



good sections (for example, the material on poetry and the electronic book chapter) are overwhelmed by the difficulties in other sections. It is hard to say whether rigorous editing would have sufficed to allow this book to realize its valuable potential; what is certain is that rigorous editing was not applied.

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***The Ivory Tower and Harry Potter: Perspectives in a Literary Phenomenon.* Edited with an Introduction by Lana A. Whited. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2002.**

Reviewed by Barbara Carman Garner

The Ivory Tower and Harry Potter addresses many of the questions readers and reviewers have had concerning the popularity, marketing history, and readership of J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter books. The sixteen essays are divided into seven sections, but the rationale for placing essays in a particular section is not always apparent.¹ Contributors discuss the works as popular culture, suggest their antecedents in both fantasy and fantastic realism genres, and discuss the political, moral, and religious ideologies informing them. The collection is now available in paperback with an epilogue (365–73) by Lana Whited on *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* (July 2004).

Many of the essays, though detailed and thought provoking, are uneven and meandering. The parts

are definitely better than the whole. Unwieldy methodology often hinders the transmission of meaning, and editing should have been more rigorous. Will this book “appeal to librarians, teachers, parents, and the general Potter reader, as well as to literature scholars” (jacket description)?

Lana Whited's goal is to supply a book of critical essays that explore the depth of Rowling's books and treat them as potential classics of children's literature. Her twelve-page introduction recaps positive and negative public reaction to the books, discusses Rowling's legal battle with Stouffer, and catalogues the awards she has won. Whited denigrates William Safire's argument that awarding *The Prisoner of Azkaban* the Whitbread Prize would have constituted “the infantilization of adult culture, the loss of a sense of what a classic really is” (7). She details Jack Zipe's alerting educators to the danger in judging the merit of the Potter books on their phenomenal reception, itself largely due to marketing tactics. Here she could have mentioned that this issue is more fully discussed in Elizabeth Teare's essay (333–34). Whited discredits Safire's objection that the books are “not written on two levels” and offer nothing to the adult reader by drawing attention to the similarities between Harry's moral reasoning in *The Prisoner of Azkaban* and Huckleberry Finn's “crisis of conscience.” She here cites fellow contributor Katherine Grimes' assertion that “the books function on more than one level” (9). Whited underestimates young readers of *The Prisoner of Azkaban*: “a child reader will not fully appreciate the

moral reasoning Harry Potter exhibits,” although she adds, “nor would some adult readers” (8). She also deems the immortality issue in *The Sorcerer’s Stone* “more meaningful to adults than to children” (9).

Whited’s introduction, like many essays in the volume, is eclectic and unfocused. Adding to the reader’s frustration, she mentions neither title nor author when she assesses how essays in the collection contribute to the Harry Potter debate (10), a lack she remedies in the epilogue to the paperback edition. Some contributors mention essays in the collection by name, but the index (391–408), though helpful, is somewhat strangely configured. Under Commodification, for example, one is referred to the entire essay “Harry Potter and the Technology of Magic” by Elizabeth Teare (329–42), whereas under Feminism one finds twenty-five references to Eliza Dresang’s essay, “Hermione Granger and the Heritage of Gender.”

The collection opens with Amanda Cockrel’s “Harry Potter and the Secret Password: Finding our Way in the Magical Genre,” a somewhat misleading title for an essay that discusses all aspects of Rowling’s writing craft, and differentiates her fantasies from high fantasy, locating them more within the “school story” genre. Cockrel compares Rowling’s plots with Kipling’s *Stalky and Co.*, and should, one would think, refer the reader to David Steege’s fine essay on Rowling’s debt to the British School story (140–56). She also compares Harry Potter with LeGuin’s *Ged*, suggesting that Voldemort is Harry’s “shadow side” (20), an

argument somewhat difficult to sustain. Pat Pincent’s essay, “The Education of a Wizard: Harry Potter and His Predecessors,” grouped with Cockrel’s, places Rowling’s series in the context of wizarding school stories. She includes Diana Wynne Jones’s *Charmed Life*, *The Lives of Christopher Chant* and *Witch Week*; Monica Furlong’s *Wise Child*; Jill Murphy’s *Adventures of the Worst Witch*, and Anthony Horowitz’s *Groosham Grange*. Pincent also differentiates between Rowling’s narratives and LeGuin’s Earthsea books. This essay is cogent and well organized.

Roni Natov’s article, “Harry Potter and the Extraordinariness of the Ordinary” (125–39), first appeared in *The Lion and The Unicorn* under a slightly different title. Assumptions and contradictions mar Natov’s reading of the Potter series as a journey into consciousness and Harry’s acquisition of self-identity. Natov treats Harry as “Everychild” experiencing injustice, and argues that Rowling is writing stories about “the development of the ordinary boy” (132). Hogwarts frees Harry and allows him to develop, but there “he is one among many” wizards (131). Furthermore, Hogwarts mirrors the real world’s “elitism and petty power struggles” (133). Since “Harry as Everychild needs guidance” (133), Natov shifts to paradigms of moral behavior concluding that Harry participates in “the narrative of Everychild—the right to knowledge and expression of self” (135). Unfortunately, ambiguity makes this essay tedious to read and difficult to evaluate. Natov’s pronouncement: “So when Harry dreams of a flying motorcycle, it fore-

shadows his success at Quidditch . . . and his imminent rise above the chains of conventionality” (127) is as far-fetched as the teacup readings done by students in Professor Trelawney’s class. Some remarks require clarification: Professor Dumbledore and Professor McGonagall “embody the childhood world of magic and awe”; school represents “the transitional world situated between childhood and adulthood”; the Skrewts “are described in concrete detail, while their size mythicizes [sic] them” (132). She also mistakenly calls Hermione Granger “the mixed-blood daughter of a Muggle and a wizard” (133).

Katherine Grimes, in “Fairy Tale Prince, Real Boy and Archetypal Hero,” compares Harry Potter as hero to Moses, Oedipus, and Jesus (the three archetypal heroes used by Otto Rank in his 1909 study), as well as to Huckleberry Finn and Oliver Twist. She suggests that the Potter books “help us whether we are aware of it or not, to face our animal nature and still have faith that we are the children of God with souls that transcend this world” (88). Grimes plods through Bruno Bettelheim’s treatment of positive effects of fairy tales, then through Rank’s list of ten basic elements of hero myths, “eight of which have been fulfilled by Harry Potter, almost the way characteristics surrounding Jesus’ birth fit the prophecies in the book of Isaiah” (107). After thirty-four pages, I was left pondering what her article had accomplished.

Whited and Grimes, in “What Would Harry Do?,” set out to examine the books “in light of the examples of moral and ethical decision-making

Rowling provides for young readers” (182), using Laurence Kohlberg’s “six-stage model” of the development of moral reasoning. They argue that Harry’s saga ultimately provides an effective illustration of Kohlberg’s theories. Like most attempts to apply Kohlberg as a grid, their reading is subjective and limiting; they suggest the moral decision-making of characters relegated to stages 1 and 2, and sometimes even stage 3, of Kohlberg’s model is motivated purely by self-interest, with little or no concern for others. Harry, Ron, and Hermione operate on a higher moral plane.

Nancy Jentsch, in her article “Harry Potter and the Tower of Babel: Translating the Magic,” which first appeared in the *Kentucky Philological Review* (2001), deftly sets about illustrating the translator’s difficulty in preserving “the juxtaposition of magical and muggle worlds . . . integral to the original text” (286). The translator must decide how much to keep in the original language, especially proper and place names and word play. Jentsch documents the differences among the French, German, and Spanish translations of the Potter books. An especially interesting dilemma facing translators is the “level of language used in dialogue” (290). This is lost in the French, German, and Spanish translations, which all use normal vocabulary and syntax for Hagrid, whom Jentsch terms a “less-educated and uncultured person.” In a footnote, she commends the Czech translator who used “identifiable colloquial modifications” in capturing Hagrid’s speaking voice (291). This essay would benefit anyone contemplating translating a

book into a foreign language. The audience it speaks to will be limited because only those proficient in the language can appreciate the limitations of translations of Rowlings' texts. Philip Nel's "You Say 'Jelly,' I say 'Jello'? Harry Potter and the Transfiguration of Language" serves as a companion piece to Jentchs' essay. Nel focuses on the "subtle blurring of cultural distinctions" (262) that occurs when one translates British English into American English, as Scholastic did in the American editions of Harry Potter. Nel also suggests that the Scholastic editions of Rowling's texts may represent "Rowling's final version of the manuscript," since Rowling clarified some ambiguous passages from the Bloomsbury text and corrected inconsistencies (264–65). Nel recognizes that Scholastic tampered with the vocabulary in the second, third, and fourth books far less than in the first; yet his article campaigns for keeping British books as they are, instead of subjecting them to what is often inconsistent and distorting Americanization that "diminishes the novels' realism" (267).

Karin Westman's essay, "Specters of Thatcherism," shows how various ideologies shape and inform the parallel and intersecting worlds of Rowling's Potter books. Westman argues that Voldemort's political ideology survives long after his initial defeat by Harry Potter: "Voldemort, like Thatcher, was ousted from power, but in neither case did their political ideologies leave with them" (307). Westman meticulously footnotes and annotates arguments with which she does not concur; thus the reader

of her essay can follow a variety of political and ideological takes on Rowling's worlds. Westman challenges the term "parallel" worlds often used to describe Rowling's wizarding and muggle worlds, noting "the degree to which the worlds not only overlap but consciously meet, merge, and interact" (328).

The Ivory Tower and Harry Potter is the first volume of serious critical studies of the Potter books as classics in the making. One should be happy for the high caliber of essays in the collection that give one food for thought, and make one appreciate the immensity of the task Rowling set herself in this series. The debate continues, and Whited's collection will serve as a starting point for undergraduate and graduate students wishing to research particular aspects of Rowling's texts. They will find the extensive bibliography (369–89) particularly useful, and some essays will show them how to go about scholarly research in a proficient, organized, and creative manner. Others, unfortunately, will not.

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Note

1. *Harry's Cousins in the Magical Realm* including two essays: Amanda Cockerell's "Harry Potter and the Secret Password: Finding Our Way in the 'Magical Genre'," and Pat Pinsent's "The Education of a Wizard: Harry Potter and His Predecessors."

Harry's Roots in Epic, Myth, and Folklore including three essays: Mary Pharr's "In Medias Res: Harry Potter

as Hero-in -Progress”, Jan Lacoss’s “Of Magicals and Muggles: Reversals and Revulsions at Hogwarts”, and Katherine Grimes’ “Harry Potter: Fairy Tale Prince, Real boy, and Archetypal Hero”

Harry’s Other Literary Relatives including two essays; Roni Natov’s “Harry Potter and the Extraordinariness of the Ordinary” which first appeared in *The Lion and the Unicorn*. and David Steege’s “Harry Potter, Tom Brown, and the British School Story: Lost in transit?”

Greater than Gold in Gringotts: Questions of Authority and Values including two essays: Farah Mendlesohn’s “Crowning the King: Harry Potter and the Construction of Authority” which first appeared in the *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts*, and “What would Harry Do? J.K. Rowling and Lawrence Kohlberg’s Theories of Moral Development” by Lana Whited and Katherine Grimes.

Gender Issues and Harry Potter including two essays: “Hermione Granger and the Heritage of Gender” by Eliza Dresang and “Locating Harry Potter in the ‘Boys’ book’ Market” by Terri Doughty

Harry’s Language: Taking Issue with Words including the two essays: Nancy Jentsch’s “Harry Potter and the Tower of Babel: Translating the Magic” and Philip Nel’s “You Say ‘Jelly’, I say ‘Jello’? Harry Potter and the Transfiguration of Language”

Commodity and Culture in the World of Harry Potter including three essays: Karin Westman’s “Specters of Thatcherism: Contemporary British Culture in J.K. Rowling’s Harry Potter Series”, Elizabeth Teare’s “Harry Potter and the Technology of Magic”, and Rebecca Sutherland Borah’s “Apprentice Wizards Welcome; Fan Communities and the Culture of Harry Potter”

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St. Nicholas and Mary Mapes Dodge: The Legacy of a Children’s Magazine Editor, 1873–1905. Edited by Susan R. Gannon, Suzanne Rahn, and Ruth Anne Thompson. Jefferson, North Carolina and London: McFarland, 2004.

Reviewed by Lorinda B. Cohoon

St. Nicholas has been, as the authors of *St. Nicholas and Mary Mapes Dodge: The Legacy of a Children’s Magazine Editor, 1873–1905* point out, the most studied children’s periodical. Yet, this collection of essays about the relationship between the editor and the periodical fills a significant gap in scholarship by providing one of the only full-length studies on the topic. Editors Susan R. Gannon, Suzanne Rahn, and Ruth Anne Thompson contribute their own thoughtful scholarship and bring together contemporary and historical perspectives on Dodge from a wide range of scholars including E.B. White, R. Gordon Kelly, and Fred Erisman. While it offers insights into *St. Nicholas* and the role of the editor in periodical production, this text also provides a model of how children’s literature scholarship might be enriched by explorations of book production histories, editors, and connections between publishing houses and authors. The best essays in this collection use archived editorial materials to assess the depth and breadth of Dodge’s influence, and scholars interested in children’s literature in the Gilded Age and in the role of the periodical in shaping children’s literature will find this a valuable resource.

The essays are grouped into three sections—the first section examines the development of the periodical,