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# Butterbeer, Cauldron Cakes, and Fizzing Whizzbees: Food in J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter series

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Butterbeer, Cauldron Cakes, and Fizzing Whizzbees: Food in J.K.

Rowling's *Harry Potter* series

by

Leisa Anne Clark

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
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## DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my nieces and nephews: Brittany Robb, Michael Albohn, Emily Brennan, Austin Dunlavey, Belle Albohn, Brooklyn Albohn, Alexis Dunlavey, Allisa Dunlavey, and Jack Brennan; in hopes that as you grow older, you will continue to read, explore, and creatively challenge yourselves in every aspect of your lives.

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis situates the *Harry Potter* books into the greater body of food studies and into the extant children's literary tradition through an examination of how food can be used to understand cultural identity. Food is a biological need, but because we have created social rules and rituals around food consumption and sharing, there is more to eating than simple nutritional value. The *Harry Potter* series is as much about overcoming childhood adversity, and good versus evil, as it is about magic, and food in the *Harry Potter* series is both abundant and relevant to the narrative, context, and themes of the books. Sweets such as candy, puddings, and cakes, help construct both wizard and Muggle identity in addition to serving as a bridge between readers and characters. How the characters use sweets to create and reinforce friendships or exclude those who do not belong is important, especially since children usually lack other cultural capital and, in their worlds, food is reward, treat, and punishment. Examples of this are shown in the scene where Harry first travels on the Hogwarts Express, in the ways the Dursleys deny Harry birthday celebrations, and in how holidays are celebrated by the witches and wizards in the series.

The sharing of food in the novels builds tensions, creates bonds, and codes different characters as "acceptable" or "unacceptable" based on their willingness, or refusal, to share food. Teatime and feasting are examples of how food is shared by analogous and disparate groups of people in the series. Tea is served most often by those in subordinate positions of power, but is one way in which the characters can socialize

and create community. Feasts at the beginning and end of the school term bookmark the year by immersing students and faculty into a shared world at first, and then by sending them back to their families, aware of their own triumphs and accomplishments. When feasts are used to unite outside groups, such as before the Triwizard Tournament, the ways that different foods are embraced or rejected serve to reinforce identity and inclusion.

Using cultural studies methods in conjunction with food studies and Reader-Response critical theory, this thesis argues that food in the *Harry Potter* series represents the socially constructed identities of the characters within the texts, and also serves to bridge the gap between the readers and the characters.

## INTRODUCTION: THE KITCHEN IS THE CAULDRON OF CREATION

*Harry Potter* is an international literary and media phenomenon that is unmatched by anything in recent history. According to an insert in the 13 April 2012 *Entertainment Weekly* magazine, the *Harry Potter* series has sold 150 million copies worldwide (Lee 84). BBC News reported on 3 October 2008 that author J.K. Rowling made £5 every second in 2007 as a result of her book sales,<sup>1</sup> and after the electronic versions of the books were made available via Pottermore in April of 2012, “\$1.5 million worth of Harry Potter books (were sold) in the store’s first three days online” (Paczkowski). Myriad people of all ages are reading the *Harry Potter* books and watching the movie versions in cinemas and on Blu-Ray and DVD. Most people have *heard of Harry Potter*, even if they have not read the books themselves. Because academics<sup>2</sup> are still trying to determine the series' place in the literary world, numerous pieces in such diverse fields as Political Science, Philosophy, Religion, and Literary Theory have been published; however, to

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<sup>1</sup> British Broadcasting Company/BBC News: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/entertainment/7649962.stm>.

<sup>2</sup> Publications analyzing the *Harry Potter* series include the following: *Sticks and Stones: The Troublesome Success of Children's Literature from Slovenly Peter to Harry Potter* by Jack Zipes, *Reading Harry Potter: Critical Essays* and *Reading Harry Potter Again: New Critical Essays*, both edited by Giselle Liza Anatol; *Critical Perspectives on Harry Potter* by Elizabeth Heilman; *From Homer to Harry Potter: A Handbook on Myth and Fantasy* by Matthew T. Dickerson and David O'Hara; *The Psychology of Harry Potter* edited by Neil Mulholland; *Prejudice in Harry Potter* by Karen A. Brown; *Mapping the World of Harry Potter* edited by Mercedes Lackey and Leah Wilson; *The Ivory Tower and Harry Potter* edited by Lana A. Whited; *Females and Harry Potter: Not All That Empowering* by Ruthann Mayes-Elma; "J.K. Rowling's Ambivalence Towards Feminism: House Elves-Women in Disguise-in the Harry Potter Books" by Rivka Temima Kellner in *The Midwest Quarterly*; "Crowning the King: Harry Potter and the Construction of Authority" by Farah Mendlesohn in *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts*; "Same-as-Difference": Narrative Transformations and Intersecting Cultures in Harry Potter" by Kate Behr in *Journal of Narrative Theory*; "A Guide to the Harry Potter Novels" by Amy Rose Rotruck in *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts*; "I Solemnly Swear I am Up to No Good" by Sarah K. Cantrell in *Children's Literature*; "Harry Potter and the Functions of Popular Culture" by Dustin Kidd in *The Journal of Popular Culture*; "Much Ado about Harry: Harry Potter and the Creation of a Moral Panic" by Danielle M. Soulliere in *Journal of Religion and Popular Culture* (2010); and *Scholarly Studies in Harry Potter: Applying Academic Methods to a Popular Text* by Cynthia Whitney Hallett (Mellen, 2005).

date, no scholarly books or specifically dedicated articles have focused solely on the discussion of food in the series.

This thesis will situate the *Harry Potter* books into the greater body of food studies and into the extant children's literary tradition through an examination of how food can be used to understand cultural identity. Chapter One will closely examine how sweets such as candy, puddings, and cakes, help construct both wizard and Muggle identity in addition to serving as a bridge between readers and characters. Chapter Two will examine how the sharing of food in the series builds tensions, creates bonds, and codes different characters as "acceptable" or "unacceptable" based on their willingness, or refusal, to share food. Using cultural studies methods in conjunction with food studies and Reader-Response critical theory, this thesis will argue that food in the *Harry Potter* series represents the socially constructed identities of the characters within the texts, and also serves to bridge the gap between the readers and the characters.

Readers cannot make potions or perform spells, but we can create and experience the food. Food is not just "fantasy" in this series; the characters eat toast, sausages, and puddings along with Fizzing Whizzbees and cauldron cakes, so the fascination readers have with the food goes beyond the fantastic connotations of the concoctions created by Rowling to add color to her imaginary world. The reader responds along with the characters and "for the reader, the work is what is given to consciousness; one can argue that the work is not something objective, existing independently of any experience of it, but is the experience of the reader" (Culler137). In other words, there is plenty of food in the series; therefore, I propose that the food means something beyond simple nourishment to the characters and to the series' readers. This approach would posit that

food is a way for readers to be grounded in the familiar within the fantastic: readers may not know what Pepper Imps and Butterbeer are, but they know toast when they read about it.

Sparked by the literary tradition, the *Harry Potter* series is meant to be read alone: most reading is by nature a solitary event, since everyone reads at a different pace, and some read to get to the end, while some savor every word, slowly progressing through the stories. There are some rare instances, such as Author Reading events or books read aloud in a classroom that invite group participation, but as a whole, reading is done on one's own. What makes *Harry Potter* unique in publishing history is the concept of millions of people all reading the same book at roughly the same time. Starting with Book Four, worldwide release parties were synchronized so that no one group could attain the novels before any other. The sense of community created by an Event Book Release was unprecedented before 2000, and says a great deal about the very human need to converge over shared experiences.

Fan communities as a whole are very vocal, very involved in a series, and very protective of it. *Harry Potter* fans use the internet as a space for what Henry Jenkins defines as “convergence culture...where communities...are held together through the mutual production and reciprocal exchange of knowledge” (*Convergence*, 27). Thus, “Convergence culture” is where everything comes together to create new meaning. In the case of a series of novels, such the *Harry Potter* books, but also with such titles as *Twilight* by Stephenie Meyer and *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins, the books make the jump from written page to “transmedia storytelling,” pushing the boundaries between what happens to the characters in the novels (canon) to what the fans create

through multi-levels of interaction (from simply reading the books to writing fan-fiction, creating full costumes for Cosplaying, building websites, throwing Harry Potter-themed parties, and beyond). Henry Jenkins defines “transmedia storytelling” as that which “unfolds across multiple media platforms, with each new text making a distinctive and valuable contribution to the whole” (*Convergence* 97-98).

What makes transmedia storytelling even more multi-layered and fascinating is that for it to be truly successful, each medium must be able to stand alone as an entity separate from the other (Jenkins, *Convergence* 98). Guests may enjoy the Wizarding World of Harry Potter at Islands of Adventure without ever having read the books and individuals can enjoy the books without ever visiting the theme park, for example. Scholars who study fan communities often look for the cohesive glue that holds the groups together within the structure of the chosen medium, especially when many fans are temporary and tend to move on to something new when the fervor dies down. That *Harry Potter* fandom is still very active fifteen years after the publication of the first book in the series says something about the fans, the author, and the story.

In a sense, food allows the *Harry Potter* books to play a part at another level in “transmedia storytelling,” which Henry Jenkins describes as a “a new aesthetic that has emerged in response to media convergence—one that places new demands on consumers and depends on the active participation of knowledge communities” (*Convergence* 21). The intense devotion of the readers to this series allows for a multi-level analysis that includes reader-response critical theory and cultural studies: unlike most books and series of this genre, *Harry Potter* works tangentially with its audience on a unique participatory level that allows the readers to move beyond the text into visceral experience. Readers

who want to know more about everything from Hogwarts to Butterbeer can share with one another in very active fan groups online and at conferences and conventions. Reader-Response critical theory suggests that creation and meaning happens with the interpretations, not in the creation of the text, acknowledging the problems with knowing authorial intent and freeing up the reader to interpret on their own. In this sense, analyzing the text beyond just the written word is appropriate, because it is the continued reader/fan response that affords Rowling the canvas on which to paint the missing details.

Some critiques<sup>3</sup> of J.K. Rowling stem from her non-canonical additions to her own work, post-publication, because, although it means that polysemic interpretations of the text are quite possible, it also means that those interpretations can change. Because “readers who participate in Potter fandom do not simply passively absorb the books, but actively respond to them” (Tosenberger 200), the books are ardently re-read by devoted fans. This is unusual in many respects, and can be attributed to the multi-layered stories that grow in complexity as the series continues and the characters (and intended audience) age: the “ever-changing magic of Harry Potter is in the magic of the (reader’s) own experiences, feelings, and imagination” (Black 239). As Rowling continues to add to the stories through *Pottermore*<sup>4</sup> and post-publication interviews, this allows both a deeper level of experiencing and revisiting the richly detailed world she has created, but also

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<sup>3</sup> Critics of Rowling’s work and her tendency to play fast and loose with her own canon include Harold Bloom (“Dumbing Down American Readers” in *The Boston Globe* 9/24/2003; Edward Rothstein (“Is Dumbledore Gay? Depends on Definitions of ‘Is’ and ‘Gay’” in *The New York Times* 10/29/2007); John Mark Reynolds (“Dumbledore is not gay: Taking stories more seriously than the author” in *Scriptorium Daily* 10/23/2007) and Mary Pharr (personal interview). Author John Scalzi argues the opposite, stating that “Whether or not anyone but the author knew about it up to last week simply doesn’t matter. The author, in her formulation of the character, has this as part of his background, and that background informs how the character was written” (“What Authors Know About Their Characters” 10/29/2007).

<sup>4</sup> Pottermore.com was launched as a beta test in the summer of 2011, and only one million fans (me included) were granted access through a series of tests and puzzles. The website is interactive and public, but also includes background information on characters, events, and items from the series, provided by J.K. Rowling as accepted as canon by Potter scholars.

becomes problematic for scholars attempting to analyze the books as a static, canonical text, a finished product. If the success of *Pottermore* is any indication, then many fans eagerly embrace any new materials Rowling can produce.

Annette Kolodny suggests that readers unconsciously engage in texts from their own point of view based on experiences, personal history, and biases that must be examined (1551). Each reader brings to the text a series of values and ideas that impact how the text is understood. When adults read children's or young adult (YA) novels, they do so through the lens of age and experience that the supposedly intended readers<sup>5</sup> do not have. Additionally, Kolodny states that "Insofar as we are taught how to read, what we engage are not texts but paradigms" (1554), suggesting that what we read is layered with ambiguity and coded through the lens of social construction. On the one hand, a book tells a story with protagonists, antagonists, and narrative arcs. But beyond that, stories tell us who we are as a culture and under what historical frameworks a story was first told. For example, feminist and gender theorists, like Kolodny, have historically been concerned with the discourses of masculinity and femininity, and how social roles and rules affect our lived experiences. These issues are played out again and again in contemporary literature, including (or maybe especially) in YA books like the popular *Twilight*, *Hunger Games*, and *Harry Potter* series, and one must learn to "read the text properly" (Kolodny 1555) to better understand what the stories mean to their readers. To properly read the *Harry Potter* series, one must put on any number of glasses and peer through different lenses by combining multiple fields of inquiry and scholarship.

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<sup>5</sup> I use the phrase "supposedly intended readers" because, although the *Harry Potter* books are aimed at child readers, there is no evidence of the didactic "dumbing down" that often occurs in novels of this genre. Additionally, especially with the later novels, Rowling had to be aware that her audience was not restricted to young readers because she has had an active presence online for many years and "has proven to be not simply aware, but actively supportive" of adult fans (Tosenberger 200).

Because “cultural studies functions by borrowing freely from social science disciplines and all branches of humanities and the arts” (Sardar and Van Loon 7), this thesis serves as a location from which to examine *Harry Potter* and food “in terms of *cultural practices* and their *relation to power*...to expose power relationships and how these relationships influence and shape cultural practices” (Sardar and Van Loon 9, emphasis in original). What this means is that the way food is used by the author reflects not just the experiences of the characters, but also the anxieties, desires, and experiences of the late twentieth/early twenty-first-century reader for whom the books are written. Sardar and Van Loon argue that:

Cultural studies attempts to *expose* and *reconcile the division of knowledge*, to overcome the split between tacit...and objective (so-called universal) forms of knowledge. It assumes a common identity and common interest between the knower and the known, between the observer and what is being observed. (9, emphasis in original)

In other words, the *Harry Potter* series straddles a complex line between reality and fiction. On the one hand, the series is set in contemporary Britain, but on the other hand, it is situated in a world-within-a-world where wizards exist, shrouded in secrecy, protected by “the International Statute of Wizarding Secrecy” (*DH* 261) and reliant on any number of safety protocols to assure that they remain hidden in plain sight. These two worlds collide in the books, and the reader, who is part of the contemporary non-Wizarding world, must navigate the spaces between them. The *Harry Potter* series performs “cultural work” on multiple levels. Paul Lauter refers to “cultural work” as “the ways in which a book or other kind of ‘text’...helps construct the frameworks, fashion

the metaphors, create the very language by which people comprehend their experiences and think about their world” (11). In *Harry Potter*, there exists a necessary juxtaposition between reality and fiction, real and fantasy, which is often reflected by the foods the characters eat, how those foods are prepared, and how they are shared.

No other series has managed to capture the culinary imagination quite like *Harry Potter*. Food has been a major aspect of children's literature from the time of the Grimm Brothers' fairy tales, and many books and articles have been written exploring the various aspects of food in children's stories.<sup>6</sup> Because *Harry Potter* is, in spite of eight films and canonical websites like *Pottermore*, a literary series, when considering the role of food in the books, it is important to also approach the novels through the lens of literary criticism. For the purpose of this thesis, I have chosen a more cultural studies and reader-response-focused approach, which allows for a close reading of the text by also considering the role the reader plays in “shaping the literary experience” along with “a desire to help explain that role” (Richter 917). What this means is that when food is mentioned in the *Harry Potter* books, I am considering not just what the meal means to the characters intertextually, but also taking into consideration what the food represents to readers, and how food may help readers better understand and engage with the materials. If “one must take into account not only the actual text, but also, and in equal measure, the actions involved in responding to the text” (Iser 212), then when I examine food in the *Harry Potter* series, I am looking beyond the literal and taking into

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<sup>6</sup> These include the following: *Voracious Children: Who Eats Whom in Children's Literature* by Carolyn Daniel; *Critical Approaches to Food in Children's Literature* by Kara K. Keeling; *Boys and Girls Forever: Children's Classics from Cinderella to Harry Potter* by Alison Lurie; “Parsimony Amid Plenty: Views from Victorian Didactic Works in Food for Nursery Children” by Valerie Mars in *Food, Culture and History. Vol. 1*; “Some Uses of Food in Children's Literature” in *Children's Literature in Education* by Wendy R. Katz; and *Consuming Children: Education-Entertainment-Advertising* by Jane Kenway and Elizabeth Bullen.

consideration the connection between the reader and the particular text. So foremost, I must examine the role food plays in cultural and literary studies, and then look at the importance of food to the *Harry Potter* series.

Beyond just eating to produce much-needed fuel and energy for the biological body,

[b]uying, consuming, and serving food are acts of signification through which people construct and sustain their identities. At the same time these acts—and the broad range of cultural representations that support and are supported by them—also serve as vehicles through which ideological expectations about those very identities are circulated, enforced, and transgressed. (LeBesco and Naccarato 1)

Therefore, there is more to food than just taste, availability, and preparation: food is about identity and belonging. The complexities of food narratives only scratch the surface of understanding people by looking at the foods they consume, relish, and share with others. Anthropologist Josephine Beoku-Betts argues that studying food offers a “great potential for an understanding of...social relations, knowledge construction, and cultural identity in communities” (535). Food is something that either produces an instant rapport, or creates distance and a sense of “othering.” What people put into their bodies in the form of food is seen as symbolically linked to the culture to which individuals belong (Douglas, “External” 433).

Food studies is a vast field that incorporates scholarly works from disciplines as diverse as anthropology, nutrition, sociology, psychology, literature, women’s studies, and humanities. Because it is interdisciplinary, food studies “cover(s) a wide range of topics and use(s) approaches and methodologies from more traditional disciplines to

develop new interpretive modalities” (Avakian and Haber 7), thus allowing any number of theoretical approaches. It is a relatively new topic of inquiry, but already there are thousands of resources available.<sup>7</sup> Many of these works, especially in the fields of women’s studies and psychology, problematize food by suggesting how disordered eating affects the body, or how class and race issues impact food production and availability. Cultural and anthropological studies of food focus on what food means to individual groups, and how identity is coded through food. As Jean-Anthelme Brillat-Savarin keenly observed, “Tell me what you eat, and I will tell you who you are” (3).

Multiple theories exist as to why ancient hominids first changed from purely foraging *australopithecines* to hunting and farming *homo sapiens sapiens*<sup>8</sup> within a relatively short span of time. Biological anthropologists and cultural anthropologists differ in their interpretations, but the most prevalent theories suggest that food production was the catalyst. Earlier theories suggest that hunting made us human because it forced early members of the genus *homo* to cooperate and share resources, which enlarged their brains. Structuralist Claude Lévi-Strauss declared in the 1960s that “Cooking established the difference between animals and people...not only does cooking mark the transition from nature to culture, but through it and by means of it, the human state can be defined with all its attributes” (164), a premise that Harvard professor of biological anthropology, Richard Wrangham supports. Wrangham believes:

The transformative moment that gave rise to the genus *homo*, one of the great transitions in the history of life, stemmed from the control of fire and the advent

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<sup>7</sup> A cursory search of the Amazon.com database yielded 25,780 results under the subject “Food Studies.”

<sup>8</sup> *Homo sapiens* is the taxonomic nomenclature for humans; the addition of a second “*sapiens*” designates the only still living genus of *homo sapiens*, anatomically modern humans. *Homo sapiens neanderthalensis* and *homo sapiens idaltu* are extinct.

of cooked meals. Cooking increased the value of our food. It changed our bodies, our brains, our use of time, and our social lives. It made us into consumers of external energy and thereby created an organism with a new relationship to nature, dependent on fuel. (2)

Wrangham critiques Lévi-Strauss's disconnection from food preparation and biology, suggesting instead that cooking food caused evolutionary changes to "*habilines*"<sup>9</sup> and then to *homo sapiens* (11). It therefore makes sense to suggest that these evolutionary changes are what allowed cooking to progress from just throwing something in the fire to creating cooking vessels and tools, rather than the other way around. Far from being a chicken-egg scenario, cooking provides the fuel to produce the energy to enable humans to think in order to produce better cooking devices. Once humans were able to cook and store food, there began the possibility of developing cultural mores centered on food sharing and identity based on food preparation and consumption preferences. The language and rules established for food take on new meaning, as different cultures create holidays, rituals, and celebrations with food at their centers. Such food-centric "customs and rites...turn(ed) out to be as crucial to our well-being as are proteins and carbohydrates," assigning greater meaning to food beyond nutrition (Harris et al viii). Understanding the role food plays in a culture goes far beyond simply what is eaten and how; it is also important to consider *why* certain foods are chosen over others, and what those foods say about the cultures that consume them. To study food in literature, we must understand food in culture and realize that "a meal is not about food; it is about the human interchanges and interactions that go on around food. Rituals—both social and

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<sup>9</sup> Habilines are an extinct, earlier branch of *homo sapiens*: the ancestors of modern humans as we know them.

practical—transform mere food into a meal” (Harris et al 8). Food in novels takes on an added layer of complexity whereby the way food is presented by, consumed by, and shared by characters often says a great deal about the characters and their culture of origin and identity.

Food sharing, banquets, and dinner parties have been a regular aspect of literature in western culture for centuries, and *Harry Potter* continues that tradition for contemporary audiences. “Academic work is not the only influence on scholars now writing about food. Good writing in this area requires something of a sensual response to food and the knowledge that comes from cooking and serving it” (Avakian and Haber 4); therefore, how we write about food and how food is described in fictional and non-fictional sources becomes important to understanding the role food plays in different cultures. The foods described in the *Harry Potter* novels become a bridge for the characters and the readers via a familiar, unifying comfort item as a vehicle to aid in the suspension of disbelief. Food allows the reader to join Harry as he enters this new world, in the same way that we often welcome new friends into our own homes and experiences. In many ways, food acts not only as a boundary between the two worlds but also as a bridge across the very separation it creates; it functions as a system to join the characters within the stories to one another, but also to the reader. The characters eat toast (familiar), yet they also drink Butterbeer (unfamiliar). Food in the *Harry Potter* series represents the anxieties and tensions, as well as the wishes of late twentieth-/early twenty-first-century children and adolescents, many who grew up with Harry and the series over its ten year printing history.

In Victorian and pre-World War Two-era novels, detailed descriptions of food often served as wish fulfillment, especially for child readers who were raised on a strict diet of spare the sweets, spoil the child, or children who faced rationing during two early twentieth-century World Wars and the Great Depression. As Carolyn Daniel offers, “Fictional food is often used to discipline fictional children ... (and is) frequently used to carry both implicit and explicit socializing messages to readers” (39). If this is the case with turn of the last century novels, then the presence of food in the *Harry Potter* books says as much about the expectations, morals, and values of contemporary young adult readers as it does about the characters in the stories. That the books are filled with food is clear: it appears repeatedly throughout all of the novels. *Why* food is so prevalent is an important question to explore.

Susan Honeyman proposes that the shift from childhood to adulthood often comes when one is forced or obligated to acquire or produce one’s own food, as illustrated by *Hansel and Gretel* (197). Forced to control their own food consumption, children on their own often assert their new power and independence, as well as masking their fears, through food. If “food lures the disempowerment of children with surrendered agency, (then) child characters’ use of food can carry a self-expressive power that at least enables young agency for identifying the self” (Honeyman 198). In novels, “children’s sweets in particular are a form of resistance to adult culture and involve a rejection of its rituals and symbols” (Daniel 82). Annette Cozzi suggests that “it is also significant that novels do not merely act as metaphors for consumption, they actually contain detailed descriptions of food and eating” (*Discourses* 4). *Harry Potter* is the latest in a long line of children’s novels that use food and food consumption to construct adolescent identity and situate

children within their cultural boundaries and norms. In order to understand how the Potter novels use food to illustrate appropriate behaviors, social mores, and cultural values, it is necessary to briefly examine how other books in this genre utilize food in key narrative points. *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) by Lewis Carroll, *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe* (1950) by C.S. Lewis, and *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* by Roald Dahl (1964) are just a few examples of children's literature from the past two centuries that contain food as important narrative arcs. Like Harry, the characters of Alice, Lucy and Charlie travel from a mundane or ordinary world, into a fantasy world, where they are the heroes of great adventures. In all four cases, food is figured prominently in the narratives, albeit in different ways.

Carolyn Daniel presents examples of how cultural superiority is coded through food in children's literature, supporting a western ideology that positions "western" food as "good" and non-western as "deviant...immoral...impure and dangerous" (14). Alice's entre into Wonderland is marked not just by falling into the rabbit hole, but also by food, which enables her to shrink in size to fit through the doorway. After the tumble down the hole, Alice finds a door leading "into the loveliest garden you ever saw," and Alice longs "to get out of that dark hall, and wander among those beds of bright flowers and those cool founts, but she could not even get her head through the doorway" (Carroll 23). A bottle on the table labeled "DRINK ME" is a potion that allows Alice to shrink and begin her adventures, but not before she realizes that sometimes small currant cakes are just cakes (25). She does question whether ingesting the bottle is the right thing to do or not, but because Alice wants to go through the door, she throws caution, and her strict Victorian upbringing, to the wind, and drinks the liquid provided.

Food figures prominently in Alice's adventures, but true to author Lewis Carroll's skillful wordplay and twisting of phrases, the food is never quite as it seems, and Alice rarely gets to sample the fares eaten by others. Alice starts out eating a mushroom that causes her to grow in size (Carroll 54) and then midway through her journey through Wonderland, she happens upon the Mad Tea-Party, to which she invites herself, much to the chagrin of the March Hare (Carroll 69). She eventually has some tea, but moves on deeper into Wonderland, where she attends her first trial, a case involving the theft of the Queen of Heart's Tarts (Carroll 103-105). Although Alice longs for the trial to be over so she can eat the tarts laid out on the table, she quickly discerns that the tarts are evidence in a mock trial where the witnesses saw nothing and the jury is too stupid to understand the case (103-105). Alice's experiences with food suggest that there are rules for behavior, as well as conventions for what can and cannot be eaten. Carole Counihan argues that "rules about food consumption are an important means through which human beings construct reality" (55), and in Alice's case, when one is having tea, then it is assumed that an invitation is given to others, that food and drinks will be served, and polite conversation will follow.

Like Alice and Harry Potter, Lucy Pevensie in *The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe*, journeys into a magical world. Harry's portal into Hogwarts is the Hogwarts Express, but Lucy arrives in Narnia via an old wardrobe in an empty room in the house she has been evacuated to during the London Blitz of World War II (Lewis 111). Lucy finds Narnia before her three siblings, and moments after her arrival into a land where it is "always winter, but never Christmas" (Lewis 118), she meets Tumnus the Faun, who invites her to dine with him. Lucy is served "a wonderful tea. There was a nice brown

egg, lightly boiled, for each of them, and then sardines on toast, and then buttered toast, and then toast with honey, and then a sugar-topped cake” (116). Lucy’s experience with Tumnus is pleasant, so that the shock of moving from one world into another is cushioned and she sees only an adventure, and not the possibility of danger.

Lucy’s brother Edmund’s first foray into Narnia is quite different, in that he meets the White Witch, who feeds him “enchanted Turkish Delight,” which guarantees that “anyone who has once tasted it would want more and more of it, and would even, if they were allowed, go on eating it until they killed themselves” (Lewis 126). In Narnia, the good, wholesome food of the Narnians such as Tumnus and the Beavers is juxtaposed with the evil magic of the White Witch, whose food is only illusionary and addictive. The Witch later taunts Edmund with Turkish Delight, then offers him only “an iron bowl with some water in it and an iron plate with a hunk of dry bread on it” (161). When the Witch comes across a party of animals enjoying Christmas foods provided by Father Christmas, in a fury, she turns them all into stone (163). For the Witch, food is a tool to enslave others, rather than something to be shared and enjoyed. Conversely, when the children finally reach Aslan, the Lion declares that a “feast be prepared” in their honor (169), planning a party to be shared by all the loyal Narnians who are fighting for their freedom. Food is shared or withheld in the book based on whether or not the characters are “good” or “evil.” This distinction is important in the Chronicles of Narnia, which C.S. Lewis wrote as allegories to teach “mere Christianity” to children, but the concept of “good versus bad” is a common theme in children’s literature, where often, there are fewer areas of gray than might be found in adult books.

Although there are multiple examples of food in children's novels, such as those described above, it is with Roald Dahl's engaging and extremely popular *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (1964) that readers are invited to experience the candies described in the novels on multiple levels; as immersion in the narrative, and as consumers of Nestlé products. Like the *Harry Potter* series, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* centers on a seemingly average little boy who turns out to be extraordinary. In Charlie Bucket's case, he is exceptional not for any magical powers, but for being a kind and loving child who is honest to a fault when surrounded by thievery and lies. The Bucket Family reaps the rewards of Charlie's good nature, when he inherits the magical chocolate factory owned by Mr. Willy Wonka. But before Charlie can inherit the factory, he is put through a series of tests, as with all heroes who must undergo a quest. Charlie's challenge is to tour the Chocolate Factory and emerge unscathed and unspoiled. Charlie is a bit of a stock character, in that he is *so good* as to be a bit boring; if it ever occurs to him to drink from the chocolate waterfall (Dahl 76), chew gum that is a three-course meal (Dahl 98), or steal a squirrel (Dahl 117), he never acts upon those desires, and as such, does not come to a sticky end (Dahl 105).

The tour of the factory is an epicurean delight, with detailed descriptions of multiple confections rarely seen in literature before that time. Charlie's Grandpa Joe tells him how Mr. Wonka is a magician who

[c]an make marshmallows that taste of violets, and rich caramels that change color every ten seconds as you suck them... He can make chewing gum that never loses its taste, and candy balloons that you can blow up to enormous sizes before you pop them with a pin and gobble them up. And by a most secret method, he

can make lovely blue bird's eggs with black spots on them, and when you put one of these in your mouth, it gradually gets smaller and smaller until suddenly there is nothing left except a tiny pink sugary baby bird sitting on the tip of your tongue. (Dahl 12)

Like Harry, who is denied most treats when with his Muggle family, Charlie's experience with food at home is limited, and often non-existent; his family is literally starving, as a family of seven must subsist on "a single slice of bread for each person (for breakfast), and lunch was maybe half a boiled potato" (Dahl 42). In contrast, when both Charlie and Harry enter their respective magical worlds (Wonka's Factory, Hogwarts, etc.), the food is abundant and intriguing.

At a cultural level, "more junk food is consumed in the UK than in the rest of Europe in its entirety" (Wight 153), which could help explain the abundance of candy and chocolate in British children's novels, as well as the added bonus of movie and novel tie-ins that are often food-related. With the release of the film *Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory* in 1971, a line of Wonka-inspired candies was produced and released by the Breaker Confections in Chicago as promotional material for the movie.<sup>10</sup> Although Wonka products often reflect the candies described in the book, for some reason, the sweets have failed to capture the imaginations of generations of readers.<sup>11</sup> The availability of Wonka Bars™ and Everlasting Gobstoppers™ "in real life" does not seem

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<sup>10</sup> According to Careers in Food, "the Willy Wonka Candy Company was started in 1971" by Breaker Confections. In 1980, Breaker Confections changed its name to Willy Wonka Brands and then Nestlé bought the company in 1988. <http://www.careersinfood.com>.

<sup>11</sup> According to Stephanie Thompson, "Wonka trails well behind rivals Hershey and Mars..." Wonka Bars were discontinued in 2010, but, they were available for purchase in big box stores. In spite of being a literary-inspired candy line, they were not sold at Barnes and Noble, according to the Manager of the Tyrone Square location, with whom I spoke on June 30, 2012. Conversely, Jelly Belly Corporation makes \$160 million dollars in revenue and their version of Bertie Botts Every Flavor Beans have been available for the past ten years at big box stores, as well as at Universal Studios Island of Adventure theme park and bookstores, like Barnes and Noble and, formerly, Borders and Waldenbooks (<http://www.jellybelly.com/>).

to hold the same fascination as their *Harry Potter* counterparts, such as Bertie Bott's Every Flavor Beans™, produced by The Jelly Belly Corporation.<sup>12</sup> Even though *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* has been read by countless children for almost fifty years, and in spite of the outrageously vivid visuals of the Factory shown in the two film incarnations, the chocolate in the stories has a very different meaning from the foods in *Harry Potter*. Fans of both series certainly have access to some of the delicious confections, but the food in *Harry Potter* is deeply embedded in the narrative in such a way as to define the characters. Roald Dahl could have written *Charlie and the Gum Factory* or *Charlie and the Toy Factory*, and the story would have been much the same.

Although Ellen Moore is writing about advertisements when she says they “serve to reinforce cultural notions of an ethnically homogenous British and U.S. national identity,” it can also be argued that books contribute to the “idea that the consumption of chocolate is thus almost exclusively associated with whiteness, while the production is largely associated with exotic ‘Otherness’” (Moore 67). In the *Harry Potter* series and *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, the consumption of candy and chocolate is almost exclusively the purview of children, and in the case of *Harry Potter*, mostly white children. There is some racial diversity in the series, but it is not directly referenced in the

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<sup>12</sup> This is based as much on anecdotal evidence as on sales figures. I ate Wonka bars in the 1970s (but then they stopped making them), and I saw them again at Toys `R Us just after the Tim Burton version of *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* was released, but my argument is not that they are not available, but that they do not excite people as much as the availability of Bertie Botts Every Flavor Beans. When I worked at Barnes and Noble in West Nyack, NY in 2000, Jelly Belly had not yet begun to produce their version of Every Flavor Beans for sale, but at the release party for *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, I went to the candy shop in the mall and purchased pounds of Jelly Bellies, then made a sign that said “Bertie Botts Every Flavor Beans” and held a contest for kids to guess how many beans were in the jar. Over and over again I heard “they need to make these for real...I would buy Every Flavor Beans! Etc.” In 2002, Jelly Belly Corporation released their product. Wonka candy bars taste good, but they are just another chocolate bar, while Bertie Botts Every Flavor beans are imaginative, fun, and allow people to engage in some *schadenfreude* by getting others to try potentially gross flavors. Every reader is different, and there is no evidence that Wonka bars are unpopular, but my argument is that Every Flavor Beans and other *Harry Potter*-inspired confections are better at capturing a reader's imagination and allowing them to experience the stories first hand in a way that the Wonka bars do not.

books: it can be surmised that Parvati and Padmil Patel are of Indian descent, but no matter what their ethnic origin, the students at Hogwarts are very distinctly British. Food, in the guise of candy, chocolate, and other puddings serve to reinforce not only ethnic and national identity, but also emphasize individual characters and personality traits. Readers are invited to better understand Hogwarts, the Wizarding world, and, for many individuals, Great Britain, through exposure to foods that are both traditional and fantastic.

Susan Honeyman suggests that “food lures the disempowerment of children with surrendered agency” (therefore) “child characters’ use of food can carry a self-expressive power that at least enables young agency for identifying the self” (198). Children, who lack cultural, economic, and social currency, often have access to food, which can give them some feelings of agency. One of the first ways contemporary children can cement their place in the Elementary School lunch room hierarchy is through the ability to trade food packed in a lunch box from home. Negotiating the value of a Twinkie™ versus a pudding cup becomes a way for children to assert themselves within a hegemonic structure that suggests children have no real power. Children who refuse to trade or have nothing of value to trade can find themselves ostracized or ignored by others for their inability to participate in the sharing game. Children’s novels often reflect the discourses of “food as power” in that they include characters who interact directly with food (sharing, hoarding, eating) and often must make decisions about when and what to eat when food is offered. Many a fairy tale has warned of the dangers of eating food one is offered without knowing where it came from and “various theories, ranging from anthropological, sociological and psychological to literary disciplines, confirm that

children's minds and bodies are shaped by adult concerns" (Daniel 40). Books which illustrate interactions between children and food model acceptable and unacceptable behaviors, as well as shape the mores and values that are important to the cultural discourses of the books' readers. When we read, we do more than convert shapes on a page into words; we also shape words into meaning. In the *Harry Potter* books, the characters and the readers work almost in tangent to convert food, not into fuel, but into meaning.

## CHAPTER ONE: NO MERE TRIFLE

Because the series is comprised of seven books, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (1997), *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (1998), *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (1999), *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* (2000), *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* (2003), *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* (2005), and *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* (2007),<sup>13</sup> the last few surpassing the 300 page mark, I am providing a brief background to help familiarize those who may not have read the books or for those who need a brief reminder. The series follows the life of protagonist Harry Potter chronologically from birth through age seventeen, and includes an epilogue showing Harry as a thirty-six year old married man with children. As a baby, Harry's parents, Lily and James Potter, are murdered by the evil wizard Lord Voldemort, who tries to kill Harry, but is instead destroyed when the magical spell backfires, leaving Harry orphaned (PS 14-15). Harry is raised by Muggles (people with no magical abilities) in Little Whinging, a fictional town near Surrey in England, until, when he turns eleven, his status as a wizard is revealed and he begins his studies at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry (PS 42).

Each of the seven books builds upon the story set in the previous volume, but all deal with Harry's experiences at Hogwarts and his attempts to negotiate his place in the hidden Wizarding world. In all but one book, *The Prisoner of Azkaban*, Harry directly or

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<sup>13</sup> In the British edition, the first book is called *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, although this title was altered to *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* for the American edition published by Scholastic Books.

indirectly confronts Lord Voldemort, successfully defeating him or at the very least, escaping death at his hands. Harry is always aided in some way by his two best friends, Ron Weasley and Hermione Granger, as well as by some of the Hogwarts professors, and the Order of the Phoenix, a group of adult wizards working with Professor Dumbledore to defeat Lord Voldemort and his Death Eaters (followers). Each book brings Harry closer to the prophesized eventual final showdown between himself and Voldemort where “neither can live while the other survives...” (*OoP* 741). In the final book, the Battle of Hogwarts brings together the current students from the school, past graduates, dark wizard hunters (Aurors), parents, and other sympathizers to fight against the force of evil, Voldemort. In what is often described as a Christ-like death and resurrection of the hero,<sup>14</sup> Harry allows Voldemort to kill him so that Harry may be reborn and in turn defeat Voldemort.

In the *Harry Potter* books, meaning is often constructed through the different types of foods that are consumed and shared by the characters in the stories. Food signifies more than just simple sustenance. Rowling’s vivid and complex descriptions of food are found throughout all seven books and the emphasis on interesting, plentiful varieties in the Wizarding World are in distinct contrast to the plainer, boring foods found in the Muggle World, suggesting multi-layered and coded meanings within the narrative. Annette Cozzi suggests that “food is one of the most fundamental signifiers of (British) identity,” and therefore food in nineteenth-century British novels serve to “reveal how that identity is culturally constructed” (*Discourses* 5). The *Harry Potter* novels are set firmly in Britain of the late twentieth-century, yet

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<sup>14</sup> The comparisons of Harry to characters such as King Arthur, Gilgamesh, Kal-El, and Luke Skywalker are discussed at length in the article “In Media Res: Harry Potter as Hero-in-Progress” by Mary Pharr (2002).

Cozzi's argument can be applied to these books quite easily. The food described in the seven novels, even when magically constructed, is rooted in typical British cuisine. American children reading the novels may mistakenly believe that treats such as "knickerbocker glories" (*PS* 24) are confections created by Rowling, rather than realize they are simply ice cream treats consumed by myriad English schoolchildren. The language and wordplay used by Rowling to construct a sense of the Wizarding world's culinary identity serve to situate the novels in two distinct worlds: that of twentieth-century Muggle Britain and twentieth-century wizard Britain.

In *Tasting Food, Tasting Freedom*, Sidney Mintz argues for an examination of food that allows for "*inside*" and "*outside*" meanings, whereby the "*inside* meaning (combines) economic, social, and political (even military) conditions" with "*outside* meaning," whereby "*inside* meaning arises when the changes connected with *outside* meaning are already under way" (20, emphasis in original). How this applies to candy, sweets, and pudding in Harry Potter is in the understanding of how the multi-layered worlds of the books (inside) combine with the readers' interpretation of meaning, outside of and in addition to the written narrative. Adding to the polyglossia of food in the series is a combination of words invented by Rowling to describe magical foods of her own creation, and the insertion of purely British foods that may not be easily recognized by non-British readers. When the first three books were published by Scholastic Books in the United States, the publishers made the seemingly arbitrary decision to "translate" some of the British words and phrases into more Americanized versions. The words that suffered most from this are food-words, such as "sherbet lemon/lemon drop," "chips/fries," "jelly/Jell-o," and "jacket potato/baked potato" (Nel 262). Philip Nel

discusses the cultural implications of this word play in “You Say ‘Jelly’, I say ‘Jell-O’? Harry Potter and the Transfiguration of Language,” arguing that “replacing British vernacular with what Americans think of as British vernacular diminishes the novel’s realism” offering the example of Ron and Harry sitting “by the fire toasting ‘bread, crumpets (and) marshmallows’” in *The Philosopher’s Stone* versus the Americanized “toasting ‘bread, English muffins (and) marshmallows’” (267). Nel points out that crumpets and English muffins “are related,” but “they are not the same” (267). While it seems like a minor argument, it does say a lot about how food is used to distinguish one group of people from another. Americans eat English muffins, but the English do not. Likewise, Muggles eat sherbet lemons and mint humbugs, but wizards eat Cauldron Cakes and Chocolate Frogs. Rowling evokes a sense of the “otherness” of wizards through the use of strangely exotic foods that are not found in the Muggle world, which is why the candy shop, Honeydukes, “is stocked with Fizzing Whizzbees, Pepper Imps, and Cockroach Clusters...and replacing these treats with M&M’s and Tootsie Rolls would be out of the question” (Radosh).

Because food is often both a boundary and a vehicle to cross the boundary, access to the foods within the structural narrative of the books becomes very important to the characters and to the readers. The types of food described serve, on one level, as a way to bring readers into the new and fantastic world created by Rowling. Access to the wonderful foods is just as important as their descriptions, for what good is it to describe the foods and then not allow Harry and his friends to experience them? The fantasy of food helps establish the Wizarding world as separate and different from the Muggle world, and the rich descriptions allow the reader a way to experience the sumptuous

meals right along with the characters. As Carolyn Daniel suggests, “mealtimes play an important role in fiction in terms of creating verisimilitude and fictional feasting undoubtedly functions to give the reader a vicarious experience of gluttony” (70), so that even if one has no access to the foods in real life, they can be experienced through the fictional meals of the characters. For this “vicarious experience of gluttony” to work, then the characters must have access to food. When they do not, tensions are created between not just the characters, but also between the readers and the characters. How these tensions are played out and resolved becomes central to the stories.

In the *Harry Potter* books, regular food shortages separate Harry from the Wizarding Community, while accessibility marks the threshold between one world and the next. Harry’s first entrance from the Muggle World to the Wizarding World is through a pub called the Leaky Cauldron that serves drinks and bar food and opens into Diagon Alley, a wizard village hidden in London. The name “Leaky Cauldron” is allegorical for food that has leaked from one world to another, like a trail of breadcrumbs guiding the chosen few (wizards) into a new life. Through this door, Harry enters into the new world, and food serves as delineation between what is preferred and what is not. His first foray into the magical world through the Leaky Cauldron’s door is not marked by any particularly odd culinary delights: the Leaky Cauldron looks like a typical London pub and the ice cream Hagrid buys is a basic “chocolate and raspberry (cone) with chopped nuts” (*PS* 61), which he and Harry enjoy together as they walk through the amazing shops in Diagon Alley. But once Harry moves out of London and into his boarding school, the foods he eats and the drinks he consumes become more and more magical. This shift from one location to another is ideological as well as geographical.

Harry's experiences with the Dursleys did little to prepare him for the variety of amazing foods available to him as a member of Wizarding society.

Food in western literary tradition has been indispensable in illustrating ties between differing groups. The importance of distinguishing one group from another in most cultures cannot be over-emphasized, with food abundance and scarcity often serving as cultural markers that distinguish one group as more "desirable" than another. In fact, "nothing is more familiar and domestic than food...like ideology, food is neither innocent nor neutral, nor is it merely nourishing fuel; rather, it allows for an assortment of associations and attachments to be swallowed with it..." (Cozzi, *Discourses* 4). We can look at "the value of food as a mark or badge of ethnicity, religion, class, and other social groupings" (Wrangham 109) within the structure of the *Harry Potter* novels by analyzing the value of food to the characters, who all exist within the framework of contemporary British ideologies.

To young wizards, Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry is a magical place that exists outside of the realm of the mundane. To get to Hogwarts via the Hogwarts Express, "one goes to platform number nine and three-quarters, which, like Brigadoon, exists only at certain times and is reached by walking straight through the wall between platforms nine and ten" (Cockrell 16). The train is located in the very Muggle King's Cross Railway Station in London, but only wizards may access it, crossing literally through a brick wall (*PS* 70). The journey to Hogwarts by train affords Harry with his first true introduction to Wizarding food, in the form of the "trolley of sweets" that reveals such epicurean treasures as "Bertie Bott's Every-Flavour Beans, Drooble's Best Blowing Gum, Chocolate Frogs, Pumpkin Pasties, Cauldron Cakes,

Liquorice Wands and a number of other strange things Harry had never seen in his life” (*PS 76*). He buys, then shares with newfound friend, Ron Weasley, some of everything from the trolley.

Most young children lack both cultural capital and economic capital, and although Harry has inherited a great deal of money from his parents, he proves to be generous and fair with his eagerness to share his sweets with someone he has just met. Rather than lord his wealth over others, Harry, “who had never had anything to share before, or, indeed, anyone to share it with” sees the opportunity to share food with Ron as a moment to finally feel like other children (*PS 76*). Ron’s “lumpy package” of corned beef sandwiches is a dismally poor trade when compared with Chocolate Frogs and Cauldron Cakes, but for Harry, the sandwiches represent something he has not known previously: food provided with loving care by a mother (*PS 76*). Ron protests the trade, arguing “you don’t want this, it’s all dry,” but Harry insists that Ron take a Pumpkin Pasty (*PS 76*). Although Ron complains about disliking corned beef, he is also loyal to his perpetually harassed mother, Molly Weasley, when he quickly tells Harry that the reason she always forgets he doesn’t like corned beef is because “she hasn’t got much time... you know, with five of us” (*PS 76*). Not surprisingly, Harry and Ron soon ignore the pitiful sandwiches and indulge in “eating their way through all of Harry’s pasties and cakes” (*PS 76*).

What follows in this scene is an introduction to some of the confections of the Wizarding world, including Chocolate Frogs (which include “Famous Witches and Wizards” cards for children to collect and trade) and Bertie Bott’s Every-Flavour Beans (*PS 77-78*). The collectible cards also serve to illustrate for Harry some of the key

differences between his two worlds: in the Muggle world “people just stay put in photos,” while in the Wizarding world, they move about and interact with others (*PS 77*). Every-Flavour Beans are always a risk, because as Ron tells Harry, “when they say every flavour, they *mean* every flavour—you know, you get all the ordinary ones like chocolate and peppermint and marmalade, but then you can get spinach and liver and tripe. George reckons he had a bogey-flavoured one once” (*PS 78*, emphasis in original). When the Jelly Belly™ Candy Company licensed and marketed “Bertie Botts Every Flavor Beans” in the United States, they included a “booger” bean, in addition to black pepper, dirt, earthworm, soap, earwax, and rotten egg. The more palatable flavors of watermelon, tutti-fruitti, candy floss, and blueberry are tossed in for good measure, but the real fun is in getting unsuspecting friends to try the “vomit” flavored jelly bean.<sup>15</sup>

Harry’s joy at having something to share with a friend is the prelude to a teaching moment. Since culture is defined by anthropologists as something that is both learned and transmitted, this suggests that culture is socially constructed and must be taught. When Harry steps onto the Hogwarts express, he brings with him the mores and expectations of the culture in which he was raised, as evidenced by his desire to “buy as many Mars bars as he could carry” and his surprise to find that the witch running the Trolley has no such thing for sale (*PS 76*). When Harry encourages Ron to accept a pasty and some Chocolate Frogs, Ron, in turn gives Harry a peek into the wizard world to which the treats (and Ron) belong. Information, such as the way people in pictures move around, that Every-Flavour beans are a risky venture, or the fact that student wizards collect “Famous Witches and Wizard” cards the way Muggles collect baseball cards, helps Harry navigate

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<sup>15</sup> Not that *I* would ever do such a thing to anyone. ~LC

the new social waters. For one thing, he knows that if someone offers him a “funny grey” bean, it could be pepper flavored.

While Harry is taught the role of sweets in the wizard world, so too is the reader introduced to some of the new ideas that make up Rowling’s careful and detailed world building. Instead of overwhelming the reader all at once with a new vocabulary and a new way of understanding the world, *Harry* is introduced to new concepts, and the reader goes along with him. Most readers have eaten candy in some form, or at least they know what it is, which allows for a perfect point of reference. Rather than have Harry share Mars bars with Ron, delicious and mysterious new confections are introduced. As the foods are explained, pieces of the Wizarding world fall into place as well. Wizard candy proves to be more challenging than the Muggle variety; they are not always the treats they appear to be, just as the Wizarding world is exciting and wondrous, but, as Harry begins to learn, not always safe.

Cakes, candy, puddings, and other sweets figure greatly into the stories. Candy and sweets are often equated with childhood (and women), suggesting that they hold a subordinate position in the hierarchy of food. In the late Victorian period, advertisements for chocolate stressed that “candy eating was an activity associated with girls” and was therefore seen “as a feminized activity in the popular press” (Dusselier 16-17). This increased emphasis on candy as indulgent is reflected in children’s books where characters over-indulged, much to their detriment, as with Edmund in *The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe*, and Augustus Gloop in *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. As food was rationed during and following World War Two, “a shortage of fats and sugars in the diet of the general population apparently produced cravings in many people,

particularly children” (Daniel 71), but the holdover Victorian restraint is still emphasized in stories in which children could enjoy sweets, as long as they are not gluttonous about it.

Harry’s desire for candy and cakes is not unusual for a child in real-life or in literature, where sweets are often a “vicarious pleasure” (Daniel 70). Most children lack the sufficient funds to buy their heart’s desire of chocolates at the local store. In the novel, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone*, Harry’s restraint in buying only one of each of the sweets from the Trolley reflects a very British ideology (76). It is somewhat telling that in the movie version of this same scene, directed by the American-born Chris Columbus, Harry pulls a handful of money from his pockets and tells the Trolley Witch “I’ll take the lot!” (*Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone*). Although, in the book, Harry and Ron arrive at the start-of-term banquet with their pockets filled with leftover sweets (*PS* 83), they do not eat everything, and they still have plenty of appetite left for the feast. Buying the entire cart of confections would have been an unnecessary indulgence: they could not have possibly eaten everything, and it would have deprived the rest of the Hogwarts students from enjoying their own treats. Harry is never portrayed as selfish in the novels; his pleasure at sharing treats with Ron is almost as important as his excitement over the amazing new sweets in this brand new world.

Behavior is taught right along with the stories, as what is emphasized is not just the foods that are eaten, but how they are eaten and with whom. On multiple occasions in the series, candy and sweets are shared by the protagonists. When Harry is hospitalized at the end of *The Philosopher’s Stone*, his bravery at defeating Lord Voldemort (which somehow the whole school knows about) is rewarded with a number of candies supplied

by well-wishers, including a box of Bertie Bott's Every-Flavour Beans, which Professor Dumbledore samples to great disappointment, declaring "Alas! Earwax!" in response to the innocuous-looking bean (217-218). After the three friends have purchased their school supplies at the beginning of *The Chamber of Secrets*, Harry, who is the only one with any money left, buys "three large strawberry and peanut-butter ice-cream cones" for himself, Ron, and Hermione (48). It is not enjoyable for Harry to eat ice cream by himself, so treating his friends adds to his own pleasure. Later, in *The Prisoner of Azkaban*, when Harry is not permitted to visit Hogsmeade Village, and therefore is banned from Honeydukes Sweets Shop, Ron and Hermione return with treats to share. They feel sorry that Harry cannot join them, but they make an effort to include him anyway by sharing what they purchase. Sharing sweets is an important aspect of the series because, at least for children, sweets are of utmost importance. Most kids are generally not going to have fancy things, but they are going to have candy to share. Sharing is how they create a community and bonds with each other.

The wizard and witch adults in Harry's life also participate in the act of sharing sweets. In the very first chapter of the series, Headmaster Dumbledore offers Professor McGonagall a "sherbet lemon" described as "a kind of Muggle sweet" (PS 13), and later in the books, McGonagall shares biscuits with Harry (OP 223-224) and Professor Flitwick rewards Harry with sugar mice (OP 513). Meals at Hogwarts generally include a dessert course with such delectable delights as treacle pudding, rhubarb crumble, and custard. Rowling does not always describe the foods being served, especially if they have real-world corresponding items, but she does get creative with the candy and treats.

When Ron discusses the sweets available at Honeydukes in Hogsmeade, he expresses his excitement by saying:

It's this sweetshop...where they've got everything...Pepper Imps—they make you smoke at the mouth— and great fat Chocoballs full of strawberry mousse and clotted cream, and really excellent sugar quills which you can suck in class and just look like you're thinking about what to write next..." (PoA 61)

Although coupled with restraint that suggests there is little over-indulging in spite of the wealth of food available, the wizard world's over-abundance of accessible food is in marked contrast to Harry's experiences within the Muggle world, where dinners are generally made up of "two slices of bread and a lump of cheese" (CoS 13) and cold soup pushed "through the cat flap Uncle Vernon had installed" in Harry's room (OoP 44). Muggle-world treats consist of Mrs. Figg's "chocolate cake that tasted as though she'd had it for several years" (PS 29) and "a cheap lemon ice lolly" (PS 24). Even when separated into different tables, everyone at Hogwarts generally eats at the same time and place. Conversely, family meals shared by Harry and the Dursleys back home on Privet Drive are distinctly marked by Harry's exclusion from the family, who often refuse to speak to him or share food with him. Harry's departure from Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry and his return to the Dursleys each summer is denoted by denial of food and resources.

If anything marks this difference between the two worlds, it is the lack of food available at the Dursley's home. In the fourth book, *The Goblet of Fire*, Harry is subjected to the same restrictive diet as his overweight cousin, Dudley, although Harry clearly does not need to lose weight. The family, including Harry, spend the summer

eating carrot sticks, unsweetened grapefruit quarters, “cottage cheese and grated celery” (40), but Harry secretly supplements this with “fruitcake and assorted pastries,” as well as “four superb birthday cakes” provided by his friends, that he has hidden in the floorboards of his bedroom (30-31). In this case, the birthday cakes not only provide Harry with much-needed caloric intake, but also a connection with the outside world. Rather than just signify a celebration, the cakes represent comfort, love, and belonging to Harry, who has been completely cut off from his friends. Later, these same friends produce Harry’s 17<sup>th</sup> birthday cake, in the shape of a golden snitch, signifying Harry’s identity (as a Quidditch player), his place in the Weasley family (as “adopted” son), and his entry into adulthood, which happens at age seventeen in the Wizarding World (*DH* 101).

That Harry has been neglected by his Muggle family, the Dursleys, is made clear from the start of the second chapter of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone*, “The Vanishing Glass,” which begins with a birthday celebration for eleven-year-old Dudley, a disagreeable and ungrateful child. Although a birthday cake is not mentioned, it is suggested, since clearly the entire day has been set aside to honor him. Dudley’s birthday is celebrated with a trip to the Zoo where treats such as “large chocolate ice-creams” and two Knickerbocker glories (because one is too small) denote Dudley’s place as preferred and treasured son to the family (24). He is indulged with sweets because it is his birthday and the family is celebrating.

Conversely, on Harry’s birthday, because Uncle Vernon is desperate to keep Harry from entering the Wizarding world, Vernon cuts off the entire family, physically, from the mainland, and from resources, forcing them all to subsist on “stale cornflakes

and cold tinned tomatoes on toast for breakfast” (PS 36). Harry wishes himself “happy birthday” silently watching the clock turn, moving him from age ten to eleven (PS 38). There is no expectation of a celebration at all and certainly no hope of a cake. The birthday cake tells a story in western culture: the mythology of the cake is that everyone gets a birthday cake and celebration for a birthday. The absence of a cake for ten of Harry’s birthdays suggests more than a liminal position within the Dursley family; it is also indicative of the hierarchical structures of a family that places Harry not even on the bottom of the totem pole, but completely separate. When the half-giant Hagrid magically appears, he delivers to Harry not just the news about his wizard status and acceptance to Hogwarts, but also his first birthday cake, a “slightly squashed...large, sticky chocolate cake with *Happy Birthday Harry* written on it in green icing” (PS 40, emphasis in original).

The meaning of birthday cakes in the series is reinforced when juxtaposed with the absence of food in the Dursley household. Numerous examples of the “food as abundance” paradigm in the *Harry Potter* books are illustrated by Harry’s interactions at Hogwarts, the Burrow, and the Wizarding villages he visits throughout the seven books. In contrast to his stark life in Little Whinging with his Aunt and Uncle, the Wizarding community represents excess, without gluttony. While the Dursleys deny Harry food, while indulging themselves and their own son, wizards are shown as hospitable and food is available to all who need it. Birthday cakes are symbolic in that they celebrate the crossing over from one year to the next, something greatly anticipated by most children. That Harry spends ten years deprived of something so meaningful is significant, especially when his cousin Dudley is over-indulged, as indicated by multiple presents

gifted to Dudley and the dog biscuits given to Harry by Aunt Marge (*PoA* 19). Dog biscuits are a poor substitute for a birthday cake and suggest that Harry does not deserve a cake because he is different and does not belong. Where a birthday cake might signify his membership in the Dursley family, the biscuits reinforce his exclusion.

Words, ideas, and signs all have meaning because someone says they do and, as Saussure argues, “The value of a word is mainly or primarily thought of in terms of the capacity for representing certain ideas” (112). Birthday cakes in the Harry Potter series support the idea that although people are generally unaware of the structured conditions in which they operate, they may still be conscious of their explicit cultural rules and of their emotional responses. The Dursleys deliberately exclude Harry from all aspects of their lives, most pointedly on his birthday, while his friends (Hagrid, Hermione, and the Weasleys) use birthday cakes to demonstrate their love and affection for Harry. The cakes Harry receives once he enters the Wizarding world serve to reinforce a sense of belonging. Cakes and other sweets used to signify celebration and inclusion are signs of family and love.

Power is constructed through the sharing of food with others: as when the Dursleys deny Harry birthday cakes or conversely, when Harry buys items from the Trolley of Treats. He does not do so intending to share with Ron, but it never occurs to him *not* to share. Harry’s internal identity is constructed in such a way as to show him as a generous and loyal friend. Rather than just say “Harry is generous and loyal,” Rowling demonstrates these traits with the candy and ice-cream Harry parses out to others. He was not taught generosity by the Dursley family, but he has been raised in a culture, English, that generally respects sharing. The Dursleys’ stinginess codes them in opposition to the

wizards, but also to other British subjects, and their failure to share separates them from other Muggles, wizards, and their own nephew.

## CHAPTER TWO: TEA AND COMMENSALISM

Western literary tradition provides many examples of the importance of hospitality and sharing of food to social groups and individuals. Hospitality is described in the Homeric tradition as that which distinguishes the “civilized” from the “uncivilized.” For example, in *The Odyssey*, Odysseus’s men come upon the Cyclopes, who are vilified for their consumption of human flesh and their refusal to provide food and drinks to the travelers (IX.133-170). The importance that the Greeks, and later, the Romans, placed on food and sharing is illustrated in multiple works from *The Iliad* to *The Aeneid*. In “Dinner with Trimalchio” from *The Satyricon* by Petronius Arbiter, Roman identity is clearly constructed through food, as the piece stresses values of frugality, nuance, and responsibility, while eschewing the excessive, vulgar, and ostentatious. One way that cultures can solidify who belongs and who does not is through food rituals and proscribed rules for how food is shared with others.

Eating together is marked by sharing and a contribution by all involved: “The word ‘companion’ means ‘bread sharer’ (Latin, *cum panis*)” (Anderson 124). Anthropologically speaking, how we eat is what makes us human: how we share it and what we eat tells us who we are and what our values are. Banquets often serve as a method for uniting members of different ethnicities or groups, whereby “we now use the shared meal to punctuate the day, celebrate the great occasions of life, make transactions, and define who is inside and outside any particular cultural group” (Jones 2). In many ways in the *Harry Potter* series, food serves as both cultural markers that establish the

Wizarding community as superior to the Muggles (non-magical folk), and as a way of “othering” people within the Wizarding community in the series. Because “the value of food (is) a mark or badge of ethnicity, religion, class, and other social groupings” (Wrangham 109), often food is used to distinguish groups of people from one another. Humans tend to “rely on the simple rules noted by Immanuel Kant long ago: the principle of aggregation and the principle of differentiation. We lump together things we find it convenient to think similar. We separate, very sharply, things we find it convenient to think different” (Wrangham 113). This is not any different in the fictional world of the *Harry Potter* books, where wizards are in many ways differentiated from Muggles, even by characters that are ostensibly open-minded about interaction between the two races of humans.

Sharing food is a profoundly important aspect of human culture, and celebrations, holidays, and ritual gatherings almost always include a meal of some kind. Through the *Harry Potter* series, holidays and special occasions are observed regularly, and always with food. Although Easter and Hallowe’en are each marked by gifts of candy such as homemade toffee (*GoF* 476) and Fizzing Whizzbees (*OoP* 577), the celebration that brings the most people together in both the wizard and Muggle worlds is Christmas. Christmas is celebrated at Hogwarts, as well as at Grimmauld Place and The Burrow, in the novels, and is marked with edible gifts, as well as large lunches and dinners. After ten years without many holiday gifts, Harry is stunned to find a pile of parcels “at the foot of his bed” his first year at Hogwarts (*PS* 147). His gifts include “a fifty-pence piece” from his aunt and uncle, and “a large box of home-made fudge” from Mrs. Weasley, which Harry finds “very tasty” (*PS* 147). He gives the fifty-pence piece to Ron, who has never

seen Muggle money. After that first year, Harry receives fudge, plum cake, or mince pies from Mrs. Weasley every year, in addition to Chocolate Frogs (from Hermione, *PS* 159), treacle fudge and a box of Honeydukes's sweets (from Hagrid, *CS* 159; *GoF* 357), and Every-Flavour Beans (from Ron, *OoP* 444).

Even more important than the gifts of food (though perhaps not to Harry), are the Christmas lunches and dinners served at Hogwarts, and at the Burrow. Many of the students either choose to stay at school or have nowhere else to go, so Hogwarts offers a large banquet for the professors and students on Christmas Day. Harry is overwhelmed by the meals, which include “a hundred fat, roast turkeys, mountains of roast and boiled potatoes, platters of fat chipolatas, tureens of buttered peas, silver boats of thick gravy and cranberry sauce” (*PS* 149). These foods are not unique to witches and wizards, but represent the kinds of dishes served at Christmas celebrations all over Britain and in the United States. Even the “flaming Christmas puddings” that end the meal are not specifically magical in anyway, even when Percy “nearly (breaks) his teeth on a silver Sickel embedded in his slice” (150) as treats baked into desserts are popular at Muggle festivities like Mardi Gras, which feature King Cakes with a good luck tiny doll cooked inside. Readers feel drawn into the Christmas celebration through recognizable foods like “turkey sandwiches, crumpets, trifle, and Christmas cake” for tea (*PS* 150) and “roast potatoes” and “tripe” and “chipolatas” for dinner (*PoA* 169-170). Traditionally, Christmas has been viewed by children as magical, and “while mealtimes play an important role in fiction in terms of creating verisimilitude and fictional feasting undoubtedly functions to give the reader a vicarious experience of gluttony, lavish descriptions of food, in the context of British classic fiction for children, also have

important social, cultural, and psychological functions” (Daniel 62). In celebrating the holidays with Harry and his friends, readers are shown siblings getting along admirably and behaving better than normally (the Weasleys), the reciprocal nature of gift-giving, and the breaking down of barriers, as when Dumbledore removes the usual House tables “against the wall” and puts a “single table, set for twelve” in the center of the Great Hall in *The Prisoner of Azkaban* (168).<sup>16</sup> After the literal and figurative walls are broken down, they sit at the table together to eat and drink merrily, celebrating the holiday together.

At most celebrations, feasts, and general gatherings of several individuals, alcohol drinking figures prominently in the series, even though the characters are primarily children and the intended audience is below the age of majority. The excessive drinking of alcohol might be unusual in an American-centric series, but alcohol is treated differently in Britain (which does not have the same religiously-sponsored Teetotaling history as its former colony, which legally banned alcohol with Amendment 18 to the Constitution in 1919, then turned around and appealed Prohibition in 1933). In the series, alcohol appears at all celebrations and events. With the exception of one instance, when Minister of Magic, Cornelius Fudge, suggests tea rather than “beer or brandy” for Harry at the Leaky Cauldron, presumably because he is only thirteen at the time, children are neither excluded from drinking, nor actively denied it (*PoA* 37). Butterbeer is the best example of an alcoholic beverage consumed regularly by the students, beginning with their first trips to Hogsmeade Village in Year Three. The actual alcohol content of

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<sup>16</sup> With all the eating and food sharing happening at Hogwarts, the Burrow and 12 Grimmauld place, it is ironic to note that Voldemort’s Death Eaters are not shown eating anything. The paradox of meeting in a drawing room around a “large and ornate table” at Malfoy Manor is that the table is not used for human meal-sharing (*DH* 10). The only consumption of food is by the giant snake, Nagini.

Butterbeer is open for debate amongst Potter scholars and fans,<sup>17</sup> but most agree that it does contain some alcohol, just not a lot, and, much like a wine cooler, one would probably have a reaction to the sugar content long before the alcohol would have any effect on the body. In *The Half-Blood Prince*, Harry wonders how Ron and Hermione will behave under the influence of Butterbeer in Slughorn's dimly lit room on the night of the party, suggesting that there is more than just vanilla, butterscotch, and cream in the drink. Butterbeer is consumed on multiple occasions, usually at one of the Hogsmeade pubs (*PoA* 119, 149, 182; *GoF* 280, 386; *HBP* 232), or when the Gryffindors celebrate a Quidditch win (*PoA* 195; *OP* 248).<sup>18</sup> However, the children usually choose pumpkin juice at dinner, which is clearly non-alcoholic, and there is no example of underage wizards ever drinking Firewhiskey or Rum.

At celebrations, banquets, and parties thrown at Hogwarts, the professors often indulge in mead or eggnog, and when they are shown at one of the Hogsmeade pubs, the Hogs Head or Three Broomsticks, most adults do order alcoholic beverages, such as “four pints of mulled mead...(and) redcurrant rum” (*PoA* 150). Although most of them are seen to imbibe frequently, this is not to suggest that the Hogwarts professors as a whole have problems with alcohol. Rubeus Hagrid and Sybill Trelawney are the only two professors who seem to take it to the next level and are portrayed as drunk or “drinking heavily” on multiple occasions. Indeed, it would appear that Professor Trelawney regularly seeks solace in cooking sherry after her unfortunate “sacking” at the hands of

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<sup>17</sup> See the webpage Harry Potter Wiki for a discussion of this issue: <http://harrypotter.wikia.com/wiki/Butterbeer>

<sup>18</sup> Butterbeer was one of the most anticipated items for inclusion in the Wizarding World of Harry Potter, and for weeks prior to the Park's opening, fans speculated on what it would taste like, how much it would cost, and whether or not it would be alcoholic. Rowling herself approved the final recipe, and even the actors from the movies indicated a desire to try the drink. <http://hollywoodcrush.mtv.com/2010/01/29/wizarding-world-of-harry-potter-park-butterbeer-will-be-sold-but-will-it-be-alcoholic/>

Dolores Umbridge (*OoP* 487, 524; *HBP* 185). Her subject of expertise, Divination, is often looked down on by the rest of the staff and some of the students, like Hermione, find the subject, and its instructor, to be “ridiculous” (*PoA* 220), which may contribute to her tendency to drink. After she is fired and replaced by a centaur, and later rehired, Trelawney’s fondness for sherry remains, and the few glimpses readers get of her in the final two books are with a bottle in hand. Like Trelawney, Hagrid is marginalized, but in his case, it is for being a half-giant. Hagrid famously loves his alcohol, and is portrayed as drunk in *The Philosopher’s Stone* (170) and *The Prisoner of Azkaban* (92), though he is not seen actually drinking in the former. Additionally, Hagrid drinks an excess of wine with Professor Slughorn following the make-shift funeral of the enormous spider Aragog in *The Half-Blood Prince* (451). Like some adults in the real world, characters in the *Harry Potter* books approach alcohol from very different places, some over-indulging, and some not partaking at all.

In the series, as in the real world, beverages in general serve the purpose of allowing individuals to bond without sharing a full meal. There is indication in the archaeological record and through ethnographic studies that one of the first beverages ever manufactured by humans was beer. As Reay Tannahill notes: “it seem that the discovery of ale was stimulated by the process of bread-making” during the Neolithic Era (48). John W. Arthur’s research among the Gamo people of Africa shows that although “in some instances it might be easier to identify beer production in the archaeological record than beer consumption,” there is evidence to suggest continued alcohol brewing and drinking in Africa going back thousands of years (524). Alcohol preparation and consumption has historically been a communal, social act, with examples of drinking

found in *The Epic of Gilgamesh* (~18<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E.), *The Odyssey* (~8<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E.), *The Iliad* (~8<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E.), and *The Song of Roland* (~12<sup>th</sup> century C.E.). In all four examples from western literature, drinking wine, ale, and beer are equated with civilization and hospitality. For example, in *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, Enkidu is encouraged to drink beer for the first time by the harlot who urges him “Eat the food, Enkidu, it is the way one lives. Drink the beer, as is the custom of the land” (Tablet II). Because Enkidu is a wild man, the fact that he does not eat bread or drink beer marks him as uncivilized—once he partakes of the harlot’s offerings, he “became expansive and sang with joy!” (Tablet II). Likewise, Penelope’s suitors in *The Odyssey* are shown to be less than suitable because, as Telemachus notes in the absence of his father, Odysseus, “they keep hanging about my father's house, sacrificing our oxen, sheep, and fat goats for their banquets, and never giving so much as a thought to the quantity of wine they drink” (Book Two).

*How* a drink is consumed is just as important as *what* one drinks. Often alcohol is shared in a group setting, where the drink is offered by a host to an individual or group as a matter of hospitality. Certainly in the *Harry Potter* series, as well as in the examples above, wine, Firewhiskey, mead, and Butterbeer are treated as items imbibed within a group, rather than alone. Like alcohol, one common beverage that is shared with others throughout the series is tea.

Laura C. Martin’s fascinating look at the history of tea relates a story that says the beverage originates “in 3000 BCE, during the time of the mythical Chinese emperor Shen Nung, who is said to be the first ever to taste tea” (24). History supports the fact that tea was enjoyed in China as far back as the Tang period in the seventh century CE and “was

generally believed to have medicinal value and contribute to longevity” (Tannahill 267) and also that “for many centuries, only the Chinese knew of the wonders of tea” (Martin 2). Tea leaves and tea-drinking spread across Asia and into Europe “with traders, who found it to be a popular commodity; with travelers, who appreciated the comfort of a daily cup of tea during a long journey; and, particularly in its early history, with scholars and monks” (Martin 2). As much as we tend to associate tea with England, tea did not arrive in London until well into the eighteenth century, when “tea the drink and tea the social occasion became a part of British life, for everyone from lords and ladies to the men and women of the working class” (Martin 3). Seen as “an innocent drink, a necessary luxury, tea and the British demand for it were to be of immense imperial importance in the nineteenth century” (Tannahill 169), impacting colonial history for over a century. To this day, tea time is observed around 4:00 pm all over Great Britain, and High Tea is served at tea shops in large cities and small hamlets. By the early twentieth century, some of the first businesses owned and operated by women in the United States and in Britain were tea rooms, which “appealed mainly to women customers” (Whitaker 90). In general, “tea room food was simply prepared (and) expected to be more artful and dainty than what would be served at a lunch counter” and they “excelled at creating a homelike environment which put women at ease” (Whitaker 96). This association with English women and High Tea persists today, especially in America.

Tea and tea time are also extremely connected with British identity and culture. In America, it is more common to offer a cup of coffee as opposed to tea. But tea has more of a sense a ritual and history attached to it. For example, with coffee one generally fills

the pot and pours it into the machine, then waits while a machine heats water and makes the coffee. With tea, there is more interaction with the process of creating a cup: first one boils water in a kettle on the stove, which can take longer than a coffee-maker. Then the bag (or preferably, the leaves), is steeped in the heated water. With each serving, one adds the preferred amount of milk, sugar, honey, or lemon. With tea, there is more human interaction and more time for socializing. Tea, the social occasion, is not hurried. It is shared and experienced. The preparation is as important as the consumption.

As Carolyn Daniel observes in *Voracious Children* regarding tea in the Harry Potter series, “it is always Hermione, rather than Harry or Ron, who performs a feeding role, bustling around making tea” (113), citing the first four books as evidence. However, throughout the series, the individual who makes and serves tea most often is not a woman, but Hagrid. Hermione does make tea on multiple occasions (*PoA* 241; *GoF* 131; *DH* 287), but when the children are invited to visit Hagrid, he usually provides the beverage and a homemade snack, such as “rock cakes” (*PS* 104; *HBP* 216), “treacle toffee” (*CS* 89), “fruit cake” (*CS* 192), “Bath buns” (*PoA* 202) or “beef casserole” (*GoF* 233). Additionally, Hagrid makes tea for Dumbledore in *The Prisoner of Azkaban* (294), but Dumbledore returns the favor in *The Goblet of Fire*, doing so magically, “drawing out his wand and twiddling it” to make a tea-tray appear (393). In addition to Hermione and Hagrid, adult women, such as Molly Weasley, Fleur Delacour, and even Petunia Dursley, are shown serving tea or inviting others to tea. The Dursleys have tea in several books (*PS* 11; *PoA* 19). In *The Prisoner of Azkaban*, Vernon Dursley offers his sister, Marge, tea, but it is Petunia who supplies them “with tea and fruitcake” (23).

It is interesting to note that very few full-grown male wizards ever make tea, and those who do generally fill marginalized positions in society. This could be because, as already indicated, often tea is associated with femininity, but it could also be connected to ideas of power and hierarchy within the series. The men who prepare and serve tea often do so from a position of subordination, such as when Percy Weasley falls over himself to make a cup of tea for his boss, Bartemius Crouch, in *The Goblet of Fire* (83). That Mr. Crouch does not touch the tea, and also calls Percy by an incorrect name (“Weatherby”) illustrates Percy’s lack of power within the Ministry of Magic. This is in sharp contrast to Percy’s role as Head Boy at Hogwarts before he graduated.

Hagrid, as a half-giant, occupies the position of “other” in more than one instance in the series: he lives on the Hogwarts grounds, but not in the castle, he teaches a class outside rather than in a classroom, and he is not permitted to practice magic after having his wand snapped in two when he was expelled as a student (*PS* 64; *CS* 185). Xenophilus Lovegood serves Harry, Ron, and Hermione Gurdyroot tea, which is “deeply purple as beetroot juice” (*DH* 328) and tastes “disgusting, as though someone had liquidized bogey-flavoured Every-Flavour Beans” (*DH* 329). Lovegood is the publisher and editor of *The Quibbler*, a magazine on par with the *National Enquirer* in terms of fact-checking, and he lives with his daughter, Luna, in “a most strange-looking house (that) rose vertically against the sky, a great, black cylinder with a ghostly moon hanging behind it in the afternoon sky” (*DH* 322) and “perfectly circular” rooms inside (*DH* 324). The House-elves that work at Hogwarts, and Kreacher at 12 Grimmauld Place, often make tea or other food for wizards, and serving food tends to be one of their primary functions (*GoF* 329; 465). Remus Lupin, who is an adult male werewolf, makes tea for Harry in

*The Prisoner of Azkaban* (116), but as a non-human, he lacks the cultural capital of most adult wizards and Hogwarts professors. Even Dumbledore, who is certainly an adult wizard, is somewhat marginalized by the fact that he is gay.<sup>19</sup> If we can argue that “the grounds upon which we assign aesthetic value to texts are never infallible, unchangeable or universal, (then) we must reexamine not only our aesthetics, but as well, the inherent biases and assumptions informing the critical methods which (in part) shape our aesthetic responses” (Kolodny 1557). Within the novels, as well as within our own lived experience, perhaps the hospitality-aspect of tea creates a brief and temporary community, and the act of offering tea is like offering a hand of acceptance, so that even those at the bottom of the hierarchical ladder can feel like a part of the community. We (the readers) respond to tea in the *Harry Potter* series for its social value, as well as for the aesthetic response it triggers: tea joins disparately different individuals together in a space of acceptance and belonging.

In the *Harry Potter* books, food is associated with Harry’s acceptance into the Wizarding Community. After earning a place in one of the four Houses that serve as “family within Hogwarts” (PS 85), students are served enough food to make “Harry’s mouth (fall) open,” including “roast beef, roast chicken, pork chops and lamb chops, sausages, bacon and steak, boiled potatoes, roast potatoes, chips, Yorkshire pudding, peas, carrots, gravy, ketchup and, for some strange reason, mint humbugs” (PS 92). Because the four Hogwarts Houses dine together, albeit at separate tables, with the entire student body, as well as faculty and staff, present, the start-of-term banquet serves as a marker between their homes (many of them with Muggle families) and their new lives as

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<sup>19</sup> Although this is not mentioned in the novels, it is considered to be “canon” as it was revealed by J.K. Rowling in a public appearance at Carnegie Hall on October 20, 2007, three months after the release of the final book, and has been confirmed by her since then on multiple occasions.

students. By sharing a meal, all of the students participate in uniting as one school, and even if they are divided into smaller groups at separate tables, each House is combined as a faction within the larger body of Hogwarts. The division is important because each House serves as a family away from home for the students, and “with a boarding school story, they have not only the routine of school itself, but the sense of a self-contained and organised community, where one’s whole life is timetabled, one’s place in terms both of house loyalty and school hierarchy settled, and one’s values made clear” (Manlove 185). As McGonagall tells the in-coming first-years, while at school “triumphs will earn your house points, while any rule-breaking will lose house points” (PS 85). In this way, students develop a sense of loyalty from the beginning, fueled by competition for the House Cup, a “great honour,” and pride in the sense that one’s accomplishments are both individual and group achievements (PS 86).

At the same time as the start-of-term banquet serves as a cohesive space and a location for socialization and cooperation, the dining hall also serves as a blatant reminder of the differences between the individual Houses, and an inherent desire to belong to a group that separates “us” from the rest of “them.” However, “eating together does not necessarily mean all is love and harmony. If the table is metaphor for life, it represents in a direct and exacting way both membership in a group and the relationships defined within that group” (Montanari 95). At Hogwarts, the four houses emphasize very different traits, as first described in *The Philosopher’s Stone*: Gryffindor is “where dwell the brave at heart” and they are known for “their daring, nerve and chivalry,” while the Ravenclaw students “have a ready mind” and love “wit and learning” (88). Conversely, Slytherin house is famous for their “cunning” and desire to “use any means to achieve

their ends,” while Hufflepuff students are “just and loyal...and true” (88). Because each House stresses different goals and values, it makes sense that the students feel competitive towards one another in classes, as well as in Quidditch. The House identity is cemented on Day One at the start-of-term feast, when each incoming student is “Sorted” by magical means based on their own personalities, wants, and desires. By labeling each child by his or her traits before classes ever start, in some ways the Sorting system forces new students to be immediately accepted at Hogwarts, even if they still must win friends and attain the regard of their teachers by their own merits.

If food is one of the indicators of cultural identity, then how the different students react to the foods served at the special Welcoming Feast in *The Goblet of Fire* demonstrates this well. Usually, the tables at Hogwarts are filled with traditional British fare, such as joints, pies, dishes of vegetables, bread, sauces and roast potatoes, and for dessert, puddings like treacle tart, Spotted dick and Chocolate gateau (*OoP* 188; *GoF* 162). The children are regularly shown eating toast, eggs, sausage, and juice for breakfast and sandwiches for lunch. Their day-to-day meals are filled with the usual foods found in a Boarding School dining hall, though perhaps better than most, as food is prepared magically by skilled House-elves. There is very little variation shown in the start-of-term and end-of-term (Leaving) feasts as regards to abundant, solid British foods, until the Welcoming Feast the day before Hallowe’en in *The Goblet of Fire*.

To welcome to Hogwarts students from the two foreign schools competing in the Triwizard Tournament, a feast is held in their honor. Banquets often serve as a method for uniting members of different ethnicities or groups and “elaborate social messages are carried out in feast behavior” (Anderson 124). Richard Wrangham argues that “people

almost always eat as a social act” (98), but there are rules, conventions, and accepted behaviors encoded into every shared meal, in every culture. In the Middle Ages in Europe, for example:

the aristocratic banquet was defined as a means to achieving union and solidarity around a chief or a lord (and) in more or less formalized ways, according to the era and the social and political contexts, the placement of guests serves to signal the importance and prestige of the individuals: the lord or chieftains in the center, the others at a remove inversely proportionate to the respective importance accorded them. (Montanari 95-96)

This positioning by rank plays out in the Great Hall of Hogwarts, whereby the professors and staff sit at a single table “at the top of the Hall,” and the students sit at “four long tables,” divided by House ” (PS 87). When Hogwarts entertains guests in *The Goblet of Fire*, this hierarchical division continues to hold true: the members of the Ministry of Magic, and the Heads of Durmstrang and Beauxbatons sit with the professors, while the student guests mingle amongst the Hogwarts pupils. Mrs. Weasley, a former Hogwarts student, joins her children at the Gryffindor table, where she ate during her years at the school (537).

The foods served at the Welcoming Feast differ greatly from those usually eaten by the Hogwarts students. Everyone in every culture has to eat, and one can learn a great deal about people by examining their native foods. Like music, it is a universal language. As foodie Andrew Zimmern states at the beginning of his Travel Channel program, “the best way to experience another culture is through the food” (“Jamaica”). There are multiple benefits to defining community both at the individual and social levels, and

“food has become a means for the visitor to arrive at an understanding of national identity so that when the gastronomy of a region is promoted, so too is its culture” (Wight 156). Food works in tandem with experience to create identity, and often we judge one another based on our perceived notions about what is edible and what is not, in our own opinions. American audiences might react in a suspicious manner to the idea of “fish and chips. Bangers and mash. Yorkshire pudding, sherry trifle, (and) spotted dick,” but these foods are part of English food culture and “despite being dismissed as a culinary joke, few national cuisines are as immediately identifiable by name alone as British food” (Cozzi, *Discourses* 1).

When Hogwarts welcomes the two other schools, which are located in continental Europe (most likely near Bulgaria and France, though this is not explicitly stated), the Feast includes the usual culinary offerings, but also “a greater variety of dishes...several that were definitely foreign” (*GoF* 221). Ron is particularly flummoxed by “a large dish of shellfish stew that stood beside a large steak-and-kidney pudding” and when Hermione identifies it as “bouillabaisse,” Ron proceeds to ignore it in favor of the steak-and-kidney pudding (*GoF* 221). Presumably, bouillabaisse is not commonly served by Hogwarts or the Weasley family, because Ron does not recognize the combination of shellfish, vegetables, and *rouille* as something edible, and he approaches it with the same trepidation he might reserve for a “bogey-flavoured” Every-Flavour Bean. One of the girls from Beauxbatons School, Fleur Delacour, requests the bouillabaisse from Ron awhile later, and because she is very beautiful, he lies and claims he enjoyed eating it (222).

Lying to Fleur is Ron's way of gaining her attention, but it also demonstrates a lack of communication between Hogwarts, Beauxbatons, and Durmstrang. That the three schools are not only completely separate, but hidden from one another in layers of secrecy, although all are dedicated to the purpose of educating young wizards and witches, shows a rift in the Wizarding world. This lack of cohesion becomes more and more evident as the British wizards are forced to confront (or join) Lord Voldemort in the last two novels, and they become more and more isolated as a result. If the true purpose of the Triwizard Tournament is for "establishing ties between young witches and wizards of different nationalities" (*GoF* 165), then it fails to unite them as intended: where are most of the international wizards and witches when Voldemort sets out to destroy Britain? It seems that the inability of everyone to move past their differences leaves the British Wizarding world even more vulnerable.

The unwillingness on Ron's part to try the different foods suggests that he is not used to anything outside his culinary comfort zone, which is not all that unusual. E.N. Anderson's discussion of what constitutes "cuisine" offers the idea that "foodways are created by dynamic processes" and therefore are constantly changing as one group of people encounters another (186). The introduction of exotic spices and crops from the New World greatly influenced the course of European history during the ages of Conquest and Colonization (fifteenth through nineteenth centuries). Often foods that are not indigenous to one land, later become associated with a cultural group that adopts it, for example, potatoes are not native to Ireland, but greatly influenced Irish history (Anderson 200). With the introduction of new foods that are identified with a certain group, culture or religion, there may be negative or positive associations depending on

interpersonal relations, the socio-political climate, and ethnic or theological prejudices. Ethnocentric food practices and beliefs are therefore not uncommon.

One way that cultures can solidify who belongs in an “us versus them” paradigm is through the use of food rituals and proscribed rules for what is edible and what is not. In “Self-Evidence,” Mary Douglas writes about rituals of purity versus taboo, and suggests that what is “clean or unclean” in different cultures is based on complex systems of classification that are unique to those groups (30). These rules act as a yardstick of separation: Douglas’s example of pigs in Hebrew culture suggests that rules against consumption of those particular animals separate those whom the Hebrew people consider to be “pure” from those who are not. In the case of the Welcoming Feast at Hogwarts, foods served for the visiting wizards and witches are seen as foreign and objectionable.

Ron’s approach to the bouillabaisse suggests that shellfish is something that washes up dead on the beach, rather than a delicacy. Classical French cuisine also includes snails and truffles “pickled in vinegar, soaked in hot water, and served with butter” (Tannahill 238), while Bulgarian foods generally contain various forms of “rice, potatoes, capsicums, tomatoes, and maize” (Tannahill 245). The often tumultuous history between France and England plays out in cuisine, whereby “no Frenchman ha(s) the slightest doubt that in matters of taste, France was superior to all other nations” (Tannahill 240). If, to paraphrase Linda Colley, a Victorian Englishman defined himself by being “not French,” then arguably that mentality has in some way carried over into contemporary Britain, as illustrated by the food preferences of both countries.<sup>20</sup> As Craig Wight states, “the UK, in relation to the rest of Europe, is perhaps an anomaly and a

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<sup>20</sup> Colley, Linda. *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837*. New Haven: Yale UP, 2009. Print.

culinary silo where food and the sociology of eating are concerned” (Wight 153), suggesting that the British have a tenuous relationship with their national cuisine when compared with other European foods.

Foods rejected by one group as “gross” or inedible are often eaten with much enthusiasm and considered to be delicacies by others. Television programs like *Survivor* and *Fear Factor* capitalize on the fact that most Americans are repulsed by foods made from insects, worms, and live animals. Foods that squirm on the plate and wiggle all the way down the gullet make for exciting television, as apparently there is nothing more entertaining than watching a young, attractive competitor gag and vomit while trying to swallow cattle milk mixed with blood, marinated raw fish or pig snout on a platter<sup>21</sup>. The fact that all of these foods are chosen because they are eaten by the locals in the areas where the shows are filmed is frequently lost on the competitors and the audiences, who usually seem to find the foods revolting.<sup>22</sup> However, according to Bilge Yesil, “the paradox of voyeurism is contained in the coexistence of revulsion” (4). In other words, people often find it intriguing to watch other people eat foods they themselves would refuse to consume. The “better them than us” ideology works with fiction because one can be titillated by something foreign and alien without having to take the risk of actually eating the foods. Ron’s feeling of revulsion and confusion by the foods served at the Welcoming feast help to illustrate the isolated and insular existence of the student at Hogwarts. Instead of realizing how out of place the foreign students might feel, Ron, in keeping with his character, is more interested in his own experiences of food. That Ron

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<sup>21</sup> *Survivor: Africa* (2001-2002 season); *Survivor: Marquesas* (2002 season) and *Survivor: Vanuatu* (2004 season)

<sup>22</sup> This observation is based on watching every season of *Survivor*, as well as personal observation watching with friends and an on-line poll at Livejournal’s *Survivor Junkies* site, which indicated that half of the respondents did not care about the culture associated with the foods in the challenges.

has always had three square meals a day, plus tea and snacks, is made evident in the text and exists as juxtaposition to the lack of good food that was Harry's experience. One of the many reasons why "Harry missed Hogwarts so much it was like having a constant stomach ache" is because his summers with the Dursleys are marked by food deprivation and he misses "eating banquets in the Great Hall" (CS 8).

Like the start-of-term and Welcoming feasts, the end-of-term feast is supposed to be festive: in the first three books of the series, students blow off steam by eating and boasting of yearly accomplishments. The awarding of the coveted House Cup is celebrated by decorating the Great Hall in the colors of the winning House (PS 220), which serves to further divide the students based on accomplishments or lack thereof. In some ways, this division is problematic, in that rather than unite the school as one cohesive group, it separates students into Gryffindor, Ravenclaw, Slytherin and Hufflepuff, allowing for very little blending of the groups outside of doubled-up classes like Potions and Herbology. The creation of Dumbledore's Army in *The Order of the Phoenix* is that much more astounding, because it includes students from all but Slytherin House, and unites them in such a way as to allow their continued participation in the fight against Voldemort and his Death Eaters in the final two novels.

As the series continues, the end-of-year feast becomes less celebratory and much more sober. In *The Goblet of Fire*, the Leaving Feast is marred by the news that fellow student Cedric Diggory has been murdered by Voldemort, who has definitely returned. Rather than decorate the Hall with Gryffindor's banners, "there were black drapes on the wall behind the teacher's table" (GoF 624). Rowling does not mention the food at all in this scene, although most of the students and teachers raise a glass to toast Cedric's

memory. Instead, the moment is used for Dumbledore to attempt to unite the entire school as one entity against evil (*GoF* 627). The Leaving Feast is barely mentioned in *The Order of the Phoenix*, except in passing by Luna Lovegood, who wants to “go down and have some pudding” (761), because Harry is mourning the recent death of his godfather, Sirius Black, and is in no mood to celebrate. This is the last end-of-term feast in the series, as Professor Dumbledore’s death in *The Half-Blood Prince* means the event is replaced by a funeral and “no one seemed very hungry” (596).

In some ways, although it is not a true end-of-term feast, the final moments following the Battle of Hogwarts at the end of *The Deathly Hallows* fulfils the same role to the students, staff, and others who fought against Voldemort. The house tables have been put back into place in the Great Hall, “but nobody was sitting according to house any more: all were jumbled together, teachers and pupils, ghosts and parents, centaurs and house-elves, and Firenze (the centaur) lay recovering in a corner, and Grawp (the giant) peered in through a smashed window, and people were throwing food into his laughing mouth” (597). After an event like the destruction of the school and the death of Voldemort, the division of people into houses seems arbitrary and unnecessary. Although food is not described, they are clearly eating together at the end of a long, exhausting, and tragic day.

Harry’s participation in the Wizarding world is marked by food in other ways as well. His best friend’s family, the Weasleys, welcome him with open arms and open plates of food on a regular basis throughout the novels. The first time he visits the Burrow, Mrs. Weasley offers him “three fried eggs” and “eight or nine sausages” (*CoS* 31), as a gesture of acceptance. Although Mrs. Weasley serves up eggs and sausage by

frying them in a pan, this is shown in stark contrast to the similar eggs and bacon started by Aunt Petunia Dursley and finished by Harry in the first novel. Unlike with the Dursleys, who often deny him access to the food he has cooked, by feeding him often and abundantly, Mrs. Weasley seems determined to make up for the years of neglect Harry suffered as a child. It is the Weasleys, not the Dursleys, who celebrate Harry's coming of age birthday by preparing a lavish dinner of his favorite foods (*DH* 101).

Rowling uses food to situate Harry's place within the narrative, but also to express to the reader the personalities and identities of those providing or denying the food. In the very first pages of the first novel in the series, the Dursleys (Muggles) are shown eating sweets and meals to excess while Harry (a wizard) is neglected and denied, and it is not hard to read Rowling's bias in the words.<sup>23</sup> At the end of Chapter Two of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* on *Pottermore*, Rowling states about the Dursleys that "'Vernon' is simply a name I never much cared for. 'Petunia' is the name that I always gave unpleasant female characters in games of make believe I played with my sister, Di, when we were very young" (*Pottermore.com*). Her dislike for the characters is illustrated clearly with food, and in the ways Harry is denied the same foods they themselves eat or serve only their own son and their guests. It is possible that Rowling's authorial intent was to purposefully set up the Dursleys to act as the antithesis not just to Harry, but against his Wizarding family (fictive and real kin). The Muggle-family/wizard-family dynamic plays out in a personal level with Harry's experiences as a

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<sup>23</sup> Rowling has often discussed name choices for her characters, suggesting that although she may "collect" names, that she assigns the names with some rationale: "I am a bit of a name freak. A lot of the names that I didn't invent come from maps. Snape is a place name in Britain. Dumbledore is an old English dialect word for bumblebee, because he is a musical person. And I imagine him humming to himself all the time. Hagrid is also an old English word. Hedwig was a saint, a medieval saint. You know, if I hear a good name, I have got to write it down. And it will probably crop up somewhere" ("J.K. Rowling").

child, and then are mirrored on a larger scale with the Pure-Blood wizards attempting to eradicate and deny rights to Muggle-born (Mudblood) wizards as the stories progress.

What makes the Dursleys so vile is that they are blood-related to Harry, yet they treat him with contempt, fear, and neglect. Dumbledore's quiet rage at this blatant disregard for Harry's well-being is clear in *The Half-Blood Prince* when he admonishes Petunia: "You have never treated Harry as a son. He has known nothing but neglect and often cruelty at your hands" (57). In the next sentence, he also accuses the Dursleys of mistreating their own son, something that baffles them because they have always spoiled and cosseted Dudley. In some ways, Harry's treatment by his Aunt and Uncle has allowed him to become the independent, loyal, and caring child he is. The denial of food at the Dursley home represents the refusal of his Aunt and Uncle to love him after his own mother died protecting the child she loved. The food is not as important as the refusal: the presence of wine, bacon, and pork roast in the Dursley home supports the idea that they live a middle class existence and can afford to feed and care for the child they have taken in; that they do not says more about their own characters than Harry's.

I have argued elsewhere<sup>24</sup> that what is missing from the story is the fact that Petunia Dursley accepted Harry and agreed to the terms that would provide a protective spell, when he was only a year old. As a baby, Harry was unable to care for himself at the most basic level, which means Petunia had to dress him, change him, and feed him. That he survived infancy shows a level of care that was not neglectful, suggesting perhaps that, until Harry first displayed signs of having inherited his parents' magical abilities, maybe Petunia tried to love him for her sister's sake. The Dursleys *have* the means to feed Harry

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<sup>24</sup> July 2010–Panel Participant: "A Feminist Perspective on Harry Potter"—HPEF: Infinitus, a Harry Potter Conference, Orlando, FL

well, but they make a conscious choice not to do so, placing Harry in a subordinate position within his Muggle life. There is food available at the Dursley home; just not for Harry.

Numerous examples of the “food as abundance” paradigm in the *Harry Potter* books are illustrated by Harry’s interactions at Hogwarts, the Burrow, and the Wizarding villages he visits throughout the seven books. In contrast to his stark life in Little Whinging with his Aunt and Uncle, the Wizarding community represents excess, without gluttony. The Dursleys deny Harry food, while indulging themselves and their own son, but conversely, wizards are shown as hospitable, and food is available to all who need it, albeit with some specific limitations. Although Harry, Ron, and Hermione, have magical abilities, when they are separated from the rest of the world in book seven, as they hide from Lord Voldemort, his Death Eaters, and the Snatchers, who are helping the Ministry of Magic round up Muggle-born wizards and witches, they learn that food is not as readily available as they thought it might be. In fact, the Muggle versus wizard paradigm is emphasized greatly in *The Deathly Hallows*, when Harry, Ron, and Hermione spend most of the story on their own, away from their usual resources. After six books filled with descriptions of ample food, feasts, and celebrations, the seventh novel in the series is markedly different in its emphasis on Harry’s experiences as a wizard trying to survive without his adult support system. That Rowling would use food to illustrate this point fits with the rest of my argument that food is often used in the series to show Harry’s magical world as vastly better than his Muggle experiences.

Following their escape from Death Eaters at the end of Bill and Fleur’s wedding at the Burrow, Harry, Ron, and Hermione disappear and reappear on a typical London

street, Tottenham Court Road. Because they have to avoid other wizards, they cannot go to the Leaky Cauldron, so they find “a small and shabby all-night café” where “Hermione ordered two cappuccinos” (*DH* 137). Ron finds the foamy, grayish coffee to be “revolting” and decides he does not “want to drink this muck” (137-138). As usual, if Ron does not recognize something, he finds it foreign and distasteful.

The group takes shelter at 12 Grimmauld Place, the home Harry has inherited from his godfather, Sirius Black, where they have “a supper composed largely of mouldy bread, upon which Hermione had tried a variety of unsuccessful Transfigurations” (*DH* 106). This is the first time that, while in the Wizarding world, Harry has been denied access to good and plentiful food, but his experiences with the Dursleys make him better suited to surviving on less than adequate resources. Once they reconnect with other wizards and magical beings, first Remus Lupin, and then Kreacher, the House-elf, the children once again, albeit temporarily, have decent food to eat. Lupin brings them Butterbeers after they have been hiding for three days, and Kreacher responds to Harry’s kindness by taking care of the fugitives and feeding them onion soup, “savory stew,” “treacle tarts,” and “steak and kidney pie” (*DH* 191-192). As long as they remain safe at 12 Grimmauld Place, they have access to good food and some of the adult wizards in their lives. Once that lifeline is cut off and they are forced to rough it camping at a new spot every night, they are also deprived resources to make meals.

While camping and hiding, Harry, Ron, and Hermione make several attempts to compensate for the fact that Hermione did not pack food because they expected to go back to Grimmauld Place. First they prepare “scrambled eggs on toast” from supplies taken from a “chicken coop” (Hermione leaves money so it would not be theft), but it

does not last long (*DH* 236). They try to make do with “scavenging nothing but berries or stale biscuits” (*DH* 237), but Hermione’s ability to “identify edible fungi could not altogether compensate for their continuing isolation” (*DH* 240). With tempers flaring and without adequate training on how to prepare the foods, they are left with unsatisfying, if not distasteful and insufficient repast. When the teenagers are unable to produce decent meals from meager resources, Ron angrily argues that his mother “can make good food appear out of thin air,” to which Hermione retorts that “food is the first of the five Principal Exceptions to Gamp’s Law of Elemental Transfig(uration). . .” (*DH* 240-241), meaning that they are unable to summon food or replicate it because food cannot just be conjured. After six years of seeing food magically appear, Harry is perturbed to learn that it is not as readily available as he believed.

By separating themselves from their friends, family, and support group, they also are disconnected from their hospitality. The lack of food represents the lack of community: Harry, Ron, and Hermione are disconnected physically and mentally from everyone they care about. Food represents safety, abundance, and sharing with others: without these things, the three teenagers turn on one another and fall into despair. It is not until they return to their families and friends that they regain the strength to continue the mission given to them by Professor Dumbledore, to find and destroy Voldemort’s Horcruxes so Harry can kill Voldemort.

Each time they have contact, no matter how limited, with other wizards, Harry, Ron, and Hermione are fed something. First, Lupin brings them Butterbeer, then after several months of isolation, they visit Xenophilius Lovegood to ascertain the meaning of the Deathly Hallows mark found in Hermione’s book. Xenophilius Lovegood offers them

tea, but also insists that the children stay for “Freshwater Plimpy soup” (335), which, probably for the best given Xenophilius’s lack of skill with tea, they never get to eat. Next, they spend time recuperating at Shell Cottage, the home of Ron’s brother Bill and his wife, Fleur, where they are once more fed regular meals and are reluctant to leave “the home comforts they had enjoyed over the last few weeks” (420). Finally, when Harry, Ron, and Hermione are at last ready to return to Hogwarts to meet up with the rest of the students, professors, and other adults, they do so through a tunnel in the Hog’s Head Pub, and only after the proprietor, Aberforth Dumbledore, has served them “a large loaf of bread, some cheese, and a pewter jug of mead” (*DH* 452). Their entrance back to the Wizarding world as members of a group is marked by the consumption of food provided by a wizard. From that point on, there is no more deprivation, and they belong to a large assemblage of individuals dedicated to destroying the evil that is Voldemort.

In many ways, food marks the circuitous journey for Harry from depravation as the unwanted foster child of his Muggle family to the abundance of the Wizarding world, back to lack of food when he is cut off from his wizard family, and finally to access to food within his culture of choice at Hogwarts in the end. Harry’s membership in the Wizarding community is marked by food that contains both nutritional value for survival and cultural meaning delineating Harry’s place in the world. It is not merely the access to food that cements Harry’s identity, but the types of food and *how* it is accessed. Encoded in the Harry Potter series “is the notion that studying the most banal of human activities can yield crucial information and insights about both daily life and world view, from what is in the pot to the significance of the fire that heats it” (Avakian and Haber 1). The wizard pot is filled with interesting, abundant fare that is made available to anyone who is

a member of that community, while the Muggle stove may contain “a joint of pork roast sizzling in the oven” (*CoS* 13), but the food is not shared with others. In the *Harry Potter* series, wizards are commonly shown sharing food in large parties or in celebratory manners, whereas Muggles are only described as eating in small, family groups of fewer than six people. The wizard community is established as superior to the Muggles because of food abundance, ritual hospitality and sharing.

CONCLUSION: “AND THE BUTTERBEER IS FLOWING FREELY TONIGHT”<sup>25</sup>

On June 18, 2010, The Wizarding World of Harry Potter opened to great fanfare in Orlando, Florida as part of Universal Studios’ Islands of Adventures Theme Park. As countless television ads claim, the park is a way for people to “truly be a part of Harry Potter’s world.”<sup>26</sup> Fans buzzed on the internet, asking questions about what the rides might be like or how Hogsmeade Village would look, but they also talked about the food. *Mugglenet*’s Eric Scull and *The Restaurant Fairy*’s Malini Sood Horiuchi,<sup>27</sup> are two of the many fans to have blogged about the food in the series and at the theme park. The chat boards lit up at *Mugglenet*, *Chamber of Chat*, and *Harry Potter Forums*, where fans excitedly posted their speculations and, once the Park opened, their experiences with Butterbeer, pumpkin juice, and the various sweets and foods available. As one Facebook fan summed it up: “The butterbeer!!! yeah...buuuuttteerrrbeer....sweet!!!”<sup>28</sup>

In July, 2010, I explored The Wizarding World of Harry Potter as part of a private party for an event called “Night of a Thousand Wizards,” sponsored by “Infinitus: A Harry Potter Conference,” which I was presenting at that weekend. In addition to a limited number of fans being allowed into the park after it closed, we were also provided with a “light dessert buffet including coffee, tea and lemonade, and voucher for a

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<sup>25</sup> Title from the blog entry “The Night of A Thousand Wizards/Fear and Loathing in Hogwarts” by Henry Jenkins at *Confessions of an Aca-Fan: The Official Webbing of Henry Jenkins*, July 21, 2010. [http://henryjenkins.org/2010/07/fear\\_and\\_loathing\\_in\\_hogwarts.html](http://henryjenkins.org/2010/07/fear_and_loathing_in_hogwarts.html)

<sup>26</sup> Superbowl ad aired in 2010: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I9d1nXpalNs>

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.mugglenet.com/ericwwfoodreview.shtml> and <http://therestaurantfairy.com>

<sup>28</sup> Alyssa O. Ascendio Facebook page, 4 May 2012.

Butterbeer and a dessert item.”<sup>29</sup> Attendees were also directed to the cash bar inside the Hog’s Head Pub, and food available at The Three Broomsticks (cafeteria-style, like at most Florida theme parks). Additionally, Honeydukes Sweet Shop was open for business, including such wonderful confections as Acid Pops, exploding bonbons, Cauldron Cakes, treacle fudge, Fizzing Whizzbees, pumpkin juice, Chocolate Frogs, Bertie Bott’s Every-Flavour Beans, and other classics, such as Muggle chocolates and fudge. Infinitus attendee and media theorist, Henry Jenkins, commented on the same event by writing in his blog that

everyone here knows that Hogwarts isn't real... (but) Please do not quote me Baudrillard's comment that Disneyland is fake so it can trick us into believing the rest of America is real. Don't pull out Umberto Eco's discussion of 'Hyperreality' and the ways that the 'absolute fake' is realer than the real. These are, to put it bluntly, pseudo-insights. (Jenkins, “Confessions”)

The Wizarding World of Harry Potter, and the food available there, represent the ultimate convergence between the novels and the fan experience of the novels. As an example of transmedia storytelling, the Theme Park adds a three dimensional, multi-faceted layer to the novels. Because no one attends a theme park alone, the experience is shared in many ways: with others present at the time, and often, with friends and acquaintances on Facebook and blog sites afterwards. When I blogged about my first taste of Butterbeer (“too sweet—I need to create my own version”), my friends all over the world responded to ask *exactly* what it tasted like, since they had read the novels, but had not yet visited the theme park. My detailed descriptions allowed them to experience Butterbeer vicariously through the characters in the novels and through my descriptions.

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<sup>29</sup> <http://infinitus2010.wordpress.com/2010/06/14/night-of-a-thousand-wizards-2/>

This moment of transition from passive consumption of a novel to active participation in the series meets over a glass of Butterbeer and created a community of fans who had shared the experience. As E.N. Anderson suggests, “food communicates class, ethnic group, lifestyle affiliation, and other social positions... (and) at a deeper level, food may become part of one’s identity” (124-125). In the *Harry Potter* series, the Wizard characters’ consumption of special foods that are unavailable in the Muggle world serve to reinforce their own identities, while at the same time constructing the feeling of “belonging” at Hogwarts and in villages and homes secretly imbedded within the Muggle world. The ability for readers to experience the same foods invites them directly into the text. In the text, food acts as a border between what is real and what is fantasy by bridging the gap between readers and characters and “what we can best learn from such practices are, perhaps, the many ways selves and communities succeed in extracting sustenance from the objects of a culture—even of a culture whose avowed desire has often been not to sustain them” (Sedgwick 150).

As I have indicated, food is so prevalent in the books yet little academic attention has been paid to the food in Harry’s world. Food in the *Harry Potter* series represents the socially constructed identities of the characters within the texts, and also serves to create a connection between the readers and the characters. Meticulous analysis of the role food plays in the series, not just for the characters, but for the readers as well, demonstrates that the *Harry Potter* books do cultural work through transmedia storytelling, which allows readers to respond not just to the events in the story, but also to the identities constructed within the narrative. Although I can only begin to touch upon the role food plays in this tremendously and surprisingly complex series, this thesis serves to add to the

extant literature and research available by expanding the discourse to include a Humanities-centered examination of food in the *Harry Potter* series, creating a new connection between Literature and Food Studies, and allowing for additional scholarship in the future. I have demonstrated how food contributes to cultural and identity-building within the fictional world of the *Harry Potter* series, and for the series' fans, but it remains to be seen what additional academic work may still be done on this series of books. By choosing to examine food in the novels, I have added a much-needed dimension to the extant literature available on Rowling's work. Food is a great indicator of cultural identity and the shared foods we eat can serve multiple purposes in delineating those who belong from those who do not. Food rituals, such as those seen in banquets and weddings, serve to reinforce identity through a complex system of behaviors that link people together, while simultaneously ostracizing others. By carrying on a literary tradition of food as a cultural marker, the *Harry Potter* series fits neatly into a body of work that celebrates abundance, family and belonging.

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## Appendix: Harry Potter-inspired Recipes by Leisa Clark<sup>30</sup>

### Butterbeer

1 cup cold ginger ale  
1 cup cold cream soda or seltzer water (depending on how sweet you want your butterbeer – can also be ½ soda and ½ seltzer)  
Add butterscotch schnapps to taste  
¼ cup cream or milk added at the end

Mix first three ingredients in large glass. Add milk/cream slowly until “head” appears. To make and serve as a “punch” use 1 2-liter bottle of ginger ale, 1 2-liter bottle of cream soda, 1 2-liter bottle of seltzer, add butterscotch schnapps to taste. Place in punch bowl with scoops of vanilla ice cream and ice. Add cream to individual servings.

### Butterbeer Cupcakes

½ cup softened butter  
¾ to 1 cup sugar  
2 eggs  
1½ cups all-purpose flour  
½ tsp. baking powder  
¼ tsp. salt  
1 cup cold ginger ale  
2 tsps. butterscotch extract

Preheat oven to 350°F. Cream butter and sugar. Add eggs 1 at a time, beating after each addition. Stir in butterscotch. In a separate bowl, stir together all dry ingredients. Add to butter mixture; stir in ginger ale. Pour into cupcake baking cups. Bake ~18-20 minutes. Makes 9 large or 12 medium cupcakes.

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<sup>30</sup> The book *The Unofficial Harry Potter Cookbook: From Cauldron Cakes to Knickerbocker Glory--More Than 150 Magical Recipes for Muggles and Wizards* by Dinah Bucholz does not include recipes for Butterbeer, so I invented my own. I also created all of the recipes here with inspiration from the series.

## Butterbeer Frosting

1 c butter (room temperature)  
2 ¼ cup icing sugar  
2 tsps. butterscotch extract or 1 cup of butterscotch  
¼ c milk  
½ tsp vanilla extract

Mix butter on high for a few minutes until it looks soft & whipped. Add in butterscotch and let that soften, while beating on high. Add icing sugar, milk, and vanilla into bowl and mix on high. Once it is blended and soft (it should be fluffy), load into a pastry bag and decorate cupcakes.

## Pumpkin Juice in a Punchbowl

3 cups diced pumpkin  
3 cups apple juice  
2 teaspoon honey  
1 cup pineapple juice  
Dash of cardamom  
Dash of cinnamon  
Dash of ginger

Juice the pumpkin then combine the pumpkin juice to the pineapple and apple juice. Add spices to taste to honey, add to juices, and blend in a blender. Put ice in punch bowl and pour mixture over the ice. (If you have pumpkin ice cream, add scoops to punchbowl). Serve very cold.

## Homemade Pie Crust<sup>31</sup>

3 cups all-purpose flour  
1 teaspoon salt  
1¼ cups butter (VERY cold)  
1 egg, beaten  
1 tablespoon distilled white vinegar  
4 tablespoons water (very cold)

In large bowl mix flour and salt. Cut in shortening with two butter knives. In separate bowl, mix together egg, vinegar, and water. Drizzle wet mixture into dry mixture, cutting it in. Place in fridge and then roll out dough to use as needed. (Can be frozen.)

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<sup>31</sup> My grandmother taught me a variation of this pie crust when I was fourteen years old, but I have changed it a bit, for example, she used lard and I use butter. Using Crisco does make incredible pie crust, but I don't usually keep it in the house.

## Pumpkin Pasties

2 cups pumpkin (canned or puree)  
3 eggs  
1 ¼ cups half and half  
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract  
¾ cup brown sugar  
½ teaspoon salt  
1 teaspoon cinnamon  
¾ teaspoon ground ginger  
½ teaspoon ground nutmeg  
¼ teaspoon ground cloves (optional)

1 prepared pie crust (see above)  
1 egg beaten with 1 tablespoon water for egg wash  
Sugar and cinnamon for sprinkling

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F.

Place pumpkin in a large bowl. In a separate bowl, beat eggs well. Beat in half and half, vanilla extract, brown sugar, salt, and spices until thoroughly blended. Add in the pumpkin mixture, mix well.

Pour pumpkin mixture into baking pan (I use a pie pan) and place in center oven rack. Bake for 30-40 minutes until the filling is firm. Cool.

With pumpkin is cooling, roll out the prepared dough on a cookie sheet and cut into circles using a 4 or 5-inch round cutter. (Caution: If the dough is too thin, it will break, and if too thick, it will not cook thoroughly.) In the middle of each circle place a scoop of the cooled pumpkin mixture (about 1 to 1 ½ tablespoons). Fold circle in half and pinch firmly to close the pouch completely. Use fork to crimp and seal the edges. Brush with egg wash, and add sugar and cinnamon to taste. Bake until brown (approx. 30 minutes).