THE MAGIC OF THE HARRY POTTER SERIES FOR STUDENT ATHLETES

by

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ABSTRACT

JULIA D. MORRIS. The magic of the Harry Potter series for student athletes. (Under the direction of DR. MARK WEST)

With the contemporary scandals that currently characterize university-sanctioned athletics and student athlete participants, this study is aimed at using Joanne Kathleen Rowling's *Harry Potter* series, as exemplary of young adult literature, as a gateway for academic achievement and investment among student athletes. This endeavor will operate under the assumption that reading and writing are the basis of academic dexterity. Many student athletes make an ideal group for analysis, not because they function as an outlier academic group. Rather, they exemplify students who utilize college as a vehicle independent of academics. Student athletes do not elect to attend their college of choice because of a desire to work with certain faculty members or a hankering to wear school colors. Instead, they see college as the natural next-step in their athletic careers. This thesis asserts that reading and writing are not currently relatable fields of study for many student athletes because they do not feel they can "play" in their academic arenas in the same way they do on the ball field. This study intends to make plain that this is due to a lack of investment in college as a practicable and practical skill; in essence, student athletes cannot "play" college the way they so adeptly "play" their sports. The utilization of Harry and his cohorts in children's/adolescent literature is a means by which college athletes can re-access reading as a skill necessary to perform well beyond the turf.

DEDICATION

This completed thesis is dedicated to my committee members who so graciously agreed to help me find my way in this first stab at my own research. Thank you to Dr. Mark West, Dr. Balaka Basu, Dr. Meg Morgan, and Dr. Paula Eckard for your unending patience and guidance. Additionally, thank you to my parents who have been unfailingly supportive in the opportunity to become "Master Julia" with this final marker of achievement. To the original Dr. Morris: thank you for holding the standard of professional achievement so high; I cannot wait to meet you there. Until then, thank you for being my dad. To my mother: may this make you proud as that is my greatest aspiration. Thank you for traveling this adventure with me and on to the next.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCING HARRY POTTER TO THE STUDENT ATHLETE

One fall afternoon, a football player entered my office where I worked as an academic advisor for UNC Charlotte's Academic Athletics Department. He showed all the signs of a difficult outdoor workout: his hair was saturated with sweat, his clothes appeared to be finger-painted with grass stains, and he smelled like the odor associated with locker rooms used by male athletes. Deciding to breathe through my mouth, I commenced with our regularly scheduled programming of discussing his grades and current assignments. A new freshman, this student athlete was still getting used to the university experience. That particular week, he liked history but was back to loathing algebra. We turned to his English class, and as I scanned my notes, I recalled the writing assignment he had due. Before I could even ask about the paper, I saw the lively student in front of me tense. This response, unfortunately, was a consistent reaction of his. Being in the business of making students squirm, I asked him to talk about the paper: How did he think it had gone? Did he enjoy the book he read for the paper? Did he have any trouble writing it? What was the writing process like for him? Lack of eye contact, mumbling, and shrugged shoulders commenced. "It was fine," he answered. Many minutes later and I was still struggling to interpret his grunt responses, so I became more direct. "Do you read much?" I asked. Silence. "Even outside of class?" He remained silent followed by an uncomfortable shift in his seating position and the customary swipe

for his cell phone. "No…I hate to read." This was the answer I anticipated, but what I was not prepared for was his evident embarrassment.

Acknowledging the stalemate, we finished our meeting, and I sent him towards the shower. However, the encounter stuck with me. How could every other academic subject capture his interest at one point or another but reading and writing were always on his reject list? I began an experiment; every subsequent meeting I had with him for the next several weeks progressed in a similar fashion but I watched carefully for his reaction when I waved the English flag. Each meeting was the same. Finally, with one hour remaining on a Friday afternoon, he made an appearance in my office, smelling significantly better this time. We exchanged pleasantries, but as he made to leave, I asked again about why he "hated" to read. "I just do," he responded, shuffling his feet. "Do you read at all? Even for class?" I asked. "Nope. Like I said, I hate it." Frustrated and my coffee buzz long expired, the nagging need to be done for the day finally got to me and I decided to close up shop. The student waited and we headed towards the parking lot together. Innocently, I inquired after his weekend plans. "I'm watching the *Harry Potter* movie marathon is this weekend!" he exclaimed. A self-proclaimed Potter fanatic, I let him know that I also enjoyed watching the *Harry Potter* movies. "Do you like Harry Potter?" I asked, wondering how someone who "hated" to read, and thus "never" read, could have tapped into one of the greatest reading phenomenon of recent years. "I love Harry Potter," he said. "I've read all the books." After picking up my bottom jaw from the concrete, I asked the obvious question: how did this not qualify as reading? "Harry Potter is not a real book…like a novel, or whatever," he said, assured of this proclamation. And it hit me, as if all seven Harry Potter books (all 4,175 pages) were

thrown at me, that the issues this student and many other male student athletes were facing had nothing to do with their hate or love for reading or writing. Instead, they did not realize that they were readers.

As a graduate student, I have had the privilege of serving the student athlete population as an academic advisor. It was during my service to the academic side of being a student athlete that I realized the deficits that exist in university-level reading for many of these students. But more than this, I found classroom engagement to be difficult for university student athletes. To my surprise, the students I have worked with recognize their academic shortcomings and do not hesitate to trace these issues to a lack of appreciation, patience, or investment in advantageous reading skills and an extreme amount of disdain for the classroom.

Student athletes do not hate reading in my experience; rather, they hate giving a poor performance of their abilities. Athletes, male athletes in particular, are highly cognizant of their competitive inclinations. Like the field, the classroom is an arena for competition. And, like touchdowns and yardage, reading is a skill that is judged by grades, rather than points on the scoreboard. Players know the value of using their strengths to achieve a win in the game. Thus, within the classroom, they recognize that they do not give a performance of their finest skills and, unfortunately, develop apathy towards their classes.

The athletes I advised within the UNC Charlotte Athletic Academic Center were not only struggling with reading. They were embarrassed by their inabilities. Too many student athletes spend time searching for courses that do not require any writing or require few reading assignments. Initially, I wondered if this was because they were

looking to avoid extra course work. At one point or another, I believe, all students could be classified as desirous of less work. However, student athletes are characteristically hard workers, despite the stereotypes that exist. Many of the advisees I worked with are unwilling to volunteer to their classmates and professors that they are university student athletes. They are self-conscious of the stigma that student athletes are negligent towards their classwork. Or, to use the words one student relayed to me, they do not want to be identified as "stupid."

My interest in pursuing this project is to advocate for a student population that is embarrassed to admit they need help learning. Additionally, they feel they are unable to incorporate their experiences as athletes in the classroom. According to my experience, almost all student athletes enroll in their college of choice based off of their athletic preferences, not academics. Thus, they are hindered when they walk into a university classroom and cannot draw on the very reason they desired to attend the university: athletics.

This thesis project is aimed at using Joanne Kathleen Rowling's *Harry Potter* series as a gateway to long-term academic achievement for student athletes. For many student athletes, their decision to attend a university is separate from academics. Rather, they elect to attend college based on a desire to play their designated sport. They are not interested in specific classes, professors, or academic incentives. Instead, they see college as the next step in their athletic careers. This thesis is premised on the assertion that reading is not a currently relatable field of study for many student athletes. Therefore, student athletes, especially male students, undervalue and do not use this skill when they can avoid it. When writing and/or reading are unavoidable, it is only out of

necessity that student athletes will participate, and even then, the results are characteristically poor. The greater implications of this are that college athletes are representative of a group of students who do not perform well in reading-intensive courses. This study demonstrates that this is due to a lack of investment in college as a practicable and practical skill because student athletes cannot play in their classes the way they play on the field. And while this is true to some extent, as not every class period can be ball-bouncing-fun, it is possible for a student to learn to appreciate reading through play. The utilization of children's and adolescent literature, as represented by Rowling's *Potter*, is a means by which college athletes can re-access reading. Children's literature is an access point to reading that, as a tool, is not being utilized to its full extent. Student athletes who are suffering to access college-level reading become frustrated with their inability to match their peers and to perform well at the university standard. Children's and young adult literature are gateway opportunities for students to build their reading skills, invest in their education, and most importantly, build confidence in their ability to perform in an academic arena. The consequences of these observations are that poor readers do not realize the value of a long-term investment in these skills. University programs need to resist treating English skills, (i.e. reading) as *only* a graduation requirement; rather, it should be considered a life skill. The student athletes I have worked with admit that they would, and do, purposefully avoid registering for courses and making career plans for jobs that will involve reading. However, what they do not realize is that they will never be able to completely avoid using this skill. Students who admit these purposeful choices are embarrassed of their ability, or inability, to read. I have confronted a significant number of student complaints that begin with, "because I

cannot read…" or "I cannot write," and "I hate reading…" These self-proclaimed assertions are not true; university students of today's age are regularly sending and communicating via text message or email and are therefore constantly reading and writing. The issue is that student athletes feel too far removed from college-level reading and writing to make an effort to improve their abilities.

A survey I conducted of seventy-three university student athletes asked them to provide the first word that came to mind when I said "English class." The stereotypical responses prevailed, such as "papers," "writing," "old people," and "that Shakespeare guy." But more startling responses included descriptors such as, "hard," "useless," "stupid," or even, "undoable." In an effort to better understand why the student I discussed *Harry Potter* with did not see himself as a reader but still actively read Rowling's entire four-thousand page series, I took up my favorite in the series, *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*. Rowling's fifth volume of the series has always held my attention, even when it was my sister's least favorite and the longest of the sequence. Upon rereading, I wondered why I enjoyed it so much and why my student would find it worth plowing through despite his lack of any confidence in his own ability to read. The answer is that I enjoyed envisioning myself as a member of Potter's Order and joining this fictional group. As a member of several student organizations growing up, I felt a connection with the Hogwarts troop that formed "Dumbledore's Army." It occurred to me that the student athlete who loved Harry Potter probably recognized similar features within the series that he could identify with as he read.

Reading crosses the bridge between the magic of the Harry Potter series and student athletes. However, male readers are characteristically "disengaged" with reading

and literacy (Smith & Wilhelm 6). In Michael W. Smith and Jeffery D. Wilhelm's 2002 publication, *Reading Don't Fix No Chevys: Literacy in the Lives of Young Men*, the authors detail the gap between male and female readers in secondary classrooms as "widening" as girls "greatly outperform" their boy counterparts in language arts classrooms (Smith & Wilhelm 20). While Smith and Wilhelm's study does not concentrate on male student athletes, the authors do address forty-nine male readers of varying race, ethnicity, economic status, background, school setting, and ages. The variety allows readers to conclude that the reading issues amongst male readers are not only ongoing and prevalent but the students recognize it, themselves. They recognize that reading is an important skill for the distant future but they feel completely unconnected to the benefits of reading in their lives at school (apart from earning a passing grade) or at home. The authors assert in their concluding remarks and suggestions to teachers that male readers need to be engaged in what they call the "inquiry process" (Smith & Wilhelm 209). That is, male readers are reading (i.e. magazines, video games, articles both online and in print, et cetera), but they need to be allowed to search for their reading material. The text states, that "every case where true inquiry environments were introduced in school in place of asking students to report on what the teacher already knew, they were embraced" (Smith & Wilhelm 254). The solution Smith and Wilhelm propose that male readers need "context" to accompany their development and appreciation of reading (Smith & Wilhelm 256). In other words, male readers need to invest, the same way all readers hope to, in their reading material.

Student athletes do no only identify as athletes; they obviously have lives outside of their sports. However, it is an undeniably huge part of their self-identification.

According to the National Collegiate Athletic Association, more than 60% of student athletes identify themselves as "athletes" before they see themselves as students (NCAA). While identifying as an athlete does not indicate poor academic performance, not identifying as a student can and does. The trick to academics for those student athletes who resist the classroom is to remind them that they do not have to leave their athletics at the door. The skills of being a student athlete can prevail within the walls of academia. Through my exposition, Rowling's series displays the way varying degrees of play are utilized. The magic of Harry Potter is not wand waving or drinking potions; rather, for student athletes, the magic has to do with associations with play. Harry and his friend use play throughout the series to accomplish their goals. For the student athlete reader, play is a substitute for athletics in Rowling's series. Therefore, the student athlete watches as Harry and his friends use play to accomplish a revolution, connect with a sense of self, and create a sustainable future.

As Smith and Wilhelm detail in their text, this research uncovers the "context" male student athletes need to accompany their path to literacy: play. The subsequent three chapters will delve into various forms of play as utilized by Rowling's series and will uncover the hidden student athlete within the magical world of Hogwarts. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's 1990 text, *Flow: The Psychology of the Optimal Experience*, details what he refers to as "flow," or "the optimal experience" (Csikszentmihalyi 3). The text states: "happiness…is a person's best moments which are not passive, receptive, or relaxing time…the best moments occur when a person's body or mind is stretched to its limits…to accomplish something difficult" (Csikszentmihalyi 3). The culmination of these experiences, for Csikszentmihalyi, creates "mastery" which leads to happiness, or

"flow" (Csikszentmihalyi 2-3). Male athletes are familiar with Csikszentmihalyi's principles of "flow"; they have "stretched" their bodies in a way that enhances them and leads them to a sense of accomplishment and "mastery." But, as *Reading Don't Fix No Chevys* details, only one of the forty-nine male participants in their study saw any relation to "flow." They are not able to see themselves stretched to accomplishment inside school the same way the do at home while "mountain biking" or "playing hockey" (Smith & Wilhelm 91). Male student athletes are a concentrated sector of the male literacy issue Smith and Wilhelm uncover, and they are unable to access Csikszentmihalyi's "mastery" because they are not engaging in the process of "stretching" their minds. But the solution for male athletes is to draw the analogy between their bodies and their minds. By teaching student athletes that they are able to play with their minds in much the same way they use their bodies, they will see the avenue to "flow" through reading in a much more relatable, or "contextual" way.

Rowling's *Harry Potter* series joins the "play" of the body with the "play" of the mind. Male student athlete readers will see themselves in Harry, who himself is a male student and an athlete, and will begin to utilize reading to stretch their minds towards a greater mastery of reading. The concentration on student athletes exposes the issue of male literacy while also highlighting the need for "context" for male readers. Athletics serves as the "context" for this group of male readers, who are not only capable of reading but also studying themselves in characters such as Rowling's Potter.

CHAPTER 2: PLAYING PRETENDING IN *HARRY POTTER AND THE ORDER OF THE PHEONIX*

The soldiers of today's warfare are children in the fifth installment of Joanne Kathleen Rowling's *Harry Potter* series: *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*. Rowling pushes the disparate themes of childhood-play and warfare together, begging the quandary of why peril and play inevitably intersect. The game of war is not only real, but it is a *real game* to be played by the characters in *Order of the Phoenix*. War, within the context of the novel, is accessible to children. It is not a necessarily frightening story; no bedtime nightmares disclaimer is required. But the most disturbing effects of war are not always blood stained. Instead, the novel, and this argument, identifies warfare as a playable game for children. Rowling's *Order of the Phoenix* makes clear that children are not immune to the effects of war. Not only this, but children in the novel are unwillingly recruited and psychologically manipulated into participating in war, and before they or the readers realize, the war of Rowling's novel becomes a children's crusade.

The Hogwarts cohort emulates the real-world war that is brewing outside the school's walls. For student athletes, this grand scale game of simulation will ring particularly true. Rowling's text provides a story to accompany what children do in real life: imitate adult situations. The battleground turned playground mirrors the way in which student athletes' locker rooms become living rooms, team members become family members, and real-world anger can be turned into organized aggression. Rowling's text

exposes the need for student athletes to sublimate their inability to affect change in the real world for success in their athletic arenas.

Without a doubt, Rowling's *Harry Potter* series is one of the most sensational publications in history. More than 450 million copies of Rowling's books have been sold internationally, as Harry Potter has "revalidated children's literature" (Record). More than 51% of children admit to having read Harry Potter in 2006. *Harry Potter* has transcended the pages of literature, becoming eight staggeringly successful films. This raises the first question surrounding this fifth installment of *Order of the Phoenix*: is it children's literature? Is a story where children form their own army, prepare themselves for battle, and simulate revolution truly a children' story?

With the depth to which child audiences have been penetrated by Rowling's texts, Michael Record takes on this issues in his review of *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* on his website, "isthismoviesuitable.com," a medium dedicated to providing a distinction between child and adult cinematic content for the benefit of parents. He is a lawyer by day but engages in freelance journalism for isthismoviesutiable.com for the purpose of aiding adult viewers consider child audiences beyond the Motion Picture Association of America film rating system, which designates appropriateness via age alone. In his review of *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, Record makes several interesting observations about J.K. Rowling's novel that had to be contended with when filming the motion picture version. Record asserts that Harry's fifth year at Hogwarts is, fundamentally, a tale about teenage angst and isolation. He rates the movie's "emotional distress" category as "4/5" for the emotional angst Harry experiences during his visions of Voldemort's mind (Record). Most interesting is the concept that the book, which is

classified as piece of children's literature by Record, is not actually meant for children; rather, he adamantly advocates that *Order of the Phoenix* is, "for adults" (Record). Record states this is due to the content of the novel, which grapples with teenage loneliness and feelings of powerlessness. However, his implications beg readers to ask what is the "real" message that is reaching children (Record)? Record suggests that the material is only "of adult interest" even though he admits there is no material that could be considered as "not child friendly" (Record). Thus, the reader understands that the story is for child audiences and that the message is for adults. But what happens if, and when, children are able to read between the lines?

In contrast to Record's assessment of *Order of the Phoenix* is *The New York Times* book review by John Leonard, published in July of 2003. Leonard's article, entitled "Nobody Expects the Inquisition," calls *Order of the Phoenix* "the witching hour," implying that Rowling's fifth installment is her "most magical" (Leonard). He finds the book to be "mystery-novel-esque," and wonders if Rowling perhaps channeled Agatha Christy and the likes. The grit of the novel, according to Leonard, is that Harry and his friends experience the normalities of prepubescent teenagers becoming pubescent teenagers. His review attributes the overarching theme of subverting authority as a naturally evolving issue; teenagers will be teenagers.

Record's report establishes that the novel's content implies a message of gravity that is "beyond child appropriateness," while Leonard's review states that children evolve out of childhood in Rowling's text (Record). But according to both, *Order of the Phoenix* transcends childhood concerns. While Record and Leonard can agree that Rowling brings more adult to the world of her child characters, both stop short of

addressing what it is that is "too much" for child audiences. What is the distinction that renders *Order of the Phoenix* inappropriate for monkey-bars-chat, or blacktop talk? This chapter establishes that war in *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* surpasses the play-space of children, and not with weapons, bloodshed, or violence. Rather, it establishes that war can take place within the parameters of the playground; and, as a novel that has been established as detailing the growth of its young characters alongside its readers, *Order of the Phoenix* implies that children can be on the forefront of war before they pop their first pimple. The majority of this installment takes place within the confines of the magical school, Hogwarts, just as the preceding installments do. But Rowling's fifth *Harry Potter* masterpiece does not distinguish between the war building in the outside world, and the safe space of school for children. Thus, when the two merge, the school becomes a battleground, and war becomes a game for children to play and attempt to win.

The male student athlete is also fighting a metaphorical war on the field of their sport. Beyond the analogies that exist between fighting and on-the-field violence is the primary premise behind competitive sports: to win. Athletics teaches participants, and spectators, to pick a side root for its success through victory. Being the performers on the field, student athletes are not only charged with the task of hoping for their own success but they subsequently wish for the opposing team's demise. As will be discussed in chapter four, the potency of athletics is the opposition competitive sports generates; there is always an enemy during an athletic competition. As in Rowling's *Order*, student athletes are simulating real-world issues. Sporting events require more than just two teams to go head-to-head; they also require fans and spectators. While these supporters

mean well (e.g. they hope for their team's success) they are concurrently promoting violence. Especially prevalent in contact sports is the praise of a "good hit" or a "hard block." Commentary from the sidelines includes rallying in the form of "hit harder" or "finish them off." The divide between the teams, while premised on good fun, simultaneously promotes a dislike for anyone who does not support the "correct" team. As with Potter's "army," the children are just trying to enact change within their school, but they are copying the adult members of the "order" who are hoping to kill off the enemy. The lines between play and violence are too closely tied in both the novel and on the field.

It is important to address why *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* is the most potent example of child warfare, as fans of the series will without doubt note that the final installment, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, makes the culture of war much more obvious. The tragic "Battle of Hogwarts" actually takes place in the seventh book, with more than a fathomable number of favorite characters dying as a result. Thus, why throw the light on *Order of the Phoenix* when discussing child warfare instead of the final installment, when the war for the magical war actually occurs? The answer is that war is placed within Hogwarts in Book Five. Hogwarts is the metaphorical playground of the series, and the war infiltrates that space before any other. This makes plain that war is a potent instrument that absolutely that wieldable by children. Even more disturbing: the fact that war breaks out amongst the students before the adults makes plain that war is far easier for children to manifest and compete in than was made clear before Rowling's publication. Still, Rowling's depiction of this impending war and the

students' preparation for this war resembles the training of athletes before an important game or match.

Jack Zipes's chapter concerning J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series – entitled, "The Phenomenon of Harry Potter" – questions Rowling's ability to produce such a "phenomenon" in his book, *Sticks and Stones: The Troublesome Success of Children's Literature from Slovenly Peter to Harry Potter*. Zipes opens by establishing that he does not wish to undermine Rowling's works, which have "reinvented childhood reading," but instead, wishes to do the author service by penetrating how such a literary "convention" became such an international sensationalized "phenomenon" (Zipes 175). The text points to a formulaic plot that constitutes an identical progression in each installment (i.e. confinement, call to arms, the adventure, and the return home) and identifies Harry as only distinguishable by his lightening-bolt scar as his "white, Anglo-Saxon, athletic, and honest" qualities are run-of-the-mill and "classic Boy Scout" (Zipes 171). Zipe goes as far as to quote cultural critic Christine Schoefer's impression of *Harry Potter* as a reinforcement of "men who run the world." This text stands against Sara Ann Beach and Elizabeth Harden Willner's finds in their article, "The Power of Harry: The Impact of J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter Books on Young Readers," in which Harry is praised as a literary hero for children. Both articles refer to Harry as "Arthurian legend" (Zipes 171) and "Arthur-like" (Beach/Harden 104); however, where Beach and Harden find Harry's abilities remarkable, Zipes finds Rowling's ordinary representation of remarkableness to be "conventionally predictable" (Zipes 177). Zipes states that Harry's inevitable growing up is a "difficulty" in reading Rowling's novel, where the Beach and Harden team suspect that Harry's growing up is a "hindrance" for young readers. Thus, the

implication of both critiques spawns the argument of whether *Harry Potter* establishes the differences amongst young readers or the sameness of the reading experience, and which is more societally potent.

Zipes' discussion is rather critical of Rowling, despite his desires to "not undermine" Rowling's literary triumph. However, it is valuable because it establishes Rowling as following a "successful formula" to access child readers (Zipes 175). *Order of the Phoenix* follows Zipes' established methodology: "confinement," "call to arms," "the adventure," and "the return home" (Zipes 175). Thus, according to the "formula," this fifth adventure of Potter's should garner the same cogency for child readers. However, this paper means to make clear that Rowling's *Order of the Phoenix* is a decisive violation of the safe space of child readers, not because it deviates from Zipes' formula; rather, because it brings calamity within the formula.

Both Zipes' and Beach and Harden's articles, despite their varying opinions on the worth of Harry Potter as a "hero," establish that Rowling's novel normalizes Harry's experiences as universal, going so far as to find him "essential" to the reinvention of children reading. Harry Potter is a very real presence in the lives of twenty-first century children. So what is to be made of Michael Record and John Leonard's establishment that *Order of the Phoenix* is not for children, and Jack Zipes and Sara Ann Beach and Elizabeth Harden Willner's finding that children are absorbing Harry Potter into their everyday life? The following conclusions should be made plain before this discussion turns to Rowling's text: *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, by bringing war within the confines of school, makes war a contest with child entries. Finally, the war of the novel asks its child participants to not only compete, but to internalize the nature of

war, rendering war as universal. War is no longer about the bad guys; both sides must fight.

As a game, *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* establishes war and the concept picking a side to attest ones allegiance to immediately. The title indicates such, as "The Order of the Phoenix" is a very real society within the magical community. "'It's a secret society,' said Hermione," in response to Harry's confusions about the Order (Rowling 67). She continues by saying, "'Dumbledore's in charge, he founded it. It's the people who fought against You-Know-Who last time.' (*Order* 67). This establishes that the Order is an active combatant against the forces of evil in the novel. However, it also makes clear that the Order was the forces of the battle from "last time," rather than the pending war climate. As the discussion continues, Harry learns that, thought his friends are not privy to the meetings as they are happening, they have "the general idea" of what occurs (*Order* 68). Thus, the meetings are not secretive; rather, they are held in the very house Harry, Ron, and Hermione are living in for the time being. The reader should note that the main characters are only fifteen or younger, as in the case of Ron's younger sister, Ginny Weasly, who is also very much involved.

The adult members of the Order are Ron's parents, the professors of Hogwarts, and Harry's godfather, who is the only parental figure the orphan boy has after his parents were killed. Thus, it is not at all paradoxical that the children should also look to join and align themselves with the Order. Harry even states, despite the warnings of the adults around him that he wishes to join the fight against evil, and thus engage in the culture of war. "'Why not?" said Harry quickly. "I'll join, I want to join, I want to fight'" (*Order* 96). But the conversation ends abruptly, as the adults do not want to

divulge – yet – the identity of the secret "weapon" the evil side is in possession of. This "weapon" is described as "powerful" and "something that [Voldemort] didn't have last time" (*Order* 96-97). The children do not yet realize that they are the weapon(s) the adults are too afraid to discuss.

By introducing the Order of the Phoenix in the first chapters of the novel, Rowling immediately normalizes the culture of war. She gives clear delineations between the two "sides": those who join the Order, and those who align themselves with Voldemort (referred to as "Death Eaters" in the novel) (*Order* 71). By providing these sides, Rowing provides an identity for the children to operate under. Thus, despite the impending violence, the children have already declared themselves "good," and any fighting and/or casualties are pardonable because they are enacted on behalf of the "good side." This brings the formation of "Dumbledore's Army" into discussion. The moniker "Dumbledore's *Army*" asks readers to please note the usage of the terminology "army," which denotes an armed infantry. The "DA," as it is referred to, is a kid's club within the Hogwarts School. Harry and his friends found the club for the purpose of: "taking matters into [their] own hands" (*Order* 339). As Hermione explains to the group of more than twenty-five students, who voluntarily gathered to join, the army was meant to "study Defense against the Dark Arts…and by that [they] meant to learn how to defend themselves properly, not just theory but real spells" (*Order* 339-340). This is a concrete establishment of warfare within the school of Hogwarts. The club is meant to allow the children to practice "real" spells, or violence, in order to train themselves in defensive action.

It is without great effort that readers can see the similarities between Dumbledore's Army and organized college athletics. As Hermione states, enacting a team, much like forming the DA, is meant to simulate "real" play, not just "theory," as Hermione states (*Order* 339). Sports, especially contact sports such as football, boxing, wrestling, rugby, or soccer, are characterized by "necessary bodily contact between players" according to the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). In essence, contact sports, like Dumbledore's Army, are organized violence. Team sports present a regulated opportunity to "properly" learn to defend oneself against an enemy; or, in this case, the opposing team (*Order* 339). But athletics extends beyond the goals of Dumbledore's Army, as players do not only intend to defend themselves by offensively attack the facing team.

But the members of Potter's club like an athletic team's offence, are also hoping to passively subvert the enemy. In the case of Dumbledore's Army, the opposing team is Professor Umbridge, a vastly unpopular Hogwarts teacher. The children elect Harry as their leader because he is already a veteran of war. The other members of the group peg him with questions about his past brushes with combat: "Can you really produce a corporeal Patronus"? "Did you kill a basilisk with that sword in Dumbledore's office"? "He saved the Sorcerer's Stone…and not to mention, all the tasks he had to get through in the Triwizard Tournament last year – getting past dragons and merpeople and acromatulas and things…" (*Order* 340-343). Dumbledore's Army thus brings war within Hogwarts, with all of its vital components. They have a cause to fight for, a leader to follow, and an enemy to vanquish. The children enact their own revolution, much like the Order of the Phoenix who is waiting to respond to the eminent threat of war. But the

children go farther than their adult counter parts, as their group begins to take decisive action against Professor Umbridge's authority. The group forms as a retaliation against Umbridges's imposition of new school rules. Professor Umbridge is appointed "High Inquisitor of Hogwarts," and is thus given "an unprecedented level of control at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry" (*Order* 306). Harry complains throughout the first chapters of *Order of the Phoenix* that he is frustrated by the lack of action the Order has taken against the return of the magical community's greatest foe, Voldemort. Thus, he and his friends waste none of the time their adult counterparts do, and decisively act against their enemy.

Harry is elected into a position of leadership because of his veteran status as a rule breaker and his previous experience with danger. As the others observes, it seems "only natural" that Harry would assume the role as team leader (*Order* 343). This harkens the power rankings within organized athletics, as the team captain is usually a senior with the most significant experience. Harry's group is seen to absorb and internalize the battle of the outside world into their organization. This happens within the world of sports, as well. Consider some of the greatest college athletic rivalries: Army versus Navy, The Ohio State versus University of Michigan, Clemson versus South Carolina, *et cetera*. Often times, these rivalries are more than isolated incidents of a great win or an untimely loss. Rather, animosity between two universities is long standing and extends beyond the world of sports. But the only admissible battle between two rivals is on the football field with rules that supposedly govern the organized violence of contact sports. Too often, teams carry the culminated pressure of a university's hatred for the opposing school on their shoulder to the effect of aggressive consequences. This is made evident by the

Entertainment and Sports Programming Network's claim that rivalry games are "some of the most violent" of the season, with an entire week of college football coverage and tens of thousands of dollars dedicated annually to "rivalries week" (ESPN).

The enacting of hostilities and embracing of war become internalized within the mind of Rowling's young hero. As mentioned previously, the adult members of the Order of the Phoenix believe that Voldemort has access to a detrimental weapon of warfare: the children. This is established by the psychological warfare that is utilized in the novel. For Harry, war is internalized when Voldemort is able to manipulate his mind. He is able to make Harry feel and see certain things at various points in the novel. Harry states that he is overcome with emotions he has not control over. He describes, "an odd feeling in his stomach…a strange, leaping feeling…a *happy* feeling…" (*Order* 381-382). Ron, panicking, asks Harry if has a "vision" of Voldemort (*Order* 380). Harry responds that, no, these sensations are beyond visions; he was able to read Voldemort's moods.

Harry is able to link his emotions with that of the enemy, and they manifest physically in the young child hero. It is important to note that Harry does not have any control over this connection; the effects of war are organic and unavoidable. The pinnacle of this psychological warfare manifests in Chapter Twenty-Two when Harry dreams of a snake attacking Ron's father nearly one hundred miles away. Professor Dumbledore asks Harry to recount his story, asking, "How did you see this" (*Order* 468)? Harry responds, "Inside my head, I suppose…I was the snake. I saw it all happen from the snake's point of view.'" (*Order* 468). Rowling thus draws her young, child character into the violence by all by accusing him of violence. Ron's father is hospitalized, and

declared, “seriously injured” (*Order* 469). Thus, Harry was a witness and a [unwilling] participant in the near-death of his best friend’s father.

While the media is not able to access the minds of student athletes, they certainly do attempt to through the unending stream of broadcasting attention college athletics receives. For example, ESPN broadcasts their NCAA Division I FBS college football coverage through no less than seven different mediums that run on a 24-hour loop during the season. Additionally, the Internet boasts more than 111,000,000 results when the searcher enters “college football” into the inquiry box. If the searcher were to attempt to limit the results by filtering the search by only this upcoming year (i.e. 2015), the results double with 222,000,000 returns. Arguably, this is also a form of psychological warfare. College athletes have more than 200,000,000 opportunities to become psychologically infiltrated with pre-game predictions, statistics, and unfounded conjectures for success or failure. While sports broadcasters present their information as factual, usually dawning suit and tie apparel and delivering statistics of how impossible odds are completely possible, the bottom line is that this information is subjective and entirely opinionated. But college students, who have unlimited access to media, cannot help but be psychologically affected, or possessed as Harry Potter found himself, by media blather. They may not be having visions of premeditated murder, but they might see themselves losing prematurely simply because a sportscaster is being paid to entertain the masses with his unmitigated opinion.

The implication of Harry’s internalization of war, as it is for student athletes, is that there is no escape of war, even for children. It is a universal affliction that even the world’s playgrounds are not safe from. Rowling, through *Order of the Phoenix*, is

making a truly novel claim about children's role in warfare: there are no sides and there can be no heroes. Instead, heroes are simply those who survive the war. We cannot pick the "good" side in the hopes of absolving our children from the turbulence. Margery Hourihan's book, *Deconstructing the Hero*, dives into this very idea of heroic representation; or, in shorter terms, who the "winner" is, and how to decipher these characteristics. She delves into children's literature in the section entitled, "Action and Violence." Here, she details a hero, both of literature and of children's literature (e.g. Lewis's Narnia and *Peter Pan*) as being "of action." Heroes, Hourihan states, are "neither contemplative nor creative." Instead, they are naturalized towards violence and we, as readers, are conditioned to search for that violence in order to indicate whom the story's hero is. That is, who wins. The discussion turns to violence and heroes in children's literature as represented by "fun." The reader wonders, after reading Hourihan's account, as to whether children are ever totally devoid of the adult world. If violence seeps into children's literature in the form of active play, the idea that children are training for adult world becomes evident. Even more disturbing is that children are training each other, as their playmates are regularly other children. Hourihan's discussion of what makes a "hero," specifically a child hero, generates the discussion of whether literature that involves games, contests, competition, pretend, et cetera, can and/or should be read as an instruction manual for adulthood.

This idea of survival, as established by Hourihan's publication, is manifested in Rowling's usage of prophesizing. Towards the end of the novel, Harry learns that there is a preordained contract that ties his life and Lord Voldemort's together. It states that, "neither can live while the other survives" (*Order* 841). On the surface, this prophecy

establishes rules for the game that is Harry's life, and the life of his childhood friends: they will have to play to survive, and survival is not enough. It is not enough for Harry to fight against the opposing side; Voldemort "must die at [his] hand" (*Order* 841). Children, thus, are established as incapable of being spectators of war. Neither can they simply live within the environment of war. They must actively participate, *and* produce fruitful results. They must not only play the game of war; they must win.

Student athletes are plagued by a similar prophesy. It is a very simple formula. If a student athlete wishes to be successful, they must win. It is not enough to have a good time, or to put forth a good college try. Winning is essential in the world of college sports. Players are put through tests of both physical and mental ability to test their tenacity for playing their desired sport before they are selected for the team. But the pressure has only just begun at this point. In order to keep a spot on the team, the athlete must also produce fruitful results, scoring points, rounding bases, and gaining yards. It is not enough to play a sport, either. It is essential to win.

Rowling's fifth installment in her *Potter* series not only accomplished reinstated an enthusiasm for reading for children, but is also penetrated the lives of young readers. Harry and his friends do not fully realize that they are taking war into their own young hands, forming a training resistance that will better prepare them for battle. Student athletes also do not realize that they are internalizing the same struggle as Harry and his friends. As Harry's group brings the war into their childhood space of play, athletes also sublimate real world issues into the opportunity to participate in organized vilence. Theoretical framework and critical reception of Rowling's series establish that Harry Potter is a childhood friend of an overwhelming number of child readers. Thus, Rowling

raises the daunting question of what happens if the sacred play sphere of children is burst. The answer quite possibly lies within the world of college athletics. When young people are allowed to bring the real world into an area of simulated violence, that simulation begins to signify real world issues. In the context of *Order of the Phoenix,* this violation recruits children into the game of war. It also teaches them that childhood games have a practical application. War is not only played, it is played to be won in *Order of the Phoenix* and on the field of student athletes. The implications of the children's crusade in both cases is that the "natural subversion of authority" that John Leonard observes is really a natural inclination to the warfare campaign, and that the innocent are not irreproachable in the playing of war or sports.

CHAPTER 3: THE DEATH DRIVEN STUDENT ATHLETE IN *HARRY POTTER AND THE GOBLET OF FIRE*

It is no secret that children's literature nose-dives into the murky depths of death in Joanne Kathleen Rowling's *Harry Potter* series. Each of the seven installments finds the series' namesake facing death in some capacity. But does he bring it upon himself? Does Harry Potter have a death wish? According to Sigmund Freud, people are driven by a "repetitive compulsion" where, "certain patterns of human behavior…are inevitable" (Freud 53). While Freud is unable to definitively establish that human beings "inevitably" desire death, he does counter his pleasure-principle philosophy with an equally enduring drive: trauma. While Harry Potter might not have an actual death wish, is the series really the tale of a boy wizard out to master traumatizing himself; and by what means?

The Harry of Rowling's series, as exemplified in the series' fourth installment, *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, exemplifies the self-destructive tendencies of student athletes. Sigmund Freud's "death drive" instinct from his 1920 publication, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, relates Rowling's Harry as a student athlete who must use both brains and brawn to accomplish the daunting physical but equally vexing mental challenges of the fourth volume (Freud,8). Freud's concept of a "death drive" is evident throughout the seven-part series. But it is especially relevant to *Goblet of Fire*.

The "death drive" is also relevant to student athletes. As established in chapter two, Harry Potter exemplifies the performativity of play that male student athletes are

familiar with from the field. While playing competitive sports promotes fun for players and spectators, it also cultivates a sense of violence. As exhibited by "Dumbledore's Army" in Rowling's *Order of the Phoenix,* student athletes are caught in the crosshairs of fun and fighting. This struggle is mirrored in Sigmund Freud's dichotomy between pleasure and trauma. For Freud, some individuals experience a constant internal conflict between their desire to master their pleasure and a natural inclination towards destructiveness. Male student athletes exemplify this division. As both "student" and "athlete," players are regularly caught in the tug-of-war between their academic obligations and their desire to perform well on game day. They are regularly choosing between their pleasure and their own pain, having to identify which is the more important drive to service. They weigh the consequences of a poor performance on the field versus a failed test grade on a weekly basis, with academics as the regular loser. Game performance is a public spectacle where a poor grade can be silently ignored or thrown away.

In addition to this struggle is the concept of male literacy, identified by Smith and Wilhelm's text, *Reading Don't Fix No Chevy's*, in chapter one. The Freudian dichotomy proves relevant to Smith and Wilhelm's study as they concluded that male readers chose between their pleasure and what Freud refers to as the "unpleasureable." Male readers see reading as "unpleasureable" and chose to service their pleasure principle with a more enjoyable pastime, such mountain biking or attending a hockey game (Smith & Wilhelm 91). Using Freud's tension between pleasure and "unpleasure" reveals the struggle male student athletes experience on the field and in the classroom, allowing the athlete reader to recognize his choices in the text of Rowling's *Goblet of Fire.*

Sigmund Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* was published in a post-World War I 1920's Germany. According to the 1961 Strachey translation, Freud was "baffled" by what the War had done to the world, and according to his first publication of *Beyond* (1919), there existed a "compulsion" that was powerful enough to "disregard the pleasure principle" (Freud ix-x). This "compulsion" is widely considered the "final phase of [Freud's] views" and was the instinct that grew out of the already established "compulsion to repeat" from *The Ego and the Id* (Freud xi). The problem of innate destructiveness is "set into motion by an unpleasurable tension" (Freud 3). According to his text, Freud believed in a "qualitative threshold" of pleasure, where the "mental apparatus endeavors to keep the quantity of excitation present in it as low as possible or at least to keep it constant" (Freud 2-3). The goal of the "mental apparatus" is to keep the level of excitation low. Anything that increases the quantity is "adverse to the functioning of the apparatus" and thus deemed "unpleasurable" (Freud 3). Freud is careful to state that this tension between pleasure and "unpleasure" is not a discussion of dominance. Rather, it elucidates the tendency towards opposition of the pleasure principle. As Freud continues, he details three examples of "inhibitors" to the pleasure principle: (1) the "reality principle," which, "demands and carries into effect the postponement of satisfaction, the abandonment of a number of possibilities of gaining satisfaction, and the temporary toleration of unpleasure as a step on the long direct road to pleasure (Freud 4). Secondly, (2) the "process of repression" occurs when "the ego is passing through its development" and details an individual's instincts as incompatible with their "aims or demands" (Freud 4-5). Certain instincts developed at "lower levels" due to this incompatibility and are therefore "cut off" from satisfaction. When the

"possibility of pleasure" is repressed, it becomes a source of "unpleasure" (Freud 4). Finally, the remaining reason explains what Freud calls "the majority of unpleasurable experiences: (3) perceptual unpleasure is a, "perception of pleasure by unsatisfied instincts," which may be "distress" or "unpleasure excite[ment], or "danger" (Freud 4).

The concept of Freud's first chapter, I, is that humanity has a "instinct" towards pleasure that is not overpowered, but rather contested, by an equally potent drive towards "external danger"; or, unpleasure (Freud 4). World War I allowed Freud to "put to rest" the philosophy that traumatic neurosis was only a result of physical trauma (Freud 5-6). Instead, he turns to his *The Interpretation of Dreams* and states that he is not able to explain traumatic neurosis through dreams as, "patients suffering from traumatic neurosis are much occupied…with *not* thinking of [their personal trauma]" (Freud 7). Here, Freud turns to what he calls "the most *normal* activities of…the mental apparatus": children's play. He details "a good little boy" with "the disturbing habit" of throwing his toys away from him. The text states that as the child did so, he would utter a representation of the German word *"fort,"* or "gone" (Freud 8-9). Freud and the child's mother concluded that the "repetition of [a] distressing experience" (such as having one's toys separated from them, or the separation of ones' mother from their presence as she retrieves the toys) forced a "game" or sorts that allowed the child to take an "active role" in his own unpleasure (Freud 10). Or, it allowed the child to "put down an instinct for mastery" of the unpleasant experience.

Freud's Eros, or pleasure principle of harmony, creativity, sexual connection, self-preservation, and the likes are in a tug-of-war with the unconscious need to master trauma, which is characterized by destruction, repetition, and aggression. Thus, self-

destruction is an expression of the energy created by a person's instinct towards death. The consequences of Freud's study are contested, especially his sections IV and V of *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, which are dedicated to a "biological" study of the body's cells as indicative of the death drive. Freud attempted to assert that the body's cells contain an "imbalance of energy" and that a cell's inclination is self-destruct, or die, in order to make room for healthier cells. Freud calls this a "natural inclination to return to an earlier state of non-existence" (Freud 149). Thus, at their most basic level, humans desire to return to their initial form of not existing. Despite the counters of his biological argument, Freud effectively establishes that human beings are not only drawn to a trauma but do so in attempt to master it. And, most significantly, that this subjection to trauma begins at childhood.

This theory of the need to master traumatizing oneself, or the "death drive," developed from Freud's 1914 essay, "Remembering, Repeating, and Working Through," published in hit *Further Recommendations in the Technique of Psychoanalysis II*. Here, Freud discusses that a patient who has forgotten past trauma, "does not remember anything of what he has forgotten and repressed…but acts it out" (Freud 151-152). The patient is not cognizant of his/her "unwillingness" to remember; instead, he or she, "has not noticed [the trauma]" (Phillips 142). According to Adam Phillips' 2004 publication, "Close Ups," Freud was "struck" by the fact that "modern individuals" resist having a "history"; rather, they prefer, and often at "an exorbitant personal cost," to repeat their "traumatic…past as if it never changed" (Phillips 147). Repetition "is the sign of trauma" (Freud 153). Freud's "Remembering…" essay distinguishes between "remembering," which Freud calls "potential," and "repeated action" (Freud 149).

Repeated action is the "unwitting performance" of something from the past. However, the patient is unaware that it is a past trauma. Rather, he or she believes it be in the present. The conclusion of these finds indicates that a person has an unconscious desire to keep their traumas close and not to "defend" themselves against it via distance (Phillips 143-144).

Both of these Freudian philosophies: the "death drive" and the traumatic "repeated action," are essential to a reading of J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series. To be candid, the significance lies in extraction of Harry Potter as a student athlete. Freud finds certain individuals be prone to "bodily harm" and "external danger" and that rather than remembering any past trauma, they "act it out" according to his findings on "repeated action." These individuals could be considered today's student athletes. According to Bill Snyder, Kansas State University's hall of famer head football coach, student athletes, specifically college athletes, have become the "traumatized spectacles…of ESPN" and the public (AP). Snyder stated, as reported by USA Today, he believes college athletics has, "sold out" with regards to keep education and academics a priority of student athletes. Snyder, who has more than fifty years college athletics experience, states that college athletics no longer has any consideration for the student portion of being a "student athlete." Instead, he feels that mainstream media has created a "traumatized spectacle of athletes" that mandates field performance over classroom performance. It is Snyder's belief that the "glitz" and "glitter" of college athletics has so overshadowed academics that athletes are not able to keep "insight…what college athletics is *really* about" (emphasis added by me). The report makes several startling considerations, relying heavily on the disparity between professor's salaries and Snyder's own multi-

million dollar contract with Kansas State University. Snyder himself states that he has "an office [he] could swim in" while full-time faculty, who are "promoting the greater good through education," are housed in cubby-holes. Snyder has seen the spectacle of college athletics grow astronomically, and he attributes the main issue to the media. He has a growing concern, as do readers of this article, for the well-being of student athletes, who are no longer considered "students" first. Instead, they are subjected to the "unfailingly critical" public who show no mercy.

Despite Coach Snyder's observations, college athletics, and by extension student athletes, are one of the top grossing sectors of university income. According to Entertainment and Sports Programming Network (ESPN), teams such as the Alabama Crimson Tide or the Oklahoma State Cowboys pulled in yearly total revenue of more than $123,000,000.00 in the year 2010. Despite the "traumatization" of student athletes, young men and women are vying for university recruitment at an ever increasing rate in order to subject themselves to the "trauma" of performing in front of huge crowds, media criticism, and not to mention potentially terminal bodily injury. The study of Freud's "drive" study is that of student athletes. They have an inexplicable need to subject themselves to the "disturbing apparatus" of injury, despite the dangerous consequences. The literature from the U.S. Center of Disease Control (CDC) states that more than 30 million children/young adults participate in organize sports (Weisenberger). Of that growing number, more than 30% experience injuries due to overuse. Additionally, the study concludes that these physical ailments are "almost always" accompanied by the even further debilitating "psychological injury," which the National Collegiate Athletic

Association (NCAA) refers to as "even more severe," with consequences such as depression, anxiety, eating disorders, and/or further physical injury.

The findings by the CDC and the NCAA when coupled with Freud's philosophies allow one to draw the conclusion that student athletes could be characterized by intentional self-sabotage. They subject themselves to the scrutiny of media, per Coach Synder's assertions, and put themselves in physical jeopardy to the point of their own safety and mental health.

Rowling's novel's "reinvented reading" according Sara Beach and Elizabeth Willner's 2002 article, "The Power of Harry Potter: The Impact of J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter Books on Young Readers." Their text finds the *Potter* series to be a gateway for other works of literature. Beach and Willner of the University of Oklahoma establish that Rowling's novels (the first four installments) are important to child and adults readers alike, and that the novels are potent for such a wide readership because of Rowling's ability to render the real world accessible through magical elements. Their article finds "adventure," "searching for [one's] identity," the moral struggle of decision-making, and "the battle of good and evil" to be "essential elements" of the novels (Beach & Willner 102). Points about child agency (i.e. Harry's ability to "save the day") and growing up are cited as identifiable elements by the children interviewed for their impressions.

Beach and Willner also state that the aforementioned characteristics of Rowling's series revive reading for children. However, the text presents an interesting tension when it states that the characters' are seen to, "make reasoned judgments about controversial issues" and that *this* element of the novels "renders the books inappropriate" for the children readers who sing Harry and Rowling's praises (Beach & Willner 104). This text

presents the paradox of what growing pains adults are willing to expose to children. Beach and Willner make no mention of overt violence, sexual content, or obscene language. Those familiar with the novels can testify that Rowling's books are not fraught with nightmare-inducing elements of morally questionable practices. Thus, one wonders why Beach and Willner would chose to caution child audiences away from watching their beloved Harry (who is established as "likable" and "meriting the most comment[ary] from young readers") learn to navigate the inevitable challenges of morality that all children face. The books are so highly praised for their ability to mount real-world issues on a magical stage, and thus simultaneously instruct and entertain. The answer to Beach and Willner's paradox lies in the crux of young Harry as a student athlete, prone to self-sabotage and trauma. Harry is not overly sexualized or even sexualized at all. The only mention pubescent stirrings is the occasional "hook behind [his] navel" when his crush (and, spoiler alert, future bride) is around (*Hallows*, 101). Thus, readers of the Beach/Willner article are left wondering why they caution child readers away from this "literary hero" that saved reading for children. The inexplicable characteristic Beach and Willner point to is Harry as a student athlete. Written in 2002, this article predates installments five, six, and seven which mark the turn in the series to a young adult, rather than child, audience. Thus, even before the great war of *Order of the Phoenix* and the unfathomable number of deaths in *Deathly Hallows*, Beach and Willner point to an indiscernible need for caution upon the conclusion of book four, *Goblet of Fire*.

Similarly, Perry Nodelman's discussion of "genre" in the field of children's literature finds that children's literature is distinctive from adult literature in his 2008 text, *The Hidden Adult: Defining Children's Literature*. Rowling's *Harry Potter*

convolutes Nodelman's idea that books written for children fit into a neat archetype, as both child and adult readers have devoured the series (as also established in Sara Ann Beach and Elizabeth Harden Willner's article, "The Power of Harry…"). This manifests in the consideration that children's literature, even with its tendencies, does not have to be distinguished as "children's" literature. Nodelman cites that literary scholars do not refer to themselves as "adult" literature scholars; rather, they simply study "literature." Rowling's novels extend the element of childhood literature, characterized by binary dualities, happy endings, repetition, and utopias. Instead, it is embodies Nodelman's discussion of childhood literature that is devoid of *obvious* adult content, but it "nevertheless… lurks within" (Nodelman 301, 303-304). Nodelman's conversation encourages readers of the *Harry Potter* texts to consider the idea of an adult message within a childhood story. His book makes a call/response to Michael Record's account of the *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* cinematic installment. Record finds the novel, and the movie it transforms into a visual element, as "not for children." He asserts that this is not due to any anti-child elements; rather, the story is for kids. The message is, however, for the adults. This parallels Nodelman's concept of "closeting" adult life from children by utilizing children's literature. The more essential question becomes: what is the effect of this? Should childhood be concealed by literature, or should adults make use of childhood entertainment, like Rowling's novels, to present precursors to adulthood in a nonthreatening and identifiable arena? Nodelman informs readers that childhood literature will never be completely devoid of adult content. This is evidenced by adults who read and identify with children's literature stories, such as *Harry Potter*. The greater significance of this idea is how adult content influences childhood play, and

what happens to the child who uncovers that they are reading an adult message, camouflaged by a child's tale.

Drew Chappell's text, "Sneaking Out After Dark: Resistance, Agency, and the Postmodern Child in J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter Series," exposes Rowling's child characters in her *Harry Potter* series as mini-adults. His reading finds the young protagonists as pseudo-representations of today's child readers who, though decidedly not following the "magical trajectory" to Hogwarts, are still fully embroiled in adventures of their own (Chappel 282). Rowling's Harry is found to be the epitome of a "postmodern hero" for children, as he typifies the inevitable struggles of "subtlety" and "uncertainty" of real life, rather than the magical battles of good and evil (283). Instead of creating a fairy-dust and fluff life for her characters, Rowling has built child protagonists who must establish themselves in the adult world in order to survive. This, according to Chappell, is meant to effectively warn child readers of reality, not magic.

Nicholas Tucker's article, "The Rise and Rise of Harry Potter," published in 1999 and predating the publication of the young-adult portion of the series, attempts to place the success of Rowling's series in the match-made-in-heaven pairing between susceptible young readers and the idealized playground of Hogwarts School. The text describes how the first three installments of the *Harry Potter* series are not only "without precedent" but has proved "instantly acceptable both to critics and to a vast international child readership" (Tucker 221). Plot-specific details in Tucker's text showcase how deeply Rowling's hooks have lodged themselves into readers of all ages, at the expense of her "many competitors" whose opportunities may be the cost of Rowling's "limited vision" of "moral simplicity" (Tucker 230). Tucker builds Rowling as successful only to

attribute her vast achievement to a formula shaped by other popular children's authors, such as Dahl and Blyton, stating, "[d]oes it matter that these books describe…simple heroics and moral absolutes?" (229). Finally, Tucker concludes by suggesting that the books are only as popular as the "stereotypes" Rowling has successfully tapped.

Tucker's article handles Rowling's success with gloved hands as he compliments her knowledge of a hero that the masses "can easily identify with" (Tucker 227). And the point is fairly made that Rowling's tales are "Cindrella-esque," to use his description, as they follow the blazed trail of best-sellers who came before them: initial suffering, ample compensation, due exulting over those who had previously scorned our hero (Tucker 227-228). However, Tucker stops short of pointing out others who have obtained the same success, apart from the dated examples of Dahl and Blyton. If the "formula" Tucker belittles Rowling for using is so readily available, it would make sense that any other author would have exploited these "easy stereotypes" long before Harry left his cupboard under the stairs (Tucker 227). Tucker gives no further acknowledgment of Rowling than to say she "breathed life" into tradition, which he makes clear was a simple task. While readers would be inclined to believe Tucker's empirical evidence, due to this textual examples and simplistic assertions, his claims of those unidentified "others" who will be unfairly "lost" to Rowling's fame fall on deaf ears with a lack of viable examples.

Chappell's article, published nearly ten years later, subverts the premise established in Tucker's text that Rowling stooped to stereotypes to champion her magical novels into such supernatural success. Chappell finds Rowling's approach to be unfailingly "realist" and "contemporary," stating: "Harry Potter is a contemporary child even though he is located in a fantastical setting, as he deals with crisis of faith and

depression, tests of endurance, bravery, community, and greed" (Chappell 283). In contrast to Tucker, Chappell finds Rowling to be relevant, if not ahead of her time. He states that Harry and his cohort directly align with the most recent developments in theories of childhood development: he is always "becoming" as there is "no developmental endpoint" (Chappell 289).

Finally, with relatively widespread mention of the darker side the *Potter* series, at one point scholarship can/will acknowledge the elephant in the room: the theme of death and the children's literature champion of Harry Potter. Alice Mills does so in her 2010 publication, "Harry Potter: Agency or Addiction?" Mills' text finds Rowling's *Harry Potter* main characters to be entirely motivated by an addiction to the dead. The article presents examples throughout the series of where Harry's motivations are entirely driven by his desire to master death. This is made evident from the first chapters of *Sorcerer's Stone*, where Harry is orphaned as an infant and thus begins the series-long battle to avenge his parent's death. Even in the final installment, *Deathly Hallows*, Harry encounters death in an effort to sacrifice himself for the good of the wizarding community. Here, death is the ultimate weapon, it is entirely in Harry's possession, and he uses it. Mills presents the possibility that the characters are "free to choose" but are continually drawn to death, nonetheless. Her main argument finds that this "draw" to death, whether predestined or cognizant, is predicated on an "addiction…to death" that is entirely due to a psychological obsession to associate, idealize, and master death (Mills 291).

The implication of Mills' argument is that the death is the great premium to be conquered of Rowling's series. Voldemort's entire mission to kill Harry Potter is

predicated on his original need to master death for himself. Knowing he could not die, he sought out infant Potter to ensure that no one could discover his secret -- not of immortality, but rather he wished to keep the mastery of death for himself. Death is a not a static state-of-being in? Rowling's novels as much as it is an apparatus of power. Upon reading Mills' argument, readers will note that death possesses so much power in the *Potter* series that the main characters: Harry, Voldemort, Dumbledore, and Severus Snape, become addicted to death, as it motivates their entire involvement in the series. Finally, it is worth noting that death is not Harry's fate for *Potter* readers know he lives out the seven-part series, with each book entitled *Harry Potter…* and some such adventure. Thus, Harry's obsession with death is not predicated by a need to prevent his own death. Instead, with its constant presence, death becomes Harry's motivator and a tool in his arsenal to defeat the dark side: to join his loved ones in death, to eventually die himself, or to use death to his advantage and the greater good of the wizarding world.

A discussion of Freud is essential with a mentioning of the preceding texts as they all point to an "unconscious" presence underneath the children's literature of Rowling's *Potter*. As Freud establishes in his "Remembering, Repeating, and Working Through," the mind does not realize its need to reenact trauma through mental cognizance, but through "repeated action." Student athletes are characterized by their physical abilities; it is the nature of athletics to be physical. Note the distinction between physical and harmful, as the intention is not to promote injury. However, harm and physical and mental traumas are regular side effects of athletics, per the CDC and NCAA findings. Thus, before turning to text itself, I would like to address why current scholarship does not address the issue of Freud's death drive in *Harry Potter* prior to this analysis. Many

publications consider Harry through Freud's oedipal lens (specifically in Lana Whited collection of edited essays, entitled *The Ivory Tower and Harry Potter: Perspective on a Literary Phenomenon* (2002)) as the ammunition is plenty: Harry grows up without a strong paternal figure, his obliviousness with regards to female attention/sexuality (i.e. Hermione throughout the series and Romilda Vane in *Half-Blood Prince*). There is brief mention of the theme of death, especially with regards to Lord Voldemort, the series' villain, whose name translates into "flight of death." But Freud's "death drive" has been largely, if not entirely, ignored.

In addition to the nonappearance of the "death drive" in scholarship, Harry as an athlete has also gone unacknowledged. Not only does very little discuss Harry's athleticism as of primary importance, it is not discussed outside of the wizarding sport, Quidditch. Thus, by proxy, the fourth installment, *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* is also overlooked. There are a number of reasons why book four is pivotal for a discussion of Freud and *Harry Potter*, chief among them Harry's pinnacle appearance as both a student and an athlete. The fourth book introduces the "legendary event" of the Triwizard Tournament (*Goblet* 291). This is important for the Freud/Rowling coupling for two reasons: (1) the presence of the tournament disbands the Quidditch season for year four, effectively displaying Harry's athleticism outside of his abilities to play the one wizarding sport, and (2) it brings together the two necessary components of student athlete-hood: brains and brawn. *Goblet of Fire* is also a necessary text for this analysis because of its pinnacle at the intersection between the child-friendly books one through four, and latter half of the series that has been characterized as more appropriate for young-adult readers. This reinforces that Harry's repetitive need to master trauma

through student athleticism is isolated to a school setting, maintain the relevance for student athlete readers. As stated previously, Harry is undeniably subjected to trauma outside of school and throughout the entire series. However, by concentrating in *Goblet of Fire* this analysis uses Freud's "death drive" and "repeated action" theories to identify Harry Potter as continually services his need to master trauma through his attribute as a student athlete.

Goblet of Fire sets up the analysis of Harry one of Freud's death-driven patients with Harry's attendance of the finals of the Quidditch World Cup. During the match, Harry learned about the "Wronski Defensive Feint" (*Goblet* 190). It is described as a "dangerous Seeker diversion" and the player attempting the maneuver, "…contorted [his] face with concentration as [he] pulled out of the dive just in time" (*Goblet* 190-191). Harry states that he, "couldn't wait to try [the Wronski Feint]" when he returned to school. Flying and Quidditch are established as an indication of adeptness when Harry successfully attempts the dangerous move, for no other reason than "excitement" (*Goblet* 357). Later, Victor Krum, the professional but student-age Quidditch player from a neighboring wizarding school, commented on Harry's ability to expertly execute the Wronski Feint, stating, "You fly very vell. I vos votching you fly" (as written) (*Goblet* 566). Harry responds with a grin and is described as "suddenly feeling much taller" (*Goblet* 566). Here, athletic abilities equalize the two characters that are competitors both on and off the Quidditch field. An ability to fly well is equated with accomplishment and character. It is intrinsic enough to make Harry feel on equal footing with a professional player, who Harry has both an action figure of and a fan poster. Harry is quoted as thinking, "[I] couldn't believe [I] was having a conversation with

Victor Krum, the famous International Quidditch player. It was as though the eighteen-year-old Krum though [I] was an equal – a real rival…" (*Goblet* 566-567). This grounds Harry's belief of character in athletic ability; it is the assessment by which he evaluates his own character. It has nothing to do with a comparison of number of friends or grades. Interestingly, it has nothing to do with women or sexuality, either. The conversation referenced above was predicated on Krum's concern that Harry might have a crush, or even be dating, the girl for whom Victor has developed feelings. "'She talks about you very often' said Krum, looking suspiciously at Harry." It is not enough to match the two men, where Harry might be a threat to Krum's romantic pursuit, because this does not bolster Harry's confidence in speaking with Krum. Rather, it is the mention of his athletic abilities that makes Harry feel adequate.

Flying (via broomstick) is significant for Harry Potter for more than one reason. During the first installment, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, Harry discovers his unparalleled and practically prodigal abilities to ride a broomstick during his first flying lesson. Flying is Harry's only athletic ability, as he is never seen, throughout the entire series, to run laps, to do pushups, or to lift weights. His only athletic ability is his dexterity for flying. Harry internalizes this skill as a mark of personal worth, as established in the conversation with Krum. But readers will find evidence of this in other installments, such as *The Prisoner of Azkaban* where he is asked to think of his happiest memory and he begins to recount his "first time on a broomstick" (*Azkaban*, 301-302). But flying, again, Harry's only athletic ability is also Harry's tie to trauma and Freud's death drive and service to the "unpleasurable" apparatus. But it is also a manifestation of Freud's "Remembering…" and "repeated action" philosophy. Harry's first year at

Hogwarts is not the first time he has ridden a broomstick. In the seventh and final installment, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, Harry finds a letter written by his dead mother. In it, she states, "[the broomstick] was [Harry's] favorite birthday present by far. One year old and already zooming along on a toy broomstick and he was so pleased with himself" (*Hallows* 179). Freud's discussion of the traumatized patient rings true. Harry never knew his mother as she was murdered not but weeks after the letter was written. Thus, flying and Harry's athletic ability is manifest trauma that, as Freud states, is what the patient "does not remember he has forgotten and repressed…but acts out" (Freud 149). His ability to fly seems natural, but in fact, Harry has flown before and flying thus represents Harry's repetitive service to his drive towards trauma in order to master his past.

The Triwizard Tournament is the most manifest example of the student athlete experience as all three tasks exemplify a combination of mental adroitness and physical prowess. Flesh-and-blood student athletes are unable to be an athlete without their ability to perform in a classroom. This is why the wizard sport of Quidditch is a poor example of Freud's philosophies. While it is require that you are student to play on the Hogwarts school team, Quidditch as a team sport is not a skill reserved for students. However, the Triwizard participants *must* be students. The Goblet of Fire is the "impartial judge" that selects the Triwizard participants (*Goblet* 359). It stands as a metaphorical representation of a selection committee or admissions committee. Students are required to "write their name and school clearly upon a slip of parchment and drop it into the goblet" before the deadline of Halloween evening. This is similar to the college application process or even tryouts for a team. The "impartial" judge is meant to make the selection based upon an

ability to compete and favorably represent the student's respective school. As one of the government officials reminds Harry when he is selected, "your name in the Goblet represents a binding magical contract" (*Goblet*, 431). This is like the signed commitments athletes make to their desired schools. They agree to abide by the rules set forth by the school in order to represent that school.

Harry is forced to compete in three life-threatening tasks because the Goblet of fire selects his name. He is required to subject himself to danger and trauma, much like student athletes do on the field of their respective sports. If they wish to keep their scholarship, if they wish to maintain field and playing time, if they wish to be recognized for their athletic abilities, they must continually subject themselves to injury and "external danger" (i.e. baseballs traveling at ninety miles-per-hour, or three-hundred pound linemen on the other side of the line of scrimmage). Harry does this, as well. In order to abide by the rules of competition, Harry must escape the fiery breath of a Hungarian dragon, survive underwater for an hour, and battle unknown creatures and spells in a locked maze. Harry continually subjects himself to trauma when he refuses to prepare for the tasks and is found awake on the day of his performances in the wee hours of morning, trying to prepare. Additionally, when offered help, Harry refuses while consciously aware of his dire need for help. One of the adults offers Harry a hand, stating: "Feeling alright Harry? Anything I can get you?" Harry answers with, "nothing." The man replies, "Got a plan?...because I don't mind sharing a few pointers, if you'd like them, you know. I mean…you're the underdog, Harry…Anything I can do to help…" (*Goblet* 511). Here, readers see Harry as in the most need of help. He is about to face a task alongside competitors "vastly more mature" than he, and without a plan of action

(*Goblet* 190). Instead of accepting the clearly needed help, Harry appeals to his drive to master trauma by stating, "'No…I'm fine…' wondering why he kept telling people this, and wondering whether he'd ever been less fine" (*Gobelt* 511-512).

Goblet of Fire presents both Freud's argument for the "death drive" and the "repeated action" analyses. This chapter establishes that the feared unknown in established scholarship, such as Zipes, Beach and Willner, and Nodelman's texts is the deep-seated psychological desire to service a mastery of trauma. His parents abandoned Harry at a young age due to their untimely and brutal murder. His "repetitive action" ability to fly represents the concepts of intentional self-sabotage as exemplified by his own stake in his physical ability to fly and his classification as a student athlete. If Freud is the perspective by which readers view Rowling's *Potter* series, close reading finds Harry Potter as the quintessential student athlete, plunging headfirst into the very principles Freud shed light upon. As exemplified by the fourth installment, *Goblet of Fire*, Harry Potter continually subjects himself to trauma and finds himself caught between the pleasure and "unpleasure" characteristic of college student athletes.

CHAPTER 4: PLAYING WITH STRATEGY IN *HARRY POTTER AND THE SORCERER'S STONE*

Ron Weasley is the knight of Joanne Kathleen Rowling's *Harry Potter* series. It is well established in scholarship that Ron's role is essential to the life and survival of his best friend, Harry Potter. Nonetheless, it is without fail that Ron repeatedly falls short of Harry's fame within the context of the novels. Unfortunately, this seems to be a trend in his life both at home and at school. However, there is a significant distinction Ron makes for himself in his ability to play chess. The series chronicles several instances, which will be explored here, that display Ron's desire to be an accomplished chess player. Chess is a game; it is a form of play. The forms of play spoken about in chapters two and three have involved the active forms of play, such as playing pretend or playing a sport. Here, Ron expands the capacity for play into the classroom, proving the necessity of intellectual characteristics in play. He completes the brains-versus-brawn dichotomy established by Harry Potter's own adeptness on the Quidditch pitch. Consequently, Ron establishes play as a vehicle to his future the same way Harry uses sports to access his past.

In chapter three, Harry is able to access his past life with his dead parents through a natural affinity for sports (e.g. Quidditch). Ron, in contrast, is able to access a sustainable future through his ability to play chess. As Harry battles for Hogwarts in the final installment of Rowling's series, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, he never uses his ability to fly a broomstick or snatch a golden snitch from the sky. But Ron

utilizes the necessary skills of an accomplished chess player, as detailed by the United States Chess Federation, of: “calculation, evaluation, and pruning” (Kasparov). Where athletics cannot serve Harry Potter outside of school, chess will continue to benefit Ron long past his graduation from Hogwarts. Student athletes are accomplished players who do not see their skills transferring off the turf. Ron’s ability to utilize chess exhibits that play is not only transferrable to the classroom but to future endeavors, as well.

Rowling modeled her version of chess from the real-life board game played today by more than 605 million people (IOC). The game of chess, affectionately christened “the game of strategy” by The United States Chess Federation, originated from the two-player Indian war game of *Chatarung* in 600 A.D. (Kasparov). Originally, the board was not checkered though the same eight-by-eight inch dimensions divided it. But the objective of the game has remained the same: “victory by vicious battle” (Fine, 12). In Rueben Fine’s 1967 text, *The Psychology of the Chess Player*, he compares the figures to members of ancient Indian military service. The king was representative of the emperor, or the *Schahin-Schah*” (Fine, 19). As Fine accounts, the emperor was a figurehead but not necessarily a warrior. Thus, the battles were fought by the generals and lost with the capture of the emperor. The same holds metaphorically true for the game of chess. The pieces fight to protect the king piece, which is limited by its one-by-one movement.

The king piece and its role has remained unchanged throughout the game’s migration to Prussia and Europe in 1000 A.D.. The rook, then called *rukh*, was a chariot, or “war carriage,” in its origins (Fine, 21). Though modern adaptations have maintained the same word in the English version, the meaning and original shape is considered outdated. The United States Chess Federation deems the term “castle” to be “ignorant”

and "incorrect," despite that the form of the piece appears to represent a castle. The modern knight is the only piece to maintain its original form as it is still represented by a horse. The pawn piece has been afforded greater power in the modern game as it can now move two spaces forward in its opening move. Before, it could only move forward one space at a time and was limited by number of moves allowed. The pawn pieces were meant to represent the king's foot soldiers. The piece now called a bishop was originally an elephant that could only move to eight different locations across the whole board and was thus considered a "useless" player (Fine, 22). Finally, the queen, today's most powerful chess piece, did not exist in the original game. Instead, the piece that stood next to the king was originally called ferzan, or ferz, and was representative of a king's right-hand man.

Though the game has evolved from its ancient Indian origins, with the changes in movements and the incorporation of the queen, the object of the game of chess has always exceeded victory. As Fine states, the game was founded under the guiles of war, "swashbuckling attacks," "clever combinations," "brash piece sacrifices…and dynamic games" (Fine, ix). Winning was not as important as winning soundly and with technique. Competitive chess arose in 1851 with the London Chess Tournament. Additional changes were added, such as timed moves or the six-move limit in which victory must be accomplished with only six maneuvers.

Wizard chess is the magical community's take on the modern game of chess. Harry explains in *Sorcerer's Stone*, "Ron started teaching him wizard chess. This was exactly like [ordinary] chess except that the figures were alive, which made it a lot like directing troops in battle" (*Stone* 99). As with the ancient origins of chess, wizard chess

harkens back to the Indian simulation of a battlefield. As Harry explains, Ron's chess set is very old, "like everything else Ron owned…it had belonged to someone else" (*Stone* 99). But, as Harry observes, this time, the hand-me-down was not a drawback: "Ron knew them so well he never had trouble getting them to do what he wanted" (*Stone* 99-100). Ron's familiarity with the pieces and consequent skill, in addition to his role as Harry's teacher renders Ron a recognizable expert. As readers study Ron's character, they will take note that Ron is rarely considered an expert of anything as he is seen regularly deferring to Harry or Hermione, or becoming lost behind his many siblings. Ron spends most of Rowling's *Harry Potter* series as Harry Potter's "ferzan," or right-hand man. As one of seven siblings and the youngest boy, Ron is consistently characterized as overlooked and lost in the shadow of his older brothers. "I've got a lot to live up to," Ron says of his own siblings:

> I'm the sixth in our family to go to Hogwarts. Bill and Charlie have already left – Bill was head boy and Charlie was captain of Quidditch. Now Percy's a prefect. Fred and George mess around a lot, but they still get really good marks and everyone thinks they're really funny. Everyone expects me to do as well as the others, but if I do, it's not big deal, because they did it first. You never get anything new, either, with five brothers. I've got Bill's old robes, Charlie's old wand, and Percy's old rat (*Stone* 99)

According to Sigmund Freud's 1899 address of sibling rivalry in his *The Interpretation of Dreams*, same-sex siblings are "interchangeable rivals vying for parental affection"

(Freud, 90). From Rowling's first installment, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, Ron is seen as "interchangeable" with his siblings. Upon meeting Harry Potter for the first time, Ron offers to share his lunch. The text states, "Ron had taken out a lumpy package and unwrapped it. There were four sandwiches inside. He pulled one of them apart and said, 'She always forgets I don't like corned beef…you don't want this, it's all dry…she hasn't got much time,' he added quick, 'you know, with [seven] of us'" (*Stone*, 101). Just pages before, Ron's mother was unable to tell the difference between Ron's older brothers, Fred and George. "Honestly, woman, you call yourself our mother," George says to her. "Can't you tell I'm George" (*Stone*, 92)? Upon arriving at Hogwarts, Hagrid, the grounds keeper, recognizes Ron as "another Weasley," making him an archetype alongside his brothers (*Stone*, 140). "'This is Ron,' Harry told Hagrid, who was pouring boiling water into a large teapot and putting rock cakes onto a plate. 'Another Weasley, eh' said Hagrid, glancing at Ron's freckles and red hair" (*Stone*, 140). All of the Weasley's are recognizable by their characteristic red hair freckled complexions.

Ron not only stands in the shadow of his older brother; he is also eclipsed by his best friend and "[Hogwart's] celebrity," Harry Potter (*Stone* 136). In Rowling's fourth installment, *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, Ron stops speaking to Harry after Harry's name is mysteriously drawn as a contender for the wizarding competition, The Triward Tournament. Ron does not join in the celebrations for Harry but sulks to their bedroom. Upon a heated argument, Harry calls Ron "stupid," Ron refuses to speak to Harry after that evening (*Goblet* 286). Hermione tries to explain to Harry, saying, "it's always [Harry] who gets all the attention. But Ron's got all those brothers to compete

against at home, and [Harry] is really famous. Ron's always shunted to one side whenever people see [Harry], and he puts up with it, and never mentions it, but it bothers him" (*Goblet* 290). Indeed it does seem to bother Ron, even before their fourth year at Hogwarts. In *Sorcerer's Stone*, Ron and Harry discover the inexplicable Mirror of Erised. When Ron stands in front of the Mirror, he exclaims, "Look at me" (*Stone*, 210)! He explains that he seems himself, "alone…and different" (*Stone* 210). "I'm Head Boy! I'm wearing the badge like Bill used to – and I'm holding the House Cup and the Quidditch Cup – I'm Quidditch captain, too" (*Stone* 210-211). The text states that, despite Harry's attempts to regain Ron's attention, but Ron is unable to "tear his eyes away from the splendid sight" (*Stone* 211). As headmaster Albus Dumbledore explains, the Mirror of Erised shows, "nothing more or less than the deepest, most desperate desire of our hearts. Ronald Weasley, who has always been overshadowed by his brothers, sees himself standing alone, the best of all of them" (*Stone* 213). Ron's greatest desire is to be recognized outside of his family and despite his friendship with "The Chosen One" (*Prince*, 496). Ron is rarely seen outside of the groups he identifies with both inside and outside school. He is part of his Weasley family and the trio he, Harry, and Hermione. He is indistinguishable from his family because of his obvious red hair. He is also inseparable from his identity as Harry Potter's sidekick. Ron even feels secondary to Harry within their group. Spoiling the afterword for those who have not read the books, Ron and Hermione end up married after Hogwarts and raise a family together. Ron's romantic feelings for Hermione stir in book six but truly manifest in *Deathly Hallows*. He feels that Harry might be intruding upon his love for Hermione. However, as he is

not the dominant player on the board, rather than confronting Harry about his feelings, Ron abandons Harry and Hermione while they are in hiding.

The only significant exception to Ron's lesser status is when readers see him playing chess. Readers will then recognize that Ron's individuation manifests in relation to the history of the game of chess. As stated, Ron is Harry's "ferzan." Even Harry sees this; while recounting his great accomplishments and various brushes with danger, states to a group of his peers that while, "it all sounds great…but all that was luck – I didn't know what I was doing half the time, I didn't plan any of it, I just did whatever I could think of, and I nearly always had help" (*Order*, 327). The "help" Harry refers to is Ron and Hermione. Harry Potter is "The Chosen One" and "the famous Harry Potter" (*Order* 389 & *Stone* 112). As war breaks out in the Wizarding community, Harry becomes the figurehead of the revolution. The secret radio station that is broadcasted in *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* to inform and update the resistance is called "Potterwatch" (*Hallows* 360). During the single broadcast the main characters are able to receive from their hiding camp, the hosts discuss the most important question, "is Harry Potter still alive" (*Hallows* 357). In more ways than one, Harry Potter is the "king" of the Wizarding community. He is even described as "the symbol of everything for which we are fighting: the triumph of good, the power of innocence, the need to keep resisting" (*Hallows* 354). This makes Ron his de facto "ferzan." By Harry's own admission, he could not have discovered the Chamber of Secrets in book two without Ron; he would have never found his only remaining family, his godfather Sirius Black, without Ron in the third installment; he would have never succeeded in eliminating the Horcruxes without Ron in the final book. After all, it is Ron who remembered that accessing the

Chamber of Secrets would provide them with the Basilisk fangs that could destroy the Horcruxes. "It was Ron, all Ron's idea!' said Hermione breathlessly. 'Wasn't it absolutely brilliant?' 'How did you get in,'" Harry asks, knowing that a secret language only Harry can speak is required to gain entry. In display, the text states that, "Ron made a horrible hissing sound," as he had copied Harry's ability to speak Parseltongue. It is Ron's cleverness and ability to memorize and recall, both intellectual skills that eliminate two of the remaining three Horcruxes and lead them towards the final defeat of the series' villain.

Ron's quality of loyalty is also represented by the game of chess' history. As mentioned previously, the knight piece is the only piece to have not only maintained its same move but it is also the only piece to have not been updated by modern adaptation. It still takes the form of a horse. During the giant wizard's chess game in Rowling's *Stone*, Ron elects to take the place of the knight, climbing atop the horse and directing the game astride. This aligns Ron with the consistency of the knight's form, in addition to other qualities of knighthood.

Ron exemplifies many of the issues recognizable in student athletes. Often times, athletes do not feel remarkable inside a classroom. According to an interview conducted with the University of North Carolina at Charlotte Athletic Academic Center, instructors single out student athletes both intentionally and unintentionally. "In one instance," an advisor recounts, "a professor required a student athlete to read out loud from a textbook to prove literacy before he would answer any of the student's questions. The student, who came uninitiated to office hours to seek extra credit, was understandably mortified and ended up dropping the class" (Fries). This is not meant as a generalization, but it is

representative of how the student athlete feels alienated within a classroom setting. Many male student athletes do live up to the stereotypes of lazy or poor student, but not all. Frequently, as discussed in Smith and Wilhelm's text, *Reading Don't Fix No Chevy's*, from chapter one, male student athletes simply find themselves unable to access the classroom because of a lack of context. These extrapolations are the metaphoric red-headed-Weasley siblings of student athletes, overshadowing the existing efforts being made in the classroom. Ron represents a feeling of classroom inadequacy that plagues college athletics. Speaking to the current political climate surrounding student athletes, ESPN's Dana O'Neil, "marginal students are being forced to commit academic dishonesty…in an effort to keep them eligible and [retain] them" (ESPN O'Neil). But the headline do not reader that 'marginal student athletes commit academic dishonest'; rather, headlines such as the New York Times' "The Myth of the 'Student-Athlete,'" or Raleigh's The News & Observer's "UNC student athlete scandal ranks among the worst…" run and overshadow the efforts made by student athletes who are following the rules on and off the court.

Chess, for Ron Weasley, presents the opportunity to separate himself from his famous friend and his extensive family. Rowling utilizes the game of chess throughout her entire *Potter* series. In the second installment, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, Ron and Hermione are seen playing chess while Harry worries himself about being the heir of a sinister presence within the Hogwarts castle. In book three, *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, and book four, *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, Ron uses chess to distract Harry. In *Azkaban*, Harry discovers that his parents' murder was the result of a betrayal by one of the Potter's best friends. "'We could have a game

of chess,' Ron suggests… as further discussion clearly wasn't what Ron had in mind" (*Azkaban* 199). In *Goblet*, Harry is distraught after the death of fellow classmate Cedric Diggory. Harry accounts that, for comfort, "[h]e liked it best when he was with Ron and Hermione and they were talking about other things, or letting him sit in silence while they played chess" (*Goblet* 722). The examples continue, with the notable trend being that every instance of a game of chess involves Ron. In *Goblet*, the Weasley's sit at home waiting for news and Ron is seen playing his older brother, Bill, in a game of chess. No matter the opponent, Ron is always found at one end of the board.

In *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, Ron is provided with a rare moment of recognition when he is selected as the year's prefect for Gryffindor house. Subsequently, readers see the rise in Ron's confidence indicated in Ron's relationship to chess. While playing with Ron, Harry accounts that, "one of his castles was engaged in a violet tussle with a pawn of Ron's, who was egging it on enthusiastically. 'Squash him – *squash him*, he's only a pawn, you idiot'" (*Order* 517). Later in the novel, the text states, "Harry and Ron whiled away most of the journey playing wizard chess…Harry looked down at the chessboard just in time to see one of his pawns chased off its square by Ron's knight" (*Order* 865). With increased confidence initiated by his appointment as a school prefect, the reader sees a simultaneous increase in Ron's tenacity for playing. Inline with Fine's text, *The Psychology of the Chess Player*, winning is not enough for the accomplished chess player. Ron does not only want to remove Harry's pawn from the board, he wants to "squash" him. Additionally, Ron proves himself an expert in book seven, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*. While standing outside a building, Ron observes, "'[t]hat's got to be [her] house, who else would live in a place like that? It

looks like a giant rook!'" (*Hallows* 397). Confused, Hermione states, "'It's nothing like a bird'" (*Hallows* 397). In an almost nonexistent moment of confidence and assertion, Ron replies, 'I was talking about a chess rook,' said Ron. "A castle to you'" (*Hallows* 398). Here, Ron draws a line in his level of ability and Hermione's, with himself as the expert. The United States Chess Federation, as mentioned previously, finds the usage of the term "castle" instead of the proper term "rook" to be ignorant and "incorrect" (Fine, 21). This establishes two important points: (1) Ron's most distinguished skill set is directly tied to chess, and (2) Ron's character development can be traced to his playing of chess.

The most significant chess match of the entire *Potter* series occurs at the end of *Sorcerer's Stone*. The trio of Harry, Ron, and Hermione make their way into the dungeons of Hogwarts in an attempt to extract and save the powerful Sorcerer's Stone. Their journey is impeded by a serious of obstacles, including a giant three-headed dog, poisonous potions, locked doors with a key that can fly away, and finally, a giant chess game. Harry accounts, "the light suddenly flooded the room to reveal an astonishing sight…they were standing on the edge of a huge chessboard. 'Now what do we do?' Harry whispered" (*Stone* 299). Where Harry is baffled Ron takes immediate charge. "'It's obviously, isn't it,' said Ron. 'We've got to play our way across the room' (*Stone* 299). Not only is Ron able to take charge in the arena of a chess match but it is "obvious" to him where it is not to the others. It is Ron who bravely walks across the board to discover they must join the game as pieces in order to move closer to finding the Sorcerer's Stone.

Harry and Hermione allow Ron to order them around the board. But, ever the loyal "ferzan," he stops to apologize before beginning. "Don't be offended or anything,

but neither of you are that good at chess -- '" (*Stone* 304). Harry recognizes immediately that this is a battle he cannot fight without Ron, replying, "'tell us what to do'" (*Stone* 204). This tells readers that it is Ron's ability to play chess that will save them and propel them forward in their journey. Where Harry usually takes charge in other challenges, he is perfectly willing to hand the reins to Ron. But notably, Ron is not interested in the reins outside of this chess match, once again deferring to Hermione's brilliance or Harry. His discomfort with this expertise is made obvious by his disclaimer apology. The stakes are different in this chess match than in the other challenges, also. Not only must they crash their away across, but they must win. When the trio encounters the Devil's Snare plant, they are entangled and on the verge of being suffocated. As a last minute save, Hermione remembers that the plant hates light. But she is paralyzed by what to do and wonders how to start a fire "without wood" (*Stone* 279)! After the boys remind Hermione that she's, "A WITCH!" and that she has the ability to conjure fire from her wand, she lights her wand and the boys can wriggle free just in time. But as Harry accounts during the chess match, escaping is not enough: "[His] knees were trembling. What if they lost?" (*Stone* 211). Ron's ability to navigate the chess terrain elevates the match beyond a game; it is now a matter of life or death.

During Sigmund Freud's early treatment of patients, specifically early childhood patients, he employed what he called his "cathartic method" (Freud, 112). Predating his psychoanalysis theory, cathartic theory states that "expressing or getting out one's aggression" as a release can be accomplished through play. Play represents, "an attempt to satisfy drives or resolve conflicts when the child does not yet have the means to do so. When a child works through a drive through play he has at least temporarily resolved it"

(California State University). For Freud, as it is for Ron Weasly, methods of play are outlets of internal emotions. Through his utilization of chess, Ron is able to accomplish his greatest desires.

For Ron, chess allows him to simulate the control and recognition he is missing in life. Chess is played by one player on each side of the board. While playing chess, he is no longer one of seven Weasley siblings; rather, he is his own team. This means that his success in winning never has to be shared. Additionally, it has been established that Ron is uncomfortable taking charge and being an expert in anything. Even before playing the come-to-life chess match, Ron apologizes for having to assert himself as the leader. A reader can account for Ron balking at a game of chess because he is used to directing himself as the only member of his team. It alters his equilibrium to have to involve other people into his accustomed method of play.

During the real-life chess match, Ron elects to take on the knight piece. After directing Harry and Hermione to their designated spaces, he states, "I'm going to be a knight" (*Stone* 211). A knight, as in medieval times, represents the traditional roles of chivalry and bravery. As defined by the Oxford English Dictionary, a knight is a "man awarded a nonhereditary title in recognition of merit or service and entitle to use the honorific 'Sir' in front of his name" ("knight"). Ron's desire to be a champion is evident by what is revealed in the Mirror of Erised. But more than this, Ron desires a "nonhereditary" type of recognition. He desires to separate himself from his redheaded conglomerate that makes him so recognized as "another Weasley" (*Stone*, 140).

The game of chess connotes a silent configuration of play. There is no sweat, hoop, or ball. Instead, it is a seated endeavor of silent suffocation of the opponent's

players. Both a football game and chess involve play strategy. But the game of chess is different from other games for obvious reasons. Rather than hoping to score points for one's own "team," the goal is to remove pieces from the opponent's team. In short, it is not only about winning; it is also about making the opposition lose. The final move in chess, "checkmate," is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as, "the move by which the queen cannot escape" ("checkmate"). For Ron, chess presents the pseudo opportunity to eliminate the other people in his home and school life that repeatedly overshadow him. As Freud states, play presents an outlet for the internal struggle. Ron wishes to be the most important and, even more so, a singularly entity. It is interesting that Ron's outlet of his emotion still involves the use of a board of pieces. This suggests Ron's natural comfort as part his respective groups (i.e. the Weasley family and his friends). But as the solo player, he is able to direct the cast of characters. In the end, he is the sole winner.

While it may seem unorthodox to align chess with aggressive contact sports, the technique required of both is similar. Both involve a play theory, or strategy. Teams do not ever enter the court with a tactic for winning the same way a chess player does not rashly move his queen into a checkmate position. As mentioned in chapter two, play is an opportunity to sublimate the real world. There is an aggression and finality to both checkmating and slamming the buzzer shot. Contact sports involve socially acceptable violence. Phrases such as, "good hit," or "beautiful block" are littered all over sport journalism. Characteristic of Ron's subtly, chess is about mental aggression of preventing all other moves from being made. Chess may even exhibit more intensity as the stealth of checkmating an opponent prevents any opportunity for retaliation;

checkmating is permanent. Touchdowns can always be followed by punt returns or basketball dunks can be rebounded. A checkmate is a permanent and game-ending play.

Chess is a form of play. Readers watch chess present the opportunity for Ron to compete for himself as a chess player. In contrast to male student athletes, Ron displays an opportunity to use play in a way that is not aggressive. It is not even frivolous. The implication of play is fun. While it is obvious that Ron likes chess, it is more important as a tool for him. Chess is an intellectual game of strategy and presents a forum for student athletes to see intellect as a tool for play. Student athletes are regularly characterized as using athletics for a myriad of reasons, including self-confidence, an outlet for frustration or other such emotions, escape from home, or even a pseudo-family environment through their team (NCAA). Ron is also an athlete. He has tenure as a Quidditch player in book five, *Harry Potter of the Order of the Phoenix*, and book six, *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*. The value of analyzing Ron as a chess player is prominent when readers consider that chess is a form of intellectual play, implying that student athletes, who it has been established do not always consider themselves students, first and foremost, can use classroom intellect to play. Sports, as with any other hobby, are a means of expression. As described by the National Collegiate Athletic Association, many athletes use sports as compensation for their personal lives, both for positive and negative. Ron Weasley has been established as unfailingly loyal character; he has not only supported Harry in all of his endeavors but also regularly saved his life in the process. Despite his intense love for his friend, and his family, Ron also needs an outlet. The value of Ron Weasley then becomes his ability to use intellect as a form of play in order to cope with reality; the same way an athlete might punch a boxing bag to relieve

frustration. Ron uses the skill, finesse, and methodical extermination of the opposing player's pieces to remove those who overshadow him in order to be recognized.

For male student athletes, Ron represents the successful utilization of play inside the classroom. He is able to make use of Smith and Wilhelm's concept of "context" by choosing how to exercise his aggression (i.e. checkmate) in a non-athletic environment. He is able to transfer Csikszentmihalyi's "flow" into the classroom, as Smith and Wilhelm's students could not. Ron represents several of the issues that plague male student athletes: he finds himself lost amongst him family similar to the way male student athletes find themselves lost amongst the stereotypes that surround college athletics. He also exemplifies the student athlete who feels lost inside his own team. Even alongside his best friends, Ron feels comparatively insignificant. This resembles the first and second-string dilemma found in organized athletics. Ron is the metaphorically benched player. He is talented but does not get the same attention as a starting first-string player. Ron also utilizes chess in the same way male student athletes use their sports: to sublimate the real world. As discussed in chapter two, athletics regularly simulates the real world. Ron uses chess to represent a control and recognition he does not have in his real life, similarly to how a student athlete might use their sport to act out the aggression they cannot unleash off the field. Ron's ability to use chess displays a relationship between the field and the classroom that appeals to male student athletes who, like Ron, are struggling to connect their identities with their surroundings.

CHAPTER 5: THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDENT

The preceding chapters have detailed that Joanne Kathleen Rowling's *Harry Potter* series utilizes play in three important ways: playing pretend, playing sports, and intellectual play. In *Order of the Phoenix*, the Hogwarts cohort recreates the outside world in their club, Dumbledore's Army, in order to practice the real world within the walls of school. Harry simulates real world violence in the same way that athletics channels aggression into something socially acceptable. *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* identifies Harry Potter as a student athlete who experiences the conflict between his pleasure principle and violent tendencies as a potentially self-sabotaging student athlete. More often than not, Harry airs on the brawn side of the brains-and-brain dichotomy drawn in chapter four. Harry's athletic ability appears to be supernatural, as he takes to flying with such ease. However, close reading of the entire series reminds readers that Harry has flown a broom well before readers watch his first lesson with Madam Hooch. Athletics represents the danger of Harry's past and aligns him with a need to risk his life, repeatedly. Similarly, student athletes are at a constant risk for injury especially while engaging in contact sports. However, despite the statistics, college athletics is one of the most popular pastimes of players and spectators, alike. Finally, Ron's relationship with chess, especially in *Harry Potter and Sorcerer's Stone,* draws on the most innovative use of play: intellectual play. Ron uses chess to cope with his inability to separate himself from his overcrowded life at home. As established, student athletes use athletics to

sublimate and compensate for a number of issues, especially in their personal lives. Ron's use of chess brings athletic aggression and violence discussed in *Order of the Phoenix* and *Goblet of Fire* inside the classroom, allowing for field house violence to become relevant.

The blending of Rowling's series with different forms of play and the issue of male literacy creates a new reading experience for male student athlete readers. Through the *Harry Potter* series, student athlete readers recognize familiar characteristics of: team dynamic, strategy, natural physical ability, aggression, craft and sportsmanship. Harry Potter, apart from all of the convoluted positions scholars twist him into, is part of an exceptional story. As detailed by chapter two, Rowling's novels have affected readers off all ages, not just children and young adults. The rhetorical question this endeavor asks is then: why can Rowling's novels not revolutionize student athletes, as well? The story entertains the bored readers; the magic captivates the reluctant imagination; and the element of athleticism entices the athlete out of his hole and into his seat at the front of the class.

The conjecture from a project like this must center around what Harry Potter could do for student athlete readers on a long-term and large-scale trajectory. Teaching students to play while learning is not a new technique; the alphabet song, colored blocks, and finger puppets should debunk those with that notion, immediately. But teaching students to play with reading the same way they might play with each other on the playground could be a valuable metaphor for reluctant student athlete learners. Athletes are not able to see the connections between the weight room and the classroom both because of their own limitations and the prejudices of some instructors. Both professors

and students are limited in their exposure to a prototype for how to use play in the classroom. However, connections obviously exist. Beyond *Harry Potter*, learning to read at all is a comparable skill to athletics. Learning to run a less-than seven-minute mile takes repetitive and monotonous practice. Learning to read also takes practice. Lifting at a higher weight class takes weeks of strength training and conditioning both in and outside of the gym. Learning to read is similar. If student athletes are able to put in the time commitment to building their bodies, they more than possess the patience required to build their mental fortitude.

This thesis project asserts that Rowling's *Harry Potter* is that prototype. With the three forms of play detailed here, professors have a model by which to teach the intellectual strategy with which they are familiar. But equally as important, student athletes have a model by which to see themselves using intellectual strategy. Where as Harry Potter cannot use sports after school, Ron will always be able to use the prowess he developed by distinguishing himself as a chess player. Suddenly, athletes can achieve the same satisfaction from hitting a homerun while sitting at their desk, with none of the residual shoulder damage.

According to a CNN article entitled, "Some college athletes play like adults, read like 5th-graders," Sara Ganim sheds light on the same issues discussed here: in short, student athletes cannot read. The article quotes that more 60% of student athletes in a twenty-one-university survey read at or below a sixth grade reading level (CNN). In December of 2013, the Drake Group, a political group advocating for academic integrity in college athletics, lobbied for an amendment to the 1965 College Education Act, citing the "necessary need" for a College Athlete Protection Act (CNN). Such an act, states

director Allen Sack, would require academically unqualified freshman athletes to sit on the bench. The real political agenda, Dent states, is to "rein in…the NCAA" (CNN). Couple this bureaucratic plan with the top Google search pertaining to student athletes: "do student athletes get special privileges," and the recent degree farming scandal at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and student athletes have one model for themselves as students: failing cheaters.

Harry Potter revives the student for student athletes, the same way Rowling's series revived reading for the masses. Student athletes can find their past struggles in Harry's broken home, the pressure of their roles as student athletes in the Order and Dumbledore's Army, and a sustainable and relevant usage for intellect in Ron's coping mechanism of chess. The remaining question is, what comes next? Student athletes are an essential part of university revenue for those college campuses with athletic programs. More than 60% of student athletes call themselves "athletes" rather than "students," and most outside individuals, according to the NCAA, consider student athletes to be more "athlete" than "student." This might imply that the need for a college education grows smaller and smaller for student athletes the more they value their roles as "athletes." As stated in the beginning of this study, statistics such as these only reinforce college as a stepping-stone towards professional athletics. However, what happens for those students who do not achieve professional status? According to the NCAA, less than one percent of NCAA athlete participants, per sport, make it to the pros. *Harry Potter* does not present a magic-wand solution; in fact, this solution is a very real one, especially for the ninety-nine perfect of student athletes who, like Harry Potter, cannot play their sport outside school. The *Harry Potter* series offers male student athletes a bridge connecting

their passion for sports and play with their long-term need for a true college education and lasting literacy skills.

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