

**UNIVERSITY OF TARTU**  
**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH STUDIES**

**HOGWARTS SCHOOL OF ABUSERS AND MANIPULATORS  
(AND OVERALL HORRIBLE TEACHERS): AN ANALYSIS OF THE  
IMAGE OF THE TEACHER IN J. K. ROWLING'S HARRY POTTER  
BOOKS**

**BA thesis**

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## ABSTRACT

The present thesis focuses on examining the behaviour and characteristics of the teachers in the Harry Potter series by J. K. Rowling. The aim of the present thesis is to unearth the abusive and manipulative tendencies found in some of the professors of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. The analysis is done by examining evidence of the teachers' abusive behaviour from the books as well as supporting evidence from several academic sources and comparing the findings to the behaviours of the same characters from a Harry Potter fanfiction series of seven books named *the Sacrifices Arc* written by the anonymous author Lightning on the Wave because *the Sacrifices Arc* in the present author's opinion, presents its characters in a more well-rounded, less stereotypical way.

The present thesis contains four parts: the introduction, two chapters and the conclusion. The introduction provides the summaries of both series, focusing primarily on the teaching staff as well as whom and based on which criteria will be covered in the main body. The first chapter of the thesis compares and contrasts the actions of several minor teaching characters with their fan fiction counterparts. The second chapter compares and discusses the actions of the two major manipulators and abusers of the series – Head Master Albus Percival Wulfric Brian Dumbledore and potions master Severus Snape in much the same way. The thesis concludes with the summarization of the main findings of the thesis.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DADA	Defence Against the Dark Arts
AU	Alternate Universe
LOTW	Lightning on the Wave

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## INTRODUCTION

Going through the Warner Brothers Studio tour near London, where the Harry Potter films were made, the tour guides start off by telling the story of when J. K. Rowling started looking for publishers to her first book, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* in 1995. She got rejected by no less than twelve publishers. When she finally did get published by a small publishing house called Bloomsbury, it was only because the first chapter of her book was given to the publisher's 8-year old daughter to read and she immediately demanded more.

The story of the series follows a boy named Harry Potter who discovers he is a wizard and is taken to Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry to get a magical education. Almost fifteen years and seven books later, the teachers at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry have shaped the lives of many people regardless of their age. They are the archetypes we can project onto our own former or present teachers or the people we wished were our teachers. While most people give them high praise and admiration or loathe the ones deliberately made out to be evil, it is the present author's objective to look at them more critically, because having read the series several times, it has become increasingly apparent that some of the teachers as liars, abusers and manipulators. The bulk of these accusations apply to the Headmaster of the school, Albus Dumbledore but can also be applied to the Potions Master, Severus Snape, both of whose actions will be covered in Chapter 2 Major Abusive Characters, as well as several minor teaching characters.

Having read the series for the first time at the age of ten, it quickly became a favourite. There is something about the magic and adventure that draws readers of all ages into the Wizarding World. Since then, having read more, having become a more critical reader and wanting to become a teacher, it became noticeable how a number of the teachers at Hogwarts are not very friendly or competent in their methods of teaching, even if they are

well-versed in their own subject matter. Because of this, in Chapter 1 of the present thesis, the behaviours of minor characters such as Divination Professor Sybil Trelawney, Defence Against the Dark Arts Professor Gilderoy Lockhart, out-of-retirement Potions Master Horace Slughorn, Keeper of Keys and Grounds and Care of Magical Creatures Professor Rubeus Hagrid and Madam Undersecretary, Hogwarts High Inquisitor and Defence Against the Dark Arts Professor Dolores Jane Umbridge will be analysed. These characters have been picked because they are either better represented in the Alternate Universe or very bad at teaching their subjects in the canon series but loved anyway and worth discussing.

Neither of the Carrow siblings, who taught Muggle Studies and Defence Against the Dark Arts during the year Snape was Headmaster, will be covered as they were not qualified teachers, were Death Eaters and only taught under orders of Lord Voldemort nor DADA Professor Barty Crouch Jr disguised as ex-Auror Alastor Moody for much the same reasons. Neither will Transfiguration Professor Minerva McGonagall, arguably the best teacher in the school, nor Charms Professor Filius Flitwick, who was a neutral character, nor DADA Professor Quirinus Quirrell, who: “[...] was a great teacher, [...] there was just that minor drawback of him having Lord Voldemort sticking out of the back of his head.” (Rowling 2003: 220) and several others whom we do not see teaching very much, do not exhibit abusive behaviour or in general know what they are doing in regard to teaching students.

This thesis will also briefly look at how the names of the characters reflect their personalities in the series, since J. K. Rowling likes to give her characters names that are meaningful. For example, Remus Lupin, whose first and last name are associated with wolves, is a werewolf. The aim of the analysis is to find out whether the abusive behaviour could have been written in deliberately or if it has been subconscious on the author's part.

In the present thesis, the teacher characters from the Harry Potter series (also known as the canon series) will be analysed and compared to the teachers in the Harry Potter fan-

fiction series *the Sacrifices Arc*, which is a series taking place in an Alternate Universe.

The canon series follows a similar pattern through all seven books – Harry Potter starts a new school-year at Hogwarts, he goes to lessons, finds out about a plot to restore Lord Voldemort to power (whether by the latter or by one of his henchmen, the Death Eaters), Harry foils the plot with help from his friends and everything is okay until the next book. Basically, almost all the books until the fifth, sixth and seventh are interchangeable as background information on all the characters is mentioned in every one of them and the plots of the previous books do not have severe impacts onto the next ones. The seven Harry Potter books are titled *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (or *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* in America), *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* and *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*. The films will not be covered, as they are not considered canon, the characters have been changed and a lot of key plot points from the books have been changed or left out (with the exception of the first film, which follows the sequence of events almost completely).

About a year ago, a friend of mine introduced me to *The Sacrifices Arc* series by Lightning on the Wave and it was a lot better than the original. LOTW has sought to reimagine the plot of the original series in a deeper, more logical and more adult way. We do not know much about the author, hence why they are anonymous. There is not a lot of information about her, but it is believed that she was 21 years old when she started writing her version of the events in a fan-fiction forum, but she has not been heard from online in around 4 years. This became apparent after trying to contact her to get her consent to use her story in the present thesis through the forum, where her series was uploaded and getting a message back from someone else looking after her account, who relayed this information.

It should be noted, that the comparisons between the series might not be entirely fair,

since the canon series is aimed at children and pre-teens, but the AU is very different as it is meant for a more mature audience and contains more intense themes. What makes them comparable is the fact that they loosely follow the same plot until the end of book three, even though they separate almost completely starting from book four onward and use only the same characters with largely the same traits. The analysis will hopefully be done as objectively as possible because comparing adult stories with deep, complicated and well-developed plots with children`s stories give the former an unfair advantage when read by adults.

The author of the AU has said that she wanted to see what would happen if she changed a few things in the canon series, reworked a lot of clichés and what the consequences of the changes would be.

*[...] In particular, I was interested in watching what happens to Harry's psychology if it's the result of certain wartime decisions...and what happens when he finds out about those decisions. On the story front, I want to give the canon characters, and any OC's who appear, fuller and more rounded characterization than they usually get in a story like this. (Lightning On The Wave 2005d)*

The premise of *The Sacrifices Arc* is that Harry Potter is born with a twin brother named Connor who is thought to be the Boy-Who-Lived. Harry is trained by his parents (who were lured away on the night Voldemort was vanquished and lived) to be Connor`s guardian. They take drastic steps to insure Harry protects his brother until the latter can defeat Voldemort for good, including binding Harry`s mind and extremely strong magic. When Harry and Connor go to Hogwarts, Connor is sorted into Gryffindor and Harry into Slytherin where Draco Malfoy befriends him and eventually, they become lovers. The surrounding characters are largely the same although a lot of characters have been added or their importance to the plot has been increased or changed, characters` motives and emotions are more explored and there is deeper character development. Although there is less time spent in the classrooms, we get to see the causes behind the actions of the major teaching characters, namely Headmaster and Light Lord Albus Dumbledore, Potions Master and



Harry`s eventual legal guardian Severus Snape and eventual Headmistress and Transfiguration Professor Minerva McGonagall. The seven books of *The Sacrifices Arc* are titled *Saving Connor*, *No Mouth but Some Serpent's*, *Comes Out of Darkness Morn*, *Freedom and Not Peace*, *Wind That Shakes the Sea and Stars*, *A Song In Time of Revolution* and *I Am Also Thy Brother*.

The main body of the present thesis has been divided into chapters, which have subsequently been divided into subchapters named after the professors covered in them. The subchapters will start with an analysis of the characters from the canon series and move on to discuss the differences between the former and their Alternate Universe counterparts including examples and quotes from both series as well as comments from other academic sources. In cases, where the characters mentioned do not have equally important roles in both series, explanations will be given as to why that might be the case.

## CHAPTER 1: LITERATURE REVIEW

Joanne Rowling is one of the most successful children's authors of the recent decades. Her Harry Potter series is quoted and known by most people, who were children in the 90s. It is often brought out that people, even if not having read the books, at least know of Harry Potter due to its impact on popular culture. The plot of the seven books follows Harry Potter and his friends Ron Weasley and Hermione Granger as they study in Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry and try to save the wizarding world from the Dark Lord Voldemort. As the analysis will be easier to follow if the main plot of the series is outlined, a brief summary of the plot will be given in the following paragraph.

*Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* begins with professors Minerva McGonagall and Albus Dumbledore leaving the orphaned Harry Potter at the doorstep of his muggle aunt, her mother's sister, and uncle. On Harry's eleventh birthday, the Keeper of Keys and Grounds at Hogwarts, Rubeus Hagrid, tells him he is a wizard and brings him to Hogwarts. Harry makes friends and discovers that Voldemort plans to use the Sorcerer's Stone to regain power. He foils it. In *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, Harry finds out that something in the School is petrifying students, it turns out to be a basilisk, defeats it and saves all the children in the school. In book three, *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, Harry finds out that the person believed to have betrayed his parents to Voldemort, has escaped from prison and is presumably trying to kill Harry. This is revealed not to be the case and the man; Sirius Black is actually Harry's godfather and Harry helps him escape recapture after learning who the real traitor was. In book four, *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, Harry is forced to take part in the Triwizard Tournament, which is a dangerous magical contest between magical schools. In the final task of the tournament, he is transported to a graveyard and sees Voldemort get resurrected. In the fifth book, *Harry*

*Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, no one except the titular Order of the Phoenix believes that Voldemort is back, and the government tries everything they can to discredit those who say so. Harry gets tricked into almost retrieving a prophecy for Voldemort from the Ministry of Magic, which leads to the truth coming out when the Minister sees Voldemort with his own eyes. Book six, *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, follows Harry as he tries to learn everything he can about Voldemort's past as it is revealed that the latter has created several dark magical artefacts which make him essentially immortal. Dumbledore dies trying to retrieve and destroy one of these artefacts called Horcruxes. Book seven, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, follows Harry and his friends as they try to find the remainder of the seven Horcruxes and kill Voldemort for good. They ultimately succeed and the series ends with them sending their own children to Hogwarts.

Since the Harry Potter series is very popular, it stands to reason that it would be thoroughly researched, which it is. There have been articles and theses written on the translating of the series, the meanings behind the names of the characters, the mythology and morphology behind the various magical creatures and items seen in the books. Harry Potter has also been researched from a pedagogical standpoint, researching the different teacher characters and their methodologies regarding teaching. Also, character analyses have been written about Severus Snape (Applebaum, 2008) and Albus Dumbledore (Olsen, 2013), though the author of the latter focuses more on the morals of the character, rather than the character themselves.

There has been a Master's thesis written on the topic in our department (2018) by Renata Lukk, titled *Harry Potter and the Stereo/typical Teachers: a Critical Study of Teacher Characters in J. K. Rowling's "Harry Potter"*. The author of that thesis aims to find out if the teacher characters in the Harry Potter series fall into any conventional teacher stereotypes. She proves this to be true. While her analysis focuses more on the Defence

Against the Dark Arts professors, the present thesis analyses other teachers as well, though a couple of them are DADA Professors as well, namely Dolores Jane Umbridge and Gilderoy Lockhart. Her conclusions on both characters are similar to those in the present thesis. She states that “[...] Dolores Umbridge is a stereotypical “evil teacher,” who is more interested in getting the power in school and infiltrating Hogwarts with Ministry spirit rather than actually teaching the students something useful.” (Lukk 2018: 63) and states the following about Prof. Lockhart. “Therefore, [she] proposed to have two new identity categories: Teacher as Objectionable and Teacher as a Fraud.” (Lukk 2018: 38). Of these two categories she concluded that Lockhart embodied Teacher as a Fraud.

What sets apart the present thesis from the others, is that while most analyses of the series do not look at the personalities of the teachers or analyse their actions, this one does and moreover, highlights the negative aspects of the personalities of several of the professors, which has previously only been done shortly in passing while discussing other aspects of the series. What is more, the present thesis combines the analyses of the Harry Potter series and the fanfiction series *the Sacrifices Arc*, which to the present author`s knowledge, has not been done before.

The main reason why very few people think about the characters in a negative way is that most people believe them to be good people at heart (with the exception of Severus Snape, who is a more controversial character, and Dolores Umbridge). A good example of this is Albus Dumbledore. A lot of people think of him as a good guy, but there are also people who, rightfully, think him a bad guy or overrated. This, however, seems to be the minority. Although the present author does not make use of material gleaned from Harry Potter related Forums, where these ideas are expressed, it is worth noting that 13,000 people out of 70,000 believed Severus Snape to be their favourite Harry Potter character in a poll done by the Guardian (Pauli, 2011) and that Dumbledore came in 8<sup>th</sup> in the same poll

surrounded by series protagonists shows what a fan-favourite he is. Evidence of the positive attitude regarding the characters can mostly be found in different Harry Potter related Facebook groups. It is also evident in the way how J. K. Rowling herself thinks and writes about her characters on *Pottermore*, which is the official Harry Potter fan-site where Rowling herself, amongst others, writes back-stories for her characters and expands the Wizarding World. For example, when the present author last visited the website, there was a featured article on the main page called *The Pros and Cons of... Working at Hogwarts*, which lists working under Dumbledore as a pro and the author, who remains anonymous, states that:

*Whilst he has his flaws, having Dumbledore as your kindly boss would be pretty lovely. Professor Trelawney found this out when the temporary headmaster Dolores Umbridge tried to turf her out, but Dumbledore stayed loyal and used his power to protect her. (Pottermore 2019)*

J. K. Rowling is also known for giving her characters meaningful names. So much so that Jacob Shamsian, a journalist for Insider magazine, has compiled a list of 46 different character names and their meanings titled *The Real Meanings Behind 46 Different Names in the 'Harry Potter' Universe — and What They Say About the Characters*.

One way of approaching the problematics of the teachers at Hogwarts is to look at their teaching methods in the light of different pedagogical theories. A. Đumlija in *The Pedagogy of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry in Harry Potter Novels* (BA thesis) (2015) has compared the methodologies of Hogwarts teachers in the light of different pedagogical theories. Using theories formulated by Megan Birch, the authors divide the Hogwarts teacher into three categories: “polarities”, who are two-dimensional teachers, who embody their subjects completely and have polar opposites like Professor Binns, the dull ghost teacher of History of Magic and Sybil Trelawney, the eccentric, free-spirited Divination teacher; “complexities”, who are three-dimensional and complex like Professor McGonagall or Professor Snape, and “paragons”, who they both deem the perfect teacher.

In addition to Megan Birch's views the author also gives her own examples and explanations for the division. This division proved useful indeed for the purpose of the present paper as some of the teachers are featured more in the series and some are given only a couple of traits.

G. Bassham in *A Hogwarts Education: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* (2010) examines the Hogwarts curriculum through the lens of educational philosophy and tries to see what different philosophers would have thought of the school. Though he commends Hogwarts on several parts of its teaching techniques, he concludes that the school is too dangerous, there are too few qualified teachers and the students do not get a well-rounded education, which is a conclusion the present author fully shares.

In *Keeping It Real: Teaching and Learning in the Harry Potter series*, an honours thesis (2011), Mary E.N. Vaughn fuses different taxonomies to analyse the teachers and their teaching methods, comparing Hogwarts to ordinary schools and asking if our educational system can learn anything from the wizarding one. Her analysis of the characters is sound and thorough and helps to highlight the issues the present thesis is going to tackle.

Björn Sundmark in his *Potter, Pedagogy and Professors: Teaching and Learning in the Harry Potter Books* (2014), focuses on the pedagogical side of the school as he looks at "what Harry learns and how, in and out of school, with and without the aid (or hindrance) of teachers." (Sundmark 2014: 2). He concludes that most of the teaching in the classroom, aside from one or two exceptions, is quite shallow and does not strive towards giving students higher order thinking skills. He also dwells at length on Snape.

Peter Applebaum in his article *The Great Snape Debate* (2008) analyses why Snape is such an attractive character for many people. His analysis is based on a book with the same title, which contain a number of anti-Snape and pro-Snape essays. He brings out that a large reason for the debate is not due to Snape's personality as created by Rowling, but rather

to Alan Rickman`s superb acting in the role, which won him the admiration of many female fans. He expands on this and brings out that the reason for this might also be how one-dimensional Snape seems through Harry`s eyes in the books and how films allowed Alan Rickman to breathe more life into the character. Most of Applebaum`s article is spent discussing the Harry Potter series as a Bildungsroman, in which Snape saw Harry make all the decisions that put him in danger, but in doing so also made the right decisions for the larger Wizarding World. On the pro-Snape side, he argues that it is Snape`s love for Harry`s mother that allows him to see that love is stronger than power and trust despite his difficult childhood and that all of his actions should be looked at in the light of the said childhood. This idea is something the present thesis is going to try to disprove when talking about Snape more thoroughly. He also argues that it is Snape`s self-sacrifice that led Harry by example to sacrifice himself to Voldemort. He also argues that Snape was a pawn of both Dumbledore`s and Voldemort`s, making the keeping of his true alliance between them a secret, a matter of grave importance.

As mentioned above, Snape is not the only character of the Harry Potter series who has been written about as an individual character. Lisa Olsen has written a Master`s thesis titled *The Ethics of Albus Dumbledore: A Critical Discussion of Professor Dumbledore as a Moral Leader and Ideal in the Harry Potter Series*. In it she discusses whether Dumbledore should be considered the moral paragon, as he is portrayed in the books, and comes to the conclusion that he should not be due to the fact that many of Dumbledore`s actions have a hidden agenda.

The aim of this thesis will be to look at seven teacher characters from the canon series and analyse them in order to identify abusive and manipulative behaviour patterns using evidence from the Harry Potter books, the fanfiction series by Lightning On The Wave and other academic sources.

## CHAPTER 2: MINOR TEACHING CHARACTERS

The following chapter will focus on some of the secondary teacher characters from the Harry Potter series. The thesis starts by outlining the faults of the secondary characters because there is less to be said about each individual character and by starting with the secondary characters, the fact that they have faults supports the idea that the major characters have them as well. The secondary characters were chosen because they displayed signs of being liars, manipulators or horrible teachers in general. The teachers who were excluded and the reasons why they were excluded were outlined in the introduction. The subchapters begin with an analysis of their respective characters from the canon series as well as their AU counterparts and evidence from other scholarly sources.

### Chapter 2.1: Divination Professor Sybil Trelawney

Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry has no shortage of teachers although it would seem that most of them are inadequate at teaching or are in general horrible people lying to and manipulating the students. The first manipulator and liar that comes to mind from the secondary character list is definitely Divination Professor Sybil Trelawney, who in the words of Minerva McGonagall:

*has predicted the death of one student a year since she arrived at this school. None of them has died yet. Seeing death omens is her favorite way of greeting a new class. If it were not for the fact that I never speak ill of my colleagues — (Rowling 1999: 69).*

Although Divination (Astrology, reading the future from crystal balls and tea leaves etc) is not a precise science, no teacher should go around telling children as young as thirteen that they are possibly going to die. It is unprofessional and could do damage to the children's psyche.



Not to mention the fact that although she has been teaching basically since the year Harry was born, she has no teaching qualifications (neither do any of the other teachers to our knowledge). We do not even know if these kinds of qualifications exist in the wizarding world, since even Voldemort, before he took on the title, simply walked into the Headmaster's office and asked for a job. Trelawney is obviously only employed at the school because Dumbledore wanted her close in case she made another prophecy about Voldemort. She admittedly does in *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, but it turns out to be useless for the Headmaster anyway since he does not hear it, it comes into fruition within the same day and according to the lore, Seers cannot recall prophecies they have made so it was lucky she was not alone in her tower when she had the prophecy. She is also mentally unstable as after High Inquisitor Umbridge fires her in *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* "Professor Trelawney was standing in the middle of the entrance hall with her wand in one hand and an empty sherry bottle in the other, looking utterly mad." (Rowling 2003: 405).

J. K. Rowling has written on Pottermore, the official Harry Potter fan site, where she writes elements of worldbuilding ranging from character backgrounds, magical history and other lore to information about other magical schools and places, that she named Sybill after the female Greek oracles called sibyls, which tells us that her powers are real. Her last name, Trelawney, is an old Cornish surname hinting, according to Rowling, that the Seer relies too much on her heritage. Rowling states in the same article:

*Half-believing in her own fibs about her talent (for she is at least ninety per cent fraud), Sybill has cultivated a dramatic manner and enjoys impressing her more gullible students with predictions of doom and disaster. (Rowling, 2019a).*

Andrea Đumlija, in her thesis, classifies Trelawney (with help from Birch) as a polarity, meaning that she represents only one side of a spectrum: she embodies her subject completely and does not contradict it. This means she has a mystical presence and tries to

get the pupils to interact with the subject matter. In Đumlija`s view she is not a bad teacher but, in the present author`s opinion, she is very one-dimensional, only getting some character after being fired from her post in the fifth book. Bassham also agrees that “Trelawney is an “old fraud” who teaches “wooly” subject and enjoys predicting her students` early and gruesome deaths.” (Bassham 2010: 6).

In *the Sacrifices Arc*, Trelawney`s character is handled differently because although prophecies are major plot devices in *the Sacrifices Arc* as well, they do not rely on her being a teacher. Since LOTW does not use the classroom setting as a place where plot progresses as much as Rowling does, the Trelawney we see in *the Sacrifices Arc* is basically the same as the Trelawney in the canon series in terms of her character, but the aspect of her as a teacher is less emphasized than her as a prophetess. This does not mean however, that she does not display the same faults as a teacher in the AU as she does in the canon series. For example, Snape still refers to her as “Hogwarts`s useless excuse for a Divination teacher.” (Lightning On The Wave 2005a: 71) and Zacharias Smith tells Harry: “Everyone knows that Trelawney is a fraud. Everyone.” (Lightning On The Wave 2005b: 283). Even though she is seen teaching less in *the Sacrifices Arc*, Harry describes her class to be as pointless as canon Harry does.

## **Chapter 2.2: Defence Against the Dark Arts Professor Gilderoy Lockhart**

Gilderoy Lockhart is an interesting character, because he seems like a great character on paper - he has written several books on the many wonderful and heroic things he has done and seems to be admired by several characters in the series, most of whom are female. His heroisms, however, are contradicted by his appearance and mannerisms. Lockhart surrounds himself with portraits of himself, uses Harry`s fame to extend his own and is generally self-

centred. As far as being an abuser and manipulator goes, he is not at all abusive, at least not to the students. The man however, is an excellent manipulator who prides himself on his memory charms.

The first time we meet Gilderoy Lockhart is in *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, when he is promoting his newest book in the bookstore in Diagon Alley. He at once takes the opportunity to grab Harry and have the press take their picture together saying it will be front page news. It is immediately obvious he only cares about his appearance as he boasts about having won a Best Smile award five times in a row, rather than any of the accomplishments in his books. Even Bassham agrees that Lockhart is “a narcissistic and ineffectual blowhard.” (Bassham 2010: 6).

It is later revealed that Lockhart is the new Defence Against the Dark Arts Professor and that he is no good at it. His study materials are his books on which he quizzes students and he cannot cast even the simplest spells as evident by how easily Snape defeats him in the Duelling Club set up to help students protect themselves from the monster in the Chamber of Secrets.

When the chamber is opened, and people start getting petrified (all their limbs become stiff as stone and they lose consciousness) he tells everyone he could have handled whatever petrified them, yet when he is finally expected to do something to help get rid of the monster in the Chamber, he attempts to escape Hogwarts. Harry and Ron must force him into the Chamber at wand-point and he tries to erase their memories, revealing that he had done the same to the people who had actually accomplished the deeds in his books. This backfires and he ends up losing his own memories completely.

Jacob Shamsian writes that J. K. Rowling has said in an interview with the BBC that the name Lockhart came from a random war memorial and that Gilderoy means a highwayman. She is reported to have said in the same interview that the name is impressive,

and yet, in the middle, quite hollow like the actual character in question (Shamsian, 2018).

We do not see as much of Lockhart in *No Mouth but Some Serpents*, but he remains mostly the same. He is obsessed with his looks, is not very bright, not very good at magic and tries to erase Harry`s memories when confronted for changing other peoples` memories and his fate, while not exactly the same, follows the general canon. The reason for this might be that while in the canon series J. K. Rowling wants Lockhart to be an example of the dangers of letting fame go to one`s head, LOTW has not seen this as an important aspect to emphasise.

It should be pointed out, though, that while J. K. Rowling portrays Lockhart as a relatively incompetent character in the sense that Lockhart wants everyone to think he is brave and heroic but is not very skilled in magic, while the AU version of Lockhart is more manipulative and aware of his actions. Although he is not very skilled in magic, he at least acknowledges it to himself. When Harry confronts him about not being a competent wizard, Lockhart tries to silence him by altering Harry`s memories. He realizes, however, that Harry is more powerful than him and tries to strike a deal with Harry rather than risk exposure. The point is that Lockhart might be incompetent in both series, but the cunning nature Rowling wanted to show in him, is more apparent in the AU than in the canon, where it is basically non-existent. Overall, he might be best classified as an overall horrible teacher with manipulative qualities.

### **Chapter 2.3: Potions Master Horace Eugene Flaccus Slughorn**

There are few characters in Harry Potter more morally ambiguous than Horace Slughorn. He is one of the teachers trying to defend Hogwarts in the Battle of Hogwarts and he is generally nice to people, but he also lies and manipulates people. He seems apologetic

enough for his mistakes but does precious little to correct them unless severely prompted to. At the same time, he is a better Potions Master than Snape, if for nothing else then for being nice to the pupils and represents a different side to Slytherins – the normal, non-evil side.

He does not come off as a very good person, as we first meet him in a Muggle (non-magical) home that had seemingly had a battle conducted in it. He is found disguised as an armchair and reveals having done the damage to the random Muggle home himself. He explains this as a precaution against Death Eaters who have not found him in order to recruit him yet. This behaviour indicates that he has enough of a history of not being too lawful that Voldemort does not immediately assume he would never join the Death Eater ranks. This is proven later in the book by his being caught harvesting rare and expensive plants presumably with the intent to sell them. He is also credited with having told Voldemort about horcruxes, which ultimately make Voldemort almost immortal and might be one of the reasons he wants Slughorn on his side. Slughorn tries to deny the fact to both Dumbledore and Harry for most of the book until Harry gets him drunk enough, so that his guilt outweighs his shame of the deed.

In his *Insider* article, Shamsian states that Horace was a Roman poet:

*known for his witty and well-mannered writing that nonetheless contained serious critiques of his society at the time. [...] he's often depicted as being friends with other famous Roman poets, like Virgil, so that could be a reference to how Slughorn likes to create a coterie of powerful friends around him. (Shamsian, 2018)*

Slughorn's middle name Eugene is Greek for “well-born”, which alludes to Slughorn's status as a Slytherin, which also puts his self-preservative and prideful actions into context, and proponent of nepotism.

Shamsian also points out that Slughorn is a word in Gaelic, which basically means “war cry”. He states that the name could refer to the moral convictions he holds, helping to protect Hogwarts while the other Slytherins were sent to the Dungeons.

Horace Slughorn is a classic manipulator. One of the first things we learn about him

is that he likes to “collect people” in the sense that he gives people he deems to have promise for fame and success the means to achieve the aforementioned fame and success. This is well and good enough, but he does it solely to benefit himself – to get his opinion noticed, to get free Quidditch tickets or just to brag that he knows this or that famous person. Dumbledore himself tells Harry that Harry would be the crown jewel of his collection, should Slughorn be able to “collect” him.

Slughorn is only mentioned in passing in *The Sacrifices Arc* when Snape becomes unable to teach and McGonagall is searching for someone to take over Snape’s duties as Potions Master and Head of Slytherin House so we do not know if Slughorn is the same person in the Alternate Universe. This is due to several reasons. Firstly, Slughorn is meant to show that while Slytherins might be cunning and self-serving, that does not make them automatically evil. Secondly, the plot has changed so much by the time he is first mentioned that the memory, which Harry had to get from him to advance the plot of the canon series, is not a plot device in *the Sacrifices Arc* anymore and LOTW uses different devices to substitute for it.

#### **Chapter 2.4: Care of Magical Creatures Professor Rubeus Hagrid**

Rubeus Hagrid is definitely the teacher in Harry Potter who is a better person than he is a teacher. Hagrid buys Harry his pet owl, introduces Harry to the wizarding world and becomes the first person from the wizarding world that Harry considers a friend – family even. Despite all this, there are secrets behind the kind demeanour of Rubeus Hagrid that both us and Harry realize over time. This is not to say that Hagrid is secretly a malicious person and he definitely does not deserve to be called either an abuser or a manipulator (with a couple of exceptions) but instead can be labelled an overall horrible teacher.

He cannot be called a manipulator (with a couple of exceptions) because his manipulation is subconscious and unintentional. His backstory and demeanour make Harry and his friends want to do things for him. Hagrid wins a dragon egg at a bar in the first book and decides to hatch it. Harry, Ron and Hermione end up helping him get rid of the young dragon when Hagrid is in danger of losing his job. In the third book when Hagrid's pet hippogriff, a magical creature that is part horse, part eagle, attacks a student and is on trial for it, Hermione researches laws to free the animal, and when Umbridge becomes a teacher in the fifth book and puts Hagrid on probation for bad teaching, Hermione makes his lesson plans for him. Hagrid does not consciously manipulate Harry and his friends but since they know he is not very educated and does not have anyone else sympathetic enough to help him, they take on that role themselves which gives the man a sort of subconscious power over them.

Hagrid starts off as the Keeper of Grounds and Keys at Hogwarts but gets assigned as the Care of Magical Creatures Professor in Harry's third year. Being a half-giant, he is larger than normal men and able to handle the more dangerous animals living in the forest due to his size and the fact he has been around them since he was wrongfully expelled from Hogwarts at age thirteen but does not consider that the students cannot handle the beasts in the same manner as him. He brings several dangerous creatures to the lessons, since he is a fanatic of them, not thinking of his students and their lack of experience with the species.

Hagrid is also a gambler and a drunkard. Draco Malfoy says: "I heard he's a sort of savage — lives in a hut on the school grounds and every now and then he gets drunk, tries to do magic, and ends up setting fire to his bed." (Rowling 1997: 54). Although it is probably an exaggeration, we do know that Hagrid goes into the nearby town several times in the first book and comes back with a dragon egg won from a stranger and reveals he had told a stranger while drunk how to get past one of the obstacles guarding the Philosopher's Stone.

Also, when he and Harry first go into the Leaky Cauldron the barman asks if he would like the usual, indicating he is a regular customer and Hagrid refuses, indicating it is something he should not be drinking when on official business. There are more instances when he has been drunk, but these are the most “disastrous” cases. In Shamsian’s article, he states that even Hagrid’s name according to Rowling refers to this drinking problem. Hagrid is supposedly a dialect word for having had a bad night and Rubeus comes from the Latin word *rubeo*, which means reddish and refers to the colour a person's face goes when they've had too much to drink (Shamsian, 2018).

Dumlija classifies Hagrid as a polarity as well. He embodies the subject he teaches, which is Care for Magical Creatures. He is the first person Harry cares about deeply and it is obvious Hagrid cares for him too. These facts make his character more likeable but do not excuse the unintentional emotional manipulation. Bassham also says that Hagrid is a knowledgeable and engaging instructor, who “can’t resist exposing his students to monstrous and dangerous creatures.” (Bassham 2010: 5). Mary Vaughn also states in her thesis that Hagrid’s classroom management skills (or lack thereof) make the lessons difficult, but he is considered a good person by readers since he treats students fairly (Vaughn 2011: 26).

Hagrid, like Slughorn, is also not talked about in *the Sacrifices Arc*. He teaches, but Harry does not pay him too much mind. Harry tries to persuade him to go negotiate with the giants to help defeat Voldemort, but he declines, and he is rarely brought up again in relation to Harry. He becomes a friend to Connor, Harry’s brother, however and takes on a role for him more akin to what we know from the canon. For Harry, LOTW uses a combination of Snape and Draco Malfoy to substitute for the father and friend figure that Rowling uses Hagrid as in the canon series.



## **Chapter 2.5: Defence Against the Dark Arts Professor Dolores Jane Umbridge**

Dolores Jane Umbridge is the character everyone loves to hate. As shown later by the opinions of the different scholars, she is considered by many evil incarnate, even worse than Voldemort. This idea is quite commonplace and one the present author agrees with. She is a manipulator and an abuser and in the present writer's opinion an overall horrible teacher. She is only prominent in *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, because that is the only book that she is a teacher in.

Umbridge starts off as the assistant secretary to the Minister of Magic but is assigned to work in Hogwarts as the Defence Against the Dark Arts Professor when the Ministry is afraid that Dumbledore wants to become Minister of Magic. She starts by banning the use of magic in her classes, punishes pupils in an unnecessarily severe manner and brings about several new and pointless rules, all the while trying to convince the children that Voldemort had not returned the previous summer (when we, the readers, know he has in the end of *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*). It is revealed that she sent a couple of Dementors, creatures that suck out people's souls and take away their happiness, to kill Harry at the beginning of *Order of the Phoenix*, which is an indication that she has little regard for life in general.

She manipulates students into believing Voldemort has not returned, but she also uses more subtle manipulations. Her appearance suggests she should be a nice person: she is short, chubby, has short curly hair, talks in a sweet, girly voice and wears all pink. All these physical traits are usually associated with pleasant and motherly characters. Another example of her manipulations, bordering on abuse, is that she uses a truth-telling potion called Veritaserum on the pupils without their knowledge. She also uses her position as High

Inquisitor, a post made specifically for her, to attempt to control the staff and regulations at Hogwarts, and to bully the other teachers, manipulating them, in many cases, into submission.

Umbridge is also an emotional as well as a physical abuser. Her form of detention involves giving pupils a quill which magical cuts into their hand and extracts blood to write on a piece of paper. She does this to Harry first, but also uses the punishment on other children. She does not care if they suffer and tries to instil fear into her students instead of being an encouraging role-model. Umbridge favours the Slytherin students as they are the most willing to cooperate with her on creating the new regime and forming the Inquisitorial Squad. Umbridge gives them special permission to take away house points, which gets abused by the Slytherins. This is partially Umbridge`s fault as she does nothing to correct her Inquisitorial Squad and even encourages their behaviour. All of these behavioural patterns make her in the present writer`s opinion a horrible teacher. Bassham states that Umbridge, in his opinion: “is a twisted, power hungry racial supremacist who tries to undermine any effective education at the school.” (2010: 6). Sundmark also supports this view by stating: “The only one who really tries to change things radically at Hogwarts is Dolores Umbridge, whose simpering, evil, technocrat persona makes Voldemort pale by comparison (if that were possible).” (2014: 7)

In the article on Pottermore about Umbridge, J. K. Rowling writes:

*“Dolores” means sorrow, something she undoubtedly inflicts on all around her. “Umbridge” is a play on “umbrage” from the British expression “to take umbrage”, meaning offence. Dolores is offended by any challenge to her limited world-view; I felt her surname conveyed the pettiness and rigidity of her character. It is harder to explain “Jane”; it simply felt rather smug and neat between her other two names. (Rowling, 2019b)*

Since the Minister of Magic does not believe that Dumbledore is plotting against him in *the Sacrifices Arc*, he does not need Umbridge to become a teacher at Hogwarts to keep an eye on him. This does not make her a better person in the Alternate Universe. In the AU, fearing Harry instead of Dumbledore, the Minister tries to take away Harry`s magic, to which

he fights back against and Umbridge flings a pain-curse at Harry. This indicates the same lack of regard for human life as was presented in the canon series. Fudge gets fired for his misdeeds and Umbridge becomes Head of the Department for the Regulation and Control of Magical Creatures. She tries to make life difficult for the magical creatures Harry is actively trying to help, such as werewolves, centaurs and magical snakes. This behaviour coincides with the knowledge from the canon series, that Umbridge hates “half-breeds”.

Umbridge is not unlike a fanatic in the sense that she believes her opinion to be the only correct one. She is very dutiful and seems to go into great lengths to persuade people that her point of view is the correct one. This aspect of her is the one that is most emphasised in *the Sacrifices Arc*.

To sum up, there is no denying that all of the minor characters mentioned in this chapter have faults. Whether the reader thinks they are unredeemable faults, is up to the reader. Professor Sybil Trelawney appears indeed to be a drunkard, an emotional manipulator and an over-all horrible teacher. Professor Gilderoy Lockhart is a vain, underqualified liar, manipulator and over-all horrible teacher. Potions Master Horace Eugene Flaccus Slughorn is an opportunist, a manipulator and a “collector” of people. Professor Rubeus Hagrid is a drunkard, manipulator and bad at teaching. Professor Dolores Jane Umbridge is all three and arguably the worst teacher (at least in the series).

## CHAPTER 3: MAJOR ABUSIVE CHARACTERS

There are several other characters, who could also be classified as major abusive characters, such as Harry`s aunt and uncle in the canon series. In this thesis however, since the main focus is on teacher characters, the two main candidates are Severus Snape and Albus Dumbledore.

Severus Snape is Harry`s abuser for almost the longest time, but since his abuse is not centred only around Harry, he becomes the person who has bullied his students and abused them for longer than any other teacher character in the series.

Albus Dumbledore qualifies as a major abusive character because he is one of the main canon characters and he has lied to and manipulated Harry for a long time as well, making him little different to Severus Snape. His abuse is amplified in the AU as well.

### Chapter 3.1 Potions Master Severus Snape

Severus Snape is the character that a lot of people are divided on their opinion about, since he does receive a “redemption arc” of sorts at the end of Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows. In the present writer`s opinion, there should be no question about whether he is a good or bad or even a morally ambiguous character, since there are almost no redeeming qualities in him. He is an all-in-one abuser, manipulator and over-all horrible teacher. Most people who perceive him as a good character are undoubtedly under the influence of Alan Rickman`s stupendous acting throughout the eight Harry Potter films. Applebaum remarks ironically:

*I mean, you didn't think all those Snape fans were really just interested in discussing the curative properties of wormwood, did you? These women (and they are almost all women) rarely venture into the academic aspects of Snape's character. They've got other things on their minds. Like what he wears under those black robes. (Applebaum 2008: 3).*

Applebaum also points out in his article that, when asked if Rowling thought Snape was a hero, she stated:

*Yes, I do; though a very flawed hero. An anti-hero perhaps. He is not a particularly likeable man in many ways. He remains rather cruel, a bully, riddled with bitterness and insecurity — and yet he loved, and showed loyalty to that love and, ultimately, laid down his life because of it. That's pretty heroic!* (Appelbaum 2008: 2).

The present author absolutely agrees with the middle part of Rowling's statement. Snape is a difficult character to dissect because there are allusions to childhood abuse in the canon and it is shown that he was bullied at school too by Harry's father and his friends, the Marauders. It is the present author's opinion, however, that what most readers and Snape himself believe is Snape's love for Harry's mother Lily, is actually obsession. Snape tried to achieve a connection with her, but ultimately failed because he became controlling, bordering on obsessive. This might stem from the abuse, meaning that since Lily was the only person who was nice to Snape growing up, he might have seen Lily as his first and only friend and felt entitled to her, in a way, which is in no way right or healthy. This is shown by how he had no qualm about hurting people Lily cared about i.e. her sister Petunia or lying about hurting them like in the following memory revealed in *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*:

*There was a crack: A branch over Petunia's head had fallen. Lily screamed: The branch caught Petunia on the shoulder, and she staggered backward and burst into tears. [...]*  
*"Did you make that happen?"*  
*"No." He looked both defiant and scared.*  
*"You did!" She was backing away from him. "You did! You hurt her!"*  
*"No — no I didn't!" But the lie did not convince Lily [...]" (Rowling 2007: 404).*

If Snape were an actual person displaying this sort of behaviour, he would most likely have a restraining order put on him and likely also be in a mental institution or jail. To further illustrate this point, it should be said that the only reason Snape decided to turn against Voldemort, was because he did not want Lily to be killed when Voldemort attacked her husband and Harry. When he came to Dumbledore for help after he learned that Voldemort

would target Lily and her family based on the half of a prophecy Snape delivered to him, they have the following exchange:

*“If she means so much to you,” said Dumbledore, “surely Lord Voldemort will spare her? Could you not ask for mercy for the mother, in exchange for the son?”*

*“I have — I have asked him —”*

*“You disgust me,” said Dumbledore, and Harry had never heard so much contempt in his voice. Snape seemed to shrink a little. “You do not care, then, about the deaths of her husband and child? They can die, as long as you have what you want?” Snape said nothing, but merely looked up at Dumbledore. (Rowling 2007: 410).*

To be fair, Voldemort offers to spare Lily`s life, but she refuses to let him kill her son. In a sense, Voldemort has more honour than Snape.

Snape goes on to become one of the biggest abusers at Hogwarts. Even his name, Severus, comes from the Latin word for “stern”, which is a great reflection of his personality. He is incredibly stern and frigid and finds immense pleasure in mentally scarring his students as well as does all he can to belittle and humiliate them. After an incident when a boy from Slytherin, a house which Snape is the Head of and which in his eyes can do no wrong, cursed Hermione, one of the three main protagonists, with a curse that started rapidly growing her front teeth, the following ensued:

*[Ron] forced Hermione to show Snape her teeth — she was doing her best to hide them with her hands, though this was difficult as they had now grown down past her collar. Pansy Parkinson and the other Slytherin girls were doubled up with silent giggles, pointing at Hermione from behind Snape`s back. Snape looked coldly at Hermione, then said, “I see no difference.” (Rowling 2000: 188).*

It should come as no surprise, based on everything beforementioned, that this was not an isolated incident and that there were many others like it. For example, he threatens to test if a potion was brewed correctly on a student`s pet frog knowing that it most likely would be brewed incorrectly and that as a result of this, would kill the frog. In Harry`s first class with him, Snape singled him out knowing that having been raised by muggles, Harry would not have known most of the questions Snape asked of him and continued to find every opportunity to berate and humiliate Harry and others. Snape is such a horrible teacher to the

point where he is at least one student`s biggest fear. It should be noted that, if the student is not alone in having Snape as their greatest fear, the others like them are probably not from Slytherin, as Slytherins would likely get away with any- and everything, were it for Snape, and that there should never be any reason for a teacher to be a child's greatest fear.

The previous statement is supported by Sundmark in *The Great Snape Debate*, where he states that:

Professor Snape is in many ways Professor McGonagall's shadow. Alike in many ways, but where she is benevolent he is malevolent; where she wants the students to succeed, he seems to want them to fail.

Birch writes: "With the combination of his dress, his attitudes and behaviors, and even his classroom décor, Snape employs [a] pedagogy of fear and intimidation" (111). Instead of instilling self-confidence in the students, like McGonagall, he takes it away. (Sundmark 2014: 5-6).

Snape tries all he can to expose Professor Remus Lupin, a former Marauder, as a werewolf even though he is very much aware that Lupin is taking a potion, made by Snape, to make him harmless when he transforms during the full moon. To be fair, Lupin almost attacked him once in wolf-form when they were both students but holding a grudge for twenty years over something that did not even fully happen and was not even Lupin`s fault in the first place, is very childish.

Also, when Snape becomes Headmaster in *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, he allows Death Eaters into the staff and allows them to literally torture children, eleven-year-olds, to be precise, with one of the Unforgivable Curses, which causes them immense pain. He does not care for the well-being of the students, they are none of his concern and he keeps them alive only because they are hostages: useful pawns to ward off hordes of wizards and witches from attacking Voldemort.

As far as loyalty goes, Snape seemed to have been loyal to exactly two people, if not one: himself and Dumbledore. The latter because he was willing to kill Dumbledore on the man`s own orders. It could be argued, though, that Snape could have seen this as revenge for all the perceived wrongs Dumbledore had done him in not expelling Lupin and his friends

after the beforementioned attack occurred.

In the present author's opinion, Snape's only half-way redeeming qualities are that he has never directly tried to kill Harry and that the way he gave Harry his memories when he died, was helpful in killing Voldemort. The first quality could basically be disregarded however, because Snape did so on Dumbledore's orders and save from saving Harry once in first year, ridiculed him the rest of the time.

In *The Great Snape Debate*, Appelbaum points out that:

*Snape made his final commitment when he approached Dumbledore for help against Voldemort, a commitment that ran counter to one implied by his own childhood and apprenticeship. [...] While Dumbledore mostly sat back and passively accepted his role at Hogwarts, Snape was the one who constantly and actively reconstructed his allegiances anew with each act of support for those united against Voldemort. So in the end, it is Snape who turns out to be the self-determined teacher, and Dumbledore the shallow cad. (Appelbaum 2008: 9)*

While it may be correct that each time Snape brought information from Voldemort to Dumbledore, he was making a conscious decision about his alliance, it should be noted that he stopped helping the protagonists the moment he had done his perceived duty to Dumbledore, so it could be surmised that the latter, not the principles of good, kept Snape from returning to Voldemort.

Severus Snape from *The Sacrifices Arc* starts off almost the same way as Snape in the canon series. He is self-centred, mean and abusive but not quite to the extent that the latter was. Slowly, he begins to change into a half-decent loving, protective parent to Harry and even finds a somewhat romantic partner in Regulus Black, who is dead in the canon series. The character growth that Rowling was aiming toward with Snape in the last book was very prominent in the LOTW's Alternate Universe. LOTW does a fantastic job showing the characters' thoughts and emotions but also making her characters relatable and capable of change even after suffering trauma.

Alternate Universe Snape is definitely not perfect, since he displays most of the flaws present in canon Snape, including being jealous of Harry's dad, wanting revenge on Remus



Lupin, having a bad temper and being closed-off and un-supportive toward his students. One of the major differences is that he is not hung-up on Lily and winning her over is not his primary goal. Instead, Snape`s goal is to restore Slytherin House to a place of esteem and he sees Harry as the perfect person to use in that cause. Over time, Snape becomes fond of Harry and vice-versa, eventually letting down his barriers and becoming a better person. This shows how the character, like an actual person, can change their minds and themselves by going through life in general. For example, Snape becomes paralyzingly afraid of werewolves after being almost attacked by Lupin, acknowledges it after a time and strives to work on himself to not be controlled by fear in the future. He starts off with a set of issues from his childhood and years as a Death Eater but ultimately makes the effort to overcome these issues to make life better for himself and the people around him. This makes him a very realistic character.

Character developments like these does not happen overnight but they do have logical reasonings behind them in LOTW`s series in a way that the canon books could not achieve, and the development remained unfinished until the end of the series as character development, in real life, is never a process anyone can be done-with.

### **Chapter 3.2 Headmaster Albus Percival Wulfric Brian Dumbledore**

There are several different opinions about Dumbledore as well, most of which involve him being the paragon of good and virtue with his only flaw being that he is too overprotective of the wizarding world, and subsequently not telling Harry important details about what Harry must do to rid the world of Voldemort. Dumbledore is usually not criticized, though he, like anyone else should be and on the same level as Snape, if not more.

J. K. Rowling makes him out to be a great character. According to Shamsian each of

his names has a meaning, and they are all positive. Albus is Latin for “white”, which could be symbolic, but could also just refer to his beard, Percival was the only one of King Arthur's Knights to be deemed worthy enough to find the Holy Grail. “Wulfric” is an Anglo-Saxon name that means “wolf ruler” or “wolf power”, which could refer to the fact that Dumbledore was supposedly one of the most powerful wizards alive, but could be referring to Wulfric of Haselbury, a 12th-century British figure who was known as a miracle worker. “Brian” is often thought to be derived from an Old Celtic word that roughly means “noble”. And finally, “Dumbledore” is an Old English word for “bumblebee”, which Rowling has said she gave him, because she imagined him buzzing about the castle. (Shamsian, 2018).

Dumbledore, however, has several flaws starting with how he treats Harry. It is not only that Harry gets away with more than he should, because he is the Boy-Who-Lived, but because Dumbledore has decided to completely throw out the school's regulations when it comes to Harry. For example, usually when a child with non-magical parents displays signs of being a wizard or witch, a teacher is sent to the family, when the child is ten years old to explain everything they might need to know. Harry received letter after letter to the hundreds and when his aunt and uncle could not take the letters anymore and fled to a remote tiny island, Dumbledore sent Hagrid, not yet even a teacher at that point, to teach him about his wizarding heritage. The whole thing is made worse when we, in a later book, find out that Dumbledore has been monitoring Harry since he was small and would have surely known how the boy was treated there.

Rowling portrays Dumbledore as an eccentric old man with a heart of gold and few flaws until *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* where we learn about his upbringing. To quote his brother, Aberforth:

*“Oh, did he now? And did he tell you everything, was he honest with you?” Harry wanted with all his heart to say “Yes,” but somehow the simple word would not rise to his lips. Aberforth seemed to know what he was thinking. “I knew my brother, Potter. He learned secrecy at our mother’s knee. Secrets and lies, that’s how we grew up, and Albus... he was a natural.” (Rowling 2007: 341)*

Even Harry himself suspected Dumbledore of not being truthful in his first year at Hogwarts. Granted, the situation was not so perilous as to demand complete truth, it did not require a lie either.

The fact that Dumbledore did not tell Harry about the prophecy or the Horcruxes sooner than he did, is baffling because he leaves it to such a last minute, that Harry knows barely anything about what he should do or where he should go when Dumbledore dies and Voldemort takes over the Ministry of Magic. In the end, Harry knows nothing about how to actually defeat Voldemort, it creates a rift between him and his friends and he takes risks and makes mistakes he would not have made, had he known about everything. One could argue that Dumbledore was teaching Harry how to find out information and survive on his own, but it can also be argued that, in a matter as important as saving the entire wizarding world, the more Dumbledore could have told Harry or done himself, the better. Several of the mishaps in the latter books would have been prevented if Dumbledore had been open with Harry about his suspicions regarding Voldemort and the prophecy and not decided to just not talk to Harry, nor look at him, for an entire year.

It can be said that Snape and Dumbledore share an awful lot of similarities, which might be why Dumbledore ordered Snape to kill him instead of anyone else. They both experienced a difficult, loveless childhood, fell in love with people they could not be with (although whether Dumbledore fell in love with the Dark Lord Grindelwald is largely up for debate and so is the matter of Snape's love/obsession towards Lily). They both favoured their own Hogwarts Houses above all else because Dumbledore was clearly as defensive of Gryffindors as Snape was of Slytherins as evidenced by how none of the Marauders were expelled after they nearly killed Snape nor suffered any repercussions for their constant bullying and how Hagrid, another orphan, was allowed to live on school grounds after being expelled. In a way, Dumbledore might have seen a kindred spirit in Snape, someone drawn

to power but not having the strength to resist it like he himself had tried all his adult life. That is why he says this to Snape, when he asks Snape to kill him in *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*:

*“If you don’t mind dying,” said Snape roughly, “why not let Draco do it?”*

*“That boy’s soul is not yet so damaged,” said Dumbledore. “I would not have it ripped apart on my account.”*

*“And my soul, Dumbledore? Mine?”*

*“You alone know whether it will harm your soul to help an old man avoid pain and humiliation,” said Dumbledore. (Rowling 2007: 413).*

He gives Snape the option to say no, while simultaneously subconsciously manipulating him into saying yes. This speaks of a kind of mutual respect and trust which seemed sincere enough, at least on Snape’s part, because he did what Dumbledore asked of him until the very end knowing it might possibly mean bringing about his own early death to do so.

This might seem like a noble sacrifice to make, but, as Lisa Olsen points out in her thesis *The Ethics of Albus Dumbledore*, all of Dumbledore’s actions had ulterior and selfish motives and that:

*Dumbledore does not regret what he did, he probably simply regrets how he had to do it. Albus Dumbledore still works for the greater good, but there is a difference. Albus Dumbledore, the teenager, wants to start a war for the greater good, whereas Albus Dumbledore, the old man, wants to end a war for the greater good. (Olsen 2013: 49)*

It might be correct to assume that Dumbledore’s idea of the greater good might not line up with everyone else’s and that he is unwilling to rethink them in light of new evidence.

Dumlija, in her thesis, agrees with Megan Birch that Dumbledore is a paragon: the perfect teacher. The statement is not unthinkably false when looking at how he treats Harry as a student. Dumbledore is kind and patient, allows Harry to come to his own conclusions about things and that is perfect if the topic being taught were Divination or any other school subject, not how to defeat Voldemort or anything regarding running the school. It is the present author’s belief that Dumbledore was likely a good person at heart who just was not

meant to be anything more than a scholar, but had power thrust upon him and could not cope with it. He even states at the end of *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, when Harry claims he would have been a good Minister of Magic:

*“Would I?” asked Dumbledore heavily. “I am not so sure. I had proven, as a very young man, that power was my weakness and my temptation. It is a curious thing, Harry, but perhaps those who are best suited to power are those who have never sought it. Those who, like you, have leadership thrust upon them, and take up the mantle because they must, and find to their own surprise that they wear it well. “I was safer at Hogwarts. I think I was a good teacher —”*

*“You were the best —” (Rowling 2007: 434)*

As a Headmaster, Dumbledore is quite incompetent. He cannot ensure the children`s safety in everyday situations, let alone in crisis situations. First of all, the school is very dangerous in and of itself with moving staircases and trick steps which can cause injuries if one is not careful to step over them. Moreover, there is a poltergeist at the school, whose idea of fun is soaking children with water or dropping things on their heads. Furthermore, there is a forbidden forest outside the school where no student must go under any circumstance. Unless the school makes two pairs of eleven-year-old children serve detention by helping Hagrid find an animal capable of killing a unicorn in the Forest with only their wands and a dog or their wands and Hagrid, who is not allowed to, nor knows how to, use magic like in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher`s Stone*. Add those to the fact that none of the teachers have any teacher training that we know of and are hired on the basis of subject proficiency, or if Dumbledore needs them or not, and the school is a recipe for disaster.

Dumbledore constantly makes decisions that put the kids in danger, for example, in Harry`s first year, he allows a giant three-headed dog into the castle. He does not close the school, when in Harry`s second year, students start being attacked nor when, in Harry`s third year, there is an alleged mass-murderer on the loose and almost certainly after Harry, nor in Harry`s fifth year, when there is about a dozen former Death Eaters out to get him. Not to mention he hosts a magical tournament which was cancelled in the first place because people kept getting killed and he allows Snape, a person he knows hates Harry, teach the latter an

important skill in defending himself from Voldemort.

In the case of alternate universe Dumbledore, they start off the same. Dumbledore in *The Sacrifices Arc* is known as a Light Lord, an exceedingly powerful wizard who has Declared for Light and does not use dark magic because of it. He is seen as a paragon as well and is worshipped by many people. What people do not know is that he and Lily have been shaping Harry into a weapon against Voldemort since Harry was a small child in order to fulfil a prophecy. His idea of morality is coherent only via a weird sort of tunnel vision. He does things because they are for the greater good and loses sight of who he might hurt in the process. Dumbledore attacks Harry several times in order to get him back under a web that binds his mind and magic, because Harry will not make the sacrifice to go under it willingly. In the end, AU Dumbledore strays from his values, becomes a Dark Lord when the Light does not approve of his methods anymore, and is killed, after having tortured a building full of people.

The character development here is very noticeable, and it could be argued that a version of the same change happened in canon Dumbledore as well. It portrays someone deep in their own ideas of right and wrong, unable to stray from their perceived truth even if their idea of what is right has strayed very far from the general consensus.

To sum up, both men mentioned in the chapter have difficult pasts and have coped with them in different ways. While Snape became a bitter bully, Dumbledore at least tried to make the world a better place. Dumbledore, like Umbridge, was a person who was set in their beliefs even if their beliefs lead to harm. The difference is that Dumbledore acknowledged that he was not always in the right (even though he arguably does little to change his behaviour).

## CONCLUSION

The thesis set out to prove that several of the teacher characters in the Harry Potter series were not good people and were instead, if not just bad at their jobs, liars and manipulators using examples from the canon series and contrasting them to examples from the AU series *the Sacrifices Arc*. The thesis proved the hypothesis, although it cannot be said that most of them did not have redeeming qualities. Most of the teachers in Hogwarts are not as good as we would have liked to believe as children and most, if not all of them have their flaws. This became especially apparent when contrasting the canon characters to their fan-fiction counterparts.

Divination Professor Sybil Trelawney is mentally unstable and should not work with children, although her abuse does not seem intentional. She really believes in her teachings and if what she learns is that someone is going to die, she is not hesitant to let that someone know not thinking how objective the teachings are or whom she is conveying the information to.

Defence Against the Dark Arts Professor Gilderoy Lockhart is a self-centred narcissist, who does not know what he is doing most of the time in regard to teaching his subject.

Potions Master Horace Slughorn is a master manipulator who uses his teaching position to gain favours from his famous former students.

Care of Magical Creatures Professor Rubeus Hagrid is a good-hearted man, who is neither very well educated nor capable of making lesson plans that take into account the level of the children he is teaching. He also has a drinking problem and has a demeanour which compels others to help him.

Defence Against the Dark Arts Professor Dolores Jane Umbridge is, by most people,

considered worse than Voldemort. She is vindictive, will not let her pupils use magic in her lessons and thoroughly paranoid about anything remotely against the Ministry of Magic.

Potions Master Severus Snape is not the morally ambiguous character most people think him to be. He is a textbook abuser and manipulator who cannot let go of neither his love nor his childhood grudges. Not even that fact that he died heroically makes up for the years of abuse he put his pupils through just because of those grudges.

Headmaster Albus Percival Wulfric Brian Dumbledore could be a good teacher, but not a very good school administrator. He is too afraid of the power holding such a position gives him and because of that, makes bad decisions.

All in all, the nuances of the teaching characters proved to be very interesting, especially in characters like Snape and Dumbledore. Although they have been shown to both be horrible people, they display a kind of depth not present in the other teachers unless we seek additional sources.

As far as further research goes, further analysis of the dynamics of names and their symbolism would have been an interesting addition to the present thesis, as J. K. Rowling uses a lot of symbolism in her character names. Unfortunately, the format of the thesis was ultimately too short to allow it. Also, it would be interesting to study both Snape and Dumbledore more in depth to see whether they adhere to any specific moral code or to study their alignments (moral good, lawful neutral etc). Furthermore, the dynamics between the canon series and the new *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* film series could be worth studying from the aspect of whether the events that take place in the yet-to-be finished five film series have a direct effect on the characters and teaching methods present in the canon characters.



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## RESÜMEE

TARTU ÜLIKOOL  
ANGLISTIKA OSAKOND

**Kaisa-Liina Näär**

**Hogwarts School of Abusers and Manipulators (and Overall Horrible Teachers) An Analysis of the Image of the Teacher in J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter Books**

**Sigatüüka Väärkohtlejad ja Manipulaatorite (ja Üldiselt Kohutavate Õpetajate) Kool: Õpetajakujude Analüüs J. K. Rowling'i Harry Potter'i Sarjas**

Bakalaureusetöö

2018

Lehekülgede arv: 45

Käesolev bakalaureusetöö analüüsib õpetajategelasi J. K. Rowlingu romaanisarjas Harry Potter. Antud töö peamine eesmärk on välja selgitada, kas ning millisel määral on Sigatüüka õpetajad väärkohtlejad ja manipulaatorid. Õpetajaid analüüsitakse võrrelduna fännikirjanduse näitega, milles on erinevate tegelaskujude areng palju paremini välja toodud ja mis on mõeldud täiskavanud lugejatele.

Käesolev bakalaureusetöö koosneb neljast osast: sissejuhatusest, kahest peatükist ja lõppsõnast. Sissejuhatuses on esindatud töö taust ja põhjused, miks analüüsitakse just seda valimit õpetajaid. Bakalaureusetöö esimene peatükk koosneb viiest alapeatükist, millest igaüks analüüsib eri õpetajate puudusi. Teise peatüki kaks alapeatükki on pühendatud kahele peamisele väärkohtlejale ja manipulaatorile Harry Potteri sarjas.

Kokkuvõtteks võib öelda, et kõigil analüüsitud õpetajatel on omad vead, eriti Severus Snape'il ja Albus Dumbledore'il, kes on raamatute peamised kaks väärkohtlejat. Enamus analüüsitud õpetajaid ei olnud halva iseloomuga, vaid ei osanud lihtsalt oma ainet õpetada.

Märksõnad: Harry Potter, 20. sajandi lõpu lastekirjandus, õpetajad noortekirjanduses.

Lihtlitsents lõputöö reprodutseerimiseks ja lõputöö üldsusele kättesaadavaks tegemiseks

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