

University of Pardubice
Faculty of Arts and Philosophy

Controversial issues surrounding the Harry Potter books
Veronika Hepnarová

Diploma Thesis
2018

Univerzita Pardubice
Fakulta filozofická
Akademický rok: 2016/2017

ZADÁNÍ DIPLOMOVÉ PRÁCE

(PROJEKTU, UMĚLECKÉHO DÍLA, UMĚLECKÉHO VÝKONU)

Jméno a příjmení: **Bc. Veronika Hepnarová**
Osobní číslo: **H16340**
Studijní program: **N7310 Filologie**
Studijní obor: **Anglická filologie**
Název tématu: **Kontroverzní otázky v díle Harry Potter a v jeho recepci**
Zadávající katedra: **Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky**

Z á s a d y p r o v y p r a c o v á n í :

Navzdory celosvětovému čtenářskému a komerčnímu úspěchu díla J.K. Rowlingové Harry Potter existuje mnoho kontroverzí, které tato septalogie vzbuzuje, ať už mezi literárními kritiky, vychovateli či náboženskými uskupeními. Cílem práce proto bude vyhledat, analyzovat a zhodotit otázky (přesněji motivy, témata, syžetové prvky, postavy, ad.), které jsou vnímány jako kontroverzní či nejčastěji vzbuzují negativní odezvu.

V úvodu práce studentka stručně zasadí zvolené dílo do širšího kontextu literatury pro děti a mládež a pojedná o jeho žánrovém zařazení. Rovněž definuje relevantní pojmy a uvede adekvátní recepční (případně další) literární teorie, s nimiž bude ve svých analýzách pracovat. Jádrem práce pak bude analýza vybraných otázek, jež jsou chápány jako kontroverzní. Své analýzy studentka opře o relevantní kritické zdroje a svou argumentaci vhodně doloží také odkazy na primární díla či přímo konfrontací s primárním textem.

Závěrem studentka své analýzy shrne a vysloví obecnější závěry o problematice kritických ohlasů a negativní recepce zvoleného díla.

Rozsah grafických prací:

Rozsah pracovní zprávy:

Forma zpracování diplomové práce: **tištěná**

Jazyk zpracování diplomové práce: **Angličtina**

Seznam odborné literatury:

Primární texty

Jacobsen, Ken. "Harry Potter and the Secular City." *Animus* 9 (2004): 79-104.

Foerstel, Herbert N. *Banned in the U.S.A: A Reference Guide to Book Censorship in Schools and Public Libraries.*

Gupta, Suman. *Re-reading Harry Potter.* 2nd ed. Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.

McCulloch, Fiona. *Children's Literature in Context.* Continuum, 2011.

Wolosky, Shira. *The Riddles of Harry Potter: Secret Passages and Interpretive Quests.* Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.

Edited by Heilman, Elizabeth E. *Critical Perspectives on Harry Potter.* 2nd ed. Routledge, 2009.

Bubíková, Šárka et al. *Literary Childhoods: Growing Up in British and American Literature.* Pavel Mervart in cooperation with University of Pardubice, 2008.

Cherland, Meredith. "Harry's girls: Harry Potter and the discourse of gender" In *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy* 52.4 (2008): 273-282.

Cordova, Melanie J. "'Because I'm a girl, I suppose!': gender lines and narrative perspective in Harry Potter." *Mythlore* 33.2 (2015): 21-36.

Murphy, Derek. *Jesus Potter Harry Christ: The Fascinating Parallels Between Two of the World's Most Popular Literary Characters.* Holy Blasphemy, 2011.

Granger, John. *Looking for God in Harry Potter.* SaltRiver, 2007.

Phillips, D. Z. *From fantasy to faith, morality, religion and twentieth-century literature.* SCM Press, 2006.

Vedoucí diplomové práce: **doc. Šárka Bubíková, Ph.D.**

Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky

Datum zadání diplomové práce: **30. dubna 2017**

Termín odevzdání diplomové práce: **31. března 2018**



prof. PhDr. Karel Rýdl, CSc.
děkan



doc. Šárka Bubíková, Ph.D.
vedoucí katedry

V Pardubicích dne 31. října 2017

Prohlašuji:

Tuto práci jsem vypracovala samostatně. Veškeré literární prameny a informace, které jsem v práci využila, jsou uvedeny v seznamu použité literatury. Byla jsem seznámena s tím, že se na moji práci vztahují práva a povinnosti vyplývající ze zákona č. 121/2000 Sb., autorský zákon, zejména se skutečností, že Univerzita Pardubice má právo na uzavření licenční smlouvy o užití této práce jako školního díla podle § 60 odst. 1 autorského zákona, a s tím, že pokud dojde k užití této práce mnou nebo bude poskytnuta licence o užití jinému subjektu, je Univerzita Pardubice oprávněna ode mne požadovat přiměřený příspěvek na úhradu nákladů, které na vytvoření díla vynaložila, a to podle okolností až do jejich skutečné výše. Beru na vědomí, že v souladu s § 47b zákona č. 111/1998 Sb., o vysokých školách a o změně a doplnění dalších zákonů (zákon o vysokých školách), ve znění pozdějších předpisů, a směrnici Univerzity Pardubice č. 9/2012, bude práce zveřejněna v Univerzitní knihovně a prostřednictvím Digitální knihovny Univerzity Pardubice.

V Pardubicích dne 27. 6. 2018

.....

Bc. Veronika Hepnarová

Acknowledgment

I would like to thank doc. Mgr. Šárka Bubíková, Ph.D. for the constant help, guidance, and advice during the process of writing this thesis. Also for her kindness and patience during the cooperation. I would also like to thank Mgr. Jitka Findejsová, for her helpfulness.

Abstract

This thesis deals with the reception of book series *Harry Potter* (1997 – 2007) by Joanne Rowling. Despite the fact, that the book series has been a worldwide phenomenon, there are many controversial issues proposed either by literary critics or pedagogues and discussed among general readership. The aim of this thesis is to research, analyse, and evaluate questions (more precisely motives, themes, plot elements, and characters) which are perceived as controversial or evoke negative reactions. The research is based on relevant critical resources and the arguments are supported or confronted by the primary work. The conclusion summarizes the analysis applying the reader-response theory and expresses a more general inference about the issues of critical points of views and negative reception of Harry Potter.

Key words

Harry Potter; Fantasy; Children's literature; Reception; Reader-response theory; Criticism; Magic; Educational system;

Abstrakt

Tato diplomová práce se zabývá recepcí díla *Harry Potter* (1997 – 2007) od Joanne Rowlingové. Přestože tato knižní série se stala světově uznávaným fenoménem, mnoho literárních kritiků a lektorů, ale také čtenářů se věnují ke kontroverzím, které se v tomto díle objevují. Cílem této práce je vyhledat, zanalyzovat a ohodnotit otázky (konkrétně motivy, témata, syžetové prvky a postavy) s použitím tzv. *reader-response theory*, které jsou vnímané jako kontroverzní nebo vyvolávají negativní reakce. Výzkum je podložen na relevantních kritických zdrojích a dané argumenty jsou podpořeny nebo konfrontovány s primárním textem. Závěr shrnuje vypořádané jevy a vyjadřuje obecnější závěry týkající se kritickým ohlasů a negativní recepce *Harry Pottera*.

Klíčová slova

Harry Potter; Fantasy; Dětská literatura; recepce; Kritika; Recepční estetika; Kouzla; Vzdělávací systém;

Table of Content

Introduction.....	8
1. History and definition of fantasy and children’s literature	9
2. Reception and readers-response theory	16
3. Resources	21
4. Reception of Hogwarts	23
4.1 School houses, Sorting ceremony	23
4.2 Hogwarts teachers, educational system and students.....	37
4.3 Dumbledore.....	48
5. Conclusion	58
Resumé.....	61
Bibliography	64

Introduction

This thesis focuses on the reception of an outstandingly successful seven-volume book series *Harry Potter* written by Joanne Rowling which has become a worldwide phenomenon. At the end of 2017, a story about a young boy Harry Potter who discovers that he is a wizard has been sold in more than 500 million copies and it has been translated into 80 languages since the first book was published in 1997.¹

Readers of all ages can encounter *Harry Potter* everywhere: bookstores, libraries, radios, magazines, local schools, and also shops full of *Harry Potter* merchandise. The book series has won many prestigious literary awards and become part of school and university curriculum. Therefore, its impact on Western culture is indisputable.

Despite the fact that this book series has attracted millions of people around the world, many critical points of view have appeared. This diploma thesis focuses on the critical reception of the wizarding school Hogwarts, Hogwarts school staff, the wizarding educational system, and the Hogwarts students. The proposed receptions have been stated by literary critics and lecturers but also among general public whose opinions and criticisms is collected and analysed by applying the reader-response criticism, a literary theory school which shifts its focus on the reader.

This thesis consists of two main parts. The first part provides a theoretical background to this thesis. Initially, the genre classification of the book series is explained. The genre fantasy and the development of the children's literature are described in order to contextualize the book series. The following part describes the term reception and then focuses on the reader-response theory. Also, the importance of criticism of literary works is described. The last section of the first part describes the sources of the critical receptions and their relevance for the purpose of this thesis.

The second part compiles and analyses the receptions of the *Harry Potter* book series both by literary professionals and a general public. Those receptions are supported or disclaimed by the quotations and paraphrasing of the primary text. The reader-response theory is applied in this part in order to analyse those receptions. At the end of this diploma thesis, those findings are summarized and the thesis is concluded.

¹ The Pottermore News Team, "500 million Harry Potter books have now been sold worldwide", February 1, 2018, <https://www.pottermore.com/news/500-million-harry-potter-books-have-now-been-sold-worldwide>

1. History and definition of fantasy and children's literature

Harry Potter books are classified as fantasy novels written primarily for children. Fantasy “enables us to enter worlds of infinite possibility and the maps and contours of fantasy are circumscribed only by imagination itself.”² *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* defines fantasy as a distinct literary genre that does not primarily represent the real world. Fantasy literary works describe imagined worlds where supernatural powers occur and are accepted as real.³

On that account, professor of English Richard Mathews suggests that it is rather difficult to the define clear boundaries of the genre fantasy in literature accurately but most specialists agree that fantasy should rise a feeling of wonder and mystery and a sense of unnatural power such as magic which does not require logic.⁴

A Dictionary of LITERARY TERMS explains that fantasy literature deals with imaginary worlds of magical and non-realistic creatures such as witches, wizards or elves (who carry human features) or, e.g., dragons, and werewolves. The dictionary also suggests that the stories which contain a kind of a fantasy world may be divided into two types. One type of the fantasy story usually features a completely fabricated fantasy world which may be parallel to our ordinary world. Probably the most famous example of this category is the fairy-tale trilogy *The Lord of the Rings* (1937- 1949) written by J. R. R. Tolkien which also include already existing Nordic myths. Furthermore, the fantasy world is either completely separated from our world (for example, *A Game of Thrones* (1992) written by George R. R. Martin.), or it is a hidden world which coexists within our world (for example, the wizarding and the Muggle worlds in *Harry Potter*).⁵

Here, it is also necessary to distinguish between the terms myths, legends, and fantasy stories. Myths are stories which usually deal with supermen or gods and their purpose is to complement or to explain religious or natural phenomenon. Usually, their origin may reach

² Richard Mathews, *Fantasy, the liberation of imagination* (New York London: Routledge, 2002), 1.

³ Chris Baldick, *Oxford concise dictionary of literary terms*, (New ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 95.

⁴ Mathews, *Fantasy, the liberation of imagination*, 1-4.

⁵ Martin Gray, *A Dictionary of Literary Terms* (York Handbooks, Longman, 1992), 116.

far back in the culture of oral traditions.⁶ An example of a myth may be the story about the Greek Titans or about the Norse god of thunder Thor.

Legends, on the other hand, were initially collections of the lives of saints. In the present day, a legend is a story, or a group of stories, about a heroic character – not a god. This personage can be a historical or partly historical character such as King Arthur or Robin Hood. Legends are part of the oral tradition, as well as myths.⁷

Fantasy stories are created by a concrete author, or a group of authors, in a form of a novel or a short story while legends and myths have usually been developing during the history. Fantasy stories may, but do not necessarily have to, include the themes of myths, legends and other folklore features in their plot.

The second type of fantasy story consists of a dreamy illogicalness and episodic narrative, as in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) written by Lewis Carroll. In certain cases, this type also presents various unreal events and balances between a supernatural and psychological explanation.⁸

Mathews describes the history of fantasy and states that the first records of literary works, now called fantasy, reaches to magical tales from Egypt written on papyrus in 2000 B.C.E. But they also appeared in other countries, such as Greece or India, during the ancient times. The “Tale of the Shipwrecked Sailor” is probably the earliest work which carries features of this genre. It contains an unexpected hero on a sea journey who arrives at a bewitched island, defeats a beast, and survives wiser than before. Moreover, Mathews adds that this Egyptian story are a kind of prototypes for the subsequent stories such as *The Arabian Nights* or *The Odyssey*. Also, the monster from the “Shipwrecked Sailor” is the archetype of the greatest phenomenon from the sphere of monsters – the dragon.⁹

In the early Middle Ages, fantasy grew and changed due to the development of literary techniques and fantasy was, for example, used as a “medium for the exploration of philosophic concepts.” Mathews also explains that fantasy stories occurred in the Dark Ages in Europe when stories containing magic and supernatural powers were created and they became a legacy and have become a core of many myths and legends. But fantasy appeared

⁶ Gray, *A Dictionary of Literary Terms*, 187.

⁷ Gray, *A Dictionary of Literary Terms*, 159.

⁸ Gray, *A Dictionary of Literary Terms*, 116.

⁹ Mathews, *Fantasy, the liberation of imagination*, 6.

only as a marginal genre due to the popularity of reason and reality. One example of fantasy may be the William Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.¹⁰

In the second half of the eighteenth-century and in the beginning of the nineteenth-century, the rediscovery of the antique literature led to publishing collections of fairy tales which became very popular. Due to an interest in ancient literary works and development of romanticism, philosophy and folklore were popular topics and became the cornerstones of fantasy. At this period of time, fantasy finally gained its recognition as a literary genre and was being written in order to create an attractive opposite to popular fiction by describing an ordinary life enriched with legends, myths and supernatural powers. At this period of time, Horace Walpole's gothic tale *Castle of Otranto* (1756) was written including exotic setting and mysterious atmosphere and gained its recognition as the pilot of this genre.¹¹

The beginning of modern times of fantasy is dated in the second half of nineteenth-century and the first purely fantasy pioneers were William Morris and George MacDonald. While Morris, who published his first fantasy novel *The Earthly Paradise* in 1865, included radical and idealistic topics in his work, MacDonald, who published *Phantastes* in 1858, focused on religious and spiritual topics and wrote predominantly for adults. Those topic opposites were highly significant and show that fantasy was also suitable for the purpose of explaining philosophy (more than realism) and this factor has been preserved during the evolution of the genre. Morris and MacDonald's aim was also to create stories which would be the complete opposite to realistic novels and, as a consequence, William Morris's work was the first one which was set into an entirely invented world – fantasy world. Their works were followed by publishing highly successful fantasy stories for children by Charles Kingsley *The Water Babies* (1863) or Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* in 1865.¹²

The end of the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth-century was the period of fantasy expansion. It was finally evaluated as a fully distinct genre in English speaking countries since the industrial revolution and scientific discoveries profoundly influenced the society. The subgenres (connected to children's literature), such as adventure fantasy or fairy-tales, and topics, such as, highly advanced or primate cultures, and non-existing worlds, appeared. Also, popularity of mythological stories and legends rose.¹³ Probably the most significant

¹⁰ Mathews, *Fantasy, the liberation of imagination*, 7-13.

¹¹ Mathews, *Fantasy, the liberation of imagination*, 3-4, 13-15.

¹² Mathews, *Fantasy, the liberation of imagination*, 16-17.

¹³ Mathews, *Fantasy, the liberation of imagination*, 18-20.

writer during this period was J. R. R. Tolkien who specialized on epic and folklore and created fantasy worlds full of magical creatures, such as wizards, elves or dwarfs, but he also pictured themes of destruction of peaceful rural areas which reflected the people's fear of nuclear wars at that time.¹⁴

At the end of the twentieth-century the fantasy market started to expand even more profoundly and stories, such as, Terry Pratchett's novels about the *Discworld*, or Rowling's *Harry Potter*, which is the most selling book series of all time,¹⁵ fantasy has become one of the mainstream genres of fiction. This genre has been reaching its boom and gave rise to number of new kinds of fantasy. Strikingly popular is, for example, the book series by George R. R. Martin *A Song of Ice and Fire* (1996) which appears to be more realistic and more violent than any previous fantasy series.

According to *the Oxford Companion to Children's literature*, the genre of fantasy books for children developed in England mainly in the period between the World Wars and became dominant genre of children's fiction. The most prominent writer of this period was, as it has been already proposed, J. R. R. Tolkien but also C. S. Lewis, the author of *The Chronicles of Narnia* (1950 – 1956), who devoted most of their writing mainly to fantasy for children.¹⁶ Equally important is the work of Roald Dahl who is known for his children's books, such as, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (1964) or *Mathilda* (1988)¹⁷ and, of course, *Harry Potter* by Joanne Rowling (1997 – 2007).

Despite the fact, that *Harry Potter* book series was written for a young audience it has also found its place in bookshelves of adults (who both, children and their parents, enjoy an entertaining fantasy story). Therefore, this book series is considered to be a crossover fiction. According to Professor of French Sandra L. Beckett, a crossover fiction is “a prominent genre of the new millennium” (although its roots reach up to the seventeenth-century) because more than ever, adults read children's books and children read book for adults. She believes that *Harry Potter* has been one of the first triggers which have started the phenomenon of adults

¹⁴ Eva Peck, Alexander Peck, *Anglická literatura = Panorama of English literature*, (Dubicko: INFOA, 2002), 231.

¹⁵ Jennifer Polland, “The 10 Most Read Books in The World”, December, 27, 2012, <http://www.businessinsider.com/the-top-10-most-read-books-in-the-world-infographic-2012-12>.

¹⁶ Humphrey Carpenter and Mari Prichard, *The Oxford companion to children's literature*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 181-182.

¹⁷ Peck, Peck, *Anglická literatura = Panorama of English literature*, 230.

reading children's books.¹⁸ Hence, the importance of the book series on the development of children's literature and its influence on an adults' readership is indisputable.

As professor of Literature Seth Lerer points out, children's literature is inseparable from the history and perception of childhood. According to him, children literature's aim is to help children to: "find worlds within the books and books in the world."¹⁹ He also claims that books have always been important for the process of growing up and that each stage is marked by a certain selection of books.²⁰

Docent in the history of British and American literature Šárka Bubíková points out that an individual experience of childhood has been influenced through history many times. She also explains that the reception of a childhood could vary from one child to another depending on his or her race or the social status of his or her family during the same period of time. Nonetheless, Bubíková divides the development of perceiving childhood into three main periods during the history based on the most noticeable changes in perception and experiencing of childhood in the Western society.²¹

Firstly, pre-modern (also pre-industrial society) phase enacted in the early Colonial (Puritan) times, when people's life was centred at home and children's possibility to play or read was observed as a waste of time or even a sinful activity and was forbidden. Children were considered to be "small adults" and they were forced to overcome their childhood as quickly as possible due to the fact that childhood was perceived as a deficient period of human life (small children could not walk or talk). Children were involved in the domestic work in an early period of their lives to make them behave like adults. The primary means of education was to arouse fear. Puritans believed that children were naturally evil and the parents/adults' work was to redeem them by strict discipline and punishments. On the other hand, Bubíková highlights that the Puritan parents truly cherished their children; they cared for their safety and moral development. She also adds that at the end of the eighteenth-century in America,

¹⁸ Sandra L. Becket, *Crossover fiction: global and historical perspectives*, (London: Routledge, 2009. Children's literature and culture), 1-2, 85.

¹⁹ Seth Lerer, *Children's literature: a reader's history, from Aesop to Harry Potter*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 1.

²⁰ Seth Lerer, *Children's literature: a reader's history, from Aesop to Harry Potter*, 17.

²¹ Šárka Bubíková, Concepts and Experiences of childhood, *Literary Childhoods, Growing Up in British and American Literature*, Šárka Bubíková et. al, (Červený Kostelec Pardubice: Pavel Mervart: Univerzita Pardubice, 2008), 12-13.

children started to be finally accepted despite their “deficiency” and could “develop at their own pace.”²²

The second period is called the Age of Industrialization and took place at the end of the eighteenth-century. This time of history (the period of the Enlightenment) took place when the attitude toward childhood radically changed. That attitude was influenced by Romanticism, when children were perceived as pure, spontaneous, and intuitive beings. The scholars started to be aware of the benefits of games and the meaning of an example. Childhood was a period of life which was lengthened, not suppressed, and the tendencies to protect children from the adult life started to emerge, too. The fact that children were not obliged to work anymore and an education was a priority also prolonged the period of childhood. Specialized institutions for children were established also due to the development of science and technology and the fact that parents were not able to provide sufficient education of their children at home anymore. That factor widened the gap between middle-class and working-class children who did not spend their time working at home but at factories which led to a higher social awareness concerning child labour. Bubíková also explains that at the end of the nineteenth-century, the family structure changed due to the fact that a mother delivered only up to three children (not up to ten, as it was at the beginning of the century). Children were no longer perceived economically beneficial in terms of working efficiency but they were priceless for their emotional value. But that did not affect the idea of children’s discipline and deference and physical punishments were still used. Nonetheless, children were finally recognized as individuals who needed a different treatment from adults.²³

The last period of children’s literature could be put in the period from the first half of the twentieth-century till now and takes place in post-modern (post-industrial) society when the changes in relationships among parents and children have been most profound. Children are no longer perceived as innocent beings but not as “small adults” either. The position of a person and his or her status in society is not based on the family status anymore but on the person’s education and job. Children are independent human beings who do not need to be unlimitedly protected because it is both impossible and also not desirable anymore, and therefore, parents are more preoccupied with a personality development of their children more than with a formation of their moral dispositions. Also, a spread of ethnic, economic, and

²² Bubíková, *Literary Childhoods, Growing Up in British and American Literature*, 13-16.

²³ Bubíková, *Literary Childhoods, Growing Up in British and American Literature*, 17-22.

geographical diversity leads to the fact that multiculturalism becomes a significant feature of a post-modern childhood.²⁴

Furthermore, Bubíková adds that the duration of childhood period is not invariable and its length is dependent on the surroundings and the general attitude toward a child. So, the term child may be used for a person from his or her birth to the age of seven, or to the age of fourteen, or to eighteen or even twenty-one. Therefore, it is more appropriate to use the word childhoods or experiences of a childhood over a childhood. Also, the cultural concepts of childhoods are shaped by class, gender, region, and, in some cases, also by religion.²⁵

Head of English department at the University of Bradford Fiona McCulloch points out that after the 1950s, the post-modern era was influenced by the development of television, cinemas and later video games and computers which made children and teenagers a new target on the market because children, firstly in the history, possess their own money using it as they please.

McCulloch also suggests that the space of contemporary childhood has moved from outdoors to indoors due to the potential danger and spread of the Internet and social media. Children are more internet-skilled than adults but their experience with the outside world is indirect. All those factors have led to the feeling that: “childhood has been disappearing, while adults are becoming increasingly child-like in their nostalgic desire to preserve their own youth,” which gave *Harry Potter* and other crossover fiction a possibility to rise.²⁶

The last genre characterization of *Harry Potter* described in this thesis summarizes the proposed idea of Professor of Sociology of Gender Libora Oates-Indruchová who points out that *Harry Potter* could also be characterized as a bildungsroman because it consists of the themes of the “coming to consciousness of a young boy and his growing up.”²⁷ A Bildungsroman is a novel which describes the character’s development from childhood to adulthood. This type of novel focuses primarily on the connection among experience, education, personality and identity.²⁸ Oates-Indruchová suggests several of the bildungsroman characteristics appearing concretely in *Harry Potter*. The first two volumes describe the

²⁴ Bubíková, *Literary Childhoods, Growing Up in British and American Literature*, 23-25.

²⁵ Bubíková, *Literary Childhoods, Growing Up in British and American Literature*, 12.

²⁶ Fiona McCulloch, *Children's Literature in Context*, (New York: Continuum, 2011. Texts and contexts (Continuum (Firm))), 22-25.

²⁷ Libora Oates-Indruchová, The Magic of the Real / The Real of the Magic in *Harry Potter*, *Literary Childhoods, Growing Up in British and American Literature*, ed. Bubíková, (Červený Kostelec Pardubice: Pavel Mervart: Univerzita Pardubice, 2008), 68.

²⁸ Gray, *A Dictionary of Literary Terms*, 43.

novice (Harry's) learning process. The third volume deals with the first awakening of the teenage mind and becoming a young adulthood. In the fourth volume, the main hero undergoes a ritual loss of innocence and his past starts to slowly reveal. Also, the hero is "marked" by death to demonstrate his lost innocence. The following volume depicts the hero's loneliness but also his commitment to a higher cause. In the sixth volume, the main hero is finally allowed to possess the adult knowledge. And lastly, the final volume describes the hero's coming off age.²⁹

2. Reception and readers-response theory

This thesis focuses on the reception of a literary work by its audience and the application of the reader-response theory on the literary work *Harry Potter*. German literary scholar Wolfgang Iser claims that the reception is an inevitable part of the reading process which results into a whole reading experience that may contain anticipation, frustration, retrospection, reconstruction, and satisfaction. He believes that the centre of literary process is the reader's reading act which transforms the text in their mind into their own experience.³⁰

Firstly, it is necessary to point out that a literary criticism is a vital part of a reception because, according to *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*, criticism is a discussion of literary works. It may include the defence of literature against moralists and censors; classifying of its genre; interpretation of its meaning; analysis of its structure and style; judgment of its worth by comparison with other works; and its effect on readers.³¹

Due to the fact, that the diploma thesis focuses not only on literary professionals' (such as literary critics, historians or theoreticians of literature) opinions on the book series but on reactions and responses of its readership as well, this thesis will employ reception theory, or more precisely, a form of reader-response criticism. Chancellor Robert C. Holub proposes the reception theory when he discusses the shift from the author and his or her work to the text and the reader and the reader's response to it. Holub proposes that the reception theory also includes the "reader-response criticism" which is better applicable, and therefore more suitable, for the purpose of this thesis because the reception theory focuses on cohesive, conscious and collective reaction only to the social, intellectual and literary development of West Germany since 1960. The "reader-response critics" do not belong to one critical

²⁹ Oates-Indruchová, *The Magic of the Real / The Real of the Magic in Harry Potter*, 67-71.

³⁰ Yanling Shi, "Review of Wolfgang Iser and His Reception Theory," *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 6, pp. 982-986, June 2013, 985.

³¹ Baldick, *Oxford concise dictionary of literary terms*, 54.

movement, the critics are spread across the world, they teach in various institutions, they do not meet regularly, and they do not publish in the same journals.³²

Firstly, it is necessary to classify the reader-response theory into M. H. Abrams's "triangle" of author, work, and reader. As professor Emeritus of English Education Richard Beach points out, there are three stages of modern literary theory: a Romantic orienting on the author, a New Critical focusing on the text, and lastly concentrating on the reader. The reader-response analysis focuses on the reading process during which the reader creates meaning of particular text. To prove the reader's claims regarding a concrete text they may also be supported by quotations from the primary text as evidence. Beach also believes that a "text cannot be understood and analysed as an isolated entity," and its reception is essential for an understanding of the text.³³

In addition, Beach highlights that some critics insist that a text is only an inkblot, whose meaning is created entirely by the reader. But he also points out that it is not possible to focus entirely on the reader or on the text but it is necessary to include social, cultural, or situational context during the transaction from the text to the reader.³⁴

Also Professor of English Lois Tyson deals with the reader-response criticism in depth. She claims that reader-response theory analyses the readers' response to the text, despite their expertness. She explains the development of this theory and says that the focus on the reading process started to arise in the second half of the twentieth-century as a reaction against the ideas of the New Criticism, but did not gain enough attention. New critics believed that the meaning of a text is only in the text itself and does not change based on the writer's intention or the reader's reception. The reader-response theory, which became more prominent in the 1970s, advocates that a text cannot be separated from its effect and "the role of the reader cannot be omitted from our understanding of literature and that readers do not passively consume the meaning presented to them by an objective literary text." One of the main ideas is that the same text may be read by a different reader in a completely different way. Moreover, the same text may be read differently by the same reader.³⁵ Tyson also says: "the ultimate goal of reader-response criticism is to increase our understanding of the reading

³² Robert C. Holub, *Reception theory: a critical introduction*, (New York: Methuen, 1984. New accents (Methuen & Co.), 9-11.

³³ Richard Beach, *A teacher's introduction to reader-response theories*, (National Council of Teachers of English, 1993), 1.

³⁴ Beach, *A teacher's introduction to reader-response theories*, 2.

³⁵ Lois Tyson, *Critical theory today: a user-friendly guide*, Second ed. (New York, NY: Routledge, 2006), 170.

process by investigating the activities in which readers engage and the effects of those activities on their interpretations.”³⁶

Beach divides the reader-response theory into five categories based on the roles, purposes, and types of the text and its context. He adds that usually each reader-response theorist focuses on one specific aspect of these categories/components. Those theoretical perspectives are divided into: *textual*, *experiential*, *psychological*, *social*, and *cultural* categories. *Textual* theory concerns with how the reader employs his knowledge of a text and its genre into its interpretation. *Experiential* theory focuses on the reader’s own experience which he or she projects into the text. *Psychological* theory deals with the reader’s cognitive processes and their variations based on the uniqueness of an individual. *Social* theory focuses on the influence of social environment of the reader/text transaction. *Cultural* theory analyses how the cultural and historical context shapes the reader’s response but also focuses on the reader’s inner attitude and values.³⁷

Also, Tyson suggests that a text is not an object but an event that appears to the reader. She believes that a literary text is as active as the reader. To be able to analyse the text based on the reader-response theory, Tyson creates five subcategories of this critical theory (similar to those proposed by Beach): *transactional reader-response theory*, *affective stylistics*, *subjective reader-response theory*, *psychological reader response theory*, and *social reader-response theory*. Those subcategories are not strictly separated and they interact with one another, depending on the grasping of concrete theorists.³⁸

Firstly, *the transactional reader-response theory*, as Tyson interprets the work of Louise Rosenblatt, analyses the transaction between the text and the reader, which are both important for the creating of the meaning. The reading process of a text creates a certain kind of stimulus to which each person reacts in his or her own individual way. Emotions stimulated by various associations and memories arise during the reading process and influence the reader’s understanding of the text. According to Rosenblatt, the reader should read in so-called aesthetic mode which means that the reader does not focus only on what the text explicitly says but also focuses the reader’s attention on the emotional nuances of the narration and evokes the reader’s judgement. The judgement and evaluation of the text may

³⁶ Tyson, *Critical theory today: a user-friendly guide*, 188.

³⁷ Beach, *A teacher's introduction to reader-response theories*, 7-9.

³⁸ Tyson, *Critical theory today: a user-friendly guide*, 172.

lead to too subjective response but it is necessary to bear in mind that a real text is involved and therefore the reader should adapt or rationalise his or her response.³⁹

Secondly, *the affective stylistics*, based on the Stanley Fish analysis which Tyson believes is the finest and the most suitable, analyses how the stylistics affects the reader in the process of reading. It is understood that a text is an event that is realized as it is read, and therefore it does not have a fixed meaning (not as it is at an existing object). The analysis focuses on every phrase of the text and how the text structures the reader's response. The question of the affective stylistics analysts is: "What does the sentence do to the reader?" or "How does the reader of this sentence make meaning?" The analysts frequently compile the responses of other readers to support their claims and to prove that their own responses are also valuable. Also, the reader-response critics search in the primary text to show that their own reception of the text reflects in the primary text.⁴⁰

Thirdly, *the subjective reader-response theory*, led by the David Bleich's work, focuses on the fact that there is no other meaning than the one created by the reader's interpretation. Also, the text itself has no literal meaning – it only represents a symbol/concept that projects in the mind of the reader, and the critical point of view of a critic is only his or her own response to the text and is not in any way objective. According to Bleich, reading is feelings, associations and memories that occur as the reader subjectively reacts to the words in the text and reinterprets it in his or her mind into his or her own perception of the world. As a result, the reader does not necessarily have to like the read text because the projection of his or her own experience into his or her understanding of the text does not have to correspond.⁴¹

Fourthly, *the psychological reader response theory*, proposed by Norman Holland, points out that the reader's motives highly influence his or her way of reading. Holland deals with the way of what the reader's interpretation says not about the text but about the reader and his or her psychological response. He believes that the way how the reader reacts on a particular text reflects how the reader reacts in everyday life. So, if the reader cannot identify with the text, he or she cannot find specific features that reflect his or her perception of the world, the reader's desire to read the text may easily fade. As a consequence, the reader usually needs to find a certain pattern or a trait to recognize himself or herself in it (which Holland calls identity theme). The reader projects his or her identity theme into everything he or she does,

³⁹ Tyson, *Critical theory today: a user-friendly guide*, 173-175.

⁴⁰ Tyson, *Critical theory today: a user-friendly guide*, 175-177.

⁴¹ Tyson, *Critical theory today: a user-friendly guide*, 177-182.

therefore, into the reading, too. Holland suggests three stages that occur during the reading: defence (feeling of threat), fantasy (desire to be protected), and transformation (abstract interpretation of previous stages into psychological/emotional satisfaction).⁴²

Finally, *the social reader-response theory*, associated with the work of Stanley Fish, points out that there is never a purely individual subjective response of the reader. Fish believes that the reader's response to a literary work is a product of the *interpretive community* he or she belongs to. The interpretive community is a group of people who share the same interpretive strategies despite the reader's awareness of using interpretive strategy. Those strategies are outcomes from various sorts of institutionalized norms, for example, from schools, universities or churches. Those norms shape the reception of a literary text and what meaning the text proposes. The reader's belonging in an interpretive community may be conscious or unintentional and the reader may belong into more than one community at the same time. The reader may also change from one community to another during his or her life. In all cases, when the reader approaches a literary text, he or she is already predisposed to interpret it in a certain way. The social reader-response theory therefore suggests that no literary criticism can reveal what is in a text. The text's meaning is shaped by each interpretation which is, however, controlled by an interactive strategy available at the time.⁴³

In like manner, Czech literary theoretician Jiří Trávniček claims, reading is not only a private individual activity but rather a socio-cultural one and people read also because they are social beings.⁴⁴ Therefore it is important to study literary works, particularly those with a great and numerous readerships, in this context, by paying attention not only to the literary but also to the social/socio-cultural dimension of the work as this thesis attempts to do. Since Rowling's Harry Potter is a true socio-cultural phenomenon, it is necessary to criticize it. But as fairy tales expert Jack Zipes claims, it is necessary to criticize it but not in order to degrade her work but to explore why this book series is such an immense phenomenon.⁴⁵

Therefore, for the purpose of this diploma thesis, the reader-response criticism is chosen because it focuses on the understanding of the readers and how they deal with what they learn from the story. As it has already been proposed, *Harry Potter* is a worldwide phenomenon and there are numerous reactions on the book series.

⁴² Tyson, *Critical theory today: a user-friendly guide*, 182-184.

⁴³ Tyson, *Critical theory today: a user-friendly guide*, 185- 186.

⁴⁴ Jiří Trávniček, *Čtenáři a internauti*. (Brno: Host, 2011), 39-41.

⁴⁵ Jack Zipes, *Sticks and Stones: The Troublesome Success of Children's Literature from Slovenly Peter to Harry Potter*, (New York and London: Routledge, 2001), 172.

3. Resources

To be as relevant as possible, the aim is to gather the critical receptions from various mediums with various levels of expertises. The critical reactions appear in printed or online media, such as books or journals; online websites or articles; theses and expert essays. Highly relevant contributions are published in the book publications *Critical Perspectives on Harry Potter*, ed. by Elizabeth E. Heilman, *The Ultimate Harry Potter and Philosophy: Hogwarts for Muggles*, ed. by Gregory Bassham and William Irwin, Richard Abanes' *Harry Potter and the Bible: The Menace Behind the Magick*, and *Divine Destiny or Free Choice: Nietzsche's Strong Wills in the Harry Potter Series* by Julia Rose Pond. Also, one issue of the Journal of Interdisciplinary Normative Studies *Reason Papers* is devoted to the philosophical issues in the *Harry Potter* book series.

Furthermore, international newspapers, such as *the Guardian* or *the New York Times* contribute about (not only) controversial issues in the book series and propose a relevant data. Harry Potter critics also publish scientific journal articles where they express their ideas supported by the specialized literature. There are also many websites (for example, a fan page *Harry Potter Wiki*) which focus only on the *Harry Potter* issues of which content is also valuable for this thesis.

Due to the fact, that the book series and also Rowling herself have been criticized, she has proposed her own explanations and statements concerning certain discussed issues. She has expressed them during various interviews, talk shows, or on her social media platforms (she uses *Twitter* most frequently).

As it has been already proposed, not only professional literary and theological critics and pedagogues comment various *Harry Potter* controversies. This thesis covers thoughts, ideas, and suggestions by the general public, either *Harry Potter* readers or their parents, too. They share their thoughts on social media platforms (*Twitter*), write blog articles (*Tumblr*) or write diploma thesis, analysing their own reception of the book series. Very valuable sources are also online forums (for example, official forums of *Harry Potter Wiki*), where the readers explicitly express their opinions and contribute to discussions.

The complete extent of *Harry Potter* critical points of views is reaching beyond the length of this thesis therefore only one main chosen topic is discussed – criticism of the representation of school environment, in this case, Hogwarts, the school staff and students. This diploma thesis focuses on gathering and summarizing the receptions of the *Harry Potter* readers'

community proposed so far. There is an extra chapter at the end which is dedicated reception of Albus Dumbledore, the school headmaster, because he is the most controversial and therefore criticized teacher in the book series.

4. Reception of Hogwarts

One of the most frequently criticised aspects of the *Harry Potter* book series is the presentation of the boarding school Hogwarts where most of the plot takes place. The critics point out that the sorting ceremony is not completely fair and that the equality of the school houses is not balanced. Also, the issue of elitism appears many times, for example, only those children who are sent an invitation letter from Hogwarts can attend the school. Furthermore, conservatism connected with nostalgia, which surrounds the whole school grounds or an unnatural rivalry is pictured there. Equally important is the criticism of the educational system and the teachers, who represent it.

This chapter will analyse selected critical points of view by literary critics but also by the readers themselves. It will focus on the most frequently criticized aspects of the book series concerning Hogwarts and will try to find factual examples in *Harry Potter* books. This chapter will also try to disprove or support those findings by using a primary text and also subtly suggest whether their criticism is justified or not.

4.1 School houses, Sorting ceremony

Firstly, it is necessary to describe the most important setting of the book series. Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry is situated in an ancient castle, hidden from all the unwanted infiltrations in Scottish countryside. The castle is surrounded by school's lands with flowerbeds, vegetable patches, greenhouses, Hagrid's hut, an owlery and a Quidditch Pitch. There is also an adjacent Black Lake and Forbidden Forest, both full of magical creatures. The castle building consists of the Great Hall, classes, common rooms – dormitories where students spend their time when they do not have classes, hospital wing, teachers' offices and staff room, Chamber of Secrets, the Room of Requirement and many secret passageways and hiding places.⁴⁶ Students arrive at Hogwarts at the beginning of a school year by Hogwarts Express and learn how to master magic during which they experience a lot of adventures.

Hogwarts is indeed a magic school but the students still have to study there as ordinary students. English professor Renée Dickenson points out that although the Hogwarts subjects are completely different from the ordinary ones, the educational system still requires attending classes from its students, studying the given material, writing homework, passing

⁴⁶ "Explore Hogwarts", *Pottermore* Limited, last modified in September 22, 2016, <https://www.pottermore.com/collection/places-around-hogwarts>.

tests, and receiving grades on an evaluating scale. Students do not enchant their homework, perhaps except the Weasley twins, and teachers do not use potions and spells to check if the students know the discussed topic.⁴⁷

“It was swelteringly hot, especially in the large classroom, where they did their written papers. They had been given special, new quills for the exams, which has been bewitched with an Anti-Cheating spell. They had practical part as well. (...) One hour of answering questions about batty old wizards who’d invented self-stirring cauldrons and they’d be free, for a whole wonderful week until their exam results came out.”⁴⁸

Rowling created a schooling system and the description Hogwarts students’ feelings similar to the existing one probably to make it more credible so the readers can easily identify with it: “Hannah Abbot became the first to receive a Calming Draught from Madam Pomfrey after she burst into tears during Herbology and sobbed that she was too stupid to take exams and wanted to leave school now.”⁴⁹ It is highly probable that most of ordinary students have felt that way in their lives, too.

The school was founded by four wizards and witches who created four houses (each house carries a name of its founder: Gryffindor, Slytherin, Ravenclaw and Hufflepuff) and those houses compete among themselves through the whole school year by gaining and losing points. At the end of the school year, the house which managed to gain the most points is awarded the House Cup. Students are sorted by the Sorting Hat at the beginning of their school attendance. Students are sorted according their personalities, qualities and potentials and put into the most suitable house where they stay during their studies. The division is essential because it affects students’ lives at for least seven years. At the beginning of the school year, the Sorting Hat starts it with a riddle song, where he explains what the sorting ceremony is. This is a song from the first book, where the Sorting Hats highlights what qualities represent each house the most:

“There’s nothing hidden in your head,
The Sorting Hat can’t see,
So try me on and I
will tell you, Where you ought to be.
You might belong in Gryffindor,
Where dwell

⁴⁷ Renée Dickenson, “Harry Potter Pedagogy: What We Learn about Teaching and Learning from J. K. Rowling”, *The Clearing House: A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues and Ideas*, August 7, 2010, 240.

⁴⁸ Joanne Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone*, (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc., 1997), 191-192.

⁴⁹ Joanne Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Order of Phoenix*, (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc. 2003), 534.

the brave at heart, Their daring, nerve, and chivalry, Set Gryffindors apart; You might belong in Hufflepuff, Where they are just and loyal, Those patient Hufflepuffs are true, And unafraid of toil; Or yet in wise old Ravenclaw, If you've a ready mind, Where those of wit and learning, Will always find their kind; Or perhaps in Slytherin, You'll make your real friends, Those cunning folks use any means, To achieve their ends.”⁵⁰

The song suggests that the students who are sorted into Gryffindor are courageous, chivalrous and resolute. The main heroes, Harry, Ron and Hermione, are sorted into this house, so naturally most of the readers would put themselves into this house, too. Hufflepuff students are loyal and hardworking but *Harry Potter* readers do not find this house interesting enough to want to be there although many great characters, such as Cedric Diggory or Nymphadora Tonks, are from Hufflepuff. Students from Ravenclaw can be characterised as witty, bright and independent, like Cho Chang or Luna Lovegood. The most controversial house, according to its popularity, is Slytherin. Those who are from Slytherin are usually ambitious and clever; they value fraternity and mainly blood purity. Most *Harry Potter* villains, for example, Lord Voldemort – a dark wizard who killed Harry’s parents, are from Slytherin and therefore this house is either damned or glorified by the readers.

Currently, anybody can make an online test on the official *Harry Potter* website www.pottermore.com and see what house he or she would be sorted into. The *TIME* magazine also created similar test which later published its results. The magazine quiz asked the participants to answer questions based on their personality and then they were shown the result. The participants were also asked to share several pieces of demographical information about them. The data collected from more than 500,000 U.S. citizens shows that the most frequent result was the house Ravenclaw, followed by Hufflepuff, Gryffindor and the last Slytherin.⁵¹ People share their results from the quizzes, especially from the *pottermore* test (which is approved by Rowling), on social media and express their impressions if they are satisfied or not.

The results may be influenced the readers’ fondness of the houses because some of them might be delighted because their wishes are confirmed but others are disappointed or even

⁵⁰ Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, 88.

⁵¹ Chris Wilson, Pratheek Rebala, Friedrich Götz., “We Sorted Half a Million Americans Into Harry Potter Houses. Here's What We Discovered”, *Time*, September 1, 2017 <http://time.com/4921918/harry-potter-hogwarts-sorting-hat-quiz/>.

indignant because they believe they “belong” to another house. The *Twitter* users: “THEY CHANGED THE POTTERMORE SORTING HOUSE QUIZ AND NOW IM HAVING AN IDENTITY CRISIS,”⁵² (reacting on being sorted into Slytherin); “ew. I just got sorted into Ravenclaw on #Pottermore. #HowSway?! The last time I was sorted, I was sorted into Slytherin, my rightful house;”⁵³ or “So, I noticed Pottermore was trending and decided to see what house I would get sorted into. I got Hufflepuff. I can't believe this.”⁵⁴ The reactions support what was already mentioned, those who were put into either Ravenclaw or Gryffindor are usually satisfied, the Hufflepuff ones are mostly displeased and those who are sorted into Slytherin are either satisfied or outraged.⁵⁵ Some of them even wrote to Rowling that they were not satisfied with the test result: “@jk_rowling THE NEW POTTERMORE TEST ASSIGNED ME TO THE WRONG HOUSE JOANNE.”⁵⁶

On the other hand, *YouGov*, UK market research and data analytics firm, published *20 years of Harry Potter* survey. They had asked their responders which personality traits they valued the most and the results showed that most frequently the responders value “hard work, patience, justice and loyalty.” This answer fits the Hufflepuffs’ features. However, the results did not correspond to the fact that *Harry Potter* fans would not want to be sorted into Hufflepuff, according to their survey.⁵⁷ So, although the readers value the Hufflepuffs attributes they still do not wish to be in this house.

⁵² Dani (@banielleDradley), “THEY CHANGED THE POTTERMORE...”, *Twitter*, January 29, 2016,

https://twitter.com/BanielleDradley/status/693292634610118656?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.telegraph.co.uk%2Fnews%2Fnewstopics%2Fhowaboutthat%2F12131373%2Fjk-rowling-pottermore-sorting-hat-test-house.html.

⁵³ *Is this your coat? Did you come with anyone?* (@DamoneWilliams_), „Ew. I just got sorted into Ravenclaw,“ *Twitter*, January 30, 2016.

https://twitter.com/DamoneWilliams_/status/693348803806498816?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.telegraph.co.uk%2Fnews%2Fnewstopics%2Fhowaboutthat%2F12131373%2Fjk-rowling-pottermore-sorting-hat-test-house.html.

⁵⁴ Gayla Cawley (@GaylaCawley), „So, I noticed Pottermore...“, *Twitter*, January 29, 2016,

https://twitter.com/GaylaCawley/status/693313460369752064?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.telegraph.co.uk%2Fnews%2Fnewstopics%2Fhowaboutthat%2F12131373%2Fjk-rowling-pottermore-sorting-hat-test-house.html.

⁵⁵ Helena Horton, “People are freaking out over their results on the JK Rowling approved Harry Potter Sorting Hat test,” *The Telegraph*, January, 2016.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstopics/howaboutthat/12131373/jk-rowling-pottermore-sorting-hat-test-house.html>.

⁵⁶ Alyssa (@lyssa_lahey), “@jk_rowling THE NEW POTTERMORE TEST...“, *Twitter*, January 29, 2016, https://twitter.com/lyssa_lahey/status/693212051217448960.

⁵⁷ Matthew Smith, “20 years of Harry Potter: Britain is a nation of Hufflepuffs”, *YouGov*, June 25, 2017. <https://yougov.co.uk/news/2017/06/25/20th-anniversary-first-harry-potter-book-yougov-di/>.

Furthermore, the popularity of each house is proposed by the author herself - the narration is not neutral because the houses are characterized to be generally liked or disliked. Many times in the book series, Slytherin is pictured as the hostile house while Gryffindor as the favourable one. “‘What house are your brothers in?’ asked Harry. ‘Gryffindor,’ said Ron. Gloom seemed to be settling on him again. ‘Mum and Dad were in it, too. I don’t know what they’ll say if I’m not. I don’t suppose Ravenclaw would be too bad, but imagine if they put me in Slytherin.’”⁵⁸ Due to the fact, that Ron becomes Harry’s friend quite immediately Ron’s opinion is determinative for him.

Also, one of the users of online portal www.tumblr.com/pdwebb0621, makes valid comments to this issue. The contributor points out that before the new students arrive at Hogwarts they usually have no deep knowledge about the houses; they only know which house their relatives were in or what famous people came from each house. On the way to Hogwarts, the new students share their thoughts and influence one another which houses would be the best to be in.⁵⁹ Nevertheless, this claim is based only on the knowledge of Harry, Ron, Hermione, Neville and Draco.

The general conflict between the houses, especially between Gryffindor and Slytherin (but not only), is present from the beginning until the end of the story. Professor J. Kornfeld and library consultant L. Prothro point out in their study that when students arrive at school and are sorted into each house they are taught that competition among the houses is an ancient tradition. “Zabini did not make any sign of recognition or greeting, and nor did Harry or Neville: Gryffindor and Slytherin students loathed each other on principle.”⁶⁰ Rather than creating a friendly atmosphere for studying, the school rules support the antipathy towards one another.⁶¹

Kornfeld and Prothro also suggest that the secret locations of the house dormitories create a certain kind of separation and impossibility of interaction among students from other houses. The authors suggest that the most significant picture of the house rivalry is during Triwizard Tournament (a magical competition between three wizarding schools: Hogwarts, Durmstrang

⁵⁸ Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, 80.

⁵⁹ Pdwebb0621, “It’s Theory Time,” *Tumblr*, <http://pdwebb0621.tumblr.com/post/146958100033/its-theory-time>.

⁶⁰ Joanne Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc. 2005), 137.

⁶¹ John Kornfeld and Laurie Prothro, Comedy, Quest, and Community, Home and Family in Harry Potter, *Critical Perspectives on Harry Potter*, ed. Elizabeth E. Heilman. (New York, Routledge, 2009), 126.

Institute from Scandinavia and Beauxbatons Academy of Magic from France) in *Goblet of Fire*, when Harry has to compete against his schoolmate Cedric Diggory. Although Hogwarts students are nasty at Harry, because they think he cheats to get into the tournament, and they glorify Cedric, Harry and Cedric manage to overcome this and they even cooperate during the tournament: “‘Listen ...’ Cedric lowered his voice as Ron disappeared. ‘I owe you one for telling me about the dragons. You know that golden egg? Does yours wail when you open it?’ ‘Yeah,’ said Harry. ‘Well ... take a bath, OK?’”⁶² Nonetheless, when Harry and Cedric get to the Triwizard Cup and decide to take it together, Cedric is eventually killed. So Kornfeld and Prothro propose that this ending can be interpreted as that working together has a little value anyway because it is paid back by death.⁶³

However, the opposite situation happens when Harry creates the Dumbledore’s Army to meet and practise spells secretly. Students from Gryffindor, Ravenclaw and Hufflepuff (Slytherin is excluded) unite against their common enemy – Dolores Umbridge and eventually Voldemort. They prepare for “what waits outside” and practise to fight and to defend themselves. Although the secret club is eventually revealed, the students stick together. Also, when Harry is away from school in order to find Horcruxes, the members of Dumbledore’s Army reunite and, when it is needed, help Harry: “‘We’re his Army,’ said Neville. ‘Dumbledore’s Army. We were all in together, we’ve been keeping it going while you three have been off on your own – (...) ‘Everyone here’s proven they’re loyal to Dumbledore – loyal to you.’”⁶⁴ Harry’s supporters come from all Great Britain to rally around him and together they defeat Voldemort. So, this time working together is rewarded by an ultimate victory.

Stephen Deets makes an interesting discovery during his teaching a university course called *Harry Potter and Politics*. He describes that when they are discussing Dumbledore’s Army with his students, they admit that despite the fact that they are aware of the injustice and discrimination which appear in their surroundings or they are even passionate about social issues around them, there is a higher chance of them joining a *Facebook* group or share a video on *Instagram* than actually forming a “guerrilla” group. Some of them would be willing

⁶² Joanne Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*. (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc. 2000), 375.

⁶³ Kornfeld and Prothro, Comedy, Quest, and Community, Home and Family in Harry Potter, *Critical Perspectives on Harry Potter*, 127.

⁶⁴ Joanne Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2007), 467.

to change a few of their life patterns (such as buying fewer or different products) but they would probably not be able to go out into the streets.⁶⁵

As has been noted, the book series is full of an unnatural rivalry during the Quidditch matches, students tell on each other or they curse each other whenever they have an opportunity. Also, especially Draco and his friends express racist insults towards those students, primarily Hermione, who are not pure-blooded witches and wizards (called Mudbloods): “‘No one asked your opinion, you filthy little Mudblood,’ he spat,”⁶⁶ was the first time the term Mudblood was used in the story. This term is considered to represent a parallel of perception of a race difference in our and the wizarding world. The book series does not consist of any racist insults or comments regarding the skin colour or ethnicity but racism is represented in a feeling of superiority among pure-blooded families: “‘If you are wondering what the smell is, Mother, a Mudblood just walked in,’ said Draco Malfoy.”⁶⁷

In addition, the lowest “race” for, especially pure-blooded but not only, witches and wizard are Muggles (people who cannot perform magic, they are usually pictured as boring, narrow-minded, and paranoid of magic). Even “good” characters from the school staff drop inappropriate comments regarding Muggles, such as Professor McGonagall who says: “‘Well, they’re not completely stupid. They were bound to notice something,’”⁶⁸ expresses her opinion on Muggles right at the beginning of the book series. Also Hagrid’s comment is not entirely unbiased: “‘It’s your bad luck you grew up in a family o’ the biggest Muggles I ever laid eyes on;”⁶⁹ or during young Lily and Snape’s confrontation: “‘Tuney h- hates me. Because we saw that letter from Dumbledore.’ ‘So what?’ She threw him a look of deep dislike. ‘So she’s my sister!’ ‘She’s only a –’ He caught himself quickly,”⁷⁰ shows that the word Muggle has indeed a negative connotation and Muggles are perceived as unequal to wizards.

Catholic lecturer on faith and a *Harry Potter* critic Michael D. O’Brien criticizes that rudeness among Hogwarts students is quite common. Frequently, they threaten one another or they are not even afraid to hurt each other. He warns that this is not a good example to young

⁶⁵ Stephen Deets, “Wizards in the Classroom: Teaching Harry Potter and Politics,” *PS: Political Science and Politics*, Vol. 42, No. 4 (October 2009), 742.

⁶⁶ Joanne Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secret*, (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 1998), 86.

⁶⁷ Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, 110.

⁶⁸ Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone*, 13.

⁶⁹ Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone*, 43.

⁷⁰ Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, 538.

readers who could reinterpret this kind of behaviour acceptable.⁷¹ The rivalry is represented by Harry's and Draco's hatred which escalates to a duel in *Half-Blood Prince* where Harry severely hurts Draco: "Blood spurted from Malfoy's face and chest as though he had been slashed with an invisible sword. He staggered backwards and collapsed on to the waterlogged floor with a great splash, his wand falling from his limp right hand."⁷² In addition, Harry is not punished for his horrible act by any authority and his reckless behaviour is not discussed further more.

Furthermore, the loyalty of Slytherin is questioned several times. One of the most critical situations is the Battle of Hogwarts. Lord Voldemort is about to attack the school and the school staff and students have to decide whether they escape or stay and fight to protect Harry and the school:

"“And what if we want to stay and fight?’ There was a smattering of applause. ‘If you are of age, you may stay,’ said Professor McGonagall. (...) ‘Where’s Professor Snape?’ shouted a girl from the Slytherin. ‘He has, to use the common phrase, done a bunk,’ replied Professor McGonagall, and a great cheer erupted from the Gryffindors, Hufflepuffs and Ravenclaws.”⁷³

Gryffindors, Hufflepuffs and part of Ravenclaws show their bravery and decide to stay but students from Slytherin, in order to save themselves, want to turn Harry in to Voldemort in order to save themselves:

"“Then a figure rose from the Slytherin table and he recognized Pansy Parkinson as she raised a shaking arm and screamed, ‘But he’s there! Potter’s *there!* Someone grab him!’ (...) the Gryffindors in front of him had risen and stood facing, not Harry, but the Slytherins. Then the Hufflepuffs stood, and, almost at the same moment, the Ravenclaws. (...) ‘Thank you, Miss Parkinson,’ said Professor McGonagall in a clipped voice. ‘You will leave the Hall first with Mr Filch.’”⁷⁴

Despite all those negative aspects of Slytherin proposed mainly by literary critics, many readers perceive this house as their favourite one and advocate in its favour. The user of the web portal *Medium* LittleSlytherKitty points out that determination, shrewdness, and

⁷¹ Michael D. O'Brien, "Harry Potter and the Paganization of Children's Culture," *Catholic World Report*, April, 2001.

⁷² Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, 489.

⁷³ Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, 489-490.

⁷⁴ Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, 490-491.

resourcefulness are very useful features to have in a real life. The user suggests that Slytherins excel in all the other houses traits plus their own. Being shrewd means to be clever, and that is Ravenclaw's trait. An effort is Hufflepuff's attribute but to reach one's goal, one has to be very diligent, which is one of the Slytherin's most profound features. And, as the user points out, Slytherins are as daring and competitive as Gryffindors and they are not afraid to break the rules in order to win as well as Gryffindors but unlike Gryffindors, Slytherins are natural winners. Also, Slytherins are generally great leaders which the user perceives as a good personality trait he or she likes to identify with. The author of the text is proud to "put" herself or himself into this house, despite its disturbed history.⁷⁵

Also, Kiah Conway, a trainee as a Campus Correspondent for *Her Campus*, suggests that encouraging ambition, having big dreams and chasing them is not wrong but it is quite the contrary – aiming high to be, for example, CEO of a big company is highly valuable.⁷⁶

As it has been already proposed, the most overlooked and underrated house is Hufflepuff. This house does not play any significant role in the story. The only important character from this house is Cedric Diggory who is killed at the end of the fourth book. The readers do not feel any bond to Hufflepuff and they would not wish to be put into this house. Sarah Todd explains why readers feel this way: "the contemporary cult of leadership means that people who display authority (Ravenclaw) and dominance (Gryffindor and Slytherin) tend to get the most praise. Folks who help each other out? Not so much."⁷⁷

But Rowling explains why "being" a Hufflepuff is important. In one interview, she gives an example that, when the Battle of Hogwarts starts and the students have to choose whether they fight or not, the Hufflepuffs stay and fight. "They didn't want to show off, they weren't being reckless. That's the essence of the Hufflepuff house."⁷⁸ To do what is right, to be kind and helpful is the most important for Hufflepuff. Perhaps, Rowling could have given the house more place to show its true potential.

⁷⁵ *LittleSlytherKitty*, „Read This If You Are A Slytherin—Why Slytherin is the Best Hogwarts House,“ *Medium*, November 25, 2017, <https://medium.com/@moviekitty/read-this-if-you-are-a-slytherin-why-slytherin-is-the-best-hogwarts-house-590510b92515>.

⁷⁶ Kiah Conway, "5 reasons why Slytherin is the best house," *Her Campus*, February 2, 2018. <https://www.hercampus.com/school/seton-hall/5-reasons-slytherin-best-house>.

⁷⁷ Sarah Todd, "Hufflepuff is the best house in Harry Potter—and the most misunderstood", *Quartz*, June 26, 2017. <https://qz.com/1014461/harry-potter-20th-anniversary-why-hufflepuff-is-the-best-house/>.

⁷⁸ Joanne Rowling, "Harry Potter: Beyond the Pages", interview by Billy Dee Michelle, October 11, 2012, video 44:16, <https://www.snitchseeker.com/harry-potter-news/live-video-jk-rowlings-new-webchat-and-interview-from-harry-potter-reading-club-91343/>.

One of the criticized parts in the *Harry Potter* book series is the sorting ceremony because the choice of the Sorting Hat could be predicted. As the family history of the students suggests, they are often chosen to the same house as their relatives were. A great example is Draco Malfoy's family. All the family members have gone to Slytherin and it would be considered a great disappointment for any of them if they or any of their relatives are sorted into another house; it is actually one of the first things Draco Malfoy says: "but I know I'll be in Slytherin, all our family have been – imagine being in Hufflepuff, I think I'd leave, wouldn't you?"⁷⁹. Not only he demonstrates which house is the best according to him, he also points out which house is the least popular. Nonetheless, Draco is pictured as a villain right from the beginning, therefore, his opinion about the school houses has the opposite effect; Harry probably does not wish to belong in the same house as Draco and the reader is suggested which house is the "bad" one (despite the fact, that the reader has not encountered with the school houses yet).

At the beginning of the book series, Slytherin is pictured as a house the main hero does not want to belong to. He is told horrible stories about the house Lord Voldemort came from. When Harry undergoes the sorting ceremony, he tells to the Sorting Hat he does not want to be sorted to Slytherin even although the Sorting Hat thinks it would suit him most because it recognises several Voldemort's features which were relocated into the baby Harry: "'Hmm,' said a small voice in his ear. 'Difficult. Very difficult. Plenty of courage, I see. Not a bad mind, either. There's talent, oh my goodness, yes – and a nice thirst to prove yourself, now that's interesting... So where shall I put you?' Harry gripped the edges of the stool and thought, 'Not Slytherin, not Slytherin.'"⁸⁰ Although Harry has no serious reason for his wish (apart from the unpleasant encounter with Draco at Madam Malkin's), he keeps saying that he does not want to be put into Slytherin and eventually he is sorted to Gryffindor.

Julia Pond proposes that Harry is probably the only student whose free will is taken into the consideration during the sorting ceremony and the Sorting Hat is influenced by Harry's wish.⁸¹ Nonetheless, it is not known what happens when other students are being sorted: "sometimes, Harry noticed, the hat shouted out the house at once, but at others it took a little

⁷⁹ Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, 60.

⁸⁰ Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, 91-92.

⁸¹ Julia Rose Pond, "Divine Destiny or Free Choice: Nietzsche's Strong Wills in the *Harry Potter Series*." (Thesis, Georgia State University, 2008), 13.

while to decide. ‘Finnigan, Seamus,’ the sandy-haired boy next to Harry in the line, sat on the stool for almost a whole minute before the hat declared him a Gryffindor.”⁸²

Rowling never mentions what happens during the sorting ceremony, except in Harry’s case, so it cannot be claimed that only Harry’s wish is fulfilled. Pond also points out that in the last chapter of the book series Harry talks to his son Albus when Albus is scared he would be sorted into Slytherin. Harry suggests that he can tell the Sorting Hat where he wants to be put in: “- then Slytherin house will have gained an excellent student, won’t it? It doesn’t matter to us, Al. But if it matters to you, you’ll be able to choose Gryffindor over Slytherin. The Sorting Hat takes your choice into account.”⁸³ He believes that if it worked for him, it could work for anybody else. But the reader will never know if it is true or not.⁸⁴

Through the whole book series, there is not a single complaint about the Sorting Hat’s decision; everybody is satisfied with the house he or she is sorted to. But a different situation appears in the *Chamber of Secret*. Harry doubts whether he deserves to belong to Gryffindor or not. He expresses his anxiety: “‘So I should be in Slytherin,’ Harry said, looking desperately into Dumbledore’s face. ‘The Sorting Hat could see Slytherin’s power in me, and it-‘Put you in Gryffindor,’ said Dumbledore calmly.”⁸⁵ Harry feels upset about his Slytherin characteristics and he fears those powers Voldemort transmitted on him. But Dumbledore explains to Harry that because he could tell the Sorting Hat what he wished, that he could express his own will, Harry shows it that he is a true Gryffindor. “It is our choices, Harry, that show what we truly are, far more than our abilities.”⁸⁶ But as it has been already discussed, all those features the Sorting Hat “detected” at Harry during the sorting ceremony are the traits Slytherin house values the most – even the ability to push through one’s choice. So, in order to put a student into the most suitable house, Harry should be put into Slytherin.

As a matter of fact, Rowling creates students that fit into each house but she also creates situations which made them act in a certain way, where they have to show the characteristics qualities of each house:

“‘Which came first, the phoenix or the flame?’ ‘Hmm... What do you think, Harry?’ said Luna, looking thoughtful. ‘What? Isn’t there just a password?’ ‘Oh no, you’ve got to answer a

⁸² Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, 90.

⁸³ Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, 607.

⁸⁴ Pond, "Divine Destiny or Free Choice: Nietzsche's Strong Wills in the Harry Potter Series," 13-14.

⁸⁵ Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secret*, 245.

⁸⁶ Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secret*, 245.

question,' said Luna. (...) 'Well then, I think the answer is that a circle has no beginning.' 'Well reasoned,' said the voice, and the door swung open."⁸⁷

In this case, the purpose is to show Luna's intellect and her unique way of thinking. The houses' characteristics endorse the best qualities in the students but they can also influence them in their behaviour. Due to the fact, that Neville was sorted into Gryffindor and not Hufflepuff, although his personality would probably fit more there, his timidity has been overcome and at the end of the story he is actually the one who destroys the last Deathly Hallow.⁸⁸

This claim could be supported by a research made by Stephen Deets. He made a research in his class applying the division of the students into houses from *Harry Potter* books and made an interesting discovery. After the division, students who were, for example, put into Slytherin, tended to defend the house.⁸⁹ So, although this house is more likely represented as a negative one, students who are sorted into Slytherin are influenced by this house traditions and rules and follow them.

So Rowling may suggest, by creating the sorting ceremony and the houses, that our behaviour is not only influenced by our own decisions but also by the environment around us. On this account, professor of Philosophy Shawn E. Klein suggests that if Harry does not express his wishes during the sorting ceremony and is sorted to Slytherin he may become a friend with Draco and his lot which could cause that Harry would eventually become Death Eater because he would be encouraged by Slytherin environment, which supports ambition and fraternity which could cultivate Voldemort's features in Harry.⁹⁰ But this idea seems unlikely since Harry would probably never become Death Eater because his hatred toward Voldemort is too strong to be exceeded by Harry's potential desire for power.

Furthermore, J. K. Rowling pictures Hogwarts as a typical private British boarding school where students stay most of the school year and leave it only on holidays. Literary critic Anthony Holden wonders why Hogwarts cannot be a comprehensive or grammar school rather than a boarding school, where children are removed from their lives and start living

⁸⁷ Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, 472.

⁸⁸ Helga Sædís Jónsdóttir, „*The Sorting Hat Effect: How the Hogwarts Houses Influence Prejudice in Harry Potter*,” (B.A. Essay, University of Iceland, 2016), 24.

⁸⁹ Deets, “Wizarding in the Classroom: Teaching Harry Potter and Politics,” 743.

⁹⁰ Shawn E. Klein, “Harry Potter and Humanity: Choices, Love, and Death”, *Reason Papers*. Volume 34, no. 1, June 2012. 34.

completely different ones. He points out that young *Harry Potter* readers can find it difficult to identify with the book characters, because this type of education is rather nostalgic.⁹¹

On that account, J.K. Rowling explains why she chose a boarding school environment in an interview with S. Hattenstone: “The school had to be a boarding school because most of the magic happens in the middle of the night, and if it was a day school you wouldn't get the same sense of community.” But she also underlines that she has never been keen on boarding schools, she does not like the environment of those institutions, and therefore, she only chooses this kind of school because it matches with her idea of the best place for adventures for her young heroes. Also, the boarding school is free from parental supervising so the students are more independent so various adventures are more accessible to them. But Rowling adds that the school is still safe because there is the school staff who protects them when needed.⁹²

Michael D. O'Brien points out that the school staff and the students are typical personalities that can be found in a British boarding school. The only difference is that they are taught how to do magic. He suggests that this picture is a caricature of our world, but contrary to a real boarding school where students are taught how to be successful in business, the students in Hogwarts are taught how to master supernatural powers and to be superior over Muggles.⁹³

This critical point of view may be reasonable because it is true that not everybody receives the education he or she applies for, both in the wizarding and the real world. In the real world, boarding schools are usually rather expensive, and therefore, not accessible for everybody, and in the wizarding world, only those who receive the letter can attend the school. When Harry's aunt Petunia was a girl, she wrote a letter to Dumbledore to be accepted to Hogwarts (like her sister Lily) but she was refused. So, although she showed an interest in attending the school, she was not born a witch therefore she could not be accepted.

The picture of Hogwarts as a boarding school could also be the cause of an interesting trend which has started to appear. Young students and their parents start to choose a boarding school over day schools in recent years. After reading *Harry Potter* book series, future

⁹¹ Anthony Holden, “Why Harry Potter doesn't cast a spell over me”, January 25, 2000, <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2000/jun/25/booksforchildrenandteenagers.guardianchildrensfictionprize2000>.

⁹² Simon Hattenstone, "Harry, Jessica and me," *The Guardian*, July 8, 2000. <http://www.accio-quote.org/articles/2000/0700-guardian-hattenstone.html>.

⁹³ O'Brien, “Harry Potter and the Paganization of Children's Culture.”

students find boarding schools a perfect place to spend their studying years as Harry, Ron and Hermione do. The interest is not based purely on the book series but it plays its part.

Tutor for the University of Buckingham Seam Reid highlights in his article that the reality is different from the one pictured in the book series but he supports this trend because he believes that it could be beneficial for students to choose a boarding school over a day one. Those benefits could be that, for example, those schools are usually (but not always) located in beautiful countryside removed from busy towns and are housed in majestic, often historic, buildings. Those schools also provide extra after school activities which are connected to the school time table. Another benefit could also be that the teachers can create more bonding relationship with their students and can develop more personal environment during the classes.⁹⁴ All those benefits appear in *Harry Potter* book series as well (i.e., ““The Sorting is a very important ceremony because, while you are here, your house will be something like your family within Hogwarts. You will have classes with the rest of your house, sleep in your house dormitory and spend free time in your house common room””⁹⁵) and may be influential during the deciding process what school to choose.

To support this claim, associate professor of history Karen M. Smith proposes that *Harry Potter* fans, besides loving the magical world, are also fascinated by the fact that the story is situated in a boarding school with their friends, and not at home with their parents. She says that in fact, boarding schools require strict obeying of the school rules, there is little privacy and also a quite high pressure on the students’ school results but that does not affect the idea of boarding school (a place without parents where the “fun” happens) and its popularity in literature.⁹⁶ So, although the readers are familiar with the real picture of a boarding school they still would enjoy the story being put into a boarding school more than if *Harry Potter* story had taken place in a day school.

Furthermore, Smith explains what a typical boarding school story should consist of and which of those features appear in *Harry Potter*. She explains that a traditional school story features the hero (or heroine) – Harry, and his (her) best friend – Ron. The third friend (Hermione), usually joins to accomplish the “rule of three” (Historically, this rule has appeared in many

⁹⁴ Sean Reid, “It’s not like Hogwarts!” *The Guardian*, April 30, 2012, <https://www.theguardian.com/teacher-network/teacher-blog/2012/apr/30/not-like-hogwarts-boarding-schools>.

⁹⁵ Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone*, 85.

⁹⁶ Karen Manners Smith, “Harry Potter’s Schooldays: J. K. Rowling and the British Boarding School Novel”, *Reading Harry Potter: critical Essays*, ed. by Giselle Liza Anatol, (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 2003), 69-70.

boarding schools; the point of it is a protection and avoidance of “unnatural” closeness of young boys but this aspect does not appear in the story).

Smith also suggests that Rowling reverses the homesickness issue, because Harry expresses that feeling only when he has to leave the school not when he comes back at the Dursleys because he hates them and his true home is at Hogwarts. When Harry is on his summer holidays at the Dursleys, he cannot wait to be back at school: “He missed Hogwarts so much it was like having a constant stomach ache. He missed the castle, with its secret passageways and ghosts, his classes, the mail arriving by owl, eating banquets in the Great Hall, sleeping in his four-poster bed in the tower dormitory, visiting the gamekeeper, Hagrid, in his cabin next to the Forbidden Forest in the grounds, and, especially, Quidditch, the most popular sport in the wizarding world.”⁹⁷

The last important aspect, that Smith suggests, of a boarding school are sports matches and food. Rowling gives Quidditch an important role in the story because the main hero excels in it and his flying skill is useful many times. Food is also pictured as a very important issue. Smith points out that a typical school story refers to a horrible food when students starve because they cannot eat enough but in *Harry Potter*, it is quite the other way round.⁹⁸ When Harry experiences the unbelievably abundant feast at the beginning of the school year, he is stunned by the volume and quality of the food: “Harry’s mouth fell open. The dishes in front of him were now piled with food. He had never seen so many things he liked to eat on one table.”⁹⁹ Rowling creates a school where everybody can choose what and how much he or she likes.

4.2 Hogwarts teachers, educational system and students

The teachers in *Harry Potter* book series are very important characters for the story progress. Without them, Harry would not be able to accomplish many of his tasks and eventually defeat Voldemort. At the beginning of the book series the professors are represented as significant characters. As a matter of fact, the story starts when Professor McGonagall appears, morphed into a cat, in front of Harry relatives’ house and waits for Professor Dumbledore to bring Harry. Throughout the whole book series, the teachers are important guides and protectors for the main characters and they help Harry and his friends to overcome many sinister situations.

⁹⁷ Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secret*, 8.

⁹⁸ Smith, “Harry Potter’s Schooldays: J. K. Rowling and the British Boarding School Novel”, 72-81.

⁹⁹ Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone*, 92.

When students arrive at school, the teachers educate, lead and protect young wizards and witches and share their ancient magical knowledge with them. The students can learn many exciting subjects the readers wish to be taught, too. Kayla M. Nelson suggests that the *Harry Potter* books may be a form of an escape for the readers who feel limited or even bored at a real school. The readers may imagine that the subjects taught at Hogwarts are more interesting and attractive than math or science but they probably overlook that Harry is bored by lectures and exhausted by the volume of his homework like them, too.¹⁰⁰ Nevertheless, Rowling creates complex characters of school staff, when some of them may be perceived as ideal pedagogues for the readers (for example, Professor Lupin) and manages to create a unique world where schooling is not observed by the readers as a boring necessity but as an amazing adventure:

“Professor Lupin had compiled the most unusual exam any of them had ever taken; a sort of obstacle course outside in the sun, where they had to wade across a deep padding pool containing a Grindylow, cross a series of potholes full of Red Caps, squish their way across a patch of march, ignoring the misleading directions from a Hinkypunk, then climb into an old trunk and battle with a new Boggart.”¹⁰¹

The curriculum is completely different from what Muggle students are taught and, in the case of Lupin’s Defence Against the Dark Art, it could be considered a dream subject everybody would enjoy. Nonetheless, future wizards and witches attend an elementary school in an ordinary world to receive a basic education just like their Muggle peers. Then, when the Hogwarts school attendance starts at the age of twelve, young witches and wizards do not learn how to count, read and write and they can focus only on the magical subjects. When younger readers reach their age of twelve, many of them hope to receive a letter from Hogwarts, too. They believe that they would enjoy attending magic school a lot more than the ordinary one.

On this account, Matthew Belinkie points out that Hogwarts is the best school to learn magic but if a young wizard or witch is interested in another field than magic he or she cannot learn it there. He suggests that the problem may be that even though Hogwarts students would change their minds during their studying they could not change their career plan because the

¹⁰⁰ Kayla M. Nelson, "Harry Potter and the Analysis of a Hogwarts Education", 2016. *All Student Publications*. 157, 1.

¹⁰¹ Joanne Rowling, *Harry Potter and Prisoner of Azkaban*. (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc., 1999), 234.

only education they can receive is connected to magic. Or if a Hogwarts graduate is no longer interested in the wizarding world and would wish to attend a Muggle university he does not have a chance to be accepted because his knowledge covers only potions, transfiguration and charms. His point is that by attending Hogwarts, a young person eliminates him or her from an ordinary human society. One of a few jobs that require an education in magic is at the Ministry of Magic which considers mainly bureaucratic work. The books also propose several other jobs such as a bank clerk or a journalist nevertheless the book series does not say where to be properly educated for this job.¹⁰²

But the separation between the Muggle world and the wizarding world is not apparent only at the level of education. Due to the fact that the wizards and witches are dissociated from the Muggle world, they have considerable difficulties when they have to deal with ordinary “Muggle” things. The struggle is pictured in Hagrid: “Although Hagrid seemed to know where he was going, he was obviously not used to getting there in an ordinary way. He got stuck in the ticket barrier on the Underground and complained loudly that the seats were too small and the trains too slow. ‘I don’t know how the Muggles manage without magic,’”¹⁰³ he even believes that it is humiliating to use it. Arthur Weasley, on the other hand, is amazed by various Muggles’ inventions: “‘Fascinating!’ he would say, as Harry talked him through using a telephone. ‘Ingenious, really, how many ways Muggles have found of getting along without magic,’”¹⁰⁴ but only in manner of a scientist discovering new species. However, the wizards and witches still have to use essential things for living such as clothes or household equipment. Nevertheless, where they buy them or even produce them, since there is no education for these professions, is not clarified.

Rosie Knight also points out that no adult wizard or witch has a higher level of education than an elementary level because they learn the core skills only until the age of eleven. Then they only focus on the magical curriculum and do not develop any other skills. But it is clear that more jobs are necessary (tailors, painters or writers) because these occupations occur in the story but it is unknown how the wizards and witches are trained for it.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² Matthew Belinkie, “Hogwarts is a Terrible School”, *Overthinking it*, September 24, 2009. <https://www.overthinkingit.com/2009/09/24/hogwarts-is-a-terrible-school/>.

¹⁰³ Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, 53.

¹⁰⁴ Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secret*, 37.

¹⁰⁵ Rosie Knight, “Why Harry Potter’s Wizarding World and Hogwarts Are Actually Horrible Places”, *Nerdist*, June 23, 2017. <https://nerdist.com/why-harry-potters-wizarding-world-and-hogwarts-are-actually-horrible-places/>.

Nevertheless, the students receive a letter from their Heads of House with a career advice and many brochures which suggest different kinds of jobs such as a Healer, Muggle Relation worker, Training of Security Trolls or a work at the Ministry – all those professions are directly connected to the magical world and using magic. After the students' career choice, their curriculum changes based on the chosen job: “Well, Potter, this meeting is to talk over any career ideas you might have, and to help you decide which subjects you should continue into the sixth and seventh years. Have you had any thoughts about what you would like to do after you leave Hogwarts?”¹⁰⁶ But she does not propose what job he could think of – where he could be successful, and because Harry grew in a Muggle world, he does not know what jobs he can apply for. He is told by Professor Moody that he could be a good Auror (a sort of a police officer in the magic world) so he sticks to this idea and does not concern any other job.

Michael O'Brien also suggests that educational process in Hogwarts can be traumatizing. The students are acquainted with Professor McGonagall's Transfiguration, a subject where they are shown how to change objects and people. They, for example, have to transform their pets into something else (without any knowledge if it would change back). Potions classes, led by Professor Snape, teach them how to make magical potions (which can, for example, control others) where students can get hurt quite easily if they do not prepare the potion well. Herbology, taught by Professor Sprout, teaches them how to take care of plants which are then used for making potions (for example, Mandrakes, small plant-babies which are grown to be cut and boiled in a magical potion). Divination is trained by Professor Trelawney who leads students to be able to see into the future (quite frequently, Professor Trelawney threaten her students with a close death). During the Defence Against the Dark Arts, which is taught by a different teacher every year because this post is cursed, students are prepared to defend themselves against dark creatures, dark witches and wizards and other dark spells. Mostly, the Professors who give those lessons are evil characters (with an exception of Professor Lupin). There are more subjects such as Charms, Flying or Arithmancy where the students are taught to master supernatural forces and to control their surroundings by using magic. As shown above, most of the subjects could be rather traumatizing for children but the book series does not suggest that. The students deal with most of the horrifying situations, for example, facing their biggest fear during the Defence Against the Dark Arts classes with Professor Lupin, without any serious mental impacts.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Order of Phoenix*, 583.

¹⁰⁷ O'Brien, “Harry Potter and the Paganization of Children's Culture.”

Teacher educator Megan L. Birch proposes that the subjects the professors teach reveal their personalities and their roles in the development of the story. She claims that their names, wardrobe and a physical appearance can also suggest what the teacher's personality is and whether they are morally good or evil.¹⁰⁸

Snape's name is a combination of words snake, snoop or sneak and Severus to severe and severed (cut into two). On the other side is, for example, Dumbledore's name is quite comical. His last name is a combination of the words bumblebee and humble and his first name Albus means white.¹⁰⁹ Professor Snape has greasy black hair and a pale skin and he wears only black robes while Professor Dumbledore has sparkling blue eyes behind half-moon spectacles and he wears various colourful robes, which he changes according to the occasion. Therefore, the readers can be fond of the teacher not only by his or her acts but also by the teacher's appearance. However, it is necessary to say that the appearance can be misleading since Snape is actually a hero or Gilderoy Lockhart: "(...) all winking and flashing dazzlingly white teeth at the crowd. The real Lockhart was wearing robes of forget-me-not blue which exactly matched his eyes; his pointed wizard's hat was set at a jaunty angle on his wavy hair,"¹¹⁰ is a fraud.

Birch suggests that a great example of her theory is professor Bins because he appears only to give a lecture. Whether he does any other activity except for teaching is now known. He is a history teacher, a ghost who once went to deliver a lecture and forgot his body in his office. He is dull, sticks to facts and focuses only on memorising information: "Professor Bins opened his notes and began to read in a flat drone like an old vacuum cleaner until nearly everyone in the class was in a deep stupor, occasionally coming round long enough to copy down a name or date, then falling asleep again."¹¹¹

Apparently, he is not one of the most favourite teachers and he does not have any important role in the plot. In the character of Professor Bins, his personality and educational skills blend together. The way he teaches is obsolete and void like a ghost removed from everyday life. Birch even proposes that professor Bin's curriculum already indicates how important and

¹⁰⁸ Megan L. Birch, "Teachers and Learning, Power and Knowledge! *Critical Perspectives on Harry Potter*, ed. Elizabeth E. Heilman. (New York, Routledge, 2009), 105-107.

¹⁰⁹ Shira Wolosky, *The Riddles of Harry Potter: secret passages and interpretive quests*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. 13-14.

¹¹⁰ Rowling, *Harry Potter and a Chamber of Secret*, 49.

¹¹¹ Rowling, *Harry Potter and a Chamber of Secret*, 113.

amusing the subject and the teacher will be.¹¹² But it is necessary to point out, that Hermione's knowledge of the school history helps the trio many times. She even refers to the text book *Hogwarts: A History* as her favourite one. So, although Professor Bins' teaching methods are not the most attractive ones, they are very important nonetheless.

Another highly criticized aspect of the book series is the educational system. A young witch or wizard starts their educational process at the age of twelve. The school year is divided into three parts separated by Christmas and Easter holidays and is closed up by a long summer holiday similarly to the UK tradition. There is an examination period to get into the next year of schooling at the end of each school year. In the fifth and seventh year, students have to pass exams proposed by the Ministry. The first big exam is the Ordinary Wizarding Level (O.W.L.) exams in the fifth year. After that, they have to decide what future career they want to take and then select the subjects they want to continue for Nastily Exhausting Wizarding Tests (N.E.W.T.) level, which is the highest level of education and entitles the graduate to do the chosen occupation.

The problem arises when a student wants to change his or her mind. K. M. Nelson questions if there is any possibility for the student to change his or her subjects. She points out that students in general struggle to choose their career path and also the decision they make at such a young age is not always the best. Nelson highlights that "real" students change their major at least once during their studies. Hogwarts students have to choose at the age of fifteen and then they have to struggle to be successful in the proposed subjects. If they fail, they cannot do any other job since they focused only on the chosen subjects. On the other hand, Weasley twins Fred and George did not finish their studies and did not pass the N.E.W.T.s either and yet they have a very successful business at the Diagon Alley running a joke shop. They are an example that intelligence and wit is not indicated by grades.¹¹³

Harry's performance at school is not the best either: "[Professor McGonagall talking to Harry] 'I'd say you are averaging "Acceptable" at the moment, so you'll need to put in some good hard work before the exams to stand a change of continuing,"¹¹⁴ but he excels in casting spells: "(...) on Thursday, Defence Against the Dark Arts. Here, for the first time, Harry felt sure he had passed. He had no problem with any of the written questions, in performing, all

¹¹² Birch, *Teachers and Learning, Power and Knowledge*, 105-107.

¹¹³ Nelson, "*Harry Potter and the Analysis of a Hogwarts Education*", 6-7.

¹¹⁴ Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Order of Phoenix*, 584.

the counter-jinxes and defensive spells right in front of Umbridge,”¹¹⁵ and he is a great Quidditch player. Needless to point out that his success is not so often based on his intelligence and knowledge but on his luck and bravery. On that account, one user of the portal *Quora Shehzaad Dhuliawala* suggests that Harry is maybe only a victim of an outdated education system (emphasizing tests and quizzes too much; several teachers show a noticeable level favouritism toward certain students without any consequences for them (Snape favouring Draco); and teacher’s incompetents - the user believes that Dumbledore must have been able to identify that Lockhart is an impostor) and therefore it is not entirely Harry’s fault that he cannot fully develop his skills and focus on his strong points.¹¹⁶

Kayla Nelson also suggests that the frequency of cancellation of the final exams is rather high. Usually, the headmaster cancels them so the students can overcome shocks from certain tragic events. The finals are cancelled firstly in *Chamber of Secret* when a killing giant snake Basilisk is finally killed, then due to the Death of Cedric Diggory in *Goblet of fire* and also when Dumbledore is killed in *Half-Blood Prince*. Nelson says that the frequent exam cancellations show how seriously the school takes the necessity of a proper education and its ending. The school shows a certain lack of responsibility to the Ministry and also to the parents who rely on the school’s commitment in educating young witches and wizards because they cannot pass the necessary exams.¹¹⁷ So the question is when the students who need to pass the O.W.L.s and N.E.W.T.s exams can actually do them?

The users of an online forum *Science Fiction & Fantasy* discuss this topic and suggest several explanations. The user *The Dark Lord* says that the exams in *Chamber of Secret* are cancelled as a kind of a treat for the students because Rowling wants to emphasise the happy ending of the book: “(...) or Professor McGonagall standing up to tell them all the exams had been cancelled as a school treat (‘Oh, no!’ said Hermione)”¹¹⁸ The user vap78 points out a contradictory scene: although the school is under the attack of Basilisk, Professor McGonagall keeps telling to the students that they have to prepare for their finals as usual: “The whole point of keeping the school open at this time is for you to receive your education,”¹¹⁹ so vap78 asks why holding the exams is important at one point but when the chamber is closed and the students can focus on their studies the exams are cancelled. The

¹¹⁵ Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Order of Phoenix*, 630.

¹¹⁶ Shehzaad Dhuliawala, „Is Harry Potter a bad student? “*Quora*, June 24, 2013, <https://www.quora.com/Is-Harry-Potter-a-bad-student>.

¹¹⁷ Nelson, "*Harry Potter and the Analysis of a Hogwarts Education*", 8.

¹¹⁸ Rowling, *Harry Potter and a Chamber of Secret*, 249.

¹¹⁹ Rowling, *Harry Potter and a Chamber of Secret*, 210.

reason may be that school staff wishes to celebrate the happy occasion. But for the students who need to pass their exams, this may be quite cruel because they need those exams for their future career. Vap78 gives quite a reasonable explanation that the headmaster cancels only the school exams at the end of each school year and not the O.W.L.s and N.E.W.T.s because they are exams proposed by the Ministry so the headmaster cannot cancel them. Thus, they are probably held later during the year.¹²⁰

Another controversial topic proposes Megan Birch who highlights that Hogwarts educational system is rather outdated. The school staff does not only teach but they also observe the school rules, rituals and routines and punish a law breaking behaviour – they are the real authority at school, not the Ministry (especially Dumbledore does as he wishes). They do not want to make any changes neither in the educational system nor in the content of the subjects. The teachers are usually former Hogwarts students so the way they teach reflects their conception of a Hogwarts educational system as they know it. They keep the inefficient traditional teaching, memorising enormous quantity of information, and ranking methods.¹²¹

Despite the fact that the teachers provide relevant lectures, they are usually given during private lessons (Lupin teaches Harry how to create the Patronus Charm during Anti-Dementor lessons at the weekends) so the students, and especially Harry, are taught many important things out of the class rooms.¹²² But not only teachers function as mentors. In *Order of Phoenix* Hermione founds Dumbledore's Army where Harry teaches his fellow students how to defend themselves [Hermione]:

“(…) but I really think you ought to teach anyone who wants to learn. I mean, we're talking about defending ourselves against V-Voldemort.’ (...) ‘I had an idea – that it might be good if people who wanted to study Defence Against the Dark Arts – and I mean, really study it, you know, not that rubbish that Umbridge is doing with us. (...) Well, I thought it would be good if we, well, took matters in our own hands.’¹²³

The students are able to take action and prepare themselves for what they believe is important. They are aware that the current education is not so satisfying because when Dolores

¹²⁰ The Dark Lord, Vap78, “Did Dumbledore unnecessarily hinder the life-chances of students by cancelling all exams in Chamber of Secrets?” *Science Fiction & Fantasy Stack Exchange*, April 20, 2016, <https://scifi.stackexchange.com/questions/125626/did-dumbledore-unnecessarily-hinder-the-life-chances-of-students-by-cancelling-a>.

¹²¹ Birch, *Teachers and Learning, Power and Knowledge*, 114.

¹²² Birch, *Teachers and Learning, Power and Knowledge*, 115-116.

¹²³ Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Order of Phoenix*, 296, 303.

Umbridge teaches the Defence Against Dark Arts, she focuses only on memorising from text books and does not include any practical training and seek it elsewhere.

Perhaps, the creation of the Hogwarts educational system is Rowling's way of criticism of real but outdated teaching methods because she had a similar experience when she was a student at a basic school and she was not very fond of the memorizing methods and lack of practical application.¹²⁴

Nevertheless, even if Rowling criticizes the educational system, she does not suggest any better alternative. When the Ministry of Magic starts interfering and criticizing the school the readers may take it as a personal attack on the teachers. So when Umbridge opposes the professional skills of Hogwarts teachers it appears that she also criticizes the teachers themselves so readers may perceive it as a kind of an attack on the teachers. On the other side, perhaps Umbridge really wants to improve the situation at school because a few of her objections are reasonable and provable.

The teachers' inability to defend themselves is clearly shown when Professor Trelawney is fired by Umbridge because she has enough reasons to terminate Trelawney's employment due to her lack of pedagogical competence. Professor Trelawney teaches Divination but she does not excel in it. She is mainly kept at the Hogwarts Castle only to be protected from Voldemort. Her classes usually consist of Trelawney's prediction of a student's death [Professor McGonagall]: "Then you should know, Potter, that Sybill Trelawney has predicted the death of one student a year since she arrived at this school. None of them has died yet. Seeing death omens is her favourite way of greeting a new class,"¹²⁵ and followed by purposeless and boring activities. Thus, when Umbridge fires Professor Trelawney, her behaviour could be perceived as quite reasonable but because she is an evil character her actions are observed as negative ones although Trelawney is not a favourite Hogwarts teacher.¹²⁶

Furthermore, Jillian Kiser points out in her study that a few of the teachers are not the best examples of a suitable pedagogue. She highlights that Hagrid, the Hogwarts groundkeeper, Harry's close friend and eventually a pedagogue, rather frequently drinks alcohol: "(...)

¹²⁴ Sean Smith, "Sen jménem Harry Potter: životní příběh J. K. Rowlingové", (V Praze: Euromedia Group: Knižní klub, 2002), 32-36.

¹²⁵ Rowling, *Harry Potter and Prisoner of Azkaban*, 84.

¹²⁶ Einar Christopher Wong, "The Magic of Hogwarts: A Critical Examination of Teachers in *Harry Potter*," (Thesis, University Of British Columbia, Vancouver, April 2014), 88.

Hagrid getting redder and redder in the face as he called for more wine,”¹²⁷ and swears in front of the students. He also acts against the law by keeping an illegal dragon and asks the students to help him with it. Kiser finds that rather disturbing because Hagrid is represented as a positive character and young readers can consider him to be a role model.¹²⁸ To mitigate this fact, it may be suggested that Rowling makes the *Harry Potter* characters to be complex, not black and white, which only represent good or evil.

On the other hand, Professor Susan Yager believes that Rowling created Hogwarts a place where those who are interested can learn what they need and the education does not necessarily have to be provided by the teachers. She suggests that there are many kinds of learning: direct instructions (Professor Flitwick teaches how to cast spells), experimental learning (Hermione prepares the Polyjuice Potion), students’ sharing (Dumbledore’s Army), private lessons (Snape teaches Harry Occlumency), classes with great teachers (Wilhelmina Grubbly-Plank) or terrible ones (Gilderoy Lockhart).¹²⁹

She also proposes that *Harry Potter* books encourage learning, not only during the classes but also outside the school. Harry and other students have to discover the magic world but also the real world through its all challenges and hardship, just like the young readers. Also, the complexity of the story asks for careful reading sometimes even re-reading which can be beneficial for the readers because they can find both personal and academic connections in the text in a game like way. Yager suggests that learning is not just a process of understanding things but a process of playing, too.¹³⁰ So, to learn things is not only about sitting in a classroom and memorising the given curriculum but also about a personal experience which is nicely pictured in *Harry Potter* books.

On the other hand, Michael D. O’Brien emphasizes that the magical power is often misused, except by the evil characters who are obviously supposed to misuse it, but often by the good ones, especially students. When mastering the supernatural power – magic, they are probably not fully aware of the power they gain and they use it to fulfil their irresponsible acts. A Ron’s curse on Draco, trying to revenge Hermione: “‘You’ll pay for that one, Malfoy!’ and pointed it furiously under Flint’s arm at Malfoy’s face,”¹³¹ or Harry uses Unforgivable Curses

¹²⁷ Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, 150.

¹²⁸ Jillian Kiser, “Harry Potter and the Christian Church,” (*AHS Capstone Projects*, 2010), 10.

¹²⁹ Susan Yager, “‘Something he could do without being taught’: Honors, Play, and *Harry Potter*,” (*Honors in Practice – Online Archive*, Iowa State University, 2015), 214.

¹³⁰ Yager, “‘Something he could do without being taught’: Honors, Play, and *Harry Potter*,” 218.

¹³¹ Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secret*, 87.

(the most sinister spells which are considered to be a criminal act in a wizarding world) and other evil spells several times without being punished. The saying “the end justifies the means” is present through the whole book series when Harry constantly breaks the rules (either the school rules or the wizarding world laws) and he is eventually appreciated by others because he always defeats the evil.¹³² The question may arise whether such young people would be able to control such a powerful source of potential danger. As a matter of fact, it is actually quite surprising that the students do not hurt each other on daily basis.

When at school, Harry breaks the school rules in almost every chapter, and when somebody tries to stop him, like Neville: “I don’t think you should be breaking any more rules! And you are the one who told me to stand up to people!’ (...) Hermione stepped forward. ‘Neville,’ she said, ‘I’m sorry, really sorry about this.’ And she raised her wand,”¹³³ he or his adherents are not afraid to use spells on their friends. There are no severe consequences for his incorrect behaviour; at the end of each book, Harry is prized by the whole school for his bravery and outstanding abilities. In addition, Harry and Ron became friends with Hermione after she had lied to Professor McGonagall. Harry also shows disrespect toward his least favourite teacher Snape. He frequently calls him only by the last name although the students are obliged to call their teachers either a Professor or Madam or Sir: “Do you remember me telling you we are practicing non-verbal spells, Potter?’ ‘Yes,’ said Harry stiffly. ‘Yes, sir.’ ‘There’s no need to call me “sir” Professor.’”¹³⁴ Also, under aged wizards and witches are forbidden to use magic outside of the school. But Harry breaks this rule several times but eventually he is never punished for it.¹³⁵

However, there are situations when Harry is punished and it is more devastating for him, but it is not by means of school detentions or imprisonment. When Harry and Hermione are caught by Professor McGonagall after they carried a dragon to be sent away, she punishes them by taking away 150 points to Gryffindor:

“From the most popular and admired people at the school, Harry was suddenly the most hated. Even Ravenclaws and Hufflepuffs turned on him, because everyone had been longing to see Slytherin lose the House Cup. Everywhere Harry went, people pointed and didn’t trouble to lower their voices as they insulted him. Slytherins, on the

¹³² O'Brien, “Harry Potter and the Paganization of Children's Culture.”

¹³³ Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, 198.

¹³⁴ Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, 171.

¹³⁵ Mary E. N. Vaughn, “Keeping It Real: Teaching and Learning in the *Harry Potter* Series”, (*Honors Theses*, University of Southern Mississippi, 2011), 52.

other hand, clapped as he walked past them, whistling and cheering, ‘Thanks Potter, we owe you one!’”¹³⁶

And that is the biggest punishment for Harry, not the one school assigned by Professor McGonagall (walking with Hagrid to the Forbidden Forest). More devastating retribution for his indiscipline is when Harry believes his visions, although he is told by Dumbledore not to do so, and the main hero is led to the Ministry of Magic where Harry’s godfather Sirius Black is killed. In other words, Harry is not usually punished by the authorities but by a loss of popularity, friends or family.

Jillian Kiser also points out that not only Harry is prized for his rule-breaking behaviour. Also Weasley twins are famous for their undisciplined manners. They do not finish their education in Hogwarts and yet again they are prized by getting money from Harry, the money he won in Triwizard Tournament, which they use to start their own business.¹³⁷

An evangelical author and *Harry Potter* critic Richard Abanes interprets the message from the book series that the school rules do not apply to everybody and those who obey them are not worthy; there is no need to obey the rules if there is a noble, higher reason or if there is no good explanation why to obey them. Also lying is quite effective and also easily acceptable method how to accomplish an intended goal.¹³⁸

So, as Megan Birch suggests, the readers can learn from the books series that the most powerful and valuable things are who you know, how brave you are, how strong you are and what your moral directives are over book learning and intellect.¹³⁹

4.3 Dumbledore

Probably the most criticized teacher is Albus Dumbledore. He is one of the most powerful wizards of all times, the headmaster of Hogwarts and one of the most significant characters in the book series. Harry firstly encounters Dumbledore when he opens his Chocolate Frog card: “considered by many the greatest wizard of modern times, Professor Dumbledore is particularly famous for his defeat of the dark wizard Grindelwald in 1945, for the discovery of the twelve uses of dragon’s blood and his work on alchemy with his partner, Nicolas

¹³⁶ Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, 179.

¹³⁷ Kiser, *Harry Potter and the Christian Church*, 10.

¹³⁸ Richard Abanes, *Harry Potter and the Bible: The Menace Behind the Magick*. (Camp Hill, PA: Horizon Books, 2001), 38.

¹³⁹ Birch, *Teachers and Learning, Power and Knowledge*, 119.

Flamel,”¹⁴⁰ so the reader knows that there is not a more powerful wizard than him. Rowling pictures Dumbledore: “though very old, always gave the impression of great energy. He had several feet of long silver hair and beard, half-moon spectacles, and an extremely crooked nose. (...) You couldn’t help trusting Albus Dumbledore.”¹⁴¹

He is an affable, gentle, caring and wise pedagogue, and as Megan Birch suggests, he is an idealized teacher and headmasters. He stands as an opposite to the school staff – he is not too strict (like Professor McGonagall) nor too emotional (like Hagrid). He sticks up for students when, for example, Umbridge exposes the Dumbledore’s Army. He declares his responsibility for the organization: “‘You organised this?’ ‘I did,’ said Dumbledore. ‘You recruited these students for – for your army?’ ‘Tonight was supposed to be the first meeting,’”¹⁴² in order to protect them. Nevertheless, the most heroic act, probably in the whole book series, is his death – a true embodiment of sacrifice. Birch believes that a mix of all those qualities could be misleading for the readers and that it distorts the conception of a teacher.¹⁴³

During the first three books Harry only meets with Dumbledore at the end of each book, when Dumbledore explains why the things happened the way they did. Usually, he does not intervene in the story and his only function is to clarify the mysteries at the end. However, his character starts revealing in *Goblet of Fire* where Harry has to compete in Triwizard Tournament and Dumbledore functions as Harry’s supervisor and mentor. In this book, Dumbledore is not represented as an old, slightly loony man anymore. Although he still has several amusing one-liners in the book,¹⁴⁴ Dumbledore is finally represented as a truly powerful wizard:

“At that moment, Harry fully understood for the first time why people said Dumbledore was the only wizard Voldemort had ever feared. The look upon Dumbledore’s face as he started down at the unconscious form of Mad-Eye Moody was more terrible than Harry could ever have imagined. There was no benign smile upon Dumbledore’s face, no twinkle in the eyes behind the spectacles. There was cold fury in every line of the ancient face.”¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁰ Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, 77.

¹⁴¹ Rowling, *Harry Potter and Prisoner of Azkaban*, 71.

¹⁴² Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Order of Phoenix*, 545.

¹⁴³ Birch, *Teachers and Learning, Power and Knowledge*. 113-114.

¹⁴⁴ Wong, “The Magic of Hogwarts: A Critical Examination of Teachers in *Harry Potter*,” 42-51.

¹⁴⁵ Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, 589-590.

Finally, Dumbledore shows his real power and abilities. When Voldemort returns and Harry witnesses the revival, Dumbledore is one of the few who believes Harry; he supports him unconditionally and restores the Order of Phoenix. Dumbledore's true abilities are shown more and more with the growing power of Voldemort.

On the other hand, Libora Oates-Indruchová asks why Dumbledore lets Umbridge in *Order of Phoenix* to try to eliminate all schooling that could actually make the students powerful and skilful in using magic (due to her fear of Dumbledore's potential ability to use Hogwarts students against the Ministry). She declares more and more restricting school laws that limit students' freedom. All forms of exchanging information are being watched and censored and those who are loyal to Dumbledore are persecuted. All those factors result in a sensation of despair because there is nobody to appeal to, the students are threatened to be expelled, the students' parents may lose their jobs, and the teachers may even be imprisoned, which are typical traits of totalitarian regime.¹⁴⁶

In the final book, Dumbledore's youth, his achievements but also his mistakes are revealed. He is not pictured as an omniscient character anymore. In *Deathly Hallows* Rita Skeeter publishes Dumbledore's biography *The Secrets and Lies of Albus Dumbledore* which, as the title indicates, reveals Dumbledore's dark history and the readers can finally know the true Dumbledore and they do not perceive him as an ideal character anymore.

Sofia Ståhl suggests in her essay that the theme "death" is embedded in this character quite profoundly. Dumbledore has to deal with death many times. When he was young, he wished to "master death" by possessing the Deathly Hallows to control Muggles for "the greater good" but he is woken from his dreams when his sister Ariana is killed during his duel with his former best friend Grindelwald, with whom he wanted to change the world. Dumbledore still wishes to possess the Deathly Hallows and especially the Resurrection Stone to reunite with his family because his sister's death hounds him his whole life: "'To me, I confess, it meant the return of my parents, and lifting of all responsibility from my shoulders.'"¹⁴⁷ But when he possesses the stone, he does not use it because he is aware of the devastating power of it: "'I was a fool, Harry. After all those years, I had learned nothing. I was unworthy to

¹⁴⁶ Oates-Indruchová, *The Magic of the Real / The Real of the Magic in Harry Potter*, 75.

¹⁴⁷ Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, 574.

unite the Deathly Hallows, I had proved it time and again, and here was final proof.’”¹⁴⁸ At least, he was able to protect others from the Hollows’ destructiveness.¹⁴⁹

Ståhl goes on and says that Dumbledore does not show any signs of fear of death during the plot because he believes that there is an afterlife. When he is told that he would probably live only one more year: “Dumbledore smiled. The news that he had less than a year to live seemed a matter of little or no concern to him,”¹⁵⁰ he is not shocked but relaxed. He asks Severus to kill him when he asks for it in order to help Harry and protect Draco Malfoy. Ståhl also proposes that what makes Dumbledore a good character is that he is able to love and show love and he is willing to sacrifice himself for others.¹⁵¹

But Harry sees Dumbledore’s death and his absence as a betrayal because he leaves him without any explanation or instructions how to find and destroy the Horcruxes. If they had communicated more openly Harry would have known what to do and would not have felt disappointed by Dumbledore’s actions through the whole *Deathly Hallows*, too. Heidi Nielson suggests that Dumbledore scripts all the steps Harry has to undergo. After Dumbledore’s death Harry is left with only one instruction – to destroy the Horcruxes. But although Dumbledore is gone, he prepared an elaborated a plan for Harry (before he died) where Harry probably dies, too. Harry feels furious, but not about the fact that he could die, but that Dumbledore left him, but he knows that he cannot quit the scripted role Dumbledore created for him.¹⁵²

Dumbledore’s preparation of Harry’s death is by far the most controversial due to the fact that the readers believe that Dumbledore would let Harry really die. Voldemort’s piece of soul sticks to Harry’s so Harry has to be killed so Voldemort dies (he is the last Horcrux).

“‘We have protected him because it has been essential to teach him, to raise him, to let him try his strength’, said Dumbledore (...) If I know him, he will have arranged matter so that when he does set out to meet his death it will, truly, mean the end of

¹⁴⁸ Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, 576.

¹⁴⁹ Sofia Ståhl, “Good or evil? Attitudes to Death in the Harry Potter Novels,” (Bachelor essay, Karlstad University, 2014), 7.

¹⁵⁰ Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, 546.

¹⁵¹ Ståhl, “Good or evil? Attitudes to Death in the Harry Potter Novels,” 8.

¹⁵² Heidi Nielson, “‘Neither Can Live While the Other Survives’: The Driving Force of Revenge in Harry Potter”, *Reason Papers*, Vol. 34, no. 1, June 2012 (all the following citations concerns this issue), 142.

Voldemort. Snape looked horrified. ‘You have kept him alive so that he can die at the right moment?’”¹⁵³

Dumbledore knows that Harry has to be killed but he does not tell him that and he raises Harry so he would be ready to sacrifice himself: “Dumbledore knew, as Voldemort knew, that Harry would not let anyone else die for him now that he had discovered it was in his power to stop it.”¹⁵⁴ Although Harry is devastated by this discovery he still does as is told. He is even disappointed that he does not manage to destroy all the Horcruxes and he feels that he lets Dumbledore down – Harry’s feel of responsibility is unbeatable. But Harry is not the only one who feels betrayed by Dumbledore’s actions.

Also Snape is shocked by this discovery but not because he feels sorry for Harry. He loves Harry’s mother Lily who he tried to protect but failed. When Harry starts his school attendance Dumbledore tells Snape to protect him as much as possible. “‘You used me.’ (...) ‘I have spied for you, and lied for you, put myself in mortal danger for you. Everything was supposed to be to keep Lily Potter’s son safe. Now you tell me you have been raising him like a pig for slaughter –’”¹⁵⁵ The only thing he cherishes is his love toward Lily and he believes that by protecting Harry he would also protect her memory. But when he discovers that it is not the case and that Dumbledore uses him, Snape keeps helping Harry as is told anyway.

When Harry arrives in the Forbidden Forest to sacrifice himself, he encounters with Voldemort and is hit by the killing curse. But instead of death, he wakes up at imaginary King’s Cross Station and meets with Dumbledore who explains Harry all that is still unexplained. After reading this chapter, the readers probably forgive Dumbledore everything because he actually does not send Harry to die since he knows that the killing curse would not actually kill him. Dumbledore is finally pictured as an imperfect but humble person and because he shows that he regrets his actions and mistakes, the readers can sympathise with him and forgive him.¹⁵⁶

Furthermore, one of the most criticized aspects is the relationship between Harry and Dumbledore. They have a special bond, especially Dumbledore towards Harry because he is

¹⁵³ Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, 551.

¹⁵⁴ Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, 555.

¹⁵⁵ Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, 551.

¹⁵⁶ Jonathan L. Walls and Jerry L. Walls, “Beyond Godric’s Hollow: Life after Death and Search for Meaning,” *The Ultimate Harry Potter and Philosophy: Hogwarts for Muggles*, Ed. By Gregory Bassham and William Irwin. (NJ: John Wiley & Sons. 2012), 253.

the one who brings him to the Dursleys and Dumbledore's magic protects him from Voldemort throughout his life at the Dursleys.

As Kate Behr points out, in the first four books Dumbledore is presented mainly symbolically, he does not intervene into the plot much but he saves or protects Harry or helps him to fulfil Harry's tasks. Nonetheless, in *Order of Phoenix*, Dumbledore's character starts to change and he loses his prestigious and idealized role mainly because of his absence when he starts avoiding Harry. So, Harry feels abandoned by Dumbledore, he is mad at him and does not seek his help either: "He was not going to go to Dumbledore for help when Dumbledore had not spoken to him since last June."¹⁵⁷ Eventually, Dumbledore has to leave the school and Harry has to deal with his troubles alone. Behr believes that the major confrontation in *Order of Phoenix* is not between Harry and Voldemort but between Harry and Dumbledore. At the end of the book, when Harry suffers from his godfather's death, he needs to vent his anger and pain but: "he felt even angrier that Dumbledore was showing signs of weakness. He had no business being weak when Harry wanted to rage and storm at him."¹⁵⁸ He does not want to see that Dumbledore is also a human, he seeks a shelter where he can hide from his pain and is irritated by Dumbledore's lack of strength.¹⁵⁹

Harry takes Dumbledore as his relative. He does not seek comfort at any other teacher, he wishes that Dumbledore would explain to him why things happened, and he wants to be saved by him. In general, their relationship is ups and downs through the whole book series and Dumbledore's death does not solve this situation either.

But what arouses the most responses from the reading community and therefore probably the most criticized and most controversial issue of this character is Dumbledore being a gay. This fact is not explicitly said in any of the books but Rowling expressed it during her audience at a Carnegie Hall reading in New York in 2007, after publishing all her seven books:

"Dumbledore fell in love with Grindelwald, and that added to his horror when Grindelwald showed himself to be what he was. To an extent, do we say it excused Dumbledore a little more because falling in love can blind us to an extent? (...) Yeah, that's how I always saw Dumbledore. In fact, recently I was in a script read through for the sixth film, and they had Dumbledore saying a line to Harry early in the scrip

¹⁵⁷ Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Order of Phoenix*, 246.

¹⁵⁸ Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Order of Phoenix*, 735.

¹⁵⁹ Kate Behr, "'Same-as-Difference': Narrative Transformations and Intersecting Cultures in Harry Potter," *Journal of Narrative Theory*, Vol. 35, No. 1 (winter, 2005), 119.

saying, ‘I knew a girl once, whose hair...’ I had to write a little note to the margin and slide it along to the scriptwriter, ‘Dumbledore is gay!’ if I’d known it would make you so happy, I would have announced years ago!”¹⁶⁰

On this account, an associate Professor in the Department of English Tison Pugh points out that there are several hints that Dumbledore is heterosexual: “It’s lucky it’s dark. I haven’t blushes so much since Madam Pomfrey told me she liked my new earmuffs,”¹⁶¹ or when Dumbledore dances with Professor Sprout during the Yule Ball; but Pugh also highlights that there are a few hints that Dumbledore is indeed a gay. Dumbledore is famous for his eccentric taste in fashion, Auntie Muriel claims that “funny rumours”¹⁶² had been circulating about Dumbledore before he became famous, and he does not try to hide his close relationship with Grindelwald (but it is unknown if Dumbledore’s probably only love felt the same way). Another hint is proposed by Elphias Doge when he talks about his friendship with Dumbledore: “Our mutual attraction was undoubtedly due to the fact that we both felt ourselves to be outsiders.”¹⁶³

Pugh points out that these are only traces of Dumbledore’s homosexuality and his orientation does not influence the present story in any way. The only comment of Dumbledore’s relationship, concerning the present story, is proposed by Rita Skeeter: “I devote an entire chapter to the whole Potter-Dumbledore relationship. It’s been called unhealthy, even sinister. (...) Dumbledore took an unnatural interest in Potter from the word go. (...) It’s certainly an open secret that Potter has had a most troubled adolescence.”¹⁶⁴ But Rita is only sensation-seeking and pictures Dumbledore as being interested in Harry in a romantic way, but it is not the case; he loves Harry as his son or grandson. Nonetheless, Pugh proposes that this may be Rowling’s ways how to imply a reference about Dumbledore’s homosexuality. In this character, Rowling probably tries not to discuss homosexuality openly (and yet keeps this fact in the character) but to propose that the readers should learn from Dumbledore and remain innocent from his sexual orientation.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁰ Joanne Rowling, Carnegie Hall audience, transcribed by Amy H. Sturgis, October 19, 2007, <http://eldritchhobbit.livejournal.com/175955.html>.

¹⁶¹ Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, 14.

¹⁶² Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, 128.

¹⁶³ Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, 21.

¹⁶⁴ Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, 28-29.

¹⁶⁵ Tison Pugh, *Innocence, Heterosexuality, and the Queerness of Children's Literature*, (Routledge New York, 2011), 83-88.

Also, webmaster of the fan site *The Leaky Cauldron* Melissa Anelli, says to *The Associated Press* that she finds it wonderful that Joanne Rowling calls a *Harry Potter* character gay. She points out that it is important for tolerance towards homosexuality. She says: "By dubbing someone so respected, so talented and so kind, as someone who just happens to be also homosexual, she's reinforcing the idea that a person's gayness is not something of which they should be ashamed."¹⁶⁶

This claim is also supported by gay rights campaigner Peter Tatchell:

"It's good that children's literature includes the reality of gay people, since we exist in every society. But I am disappointed that she did not make Dumbledore's sexuality explicit in the *Harry Potter* book. Making it obvious would have sent a much more powerful message of understanding and acceptance."

And a spokesman for gay rights group Stonewall adds: "It's great that JK has said this. It shows that there's no limit to what gay and lesbian people can do, even being a wizard headmaster."¹⁶⁷ The LGBT community is generally pleased by Rowling's proposal and Pugh's explanation why Rowling did not include Dumbledore's coming out, is probably sufficient. Nonetheless, the fact that Dumbledore is homosexual is not important for this character.

On the other hand, cultural critic-at-large for *the New York Times* Edward Rothstein claims that this extra assertion is not necessary. Readers have not sought any further explanation about Dumbledore's sexual orientation. He even says that although Rowling thinks of Dumbledore as gay, others do not have to. Dumbledore does not have to be perceived as a human with his desires; he is mainly a very powerful wizard. Rothstein also suggests that *Harry Potter* heroes are misfits who all have a few "imperfections": half-giant Hagrid, nerd Hermione, poor Ron and orphaned Harry; so Dumbledore's homosexuality fits into this rebellion against orthodoxy.¹⁶⁸

At the same time, few critics even deny that Dumbledore is a homosexual. A religious literary critic John Granger explains he is not completely convinced that Dumbledore is really gay.

¹⁶⁶ Melissa Anelli, "Dumbledore's outing gives text new meaning," interviewed by *The Associated Press*, October 21, 2007, <https://www.today.com/popculture/dumbledore-s-outing-gives-text-new-meaning-wbna21407911>.

¹⁶⁷ BBC News, "JK Rowling outs Dumbledore as gay", *BBC*, last modified in October 20, 2007, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/7053982.stm>.

¹⁶⁸ Edward Rothstein, "Is Dumbledore Gay? Depends on Definitions of 'Is' and 'Gay'," *The New York Times*, October 29, 2007, http://www.nytimes.com/2007/10/29/arts/29conn.html?_r=1.

Granger says that Rowling maybe proposed that to encourage people not to be ashamed of their orientation. He also adds that an author cannot add any further information after the book is published so her addition is not valuable anyway.¹⁶⁹

After the Rowling's statement, readers also start to express their opinion concerning this issue. A *Harry Potter* fan Ana Kovovic wrote on her Twitter page: "I wonder why you said that Dumbledore is a gay because I can't see him that way,"¹⁷⁰ and received a response from Rowling herself: "Maybe because gay people look like... people?"¹⁷¹ The respect of Rowling's answer is expressed by the fact that her response has been retweeted more than 21,000 users so far. Also other users of an online forum at *Harry Potter Wikia* express their doubt about accepting Dumbledore being a gay. Some of them require more explanation from Rowling, others claim that it ruined their image about Dumbledore or they even deny it, others accept this fact and are fine with Dumbledore's orientation.¹⁷² So the readers' reception is quite mixed but nothing indicates that it influences *Harry Potter's* popularity among common readers in any way.

Above all, Dumbledore is a "good" character. His significant characteristics are his tolerance and humanity and his true power lies in them. Founder of *TheHogsHead* (a serious blog about *Harry Potter*) Travis Prinzi comments on Dumbledore's relationship with those, who are considered to be inferior in the wizarding communality, the house elves. The house elves are slaves who have been working in wizard household for centuries and they have been lacking any kind of humanity toward them. In Hogwarts, they cook, clean and wash clothes for the whole school. But Dumbledore employs them, and not exploits them. He offers them money, free time, and freedom from unlimited obedience. Dumbledore explains to Harry that behaviour towards the weaker ones is essential and that their oppression may be the cause of uprising of those such as Voldemort. Prinzi points out that if this kind of oppression is still

¹⁶⁹ John Granger, "'I always thought of Dumbledore as gay'. [ovation.]", *Hogwarts Professor*, October 21, 2007, <http://www.hogwartsprofessor.com/i-always-thought-of-dumbledore-as-gay-ovation/>.

¹⁷⁰ Ana Kovovic (@anakocovic), "I wonder why you said that Dumbledore is a gay because I can't see him that way," *Twitter*, May 24, 2015, https://twitter.com/jk_rowling/status/580414479604822016?lang=cs.

¹⁷¹ Joanne Rowling (@jk_rowling), "Maybe because gay people look like... people?" *Twitter*, May 24, 2015, https://twitter.com/jk_rowling/status/580414479604822016?lang=cs.

¹⁷² Forum: "Is Dumbledore gay?", *Harry Potter Wikia*, last modified in October 28, 2009, http://harrypotter.wikia.com/wiki/Forum:Is_Dumbledore_gay%3F.

possible in the wizarding world and is embedded in the laws, the space for the Dark Arts will still exist.¹⁷³

Dumbledore's open-mindedness is also represented in *Order of Phoenix* by his employment of Professor Firenze, who is a centaur, even though centaurs are considered to be beasts and not humans (also pejoratively called "half-breads"). Firenze is hired to teach Divination (instead of Sybill Trelawney) because centauries are known for their ability to foretell. Dumbledore does not distinguish between the races and focuses on what is important – Firenze's ability to guide the classes.

It can be proposed that Albus Dumbledore is definitely one of the leaders of the book series and this character influences the flow of the story. He feels that he must do what has to be done in order to reach "the greater good" despite his own wishes. Even though, he is probably the most criticised teacher in the book series, common readers still perceived him as a good character in spite of having several negative features.

¹⁷³ Travis Prinzi, "Don't Occupy Gringotts: Harry Potter, Social Upheaval, and the Moral Imagination," *Reason Papers*, 23.

5. Conclusion

The aim of the thesis was to analyse the reception of the book series *Harry Potter* by using reader-response theory. In order to provide as diverse data as possible, it was necessary to investigate available sources of those receptions both from literary professionals and a general readership. Nonetheless, firstly, it is necessary to highlight that both literary critics and a general readership base their points of view on the primary text and they usually aim to confront their findings with a direct quotation from the books which is highly valuable. The literary critics were primarily university professors and literary critics, whose work could be considered authoritative.

A general readership's opinions consisted of responses of Internet portal users, such as *Twitter*, *Tumblr*, and online forums and chats. What showed to be another valuable source were opinions proposed by students in their thesis and essays. This group was also evaluated as a general readership, too. The reception of a general readership was mostly based on the psychological, subjective and transactional response focusing on the emotional response of an individual. Although their claims were often not supported by professional literature (with the exception of diploma theses), the propositions were based only on the reader's findings in the primary text.

Based on the analysis, it can be generalized that university professors tended to ground their claims in the real world. The critics appreciated that the wizarding process of education was similar to the one in the real world and that the readers could easily identify with it. Some of them also valued that *Harry Potter* books promoted education and depict an attractive schooling system which led to an interest in attending boarding schools (despite their strict rules or a lack of privacy).

On the other hand, they criticized the educational system in Hogwarts allegedly supporting excessive rivalry and hostility, and point out that *Harry Potter* promotes the idea that working together is counterproductive. Nonetheless, not all the responses proposed by literary critics are justifiable. In the case of Dumbledore's Army, it is shown that cooperation (among the school houses) is fruitful and leads to success. But when the readers projected their own experience into the books, they revealed that although they admired the determination of Dumbledore's Army, they would not be able to behave in the same way in the real life.

The general readership also agrees that the wizarding educational system is not satisfactory due to its one-sidedness and impracticality. They perceive it as too narrow-minded with a little chance for a change in the curriculum, suggesting that students of Hogwarts are victims of an outdated system and highlighting the problem that, when the students wish to learn something useful, they have to act on their own or seek an extra guidance.

Another observation emerged when comparing the idea of the sorting ceremony with the real life. The readers' responses vary according to what house the readers belong to. Based on the social role of an individual, it can be shown that one's environment influences one's decision-making which can be both - in a rather straightforward manner - positive (overcoming timidity) and negative (joining the Death Eaters).

Another parallelism can be observed in the depiction of pure-blooded or Muggle-born witches and wizards and the Muggles with comparison to the racism and elitisms in the real world. The social and cultural similarity reveals that when the readers are familiar with the literary work they feel superior to those who did not and call them *Muggles* (which has a negative connotation). The issue of elitisms also appears in the representation of Hogwarts' inaccessibility for ordinary people, and Harry's exceptional luck and "untouchability" of the wizarding law. In addition, both literary professionals and the general readership agree that unruliness of the students is rather acceptable or even approved of by school authorities when there is a higher motive to break the rules.

Based on the psychological reader-response theory, the popularity of each school house is not influenced by the attributes of each house themselves, but by their significance in the development of the story. Therefore, despite the fact that the readers value the Hufflepuffs' traits most, it is still the least favourite house due to its unimportance. Furthermore, the most discussed house and its position in the story is Slytherin. Despite its indisputably negative role in the book series, many readers appreciate its characteristic features (determination, cleverness, diligence, and competitiveness) for their importance in the real world, which is based on their social and psychological experience in their lives.

The picture of Hogwarts as a boarding school also provokes various associations from the critics' memories. They perceive the Hogwarts' staff as caricatures and parody to their curriculum, and criticise that their appearance can indicate their role in the story. Also, literary critics highlight that, in many cases, the teachers are not competent to do their job or they show a certain level of irresponsibility towards the students' education.

The critics also focus on the most idealized but also doomed teacher – Dumbledore. The development of the significance of this character is probably the most distinct and the critics point out that the popularity of this character varies based on the relationship with Harry. Firstly, the readers perceive him as a perfect headmaster who helps Harry anytime; later, they start to be aware of his imperfections and begin to doubt his morality/excellence; and eventually they see him as an imperfect but human character. The readers go through those phases in order to reach their emotional satisfaction with the character. What is equally important for the reception of this character is Dumbledore's homosexuality. The literary critics could be divided into three groups: those who accept it (and appreciate it); those who reject it; and those who believe that this extra information is not necessary. The general readership's reactions correspond with those of the professionals', they share mixed impressions on their social media platforms and ask for a better explanation.

Resumé

Tato diplomová práce se věnuje kontroverzním otázkám celosvětově úspěšné septalogii *Harry Potter* (1997 – 2007) od Joanne Rowlingové a její recepci. Přestože se tato knižní fantasy série pro mládež stala světovým fenoménem s obrovskou fanouškovskou základnou, objevuje se také velké množství kritických ohlasů, jak od literárních kritiků, tak od běžných čtenářů. Tato diplomová práce se věnuje rozboru otázek vyplívajících z těch ohlasů, které se zaměřují na kouzelnickou školu Bradavice, kde se odehrává většina děje. Vybrané otázky jsou rozděleny do subkategorií, které se věnují analýze rozdělení studentů do školních kolejí, vzdělávacího systému v Bradavicích, bradavického školního sboru a jejím studentům. Podrobnější analýza je věnována řediteli školy Abusu Brumbálovi.

Úvodní teoretická část této práce se věnuje teoretickému zařazení této knižní série do historického kontextu a vymezením základních pojmů. V první části je tato knižní série zařazena do žánru fantasy určená pro děti a mládež. První zmínky o tomto žánru pocházejí již z období starého Egypta, který se vyvíjel až do současnosti, kdy se stal jedním z hlavních literárních žánrů a umožnil tak vzniku *Harry Pottera* a dalších úspěšných fantasy knih. Poté následuje časové umístění této knižní série do vývoje dětské literatury, přestože *Harry Potter* není pouze pro děti, ale našel si své místo i mezi dospělými čtenáři. V takovémto druhu literatury dochází k tzv. mísení stylu, což je jedním z předních rysů, které se objevují v literárních žánrech nového milénia.

V další části je vysvětlen pojem recepce a tzv. teorie o čtenáři a jeho odezvě. Literární recepce znamená vnímání čtenáře daného literárního díla a převedení jeho čtenářského zážitku do svého vlastního chápání světa. Součástí recepce je i literární kritika, jejímž smyslem je diskuze o daném díle. Literární kritika se věnuje obraně, interpretaci, analýze, posudku literární hodnoty a vlivu na čtenáře daného literárního díla. Proto se této literární recepci věnuje teorie o čtenáři a jeho odezvě, která se soustředí na vnímání daného díla a na čtenářův přístup k jeho uchopení, které je u každého čtenáře jiné. Tato literární kritika se soustředí na každou konkrétní interpretaci jednotlivce, protože, podle této teorie, pouze ta dává smysl danému literárnímu textu. Hlavní myšlenkou je fakt, že stejný text může být interpretován rozdílně v závislosti na čtenářových znalostech, zkušenostech a kognitivních procesech, ale také na základě vlivu jeho okolí na jeho postoje a hodnoty.

Tyto čtenářské ohlasy mohou být analyzovány s využitím teorie o čtenáři a jeho odezvě. Ta se věnuje přenosu informací z textu na čtenáře, který vytváří význam daného textu a je u

každého jednotlivce jiný. Podle této teorie, žádný text nemá neměnný význam, ale mění se na základě promítání čtenářových vzpomínek, asociací a pocitů do textu. Proces čtení a porozumění daného textu je také ovlivněno určitou tzv. interpretační komunitou, do které patří každý čtenář. Každý čtenář je ovlivňován konkrétní čtenářkou komunitou, ať už vědomky či nevědomky, a formuje čtenářovu interpretaci daného textu.

Aby analýza recepce *Harry Pottera* byla co nejrozmanitější a co možná nejvíce relevantní a pokrývala co největší spektrum čtenářů, byly vybrány kritické názory jak od literárních profesionálů, tak i od všeobecného čtenářského publika. Zdroje vybraných kritických pohledů zahrnují v případě literárních kritiků převážně tištěné ale i online materiály. Zde je zajímavé poukázat na fakt, kolik již bylo vydáno publikací, zabývajících se problematikou interpretace *Harry Pottera*. Samotní čtenáři své názory vyjadřují převážně na internetových fórech, blogách a sociálních sítích. Ceněné jsou také úryvky z rozhovorů a výroky na sociálních sítích samotné autorky Joanne Rowlingové. Velmi pozitivní je fakt, že jak literární kritici, tak čtenáři ve svých kritických pohledech vycházejí převážně z primárního textu a konfrontují své poznatky s konkrétními úryvky z knih.

Praktická část se věnuje analýze vybraných otázek a recepci Bradavic. V této škole čar a kouzel se její studenti musí učit stejným způsobem jako skutečné děti/čtenáři. Literární kritici pozitivně vnímají popis tohoto procesu, který je znázorněn tak, že i přes to, že se bradavičtí studenti musí učit velké množství látky, tak to působí jako velké dobrodružství. Tento faktor může čtenáře motivovat k zájmu o studium a to nejen ve škole, ale i mimo školní docházku. Dále kritici pozitivně interpretují fakt, že po vzoru Bradavic stoupl zájem o studium na internátních školách.

Na druhou stranu se literárními kritikům ani čtenářům nelíbí neobjektivní rozdělování studentů do školních kolejí. Podle nich se dá tento výběr předpokládat, ne-li ovlivňovat, což podle nich není spravedlivé. Dále uvádějí, že Rowlingová tvořila jednotlivé koleje tak, aby byly mezi studenty i čtenáři oblíbené nebo neoblíbené, a že zařazení do určité koleje zároveň ovlivňuje chování jejich členů, což může ovlivňovat i vnímání samotných čtenářů.

Jedním z nejvíce kritizovaných aspektů je nedokonalost bradavického vzdělávacího systému. Kritici i čtenáři se shodují, že problém je v tom, že se bradavičtí studenti věnují pouze studiu kouzelnických předmětů, a že v případě nezájmu o tento obor nemají možnost návratu do mudlovského světa. Dále knižní série neobjasňuje, kde mohou mladé čarodějky a čarodějové získat odborné vzdělání pro pracovní pozice, jako například novinář, které se v *Harry*

Potterovi objevují. Navíc některé vyučované předměty mohou být pro studenty traumatizující, dokonce nebezpečné. Někteří kritici také zdůrazňují, že bradavičtí učitelé jsou karikaturami svých předmětů, a že jejich vyučovací metody, vzhled a i jméno napovídají jejich význam pro vývoj děje. Dokonce v některých situacích školní personál nepřikládá dostatečnou váhu na důležitost splnění všech povinných zkoušek. V některých případech také kritici uvádějí, že bradavičtí učitelé, jako například Hagrid, nejsou dostatečně kompetentní pro tuto práci, a že mohou být špatným vzorem pro čtenáře, který si ho může idealizovat.

Další nedostatek vidí kritici v tom, že Harry a jeho spolužáci často porušují školní řád či kouzelnické zákony, ale nakonec je jim vždy odpuštěno, nejsou-li za to dokonce odměněni. Obávají se, že hlavně mladí čtenáři mohou chápat tuto myšlenku, která se objevuje během celého příběhu, že pouze ti co porušují pravidla nebo podvádí, něčeho dosáhnou.

V poslední sekci praktické části se tato práce věnuje nejvíce kritizovanému učiteli, jimž je ředitel školy Albus Brumbál. Tato postava se postupně rozvíjí a odhaluje svoji komplexnost, která v sobě snoubí několik protichůdných prvků. Těmi jsou Brumbálova na jednu stranu chladnokrevnost, na stranu druhou jeho lidskost nebo ješitnost a zároveň i laskavost. Jako nejvíce kontroverzní část celé série vnímají čtenáři, když Brumbál objasní, že Harry musí zemřít, a že ho Brumbál připravoval na tuto situaci několik let. Čtenáři mu ale nakonec odpustí, když vše na konci vysvětlí. Mimo to Rowlingová prohlásila, že Brumbál je gay, což vyvolalo obrovskou vlnu reakcí. Někteří literární kritici ale i čtenáři tento fakt přijali pozitivně, dokonce z této zprávy profitovali, zatímco někteří tento fakt popřeli nebo vyvrátili. Přes všechny tyto kritické pohledy je Brumbál vnímán jako kladná postava, i když si jsou čtenáři vědomi jeho záporných vlastností a nedostatků.

Bibliography

Primary sources:

Rowling, J. K.

- *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 1997.
- *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secret*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 1998.
- *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 1999.
- *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc. 2000.
- *Harry Potter and the Order of Phoenix*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc. 2003.
- *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc. 2005.
- *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2007.

Secondary sources:

Abanes, Richard. *Harry Potter and the Bible: The Menace Behind the Magick*. (Camp Hill, PA: Horizon Books, 2001).

Anelli, Melissa. “Dumbledore’s outing gives text new meaning,” interviewed by *The Associated Press*, October 21, 2007, <https://www.today.com/popculture/dumbledore-s-outing-gives-text-new-meaning-wbna21407911>.

Alyssa (@lyssa_lahey). “@jk_rowling THE NEW POTTERMORE TEST ASSIGNED ME TO THE WRONG HOUSE JOANNE.” Twitter, January 29, 2016, https://twitter.com/lyssa_lahey/status/693212051217448960.

Baldick, Chris. *Oxford concise dictionary of literary terms*, (New ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

BBC News. “JK Rowling outs Dumbledore as gay”, *BBC*, last modified in October 20, 2007, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/7053982.stm>.

Beach, Richard. *A teacher's introduction to reader-response theories*, (National Council of Teachers of English, 1993).

Becket, Sandra L. *Crossover fiction: global and historical perspectives*, (London: Routledge, 2009. Children's literature and culture).

Behr, Kate. "'Same-as-Difference': Narrative Transformations and Intersecting Cultures in Harry Potter," *Journal of Narrative Theory*, Vol. 35, No. 1 (winter, 2005).

Belinkie, Matthew. "Hogwarts is a Terrible School", *Overthinking it*, September 24, 2009. <https://www.overthinkingit.com/2009/09/24/hogwarts-is-a-terrible-school/>.

Birch, Megan L. "Teachers and Learning, Power and Knowledge!" *Critical Perspectives on Harry Potter*, ed. Elizabeth E. Heilman. (New York, Routledge, 2009).

Bubíková, Šárka. *Literary Childhoods, Growing Up in British and American Literature*, (Červený Kostelec Pardubice: Pavel Mervart: Univerzita Pardubice, 2008).

Carpenter, Humphrey and Prichard, Mari. *The Oxford companion to children's literature*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984).

Conway, Kiah. "5 reasons why Slytherin is the best house," Her Campus, February 2, 2018. <https://www.hercampus.com/school/seton-hall/5-reasons-slytherin-best-house>.

Gayla Cawley (@GaylaCawley), „ So, I noticed Pottermore was trending and decided to see what house I would get sorted into. I got Hufflepuff. I can't believe this," Twitter, January 29, 2016,

https://twitter.com/GaylaCawley/status/693313460369752064?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.telegraph.co.uk%2Fnews%2Fnewstoppers%2Fhowaboutthat%2F12131373%2Fjk-rowling-pottermore-sorting-hat-test-house.html.

Dani (@banielleDradley). "THEY CHANGED THE POTTERMORE SORTING HOUSE QUIZ AND NOW IM HAVING AN IDENTITY CRISIS," Twitter, January 29, 2016, https://twitter.com/BanielleDradley/status/693292634610118656?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.telegraph.co.uk%2Fnews%2Fnewstoppers%2Fhowaboutthat%2F12131373%2Fjk-rowling-pottermore-sorting-hat-test-house.html.

Dark Lord, Vap78. "Did Dumbledore unnecessarily hinder the life-chances of students by cancelling all exams in Chamber of Secrets?" *Science Fiction & Fantasy Stack Exchange*,

April 20, 2016, <https://scifi.stackexchange.com/questions/125626/did-dumbledore-unnecessarily-hinder-the-life-chances-of-students-by-cancelling-a>.

Deets, Stephen. "Wizarding in the Classroom: Teaching Harry Potter and Politics," *PS: Political Science and Politics*, Vol. 42, No. 4 (October 2009).

Dickenson, Renée. "Harry Potter Pedagogy: What We Learn about Teaching and Learning from J. K. Rowling", *The Clearing House: A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues and Ideas*, August 7, 2010.

Dhuliawala, Shehzaad. „Is Harry Potter a bad student? “, Quora, June 24, 2013, <https://www.quora.com/Is-Harry-Potter-a-bad-student>.

Forum: "Is Dumbledore gay?" *Harry Potter Wikia*, last modified in October 28, 2009, http://harrypotter.wikia.com/wiki/Forum:Is_Dumbledore_gay%3F.

Gray, Martin. *A Dictionary of Literary Terms* (York Handbooks, Longman, 1992).

Granger, John. "'I always thought of Dumbledore as gay". [ovation.]", *Hogwarts Professor*, October 21, 2007, <http://www.hogwartsprofessor.com/i-always-thought-of-dumbledore-as-gay-ovation/>.

Hattenstone, Simon. "Harry, Jessica and me," *The Guardian*, July 8, 2000. <http://www.accio-quote.org/articles/2000/0700-guardian-hattenstone.html>.

Holden, Anthony. "Why Harry Potter doesn't cast a spell over me", January 25, 2000, <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2000/jun/25/booksforchildrenandteenagers.guardianchildrensfictionprize2000>.

Holub, Robert C. *Reception theory: a critical introduction*, (New York: Methuen, 1984. New accents (Methuen & Co.).

Horton, Helena. "People are freaking out over their results on the JK Rowling approved Harry Potter Sorting Hat test," *The Telegraph*, January, 2016.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstoppers/howaboutthat/12131373/jk-rowling-pottermore-sorting-hat-test-house.html>.

Is this your coat? Did you come with anyone? (@DamoneWilliams_). „, Ew. I just got sorted into Ravenclaw on #Pottermore. #HowSway?! The last time I was sorted, I was sorted into Slytherin, my rightful house,“ Twitter, January 30, 2016. https://twitter.com/DamoneWilliams_/status/693348803806498816?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.telegraph.co.uk%2Fnews%2Fnewstopics%2Fhowaboutthat%2F12131373%2Fjk-rowling-pottermore-sorting-hat-test-house.html.

Jónsdóttir, Helga Sædís. „The Sorting Hat Effect: How the Hogwarts Houses Influence Prejudice in Harry Potter,“ (B.A. Essay, University of Iceland, 2016).

Kiser, Jillian. “Harry Potter and the Christian Church,” (*AHS Capstone Projects*, 2010).

Klein, Shawn E. “Harry Potter and Humanity: Choices, Love, and Death”, *Reason Papers*. Volume 34, no. 1, June 2012.

Knight, Rosie. “Why Harry Potter’s Wizarding World and Hogwarts Are Actually Horrible Places”, *Nerdist*, June 23, 2017. <https://nerdist.com/why-harry-potters-wizarding-world-and-hogwarts-are-actually-horrible-places/>.

Kornfeld, John and Prothro, Laurie. Comedy, Quest, and Community, Home and Family in Harry Potter, *Critical Perspectives on Harry Potter*, ed. Elizabeth E. Heilman. (New York, Routledge, 2009).

Lerer, Seth. *Children's literature: a reader's history, from Aesop to Harry Potter*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

Kovovic, Ana (@anakocovic). “I wonder why you said that Dumbledore is a gay because I can’t see him that way,” *Twitter*, May 24, 2015. https://twitter.com/jk_rowling/status/580414479604822016?lang=cs.

Mathews, Richard. *Fantasy, the liberation of imagination*, (New York London: Routledge, 2002).

McCulloch, Fiona, *Children's Literature in Context*, (New York: Continuum, 2011. Texts and contexts (Continuum (Firm))).

Nielson, Heidi. ““Neither Can Live While the Other Survives”: The Driving Force of Revenge in Harry Potter,” *Reason Papers*, Vol. 34, no. 1, June 2012.

Nelson, Kayla M. "Harry Potter and the Analysis of a Hogwarts Education", 2016. *All Student Publications*.

LittleSlytherKitty, „Read This If You Are A Slytherin—Why Slytherin is the Best Hogwarts House,“ Medium, November 25, 2017, <https://medium.com/@moviekitty/read-this-if-you-are-a-slytherin-why-slytherin-is-the-best-hogwarts-house-590510b92515>.

Oates-Indruchová, Libora. *The Magic of the Real / The Real of the Magic in Harry Potter, Literary Childhoods, Growing Up in British and American Literature*, ed. Bubíková, (Červený Kostelec Pardubice: Pavel Mervart: Univerzita Pardubice, 2008).

O'Brien, Michael D. "Harry Potter and the Paganization of Children's Culture," *Catholic World Report*, April, 2001.

Peck, Eva and Peck Alexander. *Anglická literatura = Panorama of English literature*, (Dubicko: INFOA, 2002).

Pottermore News Team, "500 million Harry Potter books have now been sold worldwide", February 1, 2018, <https://www.pottermore.com/news/500-million-harry-potter-books-have-now-been-sold-worldwide>.

Pottermore Limited. "Explore Hogwarts," last modified in September 22, 2016, <https://www.pottermore.com/collection/places-around-hogwarts>.

Prinzi, Travis. "Don't Occupy Gringotts: Harry Potter, Social Upheaval, and the Moral Imagination," *Reason Papers*.

Rothstein, Edward. "Is Dumbledore Gay? Depends on Definitions of 'Is' and 'Gay'," *The New York Times*, October 29, 2007.

http://www.nytimes.com/2007/10/29/arts/29conn.html?_r=1.

Rowling, Joanne. "Harry Potter: Beyond the Pages", interview by Billy Dee Michelle, October 11, 2012, video 44:16, <https://www.snitchseeker.com/harry-potter-news/live-video-jk-rowlings-new-webchat-and-interview-from-harry-potter-reading-club-91343/>.

Rowling, Joanne. Carnegie Hall audience, transcribed by Amy H. Sturgis, October 19, 2007, <http://eldritchhobbit.livejournal.com/175955.html>.

Rowling, Joanne (@jk_rowling). "Maybe because gay people look like... people?" *Twitter*, May 24, 2015, https://twitter.com/jk_rowling/status/580414479604822016?lang=cs.

Pdwebb0621. "It's Theory Time," *Tumblr*.

<http://pdwebb0621.tumblr.com/post/146958100033/its-theory-time>.

Polland, Jennifer. "The 10 Most Read Books In The World", December, 27, 2012, <http://www.businessinsider.com/the-top-10-most-read-books-in-the-world-infographic-2012-12>.

Pond, Julia Rose. "*Divine Destiny or Free Choice: Nietzsche's Strong Wills in the Harry Potter Series*." Thesis, Georgia State University. 2008.

Pugh, Tison. *Innocence, Heterosexuality, and the Queerness of Children's Literature*, (Routledge New York, 2011).

Smith, Karen Manners, "Harry Potter's Schooldays: J. K. Rowling and the British Boarding School Novel", *Reading Harry Potter: critical Essays*, ed. by Giselle Liza Anatol. Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 2003.

Smith, Matthew. "20 years of Harry Potter: Britain is a nation of Hufflepuffs", *YouGov*, June 25, 2017. <https://yougov.co.uk/news/2017/06/25/20th-anniversary-first-harry-potter-book-yougov-di/>.

Smith, Sean, "*Sen jménem Harry Potter: životní příběh J. K. Rowlingové*", (V Praze: Euromedia Group: Knižní klub, 2002).

Shi, Yanling. „Review of Wolfgang Iser and His Reception Theory,“ *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 6, pp. 982-986, June 2013.

Todd, Sarah "Hufflepuff is the best house in Harry Potter—and the most misunderstood", *Quartz*, June 26, 2017. <https://qz.com/1014461/harry-potter-20th-anniversary-why-hufflepuff-is-the-best-house/>.

Trávníček, Jiří. *Čtenáři a internauti*. (Brno: Host, 2011).

Tyson, Lois, *Critical theory today: a user-friendly guide*, Second ed. (New York, NY: Routledge, 2006).

Vaughn, Mary E. N. "Keeping It Real: Teaching and Learning in the *Harry Potter* Series", (*Honors Theses*, University of Southern Mississippi, 2011).

Walls, Jonathan L. and Jerry L. "Beyond Godric's Hollow: Life after Death and Search for Meaning," *The Ultimate Harry Potter and Philosophy: Hogwarts for Muggles*, Ed. By Gregory Bassham and William Irwin. (NJ: John Wiley & Sons. 2012).

Wilson, Chris, Rebala, Pratheek, Götz, Friedrich. "We Sorted Half a Million Americans Into Harry Potter Houses. Here's What We Discovered", *Time*, September 1, 2017 <http://time.com/4921918/harry-potter-hogwarts-sorting-hat-quiz/>.

Wolosky, Shira. *The Riddles of Harry Potter: secret passages and interpretive quests*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.

Wong, Einar Christopher. "The Magic of Hogwarts: A Critical Examination of Teachers in *Harry Potter*," (Thesis, University Of British Columbia, Vancouver, April 2014).

Yager, Susan. ""Something he could do without being taught": Honors, Play, and *Harry Potter*," (*Honors in Practice – Online Archive*, Iowa State University, 2015).

Zipes, Jack, *Sticks and Stones: The Troublesome Success of Children's Literature from Slovenly Peter to Harry Potter*, (New York and London: Routledge, 2001).