

The Harry Potter Conference

Friday, October 20, 2017



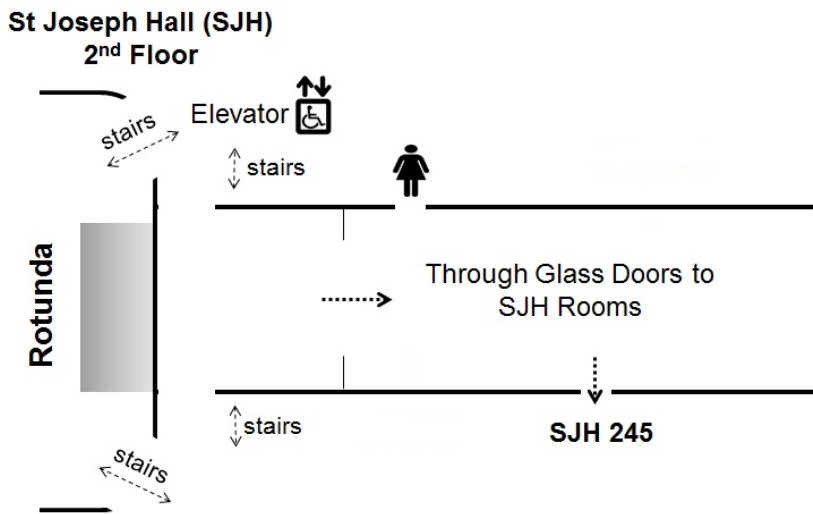
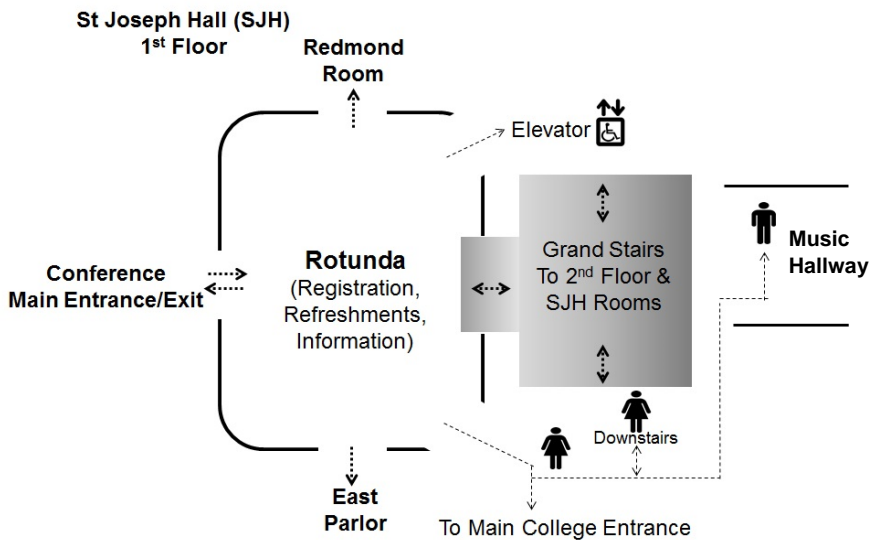
CHESTNUT HILL COLLEGE

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

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CONFERENCE MAP



CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

- 8:00-8:45** **Registration and Refreshments** Rotunda
8:30-8:45 **Opening** East Parlor & Redmond Room

Conference Section 1 (Concurrent Sessions)

- Session 1a. H.P. & Young Adult Literature** East Parlor
Moderator: McCauley

- 8:50-9:10 Phillips-Mattson, *Say the Magic Word: Spellwork and the Legacy of Nonsense*
9:15-9:35 Hayes, *Making Meaning with Magic*
9:40-10:00 Fisher, *Get 'Em While They're Young: Bridging the Gender Gap through Young Adult Literature*
10:05-10:25 McCauley, *On Being Young and Loving Books*

- Session 1b. Textual Analyses I** Redmond Room
Moderator: Camacci

- 8:50-9:10 Grogan, *"I Open at the Close:" Epigraphs, Epilogue, Community and Chronology in H.P. and the Deathly Hallows*
9:15-9:35 Camacci, *Chapter Preview: Frisky, Risky, Firewhisky*
9:40-10:00 Ambrose, *"You Have to Mean It": Emotions as Magic*
10:05-10:25 Fish, *Crime & Punishment & Wizards: H.P. and the Prisoner of Azkaban*

- Session 1c. Beyond the Books** SJH 245
Moderator: Ryan

- 8:50-9:10 Rice, *The Wand and the Stick: Looking at Rowling's Wands and Violinists' Bows*
9:15-9:35 Colte, *Our Most Inexhaustible Source of Magic: Cautionary Lessons from the Wizarding World for Dark Times*
9:40-10:25 Ryan, *Warring Wizards and Muggle Magic: The Hidden Data Story of Heroes and Villains in H.P.*

10:30-10:50 Morning Break

Rotunda

Conference Section 2 (Concurrent Sessions)

Session 2a. Politics and Justice

East Parlor

Moderator: Wendling

- 10:50-11:35 Prinzi, *Delores J. Trumpbridge: Revisiting Wizarding Racism in the Age of Trump*
- 11:40-12:00 Satterly, *The Pedagogy of Fandom: Using the H.P. Fandom to Captivate, Motivate, and Advocate in Social Work Education*
- 12:05-12:25 Chez, *The Limits of Empathy for Non-Humans in J.K. Rowling's H.P.*

Session 2b. Textual Analyses II

Redmond Room

Moderator: Strand

- 10:50-11:10 Weaver, *There Be Dragons About: Rowling's Fire-Breathers in the Anthropocene*
- 11:15-11:35 Bealer, *Consider the Dementor: H.P. and the Construction of Wizard Citizenship*
- 11:40-12:00 Strand, *Said Hermione Earnestly: H.P.'s Prose and Why it Doesn't Matter*
- 12:05-12:25 Kim, *Fantastic Beasts: Return to the Department of Mysteries*

Session 2c. Education and Science

SJH 245

Moderator: Freeman

- 10:50-11:10 Freeman, *The Shared Text and Science: Potter-inspired Names in Biology and Psychology*
- 11:15-11:35 Dolowitz & Wech, *Using H.P. and Team-Based Learning to Explore Leadership Theories and Increase Student Engagement*
- 11:40-12:00 Martin, *What Americans Get Wrong about the H.P. Novels*
- 12:05-12:25 Hunter, *Whither H.P. Scholarship? Gaps, Prospects, and Paths*

12:30-1:45 Lunch

Lunch Box Pickup
Food Truck
Eating Area

Music Hallway
Rotunda Driveway
Redmond Room

Concert

Choir & Musicians from
Archbishop Carroll High School

Rotunda

Book Signing*

Cecilia Konchar Farr

Rotunda, 1st Floor

Patrick McCauley

Rotunda, 1st Floor

Christina Phillips-Mattson

Rotunda, 1st Floor

Travis Prinzi

Rotunda, 2nd Floor


Kathryn McDaniel

Rotunda, 2nd Floor

Lorrie Kim

Rotunda, 2nd Floor

* Books can be purchased from B&N (Rotunda 1st Floor) or directly from authors.



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**Visit the Bookstore Table
in the Rotunda**

Available to purchase:

- Books authored by Conference speakers
- Harry Potter/Chestnut Hill themed merchandise

****Cash and Credit are accepted****
****Open All Day****

2:00-3:10 Plenary Lecture East Parlor
(Simulcast: Redmond Room)

Cecilia Konchar Farr, PhD

Professor of English and Women's Studies
Chair of English and Carondelet Scholar
St. Catherine University

*It's Complicated: The Relationship Between the
Harry Potter Novels and their Avid Readers*

Conference Section 3 (Concurrent Sessions)

Session 3a. Literature and Education East Parlor

Moderator: Henderson

- 3:15-3:35 Henderson, *History or Propaganda: Memorials in H.P.*
- 3:40-4:00 Wertz, *H.P. and the Order of the Republican Party: Comparing the Fifth Book of the Series to Current Political Events*
- 4:05-4:25 Aaron, *The Harmless Wolves: Lupin, Greyback, and the Wolf Myth in Scotland*
- 4:30-4:50 Wendling, *A Comparison of Common Elements in Philip Pullman's His Dark Materials Trilogy and Rowling's H.P. Series*

Session 3b. Character Studies Redmond Room

Moderator:

- 3:15-3:35 Erdman, *Power Moms: Badass Mothers of H.P.*
- 3:40-4:00 Harper, *The Weasley Children and the Seven Deadly Sins: Finding Fault in Everyone's Favorite Family*
- 4:05-4:25 Jennings, *The Complex and Evolving Identity Hierarchy of Severus Snape*
- 4:30-4:50 Scheumann, *An Exploration of Hermione Granger: Is she a Feminist, Heroine, or a Breaker of Stereotypes?*

Session 3c. Psychology and Philosophy

SJH 245

Moderator: McDaniel

3:15-3:35

McDaniel & Sibicky, *Death Meets the Three Brothers: Terror Management in the H.P. Series*

3:40-4:00

Miranda, *Bibliotherapy: Using H.P. to Understand and Treat Depression*

4:05-4:25

Gras, H.P.: *Phoenix Song and the Order of Virtues*

4:30-4:50

Jowsey, *Truth and Truth-Telling: Aletheia and Parrhesia through H.P.*

5:00-5:30

Panel Discussion & Conclusion East Parlor
(Simulcast: Redmond Room)

PLENARY LECTURER

Cecilia Konchar Farr is Chair of English, Carondelet Scholar, and Professor of English and Women's Studies in the Women's College at St. Kate's. Her research interests all circle around novels—their history, their (women) readers, and their social, educational, aesthetic, and political work. In short, professionally and personally, she likes big books.



Professor Konchar Farr's recent course topics cover feminist theory, American literature, the modernist movement, and literary criticism and theory. She also teaches in the Antonian Scholars Program, the Gryffindor Tower Learning Community, the Catherine Core Curriculum—"The Reflective Woman" and "Global Search for Justice: Immigrant Experience" (in New York City), and in UMAIE, St. Kate's travel study consortium, which recently led her to England, Scotland, and Orlando following the *Harry Potter* novels.

She will tell you that the most fun she has had as a professor was compiling and editing *A Wizard of Their Age: Critical Essays from the Harry Potter Generation* (SUNY 2015) in collaboration with a team of student editors. She also enjoys talking about novels with St. Kate's alumnae in Conversations with Books, a tradition of more than fifty years begun by Professor Catherine Lupori.

~ LECTURE NOTES ~

ABSTRACTS

Alphabetically by Author Last Name

Melissa D. Aaron, PhD

California State Polytechnic
University, Pomona

*The Harmless Wolves: Lupin, Greyback, and the Wolf
Myth in Scotland*

S.E. Robisch, the author of *Wolves and the Wolf Myth in American Literature*, has articulated a complex schema for the place of wolves and the image of wolves in American literature. Is there a distinction between werewolf stories set in North America, where wolves have always been present and where they have been reintroduced with some success, and werewolf stories set in Britain, where the wolf has been extinct for hundreds of years? The archetypes of Fenrir Greyback, the Big Bad Wolf, and Remus Lupin, the sympathetic werewolf, while present in early wolf stories, have not had real animal counterparts in the U.K. for centuries. However, for some years, there has been a movement for “re-wilding” Britain, including the re-introduction of wolves to Scotland, which may change the interpretation of wolves and werewolves in *Harry Potter*.

This presentation will focus on issues such as Lupin’s self-hatred based on his illness and his wolfish identity, the form his Patronus takes, and what wolves are “really like,” as applied to the works of J.K. Rowling, including her own writing on the subject in *Short Stories from Hogwarts of Heroism, Hardship, and Dangerous Hobbies*.

Jeff Ambrose, MA

Delaware County Community
College

“You Have to Mean It”: Emotions as Magic

Many have written about the forms of magic that exist in our real world, but most have largely focused on money or technology as our “real life” magic. This presentation will argue that the clearest magic in our world, and in that of *Harry Potter*, has always been emotion. I will show that the most enduring insight from the *Harry Potter* series concerns the magic of being able to control one’s emotions.

Tracy L. Bealer, PhD

Borough of Manhattan
Community College

*Consider the Dementor: Harry Potter and the Construction
of Wizard Citizenship*

In his 2004 essay “Consider the Lobster,” David Foster Wallace investigated the ethics of boiling alive an aesthetically unappealing, yet sentient and perceiving, creature to augment the pleasure of a human consumer. In the Potterverse, dementors are described by our human heroes as “terrible things” with “rotting” bodies, “unseen” mouths, and characterized as “among the foulest creatures that walk this earth.” Their occupation as guards of Azkaban Prison does little to improve their reputation among wizard-kind. However, how much of the dementors’ evil is ontological? Is it possible that these beings have been actively constructed as villains by wizarding institutions in order to provide a non-human bogeyman for disciplinary purposes? This talk proposes to employ posthuman and transhuman discourse to attempt a recuperation of the dementor.

Lurking beneath and at the edges of the books’ representation of dementors are clues about their chosen habitats and habits that suggest wizards have manipulated their existence in order to weaponize them. Dementors prefer “decay and despair,” and the “darkest, filthiest places.” Though unpleasant, this classification suggests that left to their own devices, dementors would self-segregate from most public spaces, and join the ranks of other largely avoided chaotic-evil beings in the wizarding world like redcaps and hinkypunks. However, dementors are enlisted as prison guards and assigned the task of punishing wizard lawbreakers. Therefore, their food supply and mating capacity is strictly regulated by wizards, and there are textual suggestions that they are being starved in order to increase their drive to hunt and feed off of wizards.

By close reading the reviled dementor, this talk hopes to open up a wider discussion of wizarding disciplinary techniques, and explore how other hierarchies in the Potterverse are established and maintained.

Lauren Camacci, PhD Candidate The Pennsylvania State University

Chapter Preview: Frisky Risky Firewhiskey

Alcohol in *Harry Potter* is both unremarkable and indispensable, both transparent and substantive. Ann Swan's 1992 (pre-Potter) article, "Children's Literature and Alcohol: Being Aware," differentiates between books with alcohol as a "major theme" and "incidental" alcohol references. The *Harry Potter* series is certainly not like Hastings and Typpo's *An Elephant in the Living Room* (1994), a book written explicitly to help children comprehend and endure through a family member's alcoholism. Nor is *Harry Potter* a story that discusses alcohol in passing as an ordinary part of everyday life, as, for example, *Lord of the Rings* and *The Chronicles of Narnia* sometimes do. And it is definitely not, as Ann Swan suggested of other children's literature featuring alcohol, an opportunity for parents and educators to begin conversations about alcoholism/alcohol use with young people. So what does it mean that *Harry Potter* uses alcohol as a major plot-mover but does not present obvious opportunities to discuss the damaging health and emotional effects of booze? This presentation is a preview of my forthcoming chapter of the same title in the edited volume, *Inside the World of Harry Potter* (2018).

Keridiana Chez, PhD, BMCC City University of New York
The Limits of Empathy for Non-Humans in J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter

Harry Potter's trajectory across the series—the journey of a boy coming of age under unusually trying circumstances—is in many ways the all-too-familiar story of a boy becoming a man by distancing himself from the non-human. According to this hackneyed gender narrative, as the heroic pre-adolescent matures into masculine adulthood, he must learn to clamp down on any excessive feelings of empathy for the non-human Other. From *Sorcerer's Stone*, wherein he gleefully hurls gnomes into the air, to *Goblet of Fire*, wherein he dismisses the concept of granting rights of house elves, to *Deathly Hallows*, wherein he appropriates an abused dragon as a means of transport, Harry experiences a series of formative encounters with non-human creatures. What *Harry Potter* reveals, however, is that heroic masculinity does not entail a wholesale rejection of empathy, but rather, the development of the paradoxical ability to both feel empathy and

cease feeling empathy in order to put human concerns first. The performance of both of these responses is critical to producing the “humane” moral subject: a man that is capable of compassion for non-human Others, albeit with carefully policed limits. Applying a feminist animal studies perspective, I will show how *Harry Potter* highlights the contradictions in contemporary attitudes to non-human Others: a dynamic of self-affirmation in the face of our ongoing exploitation of the non-human beings with whom we share the earth.

Ian Colte, BS

Our Most Inexhaustible Source of Magic Cautionary

In terms of devotion, sense of belonging, and belief in common values, we in the Potterverse find a near-religious worldview in J.K Rowling’s stories. But how well do we live out that worldview? We’ve all seen J.K. Rowling’s characters demonstrate that while there is a real struggle between good and evil in the world at large, it’s more than just choosing sides in battle. The struggle is internal to each person as well. Hence, one might expect that we would know the dangers of applying labels to individuals based on affiliation (House/School/political party), stereotypes (Slytherin=evil; conservative=racist) or racial/cultural bias (Hogwarts/Durmstrang/Beauxbatons; European/African/Latino). But observation of the political and social media landscape reveals that our society, to include the Potterverse, could learn from Dumbledore’s wisdom that words can both enlighten and cause harm. This and many other lessons from the Harry Potter series are values that those of us who hold up J.K. Rowling’s stories up as a source of moral wisdom should strive to live out and apply in order to improve the nature of social discourse and political debate.

Annetta Dolowitz, MPH, MSW

University of Alabama at
Birmingham

& Barbara Wech, PhD

University of Alabama at
Birmingham

Using Harry Potter and Team-Based Learning to Explore Leadership Theories and Increase Student Engagement

Student engagement and interaction is important to most courses. However, when a course's objectives involve learning about and understanding theories, such engagement can be a challenge. The purpose of this session is to share our approach to help create student engagement and excitement in learning about leadership theories. We combined pop culture (e.g., *Harry Potter*) and team-based learning (TBL) to create Hogwarts School of Leadership, an undergraduate business course. The approach we share in this session will provide a sound basis for use by faculty regardless of discipline.

Jennifer Erdman, PhD

Notre Dame of Maryland
University

Power Moms: Badass Mothers of Harry Potter

Mothers can have a remarkable impact on their children. The *Harry Potter* series delves into the impact of three profound mother figures. Lily Potter makes the ultimate sacrifice and unknowingly protects her son from certain death more than once. Molly Weasley serves as the most prominent mother in the series - always there for those in her sphere, whether they need a hug, a good meal, or a smack on the head. Narcissa Malfoy goes to extraordinary lengths to protect her son, even protecting Harry in the process. The *Harry Potter* books are brimming with powerful mother figures who offer guidance and their own brand of affection. In this presentation I will show that these women provide the foundation for success and victory.

Brett Fish, BA, MA Student

University of North Alabama

*Crime & Punishment & Wizards: Harry Potter and the
Prisoner of Azkaban*

The Chiasmic structure of the *Harry Potter* series presents several interesting reversals, most notably in Books 2, 3, 5, and 6. Books 2 and 6 focus on Harry's growing role as a detective/hero figure learning the truths necessary to defeat his adversary. However, Books 3 and 5 are all about crime and punishment. In *Prisoner of Azkaban*, Harry is confronted with an internal criminality that he must overcome, all while dealing with an external 'criminal' in Sirius Black. This presentation will focus entirely on *Prisoner of Azkaban* as Harry comes to grips with his internal criminality, an

important facet of the detective/hero's journey. Harry also learns important moral distinctions necessary for solving pieces of the overall mystery of his parents' murder. With Crime comes Punishment, and Punishment of all varieties envelops the narrative; all leading up to Harry's important showdown with Wormtail in the Shrieking Shack.

P. Melissa Fisher, BA

Get 'Em While They're Young: Bridging the Gender Gap through Young Adult Fiction

As is the case with many things, what works in one aspect of life might just work in another. Thus, just as it is better to prevent bad habits in math and language arts by addressing the issue in grade school rather than in college, countering sexism early can help to prevent sexist habits and assumptions from becoming fixed. This presentation will show that current trends in young adult (YA) fiction are doing just that. Citing *The Hogwarts Saga* and the *Hunger Games* series as examples, I will show how exposure to the Wizarding community and to Panem puts the idea of gender equality in the heads of the young readers by showing them worlds where gender inequality simply doesn't exist in the way that it does for us.

Louise M. Freeman, PhD

Mary Baldwin University

The Shared Text and Science: Potter-Inspired Names in Biology and Psychology

Harry Potter terms have become commonly understood words in our culture, recognized by readers and non-readers alike. Words like "muggle" and "quidditch" are now listed in the Oxford English Dictionary. Characters and terms from the series have become well-known enough for some scientists to incorporate them into scholarly journal articles, as a means of communicating their findings to both fellow researchers and the public.

At least three new species of animals have been given *Harry Potter*-inspired names by their discoverers: a predatory wasp named for dementors, a spider named for its resemblance to the Sorting Hat, and a fossil dinosaur named "Dragon King of Hogwarts." Psychologists are also using *Harry Potter* characters to describe concepts or conditions. The tendency to self-punish has been called the "Dobby Effect" while the idea that personal

choice can affect cognitive aging is known as the "Dumbledore hypothesis." This presentation will include a closer look into these uses of Potter lingo and include discussion time for teachers and professors to share how they use allusions to *Harry Potter* to explain concepts to students.

David James Gras

Christ Community Chapel

Harry Potter: *Phoenix Song and the Order of Virtues*

In J. K. Rowling's 2001 book *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*, we learn that the Phoenix Song is reputed to increase the courage of the pure in heart and to strike fear into the hearts of the impure. In this presentation I shall discuss the various symbolic meanings related to the mythic Phoenix and then show how this symbol is a key to understanding Harry's journey. The *Harry Potter* books emphasize the sacrificial courage that Harry and his friends exemplify in the face of danger and death. I will show that this sacrificial courage was impossible for the Dark Lord to understand or accept, and that this refusal ultimately lead him down the path to Dark Magic. I will then show that the elements of courage and suffering symbolized by Harry's fictional journey can be applied to our own choices on the path of life.

Marie Schilling Grogan, PhD

Chestnut Hill College

"I Open at the Close:" Epigraphs, Epilogue, Community and Chronology in H.P and the Deathly Hallows

J.K. Rowling has stated that she chose the two epigraphs for *Harry Potter and The Deathly Hallows* confident that they would powerfully "cue up" the ending to her series. This paper will explore how the second epigraph, taken from the works of William Penn, indeed offers a fruitful way to read the ultimate end of the series – that is the "Epilogue: 19 Years Later," which has received very mixed critical reaction. Some have found the Epilogue to be an aesthetic failure, while others take it to represent the apotheosis of the series' Christian message. This paper will explore how the final chapter, rather than closing the books, opens them by inviting readers to re-imagine both community and time in the register of eternity.

Caitlin Elizabeth Harper, MFA

The Weasley Children and the Seven Deadly Sins: Finding Fault in Everyone's Favorite Family

One of Rowling's greatest strengths as a writer is her ability to create characters of intense complexity and nuance. While characters like Snape and Dumbledore were initially presented as bad and good, respectively, they turned out to be hovering in a grey area. The Weasleys are generally held up as virtuous and true (remember, Percy came back), but each of them has their own faults and weaknesses as well. In this presentation, I will characterize each Weasley child as one of the seven deadly sins, examining Rowling's use of the number seven and Christian symbolism and her ability to layer even the most moral of characters with mortal flaws.

Dawn E. Hayes, PhD

Juniata College

Making Meaning with Magic

"Reading the word is dependent upon reading the world." - Freire
How do you read your world? How can the magic of *Harry Potter* help students enhance their literacy journey and their reading of the world and the word?

Helping students comprehend is the magic they need for their future as engaged learners. This session examines how the *Harry Potter* series can be used to help K-12 students make connections to larger questions in their lives, how to use Reading/Writing/Speaking/Listening activities how bolster thinking skills, and how to spur further literacy development. Learn how to use *Harry Potter* to help students make connections to other texts and the world around them, ask questions, visualize, determine themes and perspectives, make inferences, and synthesize information.

Tolonda Henderson, MA, MLS

George Washington
University

History or Propaganda: Memorials in Harry Potter

Memorials are not merely records of past events. Memorials are also interpretations of what meaning those events should have for future generations. As such, they refer not merely to the event being commemorated, but also to the time when the commemoration was created, and the moments when the memorials are experienced by visitors. Readers of the *Harry Potter* series have access to several retellings of the events

commemorated by the statue in Godric's Hollow's village square and the sign outside the house where his parents died. We also witness Harry's first encounter with these memorials. Rowling does not, however, include any explanation as to when or why the statue and the sign were erected. Using insights from contemporary scholarship on monuments, I will argue that the torture of Frank and Alice Longbottom created an atmosphere in which the Wizarding community needed reassurance that James and Lily Potter were seen as martyrs. For its part, the sign contains not only official words but also popular commentary added by visitors. The tradition of intermingled texts allows Harry's supporters to offer him encouragement as clearly as if they had been present with him. The static statue and the ever-changing sign focus on a specific version of events from 31 October 1981, solidifying the narrative that Voldemort's disappearance was something to be celebrated rather than a problem to be solved.

Joel B. Hunter, PhD

South Mountain Community
College

Whither Harry Potter Scholarship? Gaps, Prospects, and Paths

Since the publication of *Deathly Hallows* in 2007, both fans and serious readers of the *Harry Potter* saga have faced the prospect of their engagement with J. K. Rowling's world coming to an end. As each new incarnation of the franchise rises and matures – the movie franchise, the opening and then reorientation of Pottermore, the opening of the theme parks, the *Cursed Child* script and show – scholars are treated to more grist for the research mill. As I will show in detailed analytics of a literature review, the ecosystem of *Harry Potter* scholarship has evolved and expanded into dozens of fields. This fact is unsurprising, but it does raise some important questions. Are there areas in the scholarly rootstock, literary analysis (broadly construed) of the *Harry Potter* texts, that remain to be examined, or has that program reached its expiration date? What are the prospects for established and rising *Harry Potter* scholars to forge a research program in existing and new academic areas? And what are some of the most promising paths forward for *Harry Potter* scholarship? These are questions that get tossed around both formally and informally at every *Harry Potter* conference I have ever attended. I will offer answers to these questions and back these answers with concrete evidence. My

intent is for this paper to be a useful resource to all Potter academics, but especially to young scholars interested in carving out academically promising *Harry Potter* research in the years to come.

Nicole M. Jowsey, PhD

Medaille College

Truth and Truth-telling: Aletheia and Parrhesia through Harry Potter

It may appear that truth should be simple and straightforward and yet, history, politics, and philosophy have shown truth to be complex by its very nature. Michel Foucault lectured on the Greek notion of parrhesia which he seems to have understood as “free” or “fearless” speech. Foucault examined the relationship between the truth-teller and what he or she says to his or her audience. He articulates the idea there is a risk or danger to the truth-teller for what he or she speaks makes their very body vulnerable. In addition, Martin Heidegger discussed the Greek notion of aletheia, which can be translated as “truth.” For Heidegger truth was not to be thought of in terms of correctness, but rather as a disclosure or unconcealedness, arguing that it revealed something, while at the same time concealed it. This paper seeks to examine the relationship between parrhesia and aletheia through the figure of the Modern epic hero. Using Harry Potter (in the *Deathly Hallows*) as an example, I will demonstrate how he not only functions as both a site for aletheia, but also becomes a parrhesiastes as well. The disclosing hero puts him or herself at risk because the truth he discloses can be understood as a challenge, and perhaps even a threat, to the social, political and world order. I will argue both aletheia and parrhesia are prescribed to the character of the hero and constitutive of who they are.

Lorrie Kim, BA

Fantastic Beasts: Return to the Department of Mysteries

With the film *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*, J.K. Rowling returns us to the pleasures of speculating about mysteries. What does Grindelwald mean when he asks “Will we die, just a little?” Will Swooping Evil appear again? How did Credence survive so long? The author of *Snape: A Definitive Reading* will discuss and analyze how *Fantastic Beasts* and the *Harry Potter* series shed light on each other.

Cecilia Konchar Farr, PhD

St. Catherine University

It's Complicated: The Relationship Between the Harry Potter Novels and their Avid Readers

For this address, Professor Konchar Farr will dive into the gap between *Goblet of Fire* and *Order of the Phoenix*, the years between 2000 and 2003, and explore how an active fan base became a “Dumbledore’s Army” of engaged readers who took the novels into their own hands. They talked, they wrote, they re-read, revised and wrote some more. When they didn’t like something, many of them felt empowered to change it. When the author fell short, they talked back, expanded, and filled in. These readers and the ways they connect with novels are forcing critics to rethink the relationship between reader and text in an age of women’s leadership in the publishing industry, in social change movements, in our universities, and across U.S American culture.

David Martin, MS

What Americans Get Wrong about the Harry Potter Novels

Because we Americans share a language with Britain (mostly), and because we love the *Harry Potter* novels so much, it is easy for us to forget that *Harry Potter* is a British story, intended originally for a British audience, and set in a British context. When we read these novels from an American viewpoint, we are in danger of misunderstanding and misinterpreting some of the details and themes in the novels.

Starting with some small examples, such as Ron's comment that the fifty pence piece Harry gives him is "weird", this presentation will explore a number of issues that we Americans are likely to misunderstand or miss entirely while reading the novels. The most serious of these misreading is to see blood-status as a kind of racism. I will show that this "pure blood" concern has quite a different meaning in a British context.

Patrick McCauley, PhD

Chestnut Hill College

On Being Young and Loving Books

In the last few years, Rita Felski of the University of Virginia and Cecilia Konchar Farr of St. Catherine University in St. Paul have sounded a serious warning about the state of literary criticism and interpretation as it exists currently in academia. Felski, relying on

the work of Paul Ricoeur, calls out current literary critique as a “hermeneutic of suspicion.” She claims that this dominant form of interpretation “forecloses many potential readings.” Konchar Farr notes that while there are many who are willing to assert that Joyce’s *Ulysses* may very well be the best novel ever written, she finds that few of these same people have actually read it. Konchar Farr suggests we should also pay attention to what is actually being read and why. Felski calls for a turn toward hermeneutics and its focus on the interpretation of human meaning. She sees this as hopeful path forward. In this presentation I will cite the six years of the Harry Potter Conference at Chestnut Hill College as a vibrant location of this hermeneutical turn. It has always been the case that young people have turned to narrative as they go through the hard work of determining their own character and priorities. I will show that the rabid popularity of Rowling’s *Harry Potter* series and of young adult literature in general indicates exactly the narratives young people are turning to.

Kathryn McDaniel, PhD
& **Mark Sibicky, PhD**

Marietta College
Marietta College

Death Meets the Three Brothers: Terror Management in the Harry Potter Series

In 2014 a new fan theory posited a one-to-one relationship between *Harry Potter* characters and the characters from “The Tale of the Three Brothers,” the folk-tale at the center of the final book in the series, *The Deathly Hallows*. Voldemort, Snape, and Harry are said to represent the three brothers and their deathly gifts, while Dumbledore represents Death himself. Although this theory only provides limited new insight into the major theme of death in Rowling’s books, considering “The Tale of the Three Brothers” in relation to psychological theories about how human beings cope in the face of our own mortality generates deeper insights into the larger *Harry Potter* story.

Terror Management Theory (TMT)—developed and researched by social psychologists Sheldon Solomon, Jeff Greenberg, and Tom Pyszczynski, and founded on the work of cultural anthropologist Ernest Becker—proposes that human beings are distinguished by our consciousness of our own mortality; William James called this conflict “the worm at the core” of human experience. To buffer

against death anxiety (i.e., terror management) and function in a complex and sometimes dangerous social world, humans acquire a system of cultural beliefs, values, and rituals that give meaning and purpose to life. How one is meeting or exceeding this “purpose to life” in turn gives rise to the uniquely human sense of self-esteem. Social psychology experiments prove that when people are made to contemplate directly their own deaths, self-esteem serves to buffer death anxiety in various ways, including becoming more religious and patriotic while derogating others that do not conform to one’s beliefs or values; seeking greater social status through materialistic consumption or risk-taking behaviors; and embracing a sense of family and tradition as well as the desire to pass traditions down among the generations.

From the perspective of TMT, “The Tale of the Three Brothers” describes three common ways people respond to the terror of knowing they are mortal: through seeking power and status (like the first brother), connecting rigidly with an unchanging view of the past (like the second brother), or passing down cultural traditions through the generations (like the third brother). In “The Tale of the Three Brothers” Rowling both shares and reinforces her own cultural belief about death, as the third brother demonstrates the “proper way” to meet “Death”: “as an old friend.” As the Greek Philosopher Lucretius advised, when it comes to the end, “Why not depart from life as a sated guest from a feast?” Psychologists have likewise seen this as a more stable and psychologically healthy approach to mortality. Applying TMT to “The Tale of the Three Brothers” helps connect the insights from *Harry Potter* to demonstrated social psychology findings about how human beings seek to manage the awareness of their mortality. As Rowling has said, “it’s mortality that gives life meaning.”

Yasmin Miranda, MS, EdS

Bibliotherapy: Using Harry Potter to Understand and Treat Depression

Bibliotherapy has been used in the counseling field for over a century. Thanks to the likes of Dr. Janina Scarlet and Dr. Lawrence C. Rubin, more recent attention has been given to incorporating comic books and fantasy/sci-fi literature into bibliotherapy. The *Harry Potter* series is particularly useful in bibliotherapy, as it has a variety of character types, complex

themes, and relatable moments. In this presentation, I will demonstrate how the *Harry Potter* series can be helpful to treat depression. Separate attention will be given to methods that can be applied both by counselors and by individuals through self-directed work.

Christina Grace Phillips-Mattson, PhD Harvard University
Say the Magic Word: Spellwork and the Legacy of Nonsense

There is a revolution occurring in contemporary children's fiction that challenges the divide that has long existed between literature for children and literature for adults. Children's literature, though it has long been considered worthy of critical inquiry, has never enjoyed the same kind of extensive intellectual attention as adult literature because children's literature has not been considered to be serious literature or "high art." Through an investigation of spell language in J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* novels, I would like to demonstrate that there is an emerging aesthetic and stylistic sophistication in contemporary children's fiction that confirms the existence of children's narratives that are equally complex, multifaceted, and worthy of the same kind of academic inquiry that is afforded to adult literature. By privileging spell language in her novels, Rowling capitalizes on literary nonsense's heritage in a new way, employing it as a device that reveals the sophisticated style, complex narrative strategy, and seriousness of purpose of her epic. While Rowling retains many of the so-called "childish" characteristics of Carrollian and Learian nonsense—its playful puzzles, codes, and improbabilities, its allusions to fantastic creatures, its child-oriented vision, etc.—and in this way taps into our cultural memory, her nonsense also incorporates the tension between meaning and its absence, and, often, her fictional reality is created by a kind of language play that is similar to that of these two Victorian men. In Rowling's world, however, it is especially her invention of spell language that allies her with the tradition of literary nonsense. In *Harry Potter*, spell language has an underlying meaning that is illuminated both by the breakdown of the neologism as well as by the manifestation of the spell-word's intention in reality. By examining some of the most crucial spells in the novels (Avada Kedavra, Expelliarmus, Expecto Patronum, Sectumsempra, etc.) I demonstrate how Rowling creates a new

kind of nonsense device which serves not only to delight but also to instruct, and through which we come to a greater understanding of her characters. This examination will also explain how the literal language of enchantment becomes crucial to Harry's success as a hero and becomes one of the key indicators of Harry's moral growth. I ultimately argue that Rowling revolutionizes the nonsense mode in children's literature by employing nonsense language not only in order to create an effective and aesthetically pleasing reality, but also as a device to examine the tension that exists between the interior self and external action. In this way, Rowling's nonsense displays a simultaneous commitment to a sophisticated aesthetic philosophy that recalls nonsense's most acclaimed literary antecedents as well as its distinguished legacy in adult literature.

Tavis Prinzi, MS, MA

The University of Rochester

Dolores J Trumbidge: Revisiting Wizarding Racism in the Age of Trump

As the *Harry Potter* series progressed, we watched the subtle racism of the early novels transition into outright racism as government policy by the final novel. Many Western readers likely felt certain that while there are still race problems to be solved in society, at least it would never get as bad as it did in the Wizarding World. Since the 2016 US Presidential election, race issues have come front and center, from Donald Trump's controversial cabinet appointments to recent violent white supremacist marches.

While it's natural and easy to criticize Trump by calling him "Voldemort," I seek to argue that what is happening in the current administration is more Umbridge-like in character. I will draw comparisons between the current US administration and the Ministry of Magic just prior to Voldemort's takeover. I will argue that the move to blatantly racist lawmaking in *Deathly Hallows* was not a shocking turn of events, but the natural progression of the racism already present in the Wizarding World. Rooted in the works of critical race theorists and the work on racism in *Harry Potter* that has already been done, I will define racism and argue that through the use of coded racist language, racist executive orders, and the subtle encouraging of violence, the groundwork is being laid for the perpetuation and expansion of racist norms in US

culture, just as it was in the Wizarding World.

I will conclude by contrasting the sinister progression of Umbridge's ideology to Voldemort's takeover with the good progression of Dumbledore's belief in love to Dobby's and Harry's self-sacrifices and draw ideas from the Wizarding World that are relevant to our own.

Melinda Rice, MFA

The Wand and the Stick: Looking at Rowling's Wands and Violinists' Bows

This paper seeks to compare the attributes that J. K. Rowling gives to wands throughout the *Harry Potter* series with attributes that have been observed in the musical tool used by string players – the bow. Drawing on sources ranging from Leopold Mozart's 1756 *A Treatise on the Fundamental Principles of Violin Playing* to Laurie Nile's 2014 collection of interviews with 21st century violinists, *The Violinist.com Interviews: Volume 1*, this research asks if there is a correlation between wand use and bow use, and is curious as to the level of consciousness that Rowling held about the similarities as she wrote about the wand in the wizard world.

Lindy Ryan, EdD

Montclair State University

Warring Wizards and Muggle Magic: The Hidden Data Story of Heroes and Villains in H.P.

Have you ever wondered if good and evil weren't as black and white as they might appear in the era of the Second Wizarding War? Last year we used data storytelling to explore the influence of transformational leadership at Hogwarts. This year, we've transfigured the entire *Harry Potter* series into raw data and used the magic of visual analytics to a data-driven look at the role of violence and morality in *Harry Potter*. In this presentation we'll reveal the complicated truth of how Potterheads view the series' heroes and villains differently, as well as examine the use of spells and charms, aggressive behaviors of non-human creatures, and plot the progression of violence across the series. Plus, we'll see how reader sentiment stacks up when pitted against over 1 million words of text to see if we can definitively answer whether Voldemort was the ultimate villain, or if Harry was a little less of a hero than we might have been led to believe—and discover if the data gives us a clue to how Harry *really* got his lightning bolt scar!

Brent Satterly, PhD, MSS, LCSW, CSE, CST Widener University
The Pedagogy of Fandom: Using the Harry Potter Fandom to Captivate, Motivate, and Advocate in Social Work Education

The Pedagogy of Fandom is the teaching practice of utilizing and employing pop culture fandom followings to galvanize undergraduate students' motivation, specifically Millennial social work students, around course content and process. Daft (2010) defines motivation as the internal or external force that arouses enthusiasm and a drive to pursue a specific course of action. Engaging this intrinsic motivation of students around pop culture is the basis for this model. This talk will present both the theoretical approach of using fandoms as intrinsic motivators for critical thinking and engagement with students, and the design and implementation of an undergraduate social work course titled "The Spell Craft of Social Work: *Harry Potter* and Social Justice" using the Pedagogy of Fandom model. Outcomes of content analyses from assignments will be presented, including the use of House traits as coping mechanisms for hardship, the development of student Patronuses for facing personal and professional challenges, and application of trauma-based themes from *Harry Potter* in social work practice.

Emily Strand, MA

Mt. Carmel College of
Nursing

Said Hermione Earnestly: Harry Potter's Prose and Why It Doesn't Matter

Harry Potter fans understandably chafe at the idea that our favorite books are flawed in any way, yet Rowling's writing has always had its detractors. Instead of tuning out the criticism, this session will take a hard look at the claim that *Harry Potter* is poorly written and explore why someone might hold that view. This session will also present the literary merits of Potter and uncover important aspects of Rowling's writing which aspiring authors can and should emulate. Lastly, the session will tackle the question: if Rowling's writing is so flawed, why is she among the most successful and widely read authors in history?

Stephanie Weaver, PhD Candidate

St. John's University

There Be Dragons About: Rowling's Fire-Breathers in the Anthropocene

The purpose of this presentation lies in determining where Children's and Young Adult Fantasy Literature fits within the ecological literary conversation, focusing specifically on how Rowling's literary contributions interact within the ecological conversation. By looking at space, environment, and landscape in fantasy, readers and critics can witness how fantasy worlds can help us think and theorize about key ecological principles and issues, specifically the Anthropocene. In fantasy literature, authors provide audiences with clear representations on the possibility of creating hybrid, sustainable environments in the wake of environmental crisis.

In Rowling's construction of her respective secondary world, she provides an examination of a fire-breathing gold-hoarding creature that seeks to destabilize the primary and secondary worlds in which the characters navigate. This construction of a fire-breathing menace symbolizes the problems that emerge when individuals, be they man or beast, exploit valuable resources for the obtainment of wealth and power.

Beginning with John Clute's examination of the dragon as part of his research of the fantasy genre and using Jeffrey Jerome Cohen's "Monster Culture" and Jason K. Moore's "Capitalocene" as a basis for analysis, this endeavor looks to establish monstrosity in the form of the dragon as a product of overconsumption. In response to Moore's presentation of the "Capitalocene," this essay seeks to respond to his theory and propose a new name for the Anthropocene, the "Industrialocene, where unregulated industry quickly results in the destruction and exploitation of environmental resources. The analysis will move to Rowling's own creation and placement of the dragon in her novels and their place within the Wizarding World.

Karen S. Wendling, PhD

Chestnut Hill College

*A Comparison of Common Elements in Philip Pullman's
His Dark Materials Trilogy and Rowling's Harry Potter
Series*

In several documented interviews, J.K. Rowling has shared her appreciation for the works of Philip Pullman, author of *His Dark Materials*. Knowing that Rowling was reading Pullman in the years leading up to the publishing of *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, it is useful to analyze the influence Pullman's writing may have had on Rowling's construction of Harry Potter's world and story. Immediate basic correlations can be seen when these texts are compared: Rowling's dementors are similar to Pullman's spectres; echoes of Pullman's General Oblation Board (GOB) can be seen in the Ministry of Magic, particularly as it evolved in Rowling's later books; both Rowling and Pullman's characters use unique magical tools along their journeys.

Yet beyond these seemingly direct parallels, the works of Rowling and Pullman share similar themes. Both texts focus on the loss of the soul as a main plot point in the process of character development. Much of the plot of *The Northern Lights/The Golden Compass*, the first book in Pullman's series, focuses on the result of cutting a daemon away from its human partner. This severing process, be it voluntary or not, seemingly takes away – or *reduces* – the person's soul, diminishing one's fundamental humanity.

Rowling's books plot the journey of Tom Riddle, deliberately splintering his soul in the creation of horcruxes. Rowling also shows the effect of involuntarily loss of the soul as demonstrated by the dementor's kiss. Ultimately both authors also play with more positive physical manifestations of the soul: the shape-shifting daemons of Pullman's world and Rowling's use of the patronus.

Olivia Wertz, BA

Harry Potter and the Order of the Republican Party: Comparing the Fifth Book of the Series to Current Political Events

The world of *Harry Potter* often mimics the reality of our day-to-day lives. While we may not be using spells to ward off dementors or researching the location of our arch nemesis' soul-encased horcruxes, we can still relate this magical world to our conventional muggle realities. J.K. Rowling captured our attention in 1997 with the release of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*. These witches and wizards and their tribulations somehow feel familiar. Characters such as Dobby, the hovering, helicopter friend that you can't help but be thankful for, and Professor McGonagall the strict, but devoted parent are recognizable as representations of people in our own lives. However, what's even more enticing about this book series is its ability to mirror events that happen long after its publication.

In 2016, almost a decade and a half after the release of *Harry Potter and The Order of the Phoenix*, I cannot help but relate current political occurrences to the Ministry of Magic's conduct. Again, the magical world mirrors our own at the political level. James Comey's testimony concerning President Trump seems eerily similar to Harry Potter's in regard to dementors in Little Whinging. Trump's abandonment and replacement of Obama's policies parallels Dolores Umbridge's replacement of existing school policy. These coextensive situations are only a few examples of J.K. Rowling's prophetic writing and the timeless essence of the *Harry Potter* series.

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Welcomes you to the sixth annual
Harry Potter Conference



The Harry Potter Conference is an annual academic conference held at Chestnut Hill College in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. This interdisciplinary conference provides a forum for scholarly presentations arising out of the series of books by J.K. Rowling.

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