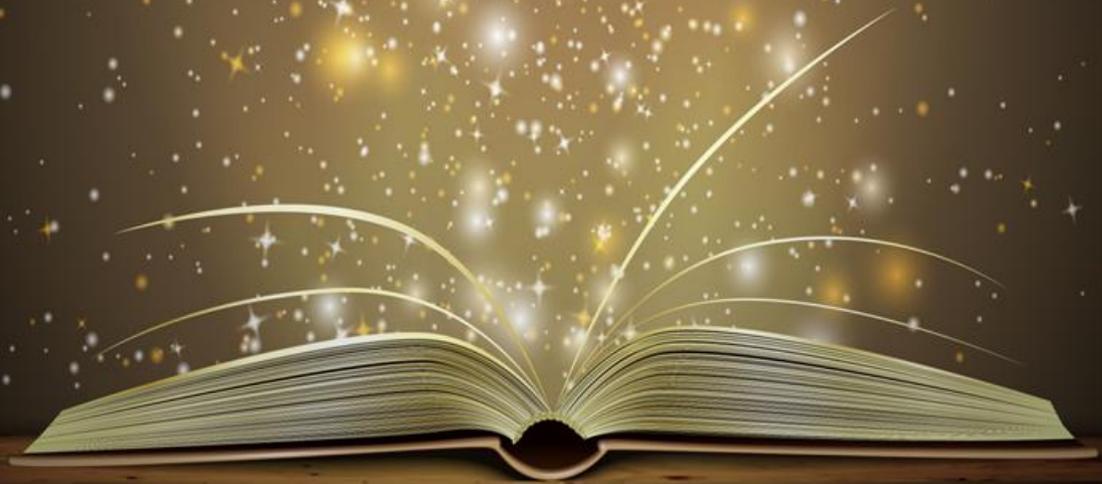


The Harry Potter Conference 2013

Academic Reflections on the Major Themes
in J.K. Rowling's Literature

Chestnut Hill College

October 18th, 2013 at 3PM



Conference Coordinators:

Karen Wendling, PhD, Chestnut Hill College

Patrick McCauley, PhD, Chestnut Hill College

2:00 – 3:00 Conference Check In and Registration (Rotunda)

(Please enjoy drinks and snacks in the Rotunda, courtesy of the Chestnut Hill College Student Activities Office and Lecture Committee)

The Harry Potter Art Exhibit (Rotunda)



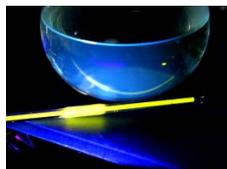
Natalie Ann Feld
(Chestnut Hill College)
“Sirius Black”
(Charcoal)



Stephanie Reif, BS
“Chapter Eleven”
(Mixed Media)



Zaneta Zachwieja
(Academies in Englewood)
“The Butter Beer of Youth” (Mixed Media)



Karen Wendling, PhD
(Chestnut Hill College)
“Potions Class”
(Photography)

3:00 – 3:05 Conference Welcome (The East Parlor)

Notes on Conference Program

The conference is split into two concurrent sessions; Session A is located in the East Parlor, while Session B is located in the Redmond Room. While the presentations are scheduled to allow attendees to move between sections, please note that the times listed are approximate. Feel free to quietly leave the conference rooms at any time. Refreshments are available in the Rotunda for the duration of the conference.

Presenters are listed in the conference program with their most recent academic degrees and the current institution where they are attending (students) or are employed (faculty/staff).

Session A: The East Parlor

3:05 PM

**Tolonda Henderson, MA, MLIS
(George Washington University)**

Shhhhh!!: Hermione and the Marginalization of the Hogwarts Library

Libraries have been described as the heart of academic institutions, but this certainly cannot be said of the library at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. Madam Pince, the librarian, is mean, unhelpful, and more of a caretaker of artifacts than someone who fosters learning. The library itself seems to lack tools such as a catalog or signage that would help the students locate resources efficiently. From among the variety of reasons for this marginalization, this presentation will focus on the role of gender. Although Hogwarts is co-educational, the *Harry Potter* series is part of a long tradition of books written for and about boys, namely the British boarding school story. The novels exemplify key aspects of this genre, including an emphasis on team sports, a focus on the relationship between the protagonist and the headmaster, and a privileging of extra-curricular adventure over book learning. In this context, it is significant that the character most associated with the library is a girl. One of Hermione's key roles is as intermediary between Harry's masculinized quests and the feminized realm of the library.

3:28 PM

Patrick McCauley, PhD (Chestnut Hill College)

King's Crossroads: The Border between the Real and the Imagined

Rowling's seven novels about Harry Potter center around the question of the real and the imaginary. Late in the last novel of the series Harry asks Dumbledore whether his experiences are real or just happening in his head. Dumbledore responds, "Of course it is happening inside your head, Harry, but why on earth should that mean that it is not real?" This presentation will discuss the idea of aesthetic distance, a literary device closely related to the willing suspension of disbelief. As the reader encounters written material, it is crucial to determine what ontological or reality status the world within that material attains. Is it a true story or not? Is it to be taken literally or figuratively? Should what is found in the text apply to real life and, if so, to what degree? Where some would shy away, Rowling instead courts and emphasizes the border between the real and imaginary.

Session B: The Redmond Room

3:05 PM

Lorrie Kim, BA
Oxytocin, the Ancient Magic

What does it mean that love is the greatest magic, “more wonderful and terrible than death”? Why did Dumbledore say he put his faith in Harry’s mother’s *blood* rather than her family or her love? Why did Voldemort want to steal that blood? What was Snape doing with Lily’s photo and letter in Sirius Black’s bedroom? Why did the Elder Wand pass to Draco and Harry but not Voldemort?

These questions are all connected to Snape and Dumbledore’s joint strategy to help an orphaned survivor of violence overcome the scars and trauma he bears from his attacker. J.K. Rowling’s wizards called love “an ancient magic.” Muggle scientists study the same phenomenon under the name of oxytocin, the hormone that causes feelings of love and empathy. By reading Lily Potter’s magical protection as the effect of oxytocin in Harry’s bloodstream, we can understand what Snape was doing with Lily’s letter and photo and how this enabled Harry to master the Elder Wand and defeat Voldemort.

3:28 PM

Robert D. Meyer, PhD (Chestnut Hill College)
The Inheritance of Magic Use: Genetics in the Wizarding World

A pervasive theme and motivator of many characters in Rowling’s *Harry Potter* series is the question of the inheritance of magic. It could be argued that the actions of the members of the dark forces in the story are based on their obsession with creating and controlling a “pureblood” world of wizards. Certainly their contempt of muggles and “mudbloods” indicates this. This presentation will attempt to take the information in the books about the inheritance of magic use and put it into the context of the transmission of genetic phenotypes. The goal is to determine if there is a genetic model that can adequately fit the data that Rowling has provided.

Session A: The East Parlor

3:51 PM

Matthew Chominski, BA (Archmere Academy)

The Hexing Virtue: Loyalty in *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*

In ways both pronounced and subtle, loyalty shapes and contours the narrative of *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*. Whether it is Harry's loyalty to Sirius, or the Order's loyalty to Dumbledore, Bellatrix's loyalty to Voldemort, or Creature's loyalty to the Black Family, this virtue—or is it at times vice?—provides impetus, motive and decisive direction to Rowling's characters and their manner of action. The web of loyalties and affections that spans the course of the book in both depth and breadth help the reader reflect upon the bonds that form and sustain relationships and allegiances. Beyond the interpersonal loyalty that is all too apparent, the narrative forces the interested reader to wonder about the limits of loyalty and its proper and fitting objects. In what way is it proper to be loyal to abstractions and institutions? When should the ties of loyalty be dissolved or amended? The consideration of such questions regarding loyalty throughout the course of the *Order of the Phoenix* provides ample room for exploration for the sources necessary for the formulation of some of the defining qualities of what we call loyalty. Reference will be made to Eric Felton's recent work, *Loyalty: The Vexing Virtue*.

4:14 PM

Amanda Finlaw (Chestnut Hill College)

Ginny Weasley & Hermione Granger: Exploring Their Traits and Roles in the Novels

This presentation describes the characters of Hermione Granger and Ginny Weasley by contrasting and comparing their personalities, tendencies, and temperaments. The interrelationships between these women are explored, as is their relationship with Harry, the title character. Even though both Hermione and Ginny were sorted into Gryffindor, they represent Gryffindor characteristics differently. They care about and are interested in pursuing different hobbies and hold Harry's attention in different ways. This presentation explores the characteristics that make these two female friends so different as well as surprisingly familiar.

4:27 PM

Christia Antoine (Chestnut Hill College)

Harry Potter and the Concern of Religious Parents over Witchcraft

The *Harry Potter* series is one of the most successful children's books ever published. It has so captivated young readers that an entire generation has returned to reading. However, some religious parents have had misgivings. They are concerned that references to witchcraft will harm their child's ability to stay true to their Christian beliefs. This presentation argues that these religious parents should allow the children to read the books. These parents are missing an opportunity to read with their children. They are missing a chance to guide a discussion of the moral issues that are raised in the series as well as a chance to bond with their children while doing so. It is a mistake to squander a child's interest in reading.

Session B: The Redmond Room

3:51 PM

**Joseph Patrick Cunningham, CPA, MBA
(Albright College)**

The Economic Wizardry of *Harry Potter*

This presentation traces the economic development of J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* universe as a business enterprise from conception through today as well as its future business implications. This presentation studies the impact of an initial printing of a mere 1,000 novels of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* through the development of a billion-dollar industry that continues to flourish around the now famous, yet fictional, teenaged wizard.

4:14 PM

**Jeff Ambrose, MA
(Delaware County Community College)**

Teaching through Terror: Horror in *Harry Potter*

The *Harry Potter* series contains many light-hearted and feel-good moments which the reader experiences so strongly because they are in stark contrast to numerous instances and tropes of horror in the books. This presentation argues that many great lessons of the series come from the darker moments, such as Harry being left for dead by Draco on the Hogwarts Express and the shared memories of Tom Riddle. In analyzing these scary moments, in contrast to their lighter counterparts, powerful lessons about choice, friendship, and love are not only revealed but permanently stamped on the reader's consciousness.

Session A: The East Parlor

4:37 PM

Zoey Gabriella Bonfante, BA
**Muggle-Borns and Half-Bloods in Harry Potter:
A Post-Colonial Approach**

J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* saga addresses issues of belonging and identity that surround the motives behind the focal Potter/Voldemort conflict; these tensions are especially pronounced and significant among those from magical or Muggleborn backgrounds. This presentation uses a postcolonial lens to examine the treatment and inclusion of Muggleborn witches and wizards within the magical society created by Rowling. Muggle-born characters, such as Hermione Granger, Colin Creevey, and Dean Thomas, are used to explore postcolonial issues of hybridity and mimicry. This presentation offers a new examination of the racial divides and fragmented identities found in the saga, and argues that the *Harry Potter* series participates in important theoretical discussions on both the opportunities and costs experienced by hybrid identities.

4:50 PM

Janet lafrate, MA

Expelliarmus!: Revenge and Incarceration in the *Harry Potter* Series

J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series is often noted as a liberal-slanted narrative, a story in which heroes strive for equality and fair treatment among all sectors of society: muggles, half-giants, and even house-elves. This presentation provides an extension on these themes: the representation of incarceration and revenge. In *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, Rowling introduces both a famous prisoner and an entire penal system. This can be interpreted as the author questioning, via some of her most trustworthy characters, the conventional methods of incarceration as well as the purpose and practice of revenge.

This presentation first focuses on the representation of Sirius Black and his incarceration in Azkaban, followed by Rowling's treatment of Kreacher the House-Elf and systematic abuse. The presentation concludes with an analysis of the role of Dumbledore's Army in *The Order of the Phoenix*, which spotlights a general interrogation of "revenge" that exists across the entire series. In creating a structured penal system that is riddled with problems and corruption, Rowling offers both her protagonists and her readers a re-examination of how and why individuals decide to punish.

Session B: The Redmond Room

4:37 PM

**Danielle Tucci-Juraga¹ (Owner and Director)
& and Shalay Johnson¹ (Co-Choreographer)
(¹ Downstage Center Dance Studio)**

The Wondrous World of Harry Potter Ballet: An Artistic Journey

Owning and operating a dance studio allowed for the artistic creation of this piece using J.K. Rowling's writing as the platform. While the idea of using *Harry Potter* as a dance piece was simple to conceive, it would take a process of months to create this original work. After weeks of listening to the movie soundtracks, a 10 minute arrangement of music was selected that would take the dancers (and the audience) through many levels of tempo, rhythm, and percussion. This selection also allowed the incorporation of all eight *Harry Potter* films into a condensed and "danceable" melody featuring characters from all 7 books. Supplementing the dancing with special effects would be essential to making the magic as real as possible, which on a small financial budget was difficult but necessary. Effects included smoke, the hovering Sorting Hat, projections of the Great Hall, extensive costuming and flying dancers. *The Wondrous World of Harry Potter* was performed in the summer of 2012 by the Downstage Center Dance Studio.

Conference History

The Harry Potter Conference has its origins in an Interdisciplinary Honors course for undergraduate students developed by Profs. McCauley and Wendling and taught at Chestnut Hill College (Philadelphia, PA). This IDHP course used the *Harry Potter* series as an example of *Bildungsroman* literature to study the often competing influences of science and philosophy/religion on the development of personal truth and meaning. The course was taught from Fall 2009 through Spring 2012. During this time, independent of the course, Chestnut Hill College students formed their own Quidditch team and began to compete in the national arena ... and to host their own tournament, the Brotherly Love Cup. Then the town of Chestnut Hill, located next to the college, got involved. Already a beautiful community boasting unique restaurants and shops, the town "converts" for one weekend in October into all things Harry-related. The Harry Potter Conference was first held in October 2012 as part of Chestnut Hill's Harry Potter Weekend to provide an academic outlet for a serious - but always enjoyable - study of the themes in the *Harry Potter* series. The conference was well attended and presentations were made by area students, faculty, and community members.

Further Information

Information on the 2014 Harry Potter Conference will be posted on the conference website as it becomes available.

www.harrypotterconference.com

Professors McCauley and Wendling will be offering their Interdisciplinary Honors Course at Chestnut Hill College for the Fall 2013-Spring 2014 academic year. Please see the IDHP website if you are interested in being a part of the Interdisciplinary Honors Program at Chestnut Hill College.

www.chc.edu/interdisciplinaryhonorsprogram/