sup>18</sup> Quidditch is the name of the most popular magical sport: it is played far up in the air, riding on brooms. Seven players on each side, and four balls. Harry plays the position of Seeker for his House Team.

witches and wizards take their O.W.L. exams, Ordinary Wizarding Levels, and after that they choose their subjects for the last two years, in which they do the N.E.W.T.-levels, Nastily Exhausting Wizarding Tests. At about seventeen, wizards are fully educated, and seventeen is also the year that they come of age. Grown up wizards can have many different sorts of jobs, within the ministry or working with magical creatures, as a professor and so forth.

Just as in muggle society, there are rich and poor wizard families, and those in-between. Conflicts like racism and war are as present as anywhere; however, the colour of your skin is not the issue, it is your ancestry: it is supposed to be finer to be “pure blood” than part muggle or muggle born (though your heritage has really nothing to do with your magical powers) and the very offensive word “mudblood” is used to describe somebody who’s blood is not “pure”. Just as in the Muggle world, though, only a small group of witches and wizards consider things like this to be of any importance.

### **3.1 The Ministry of Magic, Restrictions and Laws in the Wizarding Community – Keeping Magic Hidden From Muggles**

Nikolajeva says that in fantasy, it is important to limit the magic: it cannot run wild but must have rules for how it is used, either for its possibilities and power, or how it is allowed to be used, because “if anything can happen, there can be no narrative structure, no logical development, no coherent dénouement.”<sup>19</sup>

The magic in the books of Harry Potter have many restrictions, though they are easy to remember. The nature of the magic is that it takes a powerful mind to perform magic, and determination to perform the simplest spells. Add to this that every bit of magic requires some tools, or in the case of potions; magical ingredients. To make an enchantment and spell you need a wand, and even if any old wand will do, you will get the best results with your own wand. In fact, the wand chooses the wizard,<sup>20</sup> as Harry is told by Mr Ollivander, the wizened old wizard that makes the wands sold in Diagon Alley. Wands are made with wood from a number of trees, and inside is a magical substance, for example a unicorn hair or the feather from a phoenix.

Every spell or charm has an incantation which may be spoken, or if you have a strong enough mind, without speaking, merely thinking the word. Yet, however

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<sup>19</sup> Nikolajeva, p. 28.

<sup>20</sup> Rowling, J. K., *Harry Potter och De Vises Sten*, London 1997, p. 108. (from here on HP&DVS).

strong-minded and talented you may be, you have to obey the laws set by the Ministry of Magic. The Ministry consists of a multitude of different departments, such as the “Department for Regulation and Control of Magical Creatures” (that sets rules and laws regarding magical creatures), the “Committee on Experimental Charms” (which tests and approves, or disapproves, new inventions, charms and such), and the “Department for International Magical Cooperation” (that care for communication with Ministries for Magic in other countries and make arrangements for international events and so forth). There is a department for every aspect of the wizarding world, there is even a department working with muggles and, naturally, there is a “Department for Magical Law Enforcement”, which handles wizards and witches who have broken Wizarding Law.

Before you come of age at seventeen, you are not allowed to use magic outside of school. But also as you become an adult, there are laws to be obeyed. To perform magic in front of muggles is strictly forbidden, and so is enchanting a muggle artefact that may end up in the hands of a muggle. Muggles seem, though, not to want to think that magic exists: J. K. even goes so far that to say Muggles tend to ignore magic even when exposed to it, or so she lets her characters express at several occasions. An example is shrinking door-keys, that some wizard twats will sell to a Muggle, just for the fun of imagining them trying to find it once it’s tiny. Arthur Weasley, Rons father who works in the Misuse of Muggle Artefacts Office in the Ministry, says

“Of course, it’s very hard to convict anyone because no Muggle would admit their key keeps shrinking – they’ll insist they just keep loosing it. Bless them, they’ll go to any lengths to ignore magic, even when it’s staring them straight in the face...”<sup>21</sup>

In that case a member of the “Accidental Magic Reversal Squad” will show up to set things straight and “obliviate“ (a memory charm that will make the muggle forget the magic they have just witnessed, can also be used on a witch or wizard) the muggle in question.

There are laws against time travel in the wizarding world, as Hermione explains to Harry: “Nobody’s supposed to change time, nobody!”<sup>22</sup> The use of Time-Turners

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<sup>21</sup> Rowling, J. K., *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, London 1998, p. 34. (from here on HP&CoS)

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 292.

(explained in chapter 3.3) is utterly restricted, and only to be used for practical reasons, not to change a string of events.

There are, most significantly, three curses that are absolutely forbidden under all circumstances. These are called “the Unforgivable Curses” and include the Cruciatus curse, which induces severe and pure pain to its recipient, the Imperius curse, which gives the caster total control over the mind and actions of the cursed, and lastly, the Avada Kedavra, the killing curse. All of these curses, performed on a fellow human being, will earn the person behind the curse a lifetime sentence in Azkaban.<sup>23</sup> These evil wizards are hunted down by Aurors, wizards highly trained in defence against dark arts – a sort of Wizard FBI.

On the top of the ministry reins the Minister of Magic himself, in book 1 through 5 his name is Cornelius Fudge (though in book 6 he is replaced by Rufus Scrimgeour, priorly head of the Auror Office, for being neglective of the fact that Voldemort, the most evil wizard for centuries, has returned) and according to the books, the Minister of Magic is in contact with the Prime Minister of England. A painting hanging in the Prime Minister's office will tell him when the Minister of Magic requests a meeting; this happens quite rarely though, as Fudge puts it to the Prime Minister: “I’ll only bother you if there’s something really serious going on our end, something that’s likely to affect the Muggles”.<sup>24</sup> When the Prime Minister asks Fudge why he hasn’t been told about this particular part of the job, Fudge merely laughs. “My dear Prime Minister, are *you* ever going to tell anybody?”<sup>25</sup> This not only offers an explanation to why muggles who may have encountered magic will keep it silent – in fear of being labelled crazy – but also lives up to Göte Klingbergs demand on a unity between the primary and secondary world.

### **3.2 Moody’s Magical Eye, the Marauders Map and Invisibility Cloaks – Objects with Magical Properties**

Objects that are enchanted, or cursed, or simply have their own magic, appear throughout the books. There are the simple things, like magic (flying) broomsticks: these, after only a few chapters of reading, seem to the reader as ordinary as anything.

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<sup>23</sup> Rowling, J. K., *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, London 2000, p. 232 ff. (from here on HP&GoF)

<sup>24</sup> Rowling, J. K., *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, London 2005, p. 11. (from here on HP&HBP)

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

In this group of magical objects we may also count self-stirring cauldrons, anti-cheating quills and an assortment of more or less harmless things.

There are, however, some far more rare magical objects, with more mysterious functions.

The old Auror, Alastor “Mad-Eye” Moody, who teaches Harry’s class Defence Against the Dark Arts in his fourth year, has a magical eye; a light blue, round eye that can look in every direction – even out of the back of his head.<sup>26</sup> The eye can see through clothes and even solid wood. Nobody else, appearing so far in the books, has an eye anything like it, and it is not explained further. According to Klingberg, though, not everything must be explained, as long as when it is, it must be believable.<sup>27</sup> The eye would seem more believable if it would be more thoughtfully explained, since it is hard to imagine where it would have come from, and why everybody doesn’t have one: they seem very practical.

The story of the Marauders Map, however, is clear; when Harry’s father, James Potter, was in school, his best friends were Harry’s godfather Sirius, Remus Lupin and a boy named Peter Pettigrew. Remus Lupin, being a werewolf, would be hidden in the Shrieking Shack during full moon, to avoid attacking the other children when transformed. Sirius, James and Peter became animagus: this is how they could spend time with their friend without being in danger of attack. They created the Marauders Map to be able to sneak out of the school grounds without getting caught: it is a map over the entire school, all floors and the grounds, with little, moving, black dots, each with a nametag, so that the person watching the map can see who is where inside the grounds and avoid getting caught out of bed after hours by dodging the dots.<sup>28</sup> The map is enchanted to look just like any old scrap of paper when not used, and the person that wants to use it must tap it with his wand and say: ”I solemnly swear I am up to no good!” for the map to appear. When finished, you simply say “Mischief managed!” and the map will return to looking just like trash. Far later, Harry is given the map by George and Fred, Rons’ twin brothers. The map at several occasions help Harry out of trouble, but it sometimes gets him into it to.

There is also the Invisibility Cloak that James passed on to his son, through Dumbledore. Not used, it looks merely a thin, silvery fabric, but when put on it

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<sup>26</sup> HP&GoF, p. 233.

<sup>27</sup> Klingberg, p. 92.

<sup>28</sup> Rowling, J. K., *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, London 1999, p. 11. (from here on HP&PoA)

leaves the user invisible to anybody around<sup>29</sup> (with the exception of Moody's Eye). Where you can buy them is not said, and I can not find one mentioned any time the characters are looking inside a wizards shop (these are closer introduced in the following chapter).

For wizards afraid of the dark side, there are many different sorts of Dark Magic Detectors, such as Sneakoscopes, a spinning top that alerts if somebody untrustworthy is around by lighting up and spinning,<sup>30</sup> and there is also a sort of mirror-like object called a Foe-Glass, in which shadows of your enemies dwell. As they get clearer, your enemies come closer: when you can see the whites of their eyes: that's when you are really in trouble.<sup>31</sup>

A lot of magic is done with potions. Each potion is made with a precise amount of some very magical substances, and that is not enough. There is a special way to stir the potion, a certain number of stirs and clockwise or counter-clockwise; the temperature must be right and any solid ingredience chopped in the right size or mashed to the correct consistency. Most of the power comes from the potions ingredience, rather than the person brewing it.

Made incorrectly, however, the least dangerous potions may become hazardous. Potions are very powerful, but most potions have an antidote (if brewed correctly: that is, both potion and antidote), or are only active for a limited amount of time, therefore limiting the magic, also of the potion. Given that there are antidotes to the most vicious potions, we know that nothing a potion could do to a person is irreversible, and that fits well with Nikolajevs statement that "there must be some cure for it, and we, readers, know it."<sup>32</sup>

### **3.3 Time-Turners – Meddling With What Should Not Be Meddled By Humans**

In her third year, being a slight overachiever, Hermione Granger signs up to so many subjects that there's just not room on the timetable. Professor McGonagall gives Hermione a Time-Turner, a time travelling-device that looks like an hour-glass and hangs in a fine gold chain around the neck. By turning the hour-glass, the person with his or her neck inside the chain is transported back in time, one hour for each turn.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> HP&DVS, p. 248 f.

<sup>30</sup> HP&PoA, p. 13.

<sup>31</sup> HP&GoF, p. 376 f.

<sup>32</sup> Nikolajeva, p. 34.

<sup>33</sup> HP&PoA, p. 288.

When dealing with time travel, Klingberg sees several obstacles that must be overcome. The first is: how come the person travelling in time is not missed in his or her present? Many authors simply make time stop in the present, for as long as the time traveller is gone.<sup>34</sup> In Rowling's case, the problem is the opposite: instead of going missing, the time traveller simply doubles: when Harry and Hermione go three hours back to rescue Buckbeak and Sirius, they are both in the three hours that just passed, and they relive the time, watching themselves and meddling in the events.<sup>22</sup> Instead of explaining why they are missing, they have to get around the fact that there is two each of them. Hermione tells Harry that they must not be seen, and as he asks her why, Rowling has used Hermione to explain how it works in her world:

'Harry, what do you think you'd do if you saw yourself bursting into Hagrid's house?' said Hermione.  
I'd – I'd think I'd gone mad,' said Harry, 'or I'd think there was some dark magic going on –'  
'*Exactly!* You wouldn't understand, you might even attack yourself! Don't you see? Professor McGonagall told me what awful things have happened when wizards have meddled with time ... loads of them ended up killing their past or future selves by mistake!'<sup>35</sup>

The solution is to not be seen. Their future selves, that have travelled back in time, must hide so that they aren't spotted by their past selves or anybody else, all whilst correcting the mistakes they did the first time around. However, at one point when Harry and Sirius are almost kissed by the Dementors that have come to collect Sirius back to Azkaban, the Harry that has travelled back in time lunges out from behind a bush and sends his Patronus to help his trapped self and Sirius. When Harry sees himself far away, his first thought is that his father has returned from the dead to rescue him;<sup>36</sup> he has always been told that he looks very much like his father did in his school days.

Seeing as Harry did not, at the time he saw himself cast the Patronus, know that time travel was possible even in the wizarding world, it was lucky that he assumed the shape of himself to be good, and in any case he was not capable of attacking, weakened by the Dementors surrounding him. However, since Hermione had been using the Time-Turner all year, she should be aware that at some times, there were two of her running around. One can only assume that Rowling has made these

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<sup>34</sup> Klingberg, p. 100.

<sup>35</sup> HP&PoA, p. 288 ff.

<sup>36</sup> *ibid.*, p. 292.

wizarding laws up in the attempt to limit the time travelling; too much of it would be confusing. In her next year, Hermione drops a few classes and gives her Time-Turner back to McGonagall.

Klingberg lists a few more problems with time travel, that do not apply to Rowling's particular form of it. The difference in clothes and language, for instance.<sup>37</sup> Since Harry and Hermione are not travelling very far back in time, their clothes do not look odd (and even if they did, we can probably assume that wizards robes have looked quite alike for the last few centuries, at least the plain black school robes that the students of Hogwarts wear) and the same is true for language: not enough time has passed for there to be any difference, and anyway, they must not speak to anyone.

Nesbit, as usual with the most simple explanation, concludes that if magic can make you travel in time, magic will also bring solutions to the obstacles along the way.<sup>38</sup>

### **3.4 Hogwarts, Hogsmeade and other Hidden Places**

As mentioned, the world in which Rowlings story takes place, aside from the primary ("Muggle") world that the reader is familiar with, consists of several hidden locations, places and addresses that constitute the secondary ("Wizarding") world.

Every year on September 1<sup>st</sup> all the students of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry take the Hogwarts Express, a great, scarlet steam engine, from platform nine and three quarters at Kings Cross Station in London. This platform, of course, does not exist, or at least is not marked with any signs. Only wizards know how to, and have the power to, get on the platform: simply by leaning towards the barrier between platforms nine and ten.

The train leaves at eleven o'clock, heading north, and the students arrive at the school just in time for dinner. There have been attempts to locate where Hogwarts is supposed to be, but naturally, nobody has found it (if this is because it does not exist, or because the people who have gone looking for it are muggles, is up to anyone to decide for themselves since we cannot know). It is rumoured, however, that the castle is located in the highlands of Scotland,<sup>39</sup> because with the course of the train and the time it takes to travel, they must have passed the border to Scotland. The weather also seems to imply that they are pretty far north: the winters are described as very snowy

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<sup>37</sup> Klingberg, 100 ff.

<sup>38</sup> *ibid.*, p. 106.

<sup>39</sup> [www.hpfgu.org.uk/faq/geography.html#Hogwarts](http://www.hpfgu.org.uk/faq/geography.html#Hogwarts)

and pretty long, though it would be hard to say anything about the nature, because it is not described in detail: all we know is that there is the large Forbidden Forest, inhabited by creatures you would not normally find in a forest, and which are so unfamiliar to us that we can not place them in a certain climate, yet there is the lake on the grounds, usually only referred to as plainly “the lake”, which contains a sea monster: this could be interpreted as Loch Ness, the famous lake in Scotland, but it seems unlikely as it would attract a lot of muggle tourists, and it would be hard to keep the school hidden.

Hogwarts is a boarding school: the castle of the school also doubles as the home of the students during terms (and for some students, also during holidays, though not summer vacation). The students are divided into four different school houses, Gryffindor, Ravenclaw, Hufflepuff and Slytherin, who sleep in different dormitories and compete with one another to win the House Cup, for good behaviour, and the Quidditch Cup, given to the team that wins most points in the wizarding sport quidditch during the school year.

Hogwarts is said to be protected by a multitude of different charms and protective spells and even simple common sense. First of all, it’s the location of the school, which is far from preying eyes, and in case somebody would happen to pass by, they will not see the school, because it is enchanted to look like just some old ruins to anybody who is trespassing. The castle is also hidden by an unplotable charm, which makes it impossible to mark out on a map.<sup>40</sup> The means by which witches and wizards can travel to the school are also limited; witches and wizards have many ways of travelling: they may fly on brooms, travel by floo powder and apparate. It is not possible to fly over the walls surrounding Hogwarts, as Hermione points out, citing “Hogwarts, a History” (which she does repeatedly throughout the books<sup>41</sup>), and it not possible to apparate in on, nor disapparate from, the grounds of Hogwarts.

Here, however, there is an inconsistency in Rowlings narrative. In their first year, oddly enough, when helping Rubeus Hagrid get rid of the baby Dragon Norbert, which Hagrid has tried to keep as a pet, Harry, Hermione and Ron contact the latter’s brother Charlie, a Dragon-Keeper (I will return to this later), to ask him to care for Norbert. Charlie sends a few friends, who pick the dragon up in the highest tower.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> HP&GoF, p. 185.

<sup>41</sup> One description of some of the charms protecting the school can be found in HP&GoF, p 185.

<sup>42</sup> HP&DVS, p. 295 ff.

To do this, they must enter school grounds, and since the Dragon is illegal, it is not likely that they have asked permission. It is said to be impossible to enter the school grounds on broom or anything else, if you are not invited. Nowhere in the text is there an explanation to how they manage to pass the walls around the school grounds.

Hogwarts, however, is far from the only magically hidden location in the series. In their third year, Hogwarts students are permitted to visit the village of Hogsmeade, the only entirely wizarding settling,<sup>43</sup> on weekends (provided they have their permission forms signed from home). In Hogsmeade you find Dervish and Bangs, a wizarding equipment shop, Zonko's Joke Shop, which is exactly what it sounds like, a post office with hundreds of owls (wizard mail is sent by owl, I will return to this later), all marked by colour depending on the hurry of your parcel or letter, Honeydukes, a magic candy shop and of course the Three Broomsticks, the bar where you can huddle up and be served butter beer. The train station where the Hogwarts Express drops off the students at the beginning of the school year is also in Hogsmeade.

In the books, Harry also visits The Burrow, where the Weasleys live. It is a cottage, apparently built out after every child born in the Weasley family (there are seven!) and several stories high. The Burrow is in the country side. Although it is not said anything about it being hidden by magic, the location and the fact that it is surrounded by great hedges, makes it possible to assume that it is well hidden. However, since it is the only magical setting that is not stated to be hidden by magic, I would assume that there is some sort of muggle repellent charm cast on the hedges, yard or house.

Another residence that plays an important role in the fifth and sixth book is number twelve, Grimmauld Place, supposedly situated in London.<sup>44</sup> Number 12, Grimmauld Place is protected by a lot of powerful magic, but the most powerful spell is the Fidelius Charm, making Dumbledore its Secret-Keeper, which means that nobody can find the house unless they are told the address by Albus Dumbledore himself.<sup>45</sup> Number twelve, Grimmauld Place is the address of the Black family's ancestral mansion. The Blacks are an unpleasant and malicious bunch, believing that magic

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<sup>43</sup> HP&PoA, p. 61.

<sup>44</sup> Using the search engine mapquest.com I found no Grimmauld Place in London, though I did get the hit "[1-15] Grimaldi, London N1 9, GB". Grimaldi is the address used in the Swedish translation of the books, but hitting the search button another time, I found number 12, which suggests that the house is not unplotable.

<sup>45</sup> HP&PoA, p. 152 f.

should be kept within pureblood families like themselves, and not taught to “mudbloods”, wizards who have muggles in their heritage. Most of the Blacks alive, though, are in Azkaban, the wizarding prison, situated on an island “far away” (exactly where this is, or what it is far away from, is never said. Nikolajeva says that it should never be said exactly where the secondary world is situated<sup>46</sup> and this applies to Azkaban since it is part of the Wizarding community) and guarded by foul creatures called Dementors, and to which I will return later. Sirius is the only one not in Azkaban, and although he was considered a disgrace to his family for not judging people by their heritage (i. e. hanging out with “mudbloods”) he is now the owner of the house, and he offers Dumbledore to use it as headquarters for the Order of the Phoenix.

An other hidden place in London is Diagon Alley. This is where witches and wizards come to purchase anything they might need, robes, cauldrons, ingredients for potions, magical pets (mostly cats, owls, rats or toads, though not entirely regular ones). Gringotts Bank lies in the centre of Diagon Alley, a huge, white bank conducted by goblins, and probably the safest place in the world to keep something, except for Hogwarts,<sup>47</sup> according to what Rubeus Hagrid, the gamekeeper at Hogwarts, tells Harry at his first visit to the magical market place. The reason that Hogwarts is so safe, is that Albus Dumbledore, the headmaster, is the most powerful sorcerer alive. This is important that we know as we read the story, because since Harry has the help and guidance by Dumbledore, we can be sure that he will succeed, and that the “good” will win over the “evil”, in accordance to Nikolajeva.<sup>48</sup>

To reach Diagon Alley you must enter The Leaky Cauldron, an inn on Charing Cross Road, which can only be seen by witches and wizards. In the small courtyard in the back you find the correct brick, tap it with your wand, and the surrounding bricks will disappear to leave a passage through which you can enter the alley.

All of these places are ones that only wizards and witches are aware of, can see and can enter. Within these secluded areas, protected and/or hidden by powerful (yet to a Muggle undetectable) magic is allowed to be used openly. We do not need to question the ways in which the magic might work – *how come* nobody seems to see The Leaky Cauldron? – but only accept that nobody does, and therefore the magic people that

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<sup>46</sup> Nikolajeva, p. 43.

<sup>47</sup> HP&DVS, p. 85.

<sup>48</sup> Nikolajeva, p. 34.

drink in there or stay at the inn are left alone, and he entrance to Diagon Alley, that is all but discreet in its magical appearance. As with every one of the places mentioned in the series, the presence of the Inn is sufficiently described and this enforces the unity between the Muggle world and the Magic world.

### **3.5 Floo, Brooms and Apparition – Travelling in The Wizarding World**

There are four ways, mainly, for witches and wizards to get from one place to another, not counting the various ways they might travel without magic. Broomsticks, not very surprisingly, are used to fly on. The most commonly used when adult wizards travel alone is Apparition, to disappear (disapparate) and then reappear (apparate), moments later, in another place. However, you must be of age to take your apparition test (rather like a drivers license). This is because apparating is very complex, and not knowing how to you might splinch yourself; that is, leave a part or two behind.<sup>49</sup> When apparating, there are three steps: Destination, Determination, Deliberation.<sup>50</sup> No wand is required for apparition; a wizard that is about to disapparate will concentrate on the destination you want to apparate to, then take a step forward and make a turn. When going somewhere he or she hasn't been before, I can imagine this is the hardest part. However, when Bertha Jorkins (a member of the Ministry) has gone missing, and is missing for a very long time, Cornelius Fudge says that she is probably just lost.<sup>51</sup> It seems unlikely that not knowing where you are at the moment should be any impediment for imagining the spot you would like to go, and this seems to me like a minor inconsistency in the rules of the magic world that Rowling has created.

It is important to remember to apparate to secluded places, so to not scare a muggle by suddenly appearing from thin air. Therefore, when travelling in groups like families, they'll usually use Floo Powder or Portkeys. Floo Powder is used for operating the Floo Network, handled by the Ministry, connecting fireplaces in different locations to each other, magically. After throwing some Floo Powder in the fire and turning it green, the witch or wizard can step into the fire and yell the name of the place they want to visit, and the Floo will take them there.

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<sup>49</sup> HP&GoF, p. 77 f.

<sup>50</sup> HP&HBP, p 360.

<sup>51</sup> HP&GoF, p 71 f.

The Network is controlled by the “Floo Regulation Panel” at the Ministry, since it is a way to get straight into the homes of witches and wizards. For apparition, there are certain unwritten rules, etiquette if you like; you do not apparate directly into somebody’s home, but have the courtesy to give them a chance to deny you entry. Many magic dwellings, as Harry is told by Albus Dumbledore, are protected from unwanted apparators by magic.<sup>52</sup> This is the case of Hogwarts.

Portkeys is the easiest way to travel if you are a larger group if going somewhere there is no fireplace, especially if there are underage witches and wizards (who are not allowed to apparate) in the crowd. A portkey is an object, usually something very common and often broken, so that muggles will think that they are litter. By touching the portkey, with a sensation like a hook right in back of your navel, which pulls you forward, the wizard will arrive, moments later, at the spot where the portkey was set to end up, and it is very hard not to fall over.<sup>53</sup>

Even though Wizards have several ways to travel, and hardly any of them take more than a few seconds, it strikes me as odd that they seem to have no quick way of communicating, at least nothing quicker than by owl. There is the means of using Floo Powder, but only sticking your head in the fire (instead of your entire body), which enables you to talk to somebody out of their fireplace. This is not a very safe way to discuss something privately, though. Dumbledore mentions another way, that is supposed to be safer, to Harry, but he does not explain it closer.<sup>54</sup> If we assume that this means of communicating is as quick and simple as a phone call, it is still odd that not every wizard knows of it, and how to use it. Yet it would be more odd if they had managed to find no way at all to quickly and safely contact each other, since communication must be essential also in the Wizarding world. The conclusion I make is that it would steal some of the excitement in the books if there was never any wait for answers, and it is simply a question of the dramatic grip Rowling wants on her readers, rather than a flaw in the Magical world.

### **3.6 Magical Creatures**

The Magic World is full of creatures hidden from the muggle community due to their magical qualities, their dangerousness, or both. A lot of the creatures Harry

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<sup>52</sup> HP&HBP, p 62.

<sup>53</sup> HP&GoF, p. 81 ff.

<sup>54</sup> Rowling, J.K., *Harry Potter och Fenixorden*, London (2003), p. 957 (from here on HP&FO)

meets dwell in the Forbidden Forest on the grounds of Hogwarts; in the woods he encounters Centaurs, Unicorns and giant spiders. At school, Harry and his fellow students attend “Care of Magical Creatures”, a class devoted to learning about them. Rubeus Hagrid, the professor who teaches the class, introduces them to Hippogriffs,<sup>38</sup> half horse, half eagle with large wings and talons, they are very proud; but once you win their respect, also very loyal. One of the Hippogriffs, “Buckbeak” has an important part in the books: it is on his back Harry’s godfather Sirius escapes in their third year<sup>55</sup>. It is yet to be seen if Buckbeak gets an even more prominent role in the last book.

Other creatures who are of great importance in the series are dragons, which are pretty thoroughly described partly in HP&DVS, when Harry, Ron and Hermione help Hagrid with his baby dragon Norbert, and partly in HP&GoF, when Harry is set to get by a dragon in his first task in the Triwizard Tournament. According to Hagrid, dragons are not allowed in Britain since they are very hard to hide from muggles being very large and breathing flames and all, and they are definitely not to be owned as pets by ordinary wizards, since they are very dangerous even if you do know how to manage them. Rons brother Charlie works as a dragon-keeper in Romania (therefore we can assume that there are dragons in Romania) and he has been trained especially for the task. Dragons are kept in very secluded places, due to the Wizarding community’s wish not to let muggles know about there presence.

The house-elves are the most useful of all non-human, magical creatures. Tiny, with giant bat-like ears, they are the servants of the wizard family that owns them. They will clean and cook, but also keep secrets and do whatever task their master might set for them. The only way a house-elf can be set free is by his or her master providing the house-elf with proper clothes: in most cases, a house-elves worst nightmare. Having no wage or sick-leave, they attract Hermione’s attention, and she starts S.P.E.W., Society for the Promotion of Elfish Welfare. She does not manage to find many members for her society, though. The fact is that most house-elves are very happy tending to their masters, and only few who are very badly treated want out.

When Remus Lupin teaches Defence Against the Dark Arts, in their third year, Harry, Ron, Hermione and their classmates are presented with a Boggart, that it is their task to vanquish. A boggart is a ghostlike creature, with no real shape or form, as

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<sup>55</sup> HP&PoA, p. 302 f.

Hermione explains: “‘It’s a shape-shifter,’ she said. ‘It can take the shape of whatever it thinks will frighten us most.’”<sup>56</sup> The spell to get rid of a Boggart is the Riddikulus Charm, which turns the boggart into a funny, harmless version of that we fear, because, as Lupin says, “the thing that really finishes a Boggart is *laughter*.”<sup>57</sup>

Although Lupin clearly states that nobody knows what a Boggart really looks like, since it lives in dark, enclosed places and takes a form to horrify the spectator as soon as let out, in a later book, Mad-Eye Moody uses his magic eye, which can see through solid wood, to see if it is really a Boggart in the bureau at Grimmauld Place, and he confirms that it is. This is inconsistent, since nobody knows what a Boggart looks like. Possibly, Moody knows, but that does not explain why he would not tell the others. Rowling contradicts herself and breaks one of the main rules for fantasy: once a fact is set, it cannot be altered without a satisfying explanation.

Some creatures not animal, not human: not dead, yet not alive, are the ghouls that protect the wizards prison Azkaban. The Dementors, as they are called, are tall, hooded figures who live on good feelings and suck them out of the air surrounding them.<sup>58</sup> The Dementors last and worst weapon in the Dementors Kiss; sucking a persons soul out of their mouth. According to Professor Remus Lupin, this is a lot worse than death.

/.../ You can exist without your soul, you know, as long as your brain and heart are still working. But you’ll have no sense of self any more, no memory, no ... anything. There’s no chance of recovery. You’ll just – exist. As an empty shell. And your soul is forever ... lost.’<sup>59</sup>

Muggles can not see Dementors, but they can feel the effect of them. The Dementors, being neither living nor dead, cannot be killed, they can only be fought off by using a Patronus Charm (to which I will later return).

Nikolajeva states that there must always be a “cure” for evil; if somebody (on the “good” side) is harmed by magic, it must be reversible. This does not apply to death, though. She makes a reference to the deathless warriors of Lloyd Alexander’s Prydain cycle.<sup>60</sup> There must be a possibility to kill the evil; in the case of the deathless

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<sup>56</sup> HP&PoA, p. 87 f.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., p. 101.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., p. 140.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., p. 183.

<sup>60</sup> Nikolajeva, p. 34.

warriors: there must be a way to kill them, and destroy the cauldron from which they are born. The Dementors Kiss, though, is stated irreversible, and the Dementors have no way of dying, yet since they are not dead or alive, it is hard to say if this rule applies to them in particular. Since they, in times of peace, serve the good side by keeping bad wizards locked in, they do not need to be vanquished, but only controlled. When controlled, Dementors pose very little threat to humans (although they are a bit dangerous, they still make people around them awfully sad) and therefore we could consider if not the actual creatures vanquished, at least the danger is so. However, there is always the threat that the dark side will again get control over them, since they can offer them more prey than the good side, and Dementors are to their nature creatures without other feelings than “hunger” for souls.

Some of the most remarkable creatures serving the school are Thestrals. Thestrals are large, black, very skinny and horse like animals, with red eyes. The very remarkable thing about Thestrals, is that not everybody can see them. The only people who can see thestrals, are people who have seen death.<sup>61</sup>

It is odd though, that when the Dementors attack Harry in his third year, he can hear his mother dying by Voldemorts wand<sup>62</sup>, and since we know that Harrys mother was standing in front of him, shielding him before she was killed, he must have seen death, and even though he was very young, can remember bits of it. Yet, he can not see the thestrals until his fifth year, after seeing Cedric Diggory die in the end of his fourth.<sup>63</sup> Although minor, this inconsistency seems to form a gap in the nature of the thestrals, thus making them less believable. Other than this, though, I can not seem to find any apparent faults in the descriptions of the other creatures appearing in the books, even though some of them seem to have no important role in the narrative, but have more of a satiric or plain funny function in the books. Klingberg means that the presence of nonsense character in a non-nonsense text could bring the level of credibility down.<sup>64</sup> Nikolajevas view is another: she thinks that nonsense elements in a text is “[...] rather a stylistic device than a genre, and therefore can be present, and indeed often are, in the fantasy genre.”<sup>65</sup> In my opinion Nikolajeva’s theory is better; I do not find it to disrupt the narrative, but these funny injections blend in with the story

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<sup>61</sup> Rowling, J. K., *Harry Potter och Fenixorden*, London 2003, p. 520. (from here on HP&FO)

<sup>62</sup> HP&PoA, p. 134.

<sup>63</sup> HP&GoF, p. 691.

<sup>64</sup> Klingberg, p. 99.

<sup>65</sup> Nikolajeva, p. 33.

and gives it a bit of a warm touch. None of the smaller creatures in the story have a larger part of the story at whole, and it would, to me, be less believable if all magical animals were at the least the size of a horse.

### **3.7 Advanced Magic Gifts and Controlling the Mind – When Magic Just Isn't Enough**

There are certain kinds of magic that only some witches and wizards can do. Sometimes you may be born with it: Nymphadora Tonks, an auror (dark wizard-fighter) is an metamorphmagus, a very rare power which allows the person to, without a wand even, change their appearance.<sup>66</sup> It might be the colour of your hair or the shape of your nose – whatever you please. This could come in handy being an auror, since it is easy to disguise yourself. Another form of self-transfiguration is animagus: the ability to change into an animal. This can be taught, though it takes a very capable witch or wizard to do it. And even the cleverest can't change themselves into any animal at any time; once you become your animal, that is what you will be every time you change into your animal form. If you do learn to become an animagus, you are obligated to register with the Ministry.<sup>67</sup>

Certain spells and curses also require the power of a very able witch or wizard – and a very determined mind as well. Every spell must be taught, but some of them are so advanced or in other ways hard to do that not all witches and wizards learn to manage them. One example is the Patronus Charm. When correctly performed, it will conjure a Patronus from the tip of the wand. A Patronus is a silvery guard, individual to the wizard who performs it. In Harry's case, it is a stag (a stag is what his father became as an animagus) and for Albus Dumbledore it is a phoenix (as his pet, the phoenix Fawkes). A patronus will drive Dementors away, because it is “[...] a projection of the very things that the Dementor feeds upon – hope, happiness, the desire to survive – but it cannot feel despair, as real humans can, so the Dementors can't hurt it.”<sup>68</sup> In other words: it would take a powerful mind to ignore the feeling that the Dementors give people in their presence and summon all the happy thoughts one can to project the Patronus.

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<sup>66</sup> HP&FO, p. 66.

<sup>67</sup> HP&PoA, p. 257.

<sup>68</sup> *ibid.*, p. 176

The Unforgivable Curses also need a strong force behind them, but an evil one. The caster of an unforgivable curse must really want to hurt the person in question, or not give a damn.<sup>69</sup>

A spell that requires not only an evil mind but also an evil act, is making a horcrux. When you kill somebody, the soul “splits apart”, and with complicated magic the part of the soul can be saved inside an object. A horcrux is an object that contains a bit of the creator's soul, so that if he or she dies, there will still be a part of the soul, somewhere. Mind though, that every time a person does this, there is less left of the soul in the body.<sup>70</sup>

Leglimens, the ability to read somebody's mind,<sup>71</sup> is yet another magic that takes a strong mind. It is fought by Occlumency, to “close” the mind,<sup>72</sup> and in the case that leglimency is applied to a person who knows occlumency, the stronger mind will win. However, there seems to be a way to avoid having your mind read: when Harry is hidden under his Invisibility Cloak, Snape does not seem to notice him lurking around,<sup>73</sup> and it appears that the leglimens has to concentrate on the object whose mind they want to penetrate, and can not merely sense a presence.

Also the Imperius Curse can be fought with a strong enough will, if the person who is attacked refuses to do what he or she is told by the caster, the curse will break and has to be redone.<sup>74</sup>

Even though some of these forces are pure evil, and the others good or evil depending on the intentions of the person behind them, there is always a counter-curse, or another way out. The only curse, throughout the book, which you can not defend yourself against or counter in any way, is the Avada Kedavra (the killing-curse). When cast, the wand jets a green light, and if that light hits you, you are instantly killed. I perceive this as Rowlings way of saying that dead is dead, it will not come back. Not even magic can bring back life.

### **3.8 Money in the Magical World**

Witches and wizards don't use regular “muggle-money” when they need to buy something. Wizard-money is always in gold, silver och copper: the copper one is

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<sup>69</sup> HP&GoF, p. 239.

<sup>70</sup> HP&HBP, p. 464 ff.

<sup>71</sup> HP&FO, p. 615 f.

<sup>72</sup> *ibid.*, p. 602.

<sup>73</sup> HP&HBP, p. 304.

<sup>74</sup> HP&GoF, p. 254 f.

called a knut; there's 29 knuts to a silver sickle, and 17 sickles to a golden galleon.<sup>75</sup> Things with magical properties seem to have been bought in a wizarding store in the books, probably because it is best to leave the charming of objects to somebody qualified, who works with inventing new magical things. Ron Weasleys troublemaking twin brothers, Fred and George, start their own joke shop, Weasleys Wizard Wheezes, where they sell fake wands (that turn into something else when somebody attempts to use them, for example a giant rubber mouse<sup>76</sup>), Extendable Ears (long rubbery strings which can be inserted under doors to listen to conversations from a distance, at the other end of the strings) and the famous Skiving Snackboxes, filled with an assortment of two-coloured candies: one side will make you sick enough to cut class in school, the other will bring you straight back to the health you had before eating the first half.

Although the Weasley family is claimed very poor, they seem to always have enough money for food. Every time we join in a meal at the Burrow, there is a great feast with several courses. Mrs Weasley might be a very gifted cook, yet with seven children, at least four living at home (five in the beginning of the series), and often, during summer, two more mouths to feed (Harry and Hermione) it would take a lot of raw material to prepare such a meal. Of course, she conjures the food out of her wand, and straight into the cauldron she is cooking in. So what makes the difference between a "rich" wizarding family, and a poor one? What are the galleons, sickles and knuts really for? Dumbledore conjures a chair for himself and one for Mrs Figg at Harry's disciplinary hearing,<sup>58</sup> 18 which means also solid objects can be conjured. It cannot be that advanced magic, either, as Draco Malfoy conjures a snake from the tip of his wand in second year.<sup>77</sup> Logically, conjuring a living creature must be more advanced than say, clothes and cauldrons. Assuming this, a wizarding family's only expenses would be potions ingredients, floo powder (for travelling) and other things with magical properties; I make the conclusion that anything can be charmed or hexed at a later point, but that magicking objects required a wand. Even if we assume on the contrary, that not anything can be conjured at any time, there is always the possibility to transfigure things: when Ron has to wear the dressrobes his mother bought for him,

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<sup>75</sup> HP&DVS, p. 99.

<sup>76</sup> HP&GoF, p. 69.

<sup>77</sup> HP&FO, p. 167 ff.

second hand, to the Yule Ball, he uses a severing charm to remove the lace from it,<sup>78</sup> when it seems to me as though there is no reason his mother couldn't have transfigured it into some... less ugly ones.

#### **4. Conclusion**

In this essay I have tried to examine the world of Harry Potter in J. K. Rowlings books and hold it up against the rules of Maria Nikolajeva and Göte Klingberg. I have analyzed the separate factors of the world in which the story takes place, illuminating especially at spots where the wholeness of the world has been fractured and the facts have collided, guessing on possible explanations and criticizing the text and how Rowling measures up to the Literary Laws of Fantasy, according to Nikolajeva and Klingberg.<sup>79</sup>

In following the rules set up by Nikolajeva and Klingberg, Rowling has conformed to the tradition of the fantasy narrative. This places her among C.S. Lewis, Ursula Le Guin and Edith Nesbit that the theorists have used as examples for their discussion of the literary laws. Although the nature of her world is different from the ones exemplified in these books, the structure of the elements that make the magical part of the world different from the non-magical has similarities to the examples given by Klingberg and Nikolajeva in its possibilities and restrictions.

Rowling has made mistakes here and there throughout the series. However, if these inconsistencies will be explained in the final and last book, I can only speculate. The more major mistakes will be taken care of, I am sure; perhaps were they not mistakes at all, but were intended to be understood later on (as a part of her discourse, Rowling tends to tell Harry's side of the story, and as any young boy he will sometimes make rash assumptions to later on stand corrected and therefore, the reader not served with other than a few clues and the speculating of the characters until an element is ready to reveal itself fully). Minor inconsistencies, including Mad Eye Moody's magical eye and Charlie Weasley's friends picking up Norbert, did not occur to me until I went looking for them. Even if they do make the logic of the tale wobble a little and make it slightly less believable, they are not large enough to disrupt the course of the story, and the desire to know what will happen next in Rowling's driven narrative, the agency pulls the reader forward.

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<sup>78</sup> HP&CoS, p. 145.

<sup>79</sup> HP&GoF, p. 449.

On the task of limiting the magic, Rowling has developed a world full of not only rules *of* the magic, the ways in which it is possible to use it, but also the rules and laws *for* the magic, the ways it is intended, and indeed allowed, to be used. Magic in the story has a lot of similarity to science today: it is ever-changing and constantly developing, but must be restricted by the law, because there will always be those who will abuse it, and use it for own gain without caring who they might hurt. This is an approach we can understand, and offers an identification and therefore unity with the primary world, in which the magical locations of the series resides and with which it has to blend to stay hidden. Her ties to things we for sure know exist, like the Prime Minister of England, loosing your keys and being very sad (as the Dementors make you feel), add to the reality of the novels.

Rowling at some points sway away from the principal guidelines for Fantasy, in that the Dementors can not be killed but only won over, and that there is no way avoiding the killing-curse once it is spoken (except hiding behind something, which doesn't really count because it can always come again and again). This, together with the fact that Voldemort's great quest is eternal life and that time should not be meddled with, I would believe expresses Rowlings own thoughts on life and death; that it is unavoidable, the time will come; to get the message out was more important than following every rule set up by theorists.

Finally, as Nikolajeva states: “[A] too rational approach to magic may disintegrate it.”<sup>80</sup> And she might be right. Being a nit-pick about it might suck all the fun out of it; supposedly, it is best left at what it is – fiction. What we expect from the author is first of all an exciting, thrilling, adventurous story to sweep us away from the ordinary logic of everyday life. The logic and credibility provided in the books are offering a way to easier stay inside the world we have entered.

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80

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