

NARRATIVE TECHNIQUES IN CHILDREN’S FANTASY SERIES *HARRY POTTER*

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Abstract

The paper presents an overview of the various narrative techniques employed in the children’s fantasy series, *Harry Potter*. The focus is on the multiple narrative elements, employed by J. K. Rowling, and their function that enables the generation of interest, in order to deliver a gripping story.

Belonging to the generation of children for whom Harry Potter was a significant childhood companion one may be inclined to look beyond the populist versus critically acclaimed works debate, to arrive at a reader response which is emotive, fond and grateful for the companionship. The gratefulness will be better understood by those somewhat solitary young people who have an appreciation for the fortification and comfort of being pulled into the narrative of magical castles, fantastic creatures, and flying broomsticks while riding the rickshaw to the dreaded (for some of us) mathematics tuition.

Sharon Black aptly summarizes the *Harry Potter* phenomenon when she writes that, “Children all over the world are dressing up in wizard’s hats and robes, wearing lightning-shaped stickers on their foreheads, and attending Harry Potter parties at local bookstores (540).

The power of J. K. Rowling’s narrative got us, the young readers, so wrapped up in her story world that the books were hard to put down. Though age catches up with one, which may lead to diversions from the kind of reading one did as a child, especially because one may develop reading tastes for a multitude of genres, for more complex styles, or for different kinds of writings; one remembers the feeling of wonder associated with those early reading subjects. That is not to say that adults do not read children’s books, just that they may read a variety of other things as well. Readers, young or old, may agree that Rowling’s storytelling is embedded with various narrative techniques, that keep the intrigue and mystery, the page-turning quality driven by the curiosity for what happens next, in a constant flow throughout the series.

Foreshadowing and Teasers

The very opening of the narrative in the first book in the Series, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone* (1997), is riddled with teasers that tickle a reader’s curiosity:

Mr. and Mrs. Dursley, of number four, Privet Drive, were proud to say that they were perfectly normal, thank you very much. They were the last people you’d expect to be

involved in anything strange or mysterious, because they just didn't hold with such nonsense. (*HPPS* 7)

Of human behaviour, or what can be observed of human behaviour from social experience, it can be said being normal is hardly considered anything worth being proud of. One does not boast of one's abject ordinariness and assure people there is nothing unusual about oneself, except perhaps in circumstances when being considered "strange" has consequences ranging from ostracism, to being locked away in reformatory institutions. In this light, does the fishy introduction to the Dursleys not betray, and deliberately too, the possible existence of things "strange" and "mysterious" in their lives? Does this not raise questions about what could the Dursleys possibly fear? Where does their mania for normalcy stem from?

The narrator only hints at the Dursleys' secret fear: they do not want anyone to find out that they are related to the Potters. With the words 'strange' and 'mysterious' entrenched in the narration, one cannot help growing curious about the Potters, especially since it is established that they are as "unDursleyish as it was possible to be" (*HPPS* 7). The vehement denial that nothing mysterious is going on has the effect of raising suspicions in the contrary direction. There is a foreshadowing that the Dursleys' secret fear, whatever it may be, is about to come true, which is supported by the following lines:

When Mr. and Mrs. Dursley woke up on the dull, grey Tuesday our story starts, there was nothing about the cloudy sky outside to suggest that strange and mysterious things would soon be happening all over the country. (*HPPS* 7)

Thus, the narrative force prepares the readers for what is to come by whetting their appetite which pushes them into reading further to discover the promised mystery for themselves. The function of the foreshadowing is, therefore, to build the readers' anticipation and to rouse their curiosity.

Worlds and Spaces

The narrator constructs the "normal" versus "strange" theme in the very beginning, but the theme does not split the narrative worlds into the non-magical and the magical. Instead the secondary/magical world is merely hidden from plain sight, within the primary/non-magical world. The reader is pulled into the narrative world by reiterating that the fantasy world is a part of the very reality that the reader inhabits, tantalizingly hidden just around the corner. This enables the reader to place the fantasy in his or her own living experience.

When Harry asks why the non-magical people cannot see the Wizards' "Knight Bus" on the roads, he is told that they just: "Don't listen properly, do they? Don't look properly either. Never notice nuffink, they don't" (*HPPA* 32). This is how the same world stands divided, though the magical world is under a constant strain from remaining hidden from muggle eyes. The narrative offers the alluring suggestion that the space where the fantasy world operates may overlap with the readers' reality, ironically (as fantasies are more focused on the strange and the unusual) promoting familiarity when possible.

Further, a connection to the reader is established through the inclusion of the school story. The major "chronotope" in the novels, where most of the narrative action unfolds itself, is Hogwarts School. Mikhail Bakhtin's term "chronotope", literally "time space", signifies fusion of spatial and temporal indicators in a text. "Chronotope" is the "time-space" in a narrative where events unfold and encounters take place. It may be a road, as in picaresque tradition; or a castle, as in gothic novels; or merely a parlour or a salon from a novel of manners.

Here Hogwarts is the chronotope where powerful magical objects (the philosopher's stone) are stored and defended, monsters are killed, long lost godfathers are found, mentors are murdered and the final battle against the villain is fought. The path to other chronotopes also leads from the school: the graveyard where the villain uses his blood to regain his lost body; the hero going to Ministry of Magic where he is ambushed by the villain's minions etc. These locations are reached through the school where the hero resides. In this way the school is a site of wonder and adventures that entice the readers.

However, the school narrative also provides familiarity. The school as a chronotope is a social institution the reader recognizes. The social functions within are well known, like friendships, rivalries, classes and sports. In this way, the narration showcases a space of shared human experience that binds the readers to the characters in the book through mutual understanding and already existing knowledge of the schooling as a practice.

Misleading the Reader

The narrator in *Harry Potter* does not take part in the narrated action. The narrator is not omniscient either. Instead there is a third person limited point of view that operates through focalization. Focalization, according to Burkhard Niederrhoff, is “a selection or restriction of narrative information in relation to the experience and knowledge of the narrator, the characters or other, more hypothetical entities in the storyworld”. The term was introduced by Gerard Genette.

The narration is focalized mainly through Harry with whom our sympathies are intended to remain. Still, there are parts (only for short durations) when some other character may become the focalizer. For example, Vernon Dursley (*Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, ch.1), Albus Dumbledore (*Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, ch.1), Frank Bryce (*Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, ch.1), the Prime Minister of England (*Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, ch.1) etc., often become the alternatives to focalization through Harry. This way the readers can witness scenes Harry has no access to.

The use of Harry as the focalizer, enables what John Granger calls “narrative misdirection” (13). He says:

All “narrative misdirection” amounts to is our being sucked into believing... that we are seeing the story as God sees it. Of course this isn't the case but over the course of the tale our looking down on Harry and friends (and enemies) from “on high”, even if “on high” means only from a few feet over Harry's head, we begin to think that we have a larger perspective than we do. We don't of course; we never have anything but the smallest fraction of information about what is going on with Voldemort, Dumbledore, or Snape. Of all the perspectives on the story Ms. Rowling could have chosen to give us, she chose to give us the relatively clueless angle on events in the Wizarding World. Harry doesn't know that much about what's going on. (15)

According to Granger, telling the story this way allows Rowling to create surprises (that, no doubt, entice the readers in the narrative web). An example would be when Snape kills Dumbledore in the sixth book: *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*. In the second chapter of the book we see Snape taking an “Unbreakable Vow” to kill Albus Dumbledore, in case Draco Malfoy, the sixteen-year-old Slytherin student originally entrusted with the job by the Dark Lord, is unsuccessful. Failing to do so would break the vow and end Snape's life.

The scene is one of the exceptions, not focalized through Harry but unfolded through the eyes of the narrator. The narrator omits to describe what exactly is going on in Snape's mind

during the scene. Due to the lack of adequate information the misdirection is made possible. The narrator is simply ill informed, because the author chose to construct the narrative in this manner.

Harry, while eavesdropping on Snape and Malfoy, comes to know of the vow in the fifteenth chapter, though he does not get the complete information (only that Snape swore to protect Malfoy). He already hates Snape and when a drunken Professor Trelawney informs him that Snape was responsible for giving the Dark Lord the information that made him come after his family, Harry questions Dumbledore's trust in Snape. Dumbledore, however, defends him. The reader already knows about Snape's vow and when Snape finally kills Dumbledore it seems that both Harry and the reader had been right in distrusting the character.

When the hidden information about Snape's loyalties is finally disclosed, the reader is pleasantly surprised, if he or she has not already guessed what is going on without being told (as happens with fans coming up with theories about the direction a work will take). The vow is a "misdirection" planted by the author, a fact revealed when a dying Snape leaves his memories for Harry to view. Through them it is discovered that Dumbledore had planned his own murder, because he was already dying from a curse. Thus a twist in the tale is deliberately generated. The "misdirection" operates on the characters as well. For example Dumbledore uses his death in order to misdirect the Dark Lord into believing that Snape was loyal to him, so that Snape could subtly and ultimately betray him.

Entering the Magical Space

Mendlesohn points out that the *Harry Potter* novels begin as intrusion fantasy, in which magical disturbances invade the non-magical world; but then transform into portal fantasy, "reliant on elaborate description and continual new imaginings" (2), where the realm of the fantastic is entered through a portal. Harry himself is an agent causing disturbance in the non-magical world, an intruder unaware of his true nature. His muggle aunt and uncle consider him "abnormal" (HPPS 44), but at the same time refuse to explain that the "funny business" (HPPS 23) that occurs when he is involved, is actually magic. Instead they chose to "stamp it out of him" (HPPS 43) by mistreating him making him live in a cupboard under stairs, locking him up, not feeding or clothing him properly, treating him like a servant etc. The narrative does not highlight the child abuse and as Harry is portrayed as a spirited individual, sometimes capable of outsmarting his tormentors, the abuse is not allowed to reach tragic proportions, though it has the potential for it.

The narrative does not open in the realm of the not-normal straightaway; instead it opens in the muggle/non-magical world. Then the "intrusion" begins. This ensures that the reader is not surprised into disbelief but is allowed to adjust to a new perspective. One gets hints that suggest the existence of the wizarding world as the narrator follows Uncle Vernon to his office. Getting out of his house he thinks he saw a stray cat reading a map, but blames it on his imagination (he doesn't approve of imagination of course). Tolkien's words seem to apply to people like him:

Fantasy, of course, starts out with an advantage: arresting strangeness. But that advantage has been turned against it, and has contributed to its disrepute. Many people dislike being "arrested." They dislike any meddling with the Primary World, or such small glimpses of it as are familiar to them. They, therefore, stupidly and even maliciously confound Fantasy with Dreaming, in which there is no Art; and with mental disorders, in which there is not even control: with delusion and hallucination. ("On Fairy Stories")

The narration prepares the reader for the "meddling" that their world is going to experience so that they can be "arrested" by the "strangeness" properly. One finds that seeing is

not believing, instead one's perception is influenced by one's beliefs about how things should be. Vernon Dursley finds that there are people walking about in cloaks on the streets (some silly stunt he thinks) whispering about the Potters and their son. The Dursleys would have nothing to do with the Potters so Uncle Vernon ignores the whispers. The reader, however, gets interested. Why are the Potters being talked about on the streets?

On his way home Uncle Vernon bumps into a cloaked fellow and almost knocks him to the ground only to be told that it is a happy day and even "muggles" like him should rejoice for "you-know-who" (neither Vernon, nor the reader knows who, not yet anyway) is gone at last. That's the first mention of Lord Voldemort, the sinister dark wizard in the series. But the narrator does not give the facts straight away. The story is unfolded through the characters talking and discovering things. So the narration does not hinder the action and the remarks of the narrator serve only to explain what the characters experience or feel, or to describe the scenes and settings the characters find themselves in.

Finally, with Uncle Vernon upset and trying to sleep after watching the news report about a shower of shooting stars in Kent, the magical people make an appearance in an ordinary everyday setting outside the Dursley's home. The cat mentioned earlier, reinforcing the myth we are already familiar with, turns into a witch (Professor McGonagall); and by now the readers have seen enough hints to be prepared to accept this unusual scene. This is the abracadabra moment towards which the narration was headed. She awaits the arrival of Albus Dumbledore who confirms the story about the murder of Lily and James Potter by Voldemort; and how he had tried to kill their son Harry as well, but failed and lost his own powers in the process and disappeared.

Thus the magical boy Harry intrudes the non-magical world when he is brought to the scene by Hagrid, on a flying motorbike, and is left at the doorstep of his aunt's house. There are various other instances of intrusion: when Harry speaks to a snake at a muggle zoo and accidentally sets it free by making the glass of its tank disappear (*HPPS*); when a house elf (a magical creature) appears at Privet Drive warning Harry not to return to his school where his life may be in danger (*HPCS*); when Harry blows-up Aunt Marge like a balloon for insulting his mother (*HPPA*); when Dementors (soul sucking demons) attack Harry and his cousin near his house (*HPOP*) and so on.

The narration begins to use the techniques of a portal fantasy when the intruder Harry gets to re-enter the magical space through various portals scattered over Britain. The portal marks the barrier between the magical and the non-magical space, allowing a flow of traffic between the two.

One example of a magical portal is platform 9 $\frac{3}{4}$, right at King's Cross station in London, where the train to Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry can be boarded. Another portal is The Leaky Cauldron, the pub in London behind which the entrance to Diagon Alley (the shopping destination for wizards) stands hidden.

The magical world beyond the portal is usually the unknown space. Harry is famous throughout the magical world for making Voldemort disappear but he does not know that until he comes in contact with magical people. His muggle aunt and uncle did not tell him that he is a wizard and prevented him from coming to such a conclusion himself: "If there was one thing the Dursleys hated even more than his asking questions, it was his talking about anything acting in a way it shouldn't, no matter if it was in a dream or even a cartoon- they seemed to think he might get dangerous ideas" (*HPPS* 24).

This fact also comes in handy as far as the narration is concerned. Harry does not know the wizarding world or the truth about his own past, nor does the reader, who gets access to it when Harry does, and he explores it along with him. This shared exploration allows the reader to identify with Harry. Since the experience is shared the reader is not a mere observer but a co-participant in the narrative events. Yet the narrative would describe the magical spaces, creatures, and customs as seen and understood by Harry, the main focalizer. This is how the narrative of *Harry Potter* mimics the narrative of a portal fantasy.

Thus the reader is full of the wide-eyed wonder Harry feels on beholding the scarlet engine of the Hogwarts Express. He/she is positively tickled when Harry is introduced to chocolate frogs that jump, portraits that behave and move like living people and a school that is actually a castle. The reader's knowledge of the magical world grows along with Harry's knowledge and he acquires the vocabulary Harry learns: "quidditch", "boggart", "Death Eaters", "dementors", "animagus", "horcrux"... The reader's knowledge about the story too is dependent upon what Harry knows. For example, when he finds the truth about his heroic father's treatment of Snape he, along with the reader, realizes that his father had faults and that Snape had been right about badmouthing him: "...he knew exactly how Snape had felt as his father had taunted him, and that judging from what he had just seen, his father had been every bit as arrogant as Snape had always told him" (*HPOP* 573).

Withheld Knowledge and "Narrative Transformation"

The narrative in *Harry Potter* banks on withholding information, scattering clues and making startling revelations. Hence, it is driven by the question "What happens next?" Knowledge is held back both at the level of the author and at the level of characters. The only person who knows what's going on, apart from the author, is the Headmaster Albus Dumbledore. He is a major factor in determining why things are the way they are in the story, apart from Voldemort, the Dark Lord. If Voldemort is the factor that led to the hero's becoming an orphan, Dumbledore is responsible for leaving the hero at the mercy of his hateful relatives and away from the magical world. He is the one who comprehends the real necessity of doing so and explains it to the hero at a later date. The narrative events behind *Harry Potter* depend on a prophecy, and the choices various characters have made or will make with relation to it:

The one with the power to vanquish the Dark Lord approaches... .. and the Dark Lord will mark him as his equal, but he will have power the Dark Lord knows not... .. and either must die at the hand of the other for neither can live while the other survives. (*HPOP* 741)

The Dark Lord, aware of only half of the prophecy, decided to act on it and kill the subject when he was a baby. He fails to do so and loses his body. Even when he regains it, he is adamant upon destroying the hero himself, again, because of the prophecy.

Lisa Hopkins maintains that *Harry Potter* is not about "an appointment with destiny", but about "choices and decisions- the very distinction that Dumbledore tries so hard to explain to Harry, and that ultimately makes Harry's own position not only tolerable but survivable" (63). Harry is made to understand that the prophecy was important because Voldemort believed in it. Had he not chosen to act and mark Harry in the process, or if he had never heard the prophecy, it would have remained unfulfilled. It is also known that the prophecy could have applied to Neville Longbottom as well, but Voldemort chose to attack Harry and thus marked him as his enemy. Harry now understands his choices, and he decides to fight Voldemort anyway, even to

the extent of sacrificing himself to save his friends towards the end. This choice is what would determine the turn the narrative events take eventually.

The prophecy is revealed to the hero by Dumbledore, who had heard it originally, in the fifth book. That is when the question about why Voldemort had wanted to kill Harry, asked in the first book is answered. When the information hitherto withheld is revealed, “narrative transformation” takes place. Kate Behr explains “narrative transformation” as a phenomenon when the story changes with the change in the reader’s perception. The change in perception is caused as “...clues or references planted by Rowling in earlier books are only appreciated in the light of later events...”and “...stories and characters grow in complexity and acquire a history” (113). The plot remains the same, but the narrative presented to the reader changes because new information gives a new perspective to the narrative events. It is a movement from innocence/lack of knowledge to experience/understanding. Behr gives the following examples:

Polyjuice potion, for example, is comical in Book Two when the students use it- Harry and Ron become the hulking bullies Crabb and Goyle, and Hermione accidentally gets a cat face- but an instrument of torture and potential agent of destruction when used by the fake Mad-Eye Moody in Book Four... Bathrooms are often ludicrous but unnerving in Rowling’s magical world, places where children battle trolls, brew potions and prepare to fight evil. Moaning Myrtle, a spotty adolescent ghost who weepily haunts the second floor girl’s bathroom gives new meaning to the phrase “toilet humor,” but her death is the key to the fearful confrontation at the end of that book. (113-14)

By this logic it can be said that Albus Dumbledore becomes a major force responsible for narrative transformation in book five, *Harry Potter and the Order of Phoenix*, when he decides to shed light on Harry’s past:

Dumbledore lowered his hands and surveyed Harry through his half-moon glasses. ‘It is time,’ he said, ‘for me to tell you what I should have told you five years ago, Harry. Please sit down. I am going to tell you everything.’ (HPOP 735)

His explanation of the prophecy sheds light on the Harry-Voldemort enmity. We know now that Dumbledore had distanced himself from Harry because Harry’s and Voldemort’s minds were linked through the curse scar that Voldemort had carved on Harry’s forehead. Because of this Harry had access to Voldemort’s thoughts sometimes and Dumbledore feared that the reverse might also be true, enabling Voldemort to use Harry as a tool to spy on him. Therefore Harry was asked to learn “occlumency” from Snape (mind magic to block his thoughts from outside influence). Dumbledore says that he had not told all this to Harry earlier because he did not want to burden him in his childhood, yet he admits that he had been wrong to do so, since Harry had already faced many dangers, even if he was a child. The mystery as to why Voldemort had failed to kill baby-Harry is also unfolded.

Harry’s mother had asked Voldemort to kill her instead of her son. Voldemort did kill her, but then attempted to kill her son anyway. Because her sacrifice had awakened a magical protection, her son was spared and the curse thrown at him rebounded on the perpetrator. This also explained why Harry had been made to live with his aunt: since she shared his mother’s blood, Harry was safe from Voldemort around her. Thus the main questions about the hero’s past are answered. Yet Harry is not told, and does not know “everything” about himself and Voldemort yet. He does not know the secret of his scar and the secret to Voldemort’s immortality (or simply why Voldemort did not die, but remained as a spirit when the killing curse rebounded on him).

Memory as Narrative Device

Voldemort's past is revealed with the aid of a magical device called a "pensieve", a stone basin in which memories can be stored and reviewed. A character can enter the memory and watch it run its course, much like watching a movie by being inside the movie. In the narration, it serves in place of a flashback. Dumbledore shows Harry memories that belong to him as well as several characters connected to Voldemort, so that Harry may learn of Voldemort's past. Incidentally Dumbledore can also read minds and pluck memories out of people's heads which had enabled him to collect other people's memories regarding Voldemort. The information attained from the memories would enable Harry and Dumbledore to search for Voldemort's "horcruxes", objects in which bits of Voldemort's souls are stored. He cannot be killed until all the soul pieces are destroyed.

Ironically, the seventh part of Voldemort's soul got stored in Harry's head, the night he received the curse scar from him. Dumbledore hides this information from Harry, leaving clues so that Harry may discover it for himself after destroying the other horcruxes.

Thus memories too become narrative devices, which unfold information when viewed in a pensieve. An important moment is when a dying Snape (who is believed to be a traitor) gives his memories to Harry. By viewing them, Harry learns the truth about Dumbledore's death (as discussed earlier), Snape's true loyalties, and the fact that Harry himself is a Horcrux. That is a crucial moment in the last book when Harry realizes that he must die to kill the bit of Voldemort's soul in his head, and thus make Voldemort mortal again:

Harry understood at last that he was not supposed to survive. His job was to walk calmly into Death's welcoming arms. Along the way, he was to dispose of Voldemort's remaining links to life, so that when at last he flung himself across Voldemort's path, and did not raise a wand to defend himself, the end would be clean... neither would live, neither could survive. (*HPDH* 554)

His choice not to raise a wand to defend himself against Voldemort is important in determining the future narrative events. Voldemort asks Harry to give himself up, in exchange for which he would spare the lives of his friends at school. Harry agrees to do so and unknowingly enacts the same magical ritual, the same sacrifice that his mother had made to defend him. His willingness to sacrifice his own life gives the people at Hogwarts protection against Voldemort's magic.

However, here is another case of "narrative misdirection". Harry does not know everything. He does not realize that in using his blood in a ritual to get himself a new body (*Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*), Voldemort had unknowingly done him a favour. So at the time when Voldemort casts the killing curse at Harry, Harry's blood is still alive in Voldemort, thus providing him an anchor in the world of the living. Using that anchor, Harry's spirit travels back to his body, while Voldemort's soul bit in Harry's body perishes. Hence the narrative twist in the tale and the hero lives.

"Inset" Narration

The narrative of *Harry Potter* also utilizes "inset narration", i.e. "events narrated by one character to others out of chronological sequence" (Bowman 157). The narration may be voluntary, as in case of Rubeus Hagrid in *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* (chapter 20) where he tells Ron, Harry and Hermione, though after some prodding, about what he had been doing during his absence from School. He narrates his dealings with the giants and how he had tried to persuade them to support the wizards against Voldemort in the upcoming war.

Bartemius Crouch Jr. however (the follower of Voldemort in *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* who had been impersonating Dumbledore's friend Alastor Moody at Hogwarts so that he could transport Harry to his master) did not want to divulge information willingly, therefore he had to be given a magical potion that forced him to tell the truth. In the thirty fifth chapter of the same book, he narrates his history and Voldemort's plan for Harry that he had executed successfully. This sheds new light on the past narrative events and reveals hidden truths about the plot against the hero so that we understand the mystery behind what had been happening. Inset narration brings forth the parts of the storyline that the ill-informed narrator could not have known otherwise.

Harry's mental link to Voldemort (represented by the scar on his forehead) is another source of such narrative information. Through it, especially when Harry is asleep, or Voldemort is particularly angry and not in control of his emotions, Harry can get snippets of information from the Dark Lord's mind. At first the scar merely functions as a warning if Voldemort is near. Then (in *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*) it sends him a vision about Voldemort attacking Arthur Weasley (his best friend's father) in a snake form, because of which he is able to alert Dumbledore about Arthur's predicament and save his life. However, Voldemort becomes aware of the link and plants a false vision in Harry's mind making him believe that he had captured his godfather Sirius Black. Harry believes the vision and walks into a trap which results in Sirius's death (who in turn had come to rescue Harry).

By the last book, Harry is able to use the link to his own advantage and spy on Voldemort's activities when he wants. The reader gets to see things from Voldemort's point of view, feel his emotions, and view through his eyes when he is out murdering or torturing people:

'Kill me, then!' demanded the old man. 'You will not win, you cannot win! That wand will never, ever be yours-'

And Voldemort's fury broke: a burst of green light filled the prison room and the frail body was lifted from its hard bed and then fell back, lifeless, and Voldemort returned to the window, his wrath barely controllable.... (HPDH 382)

Most importantly, in the last book, when Voldemort is informed in the twenty seventh chapter that Harry was hunting his horcruxes, he is furious and mentally catalogues the various places he had hidden them in the past. At this point Harry, feeling his fury, activates the link and is able to glean the information about one of horcruxes from his mind:

As for the school: he alone knew where in Hogwarts he had stowed the Horcrux, because he alone had plumbed the deepest secrets of that place.... (HPDH 444)

Harry, Ron and Hermione promptly decide to find the horcrux at Hogwarts, before Voldemort could reach there. This brings the final confrontation between Harry and Voldemort to Hogwarts. Thus, the scar, apart from opening a window to reveal scenes to which access would not have been possible otherwise; also provides information that directs the action of the hero, and thus directs the narrative events as well.

Conclusion: The Cloistered Space

The magical world of the *Harry Potter* narrative exists in a cramped space. (Since the building for the "Ministry of Magic" itself is forced to be constructed underground, because there is little room in London, there can be little hope for the rest of the Wizarding world). The narrative does not flow to new realms. Instead, it is taken repeatedly to a limited number of places, like the Hogwarts School or the Diagon Alley.

New/more space emerges when an old place is revisited and its previously unseen aspects are brought to light. For example, at Hogwarts, Harry discovers the “Chamber of Secrets”, the site of action in book two, where he kills the giant serpent housed in it that had been terrorizing his school. He also finds the “Room of Requirement” (that only appears when someone really needs it) on the seventh floor corridor of the school and uses it to train his fellow students in defense. He explores the “Forbidden Forest” that borders the school, the village (Hogsmeade) outside the school gates and even gets to visit the city of the “Merpeople” that live in the Hogwarts Lake. The point is that the narrative returns to Hogwarts in every *Harry Potter* book (since it *is* a school story). Harry buys his school supplies from Diagon Alley, which on account of being hidden in London, is a restricted space again and is entered through a pub. There he accidentally discovers Knockturn Alley, the hub for Dark Arts and shady business, again following the pattern of new spaces emerging from revisiting previously explored area. Apart from these places there are few other places the narrative constructs and visits, like the home of the Weasleys, the Malfoys and Sirius Black, the site of the Quidditch World Cup, the Graveyard where Voldemort meets Harry, et cetera. These are spaces bound within wards, and exist in pockets as characters just pop magically into them instead of undertaking a journey through roads or landscapes. Even the journey by train to Hogwarts is unremarkable and only the train platform and the school come into sharp focus.

The restrictedness of the magical world of *Harry Potter* comes primarily from its being a hidden world. The revisitation of the same spaces is also why the narrative resorts to “misdirection” and why narrative “transformations” occur. The transformation happens when the same space is scrutinized after receiving new knowledge about it (like discovering spaces hidden within it); thus, it is seen with new eyes. The misdirection is required because if all information about a space is given at once, an intriguing plot cannot be constructed. Therefore the narrative of *Harry Potter* works more like a jigsaw puzzle. The puzzle becomes clearer when more clues (new knowledge, new spaces and new facts) are revealed and added to the overall picture.

Abbreviations:

<i>Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone</i>	HPPS
<i>Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets</i>	HPCS
<i>Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban</i>	HPPA
<i>Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire</i>	HPGOF
<i>Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix</i>	HPOP
<i>Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince</i>	HPHBP
<i>Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows</i>	HPDH

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