

An Architecture of Happiness

Home in *Harry Potter*

by
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Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners. I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

Abstract

This thesis seeks to explore the architectural value of fantasy spaces, their ability to create home places for their audience, and the design insights they offer to the discipline of architecture. Any home, whether imagined or physical, exists to evoke emotional comfort, human connection, and positive experiences, ideas which are central to the larger field of architecture and design. Fantasy worlds have often been overlooked by architectural scholars, despite that storyworlds have always created home refuges for their audience: freeing stifled imaginations, touching hearts and minds with deep emotion, and providing relief from real-world conflicts, agitation or boredom. This thesis begins to bridge the gap between architecture and fantasy worlds by evaluating the architectural setting in *Harry Potter* as a legitimate home place, one which can bring real emotional and psychological benefits to its dwellers. By investigating the use of narrative emotions and the imaginary construction of settings, the world of *Harry Potter* can reveal new design perspectives which evolve and broaden the potential of real-world architecture and home design.

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To my sister and my parents, who have always kindled my love of stories and my faith in happy endings.

To all the imaginary realms that have captivated me and countless others, the places that have sheltered our dreams, the worlds that made us smile, laugh, cry and wish that we could dwell there forever.

Had I journeyed alone, I never would have found my way

HOME

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- | | |
|-------|---|
| 0.1.0 | Peter Pan's home in Neverland is an idyllic island located among the stars, a child's dream world where they never have to grow up. |
|-------|---|

Film still from *Peter Pan & Wendy* (2023).

- | | |
|-------|--|
| 0.1.1 | The Emerald City of Oz presents a glittering metropolis of bright colours and sentient non-human species, like munchkins and flying monkeys. |
|-------|--|

Film still from *Wicked* (2024).

- | | |
|-------|---|
| 0.1.2 | The city of Edoras in <i>The Lord of the Rings</i> employs a neomedieval aesthetic with Nordic influences, crowned by an imposing great hall. |
|-------|---|

Film stills from *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers* (2002).

- | | |
|-------|--|
| 0.1.3 | The settings in <i>Harry Potter</i> vary from bustling cobbled streets to castles and dungeons, presenting a believable and complete |
| 0.1.5 | wizarding society rooted in medieval British and French architecture. |

Film stills from *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (2001).

- | | |
|-------|---|
| 0.1.6 | Released in 2023, the video game <i>Hogwarts Legacy</i> has been met with great success in keeping the wizarding world alive for a new generation and increasing possibilities for audience immersion into the narrative. |
|-------|---|

Screenshots from *Hogwarts Legacy*, Portkey Games, accessed January 28, 2025, <https://www.hogwartslegacy.com/en-us>.

- 0.1.7 The Making of *Harry Potter* attraction in the Warner Bros. London Studio Tour enables visitors to walk through the films' architectural sets and get a closer look at many props used during filming.

Photographs taken by Martin Pettitt, *Harry Potter Studio Tour*, June 3, 2016, Flickr, accessed January 28, 2025, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/mdpettitt/albums/72157669222285741/>.

- 1.0.0 A midnight release party for *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* at a Borders bookstore in El Segundo, California.

Photograph taken by Doug Kline, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows book release party at Borders in El Segundo*, July 20, 2007, Flickr, accessed January 21, 2025, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/popculturegeek/2632440315/in/photostream/>.

- 1.0.1 The crowd outside of Indigo in Toronto celebrate the release of *Deathly Hallows* at midnight on July 20, 2007.

Photograph taken by Sam Javanrouh, *harry-potter_indigo_wide_night*, July 20, 2007, Flickr, accessed January 21, 2025, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/wvs/862610471/>.

- 1.1.0 Professor McGonagall, Professor Dumbledore and Hagrid arrive in the fictional English suburb of Little Whinging to deliver the infant Harry to the house of his Muggle (non-magic) relatives.

Film still from *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (2001).

- 1.1.1 Harry emerging in baggy hand-me-down clothes from the cupboard under the stairs at the Dursleys' house, which has been his room for the last ten years.

Film still from *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (2001).

- 1.1.2 Harry's entrance into Diagon Alley for the first time, becoming a part of the magical world.

Film still from *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (2001).

- 1.1.3 The magical platform 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ at King's Cross station, bustling with Hogwarts students as Harry departs for his first year of wizard's school.

Film still from *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (2001).

- 1.1.4 Harry, Ron and Hermione on the Hogwarts Express, journeying north to Hogwarts.

Film still from *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (2001).

- 1.1.5 Hogwarts castle approached by boat as Harry and his fellow first year students sail across the black lake.

Film still from *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (2001).

- 1.1.6 Potions class introduces a branch of magic that is independent from spell casting, enabling the creation of mixtures such as the draft of living death.

Film still from *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (2001).

- 1.1.7 The school teams for Gryffindor and Slytherin house play the first game of the year on the Quidditch pitch, a game played on flying broomsticks with high goal posts for scoring. Harry joins as Gryffindor's new player.

Film still from *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (2001).

- 1.1.8 Harry faces a greatly weakened Lord Voldemort at the climax of *Philosopher's Stone*, through the trapdoor in the forbidden third-floor corridor.

Film still from *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (2001).

- 1.1.9 Dumbledore visits Harry in the hospital wing after the demise of Voldemort, explaining the value of love and its protection over Harry.

Film still from *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (2001).

- 1.1.10 Hogsmeade station, where the Hogwarts Express arrives at the start of each school year, and on which all students depart for King's Cross station to spend the summer.

Film still from *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (2001).

- 1.2.0 *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* has several surprising plot reversals, keeping the audience engaged and unable to predict the ending. In this scene, Harry and his friends discover surprising truths about Professor Lupin, the mass murderer Sirius Black and about Harry's father.

Film still from *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (2004).

- 1.2.1 Professor Dumbledore, headmaster of Hogwarts, is a strong example of the wise mentor archetype, a necessary guide for Harry throughout the series.

Film still from *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (2004).

- 1.2.2 Sirius Black is an outlaw and rogue, first introduced in *Prisoner of Azkaban*, expanding the breadth of character types beyond what the wizarding world had already established.

Film still from *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* (2007).

- 1.2.3 Professor Umbridge debuts in *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* to portray an oppressive government official with a false, sickly sweet demeanour.

Film still from *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* (2007).

- 1.2.4 A luminous, angelic version of King's Cross station is the setting for Harry and Dumbledore's discussion about mastering death, by accepting natural passing when the time comes.

Film still from *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 2* (2011).

- 1.2.5 The underground passages of Gringotts Bank, where the vaults are located.

Film still from *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (2001).

- 1.2.6 Privet Drive, home to the Dursley family, is an exact copy of their neighbours' houses, reflecting an exaggerated image of suburban sprawl.

Film still from *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (2001).

- 1.2.7 The Ministry of Magic atrium is tiled with pristine, smooth black stone, contrasting the rugged history of Hogwarts, the crooked nature of Diagon Alley, and the mundane qualities of Privet Drive.

Film still from *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* (2007).

- 1.3.0 Harry, Ron and Hermione start Dumbledore's Army, a student group taking a stand against unjust government policy, modelling political activism to the audience.

Film still from *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* (2007).

- 1.3.1 Letters from readers testify the significance of Harry's story in and their lives.

- 1.3.2 Letters photocopied from J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (Vancouver: Raincoast Books, 1998), 253–54.

- 1.4.0 Hagrid lives in a hut on the Hogwarts grounds, at the edge of the forbidden forest, where Harry and his friends visit him often for tea. The house's design and placement were changed in the third film, *Prisoner of Azkaban*.

Film still from *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (2001).

- 1.4.1 Grimmauld Place, though musty and full of ominous décor, is nonetheless a home for Harry and other characters and acts as a safe house when he is being hunted by Voldemort's forces.

Film still from *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 1* (2010).

- 1.4.2 The Hogsmeade section of the Wizarding World theme park in and Universal Studios Hollywood, made to closely imitate the look of the film set.
- 1.4.3

Photograph taken by Universal Studios Hollywood, accessed January 21, 2025, <https://www.universalstudioshollywood.com>

/web/en/us/things-to-do/lands/the-wizarding-world-of-harry-potter.

- 2.1.0 The aesthetics of home vary considerably across the globe and
and with individual tastes; no one type of house or dwelling is above
2.1.1 any other, as shown by the distinct differences between the
rustic cabin home (left) and the modern concrete interior (right),
which are each effective in their own way. All kinds of
dwellings share the positive values of shelter, protection, and
mental and physical comfort.

Photograph taken by outreachr.com, *Contemporary Cozy Cabin*,
January 17, 2014, Flickr, accessed January 21, 2025,
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/109249103@N05/12221756025/>.

Héctor Ruiz Velázquez, *Positive House*, 2023. Photograph taken
by Nacho Uribe Salazar, ArchDaily, accessed January 21, 2025,
https://www.archdaily.com/1023787/pets-and-human-positive-house-studio-ruizvelazquez?ad_source=search&ad_medium=projects_tab.

- 2.1.2 From top to bottom: Hagrid's Hut, located on the Hogwarts
to grounds; the Burrow, the Weasleys' eccentric country home;
2.1.5 Grimmauld Place, a Georgian terraced house in London; Shell
Cottage, by the sea.

Film stills from *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*
(2004), *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (2002), *Harry
Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* (2007) and *Harry Potter
and the Deathly Hallows: Part 2* (2011).

- 2.1.6 Within Hogwarts, Professor Slughorn's homely office reminds
Harry and the viewers that it is not only students who dwell at
the school, but that the teachers as well have created domestic

environments for themselves to inhabit during the academic year.

Film still from *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* (2009).

- 2.1.7 The kitchen of the Burrow, home to the Weasley family, and cluttered with an assortment of homely objects and colours that bring a homespun warmth and immediate sense of domesticity.

Film still from *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (2002).

- 2.1.8 Privet Drive is a typical single-family house, a familiar image of suburban life and the banality of Muggle (non-magic) existence.

Film still from *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (2001).

- 2.1.9 Malfoy Manor, though a luxurious domestic place, is primarily a dark and unhomely dwelling. Being used as the headquarters for Voldemort and his followers, the manor's wealth and prestige become associated with evil, opposing the humble goodness of positive home places like The Burrow.

Film still from *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 1* (2010).

- 2.2.0 The treehouse from *Bridge to Terabithia* provides the characters a home refuge away from their suburban homes and the tumultuous family life that dwells there. The positive experiences they have together turn the woods into a fulfilling place of peace, adventure, and happiness.

Film still from *Bridge to Terabithia* (2007).

- 2.2.1 Harry comes to intimately know Diagon Alley by returning each summer to buy his wizarding school supplies for another year of Hogwarts classes.

Film still from *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*
(2001).

- 2.2.2 The Leaky Cauldron pub in Diagon Alley is frequently revisited throughout the *Harry Potter* series, becoming a familiar homely place in the wizarding world and a symbol of Harry's enjoyment as he spends time with his friends.

Film still from *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*
(2004).

- 2.2.3 The Quidditch pitch embodies Harry's positive experiences of thrilling competition, exhilaration, and triumph, such as winning important sports matches for his team as pictured above. As he feels particularly at ease when he is flying in the air on a broomstick, the Quidditch pitch is associated with homely feelings of comfort, peace and contentment.

Film still from *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*
(2001).

- 2.2.4 The spells of dark wizards bombard Hogwarts, the stronghold for the side of good during the wizarding war in *Deathly Hallows*. It is the homeland which Harry is defending and which, if taken by the nefarious Death Eaters, marks the beginning of a new era of Dark Magic similar to the hostile invasion of any real-world nation.

Film still from *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 2*
(2011).

- 2.3.0 The Hero's Journey as outlined by Joseph Campbell reflects the storyline of many mythologies (including religious narratives such as the life of Jesus, Buddha and Bhagavan Krishna), essentially consisting of a home or departure point which has been outgrown, a journey of discovery and self-development,

and a return to the departure point, having established a new and better home within their changed selves, a psychological state of comfort and self-development.

Diagram by author.

- 2.3.1 In the Star Wars film series, Luke Skywalker's journey has often
and been compared with the archetypal hero's journey: he begins in
- 2.3.2 a desolate and barren homeworld, receives a call to adventure
(in the form of an older Jedi Master Obi-Wan Kenobi), focuses
on a path of internal development and spiritual training (with
Master Yoda), and ultimately grows to take up his place as a
protector of the galaxy. Luke's path is about learning who he is
(a Jedi) and being at peace with who he has become, finding a
home within himself.

Film stills from *Star Wars: Episode IV – A New Hope* (1977)
and *Star Wars: Episode V – The Empire Strikes Back* (1980).

- 2.3.3 *Harry Potter* is a classic bildungsroman, allowing the audience
and to grow along with Harry throughout his formative adolescent
- 2.3.4 years and making his entire world into a home refuge which
shelters the development of one's identity. As eleven-year-old
Harry receives his wand in Diagon Alley (top) he accepts his
identity as a wizard, and at Hogwarts (bottom) students develop
in courage, leadership and skill as they mature into adulthood,
rising to fight alongside their professors in defending Hogwarts
and choosing the kind of person they wish to be: on the side of
good.

Film stills from *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*
(2001) and *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 2*
(2011).

- 2.4.0 *The Burrow* by Rafael Z. Chies is a modified version of the
house shown in the films, edited with brighter colours and a

different setting, reflecting the personal nature of storyworld places.

Rafael Z. Chies, *Harry Potter – The Burrow*, April 4, 2018, Behance, accessed January 21, 2025, <https://www.behance.net/gallery/64035291/Harry-Potter-The-Burrow>.

- 2.4.1 Fan-made art, such as *Never a Quiet Year at Hogwarts* by Anne Lambelet, underscores the highly individual experience and memory of storyworlds, as well as the desire to dwell in these idealized home places and to make it one's own.

Anne Lambelet, *Never a Quiet Year at Hogwarts*, 2016, accessed May 28, 2024, <https://www.annelambelet.com/#/stories/>.

- 2.5.0 At the end of *Philosopher's Stone*, family love is shown to be and
2.5.1 important in the wizarding world, as Hagrid gifts Harry with a photo album containing pictures of his parents, bringing their presence closer to reality though they have long moved on in death and helping Harry to feel at home and at peace in the world.

Film stills from *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (2001).

- 2.5.2 The prominence of love and family at Hogwarts is reinforced by the temporary resurrection of Harry's parents and mentors as ghostly figures, here to encourage him and bolster him with their love as he prepares to sacrifice himself for the good of all.

Film still from *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 2* (2011).

- 2.5.3 The friendships Harry gains at Hogwarts are strong bonds that and
2.5.4 last beyond the physical destruction of the school in *Deathly*

Hallows, highlighting the immortality of love and its pervasive existence in Harry's entire storyworld.

Film stills from *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 2* (2011).

- 2.5.5 Dumbledore makes time to speak with Harry several times throughout the story, providing him guidance, reassurance, and much-needed answers to Harry's struggles, such as when he shares wisdom about the Mirror of Erised.

Film still from *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (2001).

- 2.5.6 The final scene of the series at King's Cross station conveys a world where Harry and his friends have all experienced their own happily ever after, rewarded for their morality and defeat of evil. Having grown and started their own happy families despite all the hardship they had undergone in the Battle of Hogwarts and before, the lasting sentiment of the wizarding world is captured in the books: "All was well."

Film still from *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 2* (2011).

- 2.5.7 Harry has the freedom and power to explore Hogwarts castle unrestricted, using his father's invisibility cloak, as in *Philosopher's Stone* where Harry's hand and the lamp he carries appear to float in mid-air while the rest of him remains hidden. Throughout the series, under the cloak's cover, he expands the spatial and temporal boundaries of his experience by freely exploring at night and in forbidden locations, making Hogwarts into his own home place.

Film still from *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (2001).

- 2.6.8 A visit to Harry’s birthplace in Godric’s Hollow ties his past to the Peverell family of wizarding legend, reinforcing his importance and anchoring his sense of confidence and self-valuation to a home place.

Film still from *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 2* (2011).

- 2.5.9 Sumptuous experiences of feasting and celebration in Hogwarts and turn the Great Hall into an embodiment of friendship, comfort, abundance and happiness.

Film stills from *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone* (2001) and *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* (2005).

- 2.5.11 (Top) Harry fights off the Hungarian Horntail dragon; (bottom) and later, he faces Voldemort and his Death Eaters alone in an eerie graveyard. Thrilling dangers and fun adventure bring positive emotional stimulation to Harry’s storyworld, embedding it with fun and enjoyment that encourage Harry and the audience’s desire to dwell there.

Film stills from *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* (2005).

- 3.0.0 The aesthetics of Hagrid’s hut combine aspects of different and historic styles inside and out, creating a homey, rustic and earth worn feel that harkens to a vaguely medieval past.

Film stills from *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (2002) and *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* (2007).

- 3.0.2 The design of Gringotts wizarding bank and its surroundings combines and modifies aspects of historical designs from various periods to evoke an overall sense of believability and an imagined history.

“How to Spend 1 Day in the Wizarding World of Harry Potter in Orlando,” Land of Marvels, October 23, 2023, accessed

February 18, 2025, <https://landofmarvels.com/how-to-spend-1-day-in-the-wizarding-world-of-harry-potter-in-orlando/>.

- 3.1.0 Horace Walpole's Strawberry Hill (built in the mid eighteenth-century) reuses elements of medieval pointed windows, quatrefoil designs, battlements and towers to create a Gothic revival residence.

Photograph taken by Maxwell Hamilton, *Strawberry Hill House*, April 8, 2019, Flickr, accessed January 22, 2025, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/mualphachi/32625102827/in/photostream/>.

- 3.1.1 Completed around 1886, Neuschwanstein Castle was an extravagant pieces of physical "fantasy architecture" constructed as a pleasure palace rather than a defensive structure, with spaces honouring the narrative legends of medieval knights.

Photograph taken by Unai Carrera, *Neuschwanstein*, October 17, 2021, Flickr, accessed January 22, 2025, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/unaicarrera/51599267982/in/photostream/>. Cropped photograph.

- 3.1.2 The Palácio da Pena in Sintra, Portugal boasts vivid colours and an elaborate profile which reinforce narratives of wealth, prestige and especially whimsy.

Photograph taken by Jorge Franganillo, *Sintra: Palácio da Pena*, June 22, 2024, Flickr, accessed January 22, 2025, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/franganillo/53825363069/in/photostream/>. Cropped photograph.

- 3.1.3 Contemporary fantasy castles gained popularized in part through the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy. Minas Tirith is one example which presents an entire city constructed in the style of

a mountainside castle, with outer ramparts and numerous buildings with pointed spires, rising to the castle itself which sits on top.

Film still from *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King* (2004).

- 3.1.4 The two animated castles in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* and set off a new wave of popular fairy tale settings. The first castle
3.1.5 shown in the film (top) is used as a slightly more accurate reflection of real-life castles, with ordinary colours and relatively little ornament, whereas the castle shown at the conclusion of the film (bottom) is an idyllic palace nestled among the clouds, promising fantasy and luxury. Film stills from *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937).
- 3.1.6 The castle at Walt Disney World features tall towers with bright blue roofs that nevertheless is reminiscent of Gothic revival architecture, fantasizing the form of the castle and associating it with modern fairytales.

Photograph taken by Wally Gobetz, *Disney World: Magic Kingdom – Partners and Cinderella Castle*, July 3, 2017, Flickr, accessed January 22, 2025, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/wallyg/35047973834/>.

- 3.1.7 The throne room at Neuschwanstein castle contrasts the structure's European exterior by incorporating clear parallels to Byzantine architecture such as its bright arabesque patterning and stylized arches.

Photograph taken by Rainer Herrmann, *Throne hall, apse*, Bayerische Schlösserverwaltung, accessed January 22, 2025, <https://www.neuschwanstein.de/englisch/palace/interior.htm>.

- 3.1.8 Features like the towers and sloped blue roofs of the Cinderella
and Castle at Disney World (top) bear a similarity to real-world
3.1.9 castles like the Château Chaumont (bottom), revealing the real-
world inspiration that adds a dimension of believability and
groundedness to fantasy places.

Photograph taken by Steven Miller, *Cinderella Castle*, April 1,
2016, Flickr, accessed January 22, 2025,
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/aloha75/>.

Photograph taken by Peter Gasston, *Chaumont*, August 17,
2006, Flickr, accessed January 22, 2025,
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/gael/190266382/>.

- 3.1.10 Diagon Alley (top) closely resembles the Shambles in York
and (bottom), linking the fantasy street to a real historic cobbled
3.1.11 lane lined by small shops.

Photograph taken by Universal Studios, *The Wizarding World of
Harry Potter – Diagon Alley – Night*, The Universal Orlando
Resort and Universal Studios Hollywood Media Site, accessed
January 22, 2025, [https://media.universalparksusa.com/
photos/wizarding-world-harry-potter-diagon-alley-night-2/](https://media.universalparksusa.com/photos/wizarding-world-harry-potter-diagon-alley-night-2/).

Photograph taken by Phil Thomas, *Shambles 2*, August 27,
2021, Flickr, accessed January 22, 2025, [https://www.flickr.com
/photos/philthomas/51478763182/in/photostream/](https://www.flickr.com/photos/philthomas/51478763182/in/photostream/).

- 3.1.12 *Game of Thrones* has made extensive use of the spaces within
Doune Castle, Scotland, to the point where signage has been
mounted to identify the structure more easily to cinematic
tourists.

Photograph taken by Reiseuhu, Medium, originally on
Unsplash, accessed January 22, 2025, [https://medium.com
/globetrotters/finding-game-of-thrones-4ab959bf213e](https://medium.com/globetrotters/finding-game-of-thrones-4ab959bf213e).

- 3.1.13 The design of Moaning Myrtle's out-of-order bathroom in Hogwarts combines medieval stonework with contemporary plumbing systems, creating a neomedieval illusion that defies any real historical period.

Film still from *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (2002).

- 3.1.14 A tapestry of the swan knight, Lohengrin, in Neuschwanstein reveals the castle's close ties to fantastic medieval tales.

Photograph taken by Chris Juden, *Lohengrin, swan knight tapestry*, September 14, 2011, Flickr, accessed January 22, 2025, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/chrisjuden/6206418461>.

- 3.2.0 The drawing room of Perrycroft House in Hertfordshire shows the warmth and intimacy of domestic spaces from the Arts and Crafts movement, including a woven carpet, several groups of cushioned seating and a reassuring sense of enclosure.

Photograph taken by Paul Highnam, *Country Life* Picture Library, found in John Goodall, *English House Style: From the Archives of Country Life* (New York: Rizzoli, 2019), 366-367.

- 3.2.1 Munstead Wood uses common brick, gabled roofs, and prominent chimneys to immediately connect its form to ideals of country life. The textures of its materials speak to a natural richness and appreciation for tradition.

Photograph by Dylan Thomas, *Munstead Wood, Surrey*, posted January 15, 2023, Country Life, accessed January 22, 2025, <https://www.countrylife.co.uk/architecture/munstead-wood-the-house-that-edwin-lutyens-built-for-gertrude-jekyll-251406>.

- 3.2.2 Deanery Garden, built between 1899 and 1901 uses an organic arrangement of plantings to complement the structure's earthy brick and create a small pocket of idyllic country life in the city.

Photograph by Richard Breese, posted to The Lutyens Trust,
January 27, 2021, Facebook, accessed January 22, 2025,
[https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=](https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=2946803812230501&id=1456904437887120&set=a.1697280843849477)
[2946803812230501&id=1456904437887120&set=a.](https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=2946803812230501&id=1456904437887120&set=a.1697280843849477)
[1697280843849477](https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=2946803812230501&id=1456904437887120&set=a.1697280843849477)

- 4.0.0 Diagon Alley, first introduced in *Philosopher's Stone*, reflects a
- and complex neomedieval environment in the *Harry Potter* series,
- 4.0.1 containing details for individual shops, their wares, and signage.

Film stills from *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*
(2001) and *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (2002).

- 4.0.2 Hogsmeade – an all-wizarding village – is an important location
- throughout the *Harry Potter* series, revisited multiple times and
- gradually expanded with new locations.

Film still from *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*
(2004).

- 4.1.0 Several views of Hogwarts School as portrayed in the illustrated
- and edition of *Philosopher's Stone*, revealing the prominence of
- 4.1.1 towers, exaggerated height and complexity characteristic of
- neomedieval castles in this interpretation.

J.K. Rowling (author) and Jim Kay (illustrator), *Harry Potter*
and the Philosopher's Stone (London: Bloomsbury Children's
Books, 2015), 194 and inside back cover.

- 4.1.2 The Disney rendition of the castle in *Beauty and the Beast* relies
- on verticality and an abundance of towers to impress a sense of
- fantasy and wonder on the viewer, creating a castle that is truly
- an amalgam of tower structures assembled together.

Film still from *Beauty and the Beast* (1992).

- 4.1.3 The tower of Orthranc, as envisioned based off Tolkien's
- descriptions, presents a dark colour palette, rugged shadows,

and impressive height and scale to evoke a formidable presence rather than a dreamy, idyllic tower, broadening the lexicon of fantasy forms and the implications of fantasy towers.

Alan Lee, *Orthanc*, from *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers*, Book III, Chapter X, "The Voice of Saruman," accessed January 22, 2025, <https://arthur.io/art/alan-lee/orthanc>.

- 4.1.4 The initial approach to Hogwarts School in *Philosopher's Stone*, and highlighting the school's warm orange lighting, complex
- 4.1.5 silhouette, and rugged mountain surroundings.

Film stills from *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (2001).

- 4.1.6 In *Prisoner of Azkaban*, the clocktower was modified to become a prominent figure over the courtyard, as time plays an important role in the storyline.

Film still from *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (2004).

- 4.1.7 The astronomy tower was added in *Half-Blood Prince* as one of Hogwarts' tallest points, punctuating the skyline with another fantastical tower.

Andrew Williamson, concept art for *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc., accessed January 22, 2025, <https://andrewwilliamson.net/#/424577/3934680/>.

- 4.1.8 Hogwarts exterior as seen in *Goblet of Fire*, emphasizing verticality from the camera's low positioning and revealing a combination of architectural styles, most notably by the contrast of the detailed Great Hall on the right versus the simple volumes which compose the rest of the castle.

Film still from *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* (2005).

- 4.1.9 As seen in the Greenock sheriff court, the Scottish baronial architectural style includes elaborate rooflines, conical roofs, and tourelles which are very reminiscent of Hogwarts.

Photograph taken by Dave Souza, *Greenock Sheriff Court*, February 7, 2006, Wikimedia Commons, accessed February 18, 2025, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Greenock_Sheriff_Court.jpg.

- 4.2.0 The candle-lit and wood-panelled Great Hall interior, seen for the first time in *Philosopher's Stone*.

Film still from *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (2001).

- 4.2.1 The dining hall at Christ Church College maintains clear parallels to the design of Hogwarts' Great Hall interior, though notably is a much more enclosed space having preserved the original design element of windows with high sills.

Photograph taken by EOTours, *Christ Church College 2*, October 17, 2012, Flickr, accessed January 22, 2025, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/64352026@N02/8936453899/in/photostream/>.

- 4.2.2 The hammer-beam trusses and stone walls dominate the view of the Great Hall during Christmas break in *Chamber of Secrets*.

Film still from *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (2002).

- 4.2.3 Westminster Hall's distinct hammer-beam trusses were used directly in the Great Hall, recycling these late-medieval forms in a contemporary fantasy setting.

Photograph taken by Stijn Hosdez, *Westminster Hall*, February 11, 2012, Flickr, accessed January 22, 2025, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/shosdez/6880708211/>.

- 4.3.0 The large hearth lends an immediate sense of comfort to the Gryffindor common room, while the scale, window detailing, and stone walls maintain a neomedieval castle flair.

Film still from a deleted scene in *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (2002).

- 4.3.1 Cluttered furniture and thick red tapestries give the Gryffindor and common room a distinct aura of domestic warmth, as seen in
4.3.2 *Goblet of Fire*.

Film stills from *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* (2005).

- 4.3.3 Harry, Ron and their classmates in the Gryffindor boys' dormitory in *Prisoner of Azkaban*, with arched, diamond pane windows and the tower's round stone walls visible behind them.

Film still from *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (2004).

- 4.4.0 The cloister of Durham Cathedral lends a realistic medieval and aesthetic to a number of scenes in *Philosopher's Stone* and
4.4.1 *Chamber of Secrets*, providing hallways lined with distinct arched openings that are continuously visible as characters transition between interior and exterior spaces.

Film stills from *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (2001).

- 4.4.2 The Gothic cloister of Gloucester Cathedral, with detailed and ornamentation on the walls and elaborate fan vaults on the
4.4.3 ceiling which seem perfectly tailored to an extravagant fantasy world, used to film a number of corridors throughout the *Harry Potter* films.

Film stills from *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (2001) and *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* (2009).

- 4.4.4 The potions classroom in *Philosopher's Stone* was portrayed as a bright and medieval castle space, maintaining Hogwarts' neomedieval aesthetic but lacking the ominous feel of a subterranean dungeon.

Film still from *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (2001).

- 4.4.5 Rough stone walls, a low vaulted ceiling and ominous objects shape the potions classroom into a space of thrill and danger, as seen in *Chamber of Secrets*.

Film still from *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (2002).

- 4.4.6 The Slytherin common room is designed with a predominance and of dark colours, rough stone and low lighting. The films
4.4.7 highlight that its location is such that the common room windows look out onto the depths of Hogwarts' Black Lake rather than on picturesque landscapes.

Film stills from *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (2002).

- 4.5.0 The wizarding world theme park in Orlando has recreated Hogwarts castle and other sets from the *Harry Potter* films, portraying the castle's many towers, vaulted spaces, and other neomedieval forms in exacting likeness and enabling visitors to be truly immersed in and become a part of Harry's world.

Photograph taken by Doug Kline, *Wizarding World of Harry Potter – Hogwarts*, August 11, 2010, Flickr, accessed January 22, 2025, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/popculturegeek/5014155618/in/album-72157624884466291/>.

- 5.0.0 Disney's *Snow White* animated film popularized the magic mirror in the form of an omniscient, sage-like character who reveals difficult truths to the Evil Queen.

Film still from *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937).

- 5.0.1 In the film adaptation of *Alice Through the Looking Glass*, a mirror acts as a portal to Wonderland, where themes of time and morality are emphasized using caricatures that play off o reality.

Film still from *Alice Through the Looking Glass* (2016).

- 5.0.2 Harry is drawn in by the allure of the Mirror of Erised, which reflects a person's deepest desire, showing Harry images of his parents as if they were alive again.

Film still from *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (2001).

- 5.0.3 The science fiction world of *Inception* promises the ability to construct any landscape or other environment so long as it can be imagined, such as when the characters manipulate the streets of Paris to fold in on themselves. This world offers a place where one can shape their ideal home in a parallel dream-universe and create a place for themselves in the world.

Film still from *Inception* (2010).

- 5.0.4 *The Wild Robot* mixes science and technology with stirring natural settings, creating an appealing, idyllic world of great beauty and wonder in which audiences enjoy dwelling.

Film still from *The Wild Robot* (2024).

- 5.0.5 Historical fictions such as *Ben-Hur* often create storyworlds which romanticize past societies, constructing believable fictional environments in which the audience can imagine themselves and can feel they belong amongst great heroes.

Film still from *Ben-Hur* (1959).

INTRODUCTION

“Once upon a time, in a faraway land...”

– Narrator,
Cinderella, 1950

Introduction

Narratives and their storyworlds have captivated audiences since time immemorial. Fairy and folk tales, legends, myths, and more recent fantasy stories take us to lands far away, build places filled with mystery and magic, and surround us with landscapes teeming with danger and delight so different from the world we know. In Neverland we can fly and fight pirates, in Oz an entire city is built out of emerald gemstones, and in Middle Earth the romanticized chivalry of medieval Europe is given a new life (Figure 0.1.0 to 0.1.2). Though intangible, these storyworlds and the narratives they support are experienced in a very real way by their captive audience. Nicole K. Speer (University of Colorado) advocates the reality of experiencing space in narrative. A study performed with several of her colleagues demonstrates that certain regions of the brain which process changes in a person's real physical location also become active when merely reading about a character's spatial surroundings. This process of "simulation" shows that we experience fictional movements through space in much the same way as when we perform, imagine or observe similar real-world activities.¹ By extension, any comfort, inspiration, refuge, or sense of identity gleaned from a fictional storyworld therefore is just as real and impactful as such experiences acquired in the physical world. The reality of storyworlds encourages their audience's desire to visit such places, to see imagined architecture rendered in physical space, or to become a part of these intangible worlds.



Figure 0.1.0: Peter Pan's home in Neverland is an idyllic island located among the stars, a child's dream world where they never have to grow up.



Figure 0.1.1: The Emerald City of Oz presents a glittering metropolis of bright colours and sentient non-human species, like munchkins and flying monkeys.



Figure 0.1.2: The city of Edoras in *The Lord of the Rings* employs a neomedieval aesthetic with Nordic influences, crowned by an imposing great hall.

The storyworld and architecture of *Harry Potter* is one recent example which has had a tremendous impact on the global imagination. Originally presented as a children's series, the story of the boy wizard and his journey through the magical wizarding world has now become something nearer to a legend, admired by an audience of all ages and in all parts of the world. The narrative's unprecedented popularity is largely due to the success of its storyworld, which has been designed with a thorough attention to detail and a believability in its architecture that lends itself to audience immersion (Figure 0.1.3 to 0.1.5). Long after the story concluded in 2011 with the final film *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 2*, the world of *Harry Potter* has lived on in spin-off films, video game worlds, and theme parks attractions, not to mention in the hearts and lives of the audience (Figure 0.1.6 and 0.1.7). What is it that makes the wizarding world so appealing to so many? If it were merely the detail in *Harry Potter*'s architecture, then it follows that other franchises would have since been able to replicate *Harry Potter*'s popularity by creating sets which are equally or even more elaborate, or perhaps which simulate real-world architecture more closely. However, this does not appear to be the case. It seems there is an elusive dimension in the wizarding world, a spirit of welcoming and engaging appeal, which is embedded in the very buildings and landscapes themselves. This thesis proposes that the widespread and phenomenal success of the wizarding world is because, at its very core, Harry's storyworld feels like a satisfying home.

Home is of course a vast concept, as demonstrated in depth later in this thesis, used to refer to anything from a house to a homeland to a person's childhood. The notions of "home" and "feeling at home" are fundamental to architecture. Dwellings form our first and most prevalent interactions with the built environment. Home reflects an individual's intimate understanding of and interaction with space, bringing with it personal emotional significance. A person's home is their corner of the



Figure 0.1.3 to 0.1.5: The settings in *Harry Potter* vary from bustling cobbled streets to castles and dungeons, presenting a believable and complete wizarding society rooted in medieval British and French architecture.

world, it is a place where they feel bonded to the spatial features which surround them. Architecture, as a very human-centric discipline, relies on going beyond mere functionality to evoke a psychological and emotional reaction which enhances experience of space. To create this, each space adopts some form of homely characteristics: areas which shelter the human being, spaces which promote human connection and interaction,

aesthetics which invoke comfort, happiness, or peace of mind. Contemporary philosopher Emanuele Coccia views home as “a mental and material artifact that makes us inhabit the world better than our nature would otherwise allow.”² Since the purpose of architecture is similarly to help us better dwell in the world, all architecture can be considered a home to some degree. Home is the essence of architectural practice.

The spirit of home in Harry’s world and in storyworlds in general refers to a place that intuitively feels like home and which evokes a happiness deep in our being. A home is a happy place, where we experience a joy and contentment which calls us to linger and to dwell. Imaginative storyworlds can often become home places which provide intimate refuge and emotional nourishment, satisfying an intrinsic human longing to be in joy. *Harry Potter*’s storyworld architecture manages to achieve this positive effect to a higher degree than many other fictional places, leveraging its settings and architecture as symbols or icons rich with a feeling of home. Of course, the significance of architectural forms varies across the globe and with individual tastes, and as such the wizarding world’s design may not register as an appealing or “home” place for some of *Harry Potter*’s international audience. However, for many, the built environment in *Harry Potter* achieves a familiar sense of home associated with dwelling and family life, but also recognizes that fun and excitement can often make us feel just as at home as feelings of comfort and love. By evoking this full range of emotional stimulation – from domestic warmth and safety to adventurous thrills and enjoyment – the architecture of the wizarding world is fashioned into an iconic image of complete happiness, an ideal home place where we long to dwell.



Figure 0.1.6: Released in 2023, the video game *Hogwarts Legacy* has been met with great success in keeping the wizarding world alive for a new generation and increasing possibilities for audience immersion into the narrative.

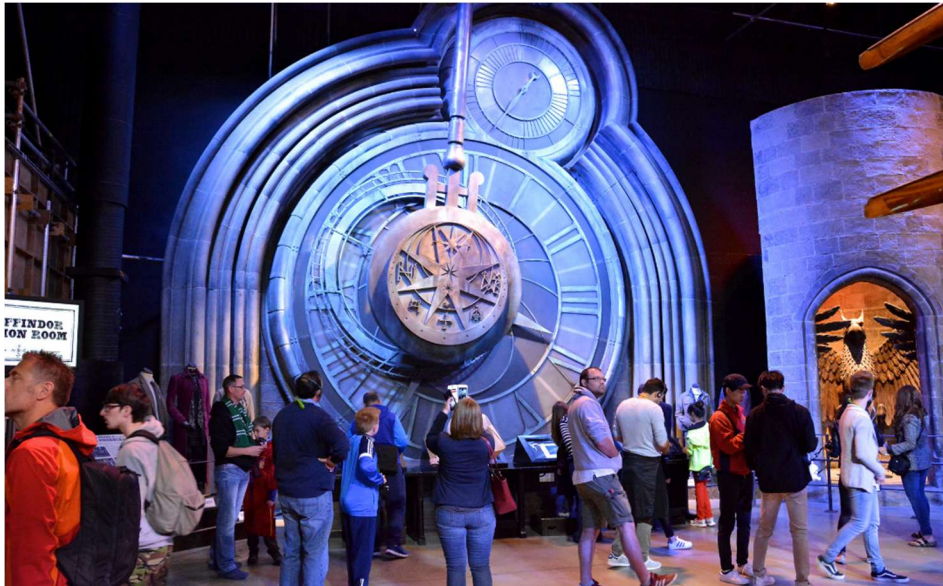


Figure 0.1.7: The Making of *Harry Potter* attraction in the Warner Bros. London Studio Tour enables visitors to walk through the films' architectural sets and get a closer look at many props used during filming.

Methodology

To investigate the homely nature of *Harry Potter*'s storyworld, this thesis seeks to reveal how the seemingly strange and unfamiliar magical settings are made into a home or happy place. The analysis sees the author and filmmakers as architects, designing every cohesive detail of the storyworld and engaging in the creation of an entire alternate

universe. The investigation of storyworld as a design artefact begins not by unravelling the secrets of the *Harry Potter* storyworld itself, but rather the context which surrounds it: investigating the storyworld's narrative underpinning, the effect it has rendered on a Western audience, and the conscious themes of home which are explicitly mentioned in the novels and films. Having established the context or "site" for the storyworld's design analysis, it is then essential to outline a conceptual framework for understanding the meaning of home as it is applied in Harry's fictional narrative and world. Various definitions of home are considered, ultimately landing on a sense of home that is at once spatial and intimately emotional, framing the storyworld as a symbolic construct, the spatial embodiment of the happiness – borne of peace, love, and enjoyment – experienced in an ideal home.

A close reading of the novels and visual analysis of the films reveals homeliness as an underlying design intent, whether consciously or unconsciously integrated, which permeates many of the *Harry Potter* settings. For the sake of containing the analysis, particular emphasis is placed on evaluating Hogwarts school as a paragon of home architecture in the story, evoking strong spatial descriptions and emotional connections related to home. Finally, the wizarding world is compared with the real-world aesthetics of home places and medieval building elements from Western cultures, on which *Harry Potter's* built environment was based. The parallels between *Harry Potter's* fictional portrayal of these places and their contemporary significance reveal the prominence of architectural symbolism in bringing meaning and a sense of home to *Harry Potter's* wizarding world.

Thesis Outline

The first chapter serves as an introduction to the *Harry Potter* storyworld as a global phenomenon which celebrates the notion of home. The widespread success of *Harry Potter* and the narrative itself are outlined to give context to the storyworld, sketching the contours of this fictional

built environment. The reception and effect of the wizarding world are explored in order to highlight the highly impactful nature of this particular storyworld and the real effect that its fictional architecture has had on the hearts and minds of its audience. The notion of home is then brought into the foreground, shown to be a prominent theme in the *Harry Potter* storyworld and a dominant aspect which appeals to the audience.

Chapter II follows with a discussion that is at once philosophical, architectural, and literary, to define the notion of “home” as it is applied in *Harry Potter*’s narrative world. Several meanings of “home” are drawn from theoretical studies, including the architectural home as a designed shelter or living space; the home as a broader spatial concept, such as homeland and place in general; and home as a state of being or identity. Each manifests in various capacities within the *Harry Potter* storyworld, however, from these different definitions emerges the central form of home which unites them all: home as a fundamentally happy place, which embodies peace, love, and enjoyment. Considering Harry’s narrative world as a home, this ultimately renders the wizarding world as a spatial embodiment of these same emotional values and as a symbol of happiness. As the homely or happy elements of the narrative unfold in each setting, not only does the novel or film itself represent that warmth, but the location designs and spatial characteristics take on the symbolic significance of a home.

The material culture of Harry’s world is the subject of Chapters III and IV, with a particular focus on the architectural spaces at Hogwarts school. In the physical world, our experience of place is in many ways based off previous exposure to spatial environments. The connotations and associations we make with schools, office buildings, stadiums or residential houses all influence our perception of place and our design sensibilities. Approaching its settings from a Euro-centric lens, the *Harry Potter* storyworld leverages the pre-existing meanings associated with both the dwelling and the fantasy medieval world to evoke a visual

association with the ideals which they represent. The homely, cozy elements of living spaces are used to convey comfort, love and warmth, while the tradition of fantasy medievalism manifests primarily in castle architecture that creates a sense of exoticism, freedom, and thrilling enjoyment. Combined, the architecture in *Harry Potter* simultaneously becomes an idealized blend of safety and mystery, of reassurance and freedom, of contentment and excitement, all amounting to a full-bodied sense of happiness, which is a home refuge as well-preserved as the story itself.

The thesis and its fantastical foray into the world of *Harry Potter* close with the analogy of a magic mirror. Fictions and storyworlds do not simply reflect reality as it is, but offer us alternative ways to see ourselves and our world, enhancing our humanity, revealing our flaws, and showing us better ways to live. In the mirror space of the wizarding world, its fantasy places offer a new perspective to architects and designers which has the potential to evolve our approach to home spaces and to design in general. First, the magic mirror of fictional places offers a measure of insight. It reflects the public's patterns of domestic desire and teaches us to acknowledge the significant impact of fictional and media-based places, as well as their role in evolving the connotations around real-world forms such as castles, houses, and landscapes. Second, Harry's storyworld home provides inspiration by its inventive design aesthetics. It supplies fantastical, unusual, and novel ways to consider home spaces and their functions, which can be translated and repurposed to evolve home design. Lastly, storyworlds promise the freedom from inhibitions in design. More than mere digital models, which must translate from mind, to hand, to screen, intangible places give the freedom of complete experimentation and unhindered imagination. With a few words, we can build worlds. Being able to control external threats such as time, war, and weather which erode and change structures, being free from physics and the limits of physicality, storyworlds offer infinite

new design opportunities. Most of all, the homes that storyworlds create have the potential to go on unlimited, to remain alive and evolving so long as the narrative lives on, and to continue being a permanent, stable refuge that provides much-needed comfort and happiness for the global community of today and of the future.

¹ Nicole K. Speer et al., “Reading Stories Activates Neural Representations of Visual and Motor Experiences,” *Psychological Science* 20, no. 8 (2009): 989, 994.

² Emanuele Coccia, *Philosophy of the Home: Domestic Space and Happiness*, trans. Richard Dixon (Dublin: Penguin Random House UK, 2024), 19.

CHAPTER I

*“This boy will be famous – there won’t be a child in
our world who doesn’t know his name!”*

– Minerva McGonagall,
Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone, 2001

Chapter I:

A Wizard's World

It's almost midnight, but the crowd in the parking lot is showing no signs of tiredness. Dressed in wizard's robes and character costumes, they chat and joke and jump up and down excitedly, but each one is aware of every minute, every second spent waiting. There is a restless anticipation, an air of mingled excitement, joy, and even fear. Most of them have been waiting what feels like their whole lives and now they have to hope it was worth it.

At the stroke of twelve, the bookstore throws open its doors and the crowd floods in. Hearts leap as they find the shiny hardcovers, the hallowed tale that would conclude a magnificent journey through castles and caverns and dragon-filled woods. Then back outside, most of them simply find an empty spot, sit down, and open the book to read at last. The parking lot is again filled with those same readers, but more than that, it is filled with the shared sense of taking part in something universal, something grander than any one individual. It is this book, this story, this fictional world, that has united parents, children, friends, siblings, neighbours, classmates, like a magic spell that reminded them what it was to be young again, and gave them a place to call their own: Harry Potter.

On July 21, 2007, midnight release events all across the world marked the long-awaited arrival of the seventh and final *Harry Potter* novel, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* (Figure 1.0.0 and 1.0.1). It was the monumental conclusion to what had been a decade-long adventure



Figure 1.0.0: A midnight release party for *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* at a Borders bookstore in El Segundo, California.



Figure 1.0.1: The crowd outside of Indigo in Toronto celebrate the release of *Deathly Hallows* at midnight on July 20, 2007.

that had swept the world like no other. What had begun as the deceptively simple premise of a boy wizard training at a magical boarding school soon revealed its power to evoke a heart's longing that touched misfits and dreamers everywhere, growing the world of *Harry Potter* into a global pop culture phenomenon that would define entertainment and literature for years to come. It is this narrative foundation which underpins the *Harry Potter* storyworld, and it is this story, along with its far-reaching impact and emphasis on home, which are essential to understanding Harry's magical setting and architecture.

The first *Harry Potter* novel, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, was released by Bloomsbury Publishing on June 26, 1997, with little expectation of success – the story was based on the worn-out model of the boarding school novel, had been written by an unknown, first-time author, and as the author herself expresses it was nearly double the length of other children's books at the time.¹ Not to mention, according to the American investment magazine *Barron's*, the first print run was going to provide only 500 hardcover copies of *Philosopher's Stone*, most of which would be distributed to libraries.² However, the unique and compelling qualities of *Harry Potter* simply couldn't go unnoticed. The book was an instant success in the U.K., quickly becoming a bestseller and undergoing many subsequent print runs to ease the growing demand for Harry's story. Within a year, *Philosopher's Stone* had entered the American market and given a similarly stellar performance – there could be no doubt that there was something special about Harry, the humble, courageous, bespeckled boy wizard, and about his magical world. By the time the fourth *Harry Potter* novel was published, the popularity of Harry's world was already beyond anything that had come before: the New York Time reported that the series' first three books had dominated their bestseller list for 82 consecutive weeks, prompting the newspaper to split the bestseller list into two, one for children's books and one for adult's, in order to clear room for other titles.³

As each of the seven *Harry Potter* novels was published, the series skyrocketed in popularity and each installment became more successful than the last. When the final novel, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, was published in 2007, Scholastic Publishing announced that the book “sold 8.3 million copies in the first 24 hours in the U.S.,” thereby “breaking all publishing records (set by previously published *Harry Potter* titles)”.⁴ The film adaptations of the novels experienced a similar stirring success. Released between 2001-2011, the films grossed over \$8 billion at the worldwide box office and routinely drew vast crowds at the premieres.⁵ Produced in parallel with the novels, it was these film adaptations which ultimately formed the visual and spatial image of the wizarding world that dominates the portrayal of *Harry Potter* in popular media. Through the films, Harry’s story reached out across different cultures and age groups, making the narrative accessible to a much wider audience and enabling a deeper, multisensory immersion into its storyworld.

Now, more than 25 years after *Philosopher’s Stone* was first published, the global phenomenon may have lessened in intensity – no more midnight release events or movie premieres packed with starry-eyed fans – but *Harry Potter* has become so embedded in pop culture that its influence is nearly unavoidable. *Harry Potter* has often been credited with sparking increased interest in the fantasy genre, with popularizing children’s and young adult literature (particularly series), and with instigating the rise of fan culture.⁶ Having been adapted into an extremely successful film series, translated into over 80 languages, performed on stage, constructed in theme parks globally, and revived through sequel narratives, in some ways Harry’s story is more alive now than ever. It is Harry’s journey through the wizarding world which is the true magic behind the global phenomenon, more than any media or marketing which subsequently built on the narrative foundation. In order to truly understand the unique qualities of *Harry Potter*’s world and the

impact of its success, we must return to Harry's origins and look closely (or look again, for many of us) at the tale which started it all.

The Boy Wizard

The narrative of *Harry Potter* has been told, retold, and adapted in innumerable ways, its world manifested through various spatial lenses and visual media, whether considering fan fiction and fan art, or official channels like the illustrated editions. Undoubtedly, one of the most authentic ways to experience Harry's story and world is by reading the original novels themselves or by watching the acclaimed film adaptations which have defined the image of *Harry Potter* in the media. However, here a summary must suffice, one which includes the major plot beats and settings which are shared between both the novels and the films. This summary will focus heavily on the first installment of the series, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, as the first novel and film established the firm foundation of plot, characters, and especially setting on which the subsequent stories could comfortably stand. This initial installment captured a youthful joy and magic, narrating in third person from the eyes of young Harry and combining many narrative typologies, such as the fantasy adventure, the bildungsroman (coming of age story), the mystery story, and even playing on the Cinderella or rags-to-riches plot. While taking the audience to places that are strange, exciting, wonderful and mysterious, *Harry Potter* tells a fundamentally personal and vulnerable story about humans and the lives we lead, or ought to lead.

Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone begins with the caricaturized, mundane life of Mr Vernon Dursley, of Number Four, Privet Drive. A beefy, middle-aged businessman, he lives in a cookie-cutter suburban neighbourhood of Little Whinging, England and is perfectly content to eat, work, and grouse his way through the day. His humorously banal existence is sharply contrasted when – unknown to Mr Dursley and his wife – two wizards and a half-giant arrive in the street under the cover of night (Figure 1.1.0). The audience witnesses their



Figure 1.1.0: Professor McGonagall, Professor Dumbledore and Hagrid arrive in the fictional English suburb of Little Whinging to deliver the infant Harry to the house of his Muggle (non-magic) relatives.

strange and intriguing conversation that centres around Harry Potter, who is just a baby in the half-giant Hagrid's arms. The most curious piece of their discussion reveals that Harry is special for mysterious reasons: the dark wizard Voldemort, who was taking over the wizarding world by force, had earlier that night tried to inflict a killing curse on the baby Harry, but it had rebounded with no conceivable explanation. Both of Harry's parents had been killed and their house destroyed, but somehow, he miraculously survived with nothing but a lightning scar on his forehead, and the dark wizard Voldemort instead suffered defeat.

The audience then is then vexed when the wizards and half-giant decide to leave the orphan Harry, this special boy from a magical world, on the doorstep of the unimaginative and disgruntled Mr and Mrs Dursley. While they may be Harry's aunt and uncle (and his only living relatives), the reader's heart aches for Harry, who will have to live a subdued existence in a mediocre, suffocating place until the time is right for him to know who he really is.

Ten long years later, Harry Potter, now age 10, is used to his unfortunate life with his aunt, uncle, and bully of a cousin, who treat him like a servant and have made him sleep in the cupboard under the stairs for his bedroom (Figure 1.1.1). Like most of us, especially when we were Harry's age, Harry often wishes he were special or that his circumstances



Figure 1.1.1: Harry emerging in baggy hand-me-down clothes from the cupboard under the stairs at the Dursleys' house, which has been his room for the last ten years.



Figure 1.1.2: Harry's entrance into Diagon Alley for the first time, becoming a part of the magical world.

were different, only unlike us, the audience has already been told to expect great things from Harry.

After an accident at the zoo where Harry magically sets a Brazilian boa constrictor on his cousin, Harry receives a curious letter in the mail. It's addressed to him, to his precise sleeping quarters (the cupboard under the stairs), and written in strange emerald ink on thick, yellowing parchment. Looking at the mysterious letter, for the first time in Harry's life, he feels wanted and valuable – someone knew about him, and thought him important enough to send him a letter. This peculiar letter, however, goes unread the moment his Uncle Vernon sees it, snatches it from Harry and fearfully destroys it, clearly aware that it comes from some manner of wizarding folk, though he doesn't tell Harry this.

However, over the next week Harry is thrilled as more letters addressed to him continue to find their way into the house in the strangest ways, despite Uncle Vernon's best efforts to seal up any possible entry points and his continued destruction of the letters before Harry can read them. Frenzied and hoping to escape the letter writer, Uncle Vernon leaves their disrupted suburban life, takes the family out of the city and rows them to a dilapidated hut on a rock way out to sea, far out of reach from any ordinary postman. It is at this broken down hut, at the stroke of midnight on Harry's 11th birthday, that the half-giant Hagrid literally crashes through the door, and at last delivers Harry's special letter. But more than that, he gives Harry the startling and long-awaited reward that he and the audience have been waiting for: Harry Potter is a wizard.

Harry at last is able to open his letter and discovers that he has been accepted at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, a place where witches and wizards just like him are trained in magic under the wise headmaster Albus Dumbledore. Hagrid also reveals to Harry what happened the night he was left with his aunt and uncle: how his parents died at the hands of the dark wizard Voldemort, and how Harry had survived despite being only a baby, to the befuddlement of the entire wizarding community. Having accomplished such a heroic and mysterious feat before he could walk and talk, Harry Potter's name is of unparalleled fame in the magical world.

The next morning, Hagrid, who is the Keeper of Keys and Grounds at Hogwarts, takes Harry to London to get his school supplies. This trip provides Harry and the audience the first immersion into the wizarding world. Starting with entry into a wizarding pub that can only be seen by magical individuals, this experience culminates in a jaw-dropping tour of a magnificent cobbled street lined with shops selling cauldrons, globes of the moon, bat spleens, magic wands and more, called Diagon Alley (Figure 1.1.2). A brief stop at the wizard bank Gringotts not only rewards

Harry with a large inheritance left to him by his parents, but reveals an intriguing task which Hagrid has been assigned: to remove a small, grubby, yet clearly valuable parcel from its vault and take it to Headmaster Dumbledore. Despite both Harry and the audience being very curious about the object, Harry knows better than to ask and forgets about the grubby little package for the time being.

On the last day of summer, Harry takes the Hogwarts Express to school, departing from the magical train platform at King's Cross Station, Platform 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ (Figure 1.1.3). On the ride he befriends Ronald Weasley, another first-year student like him. Ron has a kind and happy family that is precisely what Harry had always longed to have, and in which he now gets to take part. Ron, having grown up in a wizarding family, knows the story of Harry's legendary defeat of Voldemort as a baby – he and Harry are endlessly fascinated with each other and their opposite upbringings. The train ride to Hogwarts is filled not only with the warmth and joy of Harry having his very first friend, but introduces another first-year student, the clever Hermione Granger (who later joins Ron and Harry's friendship, forming the “golden trio” who remain together for the entire series) (Figure 1.1.4).

The real treat for Harry is upon arrival to Hogwarts school. Filled with anticipation, having travelled far north into a mountainous and wild landscape, Harry at last finds himself standing before the fabled Hogwarts, a vast castle nestled atop a cliff, windows glittering with starlight and with the warm glow of its rooms lit from within, beckoning him in the velvety night (Figure 1.1.5). The castle quickly becomes Harry's true home. There, he finds his place with like-minded peers in one of four school houses (Gryffindor House, for the brave at heart), and gains knowledge and skill from his magical classes like transfiguration and potions. He also enjoys learning about the castle's many secret passageways and moving staircases, and even feels the rush of being naturally gifted at the school sport, Quidditch, played on flying



Figure 1.1.3: The magical platform 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ at King's Cross station, bustling with Hogwarts students as Harry departs for his first year of wizard's school.



Figure 1.1.4: Harry, Ron and Hermione on the Hogwarts Express, journeying north to Hogwarts.



Figure 1.1.5: Hogwarts castle approached by boat as Harry and his fellow first year students sail across the black lake.

broomsticks fifty feet in the air (Figure 1.1.6 and 1.1.7). His life is also filled with thrills that would delight even in a non-magical world, such as sleeping in a rich, four-poster bed with red velvet curtains, or enjoying deluxe feasts in Hogwarts' Great Hall, with all the comforting and decadent foods one could ever want to eat.

Harry's splendid life in Hogwarts castle is never dull or boring, but instead filled with mystery and magic – not only does he enjoy being a part of this wizarding world, but he and his friends Ron and Hermione soon discover a sinister plot involving the mysterious package that Hagrid took from Diagon Alley (and which is now hidden at Hogwarts). They and the audience enjoy the power of uncovering secret knowledge as they find out that the mysterious package contains a priceless philosopher's stone, which can turn lead into gold and make the immortality-granting elixir of life. More than that, they find out the chilling truth that the dark wizard Voldemort is not fully vanquished after all: a weakened, half-alive Voldemort is attempting to steal the stone from Hogwarts, use it to regain his full power, and again take the wizarding world by force.

After Harry, Ron and Hermione try to convince their professors that the philosopher's stone is in danger – to no avail – the story calls upon the trio to defend the stone themselves, by entering a forbidden corridor and fighting their way past enchantments and other protections around the stone in order to reach it before Voldemort. The audience watches and cheers as the characters exercise their courage, intelligence, and strategy to succeed, but above all remain unselfish and forego the greed of taking the philosopher's stone for themselves (Figure 1.1.8). After facing the shocking deception of a trusted professor turning against them, Harry, Ron and Hermione at last emerge triumphant. Having faced the weakened Voldemort and saved the stone from his clutches, the audience feels valiant and victorious along with them. Their heroic success is celebrated with a grand feast and award ceremony at the school, where



Figure 1.1.6: Potions class introduces a branch of magic that is independent from spell casting, enabling the creation of mixtures such as the draft of living death.



Figure 1.1.7: The school teams for Gryffindor and Slytherin house play the first game of the year on the Quidditch pitch, a game played on flying broomsticks with high goal posts for scoring. Harry joins as Gryffindor's new player.



Figure 1.1.8: Harry faces a greatly weakened Lord Voldemort at the climax of *Philosopher's Stone*, through the trapdoor in the forbidden third-floor corridor.

the trio are publicly recognized for their brave and honourable feats in defending the stone against Voldemort.

Yet, more important than the grand celebration are the answers which Harry and the audience at last receive concerning *how* he miraculously survived Voldemort's killing curse as a baby. In a sweet moment alone, the wise and gentle headmaster Dumbledore reveals to Harry that Harry's mother had died trying to protect him from Voldemort (Figure 1.1.9). As a result of her sacrifice, when Voldemort tried to kill Harry, his mother's love had acted as an impenetrable shield which protected Harry from the dark magic. Dumbledore explains that love is the strongest magic of all and is something which the darkness and evil in the world cannot fathom or survive. This satisfying answer evokes a twinge of sadness and longing in Harry, who has no memory of his mother, but gives a stronger sense of warmth and comfort in knowing that he was loved, and that love is a shelter beyond any trial. The story concludes at the end of Harry's first magical school year, with the characters taking the train back from Hogwarts to London (Figure 1.1.10). Harry and his friends look forward to a well-earned summer break with the promise of seeing each other again soon, no doubt for more adventures.

After Harry's first year at Hogwarts, each subsequent school year follows a similar structure to bring his story to life (Table 1.1.0). The scene opens with Harry's humorously drab summer with the Dursleys, followed by his whimsical and joyful re-entry into the magical world. During another year of thrilling adventure and magical learning at Hogwarts, a new mystery emerges that culminates in battling a form of evil that ties back to Voldemort, who is continuing to regain power. By the end of the series, Voldemort himself – who has come back at full strength – is truly vanquished once and for all by the seventeen-year-old Harry and his friends, who emerge victorious from an all-out wizarding war to restore peace once again.



Figure 1.1.9: Dumbledore visits Harry in the hospital wing after the demise of Voldemort, explaining the value of love and its protection over Harry.



Figure 1.1.10: Hogsmeade station, where the Hogwarts Express arrives at the start of each school year, and on which all students depart for King's Cross station to spend the summer.

Number in Series	Novel / Film Title	Harry's Age	Summary & Resolution
1	<i>Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone</i>	11 years old	Harry and his friends seek to protect a philosopher's stone hidden at Hogwarts from one of Voldemort's followers, who is working to resurrect his fallen master. In the end, Harry faces Voldemort alone, fighting for the stone and triumphing because his mother's love protects him beyond any of Voldemort's magic.
2	<i>Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets</i>	12 years old	Hogwarts is threatened by an ancient creature, released from the mythical chamber of secrets, which has been petrifying students born of Muggle (non-magical) parents. Finding the entrance to the chamber of secrets, Harry enters and defeats the ghostly memory of teenage Voldemort, preserved in a living diary.
3	<i>Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban</i>	13 years old	Mass murderer Sirius Black has escaped from the wizard prison Azkaban and breaks into Hogwarts to kill Harry in the name of Voldemort. However, Harry unveils a surprising twist of fate, discovering the real nature of Sirius Black's crimes and accidentally sending one of Voldemort's followers back to him.
4	<i>Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire</i>	14 years old	Hogwarts hosts the legendary Triwizard Tournament, where an unknown villain enters Harry's name into the contest, forcing him to compete in deadly challenges. By winning the tournament, Harry is mysteriously transported to a graveyard, witnessing Voldemort returning to full power and barely escaping alive.

5	<i>Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix</i>	15 years old	Plagued by visions which allow Harry to share Voldemort's mind, Harry discovers Voldemort is searching for a kind of weapon, a prophecy, which will ensure him victory. Harry and a group of rebels duel Voldemort and his followers to keep the prophecy safe, requiring Professor Dumbledore to intervene and save Harry's life.
6	<i>Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince</i>	16 years old	Harry trains with Dumbledore to learn about Voldemort's past and his quest for immortality, while spying on Draco Malfoy's plans, a classmate who is loyal to Voldemort. At the climax, Draco enables Voldemort's followers to move against Hogwarts, defeating Professor Dumbledore and taking control of the larger wizarding world.
7*	<i>Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows</i>	17 years old	Harry, Ron and Hermione search for horcruxes, objects which contain a piece of Voldemort's soul, to destroy them and make him mortal again. Harry must sacrifice himself in order to ensure Voldemort's death, ultimately surviving and freeing the wizarding world of the greatest dark wizard of the age.

Table 1.1.0: A brief overview of each year at Hogwarts and the main conflicts encountered. *The seventh novel was split into 2 films.

Narrative and Space

As the series' popularity indicates, *Harry Potter* has been widely praised for the outstanding quality of its story and world, with general emphasis on the later installments as containing the deepest themes, rawest characters, and most satisfying resolutions which make it worthy of in-depth study. Not only the general public, but many literary scholars are at the forefront of these positive critiques: writer Greg Garrett and Cecilia Konchar Farr (West Liberty University) describe the *Harry Potter* narrative as being exceptionally good, with a fresh and funny relatability that is able to teach as well as entertain its audience.⁷ While Harry's story may not be perfect in every sense, numerous other critiques from scholars and fans alike have found that a large part of *Harry Potter*'s success is in adequately satisfying all four pillars of a great story: an engaging plot, believable characters, deep themes, and an especially well-developed setting.

As far as plot is concerned, the events in each *Harry Potter* installment consistently form an exciting roller coaster of surprising twists, heart-wrenching failures and proud triumphs that delight its readers of all ages (Figure 1.2.0). The events seldom feel arbitrary, but rather enable character agency and decision making, creating an organic and human-centric storyline.⁸ The story is also riddled with unexpected turns that engage the audience in questioning how the various mystery and adventure threads will resolve. As culture journalists Constance Grady and Aja Romano point out, this combination of different literary genres makes the *Harry Potter* novels into a more engaging and layered structure:

The puzzlebox mystery plotting keeps the pages turning propulsively forward, the fantastic mythology gives the world scope and magic and joy, and the boarding school structure makes the characters warm and familiar and charming.⁹



Figure 1.2.0: *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* has several surprising plot reversals, keeping the audience engaged and unable to predict the ending. In this scene, Harry and his friends discover surprising truths about Professor Lupin, the mass murderer Sirius Black and about Harry's father.

The cross-genre appeal is unmistakably apparent in each sweeping installment, but so is the increasing complexity of each book. The series matures along with the audience and characters, as threats become greater and issues of morality present increasingly nuanced dilemmas in the final instalments.¹⁰ These problems eventually grow to the monumental scale of life and death challenges, decisions which will decide the fate of thousands, and, perhaps most importantly, questions of individual destiny and purpose. The intricately layered, well-woven, and increasingly detailed plot is instrumental in creating the appeal of *Harry Potter's* storyworld, but it is the characters themselves who become vessels for the audience to vicariously inhabit the narrative and world.

From the wise and cryptic Professor Dumbledore to the charming rogue Sirius Black, the characters in *Harry Potter* render a broad spectrum of personalities in astute caricatures (Figure 1.2.1 and 1.2.2). These archetypes reflect real-life behaviours in a humorous slant, making them into extremified personas that are easily understood and relatable. Far from being mere stereotypes, the *Harry Potter* characters are also given unique quirks and very human emotions that increase their personality and believability. This depth of detail is often admired by fans and scholars alike, who appreciate the well-crafted, tyrannical

Professor Umbridge who hides beneath a saccharine pink aesthetic, or Harry and his friends' rebellious activism that reflects today's youth (Figure 1.2.3).¹¹

Reinforcing the nuanced emotions of the characters is their ability to have human flaws, as *Harry Potter* presents strengths and shortcomings in characters of all ages. In the mature characters, wisdom is coupled with overprotectiveness; in the story's young adults, helpful intentions are often countered by mood swings and obstinance.¹² The interactions between these fundamentally human characters can even act as a model for readers young and old, who witness the positive and complex relationships between personalities.¹³ Writer and editor Jelena Borojević commends the story for its range of relatable characters, observing that this variety provides readers and viewers with compelling personalities to “closely associate themselves with, admire, fall in love with, or aspire to be like.”¹⁴ It is through the eyes of the characters that audiences are able to become a part of the wizarding world, find relatability, learn, and take on these experiences as their own.

Similar to how *Harry Potter*'s characters convey stronger, more insightful versions of human behaviours (both the good and the bad), its themes touch on profound topics scarcely faced in real life. Frequent discussions between characters about life and death, good and evil, truth, power, and love, transform the adventure into a convincing argument about how life should be lived. This thematic depth is what author and literary critic Ursula Le Guin (1929-2018) referenced as fiction's ultimate power to deepen the reader's understanding of their world, their fellow men, and their own feelings and destiny.¹⁵ *Harry Potter* certainly satisfies this description by addressing numerous existential and psychological themes. For example, portrayals of death in *Harry Potter* provide guidance on how to accept death and continue a positive life after the deaths of loved ones. Because death is treated in the narrative, it allows its audience – particularly its younger audience – to come to terms



Figure 1.2.1: Professor Dumbledore, headmaster of Hogwarts, is a strong example of the wise mentor archetype, a necessary guide for Harry throughout the series.



Figure 1.2.2: Sirius Black is an outlaw and rogue, first introduced in *Prisoner of Azkaban*, expanding the breadth of character types beyond what the wizarding world had already established.



Figure 1.2.3: Professor Umbridge debuts in *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* to portray an oppressive government official with a false, sickly sweet demeanour.



Figure 1.2.4: A luminous, angelic version of King's Cross station is the setting for Harry and Dumbledore's discussion about mastering death, by accepting natural passing when the time comes.

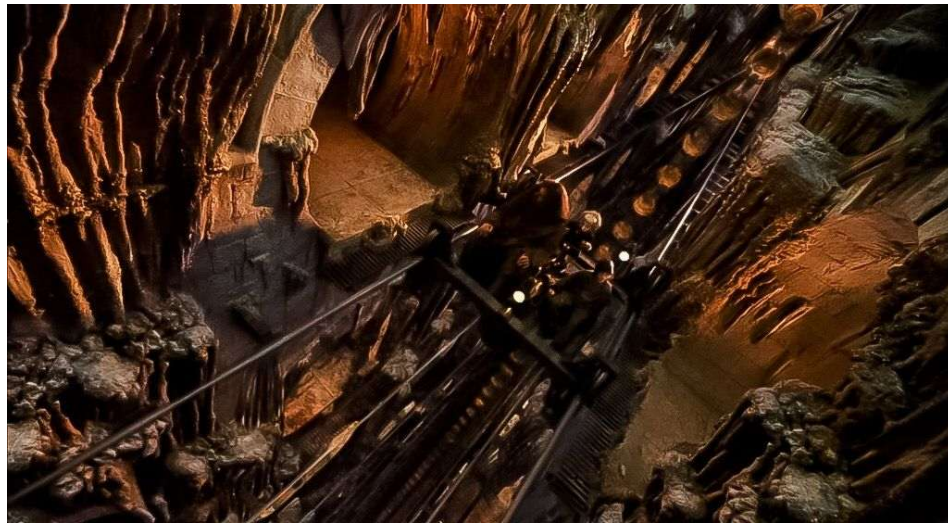


Figure 1.2.5: The underground passages of Gringotts Bank, where the vaults are located.



Figure 1.2.6: No. 4 Privet Drive, home to the Dursley family, is an exact copy of their neighbours' houses, reflecting an exaggerated image of suburban sprawl.

with topics of loss in their own time and in a protected fictional environment (Figure 1.2.4).¹⁶

Harry also models an abundance of virtues, such as a deep love, mercy and forgiveness for all, including his enemies, which promotes similar behaviours in the audience.¹⁷ His story fits into the long tradition of fantasy stories that teach standards of conduct, honour, and heroism in a way that is entertaining and therefore easier to assimilate.¹⁸ Through incorporating death, love, truth, good and evil, and other profound topics into its narrative, *Harry Potter* taps into what is perhaps the most valuable – or magical – quality of any fiction: the power that a story has to change the hearts and minds of its audience, particularly for the better.

The story's deep themes, its instinctive and relatable characters, and its stirring plot are all ultimately unified through the vessel of *Harry Potter*'s ever-present settings. The *Harry Potter* storyworld lends a continuity and believability to the narrative, but more than that, acts as the instantly recognizable icon, the visual and spatial construct that encapsulates and symbolizes all other narrative elements. Through repeated use, each place in the wizarding world becomes linked to a set of themes, emotions and experiences, whether considering Hogwarts' welcoming Great Hall, the thrilling caverns beneath Gringotts Bank, or the oppressive banality of the Dursleys' house on Privet Drive (Figure 1.2.5 and 1.2.6). The settings in *Harry Potter* depict an enhanced version of reality, playing off commonplace real-world environments to make the wizarding universe feel familiar, yet exaggerated.¹⁹ The Potterverse uses elements of magic and fantasy to create places that are either far brighter and happier or far darker and more mysterious than what we would normally encounter in this world. Both the intensely positive and negative spaces create a stronger emotional reaction in the audience, making the *Harry Potter* world feel much more entertaining and compelling than its physical counterpart. For example, the forest on the school grounds is not an ordinary canopy of shady trees, but is a tall,

ancient, misted shroud of darkness that houses dangerous mythical beasts like werewolves.

The breadth and depth of the worldbuilding is just as influential in creating *Harry Potter*'s immersive setting. Throughout the seven novels (or eight films), the narrative weaves through over a dozen locations, including a Victorian cobbled street, a picturesque wizards-only rural village, a Ministry of Magic buried deep underground, and even a luminous version of King's Cross station located in the afterlife, which all feel distinctly different and interesting (Figure 1.2.7). This broad range of locations is then detailed with incredible specificity, which gives a depth and reality to these places. The granular worldbuilding is such that by the end of the story, the audience understands the complex relationships between different magical races, can count magical money with odd names like galleons and sickles, is versed in a range of spells in nonsense words, has memorized the location of secret passages, and understands that wands require a specific magical core of either unicorn hair, phoenix tail-feathers, or dragon heartstring. The details of the wizarding world draw audiences to dwell in this intangible environment, and especially in Hogwarts School, the appealing and highly believable boarding school filled with secret corridors, glamorous balls, and endless feasts. The audience is able to delve as deeply and broadly as they choose in the ever-expanding magical world of *Harry Potter*.

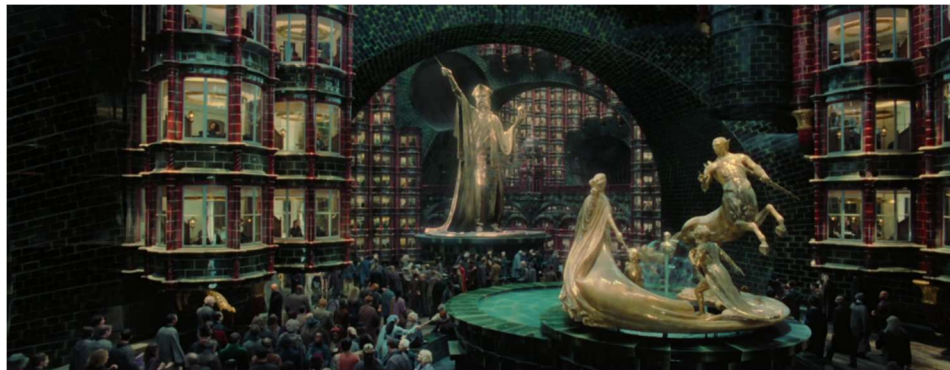


Figure 1.2.7: The Ministry of Magic atrium is tiled with pristine, smooth black stone, contrasting the rugged history of Hogwarts, the crooked nature of Diagon Alley, and the mundane qualities of Privet Drive.

The Hogwarts Legacy

The widespread impact of the *Harry Potter* storyworld is such that it can hardly be brushed aside as mere entertainment. The level of psychological and emotional connection which the audience has experienced with the wizarding world has affirmed it as a major social and cultural influence of the 21st century. In the Western world, the effect of Harry's story also spanned across many age groups. American essayist Nancy Gibbs observes that because of its intergenerational appeal, *Harry Potter* was able to create a shared experience for all to enjoy, whether it was in bringing parents and children together to read at night, or engaging professors and students who "used the case of the Hogwarts House Elves to explicate contract law."²⁰ With *Harry Potter*'s story being so pervasive in our culture, journalists Grady and Romano bring an important reminder that even though it feels like publishing, fandom, children's literature and all of pop culture have always been the way we know them today, in many ways, "Harry Potter changed the world".²¹

Children's literature is one of the areas where the *Harry Potter* universe had the biggest impact in rendering a positive change. Being a children's fantasy world, this may seem to be an obvious side effect, but few literary works have managed to achieve the scale of impact which *Harry Potter* brought. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the record-breaking popularity of each *Harry Potter* novel brought children's literature – and fantasy – to the fore, earning it a legitimate place beside works targeted at adults. The success of Harry's long, seven-novel children's series led to a huge uptick in the publishing industry of children's and young adult literature, and especially multi-volume stories.²² Following the rise of *Harry Potter*, there was increased demand for books among young teenaged boys, a group traditionally not interested in reading.²³ This is reinforced in research by Steve Dempster and his team (Lancaster University and Western Michigan University), whose study found that after reading about Harry's world, children in

British schools were both inspired to read more books generally and were given the confidence to try their hand at more difficult books they might not otherwise have attempted.²⁴

Outside of the literary world, the Potterverse promoted an important era of critical thought that challenged existing societal structures. Just as characters in the series frequently had to evade, contradict and disrupt the lawmakers and authority figures in their world, the audience picked up similar values and behaviours to implement in their own lives. Especially the young generation of child and teenage readers witnessed examples of political resistance in the world of *Harry Potter*, with characters pushing back against dominant culture and advocating for non-human races (Figure 1.3.0).²⁵ Frankie Condon, who teaches the course “Popular Potter” at the University of Waterloo, speaks to *Harry Potter*’s relatability in addressing the evolving opinions of youth and helping them to become a very “progressive generation”. She describes that from the themes in *Harry Potter*, young people learn to be “wary of the violent exercise of power” yet are taught the empathy to understand that “the seeds of what we most despise and oppose are inside us, too”.²⁶

These threads of political, racial and other manner of social reform are not merely for the average audience member to benefit from, but have been expanded into a vast array of scholarly debates about Harry’s story. These high-level analytical discussions have made *Harry Potter* an important staple and reference point in discussing all manner of contemporary literature and society. Some of the longest recurring examinations centre around the topics of race, gender, and religion, the most contested and thus enlightening subjects which are treated in the narrative. This manifests in discussions on the numerous inequalities between wizards and other magical races, the typification of gender roles, and arguments that the true reason for *Harry Potter*’s success are the Christian ideologies cleverly hidden in the wizarding storyworld.²⁷ Even



Figure 1.3.0: Harry, Ron and Hermione start Dumbledore's Army, a student group taking a stand against unjust government policy, modelling political activism to the audience.

outside of these themes there is a panoply of scholarly analyses on morality, numerology, prose, psychology, and politics in the world of *Harry Potter*, to name a few, with each discussion using the storyworld to reflect society's strengths and shortcomings and to spur large-scale behavioural change.

Beyond the social discussions which *Harry Potter* raised, as a book and film series, some of its most meaningful impact is first and foremost at the personal level of the individual reader or viewer. Storyworlds have always provided hope, relief, inspiration and guidance for us, and *Harry Potter's* is no exception. But above all, perhaps, is what these various things amount to: joy. Being a well-thought-out, fresh, and relatable storyworld, with all the delights of magic and fantasy, *Harry Potter* brings an undeniable enjoyment to its audience. Joy is one of the fundamental purposes of fiction, as authors and literary scholars J.R.R. Tolkien (1892-1973), Ursula Le Guin (1929-2018) and Kathryn Hume (Pennsylvania State University) have all stated.²⁸ In Harry's journey, the main sense of joy stems simply from the nature of its plot and world, the ups and downs, tensions and reliefs, which create an enjoyable and entertaining ride. Nicholas Shelton (University of Michigan) comfortably puts *Harry Potter* on the shelf with other stimulating, time-tested fantasy stories because of how its storyworld "draws its readers in

and allows them to imagine and experience unfamiliar places, through the eyes of people they do not know, facing dangers they cannot imagine”, and gives a fundamental enjoyment of the tale.²⁹

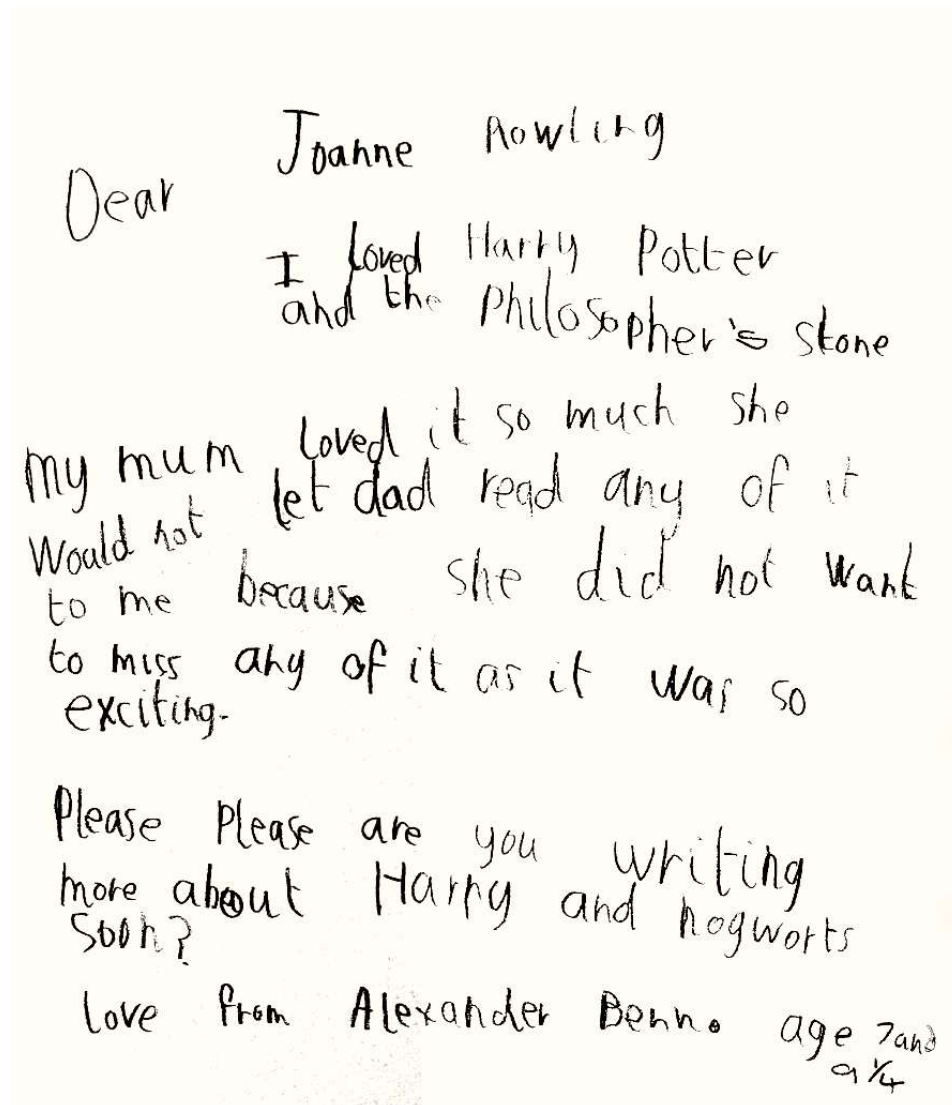
Adding to the sense of joy gleaned from the storyline itself, *Harry Potter* creates enjoyment through the audience’s immersion in being able to relate to the characters and their experiences. Everyone was young once and can see themselves in the young protagonists. Each member of the audience recognizes the process of identity-making and purpose-finding which the tween and teenaged characters must undergo. Through this familiar, shared experience with the young cast of protagonists, Harry’s story creates another chief benefit, which is its ability to rekindle the joys (and longings) of youth. Writer David Busis of the *New York Times* expresses a fondness for the *Harry Potter* books specifically because of their ability to satisfy the nostalgia for youth, reminding the grown-up audience “of what it’s like to be young, living in a world that seems both simple and incomprehensible.”³⁰ For the readers and viewers who are still youths themselves, the adventures of Harry and his school-age friends are instead a celebration of their best qualities.

In this younger generation which grew up with Harry, many fans see themselves reflected through the characters, circumstances, and morals embedded in the story. This thorough identification with the narrative is something that Dr. Elizabeth E. Heilman (Michigan State University) addresses directly:

When narrative text and images become such a pervasive part of the cultural environment, they also become part of the identity of the people who read and consume the images and narratives. *Harry Potter* then is not just books we read or movies we see or things that we buy. The text and images of *Harry Potter* become part of who we are.³¹

For the millions of individuals who choose to “consume” the images of *Harry Potter* and to engage with its world, Harry’s story has undoubtedly

impacted their sense of identity and mentality. More than this, as Heilman points out, it is the text and images, in other words, all aspects of *Harry Potter* media and its world, which become intimately connected with the audience. This indicates not only that the audience may be influenced by the morality and behaviours of characters, but is moved emotionally and psychologically by all aspects of the storyworld (Figure 1.3.1 and 1.3.2).



Dear Joanne Rowling

I loved Harry Potter
and the Philosopher's Stone

My mum loved it so much she
would not let dad read any of it
to me because she did not want
to miss any of it as it was so
exciting.

Please please are you writing
more about Harry and hogwarts
soon?

Love from Alexander Benno age 7 and
1/4

I am a class teacher of year six children at Yorbury Primary School in Hollaray. I am writing to thank you for several weeks of joyous reading sessions at the end of the school day, where my class sat enthralled to hear Harry Potter's adventures. Several times they begged me to read on past 3:30 pm home time, and, when Harry opened his fist to reveal the snitch and secure the Quidditch cup for Gryffindor they whooped, cheered, punched the air and hugged each other. I am sure you would have enjoyed their enthusiasm and thought you would like to hear of it.

So, on behalf of my class I would like to thank you, and congratulate you for Harry Potter. For myself too it has been a great read and my captivated audience has given me much pleasure.

Yours sincerely

Van Rada

Figure 1.3.1 and 1.3.2: Letters from readers testify the significance of Harry's story in their lives.³²

Creating Home

In reaching out across realms of literary and cinematographic influence, the world of *Harry Potter* has undoubtedly also caused a ripple of changes in areas of spatial and aesthetic sensibilities. At a high level, *Harry Potter*'s portrayal of a castle, a bustling Victorian street, or an endless suburban sprawl has brought such images to the forefront of their audience's awareness. There are many potential ripple effects from the design of Harry's world, however this thesis emphasizes only one: the portrayal of home places. One of the most influential visual and aesthetic effects of *Harry Potter*'s storyworld is in how it developed a vision of a

home place which has managed to appeal to a global crowd, and particularly to its Western audience.

Harry's storyworld introduces a number of homes which are important to the narrative progression, such as Hagrid's hut or Grimmauld Place, which offer protection and information as they are frequented throughout Harry's journey (Figure 1.4.0 and 1.4.1). One of the most prevalent settings is arguably the Dursleys' home at Number Four Privet Drive, where Harry has spent much of his life and where Harry begins his story each year. Seemingly just as prominent is The Burrow, where Harry's best friend Ron Weasley lives, and which is portrayed as a classic vision of home life.



Figure 1.4.0: Hagrid lives in a hut on the Hogwarts grounds, at the edge of the forbidden forest, where Harry and his friends visit him often for tea. The house's design and placement were changed in the third film, *Prisoner of Azkaban*.



Figure 1.4.1: Grimmauld Place, though musty and full of ominous décor, is nonetheless a home for Harry and other characters and acts as a safe house when he is being hunted by Voldemort's forces.

Despite these residential dwellings exemplifying what is normally considered to be a home, when the narrative or dialogue mentions “home” explicitly, it often does not actually refer to any standard family dwelling. Rather, nearly every reference to “home” is centred around the Gothic castle of Hogwarts school. Portrayed as a vast and magnificent stone castle in both the novels and films, the sense that it is a home place begins right from first book, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone*. After spending less than two months attending Hogwarts, Harry happily concludes that in contrast to his previous suburban life, “The castle felt more like home than Privet Drive had ever done.”³³ Following this, in the film for *Chamber of Secrets*, Harry’s second adventure, when Harry must promise not to return to the wizarding school Hogwarts, he exclaims, “I can’t. Hogwarts is my home.”³⁴ Even into the third novel, *Prisoner of Azkaban*, one of Harry’s first thoughts upon coming back to Hogwarts is about his profound satisfaction in returning home: “Harry climbed the spiral stairs with no thought in his head except how glad he was to be back. They reached their familiar, circular dormitory with its five four-poster beds and Harry, looking around, felt he was home at last.”³⁵

What is perhaps just as crucial is that this sentiment, which identifies the *Harry Potter* storyworld as a home, is also prevalent in *Harry Potter*’s audience. Konchar Farr reveals that when she took her college students to Universal Orlando’s Wizarding World of Harry Potter theme park for the first time, it felt so overpoweringly familiar that they instantly expressed “‘I’m home.’”³⁶ (Figure 1.4.2 and 1.4.3) Along the same lines, at the premiere for the final film in the series, the event’s opening speech expressed to the audience that, “Whether you come back by page or by the big screen, Hogwarts will always be there to welcome you home.”³⁷ Here, Hogwarts is connected with home as a perennial and welcoming atmosphere. Not to be discounted are the colloquial discussions and informal material created by audience members themselves, via memes, blog posts, video commentaries and other

formats, which express a desire to dwell in the world of *Harry Potter* and be able to call Hogwarts home. In each instance, there is undeniable emotion in how “home” is used to describe Hogwarts.

The school and its intangible world are here shown to be some of the most impactful and dear aspects which live on from the *Harry Potter* narrative. It is this sincere and profoundly emotional reaction towards Harry's storyworld which lays the ground for exploring home places in *Harry Potter's* story and revealing the relevance of Harry's world to all human disciplines.



Figure 1.4.2 and 1.4.3: The Hogsmeade section of the Wizarding World theme park in Universal Studios Hollywood, made to closely imitate the look of the film set.

¹ J.K. Rowling, foreword to *The True Story of a Boy Wizard, His Fans, and Life Inside the Harry Potter Phenomenon*, by Melissa Anelli (New York: Simon & Schuster, Inc., 2008), ix.

² Fang Block, “A First Edition of ‘Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone’ Is up for Grabs,” *Barron’s*, March 17, 2023, <https://www.barrons.com/articles/a-first-edition-of-harry-potter-and-the-philosophers-stone-is-up-for-grabs-98535602>.

³ Dinitia Smith, “The Times Plans a Children’s Best-Seller List,” *The New York Times*, June 24, 2000, sec. Books, <https://www.nytimes.com/2000/06/24/books/the-times-plans-a-children-s-best-seller-list.html>.

⁴ “Harry Potter,” Scholastic Media Room, accessed February 5, 2024, <http://mediaroom.scholastic.com/harrypotter#Highlights>.

⁵ “Box Office History for Harry Potter Movies,” The Numbers, Nash Information Services, accessed November 4, 2024, <https://www.the-numbers.com/movies/franchise/Harry-Potter>.

⁶ Margaret H. Willison, “15 Ways Harry Potter Has Changed Culture since the First Book Was Published 20 Years Ago,” *The Boston Globe*, June 25, 2017, <https://www.bostonglobe.com/lifestyle/2017/06/25/ways-harry-potter-has-changed-culture-since-first-book-was-published-years-ago/yXGL4pCa6eO1r6dB8yWJKL/story.html>.

⁷ Greg Garrett, *One Fine Potion: The Literary Magic of Harry Potter* (Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 2010), 7; Cecilia Konchar Farr, “Introduction,” in *Open at the Close: Literary Essays on Harry Potter* (Mississippi: University Press of Mississippi, 2022), xiii-xiv.

⁸ Lisa Hopkins, “Harry Potter and Narratives of Destiny,” in *Reading Harry Potter Again: New Critical Essays*, ed. Giselle Liza Anatol (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, LLC, 2009), 63.

⁹ Constance Grady and Aja Romano, “How Harry Potter Changed the World,” *Vox*, September 1, 2018, <https://www.vox.com/culture/2017/6/26/15856668/harry-potter-20th-anniversary-explained>.

¹⁰ Cecilia Konchar Farr and Amy Mars, “Ascendio: A Close and Distant Reading of Progressive Complexity in the Harry Potter Series,” in *Open at the Close: Literary Essays on Harry Potter*, ed. Cecilia Konchar Farr (Mississippi: University Press of Mississippi, 2022), 10.

¹¹ Naomi Pike, “20 Reasons Why Harry Potter Is The Best There’ll Ever Be,” *British Vogue*, June 26, 2017, <https://www.vogue.co.uk/article/harry-potter-20th-anniversary>; Gina McIntyre, “Harry Potter: The Story That Changed the World,” *LIFE*, March 18, 2022.

¹² Daniel P. Moloney, “Harry Potter and the Young Man’s Mistake,” in *Mapping the World of the Sorcerer’s Apprentice: An Unauthorized Exploration of the Harry Potter Series*, ed. Mercedes Lackey (Dallas, TX: BenBella Books, Inc., 2005), 9.

¹³ Lisa Damour, “Harry the Teenager: Muggle Themes in a Magical Adolescence,” in *Reading Harry Potter Again: New Critical Essays*, ed. Giselle Liza Anatol (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, LLC, 2009), 1.

¹⁴ Jelena Borojević, “Quenching the Quill: How Fan Art Builds Meaning, Creates Bonds and Triggers Imagination,” in *Wizards vs. Muggles: Essays on Identity and the Harry Potter Universe*, ed. Christopher E. Bell (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company Inc., 2016), 134.

¹⁵ Ursula K. Le Guin, “Why Are Americans Afraid of Dragons?,” in *The Language of the Night: Essays on Fantasy and Science Fiction*, ed. Susan Wood (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1989), 38.

¹⁶ Samantha J. Vertosick, “‘Beyond the Veil’: The Narrative Functions of Death,” in *Inside the World of Harry Potter: Critical Essays on the Books and Films*, ed. Christopher E. Bell (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company Inc., 2018), 21–22.

- ¹⁷ Callie Knudsen, "WWHPD: What Would Harry Potter Do?," in *A Wizard of Their Age: Critical Essays from the Harry Potter Generation*, ed. Cecilia Konchar Farr (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2015), 152.
- ¹⁸ Priscilla Hobbs, *Harry Potter and the Myth of Millennials: Identity, Reception, and Politics* (Lanham, MD: The Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, Inc., 2022), 8.
- ¹⁹ See Pike, "20 Reasons Why Harry Potter Is The Best There'll Ever Be"; John Granger, *How Harry Cast His Spell: The Meaning behind the Mania for J. K. Rowling's Bestselling Books* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2008), 7.
- ²⁰ Nancy Gibbs, "The Moment: 7/14/09: Peoria, Ill.," *Time*, August 3, 2009, sec. Briefing.
- ²¹ Grady and Romano, "How Harry Potter Changed the World."
- ²² Willison, "15 Ways Harry Potter Has Changed Culture since the First Book Was Published 20 Years Ago."
- ²³ David Smith, "Potter's Magic Spell Turns Boys into Bookworms," *The Observer*, July 10, 2005, <https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2005/jul/10/books.harrypotter>.
- ²⁴ Steve Dempster et al., "What Has Harry Potter Done for Me? Children's Reflections on Their 'Potter Experience,'" *Children's Literature in Education* 47, no. 3 (September 1, 2016): 273, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10583-015-9267-x>.
- ²⁵ Willison, "15 Ways Harry Potter Has Changed Culture since the First Book Was Published 20 Years Ago."
- ²⁶ McIntyre, "Harry Potter: The Story That Changed the World."
- ²⁷ Juliana Valadão Lopes, "'All Was Well'?: The Sociopolitical Struggles of House-Elves, Goblins and Centaurs," in *Open at the Close: Literary Essays on Harry Potter*, ed. Cecilia Konchar Farr (Mississippi: University Press of Mississippi, 2022), 178–87; Svenja Renzel, "Double, Double Toil and (Gender) Trouble: The Gaunt Family," in *"Harry - Yer a Wizard": Exploring J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter Universe*, ed. Marion Gymnich, Hanne Birk, and Denise Burkhard (Baden-Baden, Germany: Tectum Verlag, 2017), 85–94; Granger, *How Harry Cast His Spell*.
- ²⁸ J.R.R. Tolkien, *Tolkien On Fairy-Stories: Expanded Edition, with Commentary and Notes*, ed. Verlyn Flieger and Douglas A. Anderson (London: HarperCollinsPublishers, 2008), 75; Le Guin, "Why Are Americans Afraid of Dragons?," 38; Kathryn Hume, *Fantasy and Mimesis: Responses to Reality in Western Literature* (New York: Methuen, 1984), 16.
- ²⁹ Nicholas Sheltrown, "Harry Potter's World as a Morality Tale of Technology and Media," in *Critical Perspectives on Harry Potter*, ed. Elizabeth E. Heilman, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2009), 47.
- ³⁰ David Busis, "Why Grown-Up Muggles Should Read 'Harry Potter,'" *The New York Times*, June 26, 2017, sec. Opinion, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/26/opinion/harry-potter-20th-anniversary.html>.
- ³¹ Elizabeth E. Heilman, "Introduction: Fostering Insight Through Multiple Critical Perspectives," in *Critical Perspectives on Harry Potter*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2008), 2.
- ³² J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (Vancouver: Raincoast Books, 1998), 253–54.
- ³³ J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (Vancouver: Raincoast Books, 1997), 126.
- ³⁴ *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, Film (Warner Bros., 2002).
- ³⁵ J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (Vancouver: Raincoast Books, 1999), 74.
- ³⁶ Konchar Farr, "Introduction," xiv.
- ³⁷ J.K. Rowling, "J.K. Rowling's Emotional Speech at the Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 2 London Premiere," YouTube, 7 July 2011, Accessed 7 August 2024, 03:45, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7QnyKZe6VBA>.

CHAPTER II

*“Hogwarts was where he had been happiest; the first
and only place he had felt at home.”*

– Albus Dumbledore,
Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince, 2005

Chapter II:

Home is...

To say that *Harry Potter*'s architecture acts as a sort of home invokes many possible interpretations of "home." Home has diverse meanings in architecture, literature, philosophy, and other contexts, which surface in *Harry Potter* to varying degrees. In the following pages, the most prevalent of these "home" definitions will be defined in a review of literature and will be identified for their influential role in Harry's story. These various interpretations ultimately create an overall sense of home, combining to reveal an epitomized and yet relatively simple "home" which is the true heart driving *Harry Potter*'s storyworld architecture.

In truth, both real-world and storyworld architecture are inextricably linked to home. Homes, houses, and dwellings in general form our first rudimentary interaction with the built environment. Because of our familiarity with our living space, such places also exercise a significant influence on how we understand and interact with architecture outside of the home. More than that, our dwelling place represents an intimate bond between humans and their space, being emotionally significant to each dweller as a symbolic representation of their lives. Architecture as a discipline seeks to affect its audience: to guide behaviour, to stimulate sensory perceptions, to evoke certain thoughts, to trigger various emotions. This is what the home naturally accomplishes better than any other structure. Architecture in all its forms is in many ways indebted to the home, which has already mastered shelter, intimacy, personality and comfort, without neglecting function. Architecture is continually seeking to manifest the attributes of home in every form it touches.

Beyond architecture, home is a concept that is at once so intimate and yet so vast that in many ways it defies all description. We all understand the idea of going home, feeling homesick, feeling at home, but this familiar notion is deceptive in its depth. Certainly, many scholars have dedicated essays and books to the topic, while others have summarized and indexed these innumerable perspectives on home, as synthesized for example by anthropologist Shelley Mallett.¹ The familiarity of the home has made it the site of innumerable human experiences, imbuing it with such varied meanings that now it has become the grounds for an intense scholarly fascination and investment in determining and analyzing its character.

One quality of home almost universally agreed on is that home represents a fundamental aspect of our being, the object of an instinctive human longing that strikes a deep resonance in us.² The instinctive necessity of home is voiced by psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1934-2021) and Eugene Rochberg-Halton (University of Notre Dame), who share that “home seems to express such basic and universal human needs” that the term overflows with layered emotion in a way few other words have ever achieved.³ Home is clearly a fundamental longing, a natural instinct embedded in the human condition.

Perhaps because home is linked to our innate human needs, most individuals have an intuitive understanding of what home means to them. Home is often one of the first concepts we learn: it is the architectural house or apartment where we live, it is where our parents live, it is where we play, eat, sleep and are safe. As we mature and begin to travel the world, home may become something closer to homeland, tied to a collective social and national identity that has formed our personality. Through memory, home is also used to describe those places that, when we think about them, we can’t help but smile and remember fonder times. Home can also be a time or place to which we long to return, or one that is lost to us forever, or one that we are still trying to find. In fictions and

sweeping narratives, home can be as primally familiar as a hut in the woods, or as vast and unending as travel to a parallel universe. Home is often all of these at once: our house, our family, our homeland, a memory, a place, a time, a dream, the known universe. We may have many homes simultaneously, each nourishing a different element of our being. A family home gives us love, a treehouse gives adventure and freedom, and an idyllic vision of our future career aspirations can fuel our willpower and give us direction. In *Harry Potter*, these various meanings of “home” contribute to the comprehensively welcoming nature of the wizarding world, meanwhile the commonalities between them reveal the fundamentally satisfying and appealing ultimate “home” which sustains Harry’s storyworld at its core.

...Domestic Architecture

Prevalent in *Harry Potter* and in our daily lives, the architectural form of the house is one of the first images brought to mind by the term “home”. As French philosopher Gaston Bachelard (1884-1962) observed, “a house is first and foremost a geometrical object,” a rational creation that is visible and tangible.⁴ Truly, the house or dwelling place is not limited to the house as a detached, single family dwelling, but can take on a variety of forms such as a hotel, an apartment, an attic or a royal palace.⁵ Whatever built form it takes on, our home is the basic unit in which we live and which enables us to live, protected from the elements, from animals, and from other humans. Housing the human body has been a foundational aspect of survival for millennia, and the very foundation of architecture. The physical sense of protection is founded on the same idea that was embedded in primitive caves, huts, and other ancient structures: the notion of shelter.

Philosopher Emanuele Coccia maintains that even as we have replaced forests and marshes with cities and freeways, our homes are still an essential mediator between us and our urban environment, because by themselves, filled with concrete and strangers, “cities are, literally,

uninhabitable.”⁶ A house or housing provides the necessary shelter, a softening of the harsh physical conditions, and contains the emotional sense of protection.⁷

Here emerges another facet of houses, one that touches on the values beyond mere physical shelter. Once a physical house has proven itself to be durable, has held up against weather and nocturnal scavengers and human wanderers, the house takes on a new dimension: the psychological sense of safety. This is what social psychologists Patricia A. Parmelee (University of Alabama) and Powell Lawton (1923-2001) consider a “freedom from risk, danger, concern, or doubt”, a mental reassurance which enables the house to then become the site for dependable, peaceful daily life.⁸ The creation of a safe environment is the most basic function of the house. As explored in psychologist Abraham Maslow’s (1908-1970) hierarchy of needs, once the house has met the need for physical safety, other progressively finer behaviours and desires can safely emerge.⁹ This is where the home as shelter is then able to become the home as a site for domestic life.

More than simply physical shelter, dwelling places create a physical comfort and ease that build the foundation of our daily human experience (Figure 2.1.0 and 2.1.1). Here, home consists of the little routines and the everyday familiarity of the space and the activities that make up our “home life.” The human mode of being naturally structures spaces, by using buildings and especially houses to reflect our contemporary lifestyles.¹⁰ As Coccia expresses, dwelling homes are necessarily made up of “bedrooms and kitchens...chairs, desks, wardrobes, bathtubs and radiators” that “give a form of intimacy” to our portion of the world.¹¹ The basic domestic functionality of the house or dwelling is based on the desire to have a place for sleeping (a bedroom) separate from our place for eating (a kitchen), a storage place for clothes (a closet) that is distinct from where we keep our food (a pantry).



Figure 2.1.0 and 2.1.1: The aesthetics of home vary considerably across the globe and with individual tastes; no one type of house or dwelling is above any other, as shown by the distinct differences between the rustic cabin home (left) and the modern concrete interior (right), which are each effective in their own way. All kinds of dwellings share the positive values of shelter, protection, and mental and physical comfort.

Yet, these empty rooms and storage spaces alone cannot hospitably house our sense of domestic life, our patterns of behaviour and comfort. Rather, it is the objects inside the space which enable us to truly enact our daily lives of eating, sleeping, playing, and thereby create a sense of home. Coccia extends his description of the house to underscore the necessity of possessions, aptly pointing out that “space in its geometrical purity is physically uninhabitable.” An unfurnished home, he writes, is one “in which the most basic act of living [is] impossible,” because it denies us even the comfort of a bed, it lacks the cookware to make and eat food, and is devoid of any entertainment from books or television.¹² Furniture and objects as mundane as a table, a light, or cushioned chairs, are necessary to create homely qualities of convenience, efficiency, and physical ease.¹³ Space by itself is not intended to support the act of living, but merely sets the stage. The objects of life, as they are used each

morning, put away each night, used to help us eat and live in comfort, thereby become just as symbolic of “home” as the shelter itself.

Through these mundane but necessary spaces and things, the house becomes the backdrop of our lives, a steady and dependable refuge not only from external weather and physical threats, but from the emotional disturbance of change, unpredictability, and boredom. In this sense the house still shelters us, but more than that it shelters our imagination, allowing us to dream and to experience peace.¹⁴ Home is a place that makes us feel mentally at ease, that gives us a sense of comfort.¹⁵ This sense of domestic well-being and peace of mind is formed by the everyday relationship between humans and their spaces, revealing the nature of home as a place of mental enjoyment and relaxation.

Finnish architect Juhani Pallasmaa extends a sense of home to the domestic life routines which build a sense of emotional attachment. He expresses that “The emotional impact [of the home] is related to an act, not an object or a visual or figural element. ... The approach to the house, (not the facade); the act of entering, (not the door); the act of looking out of the window, (not the window itself); or the act of gathering around (rather than the hearth or the table as such), seem to trigger our strongest emotions.”¹⁶ It is our active lives and daily interactions with the house that enable the dwelling to feel familiar and reassuring to us. The essence of home invokes the mundane routines that lead to emotional stability and peace of mind, the actions that become embedded in our minds and in our bodily inhabitation of a house.¹⁷

In addition to all the comfort, ease, and reassurance that the physical space and objects bring to our domestic life, the idea of the house as home begins to evoke a social facet of our well-being. Architectural educator Witold Rybczynski (University of Pennsylvania) observes that once the structure has satisfied our need for dependable daily living, a house is “no longer only a shelter against the elements, a protection against the intruder” but instead becomes “the setting for a new, compact

social unit: the family.”¹⁸ Naturally, a house shelters our lives, but most of all it shelters the family life. A home is where family is created, where it lives and grows, working together to coexist in a shared space. The bond which unites family members is somewhat a measure of functional necessity – children rely on parents for their survival – but is above all centred on the universal notion of love. The base for family life is love. Naturally, some families suffer from very unloving conditions and interactions, but in such cases these relationships no longer embody the real meaning of “family”. In much the same way, friends unrelated by blood can be considered our “chosen family” by exhibiting that deep love typically associated with parents, children, siblings, and other relations.

Home is where this family life, this love and joy, is sheltered and therefore deeply tied. Author Pauline Dewan recognizes that, “Synonymous with the image of the home are connotations of love, protection, and security.”¹⁹ The family home is the fundamental shelter for intimate familial interactions of love and stability.²⁰ While the home as house may represent shelter, comfort, and peace, thanks to the family, home has also become a profound symbol of love and joy. For many of us, when we get homesick, when we dream of our home in the future, when we think of the homes we have enjoyed, we think first and foremost of the families we have or would like to have, their love and the joy they bring us. Home as family begins to shift us away from attaching to the home in the form of a house and underscores the truth in the popular adage, “home is where the heart is.”

Being set in a version of Britain in the 1990s, *Harry Potter* naturally includes depictions of family homes and similar dwellings in its setting (Figure 2.1.2 to 2.1.5). While a number of residences share functions and features with typical family dwellings, being used to build a sense of familiarity and welcoming appeal in Harry’s storyworld, their purpose and presence goes beyond acting as a site for family life in order to convey deeper themes. Specifically, the home settings in *Harry Potter*

Home is...

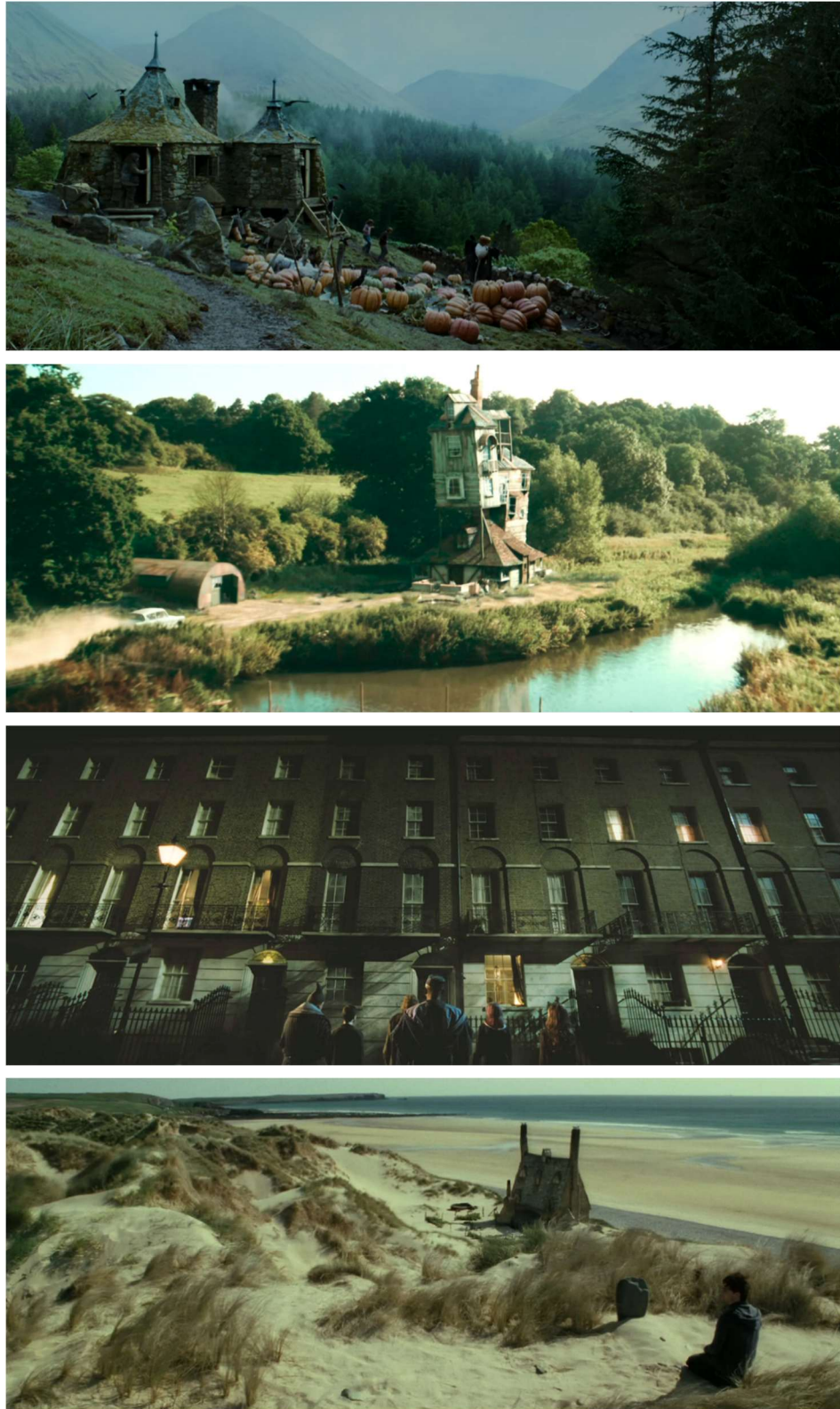


Figure 2.1.2 to 2.1.5: From top to bottom: Hagrid's Hut, located on the Hogwarts grounds; the Burrow, the Weasleys' eccentric country home; Grimmauld Place, a Georgian terraced house in London; Shell Cottage, by the sea.

are applied both to normalize the strange, magical elements of the setting, as well as to indicate a dislike for, or aversion to, the houses that neglect to embody the full sense of a house as a loving home.

Despite wizards having very different lifestyles, aesthetics and customs from regular non-magic (muggle) society, they still share the ideals of home as shelter, comfort, love, and happiness. This familiar vision of the family home helps to offset any trepidation that stems from encountering the odd or unexpected parts of the magical world, instead making it a welcoming narrative place. For example, Hogwarts as a castle is already an unconventional form of dwelling, especially when considering its maze of corridors, its moving suits of armour, and rather intimidating dungeons. Yet because it incorporates dormitory elements, comfortable and cozy furniture, shared common rooms, and a Great Hall where friends gather, Hogwarts feels familiar to experiences we have had at home or while staying over at a friend's house (Figure 2.1.6).

Another strong illustration comes in the form of the Burrow, home to Harry's friend Ron and his large family, which embodies the full measure of the home as the family dwelling (Figure 2.1.7). A significant location beginning in Harry's second school year, the Burrow is used as a permanent, welcoming staple in the wizarding world. Its continued presence as a place of peaceful and friendly domesticity establishes wizarding routines which make the magical elements of Harry's storyworld feel as familiar and easy as real-world activities. A chore like de-gnoming the garden becomes as common as doing the dishes, meanwhile hearing the attic ghouls howling and dropping pipes is no worse than listening to the racket of siblings in their room. By creating parallels with the form, functions and activities common in family homes, even wizarding homes quickly become as enticing and comfortable as their real-life parallels.



Figure 2.1.6: Within Hogwarts, Professor Slughorn's homely office, with its plush couches and drapery, reminds Harry and the viewers that it is not only students who dwell at the school, but that the teachers as well have created domestic environments for themselves to inhabit during the academic year.



Figure 2.1.7: The kitchen of the Burrow, home to the Weasley family, and cluttered with an assortment of homely objects and colours that bring a homespun warmth and immediate sense of domesticity.

Domestic dwellings and family houses are also used in *Harry Potter* to support the idea that family homes are meant to encompass love, complementing the overall narrative themes which advocate love, empathy, and human connection. The story and setting consistently promote houses which are founded on love over those which are merely an architectural shell without any positive emotional substance. The *Harry Potter* narrative provides several examples of dwellings which otherwise would appear perfectly warm and welcoming, but were revealed to be lacking in love or happiness and thus devolved into unhomely places.

The most apparent example is Number Four Privet Drive, the house belonging to the Dursley family, which includes Harry's unkind aunt, uncle and cousin (Figure 2.1.8). Number Four is designed as the stereotypical image of the single-family house, the popular icon of the suburban capitalist lifestyle. It has a neat front lawn and garden; a sitting room, kitchen and dining room downstairs; and four upstairs bedrooms, one of which is reserved for guests. Despite aligning entirely with the form of a typical single-family house, Number Four proves to be the place where Harry experiences a life near that of a servant, strongly reminiscent of Cinderella's fairy tale existence. Harry is unloved, unwanted, made to do chores and sleep in a tiny living space full of spiders, meanwhile his relatives are distinctly spoiled, unimaginative, and nosy. It is hard for the audience to feel at home in such a house, which stands in sharp contrast especially with the likes of the Burrow.

A similar situation is shown with reference to Malfoy Manor, home of the antagonistic Draco Malfoy (Figure 2.1.9). Despite being a rich country dwelling for the Malfoy family, their fear and selfishness have aligned them with evil forces, and their house becomes unhomely not only for Harry but for even the family members themselves, as in *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*. Through the examples of Malfoy Manor and Privet Drive, juxtaposed with dwelling such as the Burrow, Harry's storyworld promotes not only home as shelter and comfort, but also as reassurance and love, without which such dwellings remain merely houses. The house becomes empty, unhomely, when it is lacking in love and happiness, proving the narrative's agreement with the idea that the family home is fundamentally founded on love and connection. *Harry Potter* sees numerous manifestations of the home as the domestic dwelling place throughout its narrative, leveraging these places to support narrative themes of love and family and to increase the audience's positive perception of magical places.



Figure 2.1.8: Privet Drive is a typical single-family house, a familiar image of suburban life and the banality of Muggle (non-magic) existence.



Figure 2.1.9: Malfoy Manor, though a luxurious domestic place, is primarily a dark and unhomely dwelling. Being used as the headquarters for Voldemort and his followers, the manor's wealth and prestige become associated with evil, opposing the humble goodness of positive home places like The Burrow.

...A Significant Place

Sometimes, as much as we feel at home in our houses, there are other places where we feel just as comfortable and welcomed: a secluded summer cottage, a childhood treehouse, the corner nook of our favourite coffee shop. Writer Alain de Botton observes a similar emotional value of the term “home”, which can be attributed to nearly any place, domestic or otherwise:

Our homes do not have to offer us permanent occupancy or store our clothes to merit the name. To speak of home in relation to a building is simply to recognise its harmony with our own prized internal

song. Home can be an airport or a library, a garden or a motorway diner.²¹

Even if we don't live our lives in these places the same way we do in our houses, they have played a positive and memorable enough role in our lives to be enjoyable, homely environments that are fundamentally comforting and familiar. These places become symbols of the positive comfort, peace, and sense of belonging that we experience there. This is the essence of home as a place.

Perhaps a quick aside is necessary to differentiate space from place. Space is the basic form of physical or imagined objects, buildings, and things. A room is a space. So is a park. Space is, as geographer and writer Yi-Fu Tuan (1930-2022) called it, "abstract...broad, open, and empty."²² Place develops when a space is experienced, taken note of, or otherwise attributed a dimension of personal human emotion and memory by an individual. For example, when we put a bed and desk into an empty room, by repeated intimacy of a person using that space everyday to shelter them and their dreams, to them it becomes a place, their cozy bedroom, their place. Places mean different things to each person, and some buildings which are significant places to some may be only indifferent spaces to others. Places are where experiences and memories are located, where the space has gained a symbolic meaning and has become what Tuan considered a "construct of experience."²³

Turning the focus back to home as a place, geographers Alison Blunt (Queen Mary University of London) and Robyn Dowling (University of Sydney) state that a home is in essence "a place/site, a set of feelings/cultural meaning, and the relations between the two."²⁴ They do not advocate the necessity of the dwelling house, but rather emphasize the nature of home as a flexible form that contains some measure of human-attributed meaning. In this sense, it is the enjoyment at a movie theater or the social act of gathering around a bonfire that create feelings of home.²⁵ Home is a place, it is an otherwise generic space that has been

transformed into a place by representing feelings of home – such as belonging, comfort, joy, and other positive emotions – experienced there.

The spatial design of homely places varies widely, and indeed, almost any space can become a home if given the proper emotional significance. German philosopher Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) described that a truck driver may be “at home on the highway”, while an engineer feels “at home in the power station.” Though neither location is a typical house, these places do still “house man” and allow our lives to unfold in relaxed, familiar ways.²⁶ In children’s literature, young protagonists often find comfort in odd places like an old stump, a spot in the woods, or a watchtower, acting as a home away from home by providing security, love, protection and belonging (Figure 2.2.0).²⁷ These places satisfy the inhabitants’ needs and symbolize positive emotions, thereby becoming homely places. Considering home as place allows us to make a home for ourselves nearly anywhere, so long as there is enough positive emotion for our memories to feed on, transforming space into a symbolically significant place.



Figure 2.2.0: The treehouse from *Bridge to Terabithia* provides the characters a home refuge away from their suburban homes and the tumultuous family life that dwells there. The positive experiences they have together turn the woods into a fulfilling place of peace, adventure, and happiness.

Home as place may build its emotional foundation at the level of the individual, but when a place gains a collective cultural significance, this introduces another facet of home, that of homeland. This highlights the nature of the home as being fundamentally tied to a shared geography and cultural tradition. While homelands have been associated with oppressive politics or extremist national identities, these conflicts are not truly centred on the homeland as a home, but rather on the homeland as a possession, a symbol of power, or a fear-based weapon.²⁸ When considering homeland as a home, the adversarial nature of nationalism withdraws and gives way to a sense of positive affection, focused on internal virtues rather than on external threats, centred on principles of unity and belonging.

“Our homeland is our childhood home writ large,” writes American philosopher Robert Ginsberg (Pennsylvania State University). “It is the largest identifiable realm in which we imagine that we would feel at home...Any violation of your homeland is the magnified version of violation of your childhood home.”²⁹ A homeland acts as a collective home, a site associated with a similar sense of affection, peace, comfort, and belonging as our family home.³⁰ Only, the scale has increased to encompass many families, many houses, which share a place of origin, a way of being, that evokes a communal belonging and familiarity.

In *Harry Potter*, the home as a place and as a homeland have a fairly significant presence. Non-dwelling places which hold emotional significance are used as refuges that provide safety and happiness throughout Harry’s wizarding world. One of the strongest examples is Diagon Alley, where Harry first physically enters into a magical place (Figure 2.2.1 and 2.2.2). Nestled among the busy streets of London, Diagon Alley is one of the few places where wizards are free to buy wizarding goods, use magic, and openly wear their wizard robes without attracting unwanted attention. For Harry, the magical safe-place that is Diagon Alley also signifies the moment in time when he discovered he



Figure 2.2.1: Harry comes to intimately know Diagon Alley by returning each summer to buy his wizarding school supplies for another year of Hogwarts classes.



Figure 2.2.2: The Leaky Cauldron pub in Diagon Alley is frequently revisited throughout the *Harry Potter* series, becoming a familiar homely place in the wizarding world and a symbol of Harry's enjoyment as he spends time with his friends.

was wanted, valued, and deserved to be a part of a special and secret community. Such emotions formed Diagon Alley into a home place which was used consistently in Harry's early school years, and which preserved it as a comforting memory throughout the series despite it being gradually destroyed and abandoned as the dark forces took hold.

In a similar fashion, Hogwarts contains a number of refuges unrelated to the acts of home life and family dwelling. Though it has dormitory and common room spaces akin to domestic bedrooms and living rooms, a number of its castle- and school-related spaces provide comforts of a different kind. Such places as the Quidditch sports pitch, various familiar classrooms, the courtyard used at breaks, or even a particular patch of grass beneath a particular beech tree, all become

associated with the homely happiness, friendship, or excitement which Harry experienced related to his school classes (Figure 2.2.3).

Homeland in *Harry Potter* manifests in the form of attachment to the wizarding community and its magical spaces. Though muggles are not necessarily portrayed as lacking in intelligence, they are lacking in magic and thus have no inherent special qualities to them. This, combined with the overbearing presence of the horrible Dursleys as some of the few muggles depicted, makes Harry and the audience identify strongly with



Figure 2.2.3: The Quidditch pitch embodies Harry's positive experiences of thrilling competition, exhilaration, and triumph, such as winning important sports matches for his team as pictured above. As he feels particularly at ease when he is flying in the air on a broomstick, the Quidditch pitch is associated with homely feelings of comfort, peace and contentment.

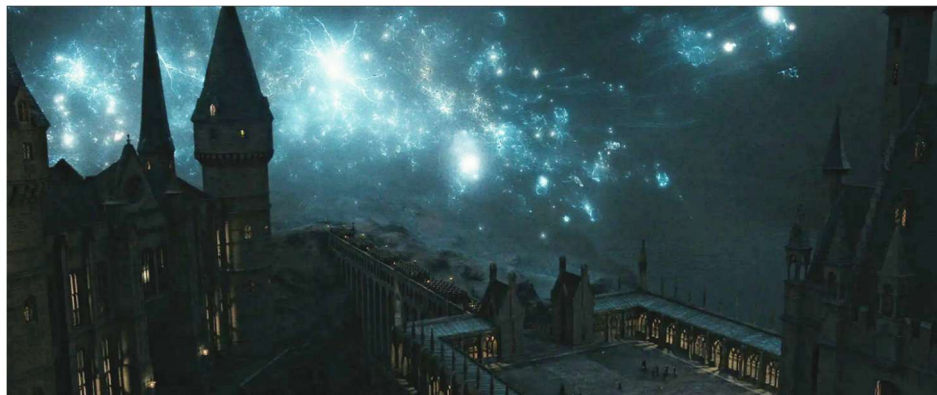


Figure 2.2.4: The spells of dark wizards bombard Hogwarts, the stronghold for the side of good during the wizarding war in *Deathly Hallows*. It is the homeland which Harry is defending and which, if taken by the nefarious Death Eaters, marks the beginning of a new era of Dark Magic similar to the hostile invasion of any real-world nation.

wizarding culture. As a result, any magical space – even the dark or unhomely wizarding places – register as being part of the wizarding homeland, and therefore are emotionally significant as a home.

Hogwarts especially is the heart of this wizarding homeland and collective magical identity. The entire wizarding community of Britain identifies with Hogwarts because it is the only magical institution nearby, which practically all English wizards attend, and therefore is the centre of all magic in the area. Hogwarts is portrayed as a national icon of magic, the stronghold of all that is good and right, the shared territory or “nation” of those who wield good magic. The use of Hogwarts as a symbol of homeland is especially evidenced by the later books, when an army of dark wizards begins an all-out war to eliminate the witches and wizards aligned with good, by choosing to attack Hogwarts school as the core symbol of wizarding life (Figure 2.2.4). Hogwarts is defended by Harry and his allies in a battle of good against evil, which is very easily likened to the defense of any culture against foreign military forces. When Harry finally triumphs, the audience is able to experience a shared relief, a collective sense of safety that their wizarding homeland and the magical undercurrent to their identity can continue to exist safely in the territory of Hogwarts’ castle and grounds.

...A State of Being

Russian-American cultural theorist Svetlana Boym (1959-2015) remarked that just as the longing for homeland is a rose-tinted “yearning for a different time”, in much the same way we yearn for home as “the time of our childhood, the slower rhythms of our dreams.”³¹ The comfort and joys that we remember from our childhood evoke what is perhaps one of the most intangible sense of home, as the idyllic world of our childhood. In seeing our childhood as a home, it evokes the joys and playfulness of youth, but also overlaps with the ideal family home. Our earliest memories of home evoke a sense of comfort and safety, they remind us of the love and care we received from others, while also

remembering this period of our lives as a cornerstone of our identity and our sense of self. The home as the state of childhood invokes a frame of mind, a temporal state, a memory in which we are immersed almost bodily or sensorially. “The word home,” observes Juhani Pallasmaa, “makes us suddenly and simultaneously remember all the warmth, protection and love of our entire childhood.”³²

Our childhood home is also more than the environment where we grew up or the senses which surrounded us, but becomes a formative aspect of our character and identity. Our positive experiences in our early life shape our desires and personality as we mature, becoming the basis for our self-esteem and self-development.³³ Home is a deeply rooted symbol of our childhood, a place to which we are forever indebted for the sense of safety, love, and identity which it established in us. Our youth may not have been devoid of negative experiences, but through memory and nostalgia it nevertheless remains a distant, oneiric, and at times idealized state of self-identity. Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton aptly consider home as “one’s childhood, the roots of one’s being,” a formative psychological period of our lives.³⁴ Our childhood is a home, an origin, for our sense of self.

Home and childhood seem to naturally fit hand in hand, but home can also apply to our state of being as adults. Rather than thinking of home as a nostalgic and carefree pillar of our long-lost youth, we are also able to find a home within ourselves. An inner home can indicate a state of being that we have achieved or one that we are still working to achieve, a goal of personal development. This crosses into the territory of home as an icon of self-development, autonomy, and maturity, and a sort of dream home or dream way of life.

Home is the person, state or purpose that we grow into or wish to grow into. The home as a symbol of self-development is immediately apparent in literature, where a character’s search for a home often leads them to grow and mature into a better version of themselves.³⁵ The hero’s

journey was a framework developed by American writer and theorist Joseph Campbell (1904-1987) in which the notion of self-improvement was considered central to many profound mythologies and a model for real-life human behaviour (Figure 2.3.0). In Campbell's hero's journey, the hero began by crossing the threshold and leaving home, only to return home and realize that "[t]he godly powers sought and dangerously won are revealed to have been within the heart of the hero all the time."³⁶ It is in finding ourselves that we are able to recognize how we have come into being, how we have shaped and developed ourselves because of our life's trials. In the process of maturing and gaining agency we have found our home within ourselves.

In speaking to the contemporary mythologies of film, Susan Mackey-Kallis (Villanova University) compares the journey home to a similar journey of self-development. She considers the goal of the protagonist to be about "finding him- or herself, which ultimately means finding a home in the universe." She defines home not only as "the literal home from which the hero sets out," but more importantly as "a state of mind or a way of seeing not possible before the hero departs."³⁷ Home is clearly an internal, intangible state of being, a level of consciousness which results from the hero maturing into themselves and their identity (Figure 2.3.1 and 2.3.2).

Beyond mythology and narrative, home is fundamentally tied to ideas of maturity and agency over our lives. In speaking to home environments for the aged, Parmelee and Lawton emphasize not only the necessity of security (as in house as shelter) but equally the "emphasis on autonomy" which the home represents. Home is a place fundamentally tied to "freedom of choice, action, and self-regulation of one's life space...the perception of and capacity for effective independent action."³⁸ Despite home needing to nurture and reassure, its role is also to promote

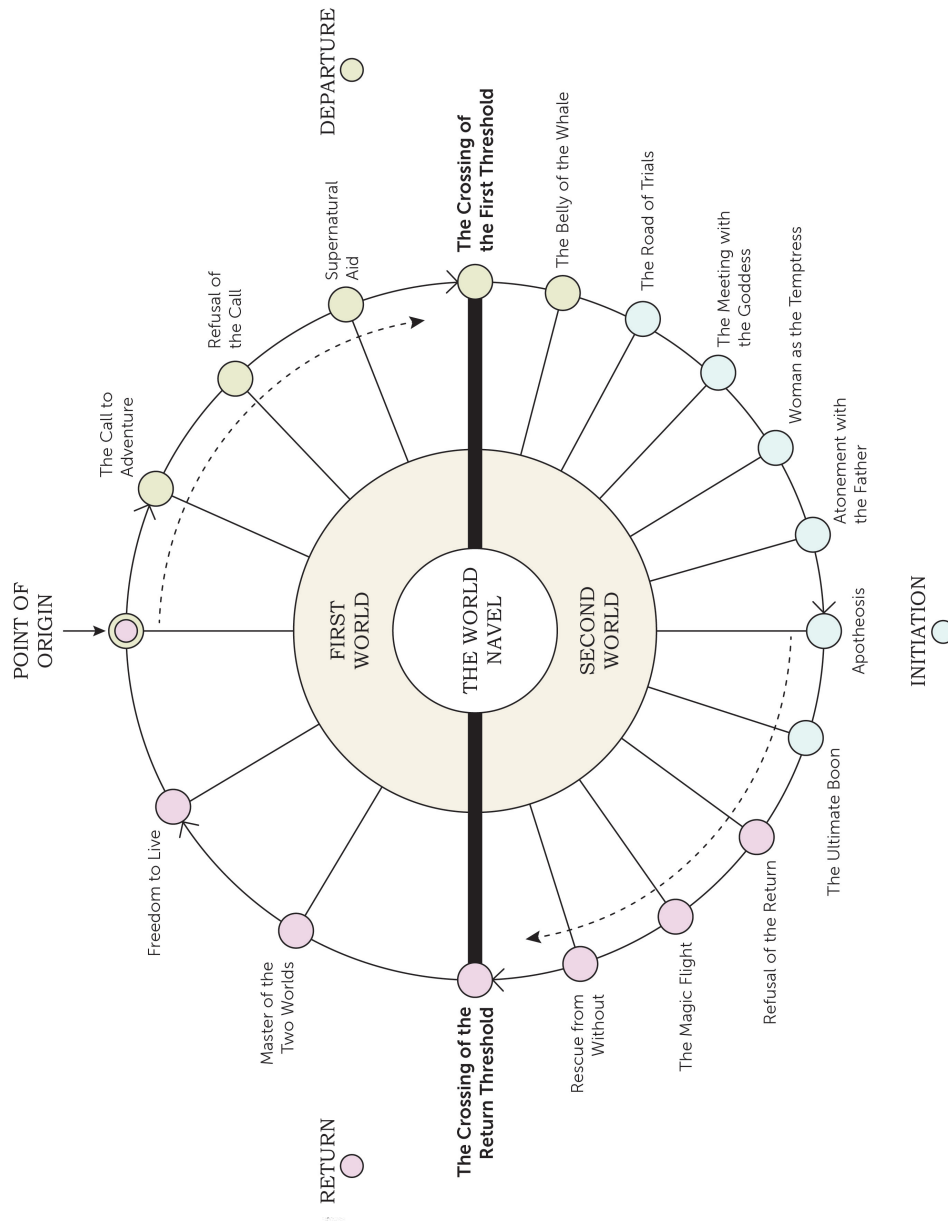


Figure 2.3.0: The Hero's Journey as outlined by Joseph Campbell reflects the storyline of many mythologies (including religious narratives such as the life of Jesus, Buddha and Bhagavan Krishna), essentially consisting of a previous home or departure point which has been outgrown, a journey of discovery and self-development, and a return to the departure point, having established a new and better home within their changed selves, a psychological state of comfort and self-development.



Figure 2.3.1 and 2.3.2: In the *Star Wars* film series, Luke Skywalker's journey has often been compared with the archetypal hero's journey: he begins in a desolate and barren homeworld, receives a call to adventure (in the form of an older Jedi Master Obi-Wan Kenobi), focuses on a path of internal development and spiritual training (with Master Yoda), and ultimately grows to take up his place as a protector of the galaxy. At its core, Luke's path is about learning who he is (a Jedi) and being at peace with who he has become, finding a home within himself.

autonomy in both manipulating one's physical environment and, more significantly, in feeling mentally liberated to make choices and have independent thought. Home is the psychological freedom to be a mature, autonomous, and unique individual; it is the progression of becoming who we want to be and the act of arriving at who we are meant to be. Our home is our sense of self, our place in the universe.

The nature of *Harry Potter* as a bildungsroman, a coming-of-age story, naturally uses its entire storyworld as the fertile ground which nurtures both the youthful identity of childhood and the self-development of maturity. Therefore, the whole of *Harry Potter*'s setting is a home in

the sense that it allows Harry (and the audience, vicariously) to freely explore and develop their sense of self (Figure 2.3.3 and 2.3.4). By including many storyworld places which recur throughout the series, this increases the homely sense of comfort, safety, and familiarity of *Harry Potter*'s locations and enables them to foster the development of both Harry's younger and older selves.

Diagon Alley is a prominent example which is instrumental in forming Harry's identity as a wizard, as it is the first magical location which Harry visits and where he is equipped with the culturally defining clothing and objects which identify him as a wizard. Throughout the series, Harry returns to Diagon Alley several times, often using it as a place which reintroduces him to the wizarding world and which sets off his personal magical journey that school year. Hence, its cobbled street and shops hold personal significance and act as symbols of his identity, having sheltered his process of self-discovery and learning.

While Diagon Alley is significant as a starting point, the majority of Harry's personal development takes place where he spends most of his time: at Hogwarts. Despite its castle form, by functioning as a boarding school it seems only fitting that Hogwarts becomes not only a place to grow in learning but an ideal environment for growing up. With students attending from the age of eleven to seventeen, Hogwarts is a home for the spirit of youth to thrive and create memories as well as a place to mature one's skills and personal attributes. As characters and audience grow together, they share experiences of feeling at home within themselves, by coming to terms with themselves as they are, by learning and experiencing autonomy and choice, and by growing into the person they want to be. Leveraging its coming-of-age narrative, *Harry Potter* utilizes its settings to convey the home as a state of being and self-discovery, and as the safe place which makes such identity development possible.



Figure 2.3.3 and 2.3.4: *Harry Potter* is a classic bildungsroman, allowing the audience to grow along with Harry throughout his formative adolescent years and making his entire world into a home refuge which shelters the development of one's identity. As eleven-year-old Harry receives his wand in Diagon Alley (top) he accepts his identity as a wizard, and at Hogwarts (bottom) students develop in courage, leadership and skill as they mature into adulthood, rising to fight alongside their professors in defending Hogwarts and choosing the kind of person they wish to be: on the side of good.

...A Truly Happy Place

Much of *Harry Potter*'s storyworld is significant in relating to one form of home or another, yet this is not the essence of what makes Harry's world so effective. Taken separately, these various interpretations of home scatter a range of topics and themes for the audience to parse through to extract meaning. However, in considering these numerous definitions of home together, it becomes possible to discern common patterns of thought, threads which link home to concepts of positive emotion, space, human nature, and to an ideal or aspirational state. These commonalities ultimately amount to a singular essence of home unifying

them all. This underlying, distilled definition of home fuels Harry's storyworld home and ignites a burning desire in the audience to take part in Harry's world.

The first commonality drawn from the various definitions of home is a clear association with positive emotions. In home as shelter, it evokes a sense of peace and protection. In home as dwelling place, in addition to peace and reassurance there is the sense of comfort and ease. Home as family, place, and homeland evoke strong feelings of love and social affection. Self-esteem, freedom, and autonomy are enjoyed via the sense of home as a state of development, the formative time of identity-making in childhood and adulthood as well as the aspirational goal of finding our place and our ideal selves. This peace, comfort, love, social validation, autonomy and freedom of the home all contribute to creating a sense of ideal well-being and a thoroughly contented life – in other words, a state of happiness. Much like how joy is often the goal of literature, happiness is the ultimate goal of the human being and of the home.³⁹ Through seeking reassurance, love, self-esteem and enjoyment, we are all really seeking happiness. The emotional attributes of the home, therefore, amount to the experience of joy and promises our attainment of such happiness. The home as happiness is revealed to be its true essence, as Coccia considers home to be about making happiness “a part and parcel of our breathing.” He also writes that “we build homes to give a form of intimacy to the portion of the world...that makes happiness possible.”⁴⁰

Some have argued that home can also be associated with negative experiences, such as conflict over homeland or oppressive parental oversight.⁴¹ However, when a place becomes associated with unpleasant experiences, it shifts more towards unhomely, unwelcoming, foreign attributes.⁴² In truth, Alfredo Marcos (University of Valladolid) and Marta Bertolaso (University Campus Bio-Medico of Rome) observe that “only a good home is really a home.”⁴³ Home is an intrinsically positive entity; inherent in the term “home” are connotations of positivity, and

anything less is not a true home but perhaps something closer to a mere dwelling or structure. A sense of happiness or joy is the ultimate product of the home, achieved through various positive experiences of peace, love and enjoyment.

Beyond the emotional vein of happiness that unites various definitions of home, the second recurring theme that home evokes is the necessity of a physical or spatial manifestation. Strong feelings of home – happiness, peace, love, enjoyment – are not independent of one's spatial environment, but rather distinctly symbolized or affected by them.⁴⁴ Each definition of home relies on a physical aspect: the basic shelter is a prerequisite for a family home, a patch of land is instrumental in creating a homeland, and an environment of freedom and peace is necessary to find one's identity, their home within themselves. Furthermore, home as place is entirely based on the notion of anchoring emotion to a space, in order to make it into a significant place. Blunt and Dowling observe the necessary link between emotion and places of home, reaffirming that a home consists of a physical location and the human sentiments with which it is associated. They use this idea as the basis for their discussion on home, emphasizing time and again that home is a "spatial imaginary," a set of "ideas and feelings, which are related to context, and which construct places."⁴⁵

It could also be considered that a spatial conception of home is necessary because of the fundamental nature of our beings. Humans are physical creatures, beings dependant on a tangible existence, existing in three-dimensional space. Our memories and experiences similarly take place in a three-dimensional understanding of the world. When we feel happy, we do not feel this in a void but rather while we are at a place. When we imagine what our future happiness will be like, it naturally needs to unfold in space, often at a specific place which makes that vision possible. We exist simultaneously in body and mind, thus a complete home must also exist on these two planes.

Therefore, home is truly both place and positive emotion. It is a spatial embodiment of happiness, a place which represents the peace, love and enjoyment that bring happiness. The home is a symbol of happiness, it is that entity commonly referred to as a person's "happy place." So long as the positive and homely emotions outweigh our negative experiences of a place, such a location gains even a rudimentary sense of home. Such is the case, for example, in a family home where arguments and friction may break out, but ultimately be outweighed by more frequent happy experiences. In homes where there is an overwhelmingly strong, dominant sense of happiness, this becomes a deeper joy that is more than mere pleasure or enjoyment, but is instead a profound contentment in our being. Boym describes this deep emotional satisfaction in expressing that "When we are home, we don't need to talk about it... To feel at home is to know that things are in their places and so are you."⁴⁶ The deepest home is the place where things simply feel right, where we experience a happiness that puts us at peace with our surroundings, where we feel fulfilled.⁴⁷

This kind of home is a truly happy place, but it is not necessarily a physical place. While this home can be one's physical family home, it can also come in the form of idealized childhood memories of a place or as a dream home which we hope to someday achieve. Though such imagined homes are not tangible, they remain just as real and appealing. The dream home can be such a powerful image that it motivates us to continue striving for our goals, giving direction to our lives.⁴⁸ Ginsberg describes an irresistible longing for a home which is primarily "an inner realm, a private world, which is our home away from home, our special place distinct from the rest of the world."⁴⁹ He highlights that home can be an ideal, a mental construct superior to a mere dwelling, which provides us a true refuge. In some ways, the mentally-constructed home is one of the most impactful forms of home, able to freely take on

desirable spatial characteristics and positive emotions, limited only by the strength of our imagination and longing.

By their intangible nature, the *Harry Potter* storyworld and other narrative worlds are some of the most appealing forms of home. Being unlimited imaginary dreams, storyworlds are free from the limits of physics and from the threat of unwanted changes such as war or natural disaster. Able to be constructed anywhere, the moment we choose to think them up, such places provide idyllic settings and strong emotional experiences for their audience. The initial creator of such fictional worlds – whether an author, filmmaker, or other visionary – is acting in the role of a hyper-architect. Their creative insight is above that of a regular architect, having carefully designed not only their storyworld architecture, but its culture, events, natural environment, and overall narrative, to create an epitomized, enjoyable experience of that place.

When the audience takes part in the narrative world, they then add another layer of idealization by focusing on and adopting primarily the storyworld aspects which suit their individual aesthetic and emotional tastes, the things which allow them to draw happiness from this world (Figure 2.4.0 and 2.4.1). Storyworlds are built by their creators and inhabited by their audience for the purpose of creating happiness. By the design of storyworlds and their ability to foster any number of enjoyable experiences, settings such as *Harry Potter*'s become true home places, happy places, where the audience dreams of dwelling.



Figure 2.4.0: *The Burrow* by Rafael Z. Chies is a modified version of the house shown in the films, edited with brighter colours and a different setting, reflecting the personal nature of storyworld places.

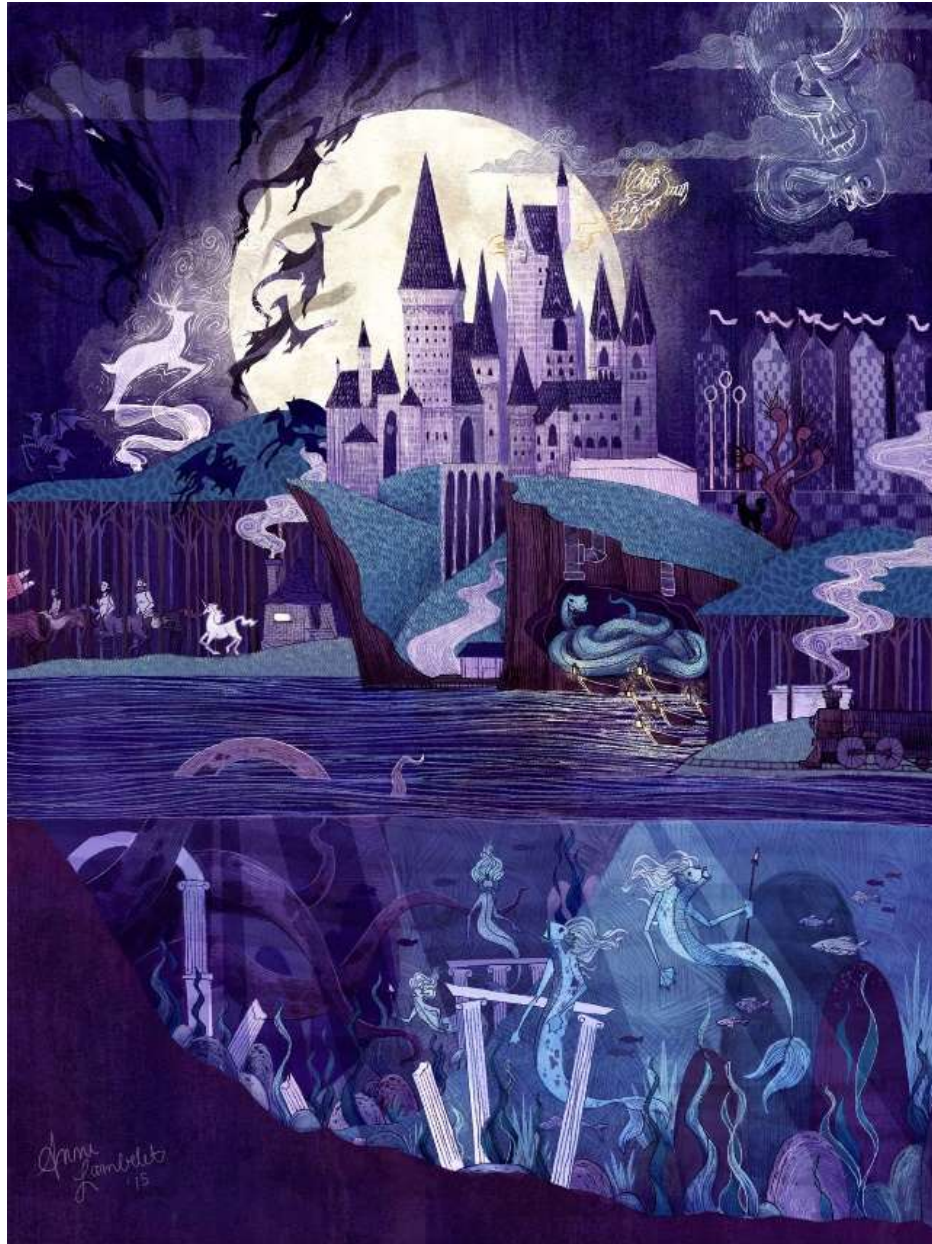


Figure 2.4.1: Fan-made art, such as *Never a Quiet Year at Hogwarts* by Anne Lambelet, underscores the highly individual experience and memory of storyworlds, as well as the desire to dwell in these idealized home places and to make it one's own.

...Harry's Narrative World

If a home is ultimately a happy place, then *Harry Potter*'s narrative world satisfies this definition by its events, characters, and themes which constantly awaken a sense of happiness for the audience. This happiness comes from many types of positive emotions – love, comfort, reassurance, freedom, enjoyment – which all recur frequently in his story, strongly imbuing the wizarding world with the joy that is emblematic of a home place. Before even considering the design aesthetics of the setting and architecture itself (the subject of Chapters III and IV), Harry's overall storyworld already contains numerous experiences of joy that shape his overall fictional universe into a truly happy, homely place.

As we have seen, positive emotions of comfort, reassurance, safety and love, characteristic of the family home and the home as place, are sources of happiness. These each manifest significantly in the *Harry Potter* narrative and establish the overall sense that his entire wizarding world is a welcoming and warm home place. Despite beginning as an orphan in an unloving household, upon entry to the wizarding world Harry repeatedly experiences the love and reassuring protection of parents and friends. In *Philosopher's Stone*, his first experience of parental love comes by seeing his mother and father's images smiling and standing behind him in the magic Mirror of Erised, then by receiving an album with old photos of them that move and reveal a semblance of their lives when they were happiest (Figure 2.5.0 and 2.5.1). As the series progresses, Harry repeatedly finds the strength to face Voldemort by drawing from the memory of his parents' love for him, such as in the finale of *Deathly Hallows* when he receives love and reassurance from speaking to their ghostly forms (Figure 2.5.2).⁵⁰ Harry's magical journey within Hogwarts also earns numerous true friends and acquaintances who love and protect him (Figure 2.5.3 and 2.5.4).⁵¹ In *Philosopher's Stone* alone, Ron gives Harry welcome company on the train to Hogwarts; Hagrid regularly invites Harry to have tea in his cabin; Dumbledore

converses with Harry like a caring uncle or grandfather; Hermione can't help hugging Harry before he faces Voldemort alone; and after



Figure 2.5.0 and 2.5.1: At the end of *Philosopher's Stone*, family love is shown to be important in the wizarding world, as Hagrid gifts Harry with a photo album containing pictures of his parents, bringing their presence closer to reality though they have long moved on in death and helping Harry to feel at home and at peace in the world.



Figure 2.5.2: The prominence of love and family at Hogwarts is reinforced by the temporary resurrection of Harry's parents and mentors as ghostly figures, here to encourage him and bolster him with their love as he prepares to sacrifice himself for the good of all.



Figure 2.5.3 and 2.5.4: The friendships Harry gains at Hogwarts are strong bonds that last beyond the physical destruction of the school in the final instalment, *Deathly Hallows*, highlighting the immortality of love and its pervasive existence in Harry's entire storyworld.



Figure 2.5.5: Dumbledore makes time to speak with Harry several times throughout the story, providing him guidance, reassurance, and much-needed answers to Harry's struggles, such as when he shares wisdom about the Mirror of Erised.

Voldemort is defeated, Hagrid cries at Harry's bedside at the thought that Harry came so close to being killed (Figure 2.5.5).

While these characters all contribute a sense of love and reassuring safety to Harry's world, the plot is also designed overall to provide a moral reassurance in championing the perpetual triumph of good over evil. Each year at Hogwarts centres on the threat of evil forces which are defeated by the end of the school year. In *Philosopher's Stone* and *Chamber of Secrets*, a rising Voldemort is taken down by Harry and his friends' brave acts, in *Prisoner of Azkaban* they deny malicious figures and save an innocent man from execution. This trend continues until, by the end of the series, a Voldemort at full strength is defeated once and for all by Harry's courageous and loving sacrifice. Anne Hiebert Alton (Michigan State University) expresses that "This repeated structure reassures readers of a happy ending" despite any tension or drama throughout the thick of the plot.⁵² This reassurance, combined with the protection and love of Harry's friends and family, make the wizarding world feel enjoyable and welcoming, imbuing the setting with feelings of home (Figure 2.5.6).



Figure 2.5.6: The final scene of the series at King's Cross station conveys a world where Harry and his friends have all experienced their own happily ever after, rewarded for their morality and defeat of evil. Having grown and started their own happy families despite all the hardship they had undergone in the Battle of Hogwarts and before, the lasting sentiment of the wizarding world is captured in the books: "All was well."⁵³

In addition to the enjoyment of love and reassurance, the wizarding world also creates feelings of home which reflect a positive happiness resulting from achieving a sense of identity, self-development, freedom, validation and purpose – such as when we find a home within ourselves or find our place in the universe. The *Harry Potter* storyworld achieves this self-happiness primarily by enabling Harry with incredible autonomy and agency. At Hogwarts, Harry is able to explore his interests, be himself, and experience freedom of choice. Upon joining the wizarding world in *Philosopher's Stone*, Harry discovers and uses his magical abilities, realizes his profound bravery, enjoys his natural talent playing the wizarding sport Quidditch and engages in vulnerable acts of kindness towards his classmates. Patricia Donaher and James M. Okapal (Missouri Western State University) agree that “throughout the series, the narrator and characters stress the role of ‘choice,’ and therefore, free will, in shaping an individual’s path.”⁵⁴ This manifests early in *Philosopher's Stone*, where Harry is consistently empowered and given opportunities to freely decide his future: he is able to escape the suffocating control of his aunt and uncle; he discovers he has a large enough inheritance from his parents to buy what he needs and wants without concern; he consistently goes wherever he likes on the Hogwarts grounds, despite curfew and out-of-bounds areas, because he receives his father’s invisibility cloak that conceals him from watchful teachers who would otherwise have stopped him (Figure 2.5.7). Not to mention, Harry’s very ability to do magic is itself an enabler of free will, giving him abilities that enhance his power to avoid repression and take charge.

Harry also receives abundant validation and a sense of purpose from joining the wizarding world. In this society, he is the famed “Chosen One” destined to defeat Voldemort, is a descendant of the fabled Peverell family who once cheated death and was born in a town which links him to Godric Gryffindor, legendary founder of Hogwarts and one of the most powerful good wizards of all time (Figure 2.5.8).⁵⁵ As broadcaster and



Figure 2.5.7: Harry has the freedom and power to explore Hogwarts castle unrestricted, using his father's invisibility cloak, as in *Philosopher's Stone* where Harry's hand and the lamp he carries appear to float in mid-air while the rest of him remains hidden. Throughout the series, under the cloak's cover, he expands the spatial and temporal boundaries of his experience by freely exploring at night and in forbidden locations, making Hogwarts into his own home place.

journalist Bidisha Mamata points out, "So many young people feel unheard, but Harry has a destiny so important that adults squabble over him, fight for him, champion him, hunt him, protect him."⁵⁶ Harry's storyworld is fundamentally about validating the individual, providing characters and the audience with a sense of agency, purpose, and the ability to express their identity freely and find a home within themselves.

A state of being at home has also been defined as the kind of person we wish to be or the life we wish to live. The idyllic home of our childhood and the home of our dreams use fun, wish-fulfillment, enjoyment and emotional stimulation to create a positive desire to dwell, a feeling of home. These are whimsical and lighthearted joys which are nevertheless able to evoke a happiness of place. Without fun or enjoyment to colour our lives, it contributes to what Aviezer Tucker (Harvard University) calls a state of homelessness, described as having "no ability to fulfil oneself in one's environment" and experiencing an "absence of intellectual stimuli."⁵⁷ The audience is certainly able to enjoy Harry's life with him by sharing in the vivid hobbies, challenges and elements of wish-fulfillment highlighted throughout the narrative.



Figure 2.5.8: A visit to Harry's birthplace in Godric's Hollow ties his past to the Peverell family of wizarding legend, reinforcing his importance and anchoring his sense of confidence and self-valuation to a home place.



Figure 2.5.9 and 2.5.10: Sumptuous experiences of feasting and celebration in Hogwarts turn the Great Hall into an embodiment of friendship, fun, abundance and happiness.

Audiences indulge their desire to fly by sharing in Harry's ability to ride a flying broomstick and thrill in discovering that "this was easy, this was *wonderful*."⁵⁸ Harry also benefits from enjoying the luxuries of feasts and excellent meals prepared for the Hogwarts students, and of course from

learning to do magic, an ability which no doubt many have dreamt of having, especially after *Harry Potter* made it seem so accessible (Figure 2.5.9 and 2.5.10). An idyllic dream life is also played out because of the characters around Harry, as Mamata points out that “Harry's surrogate family are every kid's fantasy: shape-shifters, werewolves, jailbreakers, rebels, Ministry of Magic insiders, powerful witches and maverick wizards.”⁵⁹

What brings further fun, happiness, and therefore an appeal to Harry's storyworld is another facet of emotional and intellectual stimuli, triggered by the alternation of tension and release in *Harry Potter's* complex plot. The narrative constantly indulges in the highs of winning tense competitions, holiday feasting, and mastering magnificent feats of wizardry, interspersed with the exciting challenges of fending off dangerous creatures, exploring frightening mysteries, and facing the threat of Voldemort and his followers (Figure 2.5.11 and 2.5.12). As Alton observes, the audience greatly benefits from “the vicarious enjoyment of adventure, drama, and danger.”⁶⁰ Such is the very nature of a good story, that it makes you believe for a moment that the character is facing real peril, and then relieves this tension with a well-earned resolution and rest. While *Harry Potter* is a roller-coaster of emotion, as a fictional story, the audience never feels they are in any real danger. The barrier between Harry's world and the immediate physical world maintains a level of safety, which enables the pure enjoyment of any tension rather than the threat of having to face malevolent villains and poisonous creatures in our own vulnerable bodies. The mystery, threat, magic and adventure in Harry's story make it fun and exciting, awakening the sense that his world and its enjoyable story are a happy place, a home, to which the audience can repeatedly return to find joy and exhilaration.

The world of *Harry Potter* evokes a feeling of home by tapping into a broad range of enjoyable and joyful experiences, shaping its narrative

world into a symbol of happiness. To call Harry's storyworld a home means that it is a spatial embodiment of happiness – a truly happy place – a vision of a place which brings us joy, one which we are able to access intangibly. Our universal human instinct has instilled within us the inherent longing to find or make a home wherever we go, to seek comfort and joy throughout our lives. By considering the storyworld of *Harry Potter* as a home, it allows this intangible place to take on the appeal of a true home, and to satisfy our constant yearning to experience homes filled with happiness.



Figure 2.5.11 and 2.5.12: (Top) Harry fights off the Hungarian Horntail dragon; (bottom) later, he faces Voldemort and his Death Eaters alone in an eerie graveyard. Thrilling dangers and fun adventure bring strong emotional stimulation to Harry's storyworld, embedding it with fun and enjoyment that encourage Harry and the audience's desire to dwell there.

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- ² Pauline Dewan, *The House as Setting, Symbol, and Structural Motif in Children's Literature* (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2004), 2; Aviezer Tucker, "In Search of Home," *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 11, no. 2 (1994): 186.
- ³ Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and Eugene Rochberg-Halton, *The Meaning of Things: Domestic Symbols and the Self* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 121.
- ⁴ Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. Maria Jolas (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994), 47–48.
- ⁵ Emanuele Coccia, *Philosophy of the Home: Domestic Space and Happiness*, trans. Richard Dixon (Dublin: Penguin Random House UK, 2024), 5.
- ⁶ *Ibid.*, 4.
- ⁷ Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, 17.
- ⁸ Patricia A. Parmelee and Powell Lawton, "The Design of Special Environments for the Aged," in *Handbook of the Psychology of Aging*, ed. James E. Birren and K. Warner Schaie, 3rd ed. (San Diego, CA: Academic Press, 1990), 467.
- ⁹ Abraham H. Maslow, "A Theory of Human Motivation," *Psychological Review* 50, no. 4 (1943): 376.
- ¹⁰ Alfredo Marcos and Marta Bertolaso, "What Is a Home? On the Intrinsic Nature of a Home," in *The Home: Multidisciplinary Reflections*, ed. Antonio Argandoña Rámiz (Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2018), 40.
- ¹¹ Coccia, *Philosophy of the Home*, 5–6.
- ¹² *Ibid.*, 57.
- ¹³ Witold Rybczynski, *Home: A Short History of an Idea* (New York: Penguin Group, 1987), 230.
- ¹⁴ Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, 6.
- ¹⁵ Rybczynski, *Home: A Short History of an Idea*, viii.
- ¹⁶ Juhani Pallasmaa, "Identity, Intimacy and Domicile - Notes on the Phenomenology of Home," in *The Home: Words, Interpretations, Meanings and Environments*, ed. David N. Benjamin, 1st ed. (London: Routledge, 1995), 136.
- ¹⁷ Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, 14–15.
- ¹⁸ Rybczynski, *Home: A Short History of an Idea*, 77.
- ¹⁹ Dewan, *The House as Setting, Symbol and Structural Motif*, 2.
- ²⁰ See Mallett, "Understanding Home: A Critical Review of the Literature," 63; Marcos and Bertolaso, "What Is a Home?," 53; Coccia, *Philosophy of the Home*, 31.
- ²¹ Alain de Botton, *The Architecture of Happiness*, 1st ed. (Toronto, Canada: McClelland & Stewart, 2006), 107.
- ²² Yi-Fu Tuan, "Place: An Experiential Perspective," *Geographical Review* 65, no. 2 (1975): 164–65.
- ²³ *Ibid.*, 165.
- ²⁴ Alison Blunt and Robyn Dowling, *Home* (London: Routledge, 2006), 2–3, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203401354>.
- ²⁵ Ian Tattersall, "In Search of the First Human Home," *Nautilus*, December 2, 2013, <https://nautil.us/in-search-of-the-first-human-home-234674/>.
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- ²⁷ Dewan, *The House as Setting, Symbol and Structural Motif*, 191–92; Jon C. Stott, preface to *The House as Setting, Symbol and Structural Motif in Children's Literature*, by Pauline Dewan (Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen Press, 2004), i.
- ²⁸ Blunt and Dowling, *Home*, 159; Robert Ginsberg, "Mediations on Homelessness and Being at Home: In the Form of a Dialogue," in *The Ethics of Homelessness: Philosophical Perspectives*, ed. G. John M. Abbarno (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1999), 34.
- ²⁹ Ginsberg, "Mediations on Homelessness and Being at Home," 34.
- ³⁰ Blunt and Dowling, *Home*, 142; Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), xiii and xix.

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- ³¹ Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, xv.
- ³² Pallasmaa, "Identity, Intimacy and Domicile," 135.
- ³³ Marcos and Bertolaso, "What Is a Home?," 45; Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, 4.
- ³⁴ Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton, *The Meaning of Things*, 121.
- ³⁵ Dewan, *The House as Setting, Symbol and Structural Motif*, 237.
- ³⁶ Joseph Campbell, *The Hero With A Thousand Faces*, Second Edition (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1968), 39.
- ³⁷ Susan Mackey-Kallis, *The Hero and the Perennial Journey Home in American Film* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 1.
- ³⁸ Parmelee and Lawton, "The Design of Special Environments for the Aged," 465.
- ³⁹ See "Chapter 1: The Boy Wizard," section titled "The Hogwarts Legacy" for more about joy as the goal, specifically via Ursula Le Guin, J.R.R. Tolkien and Kathryn Hume.
- ⁴⁰ Coccia, *Philosophy of the Home*, 6.
- ⁴¹ For more on the home as a negative space, see Blunt and Dowling, Boym and Mallett.
- ⁴² Ginsberg, "Mediations on Homelessness and Being at Home," 35.
- ⁴³ Marcos and Bertolaso, "What Is a Home?," 37.
- ⁴⁴ Rybczynski, *Home: A Short History of an Idea*, 62.
- ⁴⁵ Blunt and Dowling, *Home*, 2, 22.
- ⁴⁶ Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, 251.
- ⁴⁷ Tucker, "In Search of Home," 184.
- ⁴⁸ Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, 61.
- ⁴⁹ Ginsberg, "Mediations on Homelessness and Being at Home," 31–32.
- ⁵⁰ Anne Hiebert Alton, "Playing the Genre Game: Generic Fusions of the Harry Potter Series," in *Critical Perspectives on Harry Potter*, ed. Elizabeth E. Heilman, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2009), 218.
- ⁵¹ Ximena Gallardo C. and C. Jason Smith, "Happily Ever After: Harry Potter and the Quest for the Domestic," in *Reading Harry Potter Again: New Critical Essays*, ed. Giselle Liza Anatol (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, LLC, 2009), 103.
- ⁵² Alton, "Playing the Genre Game," 206.
- ⁵³ J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* (Vancouver: Raincoast Books, 2007), 607.
- ⁵⁴ Patricia Donaher and James M. Okapal, "Causation, Prophetic Visions, and the Free Will Question in Harry Potter," in *Reading Harry Potter Again: New Critical Essays*, ed. Giselle Liza Anatol (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, LLC, 2009), 50.
- ⁵⁵ Marley Stuever-Williford, "What Is a Hero?: An Analysis of Legacy Symbolism," in *Inside the World of Harry Potter: Critical Essays on the Books and Films*, ed. Christopher E. Bell (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company Inc., 2018), 165.
- ⁵⁶ Bidisha Mamata, "Harry Potter: A Home from Home at Hogwarts," *The Guardian*, November 11, 2010, sec. Film, <https://www.theguardian.com/film/2010/nov/11/harry-potter-surrogate-family>.
- ⁵⁷ Tucker, "In Search of Home," 184.
- ⁵⁸ J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (Vancouver: Raincoast Books, 1997), 111.
- ⁵⁹ Mamata, "Harry Potter: A Home from Home at Hogwarts."
- ⁶⁰ Alton, "Playing the Genre Game," 206.

CHAPTER III

In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit. Not a nasty, dirty, wet hole, filled with the ends of worms and an oozy smell, nor yet a dry, bare, sandy hole with nothing in it to sit down on or to eat: it was a hobbit-hole, and that means comfort.

– J. R. R. Tolkien,
The Hobbit, or There and Back Again, 1937

Chapter III:

Fantasy Worldbuilding and the Home

Vivid and believable storyworld settings affect the audience's experience just as deeply as the actual events taking place, and *Harry Potter* is no exception. The feelings of home conveyed through *Harry Potter*'s narrative and events rely heavily on the story's architectural settings to create locations that embody and enhance a homely sense of contentment. Harry's world is very clearly based off a number of different forms which have historically been used in British architecture. Most prominently, these include design elements related to neomedieval (modified medieval) and English country house aesthetics, which are combined in different locations throughout the wizarding world, from Hagrid's Hut to Gringotts Bank (Figure 3.0.0 to 3.0.2). This reliance on historical forms allows *Harry Potter*'s world to assimilate the connotations of these real-world architectural features into its own fantastical locations. "Nothing is experienced by itself," observed American urban planner Kevin Lynch (1918-1984), "but always in relation to its surroundings, the sequences of events leading up to it, the memory of past experiences."¹ Every form has a pre-existing association with certain values, emotions, and ideas, drawn both from a collective cultural mind and from an individual's past experiences.² In order to discuss the impactful connotations of neomedieval and country house aesthetics in Harry's world, it is important to understand their significance in the larger context of fantasy literature and ideals of

homeliness. By exploring the vast history and development of both neomedieval and country house forms, this chapter seeks to clarify their deeply engrained connotations and cultural meanings, particularly in how they create joyful and enjoyable environments which contribute to homely experiences. In the following chapter, these design principles are then applied to specific settings in *Harry Potter* in order to highlight their appealing and homely forms.



Figure 3.0.0 and 3.0.1: The aesthetics of Hagrid's hut combine aspects of different historic styles inside and out, creating a homey, rustic and earth worn feel that harkens to a vaguely medieval past.

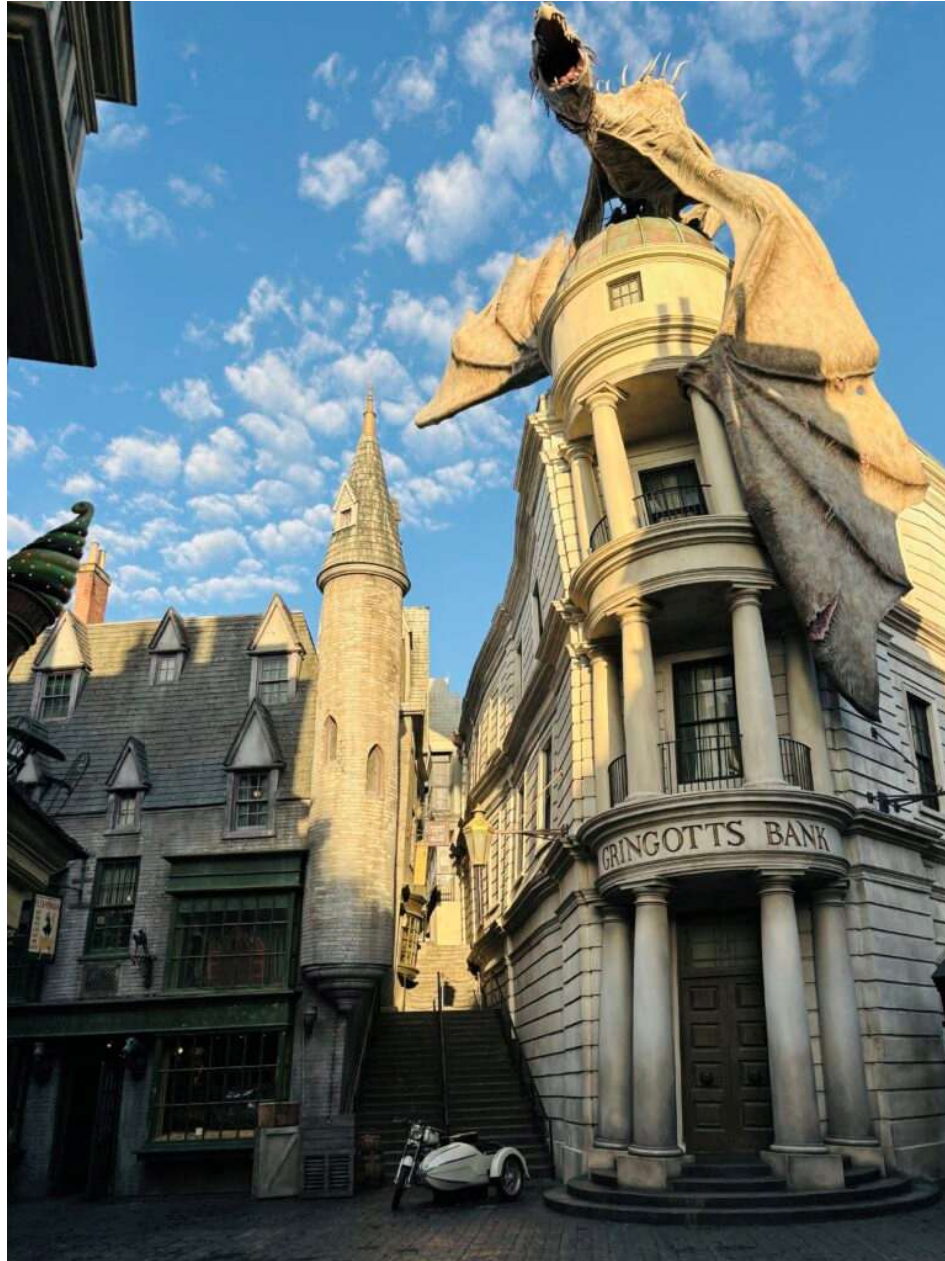


Figure 3.0.2: The design of Gringotts wizarding bank and its surroundings combines and modifies aspects of historical designs from various periods to evoke an overall sense of believability and an imagined history.

Fantasy Neomedievalism

The architecture in *Harry Potter* is unmistakably linked to medieval forms. The heavy influence of rough-hewn stone, firelight, high windows, cobbled streets, vaulted ceilings, and other architectural features link it indelibly to castles and to institutional or ecclesiastic

medieval design. However, the aesthetics used in *Harry Potter* are not a pure, historical representation of the Middle Ages. Medieval historian and philosopher Umberto Eco (1932-2016) noted that there are two sides to contemporary curiosity with the Middle Ages, which he categorized as either “fantastic neomedievalism” or “responsible philological examination.”³ As to the latter, medieval aesthetics are undoubtedly descended from a factual past and still used in the present as institutional or government buildings, especially in Europe. While these functions can associate medieval forms with mundane everyday realism, “fantastic neomedievalism” has also emerged as a strong trend, from the longstanding use of medieval forms in fantasy contexts. *Harry Potter* comes from a long line of fictions which, despite borrowing from historical medieval architecture and culture, have used medieval forms to generate a new and evolving genre of neomedieval or fantasy medieval settings.

As we will come to see, neomedievalism is not strictly limited to architecture drawn from the Middle Ages, nor to any one medieval style, but is a pastiche of many historical aesthetics repurposed to create a heightened emotional effect and to evoke epic narrative connotations. In particular, the image of the castle has been used as the central icon of fantasy fiction and therefore has gained particularly strong emotional connotations. Through centuries of mythic narratives, these neomedieval forms have become linked to attributes of danger, magic, heroism, chivalry, power, and wish-fulfillment which bring joy to their audience. In other words, neomedieval architecture has come to be deeply associated with a happiness drawn from narrative fun, adventure, and excitement, and it is this happiness that makes neomedieval spaces into home places.

The development of a neomedieval aesthetic and its associated connotations can be traced all the way from the Middle Ages themselves, forward to Romanticism and directly into twenty-first century media.

Beginning with the Middle Ages, Racha Kirakosian (University of Freiberg) reminds us that “medieval sources themselves already contain mythical dimensions.”⁴ She points out that medieval literature employed mythical elements to reinforce or explain events and history, blurring the line between “the really possible and the fantastic, the imaginable and the supernatural.”⁵ Lacking scientific knowledge, medieval societies relied on myths and legends to supplement their understanding of reality, allowing fantasy to inhabit the unknown: in the medieval imagination, dark forest settings permitted unicorns and centaurs to exist unseen, while a thatched home might just as easily house a farmer as it could a witch. The built and natural environments of this period, the architecture and landscapes, consequently adopted the values and beliefs of their inhabitants, associating the houses, castles, and churches of the period with elements of myth, fantasy and magic right from the start.

Eco considered the Middle Ages as the root of contemporary technology, society, language, economy, and understanding, and it seems only natural that the aesthetics of myth, magic and fantasy had their origins here as well.⁶ Speaking to the origins of the castle, English historian John Goodall regards these forms as both functional and symbolic almost right from the beginning of their use and construction. Despite being initially built in the context of warfare and defense, he notes that castles were intended to be “symbolic and prestigious,” used to advertise the wealth, vocation and power of the knights and nobles who constructed them.⁷ Castle elements such as battlements, walls and towers represented the fantasy of power, the hunger for wealth, or the dream of being nobility. Their solidity and potential for defense also presented a narrative of safety and reassuring enclosure. Though these were not necessarily mythic connotations, they nonetheless associated castles and other prestigious medieval architecture with narratives of aspiration and desire, which are often the object of the human imagination.

Direct fantasy associations continued to rise soon after, from the late twelfth century onwards. Goodall asserts that during this period, “the greatest castles began to be associated with the foundation myths of the kingdom as well as figures such as Julius Caesar or legendary heroes including King Arthur and Guy of Warwick.”⁸ Thus, from the Middle Ages themselves, the forms of medieval architecture – and especially the castle – have been closely tied to a belief in fiction and myth, acting as symbolic vessels for fantasy and legend.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, castles and other medieval forms continued to be associated with narratives and fiction. “Immediately after the official ending of the Middle Ages,” Eco wrote, “Europe was ravaged by a pervasive medieval nostalgia.”⁹ Citing the works of authors such as Pulci, Ariosto, Cervantes and Shakespeare, he highlighted the affectionate spirit held towards the Middle Ages as a time of chivalry and heroics, one rife with fantasies of epics and adventure. Such narratives continued to associate the medieval period, and its visual and built culture, with magic and fantasy.

Following the end of the seventeenth century, the trend of medieval nostalgia and fantasy managed to gain extraordinary influence during the neo-Gothic period. It was largely Gothic revival architecture and Gothic literature of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries which has been credited with establishing neomedievalism as we see it today.

British academic historians Farah Mendlesohn (Anglia Ruskin Centre for Science Fiction and Fantasy) and Edward James (University College Dublin – National University of Ireland) chronicle the history of fantasy literature, highlighting the rise of fantasy narratives as a response to the Enlightenment in the eighteenth century.¹⁰ This early fantasy genre, the Gothic novel, reacted to the realist and scientific ideologies of the Enlightenment by engaging in the hidden, unseen, illogical, and supernatural. The goal of such stories was entertainment, achieved

through a high drama and intensity of emotion, and using Gothic revival castles as the primary setting.

The Castle of Otranto was one of the first Gothic novels, a formative fictional text authored by English writer, art historian and politician Horace Walpole. Walpole's enthusiasm for dreaming of the past also extended into the creation of one of the first significant neo-Gothic structures, Strawberry Hill House (Figure 3.1.0). As architectural critic and writer Jonathan Glancey points out, Walpole's novel and his castle-like residence defined the perception of the Gothic revival as an "exotic alternative" to the formalities of Palladianism which were popular at the time.¹¹ *The Castle of Otranto* followed a story which can be called chivalric, introducing fantastical elements such as apparitions, giants, and subterranean passageways that changed the image of the castle in the public's mind to be highly dramatic and fictionalized.¹² Though the solid and factual lived experience of the eighteenth-century castle is far different from the drama of Walpole's narrative architecture, the Gothic novel is what introduced the castle as a fantastical architectural creation, a lasting legacy which permeates horror and fantasy films.¹³

The fictional Gothic castle took physical form at Walpole's Strawberry Hill House, in which Goodall describes "disconnected borrowings from medieval monuments" which were conjoined for effect rather than for historical fidelity.¹⁴ This neo-Gothic architectural trend was well-suited to personal expression and individual emotion, contrasting the strict Classicism which had preceded it.¹⁵ Without a strict set of academic design guidelines, the Gothic revival was therefore a period of dramatic and detailed architectural creations, with patrons implementing a sort of pastiche of recycled historical elements, in unique and rather imaginative tastes.

Spatial designs were then reflected and exaggerated again in newer Gothic novels, further emphasizing the mood, feel and atmosphere of these architectural spaces rather than returning to historical accuracy.¹⁶



Figure 3.1.0: Horace Walpole’s Strawberry Hill (built in the mid eighteenth-century) reuses elements of medieval pointed windows, quatrefoil designs, battlements and towers to create a Gothic revival residence.

Goodall describes the result of this self-affirming cycle as leading to the creation of settings where “magic, excitement and fear” lurked.¹⁷ As a result of the parallel development between Gothic revival architecture and Gothic literature, the castle and modified medieval forms became synonymous with spaces of fantasy and fiction.

As Romanticism emerged in the nineteenth century, there was a further revival of medieval forms and fantasy narratives, through the concurrent development of historical novels and of whimsical castles, which were becoming increasingly widespread. Kirakosian attributes the foundation of modern fantasy to the “Romantic enthusiasm for the Middle Ages,” influenced by medievalist images reiterated through the lens of historicism.¹⁸ The nineteenth century popularity of historical novels such as those by Walter Scott and Victor Hugo linked narratives to fictionalized medieval settings and narratives.¹⁹

During this period, architectural trends saw the rise of what Glancey terms “fascinating, decadent...whimsical creations, the stuff of fairytales.” This “fantasy architecture” included examples such as

Neuschwanstein, the Palacio da Pena, the Sagrada Familia, and Castle Drogo, some of which were designed by prominent architects such as Antoni Gaudi and Edwin Lutyens and were therefore considered significant architectural pursuits (Figure 3.1.1 and 3.1.2).²⁰ These whimsical castles drew from an array of medieval elements and reapplied them in a new collage of styles and forms. Goodall summarizes this period in castle design by expressing that “castles couldn’t do without battlements and towers but they could be made infinitely more comfortable and splendid if no one needed to use them for fighting.”²¹ The resulting castle, still functional for dwelling and reminiscent of its long history of defense, though now elaborated and ornamented, added a distinct whimsy and fantasy to the iconography of neomedieval architecture.

Twentieth century representations of neomedieval and fantasy worlds then set the basis for, and still remain themselves, contemporary fantasy. Though fantasy castles were no longer being built as functional physical spaces, the genre of fantasy stories had emerged in mainstream culture to continue building the legacy of whimsy. This modern period in neomedieval aesthetics and ideologies was largely formed by two narrative sources: J.R.R. Tolkien and Walt Disney.

English writer and philologist J. R. R. Tolkien authored the series that is often considered among the most defining works of contemporary fantasy: *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy. Supporting a tale of wizards, wood elves, orcs, dwarves, and kings, Tolkien’s setting is distinctly neomedieval, with castles, fortifications and villages all described in terms which evoke the Middle Ages (Figure 3.1.3). His vision of fantasy, or fairy-stories as he would have termed them, and fantastic settings has deeply affected the modern consciousness. Kirakosian observes that “Since Tolkien’s creation of Middle Earth, his specific notion of the European Middle Ages has served as the standard backdrop for Fantasy worlds.”²² Considering *The Lord of the Rings*’ original written material



Figure 3.1.1: Completed around 1886, Neuschwanstein Castle was an extravagant piece of physical “fantasy architecture” constructed as a pleasure palace rather than a defensive structure, with spaces honouring the narrative legends of medieval knights.



Figure 3.1.2: The Palácio da Pena in Sintra, Portugal boasts vivid colours and an elaborate profile which reinforce narratives of wealth, prestige and especially whimsy.



Figure 3.1.3: Contemporary fantasy castles gained popularized in part through the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy. Minas Tirith is one example which presents an entire city constructed in the style of a mountainside castle, with outer ramparts and numerous buildings with pointed spires, rising to the castle itself which sits on top.



Figure 3.1.4 and 3.1.5: The two animated castles in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* set off a new wave of popular fairy tale settings. The first castle shown in the film (top) is used as a slightly more accurate reflection of real-life castles, with ordinary colours and relatively little ornament, whereas the castle shown at the conclusion of the film (bottom) is an idyllic palace nestled among the clouds, promising fantasy and luxury.

and its later film adaptations of the early 2000s, Tolkien's Middle Earth setting is extensively rooted in medieval imagery, while also drawing elements from other eras such as the Migration Period or the Renaissance.²³ This architectural pastiche, which had been applied in the freeform Gothic revival and in whimsical Romantic structures, has become especially prominent in contemporary fantasy.

Departing from Tolkien's legacy, during the same period when his great literary epic originated in England, neomedieval designs and castle spaces were also being resurrected by American visionary Walt Disney. Beginning with fairy-tale based films like *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* in 1937 and continuing to the Walt Disney Animation Studios' "renaissance" films of the 1990s, fantasy castles became indelibly linked to Disney iconography (Figure 3.1.4 and 3.1.5). Martha Bayless (University of Oregon) identifies Disney's castles as being descended from the tradition of medieval constructions which had already been "imagined, restored, and reinterpreted as icons of romance in the nineteenth century."²⁴

When today's North American and global audience encounter fantasy castles, Goodall asserts that "their point of association is not with the past or anything tangible at all. Instead, it is with fairy tales and the fantastical."²⁵ It seems the castle has become a composite of its fictionalization and re-presentation in a long history of fantasy and fairy tales. From the tradition and prevalence of Disney in Western media, and even from the slightly more grounded Tolkien medieval world, the fictional vision of castles and medieval architecture has become predominant in the collective consciousness, establishing a neomedieval aesthetic that is inseparable from fantasy, adventure, and magic.

Neomedieval Aesthetics

The architectural styles and aesthetics of neomedievalism evolved from its long and varied history to include a contemporary shorthand of features linked most closely with fantasy. These primarily centre around

castles, as these dominant architectural works became unmistakably iconic of the Middle Ages and especially symbolic of mythical narratives.

With castles originating as defensive structures, Goodall asserts that the “architectural trappings of war...are inseparable from the story of the castle.” He includes in this category features such as battlements, walls, moats, towers and turrets, all of which are familiar to the modern vision of the castle.²⁶ Commenting on the Disney castle in Florida, Bayless notes that it boasts twenty-seven towers, “an extravagance of towers much greater than any medieval castle of its size” and in fact it “consists almost entirely of fairy-tale towers,” which suggests that the rising spires and slender figures of towers are indeed prominently neomedieval even by themselves (Figure 3.1.6).²⁷ From the fantasy castles of the Gothic revival and the nineteenth century, it similarly became clear that pinnacles, pointed windows, corner towers and a complex roofline on multiple levels were equally important to indicate a neomedieval or fantasy space.²⁸

Using this lexicon of fantasy iconography, neomedieval designs apply principles of exaggeration, pastiche, realism, and modernization to complete an “aesthetic of the mythical.”²⁹ The exaggeration of darkness, the sublime vastness of a landscape, the vivid effect of bold colours and high contrast lighting, all contribute to evoke a heightened emotional effect, which is the essence of neomedieval spaces.³⁰ Supporting exaggerated narratives of heroism and epic scales, spatial features which have been extremified adequately reflect and support the emotional roller coaster of plot, characters, and morals. Exaggerations of height and complexity, for example, can contribute to greater opportunities for secrecy, isolation, and suspense.³¹ Contemporary neomedieval design is exaggerated to be, as Bayless puts it, “stirring rather than formidable.”³²

Pastiche aids in emphasizing the emotional quality of neomedieval architecture over any historical function or formal adherence.

Neomedieval design is intentionally a reconstructed and modified form

of medieval representation, intentionally drifting from accurate historical recreation to leverage the symbolic importance of castle features and similar medieval structures. The result is a pastiche of architectural forms and styles which fall under the collective umbrella of “historical” or



Figure 3.1.6: The castle at Walt Disney World features tall towers with bright blue roofs that nevertheless is reminiscent of Gothic revival architecture, fantasizing the form of the castle and associating it with modern fairytales.



Figure 3.1.7: The throne room at Neuschwanstein castle contrasts the structure’s European exterior by incorporating clear parallels to Byzantine architecture such as its bright arabesque patterning and stylized arches.

“old.” Pastiche is an integral aspect of neomedieval design, reflecting the timelessness of myths and narratives, which superimpose an edited collection of architectural epochs on one another.³³ Pastiche has been used since the Gothic revival and especially the nineteenth century Romantic fantasy castles. Glancey describes Neuschwanstein Castle as combining European tapestries, murals and paintings with pillars of imitation porphyry and lapis lazuli in the Byzantine-style throne room (Figure 3.1.7).³⁴ Furthermore, he observes that the trend of nineteenth century fantasy architecture in general leverages pastiche to create characteristic buildings that simultaneously harken back to the Middle Ages and the Renaissance.³⁵

Yet, despite significant deviations from accurate historical representation, the pastiche of styles nonetheless evokes a sense of realism, a design sensibility rooted in reality. The ability to recognize even scattered parts of real-world structures can lend a subconscious authenticity and believability to these fantasy structures, encouraging the thought that they may well exist or have existed at some point – such as elements of Château Chaumont which influenced Disney’s Florida castle, or the Shambles in York which seem clearly related to *Harry Potter*’s Diagon Alley (Figure 3.1.8 to 3.1.11).³⁶ Kirakosian provides the example of the well-received and extensively detailed *Game of Thrones* storyworld, which “combines visual concepts from antiquity with those from the Middle Ages and Renaissance, as well as elements from Science Fiction.”³⁷ (Figure 3.1.12) By drawing from real-life architectural styles, even if they originate from a range of geographies and time periods, such storyworlds become more believable and able to support a vast and rich history of their own.

While not all fantasy spaces incorporate futuristic science fiction design elements, neomedieval architecture has long included modernized elements which give the sense that fantasy is accessible and contemporary. The incorporation of modern design and technology



Figure 3.1.8 and 3.1.9: Features like the towers and sloped blue roofs of the Cinderella Castle at Disney World (top) bear a similarity to real-world castles like the Chateau Chaumont (bottom), revealing the real-world inspiration that adds a dimension of believability and groundedness to fantasy places.

within fantasy structures increases the relevance and relatability of such spaces. Technological modifications and innovations to the idea of the classic castle are the natural product of practical architectural and cultural mindsets, in order to make castle spaces on par with the comfort and convenience expected by a contemporary user.

British historian and archaeologist Michael W. Thompson (1928-2019) confirmed this with reference to the early Gothic revival, in which outer detailing reflected Gothic design, yet the character of interior spaces remained unaffected and suited to lifestyles of the time.³⁸ Glancey as well characterizes nineteenth century castles as products of both the past and present, with their historical forms being “laced through with the latest domestic technology.”³⁹ Speaking specifically to Neuschwanstein, he points out that the castle was “equipped from the outset with hot running water, flushing lavatories, and even a form of central heating.”⁴⁰ Similar modernizations apply to fictional neomedieval spaces, as has been pointed out in the case of *Game of Thrones* and has been used in *Harry Potter*’s Hogwarts castle, which has conveniently been equipped with contemporary bathrooms and plumbing despite its thousand-year-old structure (Figure 3.1.13).⁴¹ Anachronistic elements of modernization aid in constructing the neomedieval as a form of idyllic, comfortable, and convenient fantasy for the contemporary crowd. In the representation of neomedieval settings, the features of castle design and their application via exaggeration, pastiche, realism and modernization all amount to creating a very distinctive and yet accessible architecture of fantasy.



Figure 3.1.10 and 3.1.11: Diagon Alley (top) closely resembles the Shambles in York (bottom), linking the fantasy street to a real historic cobbled lane lined by small shops.



Figure 3.1.12: *Game of Thrones* has made extensive use of the spaces within Doune Castle, Scotland, to the point where signage has been mounted to identify the structure more easily to cinematic tourists.



Figure 3.1.13: The design of Moaning Myrtle's out-of-order bathroom in Hogwarts combines medieval stonework with contemporary plumbing systems, creating a neomedieval illusion that defies any real historical period.

Connotations of the Neomedieval

The implications of neomedieval architecture are what link this aesthetic with the enjoyable notion of home places. Being integrally wrapped up with fantasy desires and narratives, neomedieval forms have come to signify not only the castle as a historical artefact but as a concept. As Goodall writes, the evolution and history of the castle is less about a specific form or historical artefact, but about the evolution of the term “castle” and the ways this label has been attributed to a variety of structures over time.⁴² The link between neomedieval castle forms and home comes from an association with enjoyments drawn from fantasy. Home places, as previously stated, are based in a feeling of happiness or contentment, which can stem from experiences of peace and comfort, love and self-worth, or freedom and fun. In neomedieval architecture, the deeper a form is linked with fantasy narratives, the more it evokes the enjoyable and joyful aspects of such stories. Neomedieval architecture leverages its fictional origins to evoke an illusion of threat and danger without real bodily harm, creating homes of enjoyment, intellectual stimulation, adventure, and fun.

Over time and repeated use, certain connotations have come to be associated with neomedieval forms, which renders them as symbols or icons of happiness and contentment drawn from fantasy, adventure and quest narratives. From the origin of medieval defenses, high walls and protected towers presented ideals of power, safety, and prestige. When the Gothic revival created its castle-like and medieval-esque structures, it tied Gothic aesthetics to ideals of personal expression, freedom and chivalry. The Gothic novel had its own myriad connotations to contribute, emphasizing aspects of power, drama, adventure linked to castle forms. It also introduced elements of terror, thrill and danger to neomedieval spaces, which may have produced real fear in a physical castle, but which in narrative instead evoke an enjoyable tension and emotional stimulation. During the nineteenth century, legends and stories

of the Middle Ages and other past eras continued to be resurrected. One example is yet again at Neuschwanstein, where Glancey describes tapestries reflecting the story of the medieval knight Lohengrin, whose tale fascinated the castle's owner King Ludwig II of Bavaria (Figure 3.1.14). The chivalry, heroism and righteousness of medieval knights became immortalized and glorified in narrative, tied to the simultaneous evolution of the fantasy castle. Glancey also considers this period as being linked to the "retelling of fairytales," which became manifest in the fantasy castle architecture.⁴³

As neomedieval castles became rendered less in physical space and more in narrative storyworlds, fantasy forms became increasingly symbolic of such stories and their adventures. There is now, as Kirakosian expresses, an "expectation that the epic will create a world in which myth and reality merge together."⁴⁴ Today, storyworlds and their neomedieval architecture are perceived as being intertwined with the "epic" and "mythic" elements of narrative. Much of the contemporary perception of medieval forms is centred around the narratives that abound in popular bookstores, which link medieval forms to fantasy conventions which can include anything from witchcraft and enchanted castles to unicorns, Arthurian myths, or even a *Star Wars* space opera.⁴⁵

Castles today can be compared to the way fairy tales are told today, modified and cleaned up to become safe and inviting play spaces for audiences to personally experience their own stories.⁴⁶ Gaston Bachelard observed the inherent connection between neomedieval forms and pleasurable imagination, stating that "A tower is the creation of another century. Without a past it is nothing...But we still have books, and they give our day-dreams countless dwelling-places. Is there one among us who has not spent romantic moments in the tower of a book he has read?"⁴⁷ Neomedievalism embodies an enjoyment and a happiness which call us to dwell in these settings, and to feel welcome and at home.



Figure 3.1.14: A tapestry of the swan knight, Lohengrin, in Neuschwanstein reveals the castle's close ties to fantastic medieval tales.

Castles, their towers, arched windows, vaulted ceilings and battlements, are icons of a fantasy world, a fictional and idealized world, one wrought with danger, mystery, adventure, knights, and other narrative enjoyments. Evolved through a long history of medieval nostalgia and re-presentation, the neomedieval castle has been recycled through the lens of fairytale, Gothic revival, Gothic literature, and Romanticism, in order to arrive at its contemporary significance in fiction. Today, because of its longstanding association with fantasy narratives, the neomedieval has come to symbolize a sense of home: promising happiness, drawn from the enjoyment of adventure, magic, power, danger, thrill, terror, agency, mystery, discovery, wonder, wish-fulfillment, freedom, and chivalry.

Domestic Ideals of Comfort

With an abundance of fantasy narratives continuing to reuse medieval imagery that has become a standard of the genre, neomedieval

architecture is now in its own self-affirming cycle, aligning itself more and more with the values, emotions, morals, events and imagery in fantasy stories. Used as character dwellings and destinations, neomedieval settings are increasingly being associated with these narratives' connotations of family, personality, love, romance, and other relatable positive emotions traditionally associated with family homes. Yet, despite the growing role of fictional castles and neomedieval forms as dwelling homes, the aesthetics of traditional family homes continues to exert a powerful influence in evoking strong connotations of homely love, comfort, and reassurance in Western fantasy, and certainly in *Harry Potter*.

There are many appealing kinds of home which have surfaced throughout history and across the globe, but the dwelling which manifests in *Harry Potter* is a sort of traditional vision of home, a variation on the English country house as inspired by the Arts and Crafts movement. This nostalgic house of the past – messy, homespun, full and cozy – carries strong connotations of a family life filled with comfort, love, safety, and individual expression, making it into a happy place. By applying the aesthetics of these traditional English dwellings, Harry's storyworld evokes connotations of a happy family home, making it a spatial embodiment of peace and love, and therefore an embodiment of happiness.

The country house of the Arts and Crafts movement developed in England from what Glancey terms a "romantic idea of an English yeoman's farmhouse."⁴⁸ At the same time that fantasy castles were resurrecting and romanticizing medieval forms, the Arts and Crafts movement adopted a similar historical nostalgia and applied it to residential design. Both architectural trends naturally emerged as a form of resistance to the accelerated progress of steam trains and the all-consuming industrial world.⁴⁹ The Arts and Crafts movement had an inherently social focus, concerned with preserving tradition, celebrating

the beauties of nature, valuing patina, wear and age, and honouring the influence of one's living environment on their character.⁵⁰

The aesthetics which emerged from this period were heavily focused on comfort, craftsmanship, and personality. They addressed a very human and personal scale, tailored to the social unit of the tight-knit family, as seen at Perrycroft House and Munstead Wood (Figure 3.2.0 and 3.2.1). One prominent example is Deanery Garden, designed by Edwin Lutyens (Figure 3.2.2). Glancey notes that the house and gardens were emblematic of “a new country house aesthetic for the emerging rich upper middle class,” which he described as an “idyllic, asymmetric, and yet highly disciplined brick-and-timber English country house.”⁵¹ This became the new ideal for a home, a modest house with space for friends and family to be entertained, and with a decent garden.⁵²

Turning focus to the interior aesthetics, the Arts and Crafts layout incorporated modern free-form principles, combined with age-old building methods and an overall sense of timelessness.⁵³ Speaking to craftsmanship in the home, Ola Nylander (Chalmers University of Technology) expresses that “We seem to appreciate materials that are not overly smoothed,” but which instead show signs of being worked by a craftsperson, adding a richness and sense of care in design.⁵⁴ White walls, cleanliness, the absence of human traces and signs of human occupation, can remind us of industrial and impersonal spaces, representing the opposite of homeliness.⁵⁵ The English country home in contrast emphasizes comfort, intimacy, and reveals the influence of the human hand through craftsmanship.

The vision of the country home emphasized by the Arts and Crafts movement, one characterized by proximity to nature, privacy, craftsmanship, humanity, and modesty, is aligned with the features which manifest in the settings of *Harry Potter*. The implications of this traditional home aesthetic associate it with “ordinary, human qualities” as Rybczynski notes.⁵⁶ Just as the features of neomedieval and castle

architecture indicate an association with the fun, adventurous, and otherwise enjoyable nature of fantasy narratives, the country house contains its own connotations related to home and happiness.

As we have seen, the home of the Arts and Crafts movement originated from ideals of simplicity, country life, and a romantic notion of a past which was disappearing, notably the humble commoner's farmhouse. This traditional form of home also evokes a sense of peace in nature, a relatable and human scale, strong connotations of family and human personality, in other words, the comfort to simply be, to exist as we are and with those we love. German architect Sandra Hofmeister considers the country home to represent a deep longing within us for proximity to nature and privacy, ultimately symbolizing a lifestyle of private happiness.⁵⁷ Through its application in various *Harry Potter* settings, particularly in Hogwarts, architectural elements drawn from the country home build on the connotations of neomedievalism to add the traditional homely attributes of love, comfort, and human care, amounting to a place of contentment, a home.



Figure 3.2.0: The drawing room of Perrycroft House in Hertfordshire shows the warmth and intimacy of domestic spaces from the Arts and Crafts movement, including a woven carpet, several groups of cushioned seating and a reassuring sense of enclosure.



Figure 3.2.1: Munstead Wood uses common brick, gabled roofs, and prominent chimneys to immediately connect its form to ideals of country life. The textures of its materials speak to a natural richness and appreciation for tradition.



Figure 3.2.2: Deanery Garden, built between 1899 and 1901 uses an organic arrangement of plantings to complement the structure's earthy brick and create a small pocket of idyllic country life in the city.

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- ¹ Kevin Lynch, *The Image of the City* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1960), 1.
- ² Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. Maria Jolas (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994), 33.
- ³ Umberto Eco, *Travels in Hyper Reality: Essays* (Orlando, FL: Harcourt, Inc., 1986), 63.
- ⁴ Racha Kirakosian, "Fantasy Medievalism: On the Aesthetic of the Mythical," in *Fantasy Aesthetics: Visualizing Myth and Middle Ages, 1880-2020*, ed. Hans Rudolf Velten, Joseph Imorde, and Lukas Schrage (Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2024), 217.
- ⁵ Ibid, 224.
- ⁶ Eco, *Travels in Hyper Reality*, 65.
- ⁷ John Goodall, *The Castle: A History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2022), 3.
- ⁸ Ibid, 3.
- ⁹ Eco, *Travels in Hyper Reality*, 66.
- ¹⁰ Farah Mendlesohn and Edward James, *A Short History of Fantasy* (London: Middlesex University Press, 2009), 3.
- ¹¹ Jonathan Glancey, *Architecture* (New York: DK Publishing Inc., 2006), 299.
- ¹² M. W. (Michael Welman) Thompson, *The Decline of the Castle* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 160.
- ¹³ Goodall, *The Castle: A History*, 4 and 257.
- ¹⁴ Ibid, 257.
- ¹⁵ Glancey, *Architecture*, 397; Henry Russell Hitchcock, *Architecture: Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, 4th ed. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1987), 247.
- ¹⁶ Goodall, *The Castle: A History*, 257.
- ¹⁷ Ibid, 345.
- ¹⁸ Kirakosian, "Fantasy Medievalism," 230 and 232.
- ¹⁹ Eco, *Travels in Hyper Reality*, 63.
- ²⁰ Glancey, *Architecture*, 409.
- ²¹ Goodall, *The Castle: A History*, 4.
- ²² Kirakosian, "Fantasy Medievalism," 217.
- ²³ Hans Rudolf Velten, "Introduction: Fantasy between Text and Image: Neomedieval Patterns of Visualization," in *Fantasy Aesthetics: Visualizing Myth and Middle Ages, 1880-2020*, ed. Hans Rudolf Velten, Joseph Imorde, and Lukas Schrage (Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2024), 13.
- ²⁴ Martha Bayless, "Disney's Castles and the Work of the Medieval in the Magic Kingdom," in *The Disney Middle Ages: A Fairy-Tale and Fantasy Past*, ed. Tison Pugh and Susan Aronstein, 1st ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 40.
- ²⁵ Goodall, *The Castle: A History*, 353.
- ²⁶ Ibid, 3.
- ²⁷ Bayless, "Disney's Castles," 46.
- ²⁸ Glancey, *Architecture*, 410; Thompson, *The Decline of the Castle*, 162.
- ²⁹ Kirakosian, "Fantasy Medievalism," 219.
- ³⁰ Velten, "Introduction," 14.
- ³¹ Hitchcock, *Architecture: Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, 154.
- ³² Bayless, "Disney's Castles," 40.
- ³³ Kirakosian, "Fantasy Medievalism," 226; Bayless, "Disney's Castles," 40.
- ³⁴ Glancey, *Architecture*, 412.
- ³⁵ Ibid, 410.
- ³⁶ Bayless, "Disney's Castles," 46.
- ³⁷ Kirakosian, "Fantasy Medievalism," 226.
- ³⁸ Thompson, *The Decline of the Castle*, 162.
- ³⁹ Glancey, *Architecture*, 409.
- ⁴⁰ Ibid, 412.
- ⁴¹ J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (Vancouver: Raincoast Books, 1998), 114 and 116.

- ⁴² Goodall, *The Castle: A History*, 5.
- ⁴³ Glancey, *Architecture*, 410.
- ⁴⁴ Kirakosian, "Fantasy Medievalism," 230.
- ⁴⁵ Eco, *Travels in Hyper Reality*, 61.
- ⁴⁶ Bayless, "Disney's Castles," 39.
- ⁴⁷ Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994), 25.
- ⁴⁸ Glancey, *Architecture*, 423.
- ⁴⁹ Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001); Glancey, *Architecture*, 409.
- ⁵⁰ John Goodall, *English House Style: From the Archives of Country Life* (New York: Rizzoli, 2019), 361.
- ⁵¹ Glancey, *Architecture*, 423.
- ⁵² Goodall, *English House Style*, 361.
- ⁵³ Glancey, *Architecture*, 423.
- ⁵⁴ Ola Nylander, *Architecture of the Home* (Chichester: Wiley-Academy, 2002), 21–22.
- ⁵⁵ Rybczynski, *Home: A Short History of an Idea*, 17; Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, 328.
- ⁵⁶ Ibid, 230.
- ⁵⁷ Sandra Hofmeister, *Zu Hause : Architektur Zum Wohnen Im Grünen = At Home : Architecture for Rural Living*, 1st ed. (Munich: Edition Detail, 2021), 6.

CHAPTER IV

*Hogwarts was the first and best home he had known.
He and Voldemort and Snape, the abandoned boys,
had all found home here...*

– Narrator,
Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows, 2007

Chapter IV:

Neomedieval Domesticity at Hogwarts

The entire *Harry Potter* storyworld applies a combination of neomedieval and country house forms and connotations, and therefore as a whole achieves a thoroughly enjoyable and positive environment, a fantastical home. There is an abundance of places – such as Diagon Alley or Hogsmeade – which are detailed and significant enough to merit a full architectural investigation in their own right and which incorporate various dimensions of medieval or domestic aesthetics (Figure 4.0.0 to 4.0.2). With the thesis' emphasis on themes of home, it may even seem natural to focus on a residential location such as Grimmauld Place or Number Four Privet Drive, which are inherently linked to contemporary British ideals of a house, of comfort and of everyday domesticity. However, such contemporary domestic settings do not have the most significant impact in creating a sense of home in Harry's world. In the wizarding world, feelings of home are not strictly limited to residential forms, but are felt just as strongly or even more so in other emotionally significant places. This is the case at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry.

Hogwarts castle is easily one of the most prominent locations in *Harry Potter* which has the effect of a home – or happy – place, without needing to evoke a modern house or suburban dwelling. Hosting much of the narrative and being presented as a home for Harry and other characters, its interior and exterior spaces create the strongest impression

of home and happiness throughout the series. Hogwarts' spatial and material elements draw very clearly from a legacy of neomedieval spaces and country dwellings, making its architecture into a symbol heavily laden with long-established connotations of wonder, adventure, power and fun on one hand, combined with comfort, safety, leisure, and love on the other.

The use of domestic and adventurous visual attributes applies in both the novel and film settings of *Harry Potter*. These two storyworld environments, though different in some aspects, nevertheless share innumerable spatial qualities and a unified sense of home. Being tightly interwoven, it is difficult to consider one entirely separate from the other, as the film setting is deeply indebted to the original novels, meanwhile the novels' imaginary space is inevitably influenced by images of the films in popular media.¹ As such, in the following analysis Hogwarts is considered as an amalgamation of both its literary and cinematic representations. Both the novel and film architecture were conceived to support the same emotional narrative events and to evoke a cohesive world, and are thus considered as working together to create a unified sense of home.

In the interest of highlighting specific design features of Hogwarts and their emotional and psychological impact, focus is placed on several of the most prominent and evocative aspects of its built environment: the Hogwarts castle exterior and grounds, the Great Hall, Gryffindor tower, and the corridors and dungeons. These locations within the vast castle of Hogwarts evoke various aspects of happiness and homeliness, some emphasizing a peaceful and loving space akin to a country home, others creating the thrill and excitement of an adventurous neomedieval home. Independently, they each emulate their own distinct balance of enjoyable features; considered together, the various spaces of Hogwarts create a complete image of happiness, forming a home place that is deeply enjoyable for its full range of positive human experiences.



Figure 4.0.0 and 4.0.1: Diagon Alley, first introduced in *Philosopher's Stone*, reflects a complex neomedieval environment in the *Harry Potter* series, containing details for individual shops, their wares, and signage.



Figure 4.0.2: Hogsmeade – an all-wizarding village – is an important location throughout the *Harry Potter* series, revisited multiple times and gradually expanded with new buildings.

Hogwarts Exterior and Grounds

The audience's first experience of Hogwarts is an encounter with its exterior form and the surrounding site when Harry arrives for school on the first of September. Its description in the novels, though rather brief,

reflects the grandeur and sense of wonder it excites as Harry and his classmates approach from a forest path:

There was a loud ‘Ooooooh!’

The narrow path had opened suddenly on to the edge of a great black lake. Perched atop a high mountain on the other side, its windows sparkling in the starry sky, was a vast castle with many turrets and towers.

‘No more-n four to a boat!’ Hagrid called, pointing to a fleet of little boats sitting in the water by the shore. Harry and Ron were followed into their boat by Neville and Hermione.

‘Everyone in?’ shouted Hagrid, who had a boat to himself, ‘Right then – FORWARD!’

And the fleet of little boats moved off all at once, gliding across the lake which was as smooth as glass. Everyone was silent, staring up at the great castle overhead. It towered over them as they sailed nearer and nearer to the cliff on which it stood.²

Following this, the students’ boats sail into a grotto under the castle and they exit from the boats back on to solid land. The narrative continues:

Then they clambered up a passageway in the rock after Hagrid’s lamp, coming out at last on to smooth, damp grass right in the shadow of the castle.

They walked up a flight of stone steps and crowded around the huge, oak front door.³

Hogwarts is immediately recognizable as a grand castle, set in the mountainous wilderness of the Scottish highlands.

In the novels, the castle is not described in extensive architectural details, but in terms of overall form and experiential qualities. The castle’s scale is vast, indicating a structure of magnificence and importance, or at the very least which has been designed at a fantastic scale to match the sublime landscape which surrounds it. Its profile is described as integrating numerous towers and turrets, drawing the eye

upward to increase the impression of height and strongly evoking the neomedieval prominence of the tower (Figure 4.1.0 and 4.1.1). Hogwarts' towers instantly call to mind this legacy of magic and fantasy, the tower being a form popularized by fantasy castles such as Neuschwanstein, fairy tales like Rapunzel, literary descriptions like Tolkien's tower of Orthanc in Isengard, and Disney's extensive use of towers in their iconic animated films and theme park castles (Figure 4.1.2 to 4.1.3).



Figure 4.1.0 and 4.1.1: Several views of Hogwarts School as portrayed in the illustrated edition of *Philosopher's Stone*, revealing the prominence of towers, exaggerated height and complexity characteristic of neomedieval castles in this interpretation.



Figure 4.1.2: The Disney rendition of the castle in *Beauty and the Beast* relies on verticality and an abundance of towers to impress a sense of fantasy and wonder on the viewer, creating a castle that is truly an amalgam of tower structures assembled together.



Figure 4.1.3: The tower of Orthanc, as envisioned based off Tolkien's descriptions, presents a dark colour palette, rugged shadows, and impressive height and scale to evoke a formidable presence rather than a dreamy, idyllic tower, broadening the lexicon of fantasy forms and the implications of fantasy towers.

Hogwarts also incorporates a pastiche of architectural eras which becomes clear from the materials and timeline of the structure. The novel mentions that the school was initially constructed over one thousand years ago, yet also describes Hogwarts as being built at least in part using marble.⁴ These features simultaneously link Hogwarts with an early medieval aesthetic and with features based off of the Renaissance, where the use of marble became widespread. Combined, they create a modified aesthetic for Hogwarts which ties it more to the thrills of fantasy stories than to faithful and factual historic accuracy. Hogwarts' vast scale, the prominence of towers, and the anachronistic combination of multiple eras evoke connotations of fantasy and fiction, promising an experience of adventure and thrill, characteristic of narrative enjoyment.



Figure 4.1.4 and 4.1.5: The initial approach to Hogwarts School in *Philosopher's Stone*, highlighting the school's warm orange lighting, complex silhouette, and rugged mountain surroundings.

The films echo the spatial intent of the novels, adding architectural detailing and drawing from real-world architecture to evoke a stronger tie to neomedieval spaces of mystery, fun, and enjoyable tension (Figure 4.1.4 and 4.1.5). In comparing images of Hogwarts over time, it becomes clear that the designs for Hogwarts evolve as the series progresses and spaces were added or rearranged to suit the evolving narrative (Figure 4.1.6 and 4.1.7). The production designer for all eight films, Stuart Craig, observes that “the changes and additions to Hogwarts added a level of interest to the films,” lending whimsy to the castle and highlighting that the spirit of Hogwarts was more important than precise continuity between the films.⁵ The idea of an architecture which shifts in an almost living way reinforces themes of neomedieval magic and dream worlds, bringing a sense of adventure, curiosity and novelty for the audience.



Figure 4.1.6: In *Prisoner of Azkaban*, the clocktower was modified to become a prominent figure over the courtyard, as time plays an important role in the storyline.



Figure 4.1.7: The astronomy tower was added in *Half-Blood Prince* as one of Hogwarts' tallest points, punctuating the skyline with another fantastical tower.

Speaking to the initial design for Hogwarts, Craig mentions borrowing from ““a bit of Christ Church [College], a bit of Durham [Cathedral], a bit of Gloucester Cathedral, a little bit of Alnwick Castle.””⁶ The exterior of Hogwarts maintains clear visual ties to these structures, forming its silhouette into a combination of Romanesque and Gothic medieval styles. Though it is common for real-life medieval structures to have evolved and been given additions throughout various architectural periods, in Hogwarts this nonetheless contributes to preventing Hogwarts’ easy categorization into a single historical era and instead promotes a modified medieval aesthetic, the characteristic pastiche of neomedievalism. In looking at the fourth film, *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, architectural historian Meredith Cohen discusses Hogwarts’ unusual combination of university, siege, and religious architecture to add the use of Tudor or Renaissance aspects such as a corbelled window (Figure 4.1.8). Another style evoked in Hogwarts’ exterior is Scottish baronial architecture, an ornate aesthetic characterised by corbelled turrets and conical roofs (Figure 4.1.9). As a version of Gothic revival forms, the Scottish baronial style increases the breadth of Hogwarts’ precedents, broadening its neomedieval form to include a wider historical and geographical range of origins.⁷ Leveraging extensive elements of pastiche and modifications of historical forms, the films’ portrayal of the Hogwarts exterior continues to associate it with fantasy neomedievalism and the connotations of these fun, tense and thrilling narratives.

Cohen also points out historical forms which have been repurposed and modified to fit a fantastic castle image. For one, she lists the central keep, normally associated with siege architecture, which at Hogwarts has been given abundant windows that would render it far less practical for battle and defense, and better suited for comfort, dwelling and romantic fantasy images. Cohen similarly observes a stair turret which has been placed atop the roof of the Great Hall, a seemingly impractical and

historically inaccurate location that associates it with the whimsy and mysterious functions of fantasy and neomedieval design.⁸



Figure 4.1.8: Hogwarts exterior as seen in *Goblet of Fire*, emphasizing verticality from the camera's low positioning and revealing a combination of architectural styles, most notably by the contrast of the detailed Great Hall on the right versus the simple volumes which compose the rest of the castle.



Figure 4.1.9: As seen in the Greenock sheriff court, the Scottish baronial architectural style includes elaborate rooflines, conical roofs, and tourelles which are very reminiscent of Hogwarts.

Marion Gymnich and Klaus Scheunemann (University of Bonn) express that the set designers were not aiming for historical accuracy in Hogwarts' architecture, but rather added distinct modifications to create a new and magical environment, which still maintains a dimension of believability because of its visual ties to real-life historical British forms.⁹

There is also the Hogwarts landscape which links it to fantasy, mystery and legend. As John Goodall states, Hogwarts' site aligns with mainstream contemporary fantasy castles, which are often integrated with "a ragged mountain, and possess a busy outline of towers and turrets."¹⁰ Since fairy tales and beyond, forests, lakes, mountains and other features of wilderness have been associated with unknown and hidden powers of myth and magic. Alessandra Petrina (University of Padua) notes that the layout of Hogwarts' grounds especially conveys a similarity to the tales of Arthur and the Lady of the Lake, creating an audience association with the rousing values of chivalry, honour and bravery characteristic of Arthurian legends.¹¹

The forbidden forest on the ground is another source of neomedieval spatial experiences, with descriptions that are evocative of dark and foreboding castle spaces. For instance, Denise Burkhard and scholar Julia Stibane (University of Bonn) describe the thick spread of trees as providing a distinct sense of enclosure, perhaps even bordering on a sense of the characters being trapped in much the same way as they would in a tunnel or locked room.¹² There are even architectural descriptions evoked in the forest, not only because of the towering trees, but in the form of "a roof of dense branches" and a misty spider's web constructed in the shape of a dome, as detailed in *Chamber of Secrets*.¹³ The forest is therefore not only linked to precedent fantasy landscapes, but also to the connotations of neomedieval castle architecture and their thrilling narratives.

Though Hogwarts primarily reflects neomedieval designs in its exterior form and the qualities of its site, it still manages to touch on

certain characteristics associated with dwellings and family homes in order to remain a welcoming beacon. The materiality of the oak doors, while commonly associated with rich and heavy furniture, also speaks to the warmth of wood and its softened, welcoming nature as compared with stone. At the most instinctive level, the glow of flaming torches and lit windows in both the novels and films associates Hogwarts with a warmth and lively sense of inhabitation.¹⁴ As Juhani Pallasmaa and Gaston Bachelard both highlight, a light in the window and the promise of a warm interior can provide the clearest and most appealing image of homecoming.¹⁵ While these signals of warmth promise domestic comforts and happiness, there is also the nature of castles as having been built as dwellings themselves just as much as they were defensive structures. This in many ways combines the qualities of the adventurous neomedieval and of the cozy home in the castle's very origins, evoking a two-fold joy of excitement and comfort.

As a whole, the exterior of Hogwarts school and its grounds are deeply evocative of neomedieval forms and fantasy narratives. Being so strongly linked to the connotations of thrilling woods, grand and imposing castles, and dramatic towers which stem from fantasy, its design is undoubtedly also linked to the fundamentally enjoyable nature of these stories. Hogwarts, being home to narrative experiences of joy and delight, further links itself to the enjoyment of Harry's and all previous fantasy narratives. Once again referencing Tolkien, Ursula Le Guin and Kathryn Hume's principles, since the object of fiction is to delight and evoke joy, then the places which symbolize these narratives are consequently emblematic of enjoyment and happiness, of home.¹⁶

The Great Hall

The spatial attributes of the Great Hall are a combination of distinct neomedieval architecture mixed with a significant presence of warm and homely spatial feature. Much like the dining halls which are still used in universities across England and elsewhere, the Hogwarts' Great Hall

serves the function of an assembly space where the entire school frequently gathers. It is used for meals, special feasts, all-school announcements, exams, and celebrations such as the Yule Ball in *Goblet of Fire*. During Harry's first year in *Philosopher's Stone*, he and the other first-year students enter the Great Hall through a pair of double doors and describe their initial experience:

Harry had never even imagined such a strange and splendid place. It was lit by thousands and thousands of candles which were floating in mid-air over four long tables, where the rest of the students were sitting. These tables were laid with glittering golden plates and goblets. At the top of the hall was another long table where the teachers were sitting. Professor McGonagall led the first years up here, so that they came to a halt in a line facing the other students, with the teachers behind them. The hundreds of faces staring at them looked like pale lanterns in the flickering candlelight. Dotted here and there among the students, the ghosts shone misty silver. Mainly to avoid all the staring eyes, Harry looked upwards and saw a velvety black ceiling dotted with stars. He heard Hermione whisper, 'It's bewitched to look like the sky outside, I read about it in *Hogwarts, A History*.'

It was hard to believe there was a ceiling there at all, and that the Great Hall didn't simply open on to the heavens.¹⁷

Though narrative prioritizes emotional impact, providing even fewer architectural details of the Great Hall than were mentioned for Hogwarts' exterior, the description nevertheless contains vivid spatial implications.

Prominent images of luxury are evoked by the presence of golden items and by adjectives such as "splendid," "velvety" and "glittering." These qualities are linked to rich and prestigious environments, implying an architecture of affluence which typically only noble patrons could afford. This is echoed, for instance, by the suggested size of the hall. It is host to hundreds of students and has room for thousands of floating

candles, indicating simultaneously a grandeur and an age of technology evocative of the largest medieval castles and churches. The written description continues adding to the spatial sense of the building with its emphasis on the bewitched ceiling, which seems to “simply open on to the heavens.” The principle of linking physical space with Divine grace is a clear parallel to the design intent of medieval Gothic cathedrals, which leveraged height and light in an attempt to transcend the regular, physical world. The Great Hall’s ceiling echoes the desire to transcend regular space, though its aim is instead to reach a magical fantasy place, or to create a believable and immersive fantasy universe. The unbounded height of the hall’s ceiling produces a distinct verticality, drawing the eye and the mind upward in an experience of expansion similar to that in a Gothic cathedral.

The idea of candlelight not only serves to associate the structure with a neomedieval age, but also with the implication of warmth. This coziness, associated with dwellings and with comfort, is reinforced by the novel’s later description of a roaring hearth in the Great Hall.¹⁸ Further evidence of domesticity is built into the function of the hall as a place where acts of dwelling such as gathering, eating, and meetings with old friends take place.

The imagery of the films creates an even stronger neomedieval aesthetic, while also tying it to visions of warmth, comfort, and domesticity (Figure 4.2.0). The design of the Great Hall’s interior was largely based off of the hall at Christ Church College, the real-world structure which had been used to model the hall’s exterior (Figure 4.2.1). Working in association with the film studio Warner Bros., author Jody Revenson describes the proportions of the Great Hall, the set’s Yorkstone floor and its window placement, which were all borrowed from the hall at Christ Church.¹⁹ Cohen identifies these and other similarities with Christ Church such as the entrance being a great pointed arch “taken directly” from its real-world precedent, which deliberately reminds the audience of

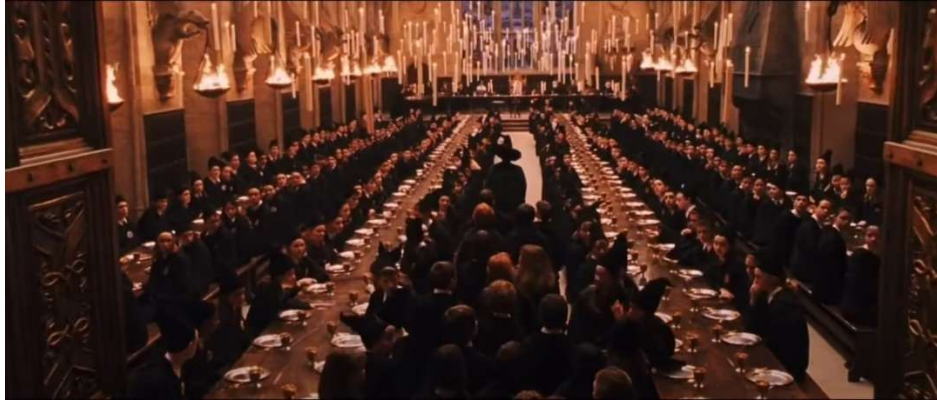


Figure 4.2.0: The candle-lit and wood-panelled Great Hall interior, seen for the first time in *Philosopher's Stone*.

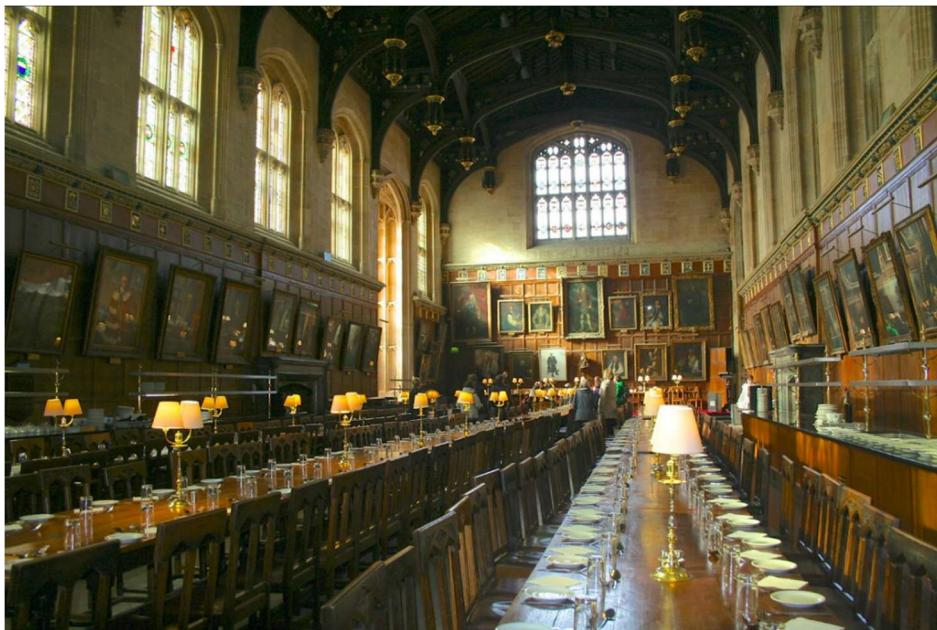


Figure 4.2.1: The dining hall at Christ Church College maintains clear parallels to the design of Hogwarts' Great Hall interior, though notably is a much more enclosed space having preserved the original design element of windows with high sills.

the “elite collegiate institutions of Oxford and Cambridge” and their associated prestige.²⁰

Production designer Stuart Craig's modifications to the original designs of Christ Church's hall make Hogwarts' space an appropriately unique and idealized neomedieval space, completed by lowering windowsills, adding a large oriole window at one end of the hall, and by bringing in Gothic hammer-beam style trusses drawn from Westminster

Hall.²¹ Jonathan Glancey describes the Westminster trusses as being “richly carved with delicate tracery” and with “giant angels” represented at the ends of the beams.²² Aside from directly evoking more Gothic imagery, these trusses are themselves further transformed into fantasy by the transparency with which they have been rendered in the films, revealing the swirling bewitched ceiling above and strengthening the idea that the Great Hall is linked to the high, vaulted spaces of Gothic cathedrals (Figure 4.2.2 and 4.2.3). Though Westminster was not a directly religious building, Goodall notes a prominent use of ecclesiastical buildings in the design of Hogwarts overall, not necessarily for their theological implications, but rather for the strength of the images they produce. “Medieval ecclesiastical architecture,” he concludes, “generally looks more immediate and obviously Gothic than its secular counterpart,” underscoring the value of believability, recognizability, and exaggerated features in evoking neomedieval connotations for the audience.²³

In the limited architectural ornamentation of the Great Hall, the emphasis on vivid and evocative details is identified by Cohen in the form of “fantastic beasts” which have been carved on corbels along the walls, and which create more ties to a neomedieval legacy of myth and magic.²⁴ Revenson notes that these carved figures are in fact the four heraldic creatures which represent Hogwarts’ four school houses, once again speaking to the modification and idealization of historical built forms, in a way typical of neomedieval storyworlds.²⁵

Just as in the exterior of Hogwarts, the films use warmth and firelight as important factors in contributing a measure of comfort and an association with domesticity. Firelight makes a distinct presence in the Great Hall, bathing the film scene in a warm glow which seems better suited to a warm hearth and intimate firelight experience at home than to a vast, neomedieval hall. The director of *Philosopher’s Stone*, Chris Columbus, describes how Great Hall’s emphasis on fire transformed it



Figure 4.2.2: The hammer-beam trusses and stone walls dominate the view of the Great Hall during Christmas break in *Chamber of Secrets*.

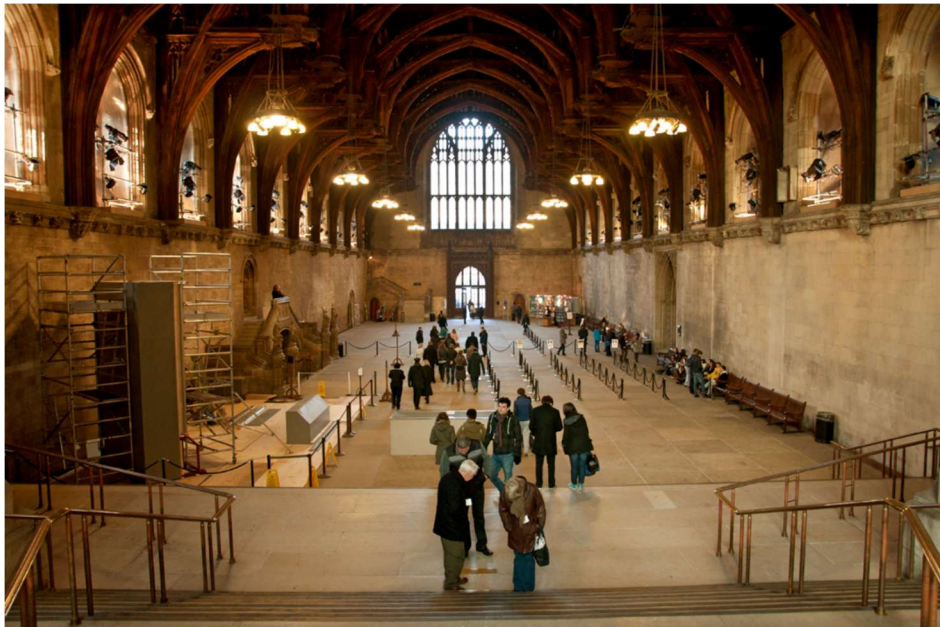


Figure 4.2.3: Westminster Hall's distinct hammer-beam trusses were used directly in the Great Hall, recycling these late-medieval forms in a contemporary fantasy setting.

into a “magical, warm, loving place.”²⁶ The prominence of firelight is also indicative of Hogwarts’ magic in itself. Fire was historically a functional element, dangerous to medieval structures, but its liberal use

in the Great Hall in the form of abundant oil lamps and candles emphasizes the magic in *Harry Potter*'s universe, where fire is no longer a threat.²⁷

The modified medieval, or neomedieval, aesthetics of the Great Hall, combined with several atmospheric and functional features of dwelling spaces, attaches this place to positive connotations of narratives and of domestic structures. The Great Hall affects its audience by evoking neomedieval narratives of wish-fulfillment and luxuries, thrilling myths of beasts and aspirations of other-worldliness, concurrently with experiences of warmth and domesticity. Whether the audience seeks comfort or excitement, the Great Hall has the ability to evoke a spectrum of positive emotions. Overall, the Great Hall is a place to be enjoyed and celebrated, one where the *Harry Potter* audience is drawn to dwell and experience joys of a happy place or home.

The Gryffindor Common Room and Dormitory

Building on the sense of warmth and luxury which is produced by the Great Hall, the Gryffindor common room and dormitory create the strongest combination of neomedieval architecture and country home aesthetics at Hogwarts. Both spaces are located in Gryffindor tower, which is described when Harry's first day at Hogwarts comes to a close. Well-fed and sleepy, after having enjoyed a splendid feast in the Great Hall, Harry and the rest of his school house make their way up to Gryffindor tower, along corridors with moving portraits and through sliding panels and hidden passages. Finally on the seventh floor, they reach their destination:

At the very end of the corridor hung a portrait of a very fat woman in a pink silk dress.

'Password?' she said.

'Caput Draconis,' said Percy, and the portrait swung forward to reveal a round hole in the wall. They all scrambled through it –

Neville needed a leg up – and found themselves in the Gryffindor common-room, a cosy, round room full of squashy armchairs. Percy directed the girls through one door to their dormitory and the boys through another. At the top of a spiral staircase – they were obviously in one of the towers – they found their beds at last: five four-posters hung with deep-red velvet curtains. Their trunks had already been brought up. Too tired to talk much, they pulled on their pyjamas and fell into bed.²⁸

The audience's first experience of Gryffindor tower already defines its domestic functions, which are further reinforced by its spatial attributes.

In the novels, the entire atmosphere of the common room and dormitory speaks to a fundamentally domestic and familial home environment. The image of a cozy space is perfectly manifested in the common room's round volume, a form that has long been associated with a friendly and appealing effect, making the space inherently welcoming. This circular enclosure, in which there are no dark or distant corners, is one of reassurance and clarity, allowing visibility and immediate understanding of space, rather than obscurity. Though the common room entrance is kept a secret, known only to the residents of Gryffindor house, this indicates a sense of safety and reassurance akin to locking one's front door, rather than a negative restraint. John Kornfeld (Sonoma State University) and library consultant Laurie Prothro consider the common room and dormitory as a sanctuary in an otherwise perilous environment, fostering "a sense of security and community."²⁹

The "squashy armchairs" evoke furniture used in a homely sitting room more than that which is used in a palace, the terminology being informal and associated with slightly deformed and potentially well used seating. These connotations bring aspects of humble and familiar domesticity to the fore, speaking to very human and imperfect lifestyles, and highlight the contrast in furnishings between the common room and the long, hard house tables in the Great Hall or the exciting flaming

torches elsewhere at Hogwarts. It becomes clear very quickly that there is also a large hearth in the common room, which is the room's centrepiece and most appealing feature, as indicated by Harry and Ron's enjoyment of being able to use "the good armchairs by the fire."³⁰ As in the case of the Great Hall and of Hogwarts overall, the notions of fire and of the hearth indicate a link with warmth, safety, comfort, and ultimately with the domesticity and coziness of a family home.

Transitioning to the dormitory space outlined in the novels, being an enclosed space which shelters peaceful and restful sleep, it bears clear associations with domestic themes of refuge, safety, reassurance, and calm. The luxury of four-poster beds and red velvet curtains creates instant positive connotations of comfort and wish-fulfillment characteristic of rich domestic spaces, from country manors to neomedieval castles. Just as in the Great Hall, the implication of luxury, and the volume of space needed to accommodate five four-poster beds, indicates an architecture of affluence which may well be reflected in ornamentation and finishes, though is not explicitly mentioned.

In terms of neomedieval features, though the novel lacks other details about furnishing, materiality, or aesthetics, its descriptive terminologies evoke connotations and spark reader extrapolation of the remaining features. In both the common room and dormitory, though they are designed as home spaces, they also exist within the larger neomedieval castle of Hogwarts. The neomedieval tower iconography is reinforced by the spiral staircase leading from the common room to the dormitory, a feature that has historically been associated with castle design, and which the novel itself associates with tower architecture (see quotation above). The use of medieval spatial features being reinhabited by contemporary characters aligns with the tradition of neomedieval architecture and fantasy, compounding the iconography of the tower with the notion of the domestic home.

In the films, the very nature of the medium requires the creation of cohesive and fully designed sets. In the case of Gryffindor tower, this allowed the spatial features to take on a more detailed and distinct character, while still maintaining a cozy, domestic comfort and neomedieval legacy at its core (Figure 4.3.0 to 4.3.2).

The reassuring comfort of the common room was very consciously integrated by production designer Stuart Craig and set decorator Stephenie McMillan. The films' version of the common room and dormitory puts domestic country home elements to the fore, and lets the neomedieval act as more of a background influence. Craig himself describes that the common room overall was created to provide "a reassuring feeling of warmth and comfort," an enveloping experience that is "almost womblike."³¹ This is illustrated by the size of the common room, which does not match the scale and prestige of the castle, but instead feels closer to the sitting room of a large country house. This reduced scale encourages intimacy, as does the arrangement of furniture into small groupings, subdividing the room into even smaller and more personal spatial regions while maintaining a sense of connectedness to the larger volume. McMillan speaks to the strong feeling of domesticity in commenting that "The common room is Harry's first comfortable home experience. It's warm, literally, with a massive fire-place; beaten up, lived-in sofa; and threadbare carpet – it's a place that's restful and secure."³² Aside from the usual warmth as a symbol of home, she equates the idea of well-used and timeworn elements with the notion of rest and security. This falls in line with the Arts and Crafts country home which values age and signs of human inhabitation, linking the common room with notions of idyllic family dwellings.

Specifically with reference to the dormitory, the film contributed more homeliness by making Harry's sleeping quarters as intimate as possible. Craig comments that "we deliberately made it small. We draped the beds with curtains because they cocooned him; they made him



Figure 4.3.0: The large hearth lends an immediate sense of comfort to the Gryffindor common room, while the scale, window detailing, and stone walls maintain a neomedieval castle flair.



Figure 4.3.1 and 4.3.2: Cluttered furniture and thick red tapestries give the Gryffindor common room a distinct aura of domestic warmth, as seen in *Goblet of Fire*.

feel comfortable and safe, which contrasted with the vastness of the rest of the place.”³³ The film also added a cast-iron stove in the middle of the dormitory room, again extending ideas of warmth.

The common room and dormitory in the films are certainly designed in alignment with the aesthetic of country homes, but through this visual media they are simultaneously able to showcase more visual similarities with neomedieval architecture. The common room in both the novels and films contains at least one window, which is not described stylistically in the novels, but is rendered in the films as an arched window of diamond-pane glass, again associating the space with fantasy and neomedieval connotations. There is also an increased presence of stone relative to the novel, highlighting the clarity of stone walls, stairs, and the stone fireplace as being natural consequences of the common room’s location within Hogwarts castle. The room gains verticality in the films, having a second floor mezzanine that speaks to a dimension of grandeur. The tapestries which decorate the walls of the common room in the film are instantly recognizable as the famous set of *The Lady and the Unicorn*, dated to approximately the sixteenth century. Despite its historical origins, this tapestry is used in a modern application which Cohen equates to contemporary wallpaper. She points out how the tapestry has been cut along the form of the doorway, something which would not have occurred historically, and therefore is a whimsical and neomedieval modification unique to Harry’s world of fantasy and magic.³⁴ Cohen also points out the pastiche of periodic styles, particularly with the common room having a modern manufactured chandelier amid its neomedieval enclosure. Though citing the common room as inaccurate to real-life precedents, she nevertheless acknowledges that the elaborate decoration of the common room is effective in indicating its “great prestige and history.”³⁵



Figure 4.3.3: Harry, Ron and their classmates in the Gryffindor boys' dormitory in *Prisoner of Azkaban*, with arched, diamond pane windows and the tower's round stone walls visible behind them.

The dormitory in the films shares the neomedieval design prevalence of stone and diamond pane windows, also revealing its conical tower form within the space (Figure 4.3.3). As a very clear combination of adventure-related neomedieval elements and of comfortable country home spaces, the Gryffindor common room and dormitory create a pleasurable mix of enjoyable spatial experiences, calling the audience to dwell.

Corridors and Dungeons

The locations discussed within Hogwarts have thus far can be described as predominantly welcoming and positive, intriguing or luxurious, but that balance shifts towards mysterious, dark and dangerous when considering the corridor and dungeon spaces of the castle. These places remind us that the enjoyment of a home does not only come from what is familiar and comforting, but that a home can be a space of adventure, enticing curiosity and mystery.

So long as the foreboding threats are contained within a narrative, and the narrative has established the reassurance of the happy ending to come, such threats no longer cause real fear but rather an exhilarating emotional stimulation, often a welcome change from our ordinary lives. A home is a happy place, and in the corridors and dungeons of Hogwarts that happiness stems from fun, thrill, danger, and adventure. These dark neomedieval spaces create an appeal, a desire to dwell, because they provide the enjoyment of an exciting and tense narrative place.

Kevin Lynch observes that “there is some value in mystification, labyrinth, or surprise in the environment” but that this is only under the condition that there is a way to navigate out. “Complete chaos without hint of connection is never pleasurable,” which is why it is essential that the audience retains a knowledge that such a space will ultimately be learned and navigable.³⁶ The corridors and dungeons in *Harry Potter* are designed in such a way as to allow for wayfinding, existing within the overall framework of Hogwarts, with the knowledge that one can escape dungeons by moving vertically through space, and escape corridors with horizontal displacement towards a room, assembly area, or exit. Therefore, because the corridors and dungeons remain navigable, they add a pleasurable thrill and manageable danger to the storyworld spaces. Hogwarts’ suite of architectural features associated with thrilling Gothic literature, including dungeons, subterranean passages, hidden entrances, and secret rooms, evoke frightening and realistic environments, while their navigability create a mythical and enjoyable sense of terror.³⁷ The strong association with darker neomedieval spaces evokes the appeal of thrill and adventure, creating a desire to dwell in this space not because it is a domestic home, but rather because it is an emotional home, a place of enjoyment, satisfying our desire for adventure, fulfilling our wild dreams of accomplishing daring and terrible feats.

The corridors in Hogwarts are almost exclusively associated with thrilling neomedieval attributes as opposed to those indicative of a

soothing cottage home or other dwelling. Being functional for movement rather than spectacle, an overall description of the corridors is patched together over the course of the novels from small, frequent interactions with their features. Initially, they are simply used to travel between classes. Later, corridors become increasingly used for nighttime wanderings, associated with acts of trespassing, secrecy, mystery, fear, and the dangers of being caught out of bed after hours. These fun, thrilling, and adventurous connotations build the corridors into a form of home place by creating enjoyable emotional stimulation and tension, resulting in an experience of joy.

Some of the earliest corridor descriptions reveal them to have high windows, lit only by moonlight, and to be draughty and icy in cold weather.³⁸ Being located within Hogwarts castle, it is implied that the high windows would be narrow and possibly arched, as is characteristic of these neomedieval structures, and that they would share the stone materiality of the entrance hall and walls. With little ornament or detailing described, the stark features of the corridors reveal their inherent unfriendliness and their similarity to older medieval or disused castles. More prominently, in *Philosopher's Stone*, the third-floor corridor is forbidden and locked to all students, promising a painful death to any who enter.³⁹ Not only does the corridor's narrative function make it into a threatening place, but its features contribute to connotations of danger and neomedieval thrill. The main feature of the out of bounds third-floor corridor is its trapdoor, which seems to be its only exit. The trapdoor is a form of portal often linked to attics and cellars, both of which conceal and are associated with mystery and imprisonment. The trapdoor also gives a distinct sense of enclosure, indicating a dark and restricted space beyond, or a "claustrophobic darkness" similar to what Burkhard and Stibane identify in other narrow, forbidden spaces.⁴⁰ Through the trapdoor, the third-floor corridor is also linked to the dungeons, and the ensuing neomedieval connotations. Though in a

physical castle the idea of foreboding corridors may evoke actual fear of injury or threat, in narrative the absence of actual danger instead creates a thrilling sense of enjoyment, a happiness, which makes these dark places somewhat appealing and welcoming, a home for our dreams and our sense of adventure.

The films closely reflect the novels' neomedieval corridor aesthetic and use, through once again applying distinct architectural precedents to strengthen the believability and realism of the spaces, while still playing on these features to create a mystic fantasy dimension. The cloisters at Durham Cathedral can be seen manifesting in corridors of *Philosopher's Stone*, while the Gloucester Cathedral cloisters are especially noticeable all the way to the sixth film, *Half-Blood Prince*. (Figure 4.4.0 to 4.4.3).⁴¹



Figure 4.4.0 and 4.4.1: The cloister of Durham Cathedral lends a realistic medieval aesthetic to a number of scenes in *Philosopher's Stone* and *Chamber of Secrets*, providing hallways lined with distinct arched openings that are continuously visible as characters transition between interior and exterior spaces.

In particular, the spectacular fan vaults of Gloucester and its intricate tracery stand out for their characteristic late Gothic detailing.⁴² The architecture in both of these locations again combines simple Romanesque and elaborate Gothic features, in a pastiche central to neomedieval fantasy worlds. The combination of styles, though somewhat anachronistic, adds a realism which makes the thrill and mystery associated with *Harry Potter*'s corridor spaces becomes stronger and more believable, yet remains enjoyably fictional and uniquely attributed to the storyworld universe. With the set design being heavily neomedieval and the corridor events being overall threatening and tense, Hogwarts' hallways broaden the enjoyment gleaned from the school's spaces to include fictional thrills, mystery and danger.

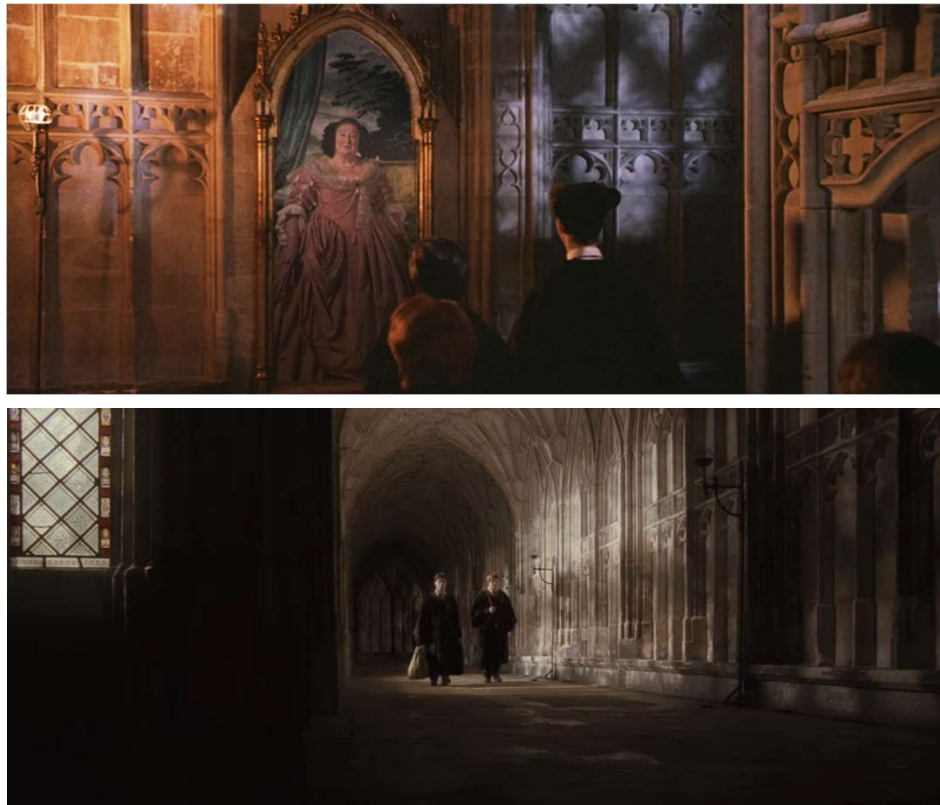


Figure 4.4.2 and 4.4.3: The Gothic cloister of Gloucester Cathedral, with detailed ornamentation on the walls and elaborate fan vaults on the ceiling which seem perfectly tailored to an extravagant fantasy world, used to film a number of corridors throughout the *Harry Potter* films.

Similar to the psychological effect of corridor spaces, though to an even stronger degree, the neomedieval architecture of Hogwarts' dungeons naturally evoke connotations of enjoyable terror and thrill that make the space appealing to the audience. In the novels, despite being part of a magical castle, the dungeons remain very close descendants of their real-life counterparts. The very nature of describing a dungeon links the school to the antagonistic situation of siege and medieval structures. Their mention in the novels implies that Hogwarts must have had a use for dungeons, in which to keep unwanted people or things, because its structure also makes reference to a basement as being separate from the dungeons. In the novel for *Order of the Phoenix*, for example, the Hufflepuff common room and kitchens are described as being below the level of the Great Hall in the "basement," whereas the Slytherin common room and potions classroom have always been attached to the term "dungeon."⁴³

The clear mention of dungeons implies features of barren stone chambers, iron bars, damp floors, and enclosed spaces, typical of their historical counterparts and of dungeon portrayals in fantasy media. From early in the first novel, the dungeons are considered an entity separate from the main castle, colder than other rooms, qualified with adjectives like "creepy" and, especially in the case of the potions classroom, populated with objects such as "pickled animals floating in glass jars all around the walls."⁴⁴ With the distinct drop in temperature and comfort from the main castle to the dungeons, it naturally follows that this space would be less furnished (with insulating elements such as tapestries) and perhaps lacking a hearth. The barren space, described as having damp stone, and its gruesome objects maintain the dungeon's association with neomedieval places of death, imprisonment, and personal danger.⁴⁵ Their "labyrinthine" spatial arrangement in the novels also indicates a complex organization of narrow and indistinguishable passages, a sense of

disorientation and lack of unique or decorative features, evoking mysterious connotations of unnavigable mazes with blank walls that reach back to legends of Daedalus and the Minotaur in Greek mythology.⁴⁶ These various threatening features and connotations maintain the adventurous and thrilling enjoyment of the school dungeons, creating a desire to dwell there because it provides a change from the rest of the homely castle, evoking the fun and delight of experiencing a broader range of emotions.

The description of the Slytherin common room and dormitory, also located in the dungeons, adds to the spatial and material attributes of these castle spaces. In *Chamber of Secrets*, it is described for the first time as “a long, low underground room with rough stone walls and ceiling, from which round, greenish lamps were hanging on chains.”⁴⁷ The volume has an emphasis on horizontality, limiting and enclosing any possibility of vertical movement or thought, which is in perfect opposition to the principles of freedom, height, and light associated with areas such as Gryffindor tower and the Great Hall. By opposing the architecture of Gothic cathedrals and transcendent spaces, the Slytherin common room and dungeons become linked even more firmly to more archaic aspects of siege and prison architecture than they do to domestic or uplifting attributes typically associated with dormitories. The “rough stone walls” reaffirm the lack of care and comfort, evoking connotations of early medieval designs, caves and primitive or early stonework. The presence of chains as well continues to evoke prison and dungeon features, as well as ideas of imprisonment. These dungeon features suggest little refinement in the ornamentation or in the spatial arrangement, which would put the Slytherin common room in contrast to the personal detail associated with luxury and with dwelling places, such as in Gryffindor tower. The Slytherin common room does, nonetheless, contain a fireplace, though none of its warmth or light are described as positive spatial influences, suggesting either a smaller hearth or that the

rest of the space is so overwhelmingly cold and austere as to make a fireplace into a negligible influence.⁴⁸

The neomedieval dungeons of Hogwarts, including the Slytherin common room and potions classroom, are consistently portrayed as being extensive and labyrinthine, remaining tied to their historical precedents and yet strengthened by their fantasy and narrative use. The strong sense of fictional thrill and danger evoke the enjoyment and happiness of experiencing a well-balanced narrative, where one can enjoy the highs of love and delight, complemented by the ability to revel in that which is mysterious and thrilling. The broad range of emotions evoked, which are all enjoyable in their own ways, allow the dungeons to contribute to the overall sense that Hogwarts is a joyful and fun place of multifaceted experiences where we wish to dwell, a home of idyllic emotion.

Interestingly, the dungeons in the *Harry Potter* films sometimes vacillate between elements of ominous medieval dungeons and brighter, slightly idealized versions of enclosed castle spaces, which again creates an overall idealized pastiche of real and imaginary, perfect for neomedieval fantasy. Working in conjunction with Warner Bros. Studios, screenwriter Bob McCabe notes that in *Philosopher's Stone*, the potions classroom was filmed in the sacristy of Lacock Abbey.⁴⁹ With its architecture primarily completed in a neo-Gothic style, the sacristy is an above-ground room with a cream-coloured ashlar in which the windows appear to have been boarded up to simulate a dungeon, though the end result is a reasonably bright and rather typical castle space (Figure 4.4.4).

As the films went on, McCabe observes that the potions dungeon was built as a set and “became a darker, more crowded room,” which is easily seen from the film’s use of dark grey walls and dramatic spotlighting from above (Figure 4.4.5).⁵⁰ The films’ rendition of the Slytherin common room maintains the austerity and coldness of the novel’s description, but renders it using a Norman or Romanesque style, described by Craig as being “stockier, sturdier, much more



Figure 4.4.4: The potions classroom in *Philosopher's Stone* was portrayed as a bright and medieval castle space, maintaining Hogwarts' neomedieval aesthetic but lacking the ominous feel of a subterranean dungeon.



Figure 4.4.5: Rough stone walls, a low vaulted ceiling and ominous objects shape the potions classroom into a space of thrill and danger, as seen in *Chamber of Secrets*.

dungeonlike” than the rest of the castle (Figure 4.4.6 and 4.4.7).⁵¹ These film sets collectively increase the darkness of the dungeons while also increasing the prestige and detail of these spaces relative to the novels’ descriptions, resulting in an idealized neomedieval space which seems appealing in a dark and sinister way. Once again, the design of these underground spaces evoke a positive sense of adventure and mystery, contributing an active and fun sense of joy to Hogwarts as an enjoyable place to dwell, a home place.

The dungeons and corridors are very strong elements, clearly associated with darkness, danger, fear and the threat of enclosure or separation, which are directly opposed to the other positive and



Figure 4.4.6 and 4.4.7: The Slytherin common room is designed with a predominance of dark colours, rough stone and low lighting. The films highlight that its location is such that the common room windows look out onto the depths of Hogwarts' Black Lake rather than on picturesque landscapes.

welcoming castle spaces. Nonetheless, the dungeons' thrilling narrative role and their confinement to the bowels of the castle allow them to exert a positive overall effect of adding variety, emotional stimulation, and excitement to the *Harry Potter* storyworld. Their rather foreboding spaces remind us that home can be a place of adventure, exciting mystery, and curious unknowns, which engage us and bring us a measure of joy. Considered in parallel with Hogwarts' other spaces – Gryffindor tower, Great Hall, and Hogwarts exterior – the castle very purposefully combines rousing neomedieval forms with spatial aspects of domestic comfort and care. This creates a rhythm within the school, a variety of interesting and entertaining experiences that work in conjunction with the

narrative to broaden the audience's range of enjoyments, making Hogwarts into a fundamentally happy and appealing home place.

At Home in Harry's World

Experiences of happiness can transform any space into a home place, which goes for Hogwarts as well as for the rest of Harry's storyworld. As seen at Hogwarts, the wizarding world has shaped itself into a home by building on a long tradition of enjoyable neomedieval fantasy architecture. The neomedieval forms used in Hogwarts castle, its classrooms, corridors, Great Hall, and towers all draw from this mythic legacy, creating recognizable images with a rich history of association with tales of adventure, magic, power, danger, thrill, fun, excitement, heroism, mystery and other fiction-based enjoyments. The contentment and joys evoked by neomedieval structures is complemented by the enjoyment of intimate settings reminiscent of family dwellings. The design of Hogwarts incorporates numerous qualities of country homes – such as aspects of furnishings, scale, and warmth – which add the positive and uplifting values of coziness, human inhabitation and intimacy enjoyed in our ideal homes.

Combined within the architecture of Hogwarts, the excitement of neomedieval forms and the comfort of domestic spaces awaken a full-bodied happiness in the audience, a multifaceted experience of joy and of home. We all seek joy. If Harry's world can provide us with even a portion of that joy, then it has served a legitimate role in improving our lives. Happiness is not always easy to find, but Harry's settings – and other fictional worlds – call us to dwell in their delightful and thrilling places, offering us the chance to find our place and to make a home for ourselves there.

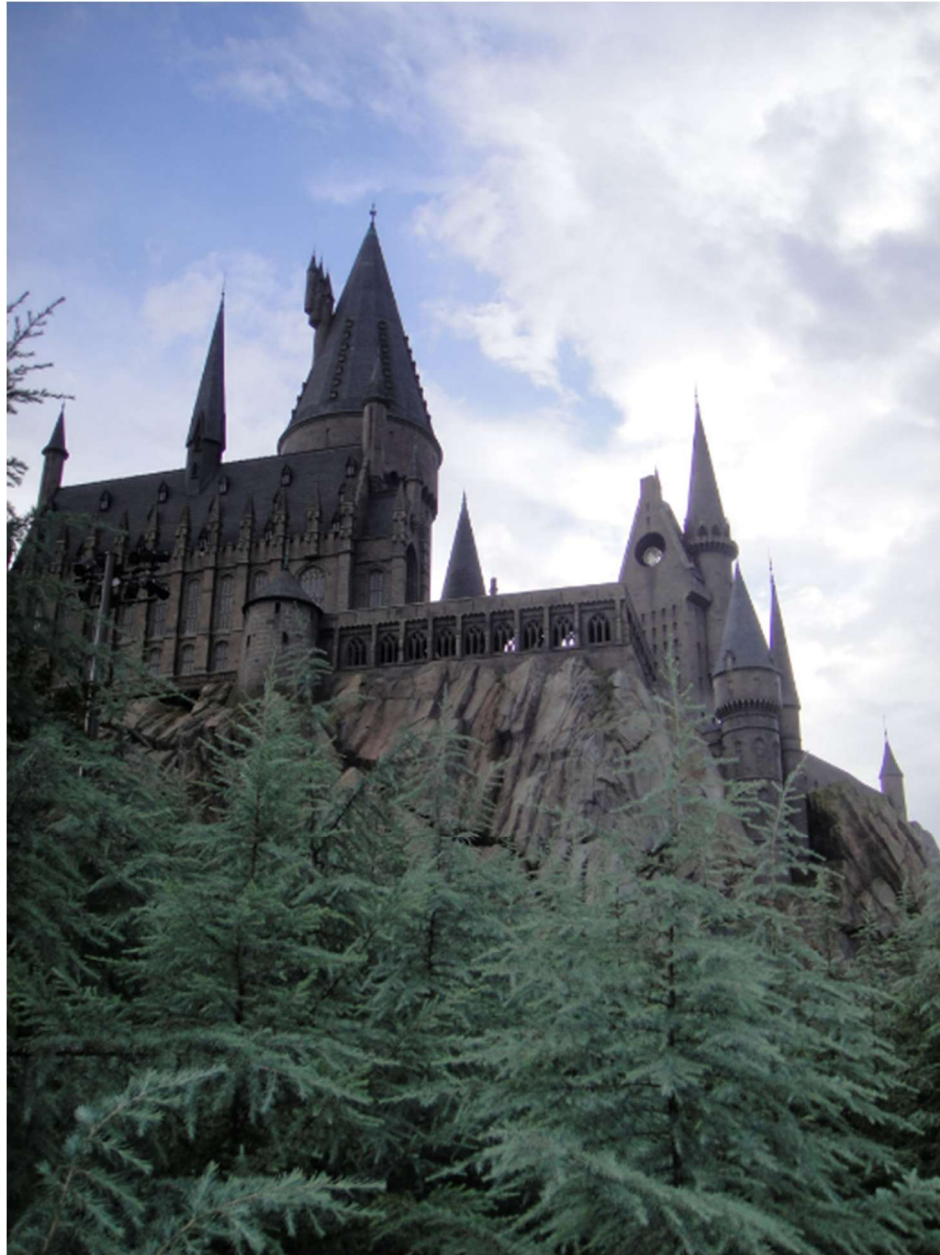


Figure 4.5.0: The wizarding world theme park in Orlando has recreated Hogwarts castle and other sets from the *Harry Potter* films, portraying the castle's many towers, vaulted spaces, and other neomedieval forms in exacting likeness and enabling visitors to be truly immersed in and become a part of Harry's world.

¹ As noted for example by Marion Gymnich and Klaus Scheunemann, faculty in the Department of English, American and Celtic Studies at the University of Bonn: Marion Gymnich and Klaus Scheunemann, "The 'Harry Potter Phenomenon': Forms of World Building in the Novels, the Translations, the Film Series and the Fandom," in "*Harry - Yer a Wizard*": *Exploring J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter Universe*, ed. Marion Gymnich, Hanne Birk, and Denise Burkhard (Baden-Baden, Germany: Tectum Verlag, 2017), 23.

- ² J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (Vancouver: Raincoast Books, 1997), 83.
- ³ Ibid, 84.
- ⁴ J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (Vancouver: Raincoast Books, 1998), 114; Rowling, *Philosopher's Stone*, 85.
- ⁵ Jody Revenson, *Harry Potter: Magical Places from the Films: Hogwarts, Diagon Alley, and Beyond* (New York: HarperCollins, 2015), 58.
- ⁶ Ibid, 58.
- ⁷ John Hendricks, "The Architecture of Hogwarts Castle," Hendricks Architecture, July 31, 2015, <https://www.hendricksarchitect.com/architecture/hogwarts-castle-architecture>.
- ⁸ Meredith Cohen, "Expert Breaks Down Hogwarts Architectural Details," Architectural Digest, September 1, 2022, video, 2:16, <https://www.architecturaldigest.com/video/watch/the-blueprint-show-expert-breaks-down-hogwarts-architectural-details>.
- ⁹ Marion Gymnich and Klaus Scheunemann, "The 'Harry Potter Phenomenon': Forms of World Building in the Novels, the Translations, the Film Series and the Fandom," in *"Harry - Yer a Wizard": Exploring J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter Universe*, ed. Marion Gymnich, Hanne Birk, and Denise Burkhard (Baden-Baden, Germany: Tectum Verlag, 2017), 26.
- ¹⁰ John Goodall, *The Castle: A History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2022), 346.
- ¹¹ Alessandra Petrina, "Forbidden Forest, Enchanted Castle: Arthurian Spaces in the Harry Potter Novels," *Mythlore* 24, no. 3/4 (93/94) (2006): 102.
- ¹² Denise Burkhard and Julia Stibane, "Darkness, Danger and Death: Exploring Gothic Places in Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets," in *"Harry - Yer a Wizard": Exploring J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter Universe*, ed. Marion Gymnich, Hanne Birk, and Denise Burkhard (Baden-Baden, Germany: Tectum Verlag, 2017), 64.
- ¹³ Rowling, *Chamber of Secrets*, 203–4.
- ¹⁴ See for example Rowling, *Philosopher's Stone*, 85; J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (Vancouver: Raincoast Books, 1999), 69.
- ¹⁵ Juhani Pallasmaa, *The Eyes of the Skin*, 3rd ed. (Chinchester: Wiley, 2012), 63; Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994), 31.
- ¹⁶ J.R.R. Tolkien, *Tolkien On Fairy-Stories: Expanded Edition, with Commentary and Notes*, ed. Verlyn Flieger and Douglas A. Anderson (London: HarperCollinsPublishers, 2008), 75; Ursula K. Le Guin, "Why Are Americans Afraid of Dragons?," in *The Language of the Night: Essays on Fantasy and Science Fiction*, ed. Susan Wood (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1989), 38; Kathryn Hume, *Fantasy and Mimesis: Responses to Reality in Western Literature* (New York: Methuen, 1984), 16.
- ¹⁷ Rowling, *Philosopher's Stone*, 87.
- ¹⁸ Ibid, 143.
- ¹⁹ Revenson, *Harry Potter: Magical Places*, 69.
- ²⁰ Cohen, "Expert Breaks Down Hogwarts Architectural Details," 6:50.
- ²¹ Revenson, *Harry Potter: Magical Places*, 69.
- ²² Jonathan Glancey, *Architecture* (New York: DK Publishing Inc., 2006), 257.
- ²³ Goodall, *The Castle: A History*, 346.
- ²⁴ Cohen, "Expert Breaks Down Hogwarts Architectural Details," 4:30.
- ²⁵ Revenson, *Harry Potter: Magical Places*, 70.
- ²⁶ Ibid, 70.
- ²⁷ Cohen, "Expert Breaks Down Hogwarts Architectural Details," 6:22.
- ²⁸ Rowling, *Philosopher's Stone*, 96–97.
- ²⁹ John Kornfeld and Laurie Prothro, "Comedy, Quest, and Community: Home and Family in Harry Potter," in *Critical Perspectives on Harry Potter*, ed. Elizabeth E. Heilman, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2009), 127.
- ³⁰ Rowling, *Philosopher's Stone*, 146.
- ³¹ Revenson, *Harry Potter: Magical Places*, 74.

- ³² Bob McCabe, *Harry Potter Page To Screen: Updated Edition: The Complete Filmmaking Journey* (New York: HarperCollins, 2018), 345.
- ³³ Revenson, *Harry Potter: Magical Places*, 76.
- ³⁴ Cohen, "Expert Breaks Down Hogwarts Architectural Details," 9:19.
- ³⁵ Ibid, 10:15.
- ³⁶ Kevin Lynch, *The Image of the City* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1960), 5–6.
- ³⁷ Anne Hiebert Alton, "Playing the Genre Game: Generic Fusions of the Harry Potter Series," in *Critical Perspectives on Harry Potter*, ed. Elizabeth E. Heilman, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2009), 203.
- ³⁸ Rowling, *Philosopher's Stone*, 117 and 143.
- ³⁹ Ibid, 95.
- ⁴⁰ Burkhard and Stibane, "Exploring Gothic Places in Harry Potter," 68.
- ⁴¹ Goodall, *The Castle: A History*, 346.
- ⁴² Cohen, "Expert Breaks Down Hogwarts Architectural Details," 15:58.
- ⁴³ J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* (Vancouver: Raincoast Books, 2003), 351; Rowling, *Chamber of Secrets*, 163; Rowling, *Philosopher's Stone*, 101.
- ⁴⁴ Rowling, *Philosopher's Stone*, 101.
- ⁴⁵ Rowling, *Chamber of Secrets*, 165.
- ⁴⁶ Ibid, 164.
- ⁴⁷ Ibid, 165.
- ⁴⁸ Ibid.
- ⁴⁹ McCabe, *The Complete Filmmaking Journey*, 357.
- ⁵⁰ Ibid.
- ⁵¹ Ibid, 349.

CONCLUSION

“For in dreams we enter a world that is entirely our own. Let them swim in the deepest ocean, or glide over the highest cloud.”

– Albus Dumbledore,
Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban, 2004

Conclusion:

Towards an Architecture of Happiness

The design of the wizarding world has been met with undeniable success in touching the hearts and minds of its global audience. Not only does the narrative of *Harry Potter* carry strong positive emotions, but even more impressively, the *Harry Potter* storyworld and architecture create an instinctive satisfaction for their audience, by constructing places which evoke the happiness of home.

Moving beyond this fictional realm, the implications of *Harry Potter's* fantasy home, and of all fantasy storyworlds, can be used to evolve real-world architectural practice and notions of home. Any place of happiness is a home place. Though domestic dwellings achieve the joy of a home more readily than many other forms, all architectural structures are nevertheless seeking to evoke some measure of comfort, wonder, shelter, intimacy, enjoyment, or agency, all amounting to a sentiment of happiness. Though architects have created some greatly successful home places, the discipline overall has at times struggled to maintain its goal of shaping emotionally and psychologically positive spaces, human spaces. Emanuele Coccia speaks to the at times detached and inorganic reality of domestic design today:

...the thought given to the home, and above all to building practices for the ordinary domestic environment, is so crude and prehistoric that it still allows the vast majority of architects to believe that the problem posed by each house is one of the spatial composition of a few rectangles that have each been given some

vital purpose: sleep for the bedroom, entertainment for the sitting room, eating for the kitchen.¹

Coccia's sentiments regarding the unemotional, sterile state of dwellings are applied by Juhani Pallasmaa to the overall built environment.

Pallasmaa observes that "In our role as architects we aspire for a meticulously articulated and temporally one dimensional environment, whereas as dwellers ourselves, we prefer a more layered, ambiguous and aesthetically less coherent environment."² Despite the architectural tendency to create highly rational spaces, in reality the nature of the architect as a human being seeks a much more organic, irrational, and imperfect surrounding. Witold Rybczynski references this tendency towards austerity as the "fundamental poverty of modern architectural ideas," which are inadequate in creating truly appealing and uplifting dwellings.³ As a result, he concludes that the home, with its ideals of human well-being, "is too important to be left to experts; it is, as it has always been, the business of the family and the individual."⁴ The way of "experts," of architects acting as removed professionals rather than as human beings, can lead to a path of sterile and scholastic buildings which lack emotional appeal. Consequently, it is crucial for designers and homeowners to listen to their humanity, their emotion, their imperfection, in order to create the strongest, happiest, most appealing home places.

To continue improving upon the happiness, warmth, and welcoming qualities of real-world architectural spaces, fictional and fantasy worlds such as the *Harry Potter* storyworld can offer new ways to consider and achieve home. These storyworlds naturally expose emotion and human psychology much more readily than physical architecture, having been designed explicitly to support narrative intent and emotional stimulation. Pallasmaa reinforces this view, commenting on the narrative architecture of film as having deep emotional appeal:

... the most powerful cinematic architecture is usually concealed in the representation of normal events, not in the specific exposition of

buildings and spaces of exceptional architectural merit. Cinematic architecture evokes and sustains specific mental states; the architecture of film is an architecture of terror, anguish, suspense, boredom, alienation, melancholy, happiness or ecstasy, depending on the essence of the particular cinematic narrative and the director's intention. Space and architectural imagery are the amplifiers of specific emotions.⁵

Pallasmaa's views clarify that the basal purpose of cinematic architecture is to support the human experience, not to eclipse it nor to be considered separately from human emotion. Real-world architecture can learn from its narrative counterpart, applying the principle that architecture does not exist for itself or for the objective application of theoretical principles, but for the delight, reassurance, and enjoyment of its end users. The practical value of fantasy structures does not end here. Storyworld architecture has the potential to contribute to the architectural discipline in many ways, the most prominent of which draw parallels to the imagery of a magic mirror.

From *Snow White*, to *Through the Looking-glass and what Alice Found There*, to *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, the fantasy trope of the magic mirror has traditionally been used to reflect not only what is known and easily visible, but rather to reveal insightful and enlightening truths (Figure 5.0.0 to 5.0.2). Fictional worlds do not simply reflect reality as it is, but instead magically reveal new insights about our past, present, and future: the heights of our humanity, the depths of our flawed ignorance, the bright promise of our untapped potential. Storyworlds and fantasy architecture reflect deep-seated patterns of human desire, spatialized emotions, and formal significance. The architectural revelations gleaned from fantasy storyworlds have the potential to influence spatial ideals of home because of the vast *insight*, *inspiration*, and the *removal of inhibitions* which they reflect.



Figure 5.0.0: Disney's *Snow White* animated film popularized the magic mirror in the form of an omniscient, sage-like character who reveals difficult truths to the Evil Queen.



Figure 5.0.1: In the film adaptation of *Alice Through the Looking Glass*, a mirror acts as a portal to Wonderland, where themes of time and morality are emphasized using caricatures that play off of reality.



Figure 5.0.2: Harry is drawn in by the allure of the Mirror of Erised, which reflects a person's deepest desire, showing Harry images of his parents as if they were alive again.

Whether in fantasy, science fiction, or any other genre, storyworlds provide *insight* on the home because of their nature as reflections of real people and their desires (Figure 5.0.3 to 5.0.5). Svetlana Boym considers fiction and art as key avenues through which we can thoroughly understand the patterns of desire surrounding the home. She notes that “some psychologists of the early twentieth century, including Freud, suggested that artists and writers have a better insight into the dream and dread of home,” talking further about artistic therapy and literature which imitate and idealize representations of home.⁶ Homes in fiction reflect patterns of desire (or dread) regarding the perception of home places. While storyworlds echo the author's own inclinations and reflections, more importantly, the popularity and widespread acclaim of any fictional world highlights large-scale societal ideals of home. The homes which appeal to multitudes through fantastical narratives reveal overarching aesthetic tastes and emotional appeal, surveying the public's subconscious notions of space and dwelling. General sentiments towards a castle as an evolving artefact of fantasy rather than history, or societal ideals which consider messy fictional homes as more human than their austere counterparts, reflect the reality of contemporary dwellers. Rather than brushing popular culture and fantasy storyworlds aside as mere entertainment or impossible spaces, architects and designers have a duty to listen to their end users and respect the aesthetic insight gleaned from

popular media and literature, using this insight to design appealing real-world home spaces.

Once a storyworld is accepted as a legitimate spatial creation and indicator of contemporary aesthetic taste, the home spaces it portrays have the potential to offer incredible *inspiration* for new forms and ways of promoting dwelling. The spectacular, impossible or unusual storyworlds represented in literature and film are a rich reservoir of divergent spatial thinking, an improved mirror-world to our physical reality. Whether real-world architects draw from fantastical ornamentation, seemingly impractical structures, unconventional spatial organization, or unique methods of combining real-world architectural forms, the inspiration for new and innovative designs is abundant in narrative otherworlds. Inspired by fantasy, real-world architecture can draw on the wonder, scale, and beauty of storyworlds to create more joyful and enjoyable forms of home and dwelling. As Alain de Botton observed, “it is architecture’s task to render vivid to us who we might ideally be,” inspiring us to greater ideals of being and dwelling.⁷

Storyworlds further contribute to real-world homes and architecture by providing *freedom from inhibitions* in design. Within fantastical worlds themselves, architects and designers are free to create any forms they wish. Liberated from the constraints of physics or the limited capacities of building materials, fictional mirror-spaces function in the literary imagination and through cinematographic “magical” effects. Even conceptual designs today, made for design competitions, exhibitions or scholarly pursuits, are not so free as imaginary and fictional designs, typically remaining constrained by the laws of physics, the conventions of efficiency, the limits of what has previously been done or proven, the expectations of the status quo. As expressed by Nicholas Sheltroun, the architecture and settings of stories like *Harry Potter* provide an “alternate world through which we can explore possibilities that the natural laws of our non-magical world do not allow.”⁸ The ability

to experiment uninhibited, to imagine freely, to visualize outside of physical reality, has infinite potential to evolve architectural practice and design, which in turn can shelter new ways of dwelling and being.

The liberating effect of these storyworld refuges also continues outside of their magical reflected realities, gradually removing some of the inhibitions which hinder the evolution of physical architecture. The prominence of fantasy forms in popular media has increasingly normalized their appearance and design, establishing them as increasingly realistic and believable spaces, and slowly facilitating their acceptance into real-world architectural expression. Just as fantasy, nerd culture and fandoms have gradually moved from childhood obsessions to be seen as legitimate forms of entertainment, so storyworlds and their architecture are progressing from being considered distasteful oddities to being embraced as welcome eccentricities. This movement is already underway, evidenced by the floods of tourists who are drawn to inhabit and take part in filming locations and reconstructed film sets, and even as seen in Coccia's observation that he once chose to move to a particular apartment because he was drawn to "the magnificent red porthole which transformed the kitchen area into a space-station hovering in the sky."⁹ Through increasing presence of and gravitation towards fantastical spaces, whimsical architecture is constantly edging closer to manifesting in commonplace architecture. The recurrence and prominence of fantasy storyworlds, and the appealing home refuges they provide, is gradually shifting the balance of architectural innovation, removing inhibitions of convention and status quo and enabling the practice to evolve along with the rising tide of narrative storyworlds.

Contemporary society has had increasing affection towards narratives and fiction, indicating that perhaps the time has come to allow fantasy worlds to seep into real-world architecture, evolving the discipline for the future and ensuring that it remains in the hands of the people for whom it has always been intended. Fantasy storyworlds

democratize design, providing insight into contemporary aesthetic tastes, inspiration to broaden architectural thinking, and freedom from inhibitions which has the potential to bring architectural expression into a new era of originality. Through literature and film, anyone with a vivid enough imagination can contribute to the legacy of the built environment. Perhaps it is time to start letting fantasy homes manifest in real-life architecture, to create physical abodes of adventure, wonder, love, imagination, comfort, and heartfelt feeling, and to ultimately construct a new architecture of happiness.

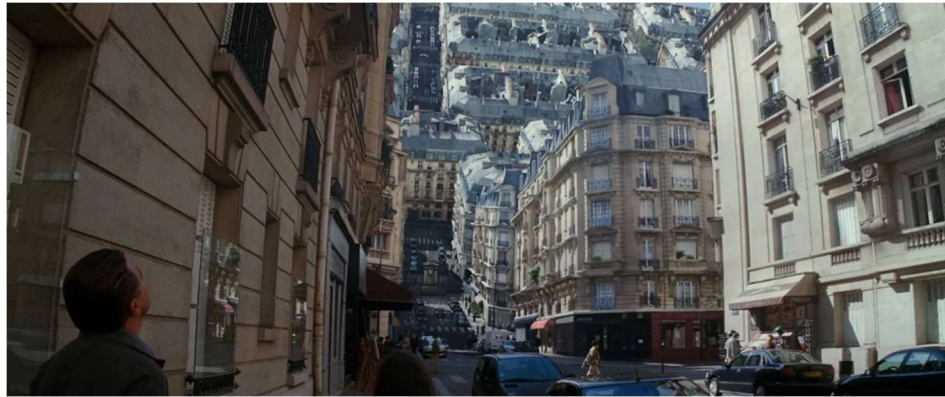


Figure 5.0.3: The science fiction world of *Inception* promises the ability to create any physical environment so long as it can be imagined, such as when the characters manipulate the streets of Paris to fold in on themselves. This world offers a place where one can shape their ideal home in a parallel dream-universe and find their place.



Figure 5.0.4: Historical fictions such as *Ben-Hur* often create storyworlds which romanticize past societies, constructing believable fictional environments in which the audience can imagine themselves and can feel they belong amongst great heroes.



Figure 5.0.5: *The Wild Robot* mixes science and technology with stirring natural settings, creating an appealing, idyllic world of great beauty and wonder in which audiences can enjoy dwelling.

¹ Emanuele Coccia, *Philosophy of the Home: Domestic Space and Happiness*, trans. Richard Dixon (Dublin: Penguin Random House UK, 2024), 35-36.

² Juhani Pallasmaa, "Identity, Intimacy and Domicile - Notes on the Phenomenology of Home," in *The Home: Words, Interpretations, Meanings and Environments*, ed. David N. Benjamin, 1st ed. (London: Routledge, 1995), 132.

³ Witold Rybczynski, *Home: A Short History of an Idea* (New York: Penguin Group, 1987), viii.

⁴ Ibid, 232.

⁵ Juhani Pallasmaa, *The Architecture of Image: Existential Space in Cinema* (Helsinki, Finland: Building Information Ltd (Rakennustieto Oy), 2001), 7.

⁶ Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), 251-52.

⁷ Alain de Botton, *The Architecture of Happiness*, 1st ed. (Toronto, Canada: McClelland & Stewart, 2006), 13.

⁸ Nicholas Sheltroun, "Harry Potter's World as a Morality Tale of Technology and Media," in *Critical Perspectives on Harry Potter*, ed. Elizabeth E. Heilman, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2009), 47.

⁹ Coccia, *Philosophy of the Home*, 56.

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