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Magic in the Classroom: The School Story and the Implications of Discipline in Harry Potter

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Abstract

Set against the history of the school story in children's literature, the *Harry Potter* series reinvigorates the genre. Specifically, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* addresses the significance of socializing disciplines within children's literature while also demonstrating the effects that education has on individuality and maturation through the roles of the characters throughout the series. Perhaps much of what lends Rowling's work its magical ability as compared to the traditional school story is its free use of traditionalism, as seen in fairy tales, in its narrative style.

Rowling's writing gestures towards the need for imagination in order to decode a text. Rowling's whimsical and rhythmic writing style often deploys participial phrases. These phrases, seen over the course of multiple sentences, emphasize the need to use careful reading in order to more easily grasp the narrative. Many of the sentences featured throughout the series utilize these participial phrases in order to describe a series of concurrent actions. In fact, the use of these participial phrases is particularly evident in descriptions that are sandwiched between encounters and dialogue between Harry and other students or professors.

To contextualize *Harry Potter* in the tradition of children's Literature and the school story, this thesis examines *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* alongside *Tom Brown's School Days*, written by Thomas Hughes. Hughes focuses on the challenges of negotiating the school social structure and the ethical expectations expected of a headmaster through the use of the fictional characters in his novel. Rowling imitates and explores this practice alongside the tropes of education, discipline, agency, and imagination, aligning her characters with the perceived roles that students play in her critical reception of the school story. Overall, J.K. Rowling's writing approach in *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* renders it as a revival of the school genre framed for a modern audience.

MONTCLAIR STATE UNIVERSITY

Magic in the Classroom: The School Story and the Implications of Discipline in *Harry Potter*

by

Megan Thompson

A Master's Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of

Montclair State University

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

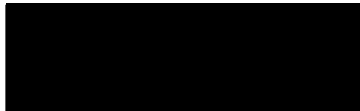
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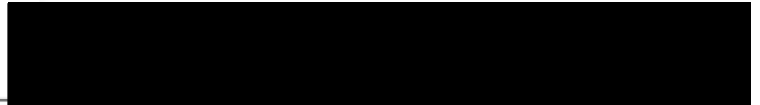
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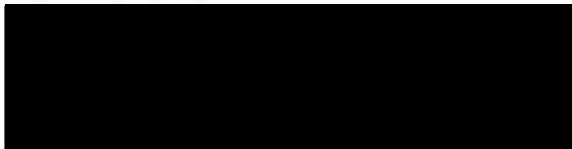
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MAGIC IN THE CLASSROOM: THE SCHOOL STORY AND THE
IMPLICATIONS OF DISCIPLINE IN *HARRY POTTER*

A THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the degree of Master of Arts

by

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Montclair State University
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Introduction

According to Maria Nikolajeva, “children’s literature has from the very beginning been related to pedagogics” (3). There are three ways that scholars have looked at this body of literature throughout history: in relation to pedagogics, in relation to society and in relation to literature. These three differing lenses set expectations for the story in relation to its scholarly role. For example, it is in the pedagogic approach that scholars will seek out “subject matter, ideology, and didactic and educational values;” all characteristics that have stood the test of time remaining a chief focus within children’s literature for critics (4). Utilizing this understanding of pedagogics alongside the purpose of children’s literature brings us to the focus of the school story.

The school story is defined as a subsection of children’s literature that centers around pre-adolescent and adolescent school life. One of the most significant forms of children’s writing since the nineteenth century, the school story conveys and teaches the importance of agency, education and discipline. Examining many of the stories that we all knew and loved as adolescents, such as *Alice in Wonderland*, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* and *The Chronicles of Narnia*, we see how they all constitute at least one shared value in the relation of pedagogics to children’s literature. In order to understand the importance of the school story genre and its evolution, the basic blueprint of the school story must be broken down. There are seven major components according to Houghton:

1. The introduction of a school for boys and girls (modeled on British public schools)
2. The introduction of a new student (the hero of the story)
3. The prevention of a mentor from meeting the new student (one who can explain school tradition)
4. The breaking of important rules by the new student

5. The entrance into popularity for the new student as a result of breaking said rules
6. The use of sports as a crucial point within the story
7. The occurrence of a crisis causing the student to become ill.

Keeping this linear structure in mind, there are quite a few examples that follow it flawlessly.

A few that will be discussed in this thesis will include both Harry and Tom's initial introduction as students at their new school, rivalries between the protagonists and their bullies as well as the critical event that will occur towards the end of the novel securing Harry and Tom's place as a hero.

Tom Brown's School Days, or *TBSD* (Hughes, 1857), provides a rich background for what is perhaps the most successful school story series in the twentieth century: the *Harry Potter* books. Enduringly popular with younger children as well as many adults, the *Harry Potter* series reflects many of the traits derived from earlier children's literature. J.K. Rowling combines the joys of imagination and discovering individuality alongside the significant role that education plays in a child's life. Comparing *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* (*TSS*) to earlier children's literature, such as *TBSD*, it is evident that Rowling's series falls in line with the genre of the school story through the use of both characters and themes.

Within *TSS*, there are many moments that reflect the traits derivative of the school story genre. For example, much like the traditional English school story, the premise behind Rowling's novel follows a similar structure, which narrates a new student challenged by trials and tribulations. Harry Potter, a new student at Hogwarts with no knowledge of the wizarding world and raised by a family of nasty muggles (a person without magical powers), serves as this focus. By the end of *TSS*, Harry overcomes his challenges and saves the school from an untimely disaster and securing his place as the hero of the novel. Reviewing this timeline, it becomes

obvious that Rowling bases *TSS* on the traits of the traditional English school story. However, the novel gives the traditional English school story a new variation on pedagogy and child development.

Considering that much of children's literature is centered around the school genre, it historically marginalizes children and adolescents. Beverly Lyon Clark describes the school story as being "about a peculiarly marginal institution, a boundary institution between family and world, between private and public spheres. Schooling is, furthermore, addressed to marginal individuals, to those between childhood and adulthood, and adults always marginalize children and adolescents" (7). Clark here discusses the idea that a story about school is simply school itself. By setting up a piece of literature that is meant for children in this way only presses adult norms on the child. Thus, causing marginalization of children and their natural ability to imagine. It can be argued that Rowling's approach towards the school story challenges these very ideas asserted by Clark. Pushing against the marginalization of adolescents, Rowling sets up *TSS* to be a school story that does center around school as the main takeaway.

Discipline in *TSS* does not serve the same purpose that it does in *TBSD*. Shira Wolosky describes the representation of discipline in the school story as a "variety of educational experiences [explaining] the possibilities through which discipline emerges not only as coercive, but also as formative in ways that are maturing, strengthening, and rewarding" (285). This idea of Wolosky's is seen challenged repetitively throughout *TSS* as it demonstrates a world where discipline serves as a negative characteristic. Given the role of collaborators within the story, the protagonists within *TSS* and *TBSD* do not seem to struggle for imaginary freedom and individuality, but it is centered around the story's use of discipline. While Tom is afforded his

freedom based on his obedience, Harry is provided with his based on his rebellion. This use of discipline is not the only example of how TSS has evolved the school story, however.

Rowling's writing gestures towards the desire to explore, which suggests a union between the enchanted and the ordinary within the story. For example, Rowling's whimsical and rhythmic writing style often singles out participial phrases, or phrases that appear as verbs, but function as adjectives, emphasizing an excessive need to use close reading in order to more easily grasp the narrative. Edward Duffy explains Rowling's writing style and use of participial phrases as "not directly drawing kids to her books, but it does provide something they will be picking up along the way, something that, for all the obliquity of its address, will be casting its spell very deeply into the propitious soil of their young minds, down where you find the 'subterranean and invisible tunnels and channels of life'" (186). Like Duffy explains, many of the sentences featured throughout the series utilize participial phrases in order to provide readers the opportunity to explore grow their appreciation for reading, The use of these participial phrases is particularly evident in descriptions that are sandwiched between encounters and dialogue between Harry and other students or professors. In relation to pedagogics, the *Harry Potter* series allows for a child's advancement in education without the dull cadence of traditional teaching. Thus, this study examines the use of participial phrases within the *TSS* in order to further advance the argument regarding Rowling's revival of the genre.

To contextualize *TSS* in the tradition of children's literature and the school story, section one will utilize *TBSD* as a steppingstone towards an understanding of discipline and its importance within children's literature. It is important to note why the setting of a school or an educational environment was canonical to the trend of children's literature between the nineteenth and the twenty-first centuries. This thesis will explore the many societal rules and

expectations set for discipline intended for children's literature. It will examine the primary purpose behind the genre and ask the question as to why it has consistencies across time.

In the second section of this study, the blueprint of the school story will be applied to *TSS*. It is here that the genre will be broken down into components attaching each to a major element within the first novel of the *Harry Potter* series. By doing so, there will be a better understanding as to how exactly *TSS* fits into the model of the school story. In addition to the in-depth comparison between the blueprint of the school story and *TSS*, the use of *TBSD* will be examined in order to push an understanding of Rowling's revival of the traditional use of the genre. Rowling's imitation and exploration of participial phrases alongside the tropes of education, discipline and agency will be better benefit this study.

Finally, the third section of this thesis will tie together the understanding of pedagogics and Rowling's use of participial phrases. Each of these aid in the understanding of how Rowling successfully replicates traditionalism as seen in fairy tales. Through the use of imagination and fantasy, *TSS* creates a new understanding of what can be considered a school story as well as how it is viewed as enticing to readers of all ages. While it does include elements of the make-believe, *TSS* also includes many of the more traditional elements that come along with the school story. This includes a storyline perfectly aligned with much earlier works of fiction within the genre.

Discipline as a foundation in the Evolution of the School Story

Jack Zipes argues that much of the literature intended purely for children published between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries functioned mainly to instruct children on morals, discipline, education and religion. He highlights the intentions of the traditional school story by stating, "The impetus behind book publishing for children at this time was not entirely

making profits. Rather, certain publishers considered it their civic duty to print books for children that would improve their morals, instruct them about given subjects, and delight them so that their spirits would be uplifted” (46). Employing a blueprint and a narrative appealing to the average child, school stories traditionally represent societal expectations for adolescents as they are pushed into a child’s subconscious through storytelling. As children’s literature continues down a linear trajectory in regard to traditional values, stories such as *Harry Potter and The Sorcerer’s Stone* revive the genre. However, before *TSS* can be examined as a piece of literature within the school story genre, earlier stories must first be looked at and *Tom Brown’s School Days* serves as one example.

Written by Thomas Hughes and published in 1857, *TBSD* takes place at a Rugby School for boys in the 1830s. The protagonist, Tom Brown, is followed through his days at the school as he evolves from the bullied newcomer into the unruly hero of the story. This evolution itself serves as a canonical model that is seen throughout much of children’s literature between the nineteenth and twenty-first centuries, including *TSS*. Hughes’ popular novel begins with the young Tom Brown eager to begin his studies at his new public school. Despite the trials and tribulations that he faces as a newcomer, Tom becomes, according to Lana A. Whited, “the upholder of school values, the protector of the younger boys, and a leader” (143). As the novel progresses, the statements made about Tom by Whited become more obvious as key events, between him and the other students, play out. Moreover, Tom’s enthusiasm of attending school and his new role within the school causes the traditional school story to fall into the trope of discipline.

Taking a closer look at part one of *TBSD*, there is a strong emphasis on maintain good behavior as Tom is prepared to enter as a new student into Rugby School. Readers join the

young protagonist as he resides at a Roadside Inn with his father for the night while awaiting the coach who will transport Tom to his new school. During this long journey, Tom's father takes this opportunity to speak some final words of wisdom to his young son before he begins this next journey of his life. He approaches Tom and states, "If schools are what they were in my time, you'll see a great many cruel blackguard things done, and hear a deal of foul, bad talk. But never fear. You tell the truth, keep a brave and kind heart, and never listen to or say anything you wouldn't have your mother and sister hear, and you'll never feel ashamed to come home, or we to see you" (Hughes 70). Examining this quote from chapter four of *TBSD*, titled "The Stage-Coach," it is apparent that Tom's father is making clear that being unruly can bring shame onto both himself and his family. With this in mind, *TBSD* pushes the message that any child reading this would interpret this idea and apply it to their own lives, creating fear of misbehaving in the company of adults.

Once at the school, Tom encounters other various forms of discipline, mostly from his new peers. While it is not traditional parental discipline, peer discipline, in this case, is crucial. Looking at chapter five, "Rugby and Football," this is the first time that readers see Tom interacting with other students at the Rugby School. Here, it becomes obvious that Tom is unaware of the traditions and expectations of the school. This sets up his new peers with the responsibility to educate him on some of the most important activities that they partake in. This becomes a form of discipline for the young protagonist as he must follow the directions given to him by his peers in order to smoothly transition into his role as a student. For example, after Tom is conducted up to his bedroom by East, he learns of the tradition of school singing: "What's singing?" said Tom, taking his head out of his basin, where he had been plunging it in cold water. 'Well, you are jolly green,' answered his friend, from a neighbouring basin. 'Why,

the last six Saturdays of every half we sing of course; and this is the first of them. No first lesson to do, you know, and lie in bed to-morrow morning” (Hughes 118). While singing is only one example seen throughout *TBSD* in regard to peer-to-peer education, it is an important introduction to ways that discipline is viewed throughout the novel.

According to Wolosky, discipline serves as a tool that is useful for both the characters in the story and the children reading it (286). *TBSD* makes discipline a main theme within the narrative while “selfhood emerges not as independent self-realization but is directed through regimes of power exercised on multiple levels and through a manifold of social arrangements” (286). This power exercised on multiple levels that Wolosky is talking about is clearly seen through the hierarchy displayed within Hughes’ novel. Selfhood takes on this role as it projects through the socialization had between Tom and the other students at the Rugby school. While Tom’s new peers are disciplining him of the actions expected of him, this concept is perpetuated not just through the experienced group of students, but through multiple layers of power leading up to the hierarchy of school officials and those truly in power at the private school.

By using the students as a mediator for the desired discipline needed in these adolescent characters, *TBSD* creates an attraction around discipline within both the novel and within the traditional school story. In the wake of this novel, the traditional English school story becomes a tool promoting discipline in children at the time of their publications. For children, this means that outside of the classroom they are still surrounded by societal expectations and the promotion of discipline while immersing themselves into a world that is not their own.

However, as literature evolves, discipline is approached in an untraditional way. Plunging readers into a world full of magic and mystery, *TSS*, among other stories such as *Dead Poets Society*, abandons many of the traditional approaches taken to encourage a positive

outlook on discipline. But that does not mean that discipline does not play a part in modern children's literature anymore. For example, much like Tom, who receives discipline from his father early on in *TBSD*, Harry receives stern discipline from his Uncle Vernon and Aunt Petunia in response to his magic abilities, or what they consider disorderly conduct.

Looking at chapter two of *TSS*, titled "The Vanishing Glass," the readers are introduced to Harry, a small boy of the age of ten living with his cruel aunt and uncle and spoiled cousin Dudley. During Dudley's birthday, the Dursleys make it a point to ensure that everything perfect. For Harry, this means being on his best behavior. Unlike Tom in *TBSD*, discipline in this young protagonist's case is not in the attempt to improve his life or ensure that he stays out of trouble. In fact, discipline in the early chapters of *TSS* does quite the opposite. For example, on the morning of Dudley's birthday, Aunt Petunia aggressively wakes Harry up in a hurry so that he can fulfill his duty of preparing a special birthday breakfast for his entitled cousin. Moreover, after having no option other than to take Harry with them to their zoo escapade for birthday celebrations, Uncle Vernon makes a very stern statement towards him: "I'm warning you...I'm warning you now, boy — any funny business, anything at all — and you'll be in that cupboard from now until Christmas" (Rowling 24). This moment portrays the concept of discipline in *TSS* as a negative concept. But discipline does not stop once Harry leaves 4 Privet Drive for Hogwarts.

At the mysterious school known for advancing the talents of young witches and wizards, Harry faces many disciplinary obstacles as he learns the ropes of being a student there. Unlike Tom, who learns what is expected of him and performs these disciplinary actions with pride, Harry attempts to disregard the set of rules put in front of him. Yet, he always finds himself being sent to Albus Dumbledore's office for reprimanding. However, Harry unexpectedly never

gets negative consequences from the headmaster. Instead, Dumbledore decides to treat Harry's disobedience as an opportunity to teach him about the more delicate side of life. In the end, he always leaves with more wisdom than he entered with and almost always no punishments. This fact showcases another side of discipline is *TSS*- a looser version of it. *Wolosky*, in her study, touches upon this form of discipline seen in the series: "The Harry Potter series itself critically addresses disciplinary structures. In doing so, it displays their coercive power and at the same time explores not only resistance to them, but also discipline as a resource that can strengthen and not just dominate agent selfhood" (286). It is obvious that there is a clear resistance to discipline in *TSS*. However, like *Wolosky* points out, the strength that this resistance, through Dumbledore's philosophical lessons, provides the protagonist with becomes more evident as the novel progresses.

While *TSS* does not present the traditional use of discipline represented by school stories such as the *TBSD*, each of these novels clearly have the same outcome: discipline is a hierarchy attempting to control the adolescent characters of the novel. There are many traits of this genre that still live on in *TSS* including the general blueprint used by authors. This blueprint allows for a general understanding of the events that must occur in order for a novel to fall into the school story genre. Tracing back to the structure used in *TBSD*, *TSS* explores the same structure. It is continuously used throughout the series written. But in order to understand this blueprint and how exactly *TSS* fits into the model of the school story, it must first be studied.

Breaking Down the English School Story

In her article, Patti L. Houghton argues the similarities seen between the popular modern children's series and older titles in children's literature stating,

Harry's biggest concern is the evil wizard Voldemort, otherwise known as 'He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named,' but Harry must also worry about his classes, his teachers, his team practices, and the rivalry between his house, Gryffindor, and its arch-rival, Slytherin. Substitute rugby for Quidditch and Greek and Latin for Defense Against the Dark Arts and Transfiguration, and Hogwarts becomes a school at which Tom Brown would feel at home (1).

Taking all of these aspects mentioned above into consideration, it is clear that Houghton's perspective is on to something important. *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* and *Tom Brown's School Days* have many characteristics in common and it is no coincidence that the two novels share a similar plotline. Houghton's discussion of Harry Potter as a character in relation to the school story provides a better understanding as to how exactly *TSS* fits into the model of the school story. It reintroduces a tradition that has served as a backbone to the creation and advancement of children's literature.

Utilizing the breakdown of the blueprint mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, there are seven key components to what makes up a school story. First, there must be the introduction of a school for boys and girls, which is somewhat modelled off of the British public-school system. In *TBSD*, we see this as the Rugby School that Tom later attends in the beginning of chapter five. It is important to understand what approach the author takes in order to introduce the institution to their protagonist. Taking a look at both *TSS* and *TBSD*, each school introduction takes place somewhere within the first five chapters of the two novels. For example, chapter four of *TBSD* takes place upon the stagecoach that is transporting Tom to the Rugby school. During this journey, he learns much about the culture of his new school and what he could possibly expect out of being a student there. "It pays uncommon cert'nly. Werry free with their cash is the

young gen'l'm'n. But, Lor' bless you, we gets into such rows all 'long the road, what wi' their pea-shooters, and long whips, and hollering, and upsetting every one as comes by, I'd a sight sooner carry one or two on 'em, sir, as I may be a-carryin' of you now, than a coach-load” (80). Tom, who had very little knowledge of this new school that he is about to attend, is introduced to the student atmosphere and what to expect from his peers.

Readers see the same concept being exercised in chapter six of *TSS*, “The Journey from Platform Nine and Three-quarters.” Arriving at King’s Cross Station, Harry finds himself lost among a crowd of bustling travelers unable to find Platform Nine and Three-quarters. However, it is not until Harry is aboard the Hogwarts express that he truly begins to learn about Hogwarts. Here he is introduced to Hermione Granger and Ron Weasley as they join him in his train car. After realizing that they are in the presence of Harry Potter, the boy who lived, they begin to explain customs and quirks surrounding the wizarding world. Ron, specifically, takes it upon himself to explain the sport of Quidditch to Harry: “And he was off, explaining all about the four balls and the positions of the seven players, describing famous games he’d been to with his brothers and the broomstick he’d like to get if he had the money” (108). Much like the scene in *TBSD* where Tom begins to learn about the customs of the Rugby School and of the life that private students live, Harry quickly realizes that he has a lot to catch up on in order to fit in at Hogwarts. Tying into the introduction of the new school, this moment aboard the Hogwarts express does more for the protagonist in terms of understanding his new life.

With the introduction of the school comes the introduction of the student; the second step in the blueprint of the English school story. For *TBSD*, we see this in chapter five during Tom’s very first day at Rugby school among the other students. However, in *TSS*, this introduction of Harry is initially seen in the same chapters that he is introduced to the school—chapters five and

six. It is in chapter seven, “The Sorting Hat,” where Harry’s introduction as a new student comes into full motion. According to Houghton, there are three sub-sections that fall under the second component of the English school story blueprint: the new student is bullied for being an outsider, the new student comes from an unhappy home or is an orphan and the new student is a scholarship kid either having attended a poor village school or a wealthy preparatory academy.

In *TBSD*, this trio of characteristics are met through Tom’s privilege. As the son of a squire, he is considered the “young master” placing him as an outsider among the other boys his age. Tom has had a home life that is filled with rules and expectations adding pressure act more mature for his age. Tom also fulfils this characteristic as he is sent off to the rugby school as soon as he is of age marking him as privileged. While these characteristics are not directly correlated to his image as the “new student,” they resemble the trio of traits Houghton is describing as a part of the protagonist in the traditional English school story.

In *TSS*, this trio of characteristics is much more prominent to Harry’s experience at Hogwarts. Largely unaware magic and the new world surrounding him, Harry walks into Hogwarts disadvantaged. Houghton describes Harry as “completely unacquainted with Hogwarts’s customs, such as shopping for his wand and schoolbooks in Diagon Alley or catching the Hogwarts Express at invisible platform nine and three-quarters” (1). However, Harry’s disadvantages do not stop in Diagon Alley as mentioned above. Arriving at Hogwarts, Harry finds himself struggling with his studies as many of the subjects are foreign to him.

Bullying is also incorporated into Harry’s disadvantages at Hogwarts. A characteristic of component six, which incorporates the struggle of rivals within sports. For example, in chapter nine, titled “The Midnight Duel,” Draco Malfoy makes it a point to taunt Harry for his upbringing and lack of knowledge when it comes to the wizarding world. He snidely remarks,

“I’d take you on anytime on my own. Tonight, if you want. Wizard’s duel. Wands only – no contact. What’s the matter? Never heard of a wizard’s duel I suppose?” (153). This scene directly plays into the athletic rivalry that Houghton is talking about. Malfoy and Harry, who are already rivals to begin, are fueled by the competitive nature of quidditch causing tensions to rise.

Component five comes into play early as both Tom and Harry arrive at their new institution with a sense of popularity already. It doesn’t take breaking the rules for this to ignite in the narrative. This popularity may benefit from the fact that Harry is a piece of living history in the wizarding world while Tom has the confidence and attitude to thrive among his new peers. Houghton states that this is normal for many of the novels that are a part of the school story genre as “in most cases he or she is popular, possessing superior talent, usually athletic, and an open, honorable nature that earns the immediate admiration of nearly everyone at the school and the devoted loyalty of one best friend.” (1). Harry and Tom emulate all of these traits as described by Houghton. But they are further emulated by their Tom and Harry’s interactions with their peers as *TBSD* and *TSS* advance. For example, Harry is admired by nearly everyone at Hogwarts because of his role in the fall of Voldemort. He has two loyal companions and it is revealed that he is remarkably talented in Quidditch for a boy who has never heard of the sport. A similar pattern occurs for Tom in lieu of any magical ability. He is confident and eager to join in the ranks of students at his new school, and he is very likeable from the start. His quick bond and friendship with East only enhance this; not to mention his skills in Rugby.

Component three focuses in on the prevention of a mentor’s aid to the protagonist while component four reveals the protagonist’s habit for breaking rules. Taking a look at *TBSD*, component three does not come to fruition within the narrative. In chapter five, after arriving at the Rugby school, Tom is immediately introduced to one of his peers by the name of East. He

becomes a mentor to Tom teaching him the customs of the school. However, this does not protect Tom from breaking the rules and getting in trouble. In fact, East seems to be the student always partaking in mischievous activities alongside Tom for the majority of their time at the school. In Part One, Chapter Nine, “A Chapter of Accidents,” follows Tom as he and East take part in a rebellion against Flashman, the school bully. Physical fights always go against the rules of a school and here it is evident that those rules are being broken.

The fourth component is comprised of four traits according to Houghton:

1. The new student is viewed as suspicious or disliked by a teacher.
2. The new student causes a chain of misunderstanding.
3. The mistrust between the teacher and the new student becomes a problem when the student must maintain a secret in the attempt to save the school from danger.
4. The students usually find themselves getting off on the wrong foot at some point during their time at the institution.

Beginning with the first trait mentioned above, it is Professor Severus Snape, the potions instructor, who views Harry as suspicious and fosters a dislike for him. In chapter eight, titled “The Potions Master,” readers see this relationship play out for the first time during a potions class. It is during this introductory lesson that Snape decides to single Harry out highlighting his lack of knowledge in potions. Attacking him with impossible questions, he makes it a point to humiliate Harry in order to prove that he is not as great as the stories depict him as: “‘Thought you wouldn’t open a book before coming, eh, Potter?’ Harry forced himself to keep looking straight into those cold eyes. He had looked through his books at the Dursleys, but did Snape expect him to remember everything in *One Thousand Magical Herbs and Fungi*?’” (138). These

questions that Snape forces Harry to endure during his potion's classes are only the beginning of Snape's distaste for Harry. In fact, the book-long suspicion that Snape is going to do something negative guides the readers to a string of events ending with Harry learning about the sorcerer's stone.

It is not until Harry, Hermione and Ron break into the room on the third floor that the third trait is successfully exemplified. Upon entering the room, the trio of friends realize what exactly they are up against: "Seeing the open door somehow seemed to impress upon all three of them what was facing them" (275). Understanding that what they are about to do is against school rules, the trio prepare to enter the forbidden room. They believe that Snape is going after the Stone and that is it up to them to stop him. Combining the student/teacher alongside the breaking of school rules lead readers to the seventh component within the outline of the English school story.

The last two traits seen in component four push TSS into the seventh element of the blueprint of the traditional school story. Focusing on the introduction of the crisis moment, readers are introduced to the most crucial period for Harry – finding himself face-to-face with Voldemort. If it weren't for his mistrust in Snape, Harry would not have found himself in this life or death situation. Houghton describes this step in the English school story as the goal for the overall novel as it shows "the development of a sense of moral responsibility for the self and others" (1). TSS, while not demonstrating selflessness in the way that Houghton is describing above, does still demonstrate Harry's willing sacrificing to stop danger from entering Hogwarts. This moment towards the end of the novel results in Harry falling ill – the eighth component of the English school story blueprint. By facing extreme circumstances, Harry comes out of the situation revealing his true worth.

Comparing *TBSD* to Houghton's observations, it is drastically different from the type of savior moment that is seen in *TSS*. In the latter half of the book, between chapter six and seven in part two, the new student, George, falls ill. As Tom is assigned to be George's mentor, he finds it important to assist with his recovery. This selflessness seen in the protagonist allows room for his spiritual growth. For Tom, this also means putting his religion and his studies above wreaking havoc on his bullies and the school. *TBSD* follows the narrative that, in the end, discipline and authority will win. It will prove to be the most important thing to have in order to succeed and lead a happy life. But *TSS* shows a different side to discipline. By continuously using a protagonist who defies the authority figures in place, Harry proves that discipline can drag someone down. If it weren't for his mischievous behavior, Hogwarts and the wizarding world would have fallen. Yet, benevolent discipline is still alluded to as it is another reason, in the end, for Harry's selfless attitude.

While both *TBSD* and *TSS* contrast when it comes to their conclusions, each share one goal message: sacrifices are important to build one's character. The measures can be extreme in some examples of English school stories, but in the end, readers understand the bigger picture. With a better understanding of what goes into the English school story and how each component provides support to the narrative, it is important to take a look at the use of language in these novels. It is easy for an author to use the blueprint, but words make a difference in the message given to the readers. They can make the defiance of discipline more attractive bringing to life the modern English school story.

Revitalization Through Participial Phrases and Fluidity

Edwards Duffy argues that Rowling's use of participial phrases promises an authentic liveliness at the forefront of a dull reality. This idea can be seen in the last paragraph of the

opening chapter of *TSS*. Rowling uses participial phrases to foreshadow Harry's future as she narrates: "One small hand closed on the letter beside him and he slept on, not knowing he was special, not knowing he was famous, not knowing he would be woken in a few hours' time by Mrs. Dursley's scream as she opened door to put out the milk bottles, not that he would spend the next few weeks being prodded and pinched by his cousin Dudley..." (17). The participial phrases in this paragraph are quite noticeable as they each follow the other consecutively. Each begins with the phrase "not knowing" "Knowing," in this segment, does exactly as Duffy says predicting Harry's new, dull reality to the readers. However, this same participial phrase also gives promise of a liveliness that he will one day experience. In a way, this demanding writing style that is utilized presents the story of the "boy who lived" stirring excitement in the reader to watch the world of magic unfold in front of their eyes.

Unlike *TBSD*, which relies on participial phrases in order to create clear and concise direct language, the first installation of the *Harry Potter* series relies on these phrases in order to dance around the plot and actions of the novel. This pattern of "dancing around the subject" seems to be quite common in English fairy tales according to Duffy. He states that, "Against the derivative or traditional count of this indictment, one might counter with Joan Acocello's observation that the radical strength of the Potter books is their 'utter traditionalism,' the way they subsume into their own imagined world the preoccupations and techniques of fairy tales, a great tradition of the English novel" (171). Connecting this observation of Duffy's to *TSS*, we see the use of this traditionalism immediately within chapter four.

Rowling, in this chapter, uses her writing style to emphasize the need for careful reading in order to decode the narrative. This decision leaves it up to the readers to use observation and radical techniques to understand the complicated world of *Harry Potter*. Taking a look at

Chapter four, titled “The Keeper of the Keys,” readers begin to see this emphasis on traditionalism as Rowling uses participial phrases to lightly circle around the key plot. For example, after breaking his way into the hut where the Dursleys and Harry were hiding, Rowling describes Hagrid’s other-worldly stature: “The giant squeezed his way into the hut, stooping so that his head just brushed the ceiling” (46). The use of “squeezed,” does not do justice to how large Hagrid actually is. “Stooping” aids with this understanding in the readers slightly, but the participial phrase still pushes the readers to utilize their literary skills in order to decode Hagrid’s size.

Chapter four is also heavy with descriptors serving as the first introduction of magic for both the readers and for Harry. It relies on participial phrases to describe Hagrid’s actions leaving a little up to the imagination. Hagrid’s basic actions are understood, but intricate details, which usually follow these actions, are left missing. This is seen played out on page 56 with the use of a “battered pink umbrella.” After getting irritated with Mr. Dursley, Hagrid pulls the item out of his coat and threatens Harry’s uncle with it. Rowling describes this telling moment through both dragged out narration and dialogue reading as, “In danger of being speared on the end of an umbrella by a bearded giant, Uncle Vernon’s courage failed again...’That’s better,’ said Hagrid, breathing heavily and sitting back down on the sofa...” Creating a lack of awareness in the readers about the umbrella’s use, Rowling adds in the participial phrase, “breathing,” to present the anger in Hagrid hinting towards darker motives. This, again, pushes the readers to practice more sophisticated reading skills in order to understand the true purpose of this object. Thus, dancing around the fact that the umbrella holds magical abilities.

However, it is not just in chapter four that this traditionalism is being utilized. In chapter one, the readers are presented with the exchange of an infant Harry at 4 Privet drive. There is a

slew of participial phrases scattered throughout the narrative to discreetly describe what is happening. Albus Dumbledore's action of rummaging through his robes is narrated as: "He was busy rummaging in his cloak, looking for something" (15). Pushing towards the plot of the novel, this specific moment in *TSS* suggests unification between the enchanted and the ordinary within the story. "Something" serves as the indicator in this sentence. While it does specify what Dumbledore is reaching for, it points towards the magical implications in the story. "Looking," however, brings our readers back to the ordinary world of 4 Privet Drive. Neither of these phrases give much context to the readers.

Fluidity plays a big role in the written language of *TSS*. Duffy argues that this fluidity supports the exciting plot of the story enticing vivid imagery within readers:

In allowing for more movement, the writing game makes the fluidity and force of that movement a major criterion...Invocation of the grammarian's quaint terms of participial phrase (and ablative absolute) will sound musty, but however you name them, these verbal constructions pop up everywhere in a style that flies and turns and loops with an agile mastery that Muggles of all ages never suspected could be found anywhere else than on a skateboard, a video screen, or a squash court (175).

This use of fluidity becomes explicit in the writing. It showcases the importance and power that reading, and writing can have in the larger scheme of things. In fact, many of the vividly descriptive scenes seen throughout *TSS* point towards the heavy responsibility that these practices hold. One chapter where this fluidity is seen is in chapter eleven, "Quidditch." Utilizing the voice of the sportscaster, Lee Jordan, Rowling successfully allows her words to flow together seamlessly in order to create excitement around her writing: "And she's really belting along up there, a neat pass to Alicia Spinnet, a good friend of Oliver Wood's, last year

only a reserve – back to Johnson and – no, the Slytherins have taken the Quaffle, Slytherin Captain Marcus Flint gains the Quaffle and off he goes...” (186). With the use of M-dashes, Rowling jumps from action to action illustrating the intensity and the exhilaration surrounding the quidditch match. This showcases how impactful writing can be to the growth of skilled reading in children.

Through this push for careful and skilled reading in Rowling’s series, the influence for imagination and fantasy are approached. Quirky names, make-believe creatures, invisibility cloaks and the use of cryptic messages all aid in imagination. Duffy explains this phenomenon by use of the Mirror of Erised:

The fantasy of this mirror-a fantasy that is both reflected upon and hedged with cautionary comment-marks these books' flights of invention and turns of magic as written not in the spirit of wildly outlandish fantasy but in acknowledgement of the limits and constraints of such inevitabilities or near inevitabilities as gravity, death, Muggles, and Draco Malfoys (181).

Looking more closely at this moment in terms of Duffy’s argument, readers watch a young Harry Potter discover the delights of the Mirror of Erised reflecting back at him. Rowling narrates this moment weaving reality and fantasy into one: “And there were his mother and father smiling at him again, and one of his grandfathers nodding happily. Harry sank down to sit on the floor in front of the mirror. There was nothing to stop him from staying here all night with his family” (212). The imaginary images that Harry is viewing in the mirror influence his thoughts and actions. It serves as a moment that teaches the readers of the restricting limits that comes with reality.

TSS introduces a new and more modern wave of the traditional school story genre. Hughes' story follows a very strict narrative while Rowling takes this tradition and reforms it in order to keep the interest of fit 21st century readers. School and education are not viewed in the same light that it was in 1857, the time that *TBSD* was published. Met with disdain and an unwillingness, it takes a lot to entice young children to find interest and excitement in a book. Yet, Rowling exceeds these expectations and transforms the learning experience of reading within *TSS*. Between discreet details, quirky names, and magic, *TSS* creates a new appreciation for the school story in a more modern setting.

Conclusion

As Nikolajeva examines in her study, "children's literature has from the very beginning been related to pedagogics" (3). Studying the different ways that scholars have viewed literature throughout history, there are three ways that can constitute the relationship between children's literature and pedagogics: in relation to pedagogics, in relation to society and in relation to literature. As discussed, there are three characteristics or traits that can determine Hughes' and Rowling's novels as a part of the school story genre. These aspects include the representation of discipline, following the eight major components that make up the school story blueprint:

1. The introduction of a school for boys and girls (modeled on British public schools)
2. The introduction of a new student (the hero of the story)
3. The prevention of a mentor from meeting the new student (one who can explain school tradition)
4. The breaking of important rules by the new student
5. The entrance into popularity for the new student as a result of breaking said rules
6. The use of sports as a crucial point within the story

7. The occurrence of a crisis causing the student to become ill.

In addition to this components, Rowling's style of writing and her use of participial phrases highlights the value of traditionalism as seen in older fairy tales. This practice aids in the push for imagination and the joy of reading.

While not serving as the main basis behind the argument in this essay, *Tom Brown's School Days* provides a rich background behind the purpose of the school story. Enduringly popular with younger children, the *Harry Potter* series, as established in this thesis, reflects many of the traits derived from that of earlier children's literature. Rowling successfully combines the cultural concept of imagination and the discovery of individuality through her exemplary use of discipline and fluidity. This fact pushes the argument that the series encourages and supports the traditional values of children's literature in combination with imagination.

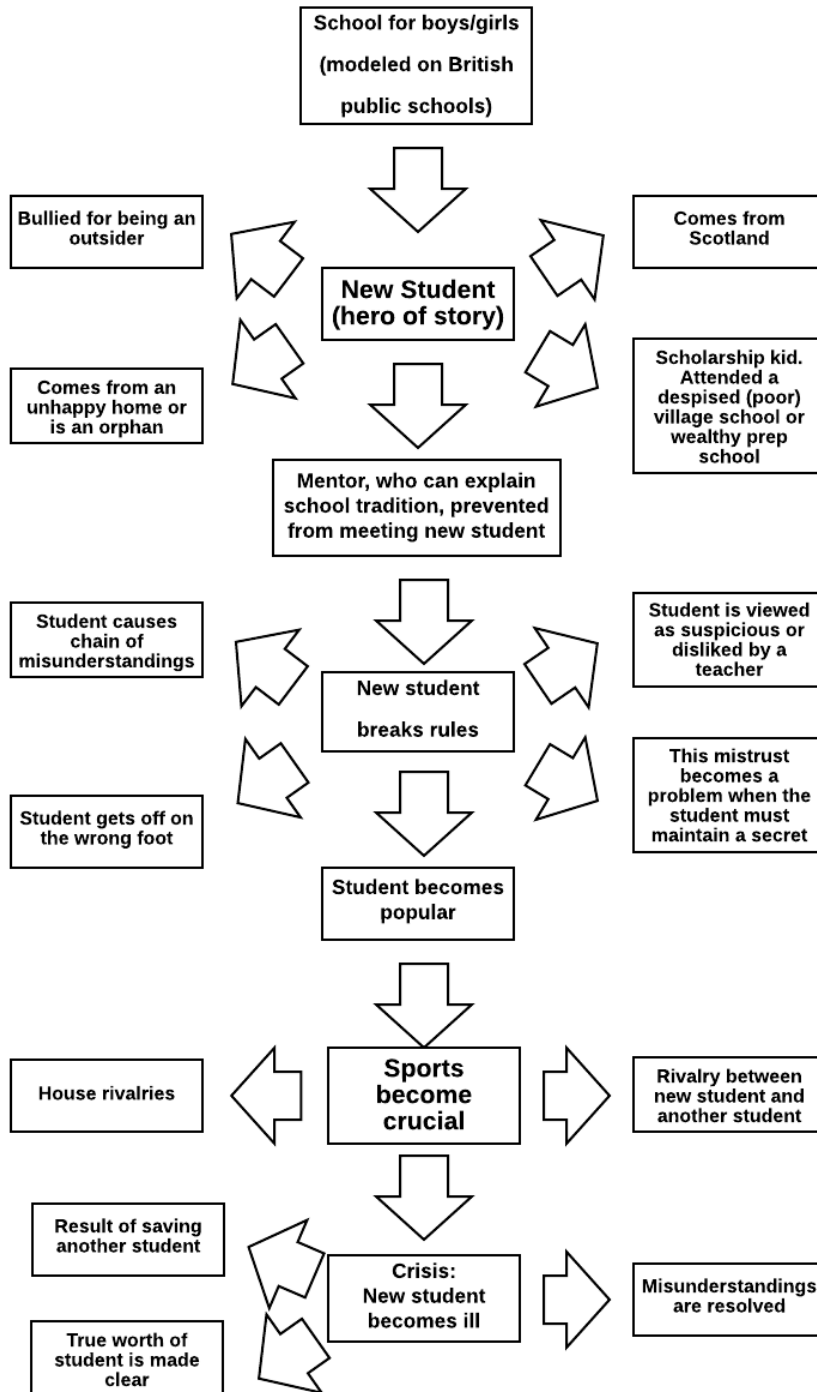
Reviewing the timeline laid out by the school story blueprint, it becomes obvious that Rowling, whether intentionally or unintentionally, bases *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* off of it. However, despite these similarities, the novel gives the traditional English school story a makeover pushing the need for discipline to the back. It highlights individuality and creativity – aspects we do not see in *Tom Brown's School Days*. While discipline is used in *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, the agenda is somewhat reversed as discipline encourages individuality rather than conformity in the wizarding world. Houghton describes the novel as a place of fantasy and that Rowling situates her story outside the constraints of the present. Thus, the genre is reinvigorated as it does not need to struggle against the same constraints that are felt by children in a modern reality – *Harry Potter* is a world where the impossible can be possible.

Rowling perfectly embodies the way that the school story can successfully survive and excel in the twenty-first century. Her writing, which points towards the desire to explore,

suggests a union between the enchanted and the ordinary within the story. This provides new excitement for readers and reinvigorates the view of the genre. Creating a new understanding of what can be considered a school story, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* includes elements of the make-believe while incorporating more traditionalism. It perfectly aligns these themes alongside much earlier works of fiction within the genre. Overall, J.K. Rowling's novel demonstrates the importance of the school story genre as it highlights her invigorating approach towards the use of discipline and participial phrases in order to captivate readers.

The English School Story

Blueprint



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