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The Harry Potter Film Franchise and the Representation of  
Traditional Britishness:  
a paratextual study, 2000 – 2011

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A dissertation submitted to the University of Bristol in  
accordance with the requirements for award of Master of  
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## Abstract

The relationship between film and national identity is an enduring topic of scholarly interest. Focusing on British national identity in particular, Sarah Street discusses the important role of film: ‘we have inherited a dominant conception of what it is to be British...which has, in part, been constructed by cultural referents including cinema’ (2009: 1). With this in mind, what role might the British characters and settings in the hugely successful Harry Potter film franchise have played in forming ideas about British national identity?

This thesis uses textual analysis of the Harry Potter film paratexts (promotional materials surrounding the films) in an attempt to answer this question. Phil Wickham explains the usefulness of this approach arguing that analysing these types of materials ‘can make meaning and provide historical evidence of the place of a film in its world and in the lives of those who saw it’ (2010: 316). These texts can tell us how the film’s visual representations of traditional Britishness were framed for audiences at the time, even for those who never even ended up seeing the films.

This thesis presents an analysis of paratexts surrounding the first and final two films of the series. This provides a sense of how the series’ representations of traditional Britishness were first introduced to audiences and how their legacy was later established through long-standing experiential paratexts.

### **Author's declaration**

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the University's *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes* and that it has not been submitted for any other academic award. Except where indicated by specific reference in the text, the work is the candidate's own work. Work done in collaboration with, or with the assistance of, others, is indicated as such. Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author.

SIGNED: Sarah Watts (nee Kelley)

DATE: 14/05/2020

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## Introduction

### What and Why? The research subject

The relationship between film and national identity is an enduring topic of scholarly interest. Focusing on British national identity in particular, Sarah Street emphasises the important role of film in this case: ‘we have inherited a dominant conception of what it is to be British...which has, in part, been constructed by cultural referents including cinema’ (2009: 1). With this in mind, what role might the British characters and settings of the hugely successful Harry Potter film franchise have played in forming ideas about British identity? This is an important text to explore as many of its representations are now aspects of British tourism – the UK filming locations and the tour of the studio sets feature on the VisitBritain website – thus they have an even stronger influence on a dominant conception of what it is to be British.

Harry Potter began life in the 1990s as the literary creation of British author JK Rowling; a popular series of children’s books about a downtrodden boy from Surrey, the discovery of his wizarding heritage and his subsequent adventures at Hogwarts boarding school of witchcraft and wizardry. In 1999, Rowling sold the film rights for the first four books to American film studio Warner Bros., which employed a significant number of British cast and crew, and utilised numerous UK heritage shooting locations in order to create the franchise’s representations of British characters and settings. 8 films later, this cinematic franchise has made \$7.7 billion at the worldwide box office and its popularity is demonstrated through *YouGov*’s data: 51% of the British public are fans of the films, books or both (Smith, 2017) and 61% of all Americans have seen at least one of the films (Henderson, 2011). An even higher percentage of these populations as well as further audiences worldwide will have been exposed to the various materials that surround the films (promotional items, merchandise

etc.). This is a highly influential film franchise and its representations of British characters and settings require interrogation, particularly when one considers the production context: a British author, cast, crew, locations and an American film studio wanting to ensure the films appealed not only to British audiences but to the lucrative American market and further audiences worldwide.

Shelley Ann Galpin draws on the work of Andrew Higson in arguing that the Harry Potter films, like the English heritage genre, utilise ‘representations of traditional Britishness to appeal to their audiences’ (2016: 431). She further explains this as offering viewing pleasure by drawing on nostalgic visions of Britain’s past. Examples of these features include the use of distinctly British sweeping landscapes, castles and period buildings, and steam trains amongst other things. Discussing the issue with these representations, Galpin comments that these are often centered on a ‘particular form of English iconography associated with the upper and upper-middle classes, and therefore the privileging of the morals and values held by members of these classes’ (2016: 435). One could also add whiteness, heterosexuality and ability to these associations. Galpin’s work on this subject forms the basis for the definition and use of the term ‘traditional Britishness’ throughout this thesis.

Galpin’s analysis is limited to the world of the films, thus it stops short of discussing their role in constructing ideas about British national identity. This thesis demonstrates that this subject can be explored through an analysis of the films’ parallel texts, or paratexts.

Examples of such texts include preview literature, trailers, posters and merchandise, and they can offer insight into the films’ interactions with its audiences and the meanings created. Phil Wickham discusses these type of texts in his work on cinema ephemera and argues that analysing these materials ‘can make meaning and provide historical evidence of the place of a

film in its world and in the lives of those who saw it' (2010: 316). These texts can tell us how the films' visual representations of traditional Britishness were framed for audiences at the time, even for those who never even ended up seeing the films. This particular methodology has become even more significant for the field of cinema history as a film's public presence is extended through the continuing development of what can be labelled paratexts. The Harry Potter film franchise is a useful study in this case as it utilises more traditional promotional materials such as trailers and posters as well as more recent examples that utilise social media and fans' desire to be part of the world of the film (*Warner Bros. Studio tour - The Making of Harry Potter*).

### **How? Research questions and methodology**

This thesis will explore the way the Harry Potter film paratexts frame representations of traditional Britishness. The purpose of this is to gain some understanding of the meanings created, which may influence audiences' conceptions of British national identity. In order to do this I have established the following set of research questions:

1. How are representations of traditional Britishness emphasised in these films' paratexts?
2. How do the paratexts for each film work collectively to emphasise a certain set of ideas about traditional Britishness or is there some diversity or contradiction in their representations? Similarly, how do they work collectively across the three focus films for this project?
3. How does the type/timing of the paratext affect what ideas are represented?

The first step in establishing a methodology for answering these questions is to review existing literature in relevant research fields. In Chapter 1, I draw on a variety of scholarship



in order to identify which existing knowledge and approaches should be applied to this study and where there are gaps that I will fill. An overview of the complex subject of British identity is required in order to situate this study's discussion of representations of traditional Britishness. For this I draw on the work of several scholars including cultural theorist, Stuart Hall. A deeper understand of what can be considered representations of traditional Britishness has been acquired by drawing on the work of Andrew Higson and Shelley Ann Galpin, and this is referenced throughout much of the textual analysis in this thesis. The paratexts for analysis have been selected according to definitions provided by scholars such as Gerard Genette and Jonathon Gray. This thesis discusses paratexts that were either licenced by Warner Bros. or contain official film announcements (including those made by Rowling) and which remain uncontested. This includes relevant news media, posters, trailers, other promotional media, merchandise and themed experiences. To ensure that the source and original release dates of the paratexts are in line with the perimeters of my study, I have used archives at the Bill Douglas Cinema Museum, the British Library and the British Film Institute. This means that while the vast majority of the paratexts I discuss were available to both British and international audiences at the time, some of the official announcements have been analysed within the context of their host publications: several British newspapers. I also visited the *Wizarding World of Harry Potter* in Florida, *Platform 9 3/4s* at Kings Cross Station and the *Warner Bros. Studio Tour* to gain a better sense of the immersive qualities of these particular paratexts.

The examination of the paratexts involves the use of textual analysis, a form of qualitative research, which is focused on 'the opinions and ideas' that are formed through the features of a text (Branston and Stafford, 2005: 278). One must acknowledge that this approach can be limiting since it relies on the interpretation of the individual scholar conducting the analysis

and, as James Chapman, Mark Glancy and Sue Harper state, they must, ‘convince readers that their reading...was the definitive reading, and the reading which an ideal audience would perceive’ (2007: 181). However, this limitation can be addressed through the analysis of a wide range of paratexts, varying in format and platform, from different stages of each film’s production, promotion and release. This approach attempts to recreate a matrix of possible readings; a ‘discursive surround’ in order to ‘investigate how an interpretation or various interpretations of a single film have arisen’ (Chapman, Glancy, Harper, 2007: 182).

In order to ascertain how each film’s paratexts work together and indeed how they work across the franchise, I will analyse a range of materials at either end of the series: the first film, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone* (hereafter, *The Philosopher’s Stone*) (2001), and the two part finale, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* (hereafter, *The Deathly Hallows*) *Part 1* (2010) and *Part 2* (2011). Each paratext will be scrutinised so that its own construction and key messages can be explored while also being considered in relation to the other materials for that film. The findings for the films will be compared and contrasted. In doing so it will be useful to consider Gregory Lukow and Steven Ricci’s concept of intertextual relay, which argues that texts such as posters and trailers help to create a network of discourses that ‘recruit, construct, integrate, regulate and ensure the return of its audience’ (1984: 29). This concept is particularly interesting when one thinks of the time span for the Harry Potter film series and its continued success throughout a decade of industrial and technological shifts. In this sense one must consider the context for the focus films and their paratexts, particularly in light of my third research question.

The focus films for this project will enable me to explore how the type and timing of the paratexts affects the ideas that are represented. These films represent differing production

contexts (2001 vs 2010) as well as paratextual formats. For example, the paratexts for *The Philosopher's Stone* can be regarded as fairly traditional for textual analysis: newspaper article, poster, trailer, images on merchandise. However, the two-part finale was produced when the internet had become a ubiquitous technology, leading to the increased use of online paratexts such as applications for social media platforms. During the final years of the cinematic series Warner Bros. also sought other ways to engage the public, long after its end, through what I would call 'experiential paratexts' such as the Warner Bros. Studio Tour. It is important to see how the representations of traditional Britishness manifest in these varying forms.

## **Chapter 1: Literature Review**

This literature review explores important work in several research areas relevant to this project, establishing the theoretical framework for my approach to the investigation. I begin with scholarship on the subject of British identity so that I can situate my specific interest in representations of traditional Britishness before moving onto a wider discussion on using ‘other materials’ in film and cinema historical work. I then focus more specifically on definitions of paratexts before finishing with a review of work on participatory culture.

### **British identity**

In order to explore representations of traditional Britishness one must first situate this in relation to the complex subject of British identity. Approaching this from a political perspective, Andrew Gamble and Tony Wright argue that a British identity first emerged in the 1700s when the Scots and the English (who had already conquered Wales) unified to form Great Britain, with the Irish joining later to form the United Kingdom (UK): ‘The term ‘Briton’ began to be used indiscriminately to mean anyone who was a citizen of the United Kingdom’ (1992: 1). They go on to claim that a sense of Britishness (a shared set of values and qualities that distinguish the British people) was strengthened by developments in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century: the creation of British institutions such as the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), the experience of war, the sacrifices made for the British Empire, universal welfare and universal military. Gamble and Wright state that these ‘gave Britishness a solid basis in everyone’s experience’ (1992: 2). Krishan Kumar also argues that empire and war forged a British identity for the inner nations of the UK. For example, by a common Protestantism (except in the Irish case) and rivalry with Catholic European countries for world power (2006: 432) and ‘by the common experience of two world wars’ (2006: 436). In addition, Kumar explores the ‘notorious English-British confusion’, arguing that as the

English oversaw the development of the UK they were ‘the principle determinant of identities in Britain’ (2006: 429). Hence English attitudes such as anti-industrial and anti-urban (think ‘green and pleasant land’, rolling countryside and quaint villages) may also be seen as British ones. Cultural theorist Stuart Hall delves deeper into this effective hegemony of ‘English’, representing itself as the essential British culture (1992: 297), by arguing that a nation is not just a political entity but a symbolic community that is formed by representation and has the ‘power to generate a sense of identity and allegiance’ (1992: 292). He goes on to explain that several representational strategies are deployed to construct views of national belonging and identity, including the invention of tradition, for example the pageantry which surrounds British monarchy: in its modern form this is a relatively recent product of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries (1992: 294). Hall points out that while a nation may be represented as unified, the reality of people’s individual identities is far more complex, incorporating differences in regional cultures, social classes, gender and ethnic groups (1992: 297). In this case, this thesis is more concerned with the British symbolic community that is formed through the representation of traditional Britishness on screen and the idea that this has the power to generate a dominant conception of British national identity for audiences, rather than investigating the complex individual identities of the British public. I am interested in how, despite the modern political backdrop (long after the breakdown of the British Empire and the end of the two World Wars) and cultural hybridity of Britain, the Harry Potter films and their paratexts construct a limited representation of traditional Britishness that has been well received by large audience worldwide.

### **The spectacle of traditional Britishness**

As mentioned in the introduction, Galpin draws on Higson’s work on the English heritage genre, to explain how these films and the Harry Potter films both utilise representations of

traditional Britishness to offer viewing pleasure to audiences. This demonstrates the English-British confusion mentioned previously as while Higson situates his study on the English heritage genre, Galpin argues that similar nostalgic, Anglo-centric iconography is the focus of the Harry Potter films despite these actually featuring some characters and settings from all of the British nations (England, Scotland, Wales) and Ireland; hence Galpin uses the term ‘traditional Britishness’. Here we can see the hegemony of English as the Harry Potter films’ representations of British characters and settings are Anglo-centric. Looking more closely at Higson’s work also demonstrates the English-British confusion as he discusses the long-standing success of the English heritage genre by using this quote: ‘big heritage films are what the British do best. At least that’s the view from across the pond’ (2011: 9). In this case Anglo-centric representations on screen are being associated more widely with the British. Delving deeper into the reasons for this success, Higson explains that it is ‘a spectacle of the past; it is a spectacle of luxury; and it is a spectacle of Englishness’ that emerges from a present attempt to market English heritage to an international audience (2011: 149). One only has to think of the Anglo-centric, privileged and nostalgic representations in films such as *The King’s Speech* (2010), *Sense and Sensibility* (1995) and *Shakespeare in Love* (1998), which have all achieved international success and won Oscars.

Like Galpin, Noel Brown also sees similar representations in the Harry Potter films, stating that ‘“Britishness”, or more commonly ‘Englishness’, is central to the international appeal of the Harry Potter series...[it] support[s] an attractive vision of heritage Britain that draws on recognisable landmarks and iconography’ (2017: 91). Given the limited nature of these representations and the success associated with them, it is important to consider their contribution to a dominant conception of British national identity. This thesis will draw on Higson at several points in the textual analysis where his work on the English heritage genre

helps to shed light on the meanings created by Harry Potter's representations of traditional Britishness.

### **The use of 'other materials' in film and cinema history**

The value in analysing materials surrounding a film has received increasing scholarly attention since the 1980s, albeit under a variety of different theoretical labels that do not always use the term 'paratexts'.

In Barbara Klinger's work on a cinematic *histoire totale*, she begins by referring to Tony Bennett's 1982 call for a revolution in literary study:

in which one would no longer just study the text but "everything which has been written *about* it, everything which has been collected on it, becomes attached to it – like shells on a rock by the seashore forming a whole incrustation" (Klinger citing Bennett, 1997: 107).

Klinger builds on this idea by drawing on historian Fernand Braudel's concept of *histoire totale* and applying this to a film context, discussing areas such as cinematic practices, intertextual zones and social and historical contexts. She concludes that while its vastness presents problems, 'the point is not to abandon the enterprise, but to deepen it by confronting its difficulties, securing historical writing as a vigorously self-reflective activity' (1997: 128). In this way the consideration of wider sources for a cinematic *histoire totale* invites reflection on the practice of film history itself. This literature review allows me to reflect upon existing work related to paratextual analysis in order to consider the most appropriate approach to my study.

The 'New Film History' has also paved the way for an expanded research agenda, with the first use of this term occurring in 1985. New Film Historian James Chapman explains that Thomas Elsaesser coined the phrase to describe the scholarly outcome of two pressures:

on the one hand “a polemical dissatisfaction with surveys and overviews... that for too long passed as film history” and on the other hand “sober arguments among professionals now that...much more material has become available, for instance on the early silent era” (Chapman, 2013: 27).

Writing in a later article, Elsaesser explains that the approach to film history required revision: ‘the move away from the film-text to the context of exhibition’ through the study of ‘hitherto unexplored non-filmic sources and documents, such as exhibitor’s catalogues, the advertisements in trade papers, or the records of a local cinema’ (1995: 9).

Formalising the term, James Chapman, Mark Glancy and Sue Harper’s *The New Film History: Sources, Methods, Approaches* (2007) presents a variety of case studies that consider films and their contexts through discussions of sources such as promotional materials, film gross figures and reviews. As they explain, the overarching definition of New Film History ‘is a commitment to expanding the boundaries of historical knowledge and a concern to understand films as both texts and in context’ (2007: 8). That is to say that the field of film history can benefit from the expansion of what we analyse in relation to a film text. Focusing on reception studies, Chapman, Glancy and Harper argue that ‘by examining a wide range of film reviews, publicity materials and other contemporaneous documents [one can] determine how a text was interpreted within a specific social, cultural and political context’ (2007: 182).



Thus an analysis of Harry Potter film paratexts can arguably shed light on how certain ideas about traditional Britishness were emphasised to British audiences at the time.

Each reception case study presented in *The New Film History* involves the discussion of a single film and its interpretation in a distinct exhibition context. However, in seeking to understand the social experience of cinema, studies conducted as part of 'New Cinema History' often refer to several films with more emphasis on sources such as promotional materials, merchandise, newspaper clippings, ethnographical studies and geographical and demographical data.

Like New Film History, the foundations for New Cinema History lay in a revisionist approach to film-historical research set out in the 1980s. Robert C. Allen and Douglas Gomery's *Film History: Theory and Practice* (1985) considers films in their technological, economic, social and aesthetic contexts and, as argued by Annette Kuhn, Daniel Biltereyst and Philippe Meers, it emphasizes:

the importance of systematic archival inquiry involving both textual and contextual primary source material, as against the emphasis on canonical directors and their masterpieces that had dominated previous histories of film and cinema (Kuhn, Biltereyst, Meers, 2017: 6).

Subsequently, New Cinema Historians Melvyn Stokes and Richard Maltby brought together a series of essays, which explored the reception of cinema through a multiplicity of sources. Their book *American Movie Audiences: from the turn of the century to the early sound era* (1999) includes analysis of materials such as advertising images, newspapers and periodicals of the time in order to shed light on the movie-going experience. Work in this area continued

with the formation of the *History of Moviegoing, Exhibition and Reception* (HoMER) Network in 2004, which was founded by a collection of New Cinema Historians including Biltereyst, Gomery, Maltby and Meers. Its website explains that it is an ‘international network of researchers interested in understanding the complex phenomena of cinema-going, exhibition, and reception, from a multidisciplinary perspective’ (HoMER Network website). The network advocates for an approach to film and cinema history that benefits from the application of a range of research approaches used in fields such as economics, geography and anthropology.

Officially formalising the term in 2011’s *Explorations in New Cinema History: Approaches and Case Studies*, Maltby defines the approach as concerned with the ‘commercial activities of film distribution and exhibition, the legal and political discourses that craft cinema’s profile in public life and the social and cultural histories of specific cinema audiences’ (2011: 3). He goes on to refer to Chapman, Glancy and Harper’s work on New Film History, explaining that the film texts remain central to their enquiries while New Cinema History engages other sources and disciplines, and ‘cautions strongly against the adequacy of a total history of cinema founded on the study of films’ (2011: 9).

While demonstrating the value in using a variety of external sources to better understand the audience’s relationship with film, the New Cinema History approach does raise the question of where to situate the film-texts themselves amongst the investigations. Kuhn, Biltereyst and Meers advocate for an approach in which methodologies are not conducted in isolation but considered alongside other sets of enquires. In a special edition of *Memory Studies*, in which the remit is to discuss people’s memories of cinema-going, they explain that these oral histories should ‘complement (or contradict) institutional, economic or text-based approaches to the historical study of film reception’ (2017: 10). This approach had already been

championed by Kuhn in her earlier work *An Everyday Magic: Cinema and Cultural Memory* (2002) in which she employs methodological triangulation, bringing together historical, ethnographical and film-based investigations. Kuhn, Biltreyst and Meers go on to highlight the specific question around the film-text, explaining that ‘[t]he place of film(s)...remains a significant challenge for memory studies: how far can we trust the impression given by informants’ memories that the actual films they saw were relatively unimportant to them?’ (2017: 10). In other words, while oral history participants may not explicitly recall the details of a film it does not mean to say that the content did not have a significant impact on them. Similarly, I must not ignore the place of the film text itself amongst the analysis of its paratexts, thus I will discuss how the representations framed in the Harry Potter paratexts relate to the film content.

### Definitions of paratexts

Focusing more specifically on the term ‘paratexts’, relevant scholarship is primarily situated in the field of literary studies. This is because the term ‘paratexts’ was originally coined by literary theorist Gerard Genette in his work *Seuils*, published in 1987 and translated into English in 1997 as *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*. He argues that a paratext is the sum of 2 fringes of a main printed text: peritext and epitext [see figure 1 for my visual interpretation of this idea].

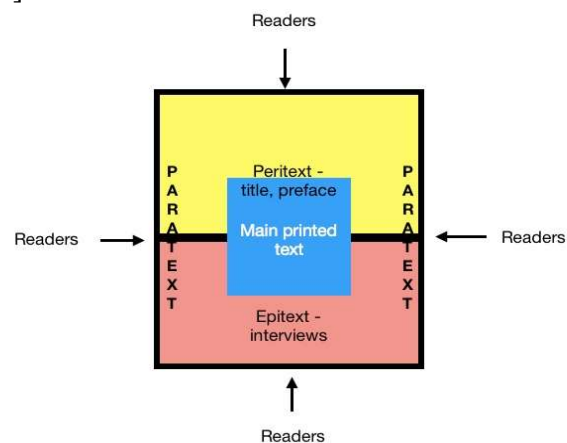


figure 1

Peritext, he explains, consists of ‘elements such as the title and preface’ within the volume (1997: 5). Epitext consists of the ‘messages that, at least originally, are located outside the book, generally with the help of the media’, for example interviews with the author (1997: 5). He goes on to state that while paratextual elements can control one’s reading of the whole text (1997: 2) they are ‘always subordinate to “its” [main] text, and this functionality determines the essence of its appeal and existence’ (1997: 12). Genette explains that ‘something is not a paratext unless the author or one of his associates accepts responsibility for it’, although he does acknowledge that the degree of responsibility varies, for example an interview, which involves third parties and can potentially be disclaimed by the author (1997: 10).

Bringing this theory into a cinematic context can become complicated when one thinks of the many parties involved in producing and distributing a film and its surrounding texts. For example, one could consider an official film poster to be a peritext since it bookends the film viewing experience with its presence in the cinema foyer and use as the DVD or Blu Ray cover. However, unlike Genette’s example of peritext, it will not necessarily have been produced by the filmmakers themselves.

In *Show Sold Separately: Promos, Spoilers, and Other Media Paratexts* (2010), Jonathan Gray provides a useful discussion of film and television paratexts specifically, adapting Genette’s theory and addressing its limitations. Gray agrees that paratexts do indeed control our entrance to texts, for example a poster outlines the ‘type of world a would-be audience member is entering’ (2010: 52). He adds to this by drawing on Martin Barker and Kate Brooks’ research into audiences for book-based films and explains that ‘intertexts’ such as the original book and the reputation of the cast help to project an image of the forthcoming

text ‘with which [the audience] can engage before the actual film is released’ (2010: 121). This is particularly applicable to the Harry Potter films. Gray also points out that while paratexts control our entrance to films, they also ‘inflect our *re-entry*’ as is the case in a long running film series such as Harry Potter (2010: 42). In this instance one can also look to Lukow and Ricci’s piece ‘The “Audience” Goes “Public”’: Intertextuality, Genre and the Responsibilities of Film Literacy’ (1984). While this is more focused on the gangster genre in the 1930s and its use by inter-texts to ‘regulate the spectator’s continual return and involvement within it’ (1984: 32), it can be applied to the way the later Harry Potter film paratexts acknowledge and build upon the audiences’ engagement with the previous films in the series.

Returning to Gray, he also argues that ‘paratexts sometimes take over their texts. A child can...buy the toys and the colouring book, play the game with his or her friends without actually watching the film.’ (2010: 45). Emphasising the potential power of film paratexts, he adds that some ‘extend the horizons of the narrative universe beyond what the [main] text itself offers’ (2010:46). This could be applied to the ‘experiential paratexts’ for the Harry Potter films, such as the Warner Bros. Studio Tour – The Making of Harry Potter. This attraction allows you to walk amongst the sets from the films and you’re encouraged to re-enact certain scenarios such as riding a broomstick (in front of a green screen). There is also an officially licensed gift shop selling merchandise inspired by the films. This paratext may provide more of a point of interest than the films themselves and its positioning as an attraction for visitors to London, long after the film series has concluded, offers more significance for its representations of traditional Britishness. Gray goes on to state that ‘paratexts may in time *become* the text, as the audience members take their cues regarding what a text means from the paratext...rather than from the film’ (2010: 46).

Gray discusses many different types of paratext from a variety of main text examples. The Harry Potter film series is mentioned but receives little attention despite its relevance to the paratextual types Gray covers. The structure of my research project will allow for the discussion of a variety of different paratexts but within the same film franchise: this will facilitate a detailed understanding of the messages on traditional Britishness that are being framed for the audience.

The combination of this literature on paratexts has highlighted the importance of analysing the paratexts surrounding the release of the first Harry Potter film, *The Philosopher's Stone*, as frames for our entrance to the film's representations of traditional Britishness. It has also influenced my decision to look at the paratexts surrounding the two-part finale, *the Deathly Hallows part 1* and *part 2*, as they frame our re-entry to the franchise as well as offering potential examples of 'over taking the main text' with their immersive qualities. The latter feature arguably presents an issue because how does one analyse an experience? In fact, Anna Nacher's chapter 'Mashup as Paratextual Practice: Beyond Digital Objects (in the Age of Networked Media)' (2014) notes the 'performative aspect' of all paratexts and what they 'make the reader "do"' (2014: 67). However, since each person's response is individual and I cannot hope to capture this, I will apply textual analysis to all of the paratexts, even those that are experiential: in this case noting the particular props, costumes and settings that are presented to the public. In this way I can identify any recurring or conflicting themes with regards to the representation of traditional Britishness.

In line with Genette's theory I will focus on paratexts that are the accepted responsibility of the author and associates and not fan made. In filmic terms this means Warner Bros. licensed

texts, production announcements and quotes from cast and crew (including Rowling) which were made officially public and remain uncontested. This covers relevant news media, posters, trailers, other promotional media, merchandise and themed experiences.

### **Participatory culture**

Given the interactive and experiential nature of the paratexts I have associated with the later films in the series, it is important to look at literature that discusses audiences' attempts to participate in the world of the film text. A leading scholar on this subject is Henry Jenkins and his book *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide* (2008) discusses a case study in which a Harry Potter fan created a website to mimic the magical newspaper featured in the books and films. Adopting the same name, *The Daily Prophet's* editor invited fans worldwide to submit online articles written as if they were characters in Rowling's stories. Jenkins explains that this offered fans valuable engagement with the main text through its 'negotiation between self-expression and shared cultural materials, between introspection and collaborative fantasy building' (2008: 215). In 2000, Warner Bros. attempted to take control of websites such as this, claiming violations of trademarks and copyrights. Ultimately they backed down due to the highly publicised negative fan response, which the media dubbed the 'Potter Wars'. Although not mentioned by Jenkins, it is useful to add that in 2003, Warner Bros. exercised control over another example of fan expression when they sent a cease-and-desist letter to the organiser of a Hogwarts themed dining experience (source: Kristin De Groot, *Associated Press*, 2018). One can also bet that if the law permitted, Warner Bros. would attempt to control the unofficial walking tours that have been set up for Harry Potter fans, who visit the UK shooting locations in Gloucester, Oxford and London, and Rowling's former home in Edinburgh. Manon Haag, a PhD student researching screen tourism, explains the appeal of this 'film-tourism': 'there is an everlasting

will of the audience to interact with the narratives directly and to ‘take the text out of the media’ (Waysdorf, Reijnders, Boross 2014) to inject it in their own lives’ (2015: 8).

In fact, the Harry Potter films have provoked so much fan expression that a reporter in *The Guardian*, in 2003, reported on its role in ‘rescuing England’s ailing tourist industry’, quoting the chapter steward of Gloucester Cathedral: “Young people come looking for the places where the films are shot” (Topham, 2003).

Concluding his case study, Jenkins indicates that consumer participation has become an emerging conceptual problem for traditional gatekeepers such as the copyright lawyers of Warner Bros. However, I would argue that Warner Bros. and Rowling have found ways to control this activity through officially licensed paratexts such as the interactive *Pottermore* website, the *Platform 9 3/4s* experience and the *Warner Bros. Studio Tour - The Making of Harry Potter*. This project will apply textual analysis to these examples in order to understand how they frame ideas about traditional Britishness for audiences.



## **Chapter 2: Harry Potter and The Philosopher's Stone**

Like the other films in the franchise, *The Philosopher's Stone* (2001) - known as *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* in the USA - is based on Rowling's book of the same name. As the first instalment in the series, 'it takes its time setting up the characters and the scenario' and establishing the screen representations of the Harry Potter world (Morrison, *Empire* magazine, January 2002). There are a significant number of paratexts preceding and accompanying the cinematic release that highlight the ideas about traditional Britishness represented in the film. Occupying a variety of widely consumed platforms (newspapers, free-to-air television, billboards), these materials not only 'prepped' eagerly awaiting fans but also reached those who may not have gone on to see the film, thus they can be considered particularly influential when it comes to the conveyance of certain themes and ideas. It is these paratexts that this chapter will analyse and discuss.

Situating this work within an industrial and political backdrop is important: as such this chapter will begin with a discussion of significant contextual factors surrounding the production of the film, drawing on relevant existing literature. The textual analysis will follow, looking at publicity and promotional materials. This analysis will allow insight into the key themes and ideas that were emphasised to audiences. James Chapman, explains the importance in analysing this material since it, 'illustrates the way in which a film is intended to be received, and as such it represents an attempt to pre-determine critical interpretation from an "official" point of view' (2000). The textual analysis will be conducted chronologically, beginning with the publicity that was created at the start of the production (summer 2000). It will then focus on texts released as part of the countdown to the film's

premiere, before moving on to publicity material and merchandise produced immediately prior to and during the film's cinematic run.

### **Industrial and Political Context**

The adaptation of the Harry Potter books for film reflects a trend in Hollywood that had grown in the 1980s following the outlawing of blind bidding (a process in which exhibitors had paid production studios in advance for the licence to show a film in their movie theatres). Quoting Jack Valenti (the President of the Motion Picture Association of America, the MPAA), Richard Maltby explains that without the financial guarantees provided by blind bidding it was predicted that, 'the studios would become more conservative in their production policies, producing "fewer imaginative films and more and more sequels and remakes"' (2011:18). That is to say that the studios would essentially be less interested in progressive film-making, preferring to make safer investments in adaptations and sequels, which already have established fanbases. This is also significant when considering issues of representation because it suggests a general tendency to 'stick with what works' and to keep looking back at previously profitable depictions. As Elissa H. Nelson explains, 'Hollywood falls back on familiar strategies, is risk averse and follows trends of producing similar kinds of successful films' (2017: 127). As one of the 'big six' American film studios, Warner Bros. reflects the interests of Hollywood and for Harry Potter was likely to borrow from other successful depictions of British characters and settings. In this case, it appears they looked to the English heritage genre and its Anglo-centric representations of traditional Britishness, as discussed by Andrew Higson and Shelley Ann Galpin and referenced earlier in this thesis. The screen version of Harry Potter emphasises the traditional Britishness iconography featured in the books including steam trains, castles and cobble-stoned streets. Warner Bros. arranged for many of the scenes set within Hogwarts castle grounds to be shot at a variety of

British heritage locations: Alnwick castle provides the backdrop for Harry's first broomstick lesson, the Bodleian Library at Oxford University is the school's infirmary and Hagrid's groundskeeper hut is set against the iconic landscapes of Glencoe in Scotland. This raises questions about the representations of people and places in the Harry Potter films and whether they are as limited as those in the English heritage films. It will be useful to consider this when analysing the paratexts for the first film.

Although financed by an American film studio, *The Philosopher's Stone* can be classified as a British film since it was produced in Britain with a largely local cast and crew. This was arguably in part due to the policies set in motion by the outgoing government (Conservative Party) and continued by its replacement (Labour Party - elected in 1997), which attempted to boost investment in UK film production through tax relief and funding schemes (BBC News, 1999, 2001). According to *The Guardian* journalist, Gareth McLean, the British film industry went to particularly great lengths to secure the work and money that would come with production of *The Philosopher's Stone* and the subsequent films in the series. He reports that they offered to help find UK filming locations, provided the long-term use of Leavesden Studios near London and agreed to petition for a change in child labour laws so that the young cast could work for longer (McLean, 2001).

While encouraging investment and economical benefits in the UK, enticing big American studios to make 'British' films does raise questions about the authenticity of any aspects of traditional Britishness that are represented on screen. That is to say that these representations are likely to be shaped by their profitability and ability to travel well trans-atlantically i.e. they are likely to be influenced by previously successful depictions of British characters and settings. In this sense one can refer back to Higson's quote regarding the success of the

English heritage genre and the likelihood that the representations in these films influenced those in *The Philosopher's Stone*.

Another factor in the government's economically driven approach to UK film policy and processes was the establishment of the UK Film Council (UKFC) in 2000. As Jack Newsinger explains, British film funding was split so that the Premier Fund, the UKFC's flagship national funding scheme, supported popular mainstream British films while regional production funds were targeted towards cultural diversity, social inclusion and bringing new voices and visions to the screen (2000: 44). The issue here, as Newsinger argues, is 'the implicit recognition that a commercially orientated and metropolitan film industry is incapable of producing a film culture sufficiently in line with contemporary ideas of national identity, in terms of ethnicity, gender and region' (2009: 45). That is to say that the government's funding model encouraged a divide between commercially successful British films and films which represented contemporary perspectives of multi-cultural Britain. Again, one can argue that the former category, in which *The Philosopher's Stone* would sit, is likely to borrow from previously profitable depictions of British characters and settings in order to achieve commercial success. With this in mind a textual analysis of some of the earliest paratexts for the film can usefully demonstrate some of the initial emerging themes regarding the representation of traditional Britishness.



Alan . . . up for Potter role

## Rickman set to be Potter film's rotter

By HELEN STUDD

TOP film villain Alan Rickman has been tipped to play the baddie in Harry Potter's first big-screen adventure.

The British actor, 54, is in talks for the role of "dark" Professor Snape, who teaches the school-boy how to make magic potions in Harry Potter And The Sorcerer's Stone.

The movie - based on the first of J.K. Rowling's hit books - is expected to be a blockbuster.

Alan shot to fame as a terrorist in *Die Hard*. He later played the Sheriff of Nottingham in *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves*.

U.S. actor Liam Aiken is favourite to play Harry. Richard Harris will play headmaster Professor Dumbledore. Dame Maggie Smith and Robbie Coltrane are in also talks for roles.

### Textual analysis: Summer 2000, the publicity machine begins to churn...

Production for the film begin in 2000 and was kept relatively secret; as such newspapers provided some of the earliest paratexts as they reported on the eagerly anticipated official announcements made by those working on the film. Using the British Library's newspaper archive, I found a cluster of articles covering the film's casting decisions in the month of August.

On 10th August, 2000, *The Sun* featured an article (page 7), which reported that British actor Alan Rickman was in talks for the role of Professor Snape [figure 2]. The use of his surname in the headline indicates that the reader would have already had some familiarity with him and his previous acting work. After his big break as German terrorist Hans Gruber in Hollywood blockbuster *Die Hard* (1988), Rickman carved a distinctively British screen presence through roles in British and American-British productions. Arguably, his most famous work has been in English heritage roles: the Sheriff of Nottingham in *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves* (1991) and Colonel Brandon in the Jane Austen adaptation *Sense and Sensibility* (1995).

figure 2

The association between *The Philosopher's Stone* and English heritage films is reinforced when the writer covers two further casting decisions: Richard Harris (confirmed to play Professor Dumbledore) and Dame Maggie Smith (in talks to play Professor McGonagall) have also taken on roles in English heritage films. Harris played King Arthur in *Camelot* (1967), and the title role in *Cromwell* (1970). Smith has starred in numerous examples such as *A*

## Author's favourites are chosen for Potter film

By Hugh Davies, Entertainment Correspondent

J.K. ROWLING, confirmed yesterday that Warner Brothers had cast Dame Maggie Smith and Robbie Coltrane in crucial parts of the film *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*.

She said: "They were the two I wanted most of all — and I am quite happy about that."

Dame Maggie, who was rumored to be having second thoughts about the multi-million dollar project after her West End success in *The Lady in the Van*, is to play Prof. McGonagall, second in command of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry.

Coltrane is to play the friendly giant Hagrid, the groundskeeper at Hogwarts.

The world's best-selling author made the long-awaited announcement when she opened a book festival in Edinburgh, where as a parentless single mother she wrote the first Potter book in a cafe.

Rowling said stepped questions about the identity of the actor to play Harry, who it appears has been chosen after a nationwide hunt and internet casting call, but a contract has still to be finalised.

The director, Christopher Columbus, has been pressing for New Jersey-born Liam Aiken, 10, half-British on his mother's side, and star of *I Dreamed of Africa*. Columbus has liked Liam since he



Dame Maggie Smith



Robbie Coltrane

filmed him in Stepsons, playing Susan Sarandon's son. However, Rowling, who has always said she wanted an all-English Harry, warned her audience that it would be unwise to believe that the actor would be American.

The film is to be made in the autumn at Gloucester

Cathedral and Leavesden Studios in Hertfordshire for release in November next year.

It is also expected to be a hit. Richard Harris, 65, Dumbledore, former head master and professor against the hero, and Kenneth Branagh, 40, Voldemort, a role not yet cast. Alan Rickman has been approached to play the dark and mysterious Professor Snape.

Rowling hinted that her next book — number five — would be published about the same time as the premiere of the film.

There were sighs from the audience at having to wait so long.

Despite her multi-millionaire status and world-wide fame, she spoke of still being unsure of her literary ability.

She said that she was always fiddling with old Potter novels. "Thinking to myself what did I see a thing like that for?" She said, "I can't let well enough alone."

She said that in her latest book she had so many doubts that she wrote 13 versions of chapter nine.

"I actually thought I'd never get past the chapter at one point. A couple of times I threw down my pen and said, 'no, it's too difficult. I can't do it. I did do it in the end, but it was a real nightmare'."

Rowling said it was "very easy" to shug off her fame while actually writing.

*Room with a View* (1986), *The Secret Garden* (1993), and *Gosford Park* (2001). The associations that come

with these particular casting decisions sets up expectations for a similarly limited representations of traditional Britishness, as discussed in the literature review.

It is also worth noting that many of the heritage films discussed here are based on what could be considered canonical British literature, thus they are 'pre-sold' by their automatic association with 'quality'. By creating

links to these films through the choice of actors, one can argue that those involved in the casting for Harry Potter are capitalising on this association with quality.

Further casting announcements were picked up by *The Daily Telegraph* and reported on 14th August 2000 [figure 3]. This article confirms the casting of British actors Dame Maggie Smith (playing Professor McGonagall) and Robbie Coltrane (playing Hagrid) as well as referring to some of the other actors involved (Harris and Rickman). Again, the previous roles of the actors play a part in setting up certain associations for the reader. In the second paragraph we are reminded of Smith's work in British theatre, for which she could be

considered part of a canon of classically trained British actors who started their careers in Shakespeare and have since received honorific titles from the British establishment. (Smith's early co-stars include Laurence Olivier, Baron Olivier of Brighton, and Richard Burton CBE.) Again, this establishes a link between the forthcoming Harry Potter film and 'quality' representations of traditional Britishness.

At the time, Coltrane was well known for his TV work, most notably as the anti-hero Fitz in the ITV crime series *Cracker* (1993 – 1996, 2006). This association with a more low-brow form of entertainment (when compared with theatre or film), coupled with his portrayal of the rather low-brow character of Fitz, seems to go some way to placing Coltrane's screen presence on a lower social standing from the other actors previously discussed (Rickman and Smith). This emphasises the class disparity between Coltrane's character in *The Philosopher's Stone* (Hagrid) and the other teachers at Hogwarts school. Thus a class-bound world for the film is established. Higson describes this feature as 'bankable' when it comes to big budget representations of British characters and setting on an international scale (2011: 27). An element also employed by the hugely successful *James Bond* and *Tomb Raider* franchises, he explains that these representations, 'draw on upper-class English traditions of aristocratic wealth, Establishment politics and private school education' (2011: 27). Far from representing diversity, Higson also argues that these, 'class-specific identities are further defined by their contrasts with various categories of otherness [which] leads to an emphasis on archetypal white, 'English' characters, pitted against other stereotypical national characters' (2011:27). Thus, the casting choices for *The Philosopher's Stone* begin to establish ideas and themes associated with traditional depictions of the British class system.

Further to this, Rowling's opinions on the casting decisions is referred to several times by the article. In response to Smith and Coltrane's casting she is quoted as saying 'They were the two I wanted most of all'. Comments like this from Rowling not only act as promotion in her and Warner Bros.' interests, but also go some way to authenticating the characters' representations of traditional Britishness, since their portrayals have been approved by the original author who is herself British.

In discussing who would take the title role, the article also refers to Rowling's desire for an 'all-English Harry'. This places emphasis on English nationality in particular, as opposed to the other countries that constitute Britain. Combine this with the previously discussed associations with English heritage films and one can see that *The Philosopher's Stone's* representations of traditional Britishness appear to be Anglo-centric, despite the backdrop for Hogwarts being the Scottish Highlands. According to L. Monique Pittman this focus on Englishness has, for many generations, been normalised as the embodiment of British identity, 'silencing the dissenting perspectives of the Welsh, Scottish and Northern Irish' (2017: 181). This is reflected in Anglo-centric representations of British characters and settings on film that have enjoyed particular international success: the Merchant Ivory productions of the 1980s, the Austen adaptations of the 1990s and the more recent Richard Curtis successes, *Four Weddings and a Funeral* (1994) and *Notting Hill* (1999). While promoting more exclusive, Anglo-centric ideas on British national identity these films have also received criticism for placing emphasis on the pleasing scenery that accompanies the wealthy English characters rather than social critique. Commenting on the Curtis films, Street argues that they tend 'to present a more hermetically sealed world in which difference is largely ignored in favour of using London as a site of a 'fairy-tale' existence for the mostly



affluent characters’ (2009: 142). This raises questions about whether *The Philosopher’s Stone* would adopt similar representations in order to mimic this international success.

An Anglo-centric representation of British culture is alluded to again in a later edition of *The Daily Telegraph* (22nd August 2000), which reports: ‘English boy picked to play Harry Potter’ [figure 4]. The reference to England in particular reinforces it as the



figure 4

dominant representation of British identity on screen, to the extent that ‘English’ and ‘British’ can, arguably, be interchanged. The article also states that, in casting Daniel Radcliffe, Rowling ‘fought off studio efforts to cast experienced American actors’ in order to secure her ‘perfect choice’ for the role. The reoccurrence of Rowling’s opinions and publicised involvement in casting British actors could be seen as a Warner Bros.’ strategy for making the representations of traditional Britishness seem more authentic to audiences, particularly in this case since it appears that the nationality of the lead actor was deemed more important than his experience.

This article includes a large photograph of the actors chosen to play the three main roles in *The Philosopher's Stone*. Two are male, one is female and all can be described as Caucasian. In terms of representing British children (11-12yrs) this can be seen as limited and favouring the white male. While Rowling had previously approved book cover artwork that featured all white characters, one can argue that the films and their paratexts present new canvases on which to represent the world of Harry Potter and that this was a missed opportunity to diversify the ethnicity of the characters. In fact this chance was later taken up in the case of the stage play, *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child* in 2015, when black actress, Noma Dumezweni, was cast as Hermione. In response to this later casting decision, Rowling pointed out that 'this is fully consistent with the canon. In the books, Hermione's main features are brown eyes and frizzy hair. Her skin colour is not mentioned but could certainly be black' (Berlatsky, 2015). This leaves one wondering why a white actress was cast in this role for *The Philosopher's Stone* and how many other of the screen characters could have represented a more diverse range of ethnicities.

Filling the three main roles for *The Philosopher's Stone* was the focus of publicity aimed at younger audiences in particular. The popular BBC children's news programme, *Newsround*, had reported on Warner Bros.' open casting call for child actors, encouraging viewers to send in an audition tape. The call had asked British children aged 9 to 11, who looked like Harry, Ron and Hermione, to submit videotapes of themselves telling a joke and reading a paragraph from a Harry Potter book (Hartman, 2000). This casting process served as a form of publicity itself, particularly to young audiences. It also established ideas about the representation of race since it requested that the candidates looked like the pre-existing illustrations of Harry, Ron and Hermione, immediately disqualifying non-white children. The emphasis on the casting of 'real British children' for these roles alongside the restriction for them to be white

creates a problematic association between whiteness and a ‘real’ representation of British children.

**Textual Analysis: Spring/Summer 2001, the countdown to release...**



figure 5

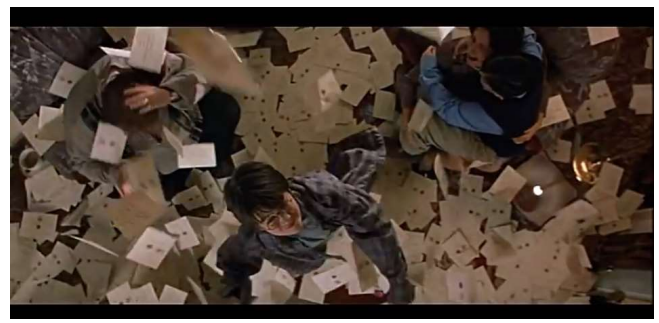


figure 6



figure 7



figure 8

In March 2001, cinema-goers got their first glimpse of the screen version of the Harry Potter world by way of the teaser trailer for *The Philosopher’s Stone*. The 1 minute 54 second sequence begins with the Warner Bros. Pictures logo accompanied by the Harry Potter theme music. The audience is then situated alongside Harry in the dingy cupboard-under-the-stairs to which he is confined by his abusive Aunt and Uncle [figure 5]. The latter is heard to exclaim, ‘There’s no such thing as magic,’ before shutting off the cupboard’s only source of light. After cutting back to the Warner Bros logo, we are presented with a flock of flying delivery owls, followed by a bird’s eye view shot of Harry as he excitedly grabs at his multiple invitations to Hogwarts boarding school of witchcraft and wizardry [figure 6]. We then hear the Standard English voice of Albus Dumbledore reading aloud Harry’s invitation,

accompanied by 16 seconds of establishing shots of the following: the Hogwarts express steam train travelling through the countryside [figure 7] and arriving at a rural station, the Great Hall at Hogwarts as new students are led in by Professor McGonagall [figure 8].

Lasting just under half of the trailer's total running time, this sequence of shots and voices has the following effects. Harry's mundane existence in the 'real' location of Surrey is established and the audience is encouraged to align with his perspective as we are introduced to the hidden world of magic through his first-time experiences. As if to mimic Harry's gaze, we are led to view the visually appealing landscapes of this world for the first time. Galpin addresses this feature, explaining, 'We are being invited simultaneously to share Harry's response to the fantastic location with our own sense of wonder' (2016: 442). In this sense some 'real world' grounding is being provided as Harry represents the audience's unfamiliarity with magic and its plausible hidden existence in our own world. This in turn provides 'real world' grounding for the British heritage iconography that is featured, as well as positioning it in a positive light and in contrast to the more familiar location of Surrey. The remainder of the trailer is dominated by shots in and around the Hogwarts boarding school (a further 26 seconds of footage). Galpin explains the effect of this: 'the use of such an iconic institution as the English boarding school creates a strongly heritage aesthetic' (2016: 433). Again one can see that a strong link between *The Philosopher's Stone* and the English heritage film is being established.

At this time some 'real world' grounding was also being reinforced through the publication of two of the school textbooks referred to in the *The Philosopher's Stone*. *Fantastic Beasts and Where To Find Them* [figure 9] and *Quidditch Through The Ages* [figure 10] appear on Harry's list of books that he must buy before arriving at Hogwarts. Rowling wrote these

textbooks and had them published in conjunction with the UK's Comic Relief fundraising event in March 2001 with 80% of proceeds going to this charity. As of July 2008, the books combined have earned an estimated \$30 million for Comic Relief. At the time of release, this did not only create more publicity for the forthcoming film but they also added to the sense of 'realness' of the magical world of Harry Potter and the traditional Britishness iconography it promoted.

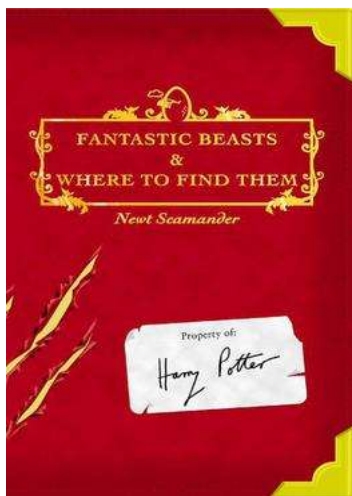


figure 9

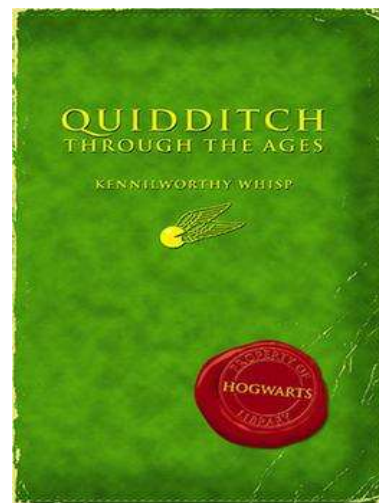


figure 10

### **Textual Analysis: November 2001, paratexts accompany the film's release**

The Bill Douglas Cinema Museum holds a variety of materials that were produced in conjunction with the release of *The Philosopher's Stone*. The museum's curator, Phil Wickham, writes about the benefit of analysing these ephemeral paratexts, arguing that they can, 'demonstrate the weft and weave of cinematic experience as it was understood without the benefit of hindsight' (2010: 317). That is to say that they provide insight into the audience's interactions with a film at the time. An analysis of these materials will thus uncover ideas and themes consumed by individuals upon the film's release.



figure 11

One of the items held at the museum is the poster used to promote the cinematic run of *The Philosopher's Stone* (the USA used a slightly different version to accommodate the title change of *Sorcerer's Stone* but it featured almost all of the same characters and iconography). This image was also used as the DVD and Blu Ray cover, thus it is a particularly important paratext to analyse [figure 11]. Looking at the representation of people, the face of Harry Potter actor

Daniel Radcliffe holds prominence by meeting our eye line in the middle of the image; a variety of characters are positioned around him in a C-like shape, which encourages us to view them in a certain order, connoting their importance. Harry shares the mid-level space with two other male characters, Dumbledore and Hagrid, while the only two females, Hermione and McGonagall, sit lower in the image behind Ron and Snape. Notably, McGonagall represents the end of the C-like shape of character importance. This positioning is interesting because Hermione (along with Ron) is arguably a more important character in the film than Dumbledore and Hagrid, given that she occupies considerably more screen time than both. McGonagall also occupies more screen time than Snape but has been positioned behind him. When one also considers that all of the characters featured are white (when there are characters of other ethnicities in the film) the representation of white males is prominent. This becomes problematic when one considers the sense of 'authenticity' that was created

around the British aspects of the film, as discussed previously. The connotation here is that a purportedly ‘realistic’ representation of traditional Britishness is being portrayed as one that lacks diversity.

Looking at the costumes presented, all of the characters are wearing their Hogwarts robes. In the film, the Hogwarts teaching staff (Hagrid, Dumbledore, Snape and McGonagall) are only ever seen to wear these costumes, however, Harry, Ron and Hermione have other outfits. This demonstrates that a deliberate decision has been made to present them in their robes. To have all of the characters dressed in this way along with the image of Hogwarts castle in the top left indicates the importance of the boarding school setting in the film, which in turn emphasises the heritage iconography that comes with it. Along with the inclusion of the Hogwarts Express, these elements help to align Harry Potter with the English heritage films and the narrow, nostalgic gaze they invite.

A set of postcards specifically aimed at school children borrows the character images from the film poster, thus reinforcing the ideas and themes previously discussed [figure 12].<sup>1</sup> The postcards were made available in cinemas during February 2002 (coinciding with half term holidays) alongside the film’s box office run. The differences from the poster are:

Hagrid, for whom an alternative but similar



figure 12

<sup>1</sup> The poster advertising the postcards can be considered a paratext in its own right, enticing audiences to make multiple trips to the cinema to collect all of the postcards.

image is used, and the Gringotts bank goblins, who did not feature on the poster. Once again there are more male characters featured and of the only two females included, Hermione shares her postcard with Ron. This is significant with regards to gender representation as this leaves McGonagall as the only female character to stand alone compared with the four males (Harry, Snape, Hagrid and Dumbledore).

As these are almost all the same character images from the poster, the Hogwarts robes are again a consistent presence. To add to this nostalgic, heritage aesthetic, the Goblins are also wearing old-fashioned-looking attire and looking down on Harry in an image that feels rather reminiscent of Charles Dickens' *Oliver Twist* character. Commenting on the scene from the film that this image represents, Galpin argues that a 'heritage space' is created through 'costumes and sets all strongly reminiscent of Dickensian London' (2016: 441).

Other images in the foreground and background of the postcards can also be associated with heritage iconography. For example, all of the characters' names are presented on scrolls and Harry's background includes a knight chess piece, stone pillars, an archway and a stone staircase, which one would associate with the Hogwarts castle interior.

It is also interesting to note that of all the wizards and witches featured in both the film poster and postcards, Harry is the only one who is not looking directly at the audience: he is looking into the wizarding world, which parallels the audience who are also looking into this world, created by the film. This reinforces Harry's role as representing the audience's unfamiliarity with the wizarding world, providing a 'real world' grounding as we follow his equally wondrous gaze at his first-time experiences of magic. As previously discussed, this has the



effect of providing some ‘real world’ grounding for the various heritage iconography in the film and making their presence plausible in a modern-day context.

Looking at some of the merchandise that was also made available alongside the release of the film one can see the repeated image of the school robes and other British boarding school iconography represented by Hogwarts. A mug features the faces of Harry, Ron and Hermione with the shirts and ties of their uniform visible [figures 13-15]. The background consists of a stone wall, paintings and books, which one would associate with the Hogwarts interior, most likely the Gryffindor House Common Room. In featuring these elements, one can argue that the mug image plays on nostalgia for the iconography of the British boarding school.



figure 13



figure 14



figure 15

It is also worth noting that the cartoon version of Harry Potter, featured on the original book covers, does not wear the boarding school uniform to the same extent [figures 16-18]. He often wears the robe but over the more casual attire of a striped jumper and jeans. This demonstrates that the film paratexts in particular are seeking to emphasise more traditional notions of the British boarding school aesthetic.

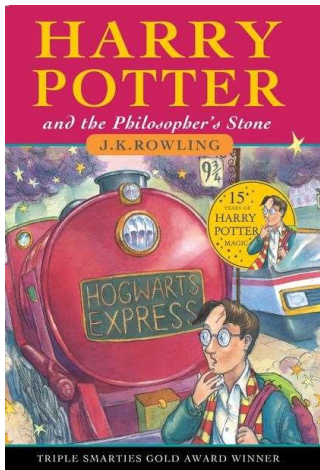


figure 16

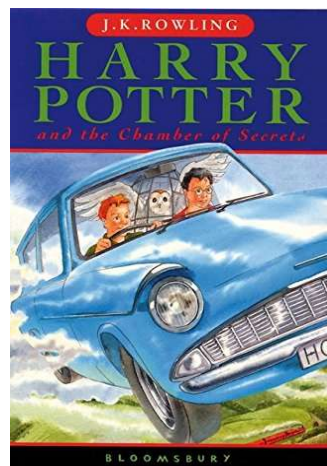


figure 17

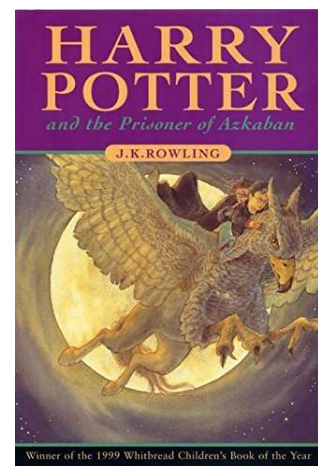


figure 18

The textual analysis of publicity and promotional materials surrounding *The Philosopher's Stone* has revealed the positive representation of ingredients associated with the English heritage genre. Indeed, during the film, these do represent a haven for Harry as it is amongst these features that he experiences all the things he never had in his miserable life in Surrey: an actual bed in his boarding school dorm room, exciting adventures with friends in the grounds of Hogwarts castle, and caring elders in the form of British thespians (Dame Maggie Smith et al.). Emphasising this, Rob White of *Sight and Sound* writes that the settings in *The Philosopher's Stone* are 'a heritage theme park kept scrubbed and shiny. *Harry Potter* is like that magic mirror: it shows a wished for world - a world without machines, a public school without bullying or sexual tension, a childhood where abusive adults can be outwitted' (2002: 44).

This indicates that the traditional Britishness iconography of the *The Philosopher's Stone* represents some sort of historical utopia, a nostalgic gaze upon the past as referred to by Higson. The issue with this lies in the limitations that come with these representation which include restricted and simplified representations of race, gender and class, as previously discussed.

This chapter has analysed a range of paratexts for the various stages of *The Philosopher's Stone*'s production, promotion and release. In doing so it has attempted to recreate the discursive surround necessary to investigate ideas about traditional Britishness that were emphasised to audiences within the 2000-2001 time frame. As discussed, these ideas can be linked to English heritage films, and their role in representing traditional Britishness was made to appear more authentic through the publicised involvement of Rowling on casting decisions. Given that this is only the first entry in an 8-film franchise, which spanned 10 years, did any of these ideas change throughout the series? In this case it is useful to analyse the paratexts surrounding the last film, which came in two instalments: *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 1* (2010) and *Part 2* (2011). This marks the climax for the darker and more complex themes within the series narrative as well as providing a more elaborate paratextual landscape that includes the Wizarding World theme park in Florida and film tourism sites throughout the UK.

### **Chapter 3: Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows part 1 and part 2**

Concluding the film series, the final Harry Potter book adaptation came in two instalments: *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 1* (released November 2010) and *Part 2* (released July 2011). The former follows Harry, Ron and Hermione as they leave Hogwarts to seek out and destroy several Horcruxes: a series of objects embedded with the soul of the villain Voldemort. The film has more of a road movie/coming-of-age feel to it as the three main characters, now 16/17, travel around the country in close quarters and experience sexual tension, anxiety, the break-up of the group and redemption. *Part 2* sees the trio return to Hogwarts to destroy the last of the Horcruxes as well as Voldemort himself amidst a battle that brings together almost all of the characters, good and evil, that have appeared in the previous instalments. The two films were part of one production schedule and the publicity for *Part 1* often referred to *Part 2*, with a trailer that included footage from both films. At the same time Warner Bros. began to establish its legacy paratexts, giving audiences the opportunity to continue to experience the world of the films beyond the franchise finale. As such, this chapter discusses materials surrounding both films from 2010 to 2011.

#### **Industrial and Political Context**

When considering the context for these films and any industrial and political factors that may have influenced themes of traditional Britishness in their paratexts, one must return to the UK's film policy at the time. In 2007 the Labour government amended the requirements for British film tax breaks by implementing a test to decide whether a film could be considered culturally British enough to benefit. This was measured through the extent to which the film met criteria such as being set and shot in the UK, how many of its principal characters and actors were British, whether it represented diverse British culture or heritage and its inclusion

of British subject matter. Notably, the structure of the test was weighted heavily towards British cultural content and Higson explains the significance of this:

this was the first time that an official film industry scheme had adopted any form of cultural criteria and is therefore a landmark of sorts, since it explicitly sets out to encourage the production of culturally British film. (Higson, 2011: 56)

Higson goes on to discuss the implications of this in terms of filmic representations, stating that the scheme's demand for Britishness without identifying or defining it potentially allows producers to perpetuate 'the most dominant, established and conservative definitions of Britishness' (2011: 61). In other words, the commercially successful representations of traditional Britishness discussed earlier in this thesis.

The post-2007 Harry Potter films benefitted from this scheme and one wonders how they might have been affected by the new requirements. Indeed, it is interesting to note that the sixth film, *The Half Blood Prince* (2009), made several departures from the source book, which enabled the opening sequence to include more recognisable London locations, such as



figure 19

the financial district, Trafalgar square and the river Thames. A backdrop of the financial district is also featured on the official poster and DVD/Blu Ray cover for the film [see figure 19].

Similarly, the narrative in *The Deathly Hallows part 1* has been adapted to allow the inclusion of more familiar British scenery, which is discussed later in this chapter. While one can only speculate a link between the British cultural text and some of the representations of traditional Britishness in the later films of the franchise, it does draw attention to the decisions, separate from the books' influence, that go into constructing the film's representations and their paratexts.

Another interesting industrial development at this time was the exclusive licence that Warner Bros. granted Universal Creative to build a Harry Potter themed area at Universal Orlando Resort in Florida, USA. The deal, which was officially announced in 2007, acknowledged Warner Bros. and Rowling's control of the intellectual property and their influence over the design (source: Morgan Korn, *Daily Ticker on Yahoo! Finance*, 2014). In this sense I regard it as a paratext 'made' by the films' authors. It is important to briefly explore its representations, since it opened just 5 months prior to the release of *The Deathly Hallows Part 1* and was advertised internationally. It was also intended to last long after the end of the film series and thus plays a particularly important role in creating a legacy for the representations in the Harry Potter film franchise.



figure 20

The Bill Douglas Cinema Museum holds a *Wizarding World of Harry Potter* mousemat [see figure 20], which provides a good example of the imagery that was used to advertise the theme park at this time. The image used is of the title character, complete with his school robes, riding a broomstick over Hogwarts castle and the nearby quaint village of Hogsmeade. These visuals represent the main focus of the theme park as visitors can purchase items such as robes and wands in a mockup of Hogsmeade before heading to an impressive replica of the Hogwarts castle to ride on *Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey*. Once again there is a strong presence of iconography associated with traditional Britishness. There are further implications for this when one considers the immersive nature of the theme park. The architecture, props and merchandise are being presented as an ideal - ingredients for pleasure - and visitors will pay for the privilege to experience this. This effectively venerates traditional Britishness iconography, arguably at the expense of other aspects of British culture. Warner Bros. would go on to expand its range of experiential paratexts as part of establishing a Harry Potter legacy and I will analyse these later in this thesis. It is important for this project to consider paratexts chronologically so for now I will analyse the

promotional materials directly linked to the *Deathly Hallows Part 1* and how they compare with those for the first film.

**Textual analysis: December 2009, the official early insights...**

UK audiences got their first glimpses of *The Deathly Hallows* in December 2009 via an officially released image [see figure 21] from the production and a teaser trailer included in the DVD/Blu Ray for *The Half Blood Prince* (the preceding film). The image was actually part of an article featured in *USA Today* but with the increasing ubiquity of the internet at this time, it was made available to worldwide audiences via third party news websites such as [comingsoon.net](http://comingsoon.net). The photograph includes the characters of Harry, Ron and Hermione in plain clothes attire, walking along a London street. Differing from the promotional images for the earlier films in the series, they are not wearing their robes nor are they in front of a Hogwarts backdrop. This indicates a shift in focus from the representations of traditional Britishness in the earlier films. The characters also look notably dishevelled and an accompanying quote



figure 21



from director David Yates explains ‘They’re out in the big bad world, facing real danger, unguarded by those wonderful benign wizards at Hogwarts’ (*USA Today*, 2009). It seems as if the traditional Britishness iconography we have become accustomed to in the previous films represents a safe haven for Harry and his friends, and without it their world is portrayed as a dark and dangerous place.

The teaser trailer, released in January 2010, also represents a bleak, post-Hogwarts world for the three main characters. This montage features shots of them looking injured, covered in blood and being chased through woodlands [see figures 22-25].



figures 22-25

The colour palette for this sequence also utilises gloomier shades than the trailers for the earlier films in the series and this is particularly noticeable when the title appears [see figures 26 and 27 for comparison of *The Deathly Hallows* and *The Philosophers Stone*].



figures 26 and 27

Over these visuals we can hear the voice of John Hurt's character, Olivander, informing Harry of the 'Deathly Hallows' with the concluding remark 'if it's true, you really don't stand a chance'. Thus the grim set up is complete just as the trailer reveals the details for release:

*Part 1* November 2010, *Part 2* July 2011.

In February 2010, Empire Magazine featured an 'on set' article, making official information and photographs from the *Deathly Hallows* film production available to the British public [see figure 28]. The first thing to note is the image of Harry Potter actor, Daniel Radcliffe, apparently in a shot from the film. Once again we see this character in plain clothes attire rather than in his Hogwarts robes. He is also standing in a dark doorway, which feels reminiscent of the type of scenes we might expect to see in a horror film. This builds upon the idea of a dangerous world beyond the safe haven of Hogwarts. The second image is of the director, David Yates, who also provides comments on the direction of *Part 1* and in turn sets up key themes and ideas for the forthcoming film. He states 'the most interesting dynamic is that you're taking these characters we know quite well away from the comfort zone of Hogwarts. And you can't underestimate the odd power of that' (*Empire Magazine*, 2010:

103). Once again the absence of the safety of the boarding school is emphasised as well as the important effect this will have on the characters and their story.

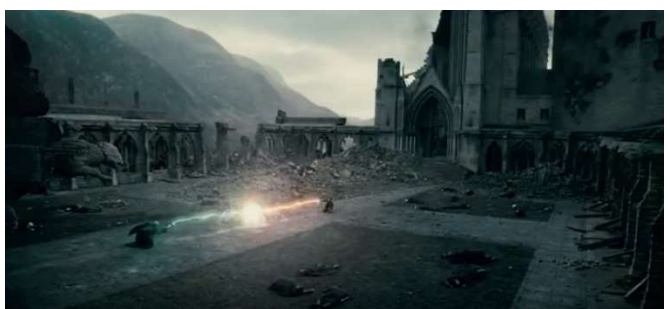


figure 28

In March 2010, more footage from *Part 1* and *Part 2* was screened at ShoWest: a convention for the USA-based organisation, the National Association of Theatre Owners (NATO). While this preview was not accessible to the general public, the internet's facilitation of self-publication and participatory culture ensured the notes from those attending reached an international audience. Various entertainment news webpages provided commentary on the preview and Harry Potter fan sites such as [mugglenet.com](http://mugglenet.com) and [the-leaky-cauldron.org](http://the-leaky-cauldron.org) shared this content, thus extending the circulation of any important themes and ideas contained within. It is reasonable to assume that those involved in marketing the films would have predicted this third party publicity and later in this chapter I will explore Warner Bros.'

efforts to harness the online activity of fans with the launch of the interactive paratext, [pottermore.com](http://pottermore.com), in 2011.

I have been able to access online reports of the ShoWest preview footage from the following websites: [movieweb.com](http://movieweb.com), [aceshowbiz.com](http://aceshowbiz.com), [thefilmstage.com](http://thefilmstage.com), [collider.com](http://collider.com), [comingsoon.net](http://comingsoon.net), [mugglenet.com](http://mugglenet.com), [the-leaky-cauldron.org](http://the-leaky-cauldron.org). Textual analysis has involved counting the most common features to all the reports in order to gain an understanding of which ideas and themes online readers would most likely have encountered. These include: a fight between Harry and Ron (included in all reports), the three main characters being chased through woodlands (6 out of 7 reports) and Harry's response to Voldemort's 'why do you live': 'because I have something worth living for' (6 out of 7 reports). Again these allude to darker themes and Harry's response to Voldemort indicates that what he is living for is all that he has found amongst the representations of traditional Britishness at Hogwarts, which the villain intends to destroy.



figures 29-32

A trailer released in cinemas in June 2010 also includes this dialogue followed by sequences of Death Eaters (Voldemort's minions) charging the Hogwarts students, the castle being destroyed and Harry and Voldemort battling amongst its ruins [see figures 29-32].

The idea being conveyed here is that Hogwarts and its representations of traditional Britishness are under threat and that without this the main characters experience a dark and dangerous existence. The implication for this is the reverence of these representations and the need to preserve them.

**Textual analysis: Sept - November 2010, the countdown to Part 1's release...**

In Sept 2010, a trailer featuring only footage from *Part 1* was released. This provides us with several birds-eye-view shots of Harry, Ron and Hermione traversing sweeping British landscapes as well as a long shot and medium shot of Harry at the top of Malham Cove in the Yorkshire Dales National Park. The three main characters also appear in Piccadilly Circus, and are almost run over by an iconic red double decker bus. These shots feature scenery that





figures 33-40

one might associate with ideas of traditional Britishness. They generally feature lush colours, are pleasing to the eye and feel spacious. In contrast, the shots of the villain Voldemort feel claustrophobic, grey and lacking in any recognisable features [see figures 33-40 for comparison].

This not only links the heroes of the film, Harry, Ron and Hermione, with representations of traditional Britishness and the need to protect this from the black void of Voldemort, but it also grounds this idea in our reality: in British scenery with which audiences are likely to be familiar. I would argue that this adds considerable weight to the paratexts' messaging around the reverence and preservation of traditional Britishness since it has been linked to specific real-life examples.

A set of character posters released shortly after this trailer also ground the heroes in recognisable British landscapes [see figures 41-43]. Each image features a close-up of the character against the following backgrounds: for Hermione it's Tower Bridge, for Ron it's High Marnham Power Station and for Harry it's London's financial district. With dirt and cuts on their faces, and what looks like flecks of blood in the bottom third of the posters,

these serve to emphasise how dark and dangerous the world is for the trio without the safe haven of Hogwarts. Voldemort's threat is also brought closer to the audience through the use of real-life locations and the text 'Nowhere is safe'.



figures 41-43

From September to November, the online social media site, Facebook, was utilised to invite users to 'Join the final battle'. Themed on the premise of *The Deathly Hallows*, this interactive application (app) was available on Warner Bros.' official Harry Potter Facebook page. Users were encouraged to click 'Like' and recruit friends to battle in order to unlock clips and images from the forthcoming film. I have been unable to access the application, however, an archived screen grab of the image used to promote it provides us with a view of Hogwarts fire [see figure 44]. As the emblem of the traditional Britishness of the Harry Potter world, this is arguably the strongest image of it under threat. When this is coupled this with the text 'Join the final battle', the user is actively being invited to fight against its destruction.

This app is arguably Warner Bros.' attempt to capitalise on the participatory culture being facilitated by the internet and social media sites such as Facebook. As a key scholar in this

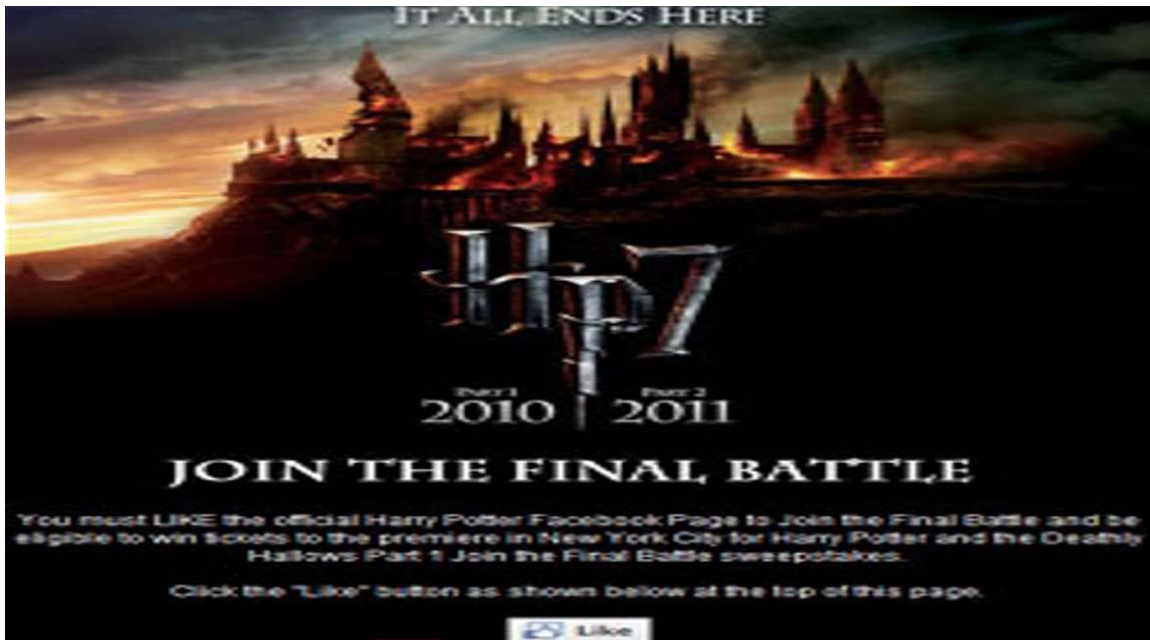


figure 44

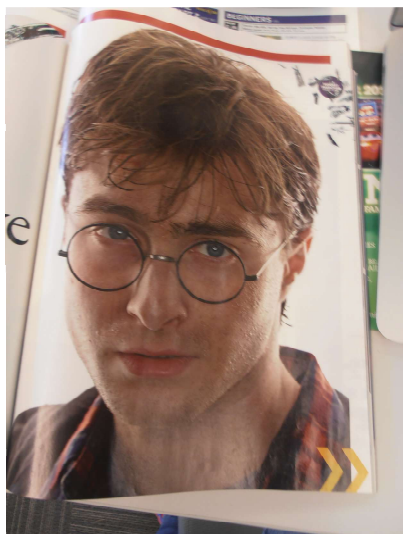
field, Henry Jenkins' initial use of the term 'participatory culture' was to describe 'a creative community that took its raw materials from commercial entertainment texts and appropriated and remixed them as the basis for their own creative culture' (2016:1). This can be exemplified through the multiple fan-made Harry Potter websites that were created as the film series progressed. The most well-known amongst these include [HP-lexicon.org](http://HP-lexicon.org), [MuggleNet.com](http://MuggleNet.com), [HPANA.com](http://HPANA.com), [The-Leaky-Cauldron.org](http://The-Leaky-Cauldron.org) and [HarryPotterFanZone.com](http://HarryPotterFanZone.com). Facebook has also given fans an online platform on which to connect and share their Harry Potter productivity, whether this be through posts and comments, the 'Notes' feature or uploads of images and videos.

Following unsuccessful attempts to shut down fan-made Harry Potter content in the early 2000s, Warner Bros. sought other ways to control participation. The 'Join the final battle' Facebook app harnesses fans' enthusiasm to engage with the early messaging around the film and to share it more widely with friends, many of whom may not even be fans themselves. It is this kind of activity that has been called out as an exploitation of free labour by Social Sciences scholar, Tiziana Terranova (2004). Indeed, these users are essentially acting as unpaid distributors, helping to promote a Harry Potter paratext and its key themes and ideas.



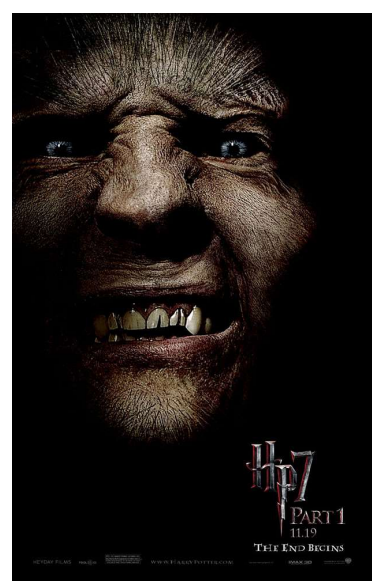
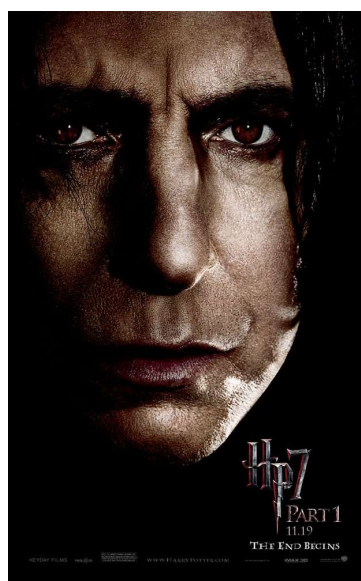
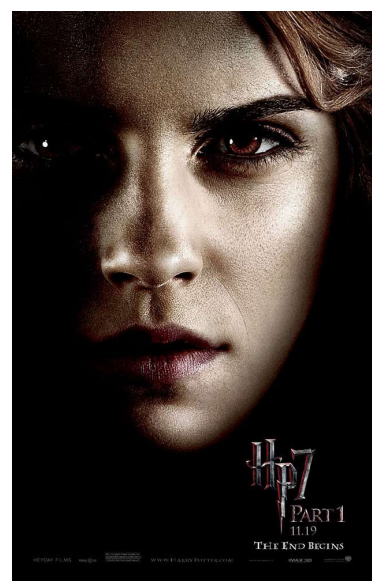
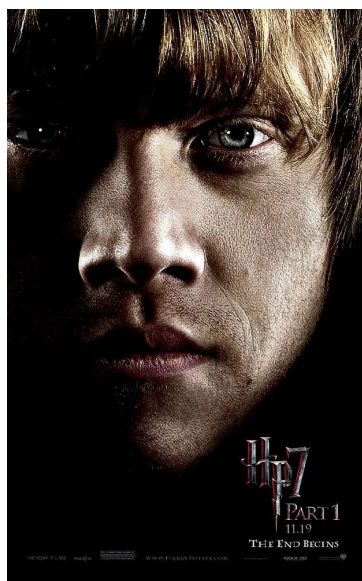
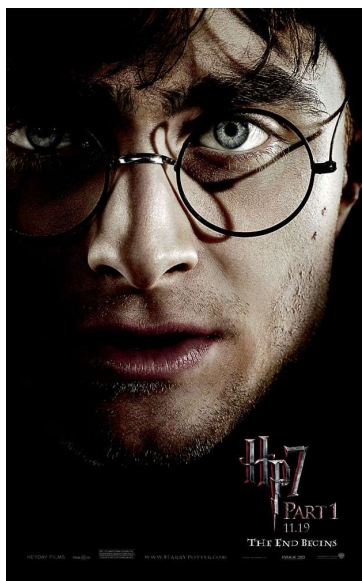
Crucially, the ripple effect of this type of distribution can reach far more people with far less effort and expense than other offline forms of promotion.

Returning to the latter, in October 2010, Empire magazine published an article that drew on interviews held with the three main actors during a visit to the Leavesden film set earlier that year in March. Photographs of the actors in their costumes and make up are featured as well as official information about the forthcoming film, thus setting up certain themes and ideas before its release.



figures 45-48

Perhaps most striking are the whole page portraits: one for each actor [see figures 45-48]. In these close-up images we can see that they are wearing casual clothes rather than their Hogwarts robes and their faces exude a sense of displeasure and determination as well as displaying cuts and/or sweat. The format and tone of these are similar to the second set of character posters released in the same month [see figures 49-54]. They build on the themes of darkness and danger beyond the traditional Britishness iconography of Hogwarts and the fight to save it.



figures 49-54

The highlighted quotes from the *Empire* interviews also emphasise the heroes' physical battle for this cause: "Before we had a camp ballet choreographer. Now it's sword-fight inspired" and "Voldemort kicks six bells out of me. Hopefully it'll shake some people up" (Helen O'Hara, 2010: 82-86).

In general, the official information we garner about the film is that it has demanded more, physically, from the actors than the previous instalments, indicating an emphasis on the fight to protect Hogwarts. It is also interesting to note the focus on these three actors rather than anyone else involved in the production. This indicates that they have become stars and key in promoting certain ideas about the film. In his work on paratexts, Jonathon Gray discusses how they can be used to set up expectations for the audience as 'they hail that star as an intertext of all their past roles and their public performance' (2010: 53). For these three young actors it is more to do with the latter and the article makes multiple comments about how similar they are to their character counterparts. Of Rupert Grint, the author writes 'its obvious he shares much of Ron's good nature and cares deeply about Potter' (page 85) and she also remarks on Emma Watson's 'Hermione like levels of overachievement' (page 86). Daniel Radcliffe's modesty and energy is also discussed (page 80), emphasising traits that are similar to his character of Harry. One can only speculate how much control Warner Bros. may have had over the perceived activities and traits of these young actors and how much they may even have been shaped by the characters they grew up portraying from the ages of 10 and 11. However, the similarities to their characters do serve to authenticate their portrayals and in turn the themes and ideas on traditional Britishness that they are involved in representing.

### Textual Analysis: November 2010, Part 1 is released

The Bill Douglas Cinema Museum holds a poster from Vue: a cinema company operating multiplexes across the UK [see figure 55]. This item not only features the theatrical poster image, which accompanied *Part 1*'s cinematic release, but it also informs us that the film was screened in special late night time slots. This alludes to more adult content as a result of Harry's physical battle to save the traditional Britishness of the wizarding world from the dark and dangerous presence of Voldemort. The theatrical poster also repeats previous paratextual imagery of the three main characters away from a Hogwarts backdrop, wearing plain clothes and engaged in a chase.



figure 55

Indeed the film sees Harry, Ron and Hermione in their most threatening scenarios to date. Within the first 15 minutes Harry battles Voldemort (a scene usually saved for the climax of the films), two of Harry's allies are murdered and one of his friends is carried away from a Deatheater encounter with a bloody injury. Later in the film, conventions associated with the horror genre are employed as Harry tries to evade a threat in an old abandoned house. The sequence climaxes with a jump scare, bringing the sense of danger more actively into the audience experience. Almost the entire film takes place away from Hogwarts and the positive representations of traditional Britishness that we have come to associate with the world of

Harry Potter<sup>2</sup> (the British boarding school aesthetic, the quaint village of Hogsmeade, the Dickensian charm of Diagon Alley). Instead, the heroes' evasion of the villainous Voldemort is conveyed through their movements between several recognisable British locations including Malham Cove, High Marnham Power Station and the Forest of Dean. It is key to note that in reality these are well-known and often frequented British places, but in the film they are portrayed as bleak, abandoned and sites for the heroes' fights, either against the villains or amongst themselves. In this way, the film follows through on the paratexts' promise of a dark and dangerous world away from Hogwarts and all its associated iconography.

However, it is interesting to note that another important theme in the film does not appear to have been emphasised by the promotional paratexts. The ideology that drives Voldemort and his followers in this film is centred on racial supremacy. They believe that wizards of a 'pure' blood line are superior to those with 'muggle' (non-wizard) heritage, and that 'muggles' themselves should be enslaved. As Sarah Wentz points out, the film draws parallels with Hitler and the Nazi regime (2015) and follows the heroes' fight against the instigators of this racism. Yet this inclusive message is not evident from the promotional paratexts alone. In fact, I would argue that they somewhat contradict the message since the actors they feature lack racial diversity. This creates an interesting divide between the potential experience of film-viewers versus those who only saw the promotional paratexts. The former may have read the film's message about 'the evils of racial supremacy' (Chitra Ramaswamy, 2015), whereas the latter were exposed to a very limited representation of race. This becomes more problematic when one considers the extent to which these characters have been linked to

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<sup>2</sup> Diagon Alley features very briefly and is almost indistinguishable as the short sequence only serves to show a character hiding in an alleyway. There is one short scene on the Hogwarts Express in which Death Eaters search for Harry, who is not there.

ideas of traditional Britishness and the need to fight for its preservation. In essence, an audience that was likely much larger than that who ended up seeing the film, were exposed to ideas about traditional Britishness that were linked to whiteness.

So far in this chapter I have analysed a range of paratexts surrounding the production, promotion and release of *The Deathly Hallows Part 1*. This has revealed problematic messages around traditional Britishness. The paratexts emphasise the grim existence of a world without the limited representations of traditional Britishness from the earlier films. This effectively invites the audience to side with Harry's fight to restore these and at times they are even invited to 'join the battle'. However, this represents only half of the ongoing promotional campaign for the *Deathly Hallows* film adaptation: how do these messages play out in the rest?

As part of its establishment of a Harry Potter legacy, Warner Bros. also made several announcements around this time, detailing their plans for more interactive and experiential paratexts beyond the end of the film series. In keeping with my chronological analysis, I will now explore how the ideas and themes around traditional Britishness emphasised here compare with those represented by the films' paratexts so far and by Warner Bros.' other existing experiential paratext, *The Wizarding World of Harry Potter* at Universal Orlando Resort.

### **Textual analysis: March 2011, Harry Potter tourism and experiential paratexts**

In March 2011, just as *Part 1* was nearing the end of its box office run<sup>3</sup>, Warner Bros. announced their plans for a Harry Potter attraction at Leavesden Studios, to be opened in Spring 2012. Having purchased the site at which all eight of the films were produced, the plan would be to create a three-hour long walking tour, which would allow visitors to ‘walk on to some of the most memorable sets including the [Hogwarts] Great Hall and Dumbledore’s office’ (Mulderrig, reporting in the *Watford Observer* in 2011). Arguably, this was Warner Bros.’ attempt to capitalise on the Harry Potter fan tourism that had grown in the UK as well as maintain interest in the franchise long after the end of the film series.

Fans’ desire to immerse themselves in the world of Harry Potter had been demonstrated through the increasing number of visitors to the UK sites featured in the films. One such example is Kings Cross train station in London; in 1999, station authorities acknowledged its role in the stories by erecting a ‘Platform 9 3/4s’ sign, which fans from ‘all over the world have ventured to’ (*Strawberry Tours*). From my own experience at the time, I had also heard of walking tours that claimed to show you the real-life inspiration for Diagon Alley in no less than three separate locations: London, Edinburgh and York. The official *Warner Bros. Studio Tour* would harness this activity, giving visitors the chance to walk amongst a variety of sets from the film, all in one location. The grand plans for the site were no secret as the senior vice president and managing director at Warner Bros. Studios Leavesden, Dan Dark, was reported as stating that ‘the company hopes the tour will become one of the leading visitor attractions in Europe’ (Mulderrig, 2011). With hindsight one can note that it has indeed

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<sup>3</sup> The Deathly Hallows Part 1 played in cinemas in the UK and in the USA from November 2010 until April 2011.

become a highly frequented site, attracting over 6000 visitors daily (Coffey, 2016), and it is featured on the official tourism website of Great Britain: [www.visitbritain.com](http://www.visitbritain.com).

To successfully position the Studio Tour and its representations as such an important site for British tourism means that it plays a role in constructing a dominant conception of British identity. The president and managing director of Warner Bros. UK, Ireland and Spain, Josh Berger, alluded to this in 2011 when he claimed that ‘it will celebrate the exceptional British creativity and craftsmanship that goes into making major movies here in the UK’ (Mulderrig, 2011). In other words, it will not just include sets from the Harry Potter films but demonstrate their specific British offering. With this in mind, what ideas were being framed by what was known of the Studio Tour at this time (March 2011)?

Having only officially confirmed the inclusion of the Great Hall and Dumbledore’s office, coupled with the release of an early concept art image [see figure 56], the Studio Tour



figure 56



seemed to be concentrating on crystallising and preserving the iconography of Hogwarts, much like the *Wizarding World* theme park in Orlando.

As discussed before, this represents certain ideas about traditional Britishness, and positioning this as a visitors attraction, an immersive ideal, has the effect of venerating these ideas. Jasna Potocnik Topler and Tjasa Spenko demonstrate this in their article on the impact of *Outlander* (2014-) on the tourism and identity of Scotland. They argue that the success of the television show and its related Scottish tourism have contributed to the rebirth of the Scots Gaelic language it features, which is now taught in schools and universities (2019: 83). This can be seen as having a positive effect on Scottish identity and heritage since the language had previously been banned under British rule. However, in the case of Warner Bros.' site for British tourism, the Studio Tour, narrow and problematic ideas on Britishness are accentuated, as previously discussed. While these plans for extending the Harry Potter legacy were being publicised, their importance was also being reiterated by the promotion for *The Deathly Hallows Part 2*, which emphasised the 'end of the line' for the film series.

### **Textual analysis: March - April 2011, the countdown to the release of Part 2**

Since *Part 1* and *Part 2* were part of the same production and *Part 1*'s promotional paratexts had already featured footage from *Part 2*, the marketing campaign for the latter was not as extensive. The 18th March saw the online release of a short video featuring some previously unseen material from the film as well as comments from the main actors and production personnel. This provides a distinct emphasis on the end of the series as seven out of the nine soundbites refer to the 'climax', 'final battle', 'end' and 'tying up the saga'. Amongst previously seen footage of 'the battle of Hogwarts', new shots of a speeding Gringotts Bank cart, a raging fire and a fearsome dragon [see figures 57-59] accompany comments such as

‘It’s a much more spectacular action picture’ and ‘your heart’s going to race’. This emphasises the idea of the film series going out with a bang.



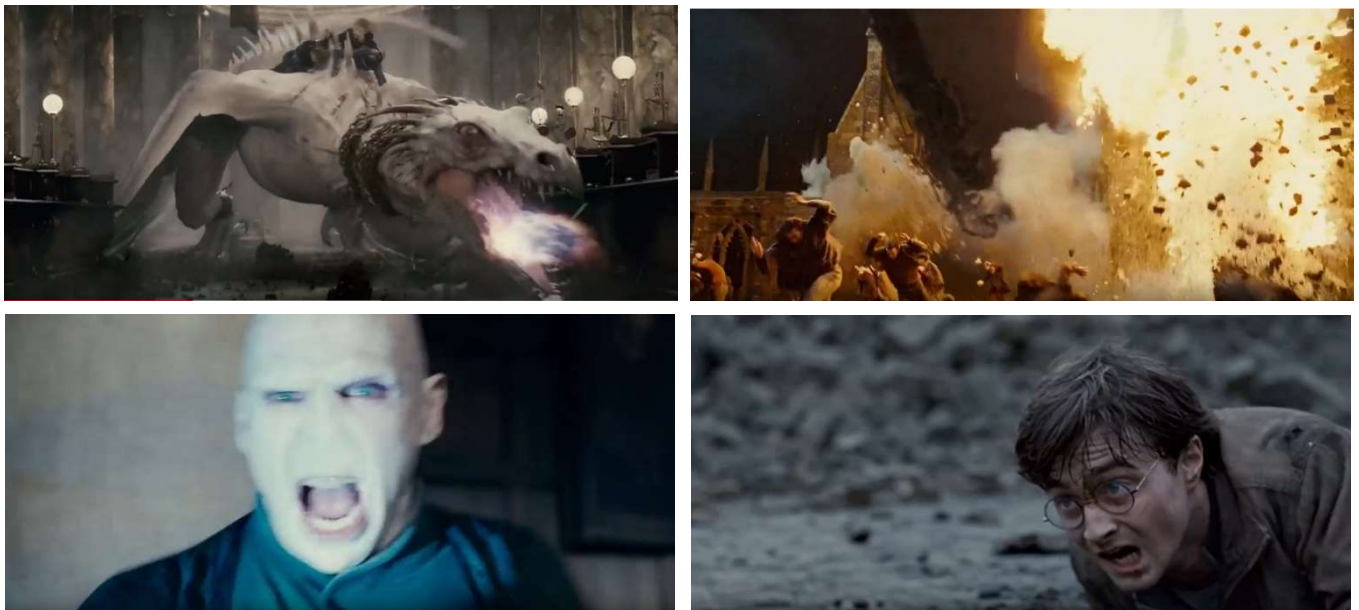
figures 57-59

Shortly after this a new film poster for *Part 2* was released [see figure 60]. The gloomy image consists of a stare down between a bruised and bloodied Harry and the antagonist Voldemort, with the words ‘It all ends 7.15’. This text seems to emphasise two things: within the narrative it refers to the climax of Harry’s long-standing fight with Voldemort, and outside of this fictional world it reminds us that the release of *Part 2* on 15<sup>th</sup> July will mean the end of the film series.



figure 60

In April, a trailer for the film continued to emphasise themes of an explosive conclusion. A large chunk of the runtime (55 out of 110 seconds) mainly consists of quick bursts of action scenes, such as a dragon breathing fire and the explosion of Hogwarts, interspersed with shots of Voldemort shouting and the struggling faces of the film's heroes [see figures 61-64]. The musical soundtrack is a building orchestral piece that feels like a rallying cry to battle and we hear the voice of Voldemort addressing Harry: 'on this night join me and confront your fate'. The following words are split into titles that are interspersed with the action scenes: 'on 15 July only one can live'. Following this we also hear Harry say 'I never wanted any of you to die for me' accompanied by a shot a lifeless Fred Weasley being cradled by his family. The combined effect of all this is to emphasise the climactic nature of the battle as well as to remind the audience of the threat Voldemort poses to Harry, his friends and the traditionally British way of life established at Hogwarts.



figures 61-64

Adding to this, the remaining 37 seconds includes faster cuts between action scenes as well as a pacier, more dramatic musical soundtrack. It ends with the familiar 'Harry Potter' titles,

continuing the gloomy colour palette of *Part 1*. In addition to this a further title states ‘complete the journey in 3D’, once again reminding us of the conclusion of the film series [see figures 65-66].



figures 65-66

The first 10 seconds of the trailer is markedly very different in tone to the rest. It almost acts as a prologue but is structured in a way that only committed fans would understand. We are presented with a succession of distorted shots that fade to black, accompanied by a simple rendition of Hedwig’s theme (the series’ most famous melody) being played on the celeste. The shots provide glimpses of the horcruxes Harry must destroy as well as some of the background to the character of Snape, which is a long-standing mystery of the series to be answered in this film. The important thing to note here is the slightly cryptic aspect of this short sequence versus the clarity of and time spent on the themes in the rest of the trailer. This demonstrates the decision to structure the trailer, which will be seen by a large audience worldwide and not just Harry Potter fans, in a way that places emphasis on the explosive ending to the series. This in turn sets the scene for the legacy paratexts, which take over where the film series has ended.

The textual analysis of publicity and promotional materials surrounding *The Deathly Hallows* has revealed a theme of veneration of the representations of traditional Britishness first

establish in *The Philosopher's Stone*. In several paratexts, audiences are encouraged to align with Harry's cause to protect these representations from the threat of Voldemort. The experiential legacy paratexts being established at this time (the Studio Tour) also provide continuing, immersive engagement with these problematic representations of traditional Britishness. It is important to consider these findings within a review of my entire investigation and to discuss their influence on a dominant conception of British national identity.

## Conclusion

This thesis has explored the ways in which the official paratexts for the Harry Potter films have framed their representations of traditional Britishness. As outlined in the introduction, I considered official paratexts to be the texts that surrounded the release of the films, which were ‘authored’ by Warner Bros., and official announcements made by the cast and crew, including Rowling. Texts such as trailers and posters prepped audiences by emphasising the main themes and ideas of the films; this included representations of British characters and settings. Since these cultural referents can contribute to a dominant set of ideas on British national identity, the purpose of my investigation has been to gain some understanding of the meanings that they created and what they said to audiences about the values and qualities that distinguish Britain and the British people.

I have conducted this investigation through textual analysis of paratexts surrounding the first and final two films of the series. This has allowed me to gain a sense of how the series’ representations of traditional Britishness were first introduced to audiences and later how their legacy was established through long-standing experiential paratexts and sites of British tourism. Key to this analysis has been the understanding of what constitutes representations of ‘traditional Britishness’, which I discussed in the introduction and literature review: it is ‘a spectacle of the past; it is a spectacle of luxury; and it is a spectacle of Englishness’ (Higson, 2011: 149). It has also been important to consider the industrial and political context for the Harry Potter films and their paratexts, to understand how this may have shaped their representations of traditional Britishness.

In Chapter 2 I identified several possible contextual influences on the representations of traditional Britishness in the first Harry Potter film, *The Philosopher’s Stone*, and its

paratexts. Popular trends in Hollywood, profitability, and the UK government's approach to film funding and investment are all considered contributing factors to the paratexts' emphasis on anglo-centric iconography associated with traditional Britishness: this includes sweeping 'green and pleasant' landscapes, steam trains and castles.

In the official announcements about the forthcoming film, reported in the national press, I also identified attempts to link *The Philosopher's Stone* to English heritage films: a purveyor of representations of traditional Britishness. This link was achieved through press releases regarding the cast, which included a significant amount of actors notable for having taken on English heritage roles. These actors include Alan Rickman, Dame Maggie Smith and Richard Harris. In perpetuating these particular representations of traditional Britishness, the film and its paratexts also echo the genre's tendency to privilege whiteness, upper-middle class values, heterosexuality and the able-bodied.

Moving onto the film's trailer, poster and other promotional items, I identified the positive positioning of these representations of traditional Britishness as well as a particular emphasis on Hogwarts and its traditional English boarding school aesthetic.

In summary, the paratexts for *The Philosopher's Stone* collectively provide several links to existing ideas and representations of traditional Britishness, notably purveyed by English heritage films. The environment created by these representations was established as the one in which Harry would thrive, away from his mundane existence in suburban Surrey.

Rowling's publicised involvement in the casting for the film could also be seen as a Warner Bros' strategy for authenticating these representations for audiences, since she is the original author and a Briton herself. This becomes particularly problematic when one considers the lack of diversity amongst the cast. Rowling actually sought to address this retrospectively in

2015 when she supported the casting of black actress, Noma Dumezweni, as Hermione in the Harry Potter stage play. At the time Rowling commented that this character could have always been black since her skin colour is not mentioned in the books. The issue here though is that in 2000, Warner Bros. and Rowling decided she was not, and with the Harry Potter legacy paratexts including this particular representation, the white version of Hermione will likely be the one that is normalised. Rowling has made other attempts to retrospectively diversify the Harry Potter series, including an announcement in 2007 that Dumbledore was gay, even though there had been no previous mention of this in the books or the films. This move has been criticised as disingenuous since ‘it treats minorities as an afterthought, a tacked-on addition to an otherwise uncompromising story’ (Moss, 2019). Certainly, it highlights the lack of diversity amongst the representations of British characters, which were established in the paratexts for *The Philosopher’s Stone*.

In Chapter 3, I analysed the paratexts surrounding the final two films of the series: *The Deathly Hallows, Part 1* and *Part 2*. This gave me an understanding of the progression of the film series’ representations of traditional Britishness as well as the evolution of the paratexts themselves. I identified the development of the British cultural test for film as a contextual influence on the regular use of recognizable British backdrops throughout *Part 1* and its paratexts in particular. This had the effect of validating their representations since they could be associated with real-life British scenery, familiar to the audience.

Moving onto the officially released images from *Part 1*’s production and its multiple trailers and posters, traditional Britishness iconography is almost completely absent. The visual of Harry, Ron and Hermione in their Hogwarts robes, which had dominated the paratexts for *The Philosopher’s Stone* and the earlier films in the series, is replaced by darker imagery of



these characters looking either disheveled or injured and wearing plain clothes. This has the effect of conveying a dark and dangerous world outside the haven of Hogwarts and its representations of traditional Britishness. This idea is developed in the trailers and posters for *Part 2* as these focus on Harry's battle against Voldemort in order to save Hogwarts, thereby venerating its representations of traditional Britishness.

Regarding the evolution of the paratexts, the increasing ubiquity of the internet at this time meant that websites and social media effectively replaced the national press as platforms on which to make the latest official announcements about the films. For *The Deathly Hallows*, this took the form of several teaser trailers, which combined new, unseen material with previously released footage. I counted no less than four trailers leading up to *Part 1* alone, which means that certain visuals and themes were emphasized over and over again to audiences in a way that was not possible before the universality of the internet. The promotion for *Part 1* also took advantage of the interactivity afforded by this platform. On the Harry Potter Facebook page, a promotional application for the film invited users to 'Join the battle' by liking and sharing its content. This essentially saw the public promoting the film on Warner Bros.' behalf in a ripple-like effect that would have reached a wider audience than more traditional promotional paratexts, such as billboard posters. The Facebook application also engaged the public in such a way that they could become part of the messages and themes around the film.

This is a feature shared with the legacy paratexts that Warner Bros. began to establish at this time. Experiential paratexts such as the Studio Tour allow visitors to walk amongst the Harry Potter film sets and their representations of traditional Britishness. The immersive nature of these paratexts brings these representations into the physical reality of the public, blurring the

line between this constructed version of traditional Britishness and people's real-life experience. Paratexts such as these have also been designed to exist long after the end of the film series, which means these representations also have longevity. Returning to the very start of this thesis, this seems to extend Street's argument for the influence of cinema on a dominant conception of what it is to be British: paratexts have the potential to provide even more influence.

As for what this influence is, Harry Potter's representations of traditional Britishness contribute to a sense of nostalgia for a 'version of our country that many didn't even experience' (Jack, 2017). Reflecting on the EU referendum in 2016, Ian Jack goes on to argue that many of those who voted for Brexit wanted to get the country back "to the way it was before" – or the way they thought it was before. Representations of traditional Britishness in Harry Potter and other media productions offer pleasure with their spectacles of the supposed scenery and luxury of past Britain, and Jack argues that the Brexit campaign benefitted from the influence of this: 'A significant part of the cultural economy has been built around these feelings, ranging from preserved steam railways to historical TV serials about midwives and country policemen – and we know now, if we didn't before, that a political movement can draw strength from them too' (2017). Similarly, Stuart Hall also discusses the implications for a national identity that is constructed to retreat to a lost time when the nation was 'great': 'this very return to the past conceals a struggle to mobilize 'the people' to purify their ranks, to expel 'others' who threaten their identity.' (1992: 296) In this case, these types of representations could be seen as disguising an ousting of the 'other'.

Since the end of the film series in 2011, the Harry Potter franchise has expanded into *Wizarding World*, which encompasses the *Pottermore* website, the *Fantastic Beasts* prequels

and many more themed experiences. There is much scope to investigate how representations of traditional Britishness have continued to play out in this extensive universe of texts.

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### **Filmography**

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*Camelot*, 1967, Film, directed by Joshua Logan, USA: Warner Bros/Seven Arts

*Casino Royale*, 2006, Film, directed by Martin Campbell, USA: United Artists, Columbia Pictures Corporation, UK: EoN Productions

*Cracker*, 1993-1996, TV, created by Jimmy McGovern, UK: Granada Television, A&E Television Networks

*Cracker*, 2006, TV Movie, directed by Antonia Bird, UK: Granada Television, ITV Productions

*Cromwell*, 1970, Film, directed by Ken Hughes, USA: Columbia Pictures, UK: Allen Irving Productions

*Die Hard*, 1988, Film, directed by John McTiernan, USA: Twentieth Century Fox, Gordon Company, Silver Pictures

*Four Weddings and a Funeral*, 1994, Film, directed by Mike Newell, UK: PolyGram Filmed Entertainment, Channel Four Films, Working Title Films

*Gosford Park*, 2001, Film, directed by Robert Altman, USA: USA Films, Chicagofilms, Medusa Film, UK: Capitol Films, Film Council, Italy: Sandcastle 5 Productions

*Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 2*, 2011, Film, directed by David Yates, USA: Warner Bros, UK: Heyday Films, Moving Picture Company

*Harry Potter and the Half Blood Prince*, 2009, Film, directed by David Yates, USA: Warner Bros, UK: Heyday Films, Moving Picture Company

*Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, 2001, Film, directed by Chris Columbus, USA: Warner Bros, 1491 Pictures, UK: Heyday Films

*Hook*, 1991, Film, directed by Steven Spielberg, USA: Amblin Entertainment, Tristar Pictures

*Notting Hill*, 1999, Film, directed by Roger Michell, USA: PolyGram Filmed Entertainment, UK: Working Title Films, Bookshop Productions, Notting Hill Pictures

*Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves*, 1991, Film, directed by Kevin Reynolds, USA: Warner Bros, Morgan Creek Entertainment Group

*Sense and Sensibility*, 1995, Film, Ang Lee, USA: Columbia Pictures Corporation, Mirage Enterprises

*Shakespeare in Love*, 1998, Film, directed by John Madden, Miramax

*Skyfall*, 2012, Film, directed by Sam Mendes, USA: United Artists, Columbia Pictures Corporation, MGM, UK: EoN Productions

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