8-2024

Harry Potter and the Immersive Space: A Rhetorical Analysis of the Wizarding World of Harry Potter

Kendra Bolin

klb13b@acu.edu

ABSTRACT

The ability of humans to share stories has changed over time. From myths shared around a campfire to the introduction of cinema, we can now tell massive, immersive stories on an epic scale. One example of this is the storytelling present in theme parks. Present-day theme parks are continuously growing and expanding each year both in size and attendance. The continued success of these theme parks and the rhetorical influences of their audiences is a cultural phenomenon that deserves rhetorical scrutiny.

My analysis looks at how one theme park, the Wizarding World of Harry Potter in Orlando, Florida, immerses guests into the stories that they are telling in an attempt to understand the success of this park. I analyze these narratives through Joseph Campbell's vision of a monomyth or hero's journey, arguing that the Wizarding World of Harry Potter uses the hero's journey narrative structure to send guests on their own immersive "journey." With a lens of constitutive rhetoric, I argue that various spaces in the park hail audiences and interpellate them into different roles throughout the park, immersing them into the story and reducing their chances of opting out. My analysis reveals one possible way that theme parks use narratives to immerse audiences, thereby leading to the park's desired rhetorical effects.

Harry Potter and the Immersive Space:

A Rhetorical Analysis of the Wizarding World of Harry Potter

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Communication and Sociology

Abilene Christian University

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

By

Kendra Bolin

August 2024

This thesis, directed and approved by the committee for the thesis candidate Kendra Bolin, has been accepted by the Office of Graduate Programs of Abilene Christian University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

Master of Arts in Communication

_____

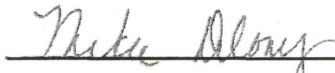Assistant Provost for Residential Graduate Programs

Date

6/24/2024

Thesis Committee

_____

Dr. Randall Fowler, Chair

_____

Dr. Joe Cardot

_____

Dr. Mikee Deloney

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my committee members, Dr. Cardot and Dr. Delony, for your time and input on this project. I would specifically like to thank my committee chair, Dr. Fowler, for your kindness, patience, and guidance throughout this process.

I owe a special thank you to Cali – your friendship is one of the best things I have. I'm thankful for all of our stories and for your endless encouragement.

Finally, my biggest thank you of all goes to my parents. Nothing I do would be possible without you and your unwavering love and support. I love you.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

"Every child in our world will know his name."[1] When J.K. Rowling wrote those words, she probably never dreamed that they would come true. However, 22 years, seven books, ten movies, four theme parks, and countless franchise memorabilia later, the name "Harry Potter" is indeed known worldwide. The popularity of this franchise has transcended time to become one of the most famous franchises in the world, currently worth more than $25 billion.[2] The story of an orphan boy who finds out he is actually a wizard has touched the lives and hearts of billions of people who grew up with the young icon. Audiences watched as he dueled dragons, learned magic, and defeated the darkest wizard of all time. The popularity of this story cannot be denied, and for many reasons, audiences everywhere flock to this story, whether by book or on the big screen. For this reason, Universal Studios decided to bring the story to life for millions and created the Wizarding World of Harry Potter (WWOHP) at their theme park in Orlando, Florida.

For those unfamiliar with the story, the *Harry Potter* novels follow the experiences of a young orphan boy who was sent to live with his aunt and uncle. He is mistreated and neglected by his relatives until his eleventh birthday, when a man named Hagrid arrives and tells Harry that he is actually a wizard destined for greatness. Harry

---

1. J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* (London, UK: Bloomsbury Publishing, 1997), 13.

2. Nick Wells and Mark Fahey, "Harry Potter and the $25 Billion Franchise," *CNBC*, October 13, 2016, https://www.cnbc.com/2016/10/13/harry-potter-and-the-25-billion-franchise.html.

goes off to Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry where he makes friends and begins to learn magic. Through his school years, Harry learns more and more about his mysterious past and what actually happened to his parents through his mentor and the greatest wizard of all time, Dumbledore. Harry finds out that eventually the fate of the Wizarding World will come down to a fight to the death between him and the man who tried to kill his parents—the darkest wizard of all time, Voldemort. In the end, Harry defeats Voldemort, and the books end with Harry having a family of his own and living in a wizarding world that is at peace.

To help fans everywhere experience the magic of this beloved story, Universal created the WWOHP, an interactive and highly immersive theme park. Universal uses narratives to immerse guests into the *Harry Potter* story and leave them always wanting more and, of course, wanting to come back. Universal can do this because the stories they tell are so familiar to audiences and because they provide a narrative space where audiences can live out the story they have loved for years or, in some cases, for their whole lives. Because Universal is able to efficiently make their audience feel as though they are immersed into a magical environment, they keep their guests always wanting more and returning again and again. Immersive environments increase both persuasion and positive attitudes because they increase sense of presence. Communication scholar Dan Grigorovici found that "more presence will, probably, lead to more arousal and affect, which will have a subsequent impact on depth of processing, making the user more likely to process information more affectively, more implicitly, and heuristically."[3]

---

3. Dan Grigorovici, "Persuasive Effects of Presence in Immersive Virtual Environments," in *Being There: Concepts, Effects, and Measurements of User Presence in Synthetic Environments,*

This in turn leads to positive attitudes and favorable intentions. Therefore, to understand the power and success of this theme park, it is important to understand how the rhetors—those accredited with creating the text—immerse their audience and persuade them to keep coming back.

In this chapter, I define theme parks, overview their history, and discuss what research has to say about their presence. Then I will provide an overview of my rhetorical text, the Wizarding World of Harry Potter. Next, I provide an overview of immersion by explaining what it is and how immersion leads to an increase of presence and persuasion. Then, I provide an overview of the theoretical framework I will be using for my thesis: Joseph Campbell's hero's journey. Finally, I explain the methodology that I will be using in my analysis to answer my research question.

Theme Parks

According to Abby Waysdorf and Stijin Reijinders, theme parks began appearing in the 1950s and were an immediate hit among consumers.[4] During this time frame (from the 1950s to present),

> theme parks have become consolidated as significant economic and cultural phenomena, which have had an extraordinary impact on tourism, territorial development, consumption, employment, and research and development, as well as on human behavior, crowd control, spatial and art design, management, security, environment, technology, and marketing.[5]

---

eds. Giuseppe Riva, Fabrizio Davide and Wijnand Ijsselsteijn (Amsterdam, NL: IOS Press, 2003), 191.

4. Abby Waysdorf and Stijn Reijnders, "Immersion, Authenticity, and the Theme Park as a Social Space: Experiencing the Wizarding World of Harry Potter," *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 21, no. 2 (2018): 174.

5. Edgar Cabanas, "Experiencing Designs and Designing Experiences: Emotions and Theme Parks From a Symbolic Interactionist Perspective," *Journal of Destination Marketing and Management* 49, no. 1 (2017): 2.

Because of their significant cultural and societal impact, dedicating more research to theme parks is extremely beneficial. To further understand the theme park, next I explain their history and popularity, starting with the first theme park: Disneyland.

Disneyland

Not to be confused with theme parks, amusement parks and fairs have been around for hundreds of years. Christina Harris traces the first fair back to 500 BCE.[6] Although it would be years before traditional rides were incorporated into these places, the general idea has always remained the same: fairs and amusement parks have been areas to trade, shop, be amused, see extraordinary things, etc. It was not until 1955, when Disneyland opened, that the first true theme park emerged. Admittedly, this is a controversial statement because many argue that the first theme park came before Disneyland; however, academics such as Jackie Botterill continuously identify Disneyland as the first theme park in their research.[7]

Disneyland opened in 1955 after being designed and brought to life by Walter Elias Disney. The park became an instant hit among audiences when opened, primarily due to how guests felt as though they had been transported to a different place, a different time, and a different reality. In Disney parks, guests are able to be whomever and whatever they want—princesses, pirates, or princes. They can fly to new worlds, sail off into the unknown, or jet to outer space. In all of the different narratives that Disney tells in their parks, the story remains the same: This is what magic can do. Disney parks are a

---

6. Christina Harris, "Out of This World: The Amusement Landscape and Our Escape to Elsewhere," (PhD diss., University of Manitoba, 2002), 6.

7. Jackie Botterill, "The Fairest of Fairs: A History of Fairs, Amusement Parks, and Theme Parks," (Master's Thesis, Simon Fraser University, 1993), 102.

cultural icon in the United States and portray American identity, values, and customs. Disneyland shaped the future of the theme park, but many other brands caught on quickly and attempted to replicate Disney's success. Specifically, they tried to copy the escape from reality that Disney offers guests: the chance to enter a different place entirely. Other theme parks endeavor to do this by following popular theme park features that encourage immersion and storytelling. Next, I will explain these attributes and how they are fundamental to a theme park's success.

Theme Park Attributes

Theme parks create a simulated environment, and through the use of technology and storytelling, these parks transport visitors into different realities. Ady Milman and Asli Tasci write that these "contemporary entertaining attractions attempt to create a fantasy atmosphere of another place and time and are regarded as symbolic landscapes of cultural narratives that feature follow-ups on stories, books, plays, and films, in which guests can immerse themselves."[8] In the case of the Wizarding World of Harry Potter, Universal has created a "follow-up" to the books and films of the popular franchise by recreating popular architectural icons, serving the same food from the story, and creating interactive spaces where visitors can act out pieces of the story and become fully immersed into the environment. Effective theme parks, according to Florian Freitag, "fuse different media in the form of attractions, restaurants, shops and service areas, forming

---

8. Ady Milman and Asli D. A. Tasci, "Exploring the Experiential and Sociodemographic Drivers of Satisfaction and Loyalty in the Theme Park Context," *Journal of Destination Marketing and Management* 8 (2018): 385, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2017.06.005

intermedia environments."[9] These stimulated environments, based on a theme, create a

narrative for guests to follow in the theme park. By creating these narratives and using

effective storytelling, Waysdorf and Reijnders determined that a guest's sense of

immersion is heightened in these spatial narratives.[10] To understand how guests become

immersed into these stories, it is important to look at how theme parks work as narratives.

Theme Parks as Narratives

Theme parks differ from traditional amusement parks because they follow a set

theme; their purpose is to entertain while telling a story, unlike an amusement park,

which focuses on simply trying to amuse or entertain. Amusement parks may incorporate

a theme, but as Kristin Kischuk explains, this "theme and storyline are usually very

rudimentary and poorly developed."[11] Harris describes theme parks as a "place for

stories," and the actual park is "a three-dimensional story where guests are active

participants in the narrative."[12] In other theme parks, such as Disneyland, the story might

not be as clear as it is in the WWOHP. For example, Kischuk notes that some of the most

famous and well-known Disney attractions use "theme, space, and time as elements to

communicate emotion, but do not sequence events in any narrative manner."[13] Disney

leaves the guest to make meaning of the scenes and characters using their imagination.

---

9. Florian Freitag, "Like Walking Into a Movie": Intermedial Relations Between Theme Parks and Movies, *The Journal of Popular Culture* 50, no. 4 (2017): 705, https://doi.org/10.1111/jpcu.12569.

10. Waysdorf and Reijnders, "Immersion, Authenticity, and the Theme Park as Social Space," 176.

11. Kristin Kischuk, "A Prototype for Narrative-Based Interactivity in Theme Parks," (Master's Thesis, University of Central Florida, 2004), 3.

12. Harris, "Out of This World," 8.

13. Kischuk, "A Prototype for Narrative-Based Interactivity in Theme Parks," 6.

Often, Disney makes an attraction that only becomes a movie afterwards, specifically *Pirates of the Caribbean* and *Jungle Cruise*. Henry Jenkins explains that these rides were originally based on "strong story ideas, which were used to create atmosphere, rules, structure, and meanings to direct the creation of the attraction."[14] The majority of Disney stories focus on what magic can do, and the narratives found at their theme park further reinforce this story. At the WWOHP, the rhetors took this idea a step further by recreating an actual story that their audience was familiar with and then creating narratives within the park that require the guests to use their prior knowledge and allows them to enhance their immersion experience.

With this approach, the Wizarding World surrounds the guest with a story by immersing them into it; by stepping into this new place and becoming a part of it, the guest cannot be left unacknowledged or separate from the story. Guests can see examples of this with the rides at the WWOHP. On these rides, guests become an integral part of the story and are placed in the middle of the action. They become visitors to Hogwarts, students in class or visitors breaking into Gringotts; these interactive experiences allow the guests to be fully immersed into the environment and increases their overall sense of presence. It persuades them to keep coming back again and again. Universal spends billions on these attractions, and to make a profit, they rely on guests who find these stories and experiences appealing. To examine this phenomenon, I chose to analyze the WWOHP.

---

14. Harry Jenkins, Jon McKenzie, Markku Eskelinen. "Game Design as Narrative Architecture," in *First Person: New Media as Story, Performance and Game,* eds. Noah Wardrip-Fruin and Pat Harrigan (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004), 123.

Rhetorical Situation

In this thesis, I rhetorically analyze The Wizarding World of Harry Potter in Orlando, Florida. I chose this theme park based on the intense immersion experience that guests go through while in the park, and I examine the mediums Universal employs to make guests feel as though they are truly a part of the *Harry Potter* story. The historical background and influences of this park are critical to understanding how the rhetors successfully immerse their audience into the story they tell. In this section I will provide an in-depth overview of the different sections of the WWOHP

In 2003, rumors surfaced that a Harry Potter theme park was in the works. The rumors stated that J.K. Rowling had been approached by the Walt Disney Company to create a Harry Potter-inspired theme park in their Magic Kingdom park and that Rowling had signed a letter of intent with the company.[15] Years later these rumors were confirmed to have been true at the time, but as David Leonard and Christopher Palmeri explain, Disney pulled out of the deal, claiming that J.K. Rowling and Warner Brothers (who own the rights to *Harry Potter*) insisted on having too much control over the final park, including the right to approve what did or did not make it.[16] Universal Studios ended up striking a deal with Warner Brothers and, in 2007, made the official announcement that a Harry Potter theme park was in the works and would open at Universal Orlando, Islands

---

15. Steven Tye, "The Real Reason Disney World Didn't Get Harry Potter Land," *Looper*, January 31, 2023, https://www.looper.com/248029/the-real-reason-disney-world-didnt-get-harry-potter-land/.

16. David Leonard and Christopher Palmeri, "Disney's Intergalactic Theme Park Quest to Beat Harry Potter," *Bloomberg*, April 19, 2017, https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2017-04-19/disney-s-intergalactic-theme-park-quest-to-beat-harry-potter.

of Adventure.[17] Universal has two parks, one called Islands of Adventure and the other

called Universal Studios. Due to issues with space at the time, Islands of Adventure

became the home of this new Harry Potter-inspired theme park. At the time of the

announcement, J.K. Rowling was quoted as saying, "the plans I've seen look incredibly

exciting, and I don't think fans of the books or films will be disappointed."[18] The only

other details given at the time was that the park would open in 2009 and be called "The

Wizarding World of Harry Potter."

The theme park opened on June 18, 2010, and was an immediate hit among

audiences. Included in the WWOHP were Hogsmeade station (where students arrive at

the start of each school year), Hogsmeade Village (where students are allowed to visit on

weekends), numerous shops famous from the movies, and The Three Broomsticks and

Hog's Head (the restaurants and pubs where students often eat while in town). Finally,

the most famous addition to this park was the recreation of the Hogwarts castle, the most

iconic and recognized architectural structure from the *Harry Potter* films. The park was

also home to three *Harry Potter*-themed rides: Dragon Challenge, Flight of the

Hippogriph, and Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey.

Over the next four years, as Hayley Cuccinello reports, the Wizarding World

would increase Universal's attendance by 80 percent, and over 50 million guests would

visit.[19] For the first time, another theme park rivaled the beloved Disney parks, with

---

17. Diane Garrett, "Harry Potter park set for Florida," *Variety*, May 31, 2007, https://variety.com/2007/film/features/harry-potter-park-set-for-florida-1117966040/.

18. James Sturcke, "Harry Potter Theme Park to Open in Florida," *The Guardian*, May 31, 2007, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2007/may/31/film.harrypotter.

19. Hayley C. Cuccinello, "How J.K. Rowling Earned $95 Million in a Year," *Forbes,* June 19, 2017, https://www.forbes.com/sites/hayleycuccinello/2017/06/19/how-j-k-rowling-earned-95-million-in-a-year/#1945a015d429.

many saying that Universal "out-disneyed Disney."[20] The WWOHP accomplished what had made Disney so successful 60 years prior: an experience where guests truly felt as though they were entering a new world when they entered the theme park. Hogsmeade Village was designed in such a way that once a guest was in, only aspects from the world of *Harry Potter* were visible. If the guest chose to leave the narrative, they would have to physically remove themselves from the WWOHP. Theme park designer Edward Marks reports that "The Wizarding World attractions, which are highly immersive, were an artistic and commercial game changer for Universal. Harry Potter changed the way theme parks are designed and built."[21] Such a significant attraction deserves rhetorical scrutiny.

Following the success of the first opening, less than two years later, on December 6, 2011, Universal confirmed their plans to add onto the Wizarding World, and Jim Hill reported that on May 8, 2013, Universal announced that this new park would be set in Universal Studios and feature Diagon Alley, London, and King's Cross Station.[22] Although this announcement was met with excitement from fans, most doubted that Universal would be able to pull off such an elaborate stunt. Their plans were to build a new Harry Potter-themed section that was geographically separated from the first. This was an effort to make the space between the parks as realistic as possible, so that they could connect the two parks with the Hogwarts Express, the train that the students embarked on every year to get to school. When the project was finished, the Universal Parks would have two separate Harry Potter-themed sections that were connected by a

20. Leonard and Palmeri, "Disney's Intergalactic Theme Park Quest to Beat Harry Potter."

21. Edward Marks in Cuccinello, "How J.K. Rowling Earned $95 Million in One Year."

22. Jim Hill, "Exclusive: A Detailed Look at Diagon Alley, the Highly Anticipated Expansion of the Wizarding World of Harry Potter at Universal Orlando Resort," *HuffPost,* May 8, 2013, https://www.huffpost.com/entry/a-huffington-post-exclusi_1_b_3233177.

third themed transportation device. Hill remarks that although something like this had never been done before, those designing the park stated they had chosen to create the theme parks this way so that "all three of these elements would come together to tell one single immersive story on an epic scale."[23]

The Wizarding World – Diagon Alley opened on July 8, 2014, to thousands of fans that were lined up to wait.[24] The new addition contained elements of London (Diagon Alley's film location) as well as other famous London architecture and landmarks. Parked outside is the familiar purple Knight Bus that Harry Potter once took to get to Diagon Alley. The entrance to Diagon Alley is hidden intentionally but may be found through a brick wall, which again allows fans to not only enter the world the same way Harry Potter did in the first book, but truly makes them feel as though they are leaving one world behind and entering a new one. Diagon Alley contains shops from the books, such as Knockturn Alley, the Leaky Cauldron (a famous restaurant and hotel), and additions that were not in the original books or movies, but that further immerse the reader into their own Harry Potteresque story. Finally, at the end of Diagon Alley stands the recreation of Gringotts Bank. This section is home to only one ride: Escape from Gringotts.

Outside of Diagon Alley, King's Cross Station is designed to look like a normal train station in London. Guests pass through a brick wall and are transported to Platform 9 3/4, the famous platform where Harry caught the train to school each year. After

23. Hill, "Exclusive."

24. Robert Niles, "The Wizarding World of Harry Potter - Diagon Alley Opens Officially at Universal Studios Florida," *Theme Park Insider,* July 8, 2014, https://www.themeparkinsider.com/ 201707.

boarding the train, fans are able to replicate the same journey to Hogwarts and the

Hogsmeade section of the park that Harry visited in nearly all of the movies. After

Diagon Alley opened, attendance soared again at Universal as millions of guests flocked

to Orlando to immerse themselves into a story they knew and loved. Particularly of

interest to guests was their ability to become part of the famous story and make it their

own through the different narratives Universal left open for guests to interact within.

Overall, the story of *Harry Potter* dictated the park, but the rhetors left the guests able to

immerse themselves into their own versions of the park's magic.

However, Universal was not finished yet; the newest addition to the WWOHP

opened in 2019. At the beginning of 2019, different news sources began leaking rumors

about a new attraction being developed in the Hogsmeade section of the WWOHP.

According to Emma Pocock, Universal confirmed these plans, and on February 21, 2019,

they announced that the ride would replace the Dragon Challenge ride and would be

centered around Hagrid, a beloved giant from the *Harry Potter* books.[25] The ride opened

on June 13, 2019, and within an hour had a ten-hour-long wait time, wrote Sarah

Whitten.[26] Scottie Andrew and Brian Ries note that guests and critics are calling the ride

the "most highly themed and immersive ride" ever made.[27] Today, guests still flock to

25. Emma Pocock, "Universal Orlando Announce Details of New 'Harry Potter' Thrill Ride," *Forbes,* February 21, 2019, https://www.forbes.com/sites/emmapocock/2019/02/21/universal-orlando-announce-details-of-new-harry-potter-thrill-ride/#4e8eb78f359c.

26. Sarah Whitten, "10 Hour Wait: New $300 Million Harry Potter Coaster Opens at Universal in Orlando to Massive Crowds," *CNBC*, June 13, 2019, https://www.cnbc.com/2019/06/13/hours-long-wait-for-harry-potter-coaster-at-universal-in-orlando.html.

27. Scottie Andrew and Brian Ries, "Harry Potter Fans Battle Crowds and Lightning in 10-Hour Wait to Ride New Hagrid Roller Coaster," *CNN*, June 13, 2019, https://www.cnn.com/travel/article/harry-potter-ride-10-hour-wait-trnd/index.html.

Universal by the millions, hoping to become part of this magical universe. The success of the WWOHP is largely attributed to the success Universal found in their design of the park, including all of the small details that most people do not notice. This success is attributable, at least in part, to the two rhetors that helped create and design the park.

J.K. Rowling wrote *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, the first novel of the series, in 1996. After the book was published, fans became infatuated with the story, and books two through seven quickly followed, along with their movie counterparts. When thoughts of building a *Harry Potter*-inspired theme park were first brought to the table, Rowling was on board. However, she insisted on the ability to oversee exactly what was being done, how the theme park would be developed, and what would or would not be included. Rowling had a very specific image and standard for a theme park dedicated to the story she had created and is one of the key rhetors of The Wizarding World of Harry Potter.[28] In this influential role, Rowling had a say in everything that was included in the theme park, from the types of drinks that would be served, to how big the Hogwarts Castle was. Much of the success of the theme park is attributed to her involvement in the planning and execution.[29]

When it came to designing a theme park, Rowling knew she would need more help than the team at Universal Creative (the department at Universal who designs and creates the park) could provide. Wanting to bring someone onto the project who was extremely familiar with the architectural design of the *Harry Potter* set, Rowling asked that Stuart Craig be brought on by Universal to lead the design process. Craig had

28. Steven Tye, "The Real Reason Disney World Didn't Get Harry Potter Land."
29. Leonard and Palmeri, "Disney's Intergalactic Theme Park Quest to Beat Harry Potter."

designed the sets for all the *Harry Potter* movies to date, so the choice was clear. When

asked about it, Rowling stated, "the key thing for me was that, if there was to be a theme

park, that Stuart Craig would be involved. More than involved, that he would pretty much

design it."[30] The sets Craig designed for the *Harry Potter* movies brought to life what

Rowling says had been in her imagination for years. Craig and Rowling worked

alongside the Universal Creative team to design The Wizarding World of Harry Potter

including the Hogsmeade and Diagon Alley sections in Universal Orlando, Hogsmeade in

Universal Studios Hollywood and Hogsmeade in Universal Studios Japan. One of

Rowling and Craig's main dilemmas was that neither had ever been involved with the

design of a theme park before; however, according to Elizabeth Stamp, they later said

that they "approached it as taking the film sets and making them real. We wanted to

create a story and a logic for everything," and they worked to "eliminate the modern real

and keep everyone fully contained to achieve a sense of authenticity."[31]

The significance of the WWOHP cannot be denied. Universal has used tactics in

their parks to enhance guests' presence in an effort to persuade them to accept these

stories they are offering, find them compelling, reconstitute their relationship to the Harry

Potter franchise, and continue to return to the parks again and again. Theme parks have a

significant impact on culture and society that is only growing in an age of increasing

tourism and desire for in-person vacation experiences, and dedicating more research to

---

30. J.K. Rowling, "PotterCast 131: Rowling Along," December 24, 2007, in *PotterCast,* produced by Melissa Anelli, podcast, MP3 audio, 33:20, http://www.the-leaky-cauldron.org/2007/12/24/ pottercast-131-rowling-along/.

31. Elizabeth Stamp, "Behind the Scenes of the Wizarding World of Harry Potter," *Architectural Digest,* April 4, 2016, https://www.architecturaldigest.com/story/wizarding-world-of-harry-potter-design.

them is beneficial to see how audiences are persuaded through immersion and an increased sense of presence.

Persuasion

Narratives are used in a variety of ways every day in an effort to persuade audiences. Whether it be on billboards to sell insurance, in magazines to persuade an audience to try a new diet, or on TV to convince audiences to watch the nightly news, narratives are influential in gaining an audiences' attention and persuading them in some way. Universal uses narratives in their theme park to persuade guests to find their stories authentic enough to keep returning to their park and being a part of their story. Universal frames many of their messages on how their audience will most easily be persuaded.

Persuasion is defined as "human communication designed to influence the autonomous judgements and actions of others."[32] Many things influence persuasion such as emotions, previous knowledge, narratives, the rhetors credibility, the way a message is framed, etc. Rhetoricians often analyze how a rhetorical text persuades audiences and the methods that rhetors use to achieve persuasion. Two tools that rhetors can use, specifically in theme parks, to increase persuasion in their audience are enhancing an audience's sense of presence and their immersion in the experience.

Presence

According to Tüzün, Bilgiç, and Elçi, presence is studied by many scholars to "determine whether an environment can enable its users to feel that they are physically

---

32. Herbert Simmons, Joanne Morreal, Bruce F. Gronbeck. "The Study of Persuasion," in *Persuasion in Society* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2001), 7.

present in an environment."[33] In an effort to increase their guests' sense of presence, Universal uses many tactics including virtual reality, emotions, and interactivity. When a guest feels a sense of presence, their experience is deemed "successful," as their feeling of being physically present in a simulated environment intensifies, as noted by Rafael T da Costa et al.[34] This feeling of presence can lead to more persuasion, as a guest is more likely to find the narratives and stories compelling or authentic. The work of Bogicevic et al. shows that "the sense of presence is a crucial factor is driving users' attitudes and behaviors toward the virtual environment."[35]

Although in a physical space, the WWOHP can technically be seen as a virtual or simulated environment because the rhetors aimed to simulate physical spaces from the *Harry Potter* films. Literary scholars Wei Wei, Ruoxi Qi, and Lu Zhang state that audiences "perceive a higher level of presence by experiencing and participating in a virtual environment, which is designed with a functional and perceptual resemblance to an actual physical environment."[36] For presence to begin to form, there are many elements that a rhetor must ensure are in place. Communication scholars Vanga Bogicevic et al. found that virtual space, physical space, and mental imagery space are

33. HakanTüzün, Hatice Gökçe Bilgic, and Sevil Yaşar Elçi, "The Effects of 3D Multi-User Virtual Environments on Collaborative Learning and Social Presence," *International Electronic Journal of Elementary Education* 11, no. 3 (2019): 221.

34. Rafael T da Costa, Marcele de Carvalho, Pedro Ribeiro, and Antonio E. Nardi, "Virtual Reality Exposure Therapy for Fear of Driving: Analysis of Clinical Characteristics, Physiological Response, and Sense of Presence," *Brazilian Journal of Psychiatry* 3, no. 1 (2018): 193, https://doi.org/10.1590/1516-4446-2017-2270.

35. Bogicevic et al., "Virtual Reality Presence as a Preamble of Tourism Experience: The Role of Mental Imagery," *Tourism Management* 74, no. 1 (2019): 56, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2019.02.009.

36. Wei Wei, Ruoxi Qi, and Lu Zhang, "Effects of Virtual Reality on Theme Park Visitor's Experience and Behaviors: A Presence Perspective," *Tourism Management* 71, no. 1 (2019): 283, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2018.10.024.

three essential sources of spatial cues for the formation of presence."[37] This thesis will examine how the WWOHP incorporates and intertwines these three necessary elements of persuasion in order to enhance guests' sense of presence.

Immersion

Communication scholars Veronica Blumenthal and Oystein Jensen define *immersion* as "the feeling of being fully absorbed, surrendered to, or consumed by an activity to the point of forgetting oneself and one's surroundings."[38] Another example of immersion put forth by creative media professor Kurt Lancaster states that "immersion is the process by which participants break the frame of their actual everyday world, allowing them to interact in some way within the fantasy environment."[39] Whichever definition one chooses, immersion is the process through which an individual may be consumed by a fictitious environment or story. Blumenthal and Jensen have called immersion the "deepest form of involvement" and the process through which someone accesses the deepest level of an experience.[40] However, there is not a lot of scholarship on what leads to immersion and the stages one must go through to become completely immersed. Some communication scholars argue that immersion is instantaneous, but most argue that there is a specific process individuals go through to become fully immersed.

37. Bogicevic et al., "Virtual Reality Presence," 56.

38. Kurt Landcaster, qtd in Veronica Blumenthal and Oystein Jensen, "Consumer Immersion in the Experiencescape of Managed Visitor Attractions: The Nature of the Immersion Process and the Role of Involvement," *Tourism Management Perspectives* 30, no. 1 (2019): 160, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2019.02.008.

39. Victoria Goodwin, "Theme Park as Interface to the Wizarding (Story) World of Harry Potter," *Transformative Works and Cultures* 25, no. 1 (2017): 3. https://doi.org/10.3983/twc.2017.01078.

40. Blumenthal and Jensen, "Consumer Immersion in the Experiencescape," 160.

Communication scholars Emily Brown and Paul Cairns state that the process of immersion starts with engagement, leading to engrossment, and finally to total immersion.[41] Brown and Cairns studied the process of immersion in users who played video games. The key to becoming engaged in the process of immersion is involvement, and they argue that for this to happen, something must capture the user's interest, which in turn leads him or her to invest time, attention, and effort into the game he or she is playing. After this initial stage, the user needs to somehow become emotionally invested in the game which leads him or her to the next stage, engrossment. In the final stage, total immersion, the user feels as though he or she is actually present in the game and mentally leaves reality. Although Brown and Cairns put forth a compelling model of the immersion process, many other researchers found it problematic because they did not account for what happened once a viewer was totally immersed.

Another model put forth by literary scholars Ann Heidi Henson and Lena Mossberg describes the immersion process based on tourism experiences. They suggest that the immersion process is "dynamic in nature and that consumers fluctuate between different levels of immersion throughout the duration of experience."[42] However, Henson and Mossberg explain that the experiencescape determines how immersed someone becomes into an environment. *Experiencescape* is "a term used to describe the environment with which consumers interact to create their own experiences."[43] Qualities

41. Emily Brown and Paul Cairns, "A Grounded Investigation of Game Immersion," *Human Factors in Computing Systems* 4 (2004): 1298, https://doi.org/10.1145/985921.986048.

42. Ann Heidi Hansen and Lena Mossberg, "Tour Guides' Performance and Tourists' Immersion: Facilitating Consumer Immersion by Performing a Guide Plus Role," *Scandanavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism* 17, no. 3 (2017): 262, https://doi.org/10.1080/15022250.2016.1162347.

43. Blumenthal and Jensen, "Consumer Immersion in the Experiencescape," 160.

and conditions of the experiencescape will determine the level of immersion that someone is able to accomplish based on three distinctive factors.

Communication scholars have found that the three factors of experiencescape that determine immersion include: the experiencescape should be themed; it should be clearly limited in time and space; and it should be perceived as safe.[44] Blumenthal and Jensen note that a themed experiencescape adds meaning to an audience member's experience which stimulates his or her emotional involvement—a key element in the immersion process.[45] Furthermore, reducing interfering elements intensifies the experience. To achieve immersion, rhetors would want to put up boundaries or physical barriers that make a visitor feel as though he or she has been transported to a different time and place where the norms and worries of everyday life are temporarily lifted. These elements are achieved at the WWOHP through the choice the rhetors made when creating the park. To help immerse guests with the factors of experiencescape, the rhetors of the Wizarding World had to create authentic and believable narratives throughout the park. The rhetors relied not only on the established narrative of the Harry Potter series, but also created new narratives for guests to immerse themselves into. These narratives, both old and new, allowed the rhetors to completely engulf guests into the story that the rhetors were telling at the park. Due to the way that Universal relies on narratives to immerse each guest, it is important to understand narratives and how they are immersive when combined with other tools.

---

44. Antonella Caru and Bernard Cova, "The Impact of Service Elements on the Artistic Experience: The Case of Classical Music Concerts," *International Journal of Arts Management* 7, no. 2 (2005): 43.

45. Blumenthal and Jensen, "Consumer Immersion in the Experiencescape," 160.

Narratives

Rhetors create narratives to draw human beings into stories and storytelling. Literary scholar James M. Lang writes that "human beings are storytelling and story-loving animals."[46] Additionally, cognitive psychologist David Willinghan explains that "the human mind seems exquisitely tuned to understand and remember stories—so much so that psychologists sometimes refer to stories as 'psychologically privileged,' meaning that they are treated differently in memory than other types of material."[47] Thus, stories have the power to capture attention, evoke emotion, and persuade humans to feel, think or behave a certain way because "narratives present information in a persuasive and meaningful way."[48] Due to humans' natural obsession with stories, it is understandable that theme parks' advertising and marketing ploys center around stories in an attempt to capture audiences' attention and persuade them to visit the park or buy the product. These stories also become imperative to immersion and allowing oneself to accept the stories that are being told to us. Communication scholar Phaedra C. Pezzullo writes that "the sequence of stories helps us discover and establish meaning, what we care about and why."[49]

---

46. James Lang, *Small Teaching: Everyday Lessons from the Science of Learning* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2016), 182.

47. Daniel Willingham, *Why Don't Students Like School? A Cognitive Scientist Answers Questions About How the Mind Works and What it Means for the Classroom* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass,2009), 66-7.

48. W. Brady DeHart, et al. "The Experimental Tobacco Marketplace: Narrative Influence on Electronic Cigarette Substitution," *Experimental and Clinical Psychopharmacology* 27, no. 2 (2019): 116, https://doi.org/10.1037/pha0000233.supp.

49. Phaedra C. Pezzullo, "Performing Critical Interruptions: Stories, Rhetorical Invention, and the Environmental Justice Movement," *Western Journal Communication* 65, no. 1 (Winter 2001): 3.

Ecologists David Caldwell and Peter White say that "it is through stories that we generally make sense of our everyday experiences."[50] Humans use stories to make sense of what is going on around them and to understand information. Narratives are successful at communicating emotions and additional information that might have been missed if presented in a different way, which is why storytelling is everywhere. Literary scholar Marie-Laure Ryan argues that narratives are not limited by one interface, specifically, traditionally written and oral stories. Instead, storytelling is "a mental representation that can be by many media and many types of signs."[51] Caldwell and White agree that it is "widely recognized in the literature that there are multiple types of storytelling across cultures and languages."[52] Diverse platforms enabled narratives to reach anyone and are a powerful tool for persuasion and understanding.

Narratives have a powerful influence over decision-making, influence, and persuasion and, as DeHart et al. argue, "can change decision making by increasing the persuasiveness of a message," and "[result] in greater utilization of information compared with presentations of information only."[53] Normally audiences can try to resist persuasion by making counterarguments, but communication scholars Elizabeth Cohen et al. state that this is not possible when an audience is being persuaded by a narrative because their "cognitive resources are occupied by the narrative world, and their capacity to resist or

---

50. David Caldwell and Peter White, "That's Not a Narrative; This is a Narrative: NAPLAN and Pedagogies of Storytelling," *Australian Journal of Language and Literacy* 40, no. 1 (2017): 16, https://doi.org/10.1007/BF03651981.

51. Marie-Laure Ryan, "Beyond Myth and Metaphor: Narrative in Digital Media," *Poetics Today* 23, no. 4 (2002): 583, https://doi.org/10.1215/03335372-23-4-581.

52. Caldwell and White, "That's Not a Narrative," 16.

53. DeHart, Kaplan, Pope, Mellis, and Bickel, "The Experimental Tobacco Marketplace," 117.

counter argue against persuasive messages embedded in the story is weakened."[54]

Therefore, narrative involvement leads an audience member to become so entangled in the narrative that he or she is more likely to be persuaded by the message the rhetor is sending. Indeed, communication scholars Jessie Quintero Johnson and Angeline Sangalang state that "narrative involvement is becoming so enthralled with a story that one ceases to be aware of oneself, forgets one's surroundings, and is somehow changed by the experience of being immersed in the experiences of a story's characters, actions, and emotions."[55] Narratives encourage persuasion through immersion. They do this by decreasing the number of counter arguments because the audience member is too immersed in his or her environment to reject the message the rhetor is sending. In theme parks, rhetors are able to immerse their guests into a simulated environment with a variety of tools for enhancing the narrative they are telling and drawing guests further into the immersive experience. Theme parks use virtual reality, amusement rides, restaurants, and more to achieve this deep level of immersion that persuades their audiences to be immersed and accept the stories they are being told. This results in positive attitudes toward the theme park, which keep guests returning. In this next section, I will provide an overview of a close reading methodology. I will also provide an overview of the hero's journey and an explanation of how I will use the hero's journey to

54. Elizabeth L. Cohen, Joe A. Wasserman, Lea M. Schlue, Christina Keely, and Angus Russell, "Seeing is Believing: The Role of Imagery Fluency in Narrative Persuasion Through a Graphic Novel," *Psychology of Popular Media Culture* 1 (2018): 177, https://doi.org/10.1037/ppm0000218.

55. Jessie M. Quintero-Johnson and Angeline Sangalang, "Testing the Explanatory Power of Two Measures of Narrative Involvement: An Investigation of the Influence of Transportation and Narrative Engagement on the Process of Narrative Persuasion," *Media Psychology* 20, no. 1 (2017): 145, https://doi.org/10.1080/152132269.2016.1160788.

analyze how the WWOHP uses narrative to immerse guests into the story of *Harry Potter*.

Methodology

In my thesis, I will analyze different narratives to show how The Wizarding World of Harry Potter immerses guests within their theme parks through the stories they tell. I will do this by performing a close reading of the WWOHP and the narratives that the rhetors tell throughout the park. In my analysis, I will use Joseph Campbell's monomyth, or hero's journey, to show how the rhetors of the WWOHP create immersive narratives for their guests within a larger metanarrative. This metanarrative is unique and important to my analysis because the rhetors of the WWOHP immerse guests into two different metanarratives. One is the metanarrative of *Harry Potter.* The other is the metanarrative that is unique to each guest's experience, which captures their immersive experience from the time they get to the park to the time they leave. This second metanarrative is, again, unique because the experience of the guests closely mirrors the experience of Harry in the *Harry Potter* books.

In my analysis, I will use the hero's journey to show how the rhetors of the WWOHP create immersive narratives for their guests within the metanarrative that is *Harry Potter* to create a theme park experience that results in the continued success of the park. I will do this by analyzing the spatial layout and experience of each guest by showing how each guest embarks on their own version of the hero's journey. I will perform this analysis by doing a close reading of the WWOHP through the lens of constitutive rhetoric. In this next section, I provide a review of the literature over close

reading and how close reading has evolved overtime to include not only literary texts but also physical and moving texts such as video games, movies, and theme parks.

Close Reading

Philosophical and literary scholar David Schur notes that "close reading… has developed over centuries."[56] Similarly noting the prominence of this method, literary scholar Barbara Herrnstein Smith notes that "close reading is the 'primary methodology' of literary studies."[57] Smith also argues that close reading as a methodology is tremendously diverse and can be applied to different texts in diverse ways which is why close reading as a methodology has such a long history and a broad overreach in academia. To provide a more detailed, yet brief, history of close reading, technology scholar Jim Bizzocchi and psychological scholar Joshua Tanenbaum write that "close reading… has evolved over the years since its early formulations by John Crowe Ransom… in the late 1930s and early 1940s… It is the quintessential humanist methodology, born in the study of literature and adapted to other media forms such as cinema studies."[58] Smith writes that John Crowe Ransom was a controversial figure in academia in the late 1930s as he advocated to turn criticism into a more empirical practice, "a form of technical expertise that elevated its status from an occasional pursuit to a duly accredited and properly housed academic program."[59] In its earliest form,

---

56. David Schur, "An Introduction to Close Reading," *Harvard University Press* no. 2 (1998): 2.

57. Barbara Herrnstein Smith, "What Was 'Close Reading'? A Century of Method in Literary Studies," *The Minnesota Review* 87 (2016): 57.

58. Jim Bizzocchi and Joshua Tanenbaum, "Well Read: Applying Close Reading Techniques to Gameplay Experiences" in *Well Played 3.0: Video Games, Value and Meaning*, eds. Drew Davidson (Pittsburgh, PA: ECT Press, 2011), 289.

59. Smith, "What Was 'Close Reading'?" 62.

Ransom referred to the then unnamed "close reading" as "the new form of literary study" and wrote that when critics used this new method of study it was because, "the critic wishes to know what he [the author of a text] is doing and how."[60] Researchers have established close reading as a traditional method in academia with a long history and a very broad applicability. Various scholars from different fields use close reading as a method and explain exactly what the method entails and aims to accomplish in their research.

Education scholars Betsy Sisson and Diana Sisson write that "the concept of close reading can first be traced to the theological term exegesis which derives from the Greek language, meaning to 'lead out' and refers to the critical explanation or interpretation of a text."[61] Schur notes that a critic will decide to do a close reading over a text when "the [critic] becomes convinced that there is more than first meets the eye. An initial, immediate reading of the text comes to appear insufficient and impoverished."[62] Communication scholar Barry Brummett has conducted thorough research over close reading. In this thesis, I understand close reading as he defines it: "close reading is a mindful, disciplined reading of an object with a view to deeper understanding of its meanings."[63] Using *Harry Potter* as an example, Brummett explains how close reading is easily applied to complex texts with multiple moving characters and story plots. He explains that someone who reads the series multiple times performs a "slow, careful

---

60. John Crowe Ransom, "Criticism, Inc.," *Virginia Quarterly Review* no. 13 (1937): 601.

61. Betsy Sisson and Diana Sisson, "The Renaissance of Close Reading: A Review of Historical and Contemporary Perspectives, *California Reader* 47, no. 4 (2018): 8.

62. Schur, "An Introduction to Close Reading," 3.

63. Barry Brummett, *Techniques of Close Reading* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publication, Inc, 2010), 9.

reading and rereading" and reveals "new understandings."[64] This, Brummett says, is a

common use of close reading. Literary scholars Annie Bares, Francesca Samsel, and

Daniel Keefe write that "close reading is paying close attention to a specific text or

groupings of a text to interpret their meaning… The interpretation involved in close

reading is frequently based on attending to both its content (what the text is 'saying') and

its formation (how is it being 'said')."[65] The modern description of close reading that

Bares, Samsel, and Keefe put forward is very similar to the way Ransom explained his

new method of literary study in the late 1930s. Although close reading has been used in

academia throughout history and is used by researchers to find implications and hidden

meanings of various type of texts, the process of close reading remains similar throughout

disciplines and diverse texts.

Bizzocchi and Tanenbaum write that "a close reading is a detailed examination,

deconstruction, and analysis of a media text."[66] Smith adds that close reading is "a

technically informed, fine-grained analysis of some piece of writing, usually in

connection with some broader question of interest."[67] In his "how to" book on techniques

of close reading, Brummett expands on other scholars' research and states that there is no

one way to perform a close reading over a text. Instead, Brummett encourages critics to

perform close readings with specific techniques in mind. Brummett writes that critics

should look for the specific form of the text or "the structure, or pattern, that organizes a

---

64. Brummett, *Techniques of Close Reading,* 9.

65. Annie Bares, Francesca Samsel and Daniel Keefe, "Close Reading For Visualization Evaluation," *IEEE Computer Graphics and Applications* 40, no. 4 (2020): 87, https://doi.org/10.1109/MGC.2020.2993889.

66. Bizzocchi and Tanenbaum, "Well Read," 289.

67. Smith, "What Was 'Close Reading'?" 58.

text."[68] He also encourages critics to look for specific context, audience perspective, narratives, metaphors, metonymy, synecdoche, and irony that a text uses. Finally, Brummett provides questions for a critic to answer during a close reading, such as: what should the audience think or do, what does the text ask the audience to assume, how does the audience know what the text claims, and who is empowered or disempowered?[69] Similarly, Bares, Samsel, and Keefe state that the process of close reading involves "making initial observations about a text's specific features including word choice, syntax, repetition of words, phrases, or sounds, figurative language, shifts in tone, or formal structure."[70]

As I mentioned before, researchers regard close reading as broadly applicable to texts. The free-range applicability of close reading as a method does come with a few limitations in research. Brummett writes that "critics and their audiences risk something when they read closely, and they ask others to take similar risks—hence the ethical implications."[71] However, this broad reach of the method has allowed research using this method to branch out to include more than traditional, literal, and physical texts. Now, researchers can use close reading to analyze moving texts that are becoming more popular in society such as movies, virtual reality, etc.

Bizzocchi has been a prominent figure in academia who has expanded the method of close reading to include more than just literal texts. Through his research, Bizzocchi has adapted close reading to analyze cinema, video games, and other more complex

---

68. Brummett, *Techniques of Close Reading,* 49.
69. Brummett, *Techniques of Close Reading.*
70. Bares, Samsel, and Keefe, "Close Reading for Visualization Evaluation," 87.
71. Brummett, *Techniques of Close Reading,* 4.

moving texts. Although his research is applicable mainly to video games and interactive

media, his research applies to this thesis as he has spent years working on using the

method of close reading in a more non-traditional sense. In his 1968 master's thesis,

Bizzocchi wrote that close reading's "application to an interactive multimedia work

requires that the same attention to detail, context and meaning be extended to include the

various component media (sounds, graphics, moving images) and the interactive process

itself."[72] Bizzocchi and Tanendaum explain that a close reading of a physical text can be

performed by re-reading a text many times. This, they say, makes way for close reading

to apply to something like video games. Instead of re-reading a text to learn new insights

from it, Bizzocchi and Tanendaum state that replaying a video game can provide the

same close reading as any other text and produce a similar analysis.[73] Throughout history,

disciplines, and types of texts, close reading has come to be regarded as an all-

encompassing method which helps critics understand texts in different ways.

In a similar method, Danielle Endres and Samanth Senda-Cook have performed a

rhetorical analysis of physical places that are common occurrences for protests, analyzing

how repeated acts in a physical space could reconstitute the meaning of that space, or

how it is viewed in an audience's mind. They write that "a place is not just a discursive

resource but is itself rhetorical. That is, the confluence of physical structures, bodies and

symbols in particular locations construct the meaning and consequences of a place."[74]

---

72. Jim Bizzocchi, "Ceremony of Innocence: A Case Study in the Emergent Poetics of Interactive Narrative," (Master's Thesis, University of Michigan, 1968), 24.

73. Bizzocchi and Tanenbaum, "Well Read."

74. Danielle Endres and Samantha Senda-Cook, "Location Matters: The Rhetoric of Place in Protest," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 97, no. 3 (2011), 276, https://doi.org/10.1080/00335630.2011.585167.

These scholars point out that close reading is an applicable rhetorical methodology to understand not only traditional texts like speeches but also can be used to unpack the meaning of physical spaces and places.

Bares, Samsel, and Keefe summarize close reading by stating "close reading is a widespread, dominant, and ubiquitous practice because it is a teachable skill and process that relies on evidence-based argumentation about a specific text or passage of a text."[75] When discussing the importance of close reading, Bizzocchi and Tanenbaum write that "close reading … is a celebration of the many ways in which a text can create meaning."[76] Although close reading is used to uncover hidden meanings in texts, different critics looking at the same text may infer multiple, differing meanings without diminishing the findings of another critic. The theory a critic utilizes to analyze a text allows them to uncover hidden meanings on specific elements of that text. In this thesis, I will perform a close reading of the WWOHP, and I will look at how the rhetors of this theme park create an immersive experience for guests through the use of stories. Most of these experiences are obvious; however, by doing a close reading, I will argue that the rhetors subtly subject each guest to elements of Joseph Campbell's monomyth, or hero's journey, through the stories they tell in the WWOHP.

The Hero's Journey

In 1949, literary scholar Joseph Campbell proposed the *monomyth*—what would later be called *the hero's journey*—a theory that outlines the common narrative structure of myths, legends, parables, and fairytales. The way a society tells stories can show the

---

75. Bares, Samsel, and Keefe, "Close Reading for Visualization Evaluation," 88.
76. Bizzocchi and Tanenbaum, "Well Read," 289.

customs, values and beliefs of cultures. Marketing scholars S. M. A. Moin, Sameer

Hosany, and Justin O'Brien write that, as emotional creatures, storytelling is embedded in

the DNA of humans.[77] The importance associated with the way stories are told and the

meanings derived from them make them a worthy field of study. Researchers from

various fields study the phenomenon of storytelling. Campbell argued that the monomyth

or hero's journey was the underlying pattern and structure for all stories, regardless of

their cultural origin.[78] Rhetoricians have used the hero's journey as a way to help

individuals understand the world around them and make sense of who they are or what

they are supposed to be. From *Harry Potter* to *The Hunger Games*, rhetors have,

consciously or unconsciously, used this structure in the stories they tell "as a narrative

pattern for telling stories about individual change and transformation" according to

Carsten Busch, Florian Conrad and Martin Steinicke.[79] Legal scholar Ruth Anne Robbins

noted that Campbell's work is mainly rooted in psychology and the work of Carl Jung.

Robbins stated that "Jung argues that human beings are persuaded by similar things after

realizing that myths from all over the world seem to be built from the same elementary

ideas."[80] Regardless of the cultural setting or language of this story type, the hero's

journey immerses audiences and helps increase persuasion. The hero's journey and

---

77. S.M.A. Moin, Sameer Hosany, and Justin O'Brien, "Storytelling in Destination Brands' Promotional Videos," *Tourism Management Perspectives* 34 (2020): 2, https://doi:10.1016/j.tmp.2020.100639.

78. Joseph Campbell, *The Hero With a Thousand Faces* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1949), 36-37.

79. Carsten Busch, Florian Conrad, and Martin Steinicke, "Digital Games and the Hero's Journey in Management Workshops and Tertiary Education," *Electronic Journal of E-Learning* 11, no. 1 (2013): 5.

80. Ruth Anne Robbins, "Harry Potter, Ruby Slippers, and Merlin: Telling The Client's Story Using The Characters And Paradigm of the Archetypal Hero's Journey," *Seattle University Law Review* 29, no. 4 (2006): 776, https://doi.org/10.7282/T3668GG4.

stories that follow the pattern are familiar to audiences and not only give them an easy

structure to follow but also allows them to put themselves into the shoes of the hero and

become that hero. Because they become personally invested in the story, audiences are

more easily persuaded by stories that incorporate the hero's journey structure.

Literary scholars Stephen Sonnenburg and Mark Runco note that the hero's

journey is a parable for the transformation that human beings go through in life and

identify the three main phases of the hero's journey: departure, initiation, and return.[81]

Within these overarching stages, Campbell identified 17 steps in the journey of a hero,

which ultimately end with the hero returning to from the place he or she left. Education

scholars Jason Thomas Duffy and Douglas A. Guiffrida conceptualized the 17 steps of

the hero's journey into three phases: "(1)leaving what is known and comfortable, (2)

experiencing—with the assistance of others—novelty and challenge, and a (3) a personal

transformation of the individual based on the new experiences encountered and the

obstacles overcome."[82] The hero's journey encompasses how an individual changes and

learns from his or her experiences, returning a different person who has learned about

themselves and what they can accomplish through transformations of the world as he or

she knows it. Sonnenburg and Runco acknowledge these transformations as being "a

transformation of setting, a transformation of self and a transformation of society …

without a change in setting the hero cannot change herself, and without a change in

---

81. Stephan Sonnenburg and Mark Runco, "Pathways to the Hero's Journey: A Tribute to Joseph Campbell and the 30th Anniversary of His Death," *Journal of Genius and Eminence* 2, no. 2 (2017): 3.

82. Jason Thomas Duffy and Douglas A. Guiffrida, "The Heroic Supervisor: Using the Hero's Journey to Facilitate Development in Supervisors-in-Training," *The Clinical Supervisor* 33, no. 1 (2014): 144, https://doi.org/10.1080/07325223.2014.978587.

herself, the hero cannot change the world."[83] Writing scholar Chris Vogler worked to simplify the hero's journey even further from the 17 steps that Campbell introduced in 1949. Vogler condensed the hero's journey to 12 steps; his "modified stages are regarded as a highly credible source in understanding movies, commercials, and speeches."[84] Because of the adaptability of the hero's journey, this thesis will combine the works and research of Joseph Campbell and Chris Vogler to analyze the WWOHP.

The first phase of the hero's journey is departure, which encompasses the first five stages of the journey. Nursing scholar M. C. Smith explains that the hero's journey begins with a "call to adventure."[85] The call to adventure attempts to take the hero away from the familiarity of where they are. This call can be internal, like the call to leave a neglectful life and reach their full potential, or external, like the response to a crisis or an invitation from an outside source. The call could come in a multitude of ways, and the fear of leaving the unknown could cause the hero to refuse the call. The refusal of the call is the second stage in departure, and could result from "a sense of duty or obligation, fear, insecurity, a sense of inadequacy," or any other range of reasons why the hero might feel he or she should not head out on this journey, according to scholars Busch, Conrad, and Steinicke.[86] Eventually, the hero will decide to answer the call and meet with a powerful and wise mentor who will give them the necessary tools or knowledge he or she needs to complete the task at hand. Smith writes that "the guide knows the path and can offer

---

83. Sonnenburg and Runco, "Pathways to the Hero's Journey," 4.

84. Moin, Hosany and O'Brien, "Storytelling in Destination Brands," 3.

85. M. C. Smith, "Health, Healing, and the Myth of the Hero Journey," *Advances in Nursing Science* 24, no. 4 (2002): 4.

86. Busch, Conrad, and Steinicke, "Digital Games and the Hero's Journey in Management Workshops and Tertiary Education," 3.

direction, support or mentoring. The guide may gift the hero with a talisman; an object imbued with special powers that will help along the journey."[87] After this, the hero enters the next stage of crossing the threshold and crosses into the field of adventure. During this stage the hero "leaves the known limits of his world" and "ventures out into an unknown and dangerous realm where the rules and limits are unknown."[88] Finally, the hero enters the last stage of the departure phase, which is the belly of the whale. Here, he or she will fully depart from the world he or she knew and undergo a transformation where he or she is "born again" into a new world.[89]

After this transformation, the hero enters the second phase of the hero's journey: initiation. Smith defines the initiation phase as "a ceremony, ritual, test or period of instruction with which a new member acquires a new place or new knowledge."[90] In this new place, the individual will meet with both friends and allies and experience tests as he or she continues in their journey.[91] The hero will then begin their approach to the central ordeal, or the climax of the story. This central ordeal will indicate not only the midpoint of the story but will traditionally also include the death and rebirth of the hero. After experiencing this trial, the hero will continue on towards their reward in the story, whether this reward is tangible or emotional. After accomplishing tasks and trials, the hero will gain items that will help him or her in the future. It is after this that Campbell says the journey is finished and the hero has accomplished the original call. Finally, the

---

87. Smith, "Health, Healing, and the Myth of the Hero's Journey," 5.

88. Sonnenburg and Runco, "Pathways to the Hero's Journey," 7.

89. Campbell, *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*, 20.

90. Smith, "Health, Healing, and the Myth of the Hero's Journey," 5.

91. Viega, "From Orphan to Sage," 7.

hero returns to his or her original environment changed and having undergone a "metamorphosis."[92]

Rhetoricians apply the hero's journey to different stories and narratives found within the world. Moin, Hoseny, and O'Brien mention that "it is common for movie makers, storytellers, and advertising directors to only use a few stages [of the hero's journey] and often in different orders."[93] As I have covered thus far, telling stories can lead to persuasion and immersion. In the WWOHP, the rhetors are telling stories in the hopes of producing both of these outcomes—persuasion and immersion—by telling a familiar story and relying on elements of the hero's journey. Therefore, in my analysis, I will conduct a close reading of the WWOHP and argue that the rhetors of the theme park immerse guests by using elements of the hero's journey to tell stories in the theme park. By participating in their own version of an interactive hero's journey, guests are immersed and persuaded by the rhetors.

Thesis Preview

In my analysis, I will examine the WWOHP. I will analyze different narratives told in the rhetorical text by performing a close reading of the text while I attempt to answer my research question: How do the rhetors of The Wizarding World of Harry Potter immerse guests through the stories they tell?

Chapter two will include my analysis of the theme park and how narratives in the theme park relate to the first phase of the hero's journey: departure. Specifically, I will look at how guests in the theme park are subjected to elements from the hero's journey

---

92. Campbell, *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*, 17.

93. Moin, Hosany, and O'Brien, "Storytelling in Destination Brands' Promotional Videos," 3.

such as the call to adventure, meeting the mentor, and crossing the threshold. I will

analyze how the rhetor's use elements that immerse guests into these elements of the

hero's journey. Examining this will allow me to show that the stories the rhetors tell are

immersive as they send guests through interactive rides, environments, and narrative

spaces. This immersion provides an explanation for the undeniable success these theme

parks continue to experience.

Chapter three will include my analysis of the theme park and how narratives in

the park relate to elements from the second phase of the hero's journey: initiation. In this

phase, I will specifically touch on how the hero is subjected to tests, allies, and enemies

and eventually how the hero (guest) is rewarded at the end of their immersive experience.

Again, I will analyze how the rhetors tell immersive stories through interactive rides,

themed environments, and narrative spaces.

Chapter four will include my analysis of the theme park and how narratives in the

park relate to elements from the third phase of the hero's journey: return. In this phase, I

will specifically touch on how the hero travels along the road back from the unknown

world to the ordinary world and how the theme park offers them elixirs with which to

return home. I will look at the agency a guest has in this section and narrative spaces that

aid the park in telling thrilling narratives.

Finally, chapter five will conclude my analysis and review the research I

discussed throughout the paper. I will offer implications of the research and future

research possibilities.

CHAPTER II

THE DEPARTURE

The success of the WWOHP lies in the level of the immersion guests experience while in the park. To accomplish this, the theme park relies heavily on the presentation of narratives, both old and new, that invite guests to step into new identities and roles. Specifically, the guest becomes the hero in multiple stories told throughout the theme park. Understanding how the WWOHP uses constitutive rhetoric to immerse guests into different roles is crucial in understanding the success of the park.[1]

In this chapter, I will first provide an overview of constitutive rhetoric for the purposes of this study. I will next overview the departure phase of the hero's journey and the three stages that fall under departure: call to adventure, meeting the mentor, and crossing the threshold. Then, I will analyze how the WWOHP invites guests through the departure phase of the hero's journey.

Constitutive Rhetoric

In 1987, Maurice Charland published his detailed perspective of constitutive rhetoric, drawing on the work of Kenneth Burke to argue that a key component of the rhetorical process was identification, rather than persuasion. In his paper, Charland stated

---

1. During this chapter and the subsequent chapters, any description or images of the theme park is pulled from my own notes and recollection of my time spent at the park from April 18-19, 2024.

that "the position that one embodies as a subject is a rhetorical effect."[2] Charland

believed that giving an individual a role to step into would also provide that individual

with a set of beliefs, actions, and ideals as a part of that role. He argues that "constitutive

rhetorics are ideological… because they provide individuals with narratives to inhabit as

subjects and motives to experience."[3] Regarding my analysis, this description is

particularly impactful because it can explain how visitors to the WWOHP are immersed

through narratives into taking on identities that create rhetorical effects. Namely, the

narrative's rhetorical effect changes how the visitors see themselves in relation to the

park as they come to accept the new identity of the "hero" into which the park's spaces

and rides rhetorically function to interpellate them. Scholars Angela L. Putman and

Kristen L. Cole summarize this process as

> identification occurs through a process of interpellation, where subjects are
> inscribed into ideology though narrative, which leads them to construct a coherent
> unified identity. When the interpellated subject recognizes and acknowledges
> themselves in rhetoric, they participate in the narrative, thus, identifying with a
> collective subjectivity.[4]

In his analysis, Charland drew on Louis Althusser's theory of interpellation, a

term that Althusser coined to describe the process of inscribing subjects into ideology.[5]

Althusser theorized that through interpellation "ideology acts or functions in such a way

---

2. Maurice Charland, "Constitutive Rhetoric: The Case of the Peuple Quebecois," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 73, no. 2 (1987): 148, https://doi.org/10.1080/00335638709383799.

3. Charland, "Constitutive Rhetoric," 143.

4. Angela L. Putman and Kristen L. Cole, "All Hail DNA: The Constitutive Rhetoric of AncestryDNA advertising," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 37, no. 3 (August 2020): 210, https://doi.org/ 10.1080/15295036.2020.1767796.

5. Louis Althusser, *Lenin Philosophy and Other Essays* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1970).

that it 'recruits'… individuals… or 'transforms' the individuals into subjects."[6]

Essentially, Althusser argued that the roles into which we are placed contribute to our

belief systems and actions. Thus, *interpellation* can be defined as the process through

which a subject (person) enters into a new identity, specifically an identity that a rhetor

has crafted for them. In this paper, the term *interpellation* will be used to describe the

process of a guest accepting/stepping into the role of "hero" at the WWOHP. Charland

expands on this notion and observes that "one must already be an interpellated subject

and exist as a discursive position in order to be part of the audience of a rhetorical

situation in which persuasion could occur."[7]

Much work has been done to expand upon Charland's account of constitutive

rhetoric. Per L. Halstrom and Per Galle applied constitutive rhetoric to design spaces,

writing that "some of the conceptual tools afforded by constitutive rhetoric may turn out

to be useful in a context of design discourse as well."[8] In their study, Halstrom and Galle

found that existing design theory holds the potential to leave a practicing designer at a

loss for guidance. The scholars argue that studying design through the lens of constitutive

rhetoric is beneficial as designs have the ability to "mold their audience into being."[9]

They explain that when an audience relates to a design (a nice watch for example), they

are persuaded to buy it to align with the typical audience for an expensive watch (wealthy

individuals with good taste). At the WWOHP, the same effect is seen; however, the

---

6. Althusser, *Lenin Philosophy and Other Essays*, 86.

7. Charland, "Constitutive Rhetoric," 138.

8. Per L. Halstrom and Per Galle, "Design as a Co-Evolution of Problem, Solution and Audience," *Journal of Design Practice* 3, no. 4 (2015): 3.6, https://doi.org/10.14434/artifact.v3i4.12815.

9. Halstom and Galle, "Design as a Co-Evolution of Problem," 3.10

audience is identifying with stories being told through physical spaces and align their actions to fit identities that belong in those narratives.

Another iteration of constitutive rhetoric was put forth by James Jasinski, who argued that there are four constitutive dimensions present in rhetoric. While he agrees that discourse has the ability to constitute identities for audiences, Jasinski did not believe that the formation of collective identity summed up the range of rhetorical influence.[10] Jasinski and Jennifer R. Mercieca also urged rhetoricians to consider

> how texts invite listeners and readers to modify the meaning of a culture's key terms, to reconceptualize a culture's experience of public time … to reaffirm or reconfigure accepted demarcations of social space, and to affirm as well as challenge established sources of cultural authority, bonds of affiliation and institutional relationships.[11]

Essentially, Jasinski argues that rhetoric can alter how one understands their sense of reality, including how they understand events in the past, present, or future to have been framed; how they believe the space they are within should operate: what it means to be a part of that space, and how an audience derives meaning from a space, how terms are applied and used, etc. Jasinski believes that an effect of rhetorical discourse was reconstituting established terms, an individual's sense of belonging to a community, framing of events, and accepted or expected behaviors in certain cultural spaces.

---

10. James Jasinski, "A Constitutive Framework for Rhetorical Historiography: Toward an Understanding of the Discursive (Re)constitution of 'Constitution' in *The Federalist Papers*," in *Doing Rhetorical History: Concepts and Cases*, ed. Kathleen J. Turner (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1998), 74.

11. James Jasinski and Jennifer R. Mercieca, "Analyzing Constitutive Rhetorics: The Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions and the "Principles of '98,'" in *The Handbook of Rhetoric and Public Address*, ed. Shawn J. Parry-Giles and J. Michael Hogan (Oxford: Blackwell, 2010), 333.

Crucially, he states that "in addition to self-constitution and the formation of…

subject positions"—acknowledging how rhetoric can constitute identities—"discourse

functions to organize and structure an individual's or a culture's experience of time and

space, … and the linguistic resources of the culture."[12] Hence, according to Jasinski, time

and space are "not merely empirical givens" but are "experiential potentialities shaped by

discursive and cultural practice."[13] Consider the future in the context of climate change,

for example. If Person A sits through a presentation about the negative effects of climate

change, and how the earth is heating up as a result of pollution and the burning of fossil

fuels, that person might have a negative outlook on the future and feel fear, helplessness,

and anger at the thought of having to live in the future. However, if Person B sits through

a talk about a company's sustainability efforts and how the collective global efforts to

reverse climate change have shown promising results, they would have a more positive

outlook on the future, leaving the talk feeling refreshed and hopeful. The future is "built"

differently as a concept for each person based on their experience of rhetoric. Similarly,

when discussing events of the past, the way a rhetor frames an experience can alter how

the audience remembers the events and the feelings they associate with it. Jasinski's point

is that our discourse can alter how we remember events of the past or interpret the

present/future.

In terms of space, Jasinski writes that "the reconstitution of spatial experience

is… equally pervasive."[14] He argues that how a space is used can exert meaning for an

audience. Essentially, the rhetorical decisions made in a physical space will alter how an

---

12. Jasinski, "A Constitutive Framework for Rhetorical Historiography," 75.

13. Jasinski, "A Constitutive Framework for Rhetorical Historiography," 76.

14. Jasinski, "A Constitutive Framework for Rhetorical Historiography," 76.

audience understands the space and the relationships between those present in the space. The way a physical space is laid out can also influence decisions made by an audience member. An example of this can be seen in John Lynch's rhetorical analysis of The Creation Museum outside Cincinnati. The way the physical space of the museum is laid out sends guests through the creation narrative and on a "spatial sermon" thus altering and determining how the audience behaves in the space.[15]

While they differ in the scope of the field of constitutive rhetoric, Charland and Jasinski both agree that constitutive rhetoric shapes how we experience the world and understand it to be. Constitutive rhetoric does not merely persuade someone how to act, it shapes their reality, which has effects on behavior, ideologies, values, and decisions. Both scholars acknowledge that the rhetorical discourse we engage in or listen to can shape our reality by providing us with a pre-defined role to step into, changing how we understand events from the past or how spaces operate, and even changing how we use various terms.

The research of constitutive rhetoric is applicable in my analysis because the WWOHP is not, by itself, persuasive. However, the design and theme choices made by the rhetors, or park designers, to interpellate guests into the role of the "hero" give the audience a set of ideals, beliefs, and norms of the world they are participating in, and provide them a place in the story. The use of constitutive rhetoric is also seen throughout the park as the rhetors heavily use rhetorical devices to shape an audience's

---

15. John Lynch, "'Prepare to Believe': The Creation Museum as Embodied Conversion Narrative," *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 16, no. 1 (2013): 18, https://doi.org/10.14321/rhetpublaffa.16.1.0001.

understanding of the world, inviting them to become immersed into various stages of the hero's journey.

Hero's Journey: Departure Phase Analysis

Ride/Space in The Wizarding World of Harry Potter	Stage of the Hero's Journey Guest Experiences in the Departure Phase
London Escape from Gringotts Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey Hagrid's Magical Creature Motorbike Adventure	Call to Adventure
Escape from Gringotts	Meeting the Mentor
King's Cross Station	Crossing the Threshold

Call to Adventure

The hero's journey or the monomyth is more than just a powerful tool for telling narratives; it is a narrative structure that has transcended time and culture. For centuries, rhetoricians have used the monomyth to help individuals understand the world around them and make sense of who they are or what they are supposed to be. Scholar Christopher Vogler has contributed extensive research to the hero's journey. In his work, he simplified Campbell's original 17 stages down to just 12, and many rhetoricians now use his condensed version of the hero's journey in their work. As I previously mentioned, among others, Moin, Hosany, and O'Brien note that his "modified stages are regarded as a highly credible source in understanding movies, commercials and speeches."[16]

In his work, Vogler writes that "because the hero's journey drew from psychological and biological elements common to all humans, stories cast in this mold

---

16. Moin, Hosany, and O'Brien, "Storytelling in Destination Brands' Promotional Videos," 3.

could speak universally to the desires of audiences everywhere."[17] His analysis means that a story that embodies some or all of the stages from the hero's journey will relate to fans immediately, as they are so familiar with the narrative, and it becomes easy for them to become immersed into the stages.

The first phase of the hero's journey is departure. Some rhetorical work refers to this stage as "separation," but in my analysis I will use the term "departure." This stage in the departure phase of the journey is a call to adventure. Campbell described this stage as a signification that "destiny has summoned the hero and transferred his spiritual center of gravity form within the pale of his society to a zone unknown."[18] Throughout literature, a large emphasis is placed in this stage of the hero physically moving from one place to another. Essentially, argues Clive Williams, a hero cannot experience an adventure without moving into a new space, and by answering the call, the hero "will find themselves in a foreign situation."[19]

Prior to receiving this call, which can be internal or external, "intentional or unintentional, sudden or gradual," the hero has been living in a familiar situation. [20] When they are beckoned on an adventure, Clive Williams writes that "the hero is shaken from the realm of the familiar, or the known, and beckoned to enter the unfamiliar and encounter the unknown. The call can come from within… or it can be thrust or pitched on

---

17. Christopher Vogler, "Joseph Campbell Goes to the Movies: The Influence of the Hero's Journey in Film Narrative," *Journal of Genius and Eminence* 2, no. 2 (2017): 10, https://doi.org/10.18536/jge.2017.02.2.2.02.

18. Campbell, *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*, 53.

19. Williams, Clive "The Hero's Journey: A Creative Act," 72.

20. Williams, Clive, "The Hero's Journey: A Creative Act," 72.

the hero from some external force, a happening, occurrence or crisis that compels the hero to embark on the adventure."[21]

The new space that the hero enters will be unfamiliar, strange, and unknown to the hero. It can take any shape or form, but Campbell remarks that no matter what kind of physical space the hero enters, "it is always a place of strangely fluid and polymorphous beings, unimaginable torments, superhuman deeds, and impossible delight."[22] Finally, while a call to adventure is not always seen as a positive and may be one that the hero might initially attempt to refuse, the hero will have no choice but to heed the call in the end.[23]

The call to adventure can be found throughout various popular films and beloved, familiar characters have experienced both external and internal calls to adventure. In *Harry Potter*, this call to adventure happens when Hagrid arrives to tell Harry that he is a wizard, destined for greatness, and invites him to practice magic at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. In *The Lord of the Rings*, Gandalf entrusts Frodo with the One Ring and requests that he embark on a journey to destroy the ring in the fires of Mordor, which sets in motion the rest of the trilogy's plot.

An internal call to adventure is less common but not impossible. In Disney's *Coco*, the main character, Miguel, longs to be a musician, even though his family despises and has forbidden all forms of music. When he sees a flyer for a Day of the Dead talent show, he cannot help the longing inside of him to experience playing music for a crowd to enjoy. Similarly in Disney's *Moana*, the main character desires to find out

---

21. Smith, "Health, Healing, and the Myth of the Hero's Journey."
22. Campbell, *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*, 53.
23. Robbins, "Harry Potter, Ruby Slippers and Merlin," 792.

what is beyond the horizon after living on an island her entire life. Before external forces prompt her to leave the island, an internal sense of adventure is a constant motivation for her to sneak off the island and sail into the unknown while growing up. Later the audience finds out that this internal call to adventure was the correct path for the heroes to follow in their journey.

In my analysis, I will discuss the first phase of the hero's journey: departure. The WWOHP is divided into three main areas: Diagon Alley, King's Cross Station, and Hogsmeade Village. At various locations in these three areas, I will explain the rhetorical choices the designers of the park made that subject the guests to different stages of the hero's journey, as defined by Campbell, in the departure phase. I previously mentioned that researchers agree that not all stages of the hero's journey need to be present or even appear in order for a narrative to occur. In this chapter, I will focus on how the WWOHP invites guests to participate in the departure phase of the hero's journey and will focus on three stages within the departure phase: call to adventure, meeting the mentor, and crossing the threshold.

Diagon Alley

Diagon Alley is an important location in the *Harry Potter* novels, a place witches and wizards convene to do their shopping and have access to everything they need in the magical world. From appropriate attire to candy, cooking ingredients, or a new wand, Diagon Alley presents witches and wizards with any necessity they might need to live in the wizarding world. Located in London, it can be accessed through a pub that only witches and wizards can see. Therefore, at the WWOHP Diagon Alley is set behind a

London-esque scene and located next door to King's Cross Station, a popular London train station and the location where Hogwarts students catch the train to school each year.

As a guest approaches the space, the stereotypical London architecture provides the first sign that they have entered a new area. Many of the Harry Potter movie scenes set in the Muggle world (*Muggle* meaning non-witch or wizard) were inspired by Edinburgh, Scotland, the city where J.K. Rowling has lived since 1993, nearly a decade before the filming of the series began. Edinburgh is a town heavily influenced by Georgian architecture,[24] a popular design that influenced much of London's architecture beginning in 1714, after the Great Fire.[25] As Rowling had a substantial say on any design choices made for the WWOHP, Georgian design elements are seen throughout this area; specifically, the "proportioned classical buildings" that exhibit "pleasing symmetry… achieved by applying the golden ratio."[26] The following photo is a clear example of this architecture in The WWOHP.

24. Expat in UK. "Edinburgh – Beyond Cobbled Streets and Georgian Architecture," *Medium,* August 29, 2021, https://medium.com/show-your-city/edinburgh-beyond-cobbled-streets-and-georgian-architecture-20865cbcc73e

25. Evan Evans, "The History of London Architectural Styles," *Evan Evans Tours,* October 27, 2020, https://evanevanstours.com/blog/the-history-of-london-architectural-styles/

26. Kristin Hohenadel, "What is Georgian Architecture?" *The Spruce,* December 8, 2023, https://www.thespruce.com/georgian-architecture-4846979

Fig. 2.1. A Georgian boulevard in The Wizarding World of Harry Potter. Author photo.

Viewed rhetorically, this space invites guests to begin their journey into the world

of *Harry Potter* and prepares them to embark on the hero's journey. In addition to the

familiar London architecture, guests find replicas of popular London destinations and

elements, including an iconic red English phone booth, a taxi hut, a replica of Alfred

Gilbert's Eros Fountain from London's Piccadilly Circus, Wyndham's Theatre, and

Leicester Square. The final set piece to call this area home is a replica of the Knight Bus

from the films—a triple-decker bus that rescues stranded witches and wizards. This bus

kickstarts the guest's journey; however, only witches and wizards can see the bus, let

alone board it or talk to the driver about possible destinations.

In the *Harry Potter* films and books, the Knight Bus becomes a symbol for

moving from one place to another and is prevalent in multiple scenes throughout *Harry*

Potter series, often appearing when a character embarks on some kind of adventure. In

the third book, *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban,* Harry leaves his aunt and

uncle's house during an argument with his belongings in tow. At the time, Harry had just

used magic in the Muggle world, which is forbidden for two reasons: he is underage and therefore not allowed to use magic outside of school, and he performed the magic in front of Muggles. When he leaves his house that night, Harry is under the impression that he is fleeing from the government that prevails over the wizarding world. When the Knight Bus shows up to aid him, Harry makes the decision to board and embark on a new adventure—a life on the run. The decision to place the bus at the entrance to the WWOHP allows the rhetors to invite guests to begin a new adventure in the theme park.

Furthermore, when guests stop to talk to the bus "driver," he will casually mention that he just dropped off a load of witches and wizards at Diagon Alley and will encourage any guest that speaks with him to visit the area and "book a stay in the Leaky Cauldron" or "rent a vault at Gringotts and go check out the crazy stuff the goblins keep in the basement." With this statement, the park situates the bus driver as a unique call-to-action character, and guests are invited to begin a new adventure in whatever role they choose to embrace: a visitor, a Muggle, a student, a witch, or a wizard. Regardless of the identity that a guest chooses, their actions are shaped by the role they are stepping into as they are encouraged to enter the next section of the theme park and continue the story.

Charland would describe this moment as the "hail" and an example of the guest being invited to assume an identity.[27] When an audience member is first acknowledged or referenced in the rhetorical space (e.g., Americans being referenced as "my fellow Americans" by the president), they have been "hailed" into an identity. When they step into that role and acknowledge their presence (e.g., Americans listening to what the

---

27. Charland, "Constitutive Rhetoric," 138.

president says and acknowledging that he is talking to them) then they have been "interpellated" into the role.

The bus driver sets up clear expectations associated with the role: to enter Diagon Alley, visit Gringotts, shop at the various stores in the alley, or stop into the Leaky Cauldron to grab a bite to eat. Charland writes that "interpellation occurs at the very moment one enters into a rhetorical situation, that is, as soon as an individual recognizes and acknowledges being addressed."[28] When the guests listen to the bus driver and enter Diagon Alley, they have successfully been hailed into a new identity.

Before leaving this section of the park, guests will also find Number 12 Grimmauld Place, a recognizable scene from *Harry Potter* as the headquarters for the Order of the Phoenix (rebel group) and the home of Harry's godfather, Sirius Black. If guests knock on the door to the townhome, a windowpane will move aside to expose a creature staring down at the audience. This is Kreacher, a house-elf from the series who lives in the house. As the only source of magic in this area, the addition of Kreacher plays a big role in reminding the audience that there is magic just around the corner, an implicit call for the guests to dive into the adventure ahead. Thus, Kreacher provides another call to adventure for the guests. When seeing a small bit of magic, audiences are drawn into the adventure for many different reasons. Whether it be to see what else the rhetors have done with the park or to discover what other types of magic await them in Diagon Alley, these rhetorical appeals work to evoke curiosity in the audience and persuade them that there is an adventure waiting for them.

---

28. Charland, "Constitutive Rhetoric," 138.

The examples of how Diagon Alley invites guests in the call to adventure stage of the hero's journey are abundant. This section of the park relies on spatial elements and familiar characters to build a guest's understanding of where they are in time and space and how they should operate in this space, which Jasinski and Mercieca list as one of the fundamental rhetorical effects of constitutive rhetoric.[29] By stepping into the desired role—whether a visiting Muggle, a witch or a wizard—the guest accepts the call to adventure and the elements associated with it. Something external has pushed them to a journey of some sort, and they are physically about to enter into a new space. Additionally, because of the rhetorical choices made by the theme park, the guest understands the behaviors and expectations associated with the role they have entered. In short, they have taken the first step to accepting their new identity as the "hero."

Escape from Gringotts

The next area I examine for examples of a call to adventure is the Escape from Gringotts, a roller coaster inside of Diagon Alley. In Escape from Gringotts, the audience is subjected to multiple stages from the hero's journey in order to immerse them into the story being told within the park. First, I will explain how the ride invites guests to experience a call to adventure.

Gringotts is a wizarding bank located within Diagon Alley. In *Harry Potter*, Gringotts serves as the most common place for witches and wizards to leave anything valuable. Throughout the series, the bank is continuously referred to as the safest place in the world due to the unnamed charms and creatures that protect the bank. To build on this premise, the rhetors of the WWOHP developed an attraction that is part rollercoaster, part

---

29. Jasinski and Mercieca, "Analyzing Constitutive Rhetorics," 320.

virtual reality, and pays homage to the bank. On this ride, guests are invited into

Gringotts to open a vault at the bank for safekeeping of their belongings. Because of the

depth in which Gringotts' vaults are located under the ground—up to nine miles

underground—visitors are informed that to avoid getting lost they must be escorted via a

buggy that will carry them through a complicated series of tunnels. Unbeknownst to the

guest, who has taken on the role of a visitor to the bank, Gringotts is currently under

control of Bellatrix Lestrange, an evil character from *Harry Potter* and a supporter of

Lord Voldemort, and she is on-site visiting her vault at the same time the guest is going

to look at their potentially new vault.

At this attraction, team members are playing the role of Gringotts security and

other various employees. [30] Team members invite the guests to visit the bank and open

an account to ensure that their most important belongings are kept safe. Immediately after

entering the attraction, three identical banners cover the foyer for guests to read:

"Gringotts Bank. Safest place on Earth for gold, jewels and magical artifacts. Since 1474.

Secure a vault today." Along with the team members, these banners reinforce the call to

adventure of this ride: open a vault inside of a magical bank. In the *Harry Potter* books

and movies, Gringotts is seen as a mysterious establishment with cruel, spiteful

employees (goblins). The books allude to unknown creatures lurking in the caves of the

bank to protect the vaults, and in the first book, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*,

one of the goblins tells Harry that if anyone tries to enter a vault that does not

---

30. For the rest of my analysis, the term "team members" is used to describe employees of
Universal who take on various roles throughout the theme park.

belong to them, hexes placed on the vaults will suck the person into the vault, effectively trapping them. When Harry inquires how often the goblins check the vaults, the goblin leading him to his vault smiles nastily and answers that they check them once every ten years. The unsettling reputation of Gringotts deters many people from venturing down to the vaults; therefore, traveling underground to visit a vault would evoke a sense of adventure, as the guest is unsure what creatures or spells they might encounter while there.

Another way this ride evokes a call to adventure occurs during the queue. While the guest has already agreed to embark on a journey underground with goblins and many other unnamed creatures, they overhear the characters of Harry, Ron and Hermione behind a door and see their silhouettes conversing quietly. Guests will overhear the trio plotting to steal something and destroy it, noting that they need to hurry and absolutely cannot get caught. With them, is a goblin, Griphook, who is employed at Gringotts and is leading the way for the trio, eliminating obstacles they might encounter while trying to accomplish their unnamed task. For the guest, the knowledge that characters whom the guest already sees in a positive light are working behind the scenes to make something happen, evokes another call to adventure as they get their first sense that maybe not everything is as it seems at the bank. The guest is let into the knowledge that something unexpected is about to occur and, should they choose to keep going, they will become a part of the narrative.

The spaces in Diagon Alley subject guests at the WWOHP to experience a call to adventure. While both invitations to adventure fall within Campbell's parameters, they are presented very differently. According to Campbell, a call to adventure happens when

the hero leaves a familiar place and enters a new, unknown area where the status quo varies from the space they just left. This may happen through either an internal or external force. In Diagon Alley, the guests will experience an internal force to embark on an adventure, while guests at the Escape from Gringotts ride will have an external force inviting them to a new space. Additionally, Campbell writes that this new space can take any form but will be filled with "unimaginable torments, superhuman deeds, or impossible delight."[31] The spaces that guest enters into fall within these guidelines but are vastly different. While Diagon Alley is a place of delight, sunlit streets, candy and ice cream shops, and bustling restaurants, Gringotts is a stark contrast. The building is ten degrees cooler when a guest walks inside, and the temperature plummets the further "down" they go. They are surrounded by tight cave walls and the distant sound of roaring.

Diagon Alley and the spaces in it uniquely invite guests to different adventures. When in this stage, guests are placed into different identities that help them execute agency when experiencing the theme park. Stepping into the role of a "visitor" while at the Knight Bus gives guests the understanding that the next logical step in the story is to enter Diagon Alley. By becoming a "client" and then "co-conspirator" during the Escape from Gringotts, a guest understands the actions required of them to experience the next step of the narrative. In this instance, Universal is successful if the guest accepts the call to adventure and proceeds to get on the ride. Now that I have explained how audiences are subjected to the "call to adventure" stage in Diagon Alley, I will explain how they experience it in Hogsmeade.

---

31. Campbell, *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*, 53.

Hogsmeade

Guests at the WWOHP will also be invited to experience the call to adventure in Hogsmeade and the spaces that operate within. Hogsmeade is an entirely non-Muggle, magical village in *Harry Potter* that caters to witches and wizards in the area, students of Hogwarts, and the school's staff and faculty. Students in their third year and above are allowed to visit the charming village on select weekends to have a meal, visit the joke shop, grab some Butterbeer, or pick up supplies for their school pet. In *Harry Potter* the village is quaint and within walking distance from Hogwarts, a detail that is replicated at the theme park. At Hogsmeade, the village is dotted with shops and a real-life functioning restaurant, The Three Broomsticks. However, down the cobblestone path and up a small hill stands the most iconic, physical replica from *Harry Potter*—Hogwarts castle. In this space, Hogsmeade is seen as a pre-requisite to adventure. Hogsmeade is well laid out, and all parts of it—shops, restaurants, bars—are visible to the guest, while the lone Hogwarts castle is more elusive and mysterious, beckoning guests to travel to it and enter the unknown.

It is common knowledge that within the castle is a ride for guests to embark upon, and Jeff Moss describes the way the rhetors spatially laid out this area to draw guests through the village and to the castle. [32] For those who are not aware of the ride, the park's infrastructure guides guests in the direction they should go, inviting them into the castle and onto an unknown adventure. In this area, the call to adventure can operate as the direct, tunnel-vision path to the castle or the general flow that exists in this space. The

32. Jess Moss, "The Ultimate One-Day Guide to the Wizarding World of Harry Potter," *U.S. News*, November 10, 2017, https://travel.usnews.com/features/the-ultimate-one-day-guide-to-the-wizarding-world-of-harry-potter

park designers crafted this space to direct the guests down a linear walkway, only

providing a single cobblestone path leading through Hogsmeade and to the three

attractions in this area. This invitational infrastructure operates as a form of interpellation.

Whether or not a guest is aware of what lies in store for them, the spatial layout of the

entrance to the park beckons them to come in closer, subjecting them to answer the call

of adventure (and literally presenting no other alternative pathways). Hogsmeade is the

current home to three attractions, but for the purpose of my analysis I will focus on two:

"Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey" and "Hagrid's Motorbike Adventure."

Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey

Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey is a scenic dark ride located within

Hogwarts. According to Jan G. Langhof and Stefan Guldenberg, a dark ride is a highly

immersive ride in which "visitors sit in automotive and guided vehicles and go past

scenes of animations… typically, guests pass by animatronics… and are usually situated

in enclosed buildings."[33]

When queuing for this line, guests pass through multiple, familiar sets from the

Harry Potter films, including common rooms, stairwells, offices, greenhouses, and more.

They also have the chance to interact with and observe multiple recognizable characters

from the films and books. At this attraction, visitors take on the role of "visitors" on a

tour of Hogwarts. During their tour, they meet Professor Dumbledore, the headmaster of

Hogwarts, who advises the guests to congregate in the Defense of the Dark Arts

classroom to hear a lecture from Professor Binns, a teacher at the school who plans on

---

33 Jan G. Langhof and Stefan Guldenberg, "Pirates, Ghosts and Customer Loyalty – Reviewing the Dark Ride Experience," *Tourism Management Perspectives* 31 (July 2019): 399. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2019.06.004.

hosting a lecture on the history of Hogwarts. In this room, while guests are waiting for the professor to arrive and begin his lecture, Harry, Ron, and Hermione arrive under the Invisibility Cloak. They urge visitors to skip out on the "very boring" lecture and meet them in the Room of Requirement so they can fly everyone down to the Quidditch Pitch.

At this attraction, the call to adventure is clear. Harry, Ron and Hermione specifically acknowledge the guests waiting in line and urge them to meet them in the Room of Requirement to fly down to the Quidditch Pitch. Here, we see Universal using the hero's journey as a rhetoric tool. In addition to inviting the audience members on a call to adventure, the theme park has also made the stylistic choice to use dialogue from Harry, Ron and Hermione to construct an identity for the audience and to inform guests of the expectations and behaviors associated with stepping into the role of "loveable rule-breaker." Betting that guests will accept this call to adventure, rather than continue with the tour, Universal is able to constitute an identity where expectation and values are clear. They accept an identity where experiencing this new world filled with magic is not only valued, but a priority.

Constructing this identity for guests gives Universal a unique advantage and is one way to explain the success of the Wizarding World and, probably, theme parks in general. Narratives, immersion, heightening a sense of presence, and the hero's journey are all tools that Universal uses to create this shared identity for guests, culminating in the desire to reexperience this story again and again. On "Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey," we see how Universal carefully constitutes an identity and invites guests to become a part of it. Harry, Ron and Hermione are simply urging the guests to skip a

lecture, in theory, but in reality, they are setting the expectations of what being a part of this world entails—believing the stories told, participating in them, going on quests.

The physical space of the ride interpellates guests into the role of the hero through the discourse of Harry, Ron, and Hermione, who set up the new identity of "rule-breaker." While this identity would typically be associated with a negative connotation, the *Harry Potter* books and movies repeatedly cast the loveable main characters into this role. Jasinski and Mercicea note that "texts invite listeners and readers to modify the meaning of a culture's key terms,"[34] which is what we see happening here. Universal successfully builds on this by providing a new meaning to what it means to be a "rule-breaker" and how one operating under this identity should behave. Halstrom and Galle, who studied constitutive rhetoric from a design framework, argue that designs could "mold" an "audience into being."[35] Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey does this, again, through the use of Harry, Ron and Hermione who present the role to the audience. By agreeing to step into that identity, guests alter their actions to align with the proposed role. In this role, that means breaking the rules and going on the ride. The final area in The Wizarding World of Harry Potter that I analyze is Hagrid's Magical Creatures Motorbike Adventure.

---

34. Jasinski and Mercieca, "Analyzing Constitutive Rhetorics," 320.

35. Per L. Halstrom and Per Galle, "Design as a Co-Evolution of Problem, Solution and Audience," 3.10.

Hagrid's Magical Creatures Motorbike Adventure

Fig. 2.2. Hagrid's Magical Creature Motorbike Adventure concept art. Photo by Universal.

The ride begins to set up the clandestine work of Hagrid immediately as the queue begins in the Forbidden Forest, an area that students and visitors to the school are absolutely forbidden from entering. However, it turns out that Hagrid has been using some of the school's old ruins that have been reclaimed by the forest as an area to take care of the magical creatures in his possession. While walking through the queue, it is immediately clear how Hagrid has been using the space. Empty cages and food bowls lay scattered about; dragon eggs in various forms and sizes are present along the walls, and anatomy books of magical creatures lay open on tables.

Entering a room with more cages, the guest is faced with a room that holds a fireplace and kitchenware and is adorned with unidentified animal footprints. It is clear that someone is either staying here or visiting frequently. An enchanted motorbike is also present, and in *Harry Potter*, this motorbike once belonged to Sirius Black, Harry's

godfather, before Hagrid possessed it. Hagrid used it to get around and perform tasks for Dumbledore. Before the guest has time to wonder too much what is going on in this space, Arthur Weasley pops out from behind the motorbike. Mr. Weasley is a loveable character from the series and the father of Ron. Mr. Weasley is known for his love of Muggles and Muggle artifacts. Throughout *Harry Potter* he consistently finds himself in trouble with his wife for bewitching Muggle gadgets, including making a car fly.

In this pre-ride show, Mr. Weasley is working on the motorbike. Hagrid arrives, and Mr. Weasley informs him that he is tinkering with the Muggle contraption. Hagrid acknowledges this before noticing that the Muggles have arrived. He welcomes them, stating that he has an exciting Care of Magical Creatures lesson lined up for the visitors today. Mr. Weasley excitedly announces that he has gotten the motorbike to fly. With a multiplying charm, he will create a row of motorbikes for the visitors to ride further into the Forbidden Forrest so that Hagrid can perform a lesson on Blast-Ended Skrewts, a magical creature from *Harry Potter*.

As they are explaining the plan to the Muggles, Hagrid accidentally sets loose a cage of pixies, creatures from *Harry Potter* who are notorious for causing mischief. The pixies quickly set fire to the room, explode the motorbike, and temporarily restrain Mr. Weasley. Eventually Mr. Weasley gets free, puts out the fire, and casts a spell to repair the motorbike. Afterward, Hagrid and Mr. Weasley leave the scene while encouraging guests to meet them down at the stables where there is more room to multiply the motorbikes and where guests can safely get on. These characters are lovingly known for their quirky personalities and tendency to execute plans have not been completely

thought out. However, their reputation for providing comedic relief precedes them and is a staple part of the ride.

At this attraction, the beloved characters of Hagrid and Mr. Weasley are used to invite guests to experience a call to adventure and embark into the dangerous Forbidden Forest. Using narratives, the ride provides the audience with a shared knowledge that following Hagrid into this adventure will inevitably lead to some aspect of the journey going awry. Although Hagrid is a trustworthy character, he tends to not fully think through actions, brushing off the little—and sometimes big—things. However, rather than being a deterrent, the discourse provided in the pre-ride show moves the audience into action as they are propelled to answer the call to adventure and see what will happen once they choose to embark on the ride. Kenneth Burke explained that an audience identifying a social identity "can occur spontaneously, intuitively, even unconsciously" and are "discursive effects that induce human cooperation."[36] Hagrid hails the audience to interpellate into the role of becoming his students. The associated behaviors of that role assume that the audience will follow him; even though they have a shared knowledge that something will go wrong, they trust that it will be comical and that they will be safe. As Burke describes, this ride spurs park visitors to "spontaneously" embrace a new role that of adventuring companion—and thus proceed on their own hero's journey. It is the quintessential departure stage.

---

36. Kenneth Burke, quoted in Charland, "Constitutive Rhetoric," 133.

Charland writes that "constitutive rhetorics leave the task of narrative closure to their constituted subjects."[37] On this ride, guests are able to choose if they want to accept the role that Hagrid has presented and get on the ride or reject it and leave, thus ending the narrative. Those who have subconsciously accepted the subject position of "Hagrid's student" and entered the collective identity accept the call to adventure and move along in the narrative.

In sum, Universal uses many narratives to invite guests to accept the subject position of "hero." As I have shown, this identity is not always framed as "hero" and can instead be referenced as "rule-breaker," "co-conspirator," "Muggle," "witch," "wizard," and others. Universal successfully creates these subject positions by inviting guests through the departure phase and into the call to adventure stage of the hero's journey. In the next section, I continue to analyze the spaces around the WWOHP to show how the theme park continues this narrative through the departure phase and invites guests through the stages of meeting the mentor and crossing the threshold. However, it should be noted that in Vogler's condensed stages of the hero's journey, at this point a hero might encounter an additional stage: refusal of the call. As I have mentioned, scholarship agrees that not every stage needs to appear in order for a narrative to occur. It might be beneficial, however, to explain this stage and the reasoning for its absence in this project.

A refusal of the call is marked by a hero's unwillingness to participate in the adventure that they have been called to experience. This can come from a variety of reasons. They might fear the journey, be ill-equipped to handle it or lack the correct tools,

---

37. Charland, quoted in James Jasinski, "C," in *Sourcebook on Rhetoric: Key Concepts in Contemporary Rhetorical Studies*, ed. Herbert W. Simmons (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2001): 107

or external factors might be working against them, physically or mentally, thus disabling the hero from accepting the call.[38] In *Harry Potter*, this stage occurs when Harry initially denies the possibility that he might be a wizard and disappointedly informs Hagrid that he has mistaken Harry for someone else. This stage is not applicable at the WWOHP because this is not a stage built into the narrative of the theme park. While guests might refuse the call for external reasons, this would not occur due to rhetorical decisions made by Universal to purposefully invoke a refusal of the call.

Meeting the Mentor

After a hero has accepted the call to adventure, the next stage they will encounter (per Vogler's revised model of the monomyth) is meeting the mentor. In this stage, the hero is ready to embark on their adventure, but needs help in the form of supernatural aid, or a mentor who can point them in the right direction, answer questions, and provide assistance as the hero comes to terms with the journey that lies ahead of them.

Robbins explains this role as "a spiritual or magical guide that will herald the call to the quest. That guide will not travel with the hero but will appear at key points during the adventure."[39] The guide typically appears when a choice needs to be made, or the hero is feeling overwhelmed with the task at hand and is unsure what step they should take next. Smith writes that "a guide knows the path and can offer direction, support, or mentoring."[40] Sometimes, according to Sonnenburg and Runco, this figure is essential in

---

38. Campbell, *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*, 63.

39. Robbins, "Harry Potter, Ruby Slippers and Merlin," 792.

40. Smith, "Health, Healing, and the Myth of the Hero's Journey," 5.

helping the hero gain the courage to depart and head off on their journey into the next stage (crossing the threshold) and phase (initiation) of the journey.[41]

The mentor will also play the role of guiding the hero to a desired goal,[42] says Vogler, and "remind dazed heroes that resolving the journey is possible. They have typically been on a similar journey and lived to tell the tale… they are well placed to encourage and support, and if necessary, as Williams suggests, push heroes into action."[43] There is a large emphasis placed in literature that some mentors are effective because they have been on similar paths as the hero and have gained wisdom and insight because of it. Whether this is something drastic like fighting off a powerful wizard or as simple as riding a broomstick for the first time, the mentors found throughout the WWOHP can relate to the heroes who might be experiencing these stories for the first time as they themselves have lived these stories. Randles writes that mentors "show us mistakes that we can potentially avoid in our own journey or… that we can prepare for them."[44]

Additionally, much literature, including Campbell, emphasizes that the guide, mentor, or supernatural aid typically appears to "provide the adventurer with amulets against the dragon forces he is about to pass."[45] Some scholars, including Robbins, describe this gift as a "protective amulet or talisman… such as a wand, ruby, glass slippers or a light saber,"[46] framing the gift as a protective shield with special powers.[47]

---

41. Sonnenburg and Runco, "Pathways to the Hero's Journey," 3.
42. Vogler, "Joseph Campbell Goes to the Movies," 16.
43. Williams, "The Hero's Journey: A Creative Act," 72.
44. Randles, "Music Education's Hero Collective," 92.
45. Campbell, *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*, 63.
46. Robbins, "Harry Potter, Ruby Slippers and Merlin," 792.
47. Smith, "Health, Healing and they Myth of the Hero's Journey," 5.

However, other scholars describe this object simply as "something powerful… and a way to overcome obstacles."[48] With the reception of this gift, the hero will have what they need to help them along the next stage of the journey. Some scholars even argue that instead of a physical gift, this amulet could be skills to overcome an unfamiliar situation.[49]

This guide who seemingly possesses the answers the hero will need to aid them in their journey can appear in many different ways, shapes, and forms. Campbell writes that traditionally, this figure is "a little old crone or old man," but that it can also be "masculine in form… or some little fellow of the wood, some wizard, hermit, shepherd, or smith, who appears, to supply the amulets and advice that the hero will acquire."[50]

In *Harry Potter*, this figure shows up in a couple of different ways. The first is through Hagrid, the first person Harry meets from the wizarding world and the one who informs him that he is a wizard. Hagrid supplies Harry quite literally with all the physical equipment he needs to be a successful student at Hogwarts. Additionally, Hagride equips Harry with the knowledge of his past that had been secretly kept from him, arming him with the truth as he heads off to a school where everyone knows his name and story. Later, Dumbledore steps into the role of mentor throughout the books, appearing at pivotal times when Harry is confused or lost and providing him with skills, tools and context to overcome the situations Harry finds himself in.

---

48. Vogler, "Joseph Campbell Goes to the Movies," 21.

49. Williams, "The Hero's Journey: A Creative Act," 73.

50. Campbell, *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*, 66.

In the next section of my analysis, I show how different spaces throughout the WWOHP invite guests at the park to experience the meeting the mentor stage of the hero's journey in various ways.

Fig. 2.3. Escape from Gringotts concept art. Photo by Universal.

Escape from Gringotts is a ride in which the forces of good versus evil are at play. During this attraction, the WWOHP invites guests to step into the role of the "hero" and subjects them to various stages from the hero's journey. On this attraction, guests have already experienced a call to adventure by being lured to open a vault inside of the ominous Gringotts Bank and travel down into the unknown, underground of the bank. At this point, they have agreed to make the foreboding journey and have also overheard Harry, Ron and Hermione secretly hatching a plan. They are aware something is amiss and could possibly be about to happen during their travel to the vaults.

Before guests are able to do this though, they encounter a scene (a pre-ride show) where Blordak, a goblin who works at Gringotts, is looking for the keys to the potential

vault he will be showing his new clients (the guests). He is interrupted in his search by Bill Weasley, Ron's older brother, who also works at Gringotts.

Bill inquires about what Blordak is doing, and when he finds out that the visitors will be traveling down to the vaults, he decides to tag along, ensuring the safety and well-being of the guests. In this instance, Bill and Blordak act as the mentors or supernatural aids for the guest. On this attraction, the guest has now met their mentor and is ready to continue their journey. In describing this stage, many scholars agree that the guide will provide the hero with the tools or knowledge that they need to conquer the next step of their journey. In this scene, Bill and Blordak supply the hero with the main tool they will need to continue onto their journey—the cart that will carry them down to the vaults.

Through their commentary during the pre-ride show, Escape from Gringotts uses the dialogue between Bill and Blordak to interpellate the guest into the role of "hero." More specifically, the guest remains in the role of "client" or "co-conspirator." To keep the guest interpellated into this identity during this stage, Escape from Gringotts relies solely on Bill and Blordak's discourse to give the identity a name and set clear expectations of what is now expected from the hero, propelling them along in their adventure.

During the exchange between the two characters, Blordak repeatedly gestures to the audience and refers to them as "clients" who he is "showing to their vault." Additionally, Bill tells Blordak that he is just picking up a few things from his office and then implores the guests to pretend that they have not seen him, again, suggesting that the guest is a "co-conspirator" in the ploy they are already aware is going on. After Bill

decides to guide the clients down to the vaults, Blordak gives clear instructions on the expectations associated with this role and what actions the heroes should take next.

Of course, at this point guests are able to opt out of the ride at any moment and have complete agency over the situation. Successfully being interpellated into their role means that they have accepted their identity as "client" and or "co-conspirator" and are acting accordingly, headed off in the direction of the vaults. Additionally, the space of this section is set up to increase the likelihood that the guest will continue on in the journey. In order to be successful, Universal needs guests to participate in the stages of the hero's journey as immersion will lead to more time spent at the park, more money spent, and a higher likelihood of returning. And the ride is designed in such a manner as to minimize such opting out.

For instance, at this point in the ride, the doors to continue into the next part of the attraction open, seemingly due to a wave of Bill's wand. From their perspective, the guest can only see a dark hallway with lit torches lighting the way for them. A draft of cool air washes over them as they make their way forward, continue the narrative, and remain in the identity into which they have been interpellated. The ambiguity of this section clearly works in the favor of the theme park as it evokes a sense of wonder and excitement. In his analysis of the creation museum, Lynch argues that evoking wonder in an audience provides a powerful rhetorical effect that will have an impact on the actions of audiences, working to reconstitute an audience's sense of self.[51] In similar fashion, the audience at the WWOHP continues along their journey after having been exposed to the wonder of Escape from Gringotts.

---

51. Lynch, "Prepare to Believe," 8.

Crossing the Threshold

The next stage that the hero will experience in this adventure is crossing the threshold. As I mentioned before, researchers agree that the stages of the hero's journey do not have to happen in order for a narrative to successfully occur, so when the "heroes" (guests) at the WWOHP experience this stage, they may have yet to meet their mentor. In this stage, Campbell emphasizes the other-worldly, particularly the unknown, lying in wait on the opposite side of this threshold; the hero has no idea what they might encounter on the other side. In his writing, Campbell clearly warns the participants that by crossing this threshold, a hero is entering into an entirely new world or place where the previous rules of the land, and even the universe, do not apply; Smith suggest that in this case "the hero is consumed, swallowed up by the unknown, to be born anew on the journey."[52]

Campbell uses the example of seamen being terrified to set sail in search of new lands for fears of mermaids, serpents, and other monsters of the deep. He depicts the hero in a state of unease, torn between continuing or discontinuing the adventure as they are unsure if they are entering a world of darkness or delight. Stephan Sonneburg describes this stage as "between the known and the unknown world… heroes are in an explorer archetype mood—ambitious, curious, and independent."[53] Regardless of the hero's emotions and trepidation, Campbell writes that ultimately, "with the personifications of his destiny to guide and aid him, the hero goes forward in his adventure."[54]

52. Smith, "Health, Healing, and the Myth of the Hero's Journey," 5.

53. Stephan Sonnenburg, "From Zero to Hero: A Narrative Amplification of Design Thinking," *Journal of Genius and Eminence* 2, no. 2 (2017): 111, https://doi.org/10.18536/jge.2017.02.2.2.11.

54. Campbell, *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*, 71.

Robbins writes that "the hero must… cross the threshold into the new world, where he or she will start on a road of trials."[55] During this transition, in which the hero is leaving the ordinary world, according to Smith, there might be "an experience of death and rebirth… the hero is giving up the known patterns of living to be born again as the explorer on the path of the unknown."[56] Oftentimes, this threshold is blocked by "threshold guardians or gatekeepers who try to block the hero's path. These gatekeepers provide the hero with the opportunity for training; training that the hero will need in order to complete the journey."[57] While these threshold guardians will attempt to stop the hero, or make the journey more difficult for them, they are not the main villain that the hero has to worry about; instead, they are merely a roadblock.[58] In *Harry Potter,* these characters might be Draco Malfoy or Professor Snape, both characters who make life difficult for Harry in his new reality, but who do not rise to the level of ultimate antagonist like Voldemort. The storm troopers in *Star Wars* and the flying monkeys in *The Wizard of Oz* are other popular examples of threshold guardians.

In terms of crossing the threshold, this happens several times for Harry throughout *Harry Potter*. The first occurs when Hagrid leads him into Diagon Alley, and he first sets foot into the wizarding world. Other times include passing through the wall in King's Cross Station and onto Platform 9 3/4 to catch the Hogwarts Express, and the first time he enters Hogwarts. Each of these situations take Harry out of the normal world and

---

55. Robbins, "Harry Potter, Ruby Slippers and Merlin," 792.
56. Smith, "Health, Healing, and the Myth of the Hero's Journey," 8.
57. Robbins, "Harry Potter, Ruby Slippers and Merlin," 792.
58. Williams, "The Hero's Journey: A Creative Act."

into the wizarding world, where the previous rules that Harry understands about the world around him do not apply.

In other popular culture media, this could look like Katniss entering the arena in *The Hunger Games* or Frodo leaving the Shire in *Lord of the Rings*. Regardless of the adventure being analyzed, crossing the threshold occurs when the hero leaves the ordinary world for a new space where they do not understand how to operate, what the new rules are, or even what to expect from this new realm into which they have been thrust.

King's Cross is the railroad station in London where Rowling located the hidden Platform 9 ¾, which leads to the magical world. At the WWOHP, guests who visit King's Cross Station will take on the identity of "student" and participate in crossing the threshold from London and onto the magical Platform 9 3/4 where students will catch the Hogwarts Express, a train that takes them to Hogwarts at the beginning of each school year.

In *Harry Potter*, this space plays a crucial role as it is where Harry first realizes that he belongs in the wizarding world. To catch the train, students must pass through a solid, brick wall and, of course, this can only be done by those who possess magic. Harry successfully passes through the brick wall, crossing from the ordinary world he was used to and grew up being a part in to a new, unknown world where anything can happen.

At the WWOHP, this space plays a very similar role for guests and invites them to cross the threshold and continue on their journey. When arriving at King's Cross Station, guests are firmly back in the Muggle world and in London. Likely, they may have just left Diagon Alley where they bought wands, wizard robes, and wizarding candy. At this

location, the theme park uses many stylistic choices to plant the hero firmly back in the known world. Again, the theme park relies on the use of team members in this space. When speaking to team members who "work" at King's Cross Station, guests will find that the team members do not recognize a wand, look oddly at guests who wear robes, are not familiar with any candy a guest might have, and, when asked, have never heard of Platform 9 3/4. The space is adorned with posters of upcoming shows in London and famous sight-seeing activities in the area and luggage that is bound for other trains are stacked along the walls.

As the hero ventures further into this attraction, they eventually come to a point where they must pass through the "brick wall" to get onto Platform 9 3/4, following the same path that every other Hogwarts student must take. With the use of a window, guests who walk through the wall genuinely appear to be swallowed up by a brick wall to those watching from the other side of the window. They are there one second and gone the next.

Fig. 2.4. A guest appears to be disappearing through a brick wall. Author photo.

As the guest leaves London and the ordinary world, they pass into the unknown world and onto Platform9 3/4. The spatial design of this area is important for how a guest experiences this area. In London, King's Cross Station is dim, with flickering lights, drab and quiet elevator music that plays throughout the space, and with torn, old posters on the wall. After passing through the brick wall, guests come around a corner and are hit with an intrinsically different space: the platform is bright, with sunlight streaming onto it from the open windows. Upbeat music filters through the space. Students' luggage is packed along the wall, but unlike in the last scene where the luggage is stationary and drab, this luggage occasionally appears to move and emit noises as through magical creatures are stuck within.

The design choices of this space all work to create a sense of otherness for the guest. It is very apparent that they have left one area and crossed a threshold into another. Through the design choices the theme park has made to tell the story of leaving London and embarking on the Hogwarts Express, guests are hailed into accepting the role of "student" as they follow the exact path that students before them have taken to get onto the platform and travel to Hogwarts School.

This stage of the hero's journey can also be seen in other spaces at the WWOHP, including the guest's departure from London to enter Diagon Alley. When entering Diagon Alley, guests must walk between two brick walls. The bricks on these two walls are situated to appear as if they are coming apart and making a space in the wall for a guest to walk through. As a guest passes through, they will hear the noise of bricks clicking and clacking as they "move" about to make a wide enough hole for those entering and exiting Diagon Alley. This entrance is particularly interesting as it pertains

to crossing the threshold. Once a guest has entered through the brick wall, they are completely shut off from all areas of the rest of Universal and experience a total immersion into the WWOHP.

Fig. 2.5. Brick wall that leads into Diagon Alley. Author photo.

In their analysis of spatial narratives at historical sites, Maoz Azaryahu and Kenneth Foote argue that a common strategy when utilizing space to tell a narrative is to separate the narrative space. Using historical sites as an example, they write that narrative spaces "are frequently framed by a fence or a wall, with gates sometimes used to separate the narrative space from the surrounding area."[59] At this point, guests have "left" the ordinary world and from a sensory standpoint are completely cut off from what they once knew. They can no longer hear or see the ordinary world (London) and feel as though they have been transported through time. Following Campbell and Vogler's stages, the

---

59. Maoz Azaryahu and Kenneth Foote, "Historical space as narrative medium: on the configuration of spatial narratives of time at historical sites," *Geo Journal* 73, no. 3 (January 2008): 183.

guest is now in the unknown world, where they are unfamiliar with the rules, expectations, and possibilities of this new place.

Conclusion

The WWOHP uses multiple narratives throughout the theme park that interpellate guests into the role of the "hero" from the hero's journey. During the departure phase of their journey, guests are invited to experience a call to adventure, meeting the mentor, and crossing the threshold from the ordinary world to the unknown world.

During the departure phase, a hero must experience the departure from an ordinary world and into an unknown world where they are unfamiliar with the rules and expectations. At the WWOHP, the theme park accomplishes this by the spatial layout of the park and by inviting guests to answer a call to adventure. The guest is first subjected to "London," a space that reflects traditional London architecture and includes replicas of the city so the guest is aware of their place in space. With this replica, the rhetors of the theme park present the ordinary world to the guest. Through small details and characters located throughout the space, they invite the guest to an experience a call to adventure. This call to adventure is replicated in other spaces and rides throughout the park. As the primary moment when a guest is hailed to accept their role in the narrative, the successful interpellation of the guest into the stage of the journey is pivotal and should be focused on the most in the park. For this reason, the guest experiences this call in several areas of the park, making it the most notable stage of the journey in The Wizarding World of Harry Potter and setting up the identities that guests will accept for the rest of their time in the park.

Next, the guest experiences meeting the mentor. While the park offers these narrative opportunities multiple times in the park, the most prominent example occurs on Escape from Gringotts as Bill and Blordak literally offer to lead the guest on their journey down to visit a vault deep within the bank. Through discourse directed at the audience, Bill and Blordak serve as powerful rhetorical tools on this ride, hailing the guest to accept the roles being presented to them and offering expectations and rules associated with these roles that guests can align themselves with.

Finally, the guest is subjected to crossing the threshold. During this stage, the hero leaves the ordinary world and enters an unknown world. Most notably, the guest experiences this stage when leaving London through King's Cross Station. Design choices made in this area create a sense of otherness for the guest, and the spatial layout and the use of team members inform them that they are in a different world. Now, having invited the guest to depart on their hero's journey, the WWOHP must initiate the guest into this new world by presenting them with tests, allies, enemies, and some kind of reward for their bravery and accomplishments.

CHAPTER III

THE INITIATION

After accepting the call to adventure, meeting the mentor, and crossing the threshold, the hero is finally fully immersed into the unknown world. Here, the previous rules (whether physical or ideological) of the ordinary world no longer apply, and the hero must learn how to exist in this new reality with advice from the mentor and their previously received amulets. In the initiation phase, the hero will endure test after test on their path, encounter various friends and foes, go through an extreme ordeal, and receive their reward for the adventure they embarked upon.

This chapter analyzes how the WWOHP interpellates guests into the initiation phase of the hero's journey through physical spaces. First, I provide an overview of tests, allies, and enemies and describe the various ways the theme parks invites guests to experience this stage before overviewing the reward and explaining how guests are subjected to this stage at the park through a close reading of selected park spaces and places.

Hero's Journey: Initiation Phase Analysis

Ride/Space in The Wizarding World of Harry Potter	Stage of the Hero's Journey Guest Experiences in the Initiation Phase
Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey Magic spell stations Knockturn Alley	Tests, Allies, Enemies
Ollivander's Escape from Gringotts	The Reward

Tests, Allies, Enemies

The first stage of this phase is tests, allies, and enemies. This stage was introduced by Vogler in his condensed version of Campbell's original monomyth stages. Vogler's version combines multiple stages from Campbell's original stages, but the most notable one from Campbell is the road of trials. For this reason, much literature on the hero's journey refers to this stage as the road of trials but fails to include the other important aspects that Vogler assigned to this stage. For that reason, my analysis will utilize Vogler's "test, allies, and enemies" stage but might reference literature, including Campbell's, that refers to this segment of the hero's journey as the "road of trials."

Campbell describes the hero in this stage as moving "in a dream landscape of curiosity fluid, ambiguous forms, where he must survive a succession of trials… The hero is aided by the advice, amulets, and secret agents from supernatural helpers whom they met before his entrance into this region."[1] During this stage, the hero passes through a series of trials that lead up to the inevitable climax of the story. While experiencing encounters on this road of trials, Robbins notes that "the hero learns lessons that he or she will need in order to reach the ultimate goal."[2] Depending on the hero, these tests and trials will be different and will not always follow the same format. Smith notes that for some, these trials might be a "labyrinth" that represents "confusion, uncertainty, and aloneness," while others might be subjected to "fighting monsters and dragons… climbing mountains… drowning in the storm at sea… or falling into the abyss."[3] For example, in *The Lord of the Rings*, two of the main characters face distinct challenges.

---

1. Campbell, *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*, 89.
2. Robbins, "Harry Potter, Ruby Slippers and Merlin," 795.
3. Smith, "Health, Healing, and the Myth of the Hero's Journey," 8.

While Frodo struggles with his physical challenge to destroy the ring at Mount Doom, he also faces the relational challenge of learning who to trust along the way. Aragorn, another main character in the movie, faces a psychological challenge of accepting his status as the rightful King of Gondor. While these heroes both face extreme challenges on their journey, they vary in the format and toll they have on the hero.

Regardless of the trial, Williams writes that "these fearful and foreign tasks force a hero to tap into unknown inner resources and potentials."[4] Further complicating the journey is that for many of these trials, the hero will be unsure whether they have the knowledge and power to overcome them, and they will struggle with "deeds they do not know how to do, may not want to do, and are unsure they can do."[5] However daunting the road seems, heroes must go through these trials as the tests, whether they pass or fail them, will transform the hero and become learning opportunities. Smith writes that "strength and confidence are gained through the encounters on the road of trials as the hero grows from suffering."[6]

While this stage may seem daunting, the hero is not forced to endure this road by themselves. Helping them along the way are friends and allies. In *Harry Potter*, Harry encounters many tests, setbacks, and quests during the series that leads up to his inevitable final showdown (ordeal) with the central villain of the story—Voldemort. In book one he must rescue the Sorcerer's Stone; in book two he must locate and kill the monster in the Chamber of Secrets; in book four he must triumph in task after task to win the Tri-Wizard Tournament, and these trials continue throughout the series. Along the

---

4. Williams, "The Hero's Journey: A Creative Act," 71.
5. Williams, "The Hero's Journey: A Creative Act," 72.
6. Smith, "Health, Healing, and the Myth of the Hero's Journey," 9.

way, his friends Ron and Hermione aid him by gifting him with knowledge, power (both physical and magical), and other resources. In many instances, they accompany him on his trials. However, Harry's friendships are not always so simple. He often navigates relationship ambiguity by having to discern who his true friends are and what characters have pure intentions. He struggles with a complex web of relational connections that range from friends (Harry, Ron, Hermione, Hagrid) to allies (Neville Longbottom, Luna Lovegood) to varying levels of foes (Draco Malfoy, Severus Snape, Voldemort).

Robbins states that "the hero generally meets companions who will journey with and aid the hero until the final confrontation."[7] Sometimes, according to Randles, these allies are those "who have themselves entered that world" and experienced the ordeals that the hero is now experiencing. Or, they might just have previous knowledge that will benefit the hero.[8] This ally or companion "can be anyone who brings comfort to the hero along the way, including peers, animals, or even machines."[9]

The purpose of these trials is two-fold; for one benefit, the hero is being further propelled through the story and towards the climax, and these trials merely serve as a way to push the story along. On the other hand, as William argues, with each trial, "regardless of success or failure, heroes begin to do what they have previously avoided or considered impossible… heroes are being pushed to move beyond what they consider are their limits."[10]

---

7. Robbins, "Harry Potter, Ruby Slippers and Merlin," 795.

8. Randles, "Music Education's Hero Collective," 92.

9. Robbins, "Harry Potter, Ruby Slippers and Merlin," 795.

10. Williams, "The Hero's Journey: A Creative Act," 72.

In the next section of my analysis, I analyze different spaces around the WWOHP that invite guests at the park to experience the tests, allies, and enemies stage of the hero's journey. This stage is important because it represents the next step of immersion into the hero's journey offered to the park guests at the WWOHP, creating a relational environment to match the physical one. In these spaces, guests have the agency to explore the area, they encounter known enemies, and they can perform magic.

Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey

At the WWOHP, many of the tests and trials that guests will pass through as the hero appear in the form of various rides throughout the park. To keep guests interpellated in the hero's journey and reduce their opportunities to opt out of the narrative, the most difficult parts of the journey (trials) are often presented to the audience when they have lost their agency over the situation.

On Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey, the guest must fly for the first time and escape various monsters in the Forbidden Forest. For this sub-section of my analysis, I will focus primarily on analyzing how Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey invites guests to participate in this stage of the hero's journey and will rely on other rides throughout the park for supporting examples.

Before a guest steps onto Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey, they are aware that they have been called to embark on a journey. Harry, Ron and Hermione have encouraged the guest to fly down to the Quidditch Pitch with them and abandon the tour of Hogwarts they are currently on. As the guest continues toward embarking on the ride, they are unaware of how they will "fly," thus setting up a sense of anticipation and curiosity about how they will manage it. Once they are on the magical bench and

Hermione casts the necessary spell to send them into flight, the guest officially steps into the role of "rule-breaker" and is embarking on the next stage of the hero's journey. They are currently on a trial and will soon encounter allies and enemies.

Soon, the guest is subjected to various well-known enemies from the *Harry Potter* series. During one scene of the ride, they fly through the Forbidden Forest and encounter large, man-eating spiders and dementors (guards of the wizarding prison, Azkaban, who attempt to capture the soul of their enemies). In another scene, guests are participating in a Quidditch match against Draco Malfoy, an antagonist present throughout the entire *Harry Potter* series. Finally, Harry and Ron lead the hero back to the castle where they are met with friendly, familiar faces that encourage them to come back soon for another visit to the castle.

This is a very similar experience to what guests will experience on other rides throughout the WWOHP. When a guest boards the Escape from Gringotts, they are strapped into a cart that will serve as their method of transportation down to the vaults. The cart begins its journey to meet Bill and Blordak when it is suddenly stopped by Bellatrix Lestrange who is aware that a potential threat is inside of the bank. When Bellatrix and Voldemort attempt to torture information from the guest on the whereabouts of the intruder inside of the bank, the guest is rescued by Harry, Ron, and Hermione, who pull them to safety. The ride ends with Bill encouraging guests to visit the bank again soon.

Hagrid's Magical Creature Motorbike Adventure follows the same narrative structure as the other two rides, although this one is more light-hearted. While on the motorbikes, the spell Hagrid casts on them goes awry, sending guests on a wild ride

throughout the Forbidden Forest as Hagrid attempts to get the situation under control. While on the ride, guests encounter a number of magical creatures from *Harry Potter*, most of which can cause minor harm in some form or fashion. While these creatures are not necessarily enemies, they do represent potential danger to the hero. In one instance, the guest becomes trapped in Devil's Snare, a powerful root-like plant that traps anything it encounters, and Hagrid helps the guest escape. At the end of the ride, Hagrid encourages the guest to come back again and join him for another lesson on magical creatures.

For the WWOHP, the rhetorical process does not end once a guest has stepped into the identity that the park has constituted for them. It is imperative that they remain immersed into their role and continue the hero's journey for as long as possible for the ultimate impact. Danielle Endres and Samantha Senda-Cook write that "place is a rhetorical phenomenon. Instead of merely arguing that people make meanings for places through discourse, we argue that places, imbued with meaning and consequences, are rhetorical performances." They studied how physical spaces operate as places in protest and the rhetorical effects these spaces had on their audience and state that "place is rhetorical to specifically show how rhetorical performances of place in protest are a rich intersection of bodies, material aspects, past meanings, present performances, and future possibilities."[11] In the same way, this ride works to residually reinforce the guest's identity as the hero in line with the expectations and experience of the Harry Potter franchise, literally inviting guests to return again and again to the ride in an almost ritualistic renewal of their hero status.

---

11. Endres and Senda-Cook, "Location Matters: The Rhetoric of Place in Protest," 260-261.

In their study of physical spaces used as places of protest Endres and Senda-Cook found that the repeated use of space would have a rhetorical effect on an audience. They claim that the repeated use of a space for protest (e.g., the Lincoln Memorial) would eventually reconstitute the meaning of that space for the public. Rather than being a monument dedicated to Abraham Lincoln, in some public conceptions, it was a space where protests typically occur. The repeated effect of this would also have an effect on those present in the space by "confronting, challenging and acting" on them. They discovered how these fissures in meaning "when repeated over time, can result in more permanent changes in the meaning and consequences of places."[12]

The WWOHP repeatedly relies on the use of past meanings, present performances, and future possibilities in their narratives; the park counts on the guests' knowledge of the Harry Potter story, and they utilize performances on site to keep the guest immersed into their stories. They set up various stages (call to adventure, tests, trials and enemies) to hint at more to come in the story if the guest does not opt out. The repeated use of these elements has a rhetorical effect on the guest by increasing immersion and keeping a guest mentally and physically present in the narrative.

The scenes and experiences that an audience is subjected to while on the rides plays an important role in keeping guests engaged, specifically the consistent inclusion of the hero in the story. While the hero lacks agency on these rides, the narratives being told are not possible without the involvement of the hero. The repeated discourse on the rides that involves the hero into the story is how the theme park keeps guests interpellated into

---

12. Endres and Senda-Cook, "Location Matters: The Rhetoric of Place in Protest," 277.

the roles they have offered them. They are not just casual observers; instead, the WWOHP has made them a part of the narratives being told.

Charland writes that "[i]nterpellation occurs at the very moment one enters into a rhetorical situation, that is, as soon as one recognizes and acknowledges being addressed. An interpellated subject participates in the discourse that addresses him."[13] At the WWOHP, we see this happening in the ways the rides single out and address the audience. On Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey, the guest is repeatedly spoken directly to by Harry, Ron, and Hermione, and the rhetorical effect of this discourse keeps the guest interpellated into the role of the hero. Althusser writes that as soon as an individual acknowledged they had been addressed, they became subjects; in his famous example, Althusser describes a policeman hailing a passerby who passes him on the street. When the individual responds to the officer's call, Althusser argues that interpellation has taken place.[14] By the same measure, in the WWOHP, directed discourse towards the audience is consistently used as an intentional way to hail guests into the subject position of wizarding hero.[15]

The WWOHP is designed to maximize the continual interpellation of guests through spatial and auditory rhetoric so that guests strongly identify with the subject position of hero. Indeed, there are similar narrative structures throughout the rest of the theme park. Charland writes that "this rhetoric of identification is ongoing, not restricted to one hailing, but usually part of a rhetoric socialization."[16] By using physical spaces to

---

13. Charland, "Constitutive Rhetoric: The Case of the People Quebecois," 138.

14. Althusser, *Lenin Philosophy and Other Essays.*

15. Althusser, *Lenin Philosophy and Other Essays*, 86.

16. Charland, "Constitutive Rhetoric: The Case of the Peuple Quebecois," 138.

tell narratives, the theme park continuously hails guests to remain immersed in the roles presented to them through intentional discourse.

Magic Spells around the Park

The next instance of the guest being subjected to a road of trials can be seen with the various stations around the park that allow guests to physically perform and see the result of magic spells. These interactive stations keep the guest interpellated into the role of hero and gives them an understanding of how they should behave in the role they have been interpellated into by playing an active role, resulting in extreme levels of immersion.

Throughout the WWOHP, multiple spaces allow guests to create magic of their own. After acquiring a magic wand in Ollivander's, a popular wand shop, guests can track down over two dozen areas throughout the park that are marked by a golden medallion on the ground. The medallion provides witches and wizards with information about the spell they can cast at that particular location in order to successfully create magic. In these spaces, guests move about with their own agency to uncover spaces where they can perform the magic. The variety of spells a guest can perform is also a draw as each of the twenty-five locations offer different spells and effects; guests can light up lanterns in a second story shop, repair a suit of armor, silence talking heads, and set off a box of rockets, just to name a few.

Fig 3.1. Wingardium Leviosa medallion. Author photo.

These locations draw inspiration from the various wand work scenes seen in

Harry Potter and allows guests to step into the role of "witch" or "wizard" by attempting

to duplicate the precision of wand movement that *Harry Potter* characters must perfect.

In one famous scene from *Harry Potter*, Hermione attempts to teach Ron how to work

Wingardium Leviosa, a spell that makes objects float or fly.[17] However, Ron is

repeatedly unable to perform the spell because he cannot swish and flick his wand

correctly. In Hogsmeade, guests are able to perform this spell to levitate a quill. The

correlation between undergoing the same trials seen in *Harry Potter* and the guests'

experience culminates in a highly immersive narrative, specifically as it is set in a

---

17. J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* (New York: Scholastic, 1997).

physical space. While the rides the guests have participated in up to this point are

physical spaces, many of them rely on virtual reality elements (screens, 3-D, holograms)

to aid the rhetors in telling the story the guest is immersed into. Casting magic spells

around the park, however, does not require any virtual reality, and the guest interacts with

only a physical medium of the narrative.

In this way, the WWOHP mirrors other kinds of spatial rhetorics. In his 2016

paper, scholar Samuel Gallastegui studied how a user could experience space in different

forms while playing video games. In his conclusion, Gallastegui writes that "[t]he

experience of playing constitutes a mental-emotional space that is determined by many

aspects (cognitive, cultural, symbolical, emotional, etc.). It can, depending on variables of

narrative, representation and interaction, be placed in the virtual or in the physical

space."[18] His paper argued that the spatial involvement of a game impacted a user's (or

subject's) spatial perception, awareness, and immersion. Essentially, a user's experience

and level of emersion (a term that Gallastegui uses to describe immersion in a physical

space) is heightened when they experience a game in more than one spatial reality (i.e.,

physical and virtual). By incorporating physical spaces around the park where guests can

physically perform actions required of their role (trials or games), the WWOHP doubles

the immersive effects experienced by their audience. Performing required actions of the

identity a guest has stepped into is imperative for interpellation.

Althusser argues that the subject of an audience is reflected in their actions or

practices. He writes that "these practices are governed by the rituals in which these

_____

18. Samuel Gallastegui, "Between Immersion and Emersion: Orientating Digital Games
Towards Virtual and Physical Spaces," *IADIS International Journal on Computer Science and
Information Systems* 11, no. 1 (2016): 60-61.

practices are inscribed, within the material existence of an ideological apparatus."[19]

Essentially, when an audience aligns with a particular identity, their agency should alter

to compensate for the actions expected of them. We see this at The Wizarding World of

Harry Potter each time a guest accepts a role before getting onto a ride. Whether they are

"co-conspirators" on Escape from Gringotts or "students" on Hagrid's Magical Creatures

Motorbike Adventure, the success of the theme park to keep the hero interpellated lies in

their ability to convince the guest that these are the actions required of the roles and

identities that they have been hailed into.

However, it is worth noting that Althusser's views on these actions or practices

were presented as the subject conforming to their role in an unconscious way; essentially,

they lacked agency on their actions and performed them almost robotically because the

subject "knows their place."[20] In response to this, scholar Judith Butler dedicated

extensive research to expanding upon Althusser's implied expected reaction of the

subject. While she acknowledged the usefulness of Althusser's view, Butler was more

concerned on the agency that she theorized subjects still maintained even after being

interpellated into an identity.[21] Drawing on this same theory, in their study on the

sociological and consumeristic effects of video games, scholars Nick Dyer-Witheford and

Greig de Peuter write that

> games are machines of "subjectivation." When we play an in-game avatar, we
> temporarily simulate, adopt, or try out certain identities. Games, like other
> cultural machines, hail or "interpellate" us in particular subject positions. These

---

19. Althusser, *Lenin Philosophy and Other Essays*, 114.

20. Althusser, *Lenin Philosophy and Other Essays*.

21. Judith Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997).

subject positions may be utterly fantastic, quite realistic, or somewhere in between.[22]

This impacted my analysis by offering a counter to the non-voluntaristic interpellation process as seen throughout rides in the WWOHP, where the guest has no agency once they embark on the ride. While Althusser, Butler, and Jasinski offer different ways a subject performs after being hailed (non-voluntaristic or with agency), both are determined as possible in scholarly literature. Allowing guests to have agency over casting spells is not a right or wrong way to continue the interpellation process; rather, it is one of many and another way the WWOHP keeps their guests moving along the hero's journey and immersed into the narratives they are telling. Whether the guest is in a physical space where they have agency or not, both forms of this are recognized throughout literature as possible ways to keep a subject interpellated. This scholarship can be applied to the interactivity the guest experiences at these magic stations around the WWOHP. Additionally, this level of agency and interactivity serves to heighten a guests' sense of presence, an imperative step in the persuasion and immersion process.

Knockturn Alley is an infamous location in *Harry Potter* and represents another physical space at the theme park where the above factors are also at play (guests have agency to explore the area, they encounter known enemies, and they can perform magic). In contrast to Diagon Alley with its sunshine-filled streets and ice cream shops, Knockturn Alley is a dark, cold alley associated with evil. In *Harry Potter*, Knockturn Alley is frequently discussed as a place where evil witches and wizards do their shopping and is presented as the evil counterpart to Diagon Alley. The rhetors of the WWOHP

---

22 Nick Dyer-Witheford and Greig de Peuter, *Games of Empire: Global Capitalism and Video Games* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 192.

recreated this physical space in the Diagon Alley section of the theme park. Unlike the rides present at the theme park, there are no external factors that urge guests to explore this section of the park. The agency that guests act on here is important, however, to show the success Universal has achieved in interpellating guests into the role of the "hero," in their narrative. In Knockturn Alley, guests are subjected to trials in the form of additional magic spell stations as well as encounters with enemies/dark forces.

However, instead of coming face-to-face with a real enemy from *Harry Potter*, here the theme park relies heavily on the use of physical space. Knockturn Alley is so dark that it is often hard for guests to see where they are when they enter from the brighter streets of Diagon Alley. The shift into darkness and much cooler temperatures signifies that they have entered a potentially dangerous scene in their journey. Adorning the shop walls are skulls, snakes, and decaying hands – symbols that often reflect evil in *Harry Potter*. The theme park also relies on eerie green lighting in this space as another representation of evil that is identifiable from the *Harry Potter* movies. Knockturn Alley is a supplementary example of how the WWOHP invites guests to the tests, allies, enemies stage of their narrative journey, thus facilitating guests' deeper foray into the hero's journey as they take agency over their immersion into the park's experience.

Fig 3.2. Knockturn Alley. Author photo.

In the next section of my analysis, I analyze the reward stage of the hero's journey and how the WWOHP invites guests to participate in this stage. Before doing that, however, it is necessary to acknowledge two additional stages in the initiation phase that do not appear at the WWOHP: the approach to the inmost cave and the ordeal.

The approach to the inmost cave signifies the period of time when a hero approaches their final test. They have been subjected to a period of trials and weakened by the various enemies that they have encountered along their journey. Here, Randles suggests, "preparations for the ordeal are made."[23] This represents a problem that the hero knows is on the horizon for them to face, and one they have been working towards for quite some time. They may not realize the extent of the ordeal yet, and during this stage they will organize a plan to conquer the ordeal and triumph. The ordeal itself is the

23. Randles, "Music Education's Hero Collective," 93.

central conflict of the story and according to Randles, it "represents the moment in the journey where there is something to be lost, as well as something to be gained."[24] Additionally, Sonnenburg suggests that the ordeal could represent a physical trial and represent "great fear, the ultimate enemy or the fundamental crisis."[25]

These stages to do not appear in my thesis, as the WWOHP subjects guests to multiple versions of the hero's journey, meaning these narratives do not always occur in order. Guest A might experience a journey vastly different than Guest B while visiting the park; although each will lead to levels of immersion and other rhetorical effects, the agency provided to guests does not allow for a singular ordeal to appear at the park. While a hero experiences different calls to adventure at different times, literature defines the ordeal as one, specific event that the hero will endure, typically at the climax of the story. Because of the amount of agency allowed in the park to choose their own adventures, this is not a stage guests are subjected to while at the WWOHP.

The Reward

During their journey, the hero will at some point acquire an award for all of their bravery and hard-fought battles. In some literature, this is simply referred to as "the reward" while others (including Campbell) refer to it as "the ultimate boon."[26] The terms can be used interchangeably. Different scholars refer to the reward differently. In some literature, the reward a hero receives is a physical one, something they can bring with them back to the ordinary world. For others, this reward is more akin to the hero finally accomplishing the journey. They have accomplished the task at hand.

---

24. Randles, "Music Education's Hero Collective," 93.
25. Sonnenburg, "From Hero to Zero," 111.
26. Campbell, *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*, 148.

For Campbell, this reward is the latter. He writes about the reward as "spiritual growth" accomplished by the hero after agonizingly breaking through their own personal limitations. Campbell writes of the reward as a cosmic experience, in which the hero transcends any and all expectations, antagonists or powers that were working against him.[27] Robbins agrees with Campbell's interpretation of the reward, stating "the hero may receive the ultimate boon by facing and overcoming something within him or herself, or, the boon could be something wholly unanticipated until the moment when the hero became whole enough to realize how to transform."[28]

Some scholars such as Helen Sheehan and Stewart Riddle write of the reward in the physical sense, describing it as "the hero rescues the imprisoned, finds the coveted treasure or is granted lands and great wealth," but most literature refers to this reward as lessons learned along the way or a clarifying moment for the hero—essentially, most literature refers to the reward as the moment when the hero accomplishes what previously they thought was impossible, or faces the ultimate trial.[29] For instance, Randles writes that the reward can take "many different forms" and "resent a variety of paths toward fulfillment or enlightenment."[30] This could be the hero taking some sort of action that affirms they have been on the right path all along or accomplishing something that has felt daunting from the beginning of their journey. Sonnenburg and Runco note that after receiving the reward, or completing their final task, the hero might be led to believe that

27. Campbell, *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*, 163.

28. Robbins, "Harry Potter, Ruby Slippers and Merlin," 796.

29. Helen Sheehan and Stewart Riddle, "The Hero's Journey: Understanding the Experiences and Motivations of International Secondary Students," *Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education* 43, no. 6 (December 2022): 974, https://doi.org/10.1080/01596306.2021.1947190.

30. Randles, "Music Education's Hero Collective: More like The Justice League than Superman," 93.

the journey is over, but they will still need to experience the return phase to complete the journey.[31]

In *Harry Potter*, this reward can be seen multiple times throughout the series. Some examples include when his wand chooses him (affirming that he is indeed a wizard), when the Sorting Hat places him in Gryffindor, when he defeats the basilisk in the Chamber of Secrets, when he conjures a Patronus charm in book three after spending the entire book trying to learn how, and, of course, when he finally defeats Voldemort. This reward is also symbolized in *The Lord of the Rings* when Frodo finally achieves his task to destroy the ring at Mount Doom, and in *The Lion King* when Simba takes his rightful place on the savannah's throne after overthrowing his evil uncle.

In similar fashion, the WWOHP offers various rewards to guests as they progress through the hero's journey designed by the park. In the next section of my analysis, I analyze different spaces around the WWOHP that invite guests at the park to experience the reward stage of the hero's journey.

Ollivander's Wand Shop

Ollivander's Wand Shop is an essential stop for any witch or wizard in *Harry Potter*; the act of being chosen by their wand is a rite of passage and an honor. In the WWOHP, guests are invited to participate in the reward stage of the hero's journey by acquiring their very own wand to perform magic with.

In both the Hogsmeade and Diagon Alley sections of the WWOHP, guests can visit Ollivander's Wand Shop, a popular wand shop from *Harry Potter* where most

---

31. Sonnenburg and Runco, "Pathways to the Hero's Journey: A Tribute to Joseph Campbell and the 30th Anniversary of His Death," 3.

Britain-based witches and wizards receive their wands. In *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, Harry visits Ollivander's to receive his wand, as witches and wizards cannot produce magic without their wands. Famously, Ollivander tells Harry that "the wand chooses the wizard."[32] With that knowledge, it can be assumed that by being chosen by a wand at Ollivander's, one is clearly deserving of the title "witch" or "wizard."

When first stepping into Ollivander's, the first thing that a guest will notice are the ceiling-tall stacks of shelves that each contain hundreds of boxes of wands. These wands are each waiting for their rightful owner. A live actor playing Ollivander enters into the quiet room the where the guest waits and confirms that the guest is waiting to receive a wand. After confirming this, Ollivander asks the guests to step up to his desk so they can try and find the correct wand. He informs the guest that the wand chooses the wizard, and that he might not always make the perfect pairing on his first try. He also asks the guests which arm is their wand arm.

Ollivander explains that the core of each wand is filled with a powerful magical substance (dragon heartstring, phoenix feather or unicorn hair) and that no two wands are the same—just as no two dragons, unicorns, phoenixes, or wizards are the same. With the first wand that Ollivander has the guest try, he tells them to attempt to levitate a box on one of the top shelves his shop and encourages the guest to give the wand a wave. When they do so, the entire shelf falls, and Ollivander swiftly takes the wand back from the guest, determining that this is not the correct wand. On the second attempt and with a new wand, Ollivander asks the guest to attempt to ring the bell above the door to his

---

32. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone,* 85.

office just once. Instead, when the guest waves the wand, the bell starts ringing shrilly

and incessantly, causing Ollivander to again yank the wand away.

Finally, Ollivander notes that this particular guest is a tricky customer. As he does

so, soft music starts filtering throughout the space. When the guest is handed the third

wand, a warm breeze floats through the space, and the music increases in volume and

tempo. A warm, golden light shines on the guest holding the wand, and Ollivander notes

that the wand has officially chosen the wizard.

Fig 3.3. Ollivander's Wand Shop pre-selection.
Dena U. "The Wand Chooses Tia!" YouTube video, 1:48. April 8, 2015.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gWh6vL5YO9k.

Fig 3.4. Ollivander Wand Shop Wand selection.
Dena U. "The Wand Choose Tia!" YouTube video, 2:44. April 8, 2015.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gWh6vL5YO9k.

In this scene, the discourse used by Ollivander and the stylistic choices made throughout the space hail the guest into the identity of "witch" or "wizard." This is accomplished in the way Ollivander sets up the scene and explains that a wand will only choose a witch or wizard to belong to. Therefore, when wand chooses the guest, it is implied that the guest is indeed a witch or wizard. The rhetorical effect is the guest being interpellated into the role of "witch" or "wizard." This might have already happened at some point during their journey, but the theme park keeps the guest interpellated into the narrative through this scene. Such renewal is key to the power of constitutive rhetoric.

In her paper on the rhetoric of covenant renewal, Denise M. Bostdorff studied the similarities in the rhetoric of George W. Bush after the September 11 attacks and the Puritan rhetoric of covenant renewal in 1600s. In both instances, people in power or with large amounts of credibility (Bush and Puritan ministers) relied on rhetoric to rally or revitalize different generations of their audience. Bostdorff explains that the rhetoric of

covenant renewal is highly beneficial when an audience is "particularly in need of understanding," and can provide audience that is experiencing uncertainty with an identity to cling to.[33]

For Puritan ministers in the 1600s, their congregations were heavily impacted by various crises in New England (droughts, fires, epidemics, etc.). For Bush, his nation was desperate to rebuild their homes and find an outlet to channel their frustration and heartbreak. These identities were not new or unheard of for their audiences. Rather, they were identities that Puritan ministers and Bush had an extrinsic need for the re-adoption of, so they altered their rhetorical messages to mold and shape these identities for their audience who may have strayed to step back into.

At the WWOHP, this renewal into the subject position of hero is seen repeatedly. For the theme park, the frequent hailing of a hero into different identities around the park allows the park to keep the guests firmly immersed into their journey and narrative, thus reducing the likelihood that a guest will opt out of the story. Providing rewards is a crucial way they do this.

The reward that a hero receives can be physical, and in this scene, the WWOHP presents the guest with a physical token (the wand) as a reward for the journey that they have either been on or are about to embark on. As I have mentioned before, the hero's journey does not necessarily need to occur in order for a narrative to successfully occur, so the guest may have received the wand prior to experiencing other referenced stages of the hero's journey. I identify the wand selection as a reward because of the importance

---

33. Denise M. Bostdorff, "George W. Bush's Post-September 11 Rhetoric of Covenant Renewal: Upholding the Faith of the Greatest Generation," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 89, no. 4, https://doi.org/10.80/0033563032000160963.

placed on the acquisition of a wand throughout *Harry Potter*. In *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, we see how useless Ron is during the school year he deals with a broken wand. Spells consistently backfire and his schoolwork suffers. In *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, Harry mourns the loss of his first wand when Hermione accidentally hits it with a spell while the pair are trying to escape an enemy. Harry feels lost without his wand in the subsequent chapters and longs to have it again. Acquiring a wand in *Harry Potter* is a rite of passage, and in the WWOHP, a magic wand is the ultimate reward for attending the park.

This totemic investment works to powerful rhetorical effect. Communication scholar John H. Saunders studied how some objects become imbued with public memory, providing context and significance to materials that might otherwise be looked over and seen as useless. He writes that "to imbue an object with public memory is to attach it to a context where that context gives the object rhetorical value and purpose."[34] In the WWOHP, the *Harry Potter* movies have already assigned this contextual meaning to wands, and they are already imbued with collective memory and investment from fans.

However, the theme park builds upon this meaning with magic wand stations around the park and the presentation of these wands as a pivotal experience in one's journey. Saunders's study on mundane objects explores this rhetorical effect: "there are relics from public memory that carry a rhetorical presence from their connection to a specific public memory and place but do their work as public memory outside of their

---

34. John H. Saunders, "Public Memory Relics: The Rhetorics of Personal and Public Collections of Mundane Items Imbued with Public Memory," *Journal of Contemporary Rhetoric* 12, no. 3 (2022): 172.

original context."[35] At the theme park, this exact phenomenon is seen with wands and how the park switches the importance of characters having a wand to the importance of guests acquiring one to fully experience and live out their time at the park. While just a physical prop, the wand each guest wields exerts imaginative power on its user, constantly inviting them to see themselves as more than consumers of a theme park experience, but to see themselves as true participants in the story.

With this reward, the guest continues on in their journey. While this physical reward plays a large part of the overall immersion in the park, it is not the only one guests will experience at the theme park. Next, I analyze how guests are invited to participate in the reward stage of the hero's journey through receiving non-physical awards.

Escape from Gringotts

As I mentioned before, the reward a hero receives *can* be physical; however, most often the reward a hero gets on their journey is the accomplishment of the main tasks they set out to achieve on their journey. At the WWOHP, a successful completion to a task is seen at the end of each of the rides a guest goes on, thereby resulting in a reward.

During Escape from Gringotts, guests are aware from their time in the queue that they will be a co-conspirator on the ride they are about to embark on as they overhear Harry, Ron and, Hermione discussing their plan to steal an object while they wait for their turn to go down to the vaults. Once interpellated into this role, the guest is aware that their next action should be to get onto the ride and "aid" Harry, Ron, and Hermione. Although the guest lacks the agency to physically aid the trio, they are able to root for

---

35. Saunders, "Public Memory Relics," 173.

their success which aligns with the role of co-conspirator that they have been hailed into by the discourse of the three characters.

Once on the ride, guests are intercepted by Bellatrix Lestrange who is aware that an intruder/imposter has infiltrated the bank. She casts a spell that sends the cart traveling further into Gringotts. Bill and Blordak stop the cart from falling too far and attempt to apologize, but before they can, Harry, Ron, and Hermione interrupt as they arrive, urging Bill and Blordak to get the guests out of the bank. Hermione notes that Bellatrix has set off Gringotts defenses against the supposed intruders, and giant trolls show up and send the cart hurtling through caves. The cart begins a free-fall through the massive bank, but it is eventually brought to a halt by Bill again. Behind him, a dragon enters the scene carrying Harry, Ron and Hermione. Harry informs Bill that the trio has just recovered a Horcrux (a piece of Voldemort's soul that they need to acquire in order to kill him) and urges him to get the visitors out of Gringotts as a battle ensues between Harry, Ron, Hermione, and the approaching trolls and various Gringotts guards.

Bill sends the cart to Blordak, assuring the guests that he will help them get safely into a vault and wait out the chaos. However, before Blordak can get them inside of a vault, Bellatrix and Voldemort show up. They are aware that Harry is inside of the bank, and Voldemort accuses the guests of having seen Harry and knowing where he is. Voldemort threatens to torture the information out of the guests, but before he can, Harry, Ron, and Hermione show up on the back of the dragon who scares Voldemort and Bellatrix away. The trio attach a metal cord from the dragon to the cart, and Harry assures the guests they will "get you out of here." The dragon pulls the cart back to the top of

Gringotts where Bill is waiting for them. As he, Ron, and Hermione escape, Harry tells Bill to take care of the guests.

During this ride, the guest is an active member of the narrative being told even though they lack agency in it. Through discourse directed at them by the characters in the ride, the guest is continuously hailed to be a part of the story. Therefore, the triumph over Voldemort and Bellatrix does not belong to only Harry, Ron and Hermione; it is the guests' reward as well for enduring the trial.

This strategy is also seen at the other rides throughout the park. In Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey, Harry and Ron constantly refer to the guest as they fly throughout the different narratives. Harry asks if they are okay, Hagrid asks if the guests have seen a dragon, and even Draco Malfoy acknowledges the guests when he asks Harry if he is showing off for his admirers. At the end of the ride, Dumbledore tells the guest that he hopes they had a good visit.

On Hagrid's Magical Creatures Motorbike Adventure, Hagrid spends the majority of the ride referencing the audience as he teaches them about Blast-Ended Skrewts. During which, the motorbikes begin acting of their own control and fly towards the Forbidden Forest. Discourse from Hagrid consists of regular updates as he tries to get the ride back on track, including fun facts about the creatures the guests are zooming past, and at the end of the ride, Hagrid implores the guests to not mention anything back at Hogwarts about what happened, as it is not a good look for him to send guests hurtling through a forest filled with dangerous creatures.

Through the continuous discourse aimed at the guest, characters within the rides are used as rhetorical tools to create the effects the WWOHP is aiming for, implying that

the guests have a very important place in the story, to the point that the story would not be possible without them. The guests are hailed into different identities in their overarching role as the hero throughout the narrative is crafted by the theme park. This process of solidifying the guest's embrace of their status as the hero in portions of the Initiation Stage thus sets up the final stage of the hero's journey: the return.

Conclusion

While traveling through the initiation phase of the hero's journey, the guest has encountered tests, allies and enemies, and received an award for their bravery and success in continuing along their journey. This phase has increased the guest's knowledge of the unknown world they have entered, and they have observed how the characters operate in this space and have learned their own place in these narratives and places that the theme park invites them to join.

During the tests, allies, enemies stage of the journey, the guest is subjected to various trials in the rides they participated in and other physical spaces around the park such as magic wand stations and Knockturn Alley. They also met various friends and allies along the way that the either aided or impeded their journey. This stage helped the guest acknowledge pivotal role in the narrative they are in and encouraged their agency through the physical spaces they experienced. The hero was subjected to physical and relational challenges and were encouraged to acquire additional resources to continue on their quest.

Receiving an award after a long, tiresome journey is a pivotal moment for the hero. In the WWOHP, the presentation of a wand to the hero is their ultimate reward. Because of the public memory and importance attached to wands in this world, the

acquisition of this object is of extreme significance to the guest and also works to reaffirm the identity that has been constructed for a guest; only a true witch or wizard will be chosen by a wand, and the selection of a guest by a magical wand confirms the identity they have taken on. They are indeed a hero in this journey. In my next chapter, I analyze how physical spaces in the WWOHP invite guests to the final chapter of their journey, the return phase, and explain how the guest is subjected to various stages within this phase.

CHAPTER IV

THE RETURN

After enduring tests and encounters with allies and enemies and receiving the

reward for making it this far in the journey, the hero enters the return phase of the hero's

journey. They are headed back to the ordinary world that they originated from whether by

choice or fate. Here, the hero will encounter a road back to their known world. They will

return with some sort of elixir brought back from the unknown world. As the shortest

phase, this part of the hero's journey is typically the least prominent in their journey but

is still relevant to create a satisfying narrative and set the stage for future adventures. This

chapter analyzes how The Wizarding World of Harry Potter interpellates guests into the

return phase of the hero's journey through its rhetorical use of physical spaces.

The return phase is critically important to establishing the memory of the guest's

experience of the park and contributes to the achievement of "narrative enmeshment" for

park visitors. Reinhardt Fourie studied the rhetorical effects of videogames on their

audiences and how these effects vary from other forms of media. In their study, Fourie

coined the term "narrative enmeshment," to explain the extreme level of engagement a

player achieves in a story through narratives. Fourie argued that this level of engagement

was due to the extreme level of engagement, "the expanded access that a player is given

to the narrative world [of video games] and the ability to make certain choices,

potentially feeling … a complicity in the choices and outcomes in and of the story."[1] *Narrative enmeshment* is a term Fourie coined to describe deep immersion into a story in the manner a video game player can become fully identified with the character they play in a particular game.

Fourie argued that this level of experience goes even deeper than immersion (while still adhering to the concepts and rules of immersion) and is more complex. That is to say, immersion is still present in Fourie's claim; however, the level of immersion is much deeper and intricate. He writes, "the careful integration of the story elements with the mechanics of the game world—and the active processes of choice, character formation, and culpability" allowed the player to alter the course of events and exert agency. This resulted in a "a response from the player that weighs heavily with emotional poignancy and affective investment."[2]

Such affective investment is what the WWOHP works to generate. Narrative enmeshment is particularly relevant in the return phase of the hero's journey as the hero has a chance to reflect over their time in the park and how their actions throughout their visit shaped their journey. In the return phase, this is seen more than ever as the guest actively makes the choice to exit the narrative, the most important choice they will make during their visit. While the Wizarding World has guided them throughout their time in the park, the guest ultimately has the final say on when to end the journey and opt out of the story, even as they remain on a journey until they step out of the narrative space.

1. Reinhardt Fourie, "Narrative Enmeshment" in Rockstar's *Red Dead Redemption 2*," *South African Journal for Communication Theory and Research* 49, no. 3-4 (2018): 3, https://doi.org/10.1080/02500167.2023.2279320.

2. Fourie, "Narrative Enmeshment," 4.

Hero's Journey: Return Phase Analysis

Ride/Space in The Wizarding World of Harry Potter	Stage of the Hero's Journey Guest Experiences in the Return Phase
The Hogwarts Express	The Road Back
Gift shops	Return with Elixir

The Road Back

When the hero has completed their trials and is nearing the end of their journey, they then enter the return phase of the hero's journey. During this stage, the hero will leave the unknown world and return to the ordinary world they originally departed from.[3] Whether they have been gone for months, days, or years, the hero will need to make this final return to complete their journey.

Campbell describes this stage as "the magic flight" in which a hero returns home after finishing all of the trials presented to him during his journey. He writes that "the two worlds… can be pictured only as distinct from each other—different as life and death, as day and night. The hero adventures out of the land we know … and his return is described as a coming back out of that yonder zone."[4]

During their return, the hero has time to reflect on the changes they have undergone and the adventures they embarked on. Because of this reflection, Smith writes that the hero "expresses a reluctance to return to ordinary life after experiencing the extraordinary.

---

3. Sheehan and Riddle, "The hero's journey: understanding the experiences and motivations of international secondary students," 973.

4. Campbell, *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*, 201.

Something may pull her back to the world and she returns, realizing that she can be the master of two worlds."[5]

With this description, Smith explains that the hero can sustain the bliss that accompanies the end of a long journey, due to the realization that they have conquered and excelled in multiple dimensions; the first is the ordinary world, and the second refers to the unknown world. Likewise Randles suggests that [d]epending on the shape the road back takes, the hero will have ample time to reflects on the ordeal and reward accomplished and gained during the journey, leading to a sense of bliss over the outcome.[6] This bliss gives the hero the knowledge that, according to Robbins, they are "the master of both worlds because the hero has conquered the fears that previously hindered him or her from growth as an individual."[7]

In *Harry Potter*, Harry experiences the road back at the end of the first six books when he must return to the Dursley's for summer break, leaving behind his friends and the only real home he has ever known—Hogwarts. In *Moana*, Moana sails back to her island after restoring the heart of Te Fiti and in *Coco,* Miguel returns back from the Land of the Dead and is whole once again. In the next section of my analysis, I will analyze different spaces around the WWOHP that invite guests at the park to experience the road back phase of the hero's journey.

The Hogwarts Express is a prominent fixture in *Harry Potter* for its role in safely carrying students to and from Hogwarts at the beginning and end of each school year. In

---

5. Smith, "Health, Healing, and the Myth of the Hero's Journey," 10.

6. Randles, "Music Education's Hero Collective: More like The Justice League than Superman," 93.

7. Robbins, "Harry Potter, Ruby Slippers and Merlin: Telling the Client's Story Using the Characters and Paradigm of the Archetypal Hero's Journey," 800.

the WWOHP, the train is responsible for sending guests through multiple stages of the hero's journey. At the end of the journey, this ride interpellates guests into the role of the hero once more, inviting them to the stage of the road back through a narrative structure in a physical space. It facilitates their transition from the stage of adventure and extraordinary life back to the ordinary world of normal life. This point is critical for affixing a positive memory of the guests' experience of their time at the WWOHP, as this formative stage represents the final moments of rhetorical influence of the park over its audience of park guests.

At the WWOHP, the Hogwarts Express departs from King's Cross Station and arrives in Hogsmeade, helping immerse guests into crossing the threshold which I discussed in chapter two. However, it also journeys back to return guests to King's Cross Station at the end of their day. In a design choice made by the theme park, Diagon Alley is situated physically closer to the exit of Universal Orlando. Therefore, while guests can choose to walk to the exit from Hogsmeade and forego the Hogwarts Express, most will opt to take it as it reduces a significant amount of walking time. Guests are incentivized to opt-in to this final setting in which the park's suasory influence works to structure their self-understanding as participants on the hero's journey one last time.

When boarding the Hogwarts Express, guests are assigned to different carriages. Each carriage provides a window for the guest to view the journey back to "London," returning to the ordinary world. During this trip, the guest has time to ponder on the journey that they have just completed and the adventures they participated in. The train is a physical space that literally mediates the transition between worlds.

Through the window in their carriage, the guest first sees Hagrid waving goodbye to them in front of the Hogsmeade Station sign. Soon, the train gains speed and glimpses of the Forbidden Forest start passing by. At the door to the carriage, the silhouettes of Harry, Ron, and Hermione appear, and they ask whether the carriage is free for them to sit in. Ron notes that it is full, and they leave in search of an empty carriage, implicitly placing park guests on a level of equality with the signature heroes of the Harry Potter franchise. Meanwhile, outside of the window, the guest is able to see multiple magical creatures with which they came face-to-face on Hagrid's Magical Creature Motorbike Adventure. Centaurs run next to the train, watching the guests until the train hurtles past a cliff, and they can no longer keep up. As the train ventures across a vast lake, a lone hippogriff flies next to the train. In the distance, the guest can see Hogwarts, a representation that the guest has already physically moved away from this wizarding world and is headed back home.

During the rest of the ride, the guest watches Fred and George Weasley, Ron's brothers, shoot off fireworks into the sky, and they see the silhouettes of students as they pass by the door to their carriage. The train continues to move through countryside that becomes increasingly dotted with details that show the train is headed back into Muggle territory. The train first passes by the Riddle House, an important place in *Harry Potter* that is located in a Muggle village. Soon after, the train begins to pass telephone poles, highways packed with cars and factories, and finally arrives back in London. This is apparent through the appearance of Georgian architecture mentioned in Chapter 2. The Hogwarts Express passes through multiple sets of identical townhomes that replicate

outer London neighborhoods, features representative of Georgian architecture and quotidian British streets.

Fig. 4.1. Georgian architecture as seen from the window of the Hogwarts Express. Author photo.

Through the townhomes and busy streets, a familiar purple bus begins to dart its way through tightly parked cars and under low overpasses. The Knight Bus pulls up directly beside the Hogwarts Express for a moment before taking off in a different direction on its way to rescue stranded witches and wizards. Finally, the Hogwarts Express pulls back into King's Cross Station.

During the journey, the reference to multiple characters (Harry, Ron, Hermione, Hagrid), architecture (Hogwarts castle, Forbidden Forest) and creatures (centaurs, hippogriffs) provides a way for the WWOHP to provide the guest a chance to reminisce on their adventure, a key feature of the road backstage or falling action in the hero's journey.

Campbell also writes that there is a clear distinction between the two worlds in this stage; they appear as different as night and day and do not overlap at all.[8] The WWOHP accomplishes this sharp distinction between the unknown world of adventure and everyday life in a few ways. First, once a guest embarks on the Hogwarts Express back to London, they will not be able to physically see Hogsmeade or Hogwarts again from any section of the park. It would almost appear as if that section of the park just disappeared after they left it. Additionally, once arriving back in London, team members in this area will appear as if they do not know where Hogwarts is. Some will even be surprised to see the guests, noting that they thought all of the trains for the day had arrived at the station. If pressed on the existence of Hogwarts or Hogsmeade, the team member will often feign annoyance and walk off.

This sense of secret knowledge about the wizarding world and how to access it operates as yet another level of investment for guests. In Phillip Wander's terms, the team members in this section of the park operate under the third persona, a portion of the audience that is excluded from the rhetorical discourse of an author yet conveys secret or tacit knowledge covertly to audiences aware enough to pick up their subtextual messages. In the WWOHP, guests make up the second persona (the "you") while the park consists of the first persona (the "I").[9] When team members take on the role of the third persona, guests develop a secret knowledge that encapsulates them in the first persona and creates an otherness between themselves and the team members. Again, the guest is the "hero" and has acquired knowledge that members of the ordinary world do not have, and this

---

8. Campbell, *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*, 201.

9. Phillip Wander, "The Third Persona: An Ideological Turn in Rhetorical Theory," *Central States Speech Journal* 35 no. 4 (Winter 1984): 199, https://doi.org/10.1080/10510978409368190.

serves as a way that the theme park continuously creates a successful divide not only physically but relationally. The park visitors, now transformed into heroes, are the caretakers of secret knowledge.

This sense of secret knowledge as well as the other rhetorical features of the Hogwarts Express contribute to Campbell's description that the road back will emphasize the dichotomy between the ordinary world and the known world; the two worlds should not even feel as though they exist in the same universe. By delineating between the two worlds through these devices, the park effects this sharp division.

The Hogwarts Express is not the only instance where the WWOHP represents this extreme shift from unknown world to ordinary world. Of course, the Hogwarts Express is not the only way to leave the park. Some guests may choose to enter into another land from the WWOHP. Hogsmeade is bordered by The Lost Continent and Jurassic Park, and a path will lead the guest into The Lost Continent while a bridge will take them into Jurassic Park. Other than the Hogwarts Express, these two exits are the only way a guest can leave the Hogsmeade section of the park.

Both of these are presented to the guest as a representation that they are leaving this world behind and entering into another one. Again, it is very difficult (if not impossible) to see Hogsmeade and Hogwarts once a guest enters Jurassic Park and The Lost Continent. When exiting from the bridge and entering Jurassic Park, the guest's view is obscured by tall hedges that block their view and immediately rounding a corner that prevents them from looking back across the bridge and into Hogsmeade.

Fig. 4.2. Bridge to Jurassic Park. Author photo.

In Fig. 4.2 the bridge leads directly into Jurassic Park. Tall trees surround the guest as soon as they step into the new world and leave behind Hogsmeade. The rhetorical function of this vegetation is to close off the guests from a wider sight line or perspective from which to view each park simultaneously. They are literally in a liminal space of transition that links the two worlds that do not overlap at all.

Similarly, when exiting from the path into The Lost Continent, the guest will exit under an arch that has Hogsmeade's name on it. Just like the bridge into Jurassic Park, this path will curve and partially, and at times wholly, obscure Hogsmeade from view. In Fig. 4.3, the curved path can be seen which is the direction guests will follow when leaving Hogsmeade. This image shows the blocked visual range.

Fig. 4.3. Path into Hogsmeade from The Lost World. Author photo.

The spatial organization and rhetorical choices made by the rhetors of the WWOHP when designing the potential exits a guest can take from the park hail the guest into the role of the hero as they symbolically embark on the road back. By aligning with Campbell's description of what this process should entail, the theme parks interpellates guests into the role of the hero and sends them through another stage of the hero's journey. The road back is filled with moments to reflect on the previous adventure experienced by the guest and represents a clear distinction between the world being left and the world being entered; both criteria are accomplished by the theme park.

Before moving onto my analysis of the final stage of the journey, it should be noted here that an additional stage does appear in Vogler's condensed version of the hero's journey. Williams suggests that the resurrection signifies the "death of the old self and the birth of a new more capable self," allowing the hero to become the master of two

worlds.[10] In this stage, the hero becomes a changed version of themselves because of the events and trials they have endured on their journey. In *Harry Potter*, this is signified when Voldemort kills a part of Harry, and Harry is resurrected. After defeating Voldemort, Harry possesses all three of the Deathly Hallows, making him not only the most powerful wizard in the world, but the master of death. He has become the master of both the ordinary and the special world.

This stage does not appear in my analysis of the WWOHP because it does not occur at the theme park. In the return phase guests begin their journey back to the ordinary world by ending their narrative journey. There are no rhetorical elements of the park that subject guests to a resurrection. While a guest might experience a sense of fulfillment or accomplishment and feel they have "conquered" the theme park, this is not an active choice made by Universal to subject guests to this stage. During my close reading of the park, I did not observe any rhetorical or stylistic decisions that prompted guests to celebrate their journey or alluded to a transformative process. In the next section of my analysis, I will analyze how the WWOHP uses physical spaces and rhetorical tools to invite guests into a final role in the hero's journey—the return with the elixir.

Return with Elixir

Once a hero returns home, they will typically produce an elixir that they acquired during their travels. If the reward, or the ultimate boon, that they receive during the initiation phase is physical, this might be the elixir that the hero brings back and is an object that will benefit the ordinary world.[11] However, this elixir is not always something

---

10. Williams, "The Hero's Journey: A Creative Act," 71.

11. Sonnenburg and Runco, "Pathways to the Hero's Journey: A Tribute to Joseph Campbell and the 30th Anniversary of His Death," 4.

physical. Vogler writes that the ultimate boon a hero returns with could be the hero's expanded consciousness or a life-changing enlightenment.[12]

Building on the idea of a non-physical elixir, Darbellay writes that the hero can be assured that they are returning to the ordinary world having "undergone a significant transformation" during which they gained extraordinary wisdom and are now "rich in new skills and … freedom that should be shared" with the world.[13] Whatever the elixir may be, "it is now the duty of the returned hero to share this new potential, the elixir, with the world."[14] Regardless of what the elixir is, the hero knows that by acquiring it, it is something that they should take with them back home, where they will get the most use out of it. Sheehan and Riddle write that in this stage, "the hero returns to their homeland … the battles won, the enemies defeated, and the challenges overcome have helped the hero to grow in knowledge and skills. The hero returns home to bring gifts to those who remained behind."[15] Again, this literature supports that the elixir could be gifts of knowledge and power or physical gifts.

In *Harry Potter,* Harry's elixir is a wizarding world that is finally at peace after years spent in trepidation at the thought of Voldemort's return. In *Moana,* Moana returns to her island with knowledge of voyaging that her people can benefit from and brings back life into the nature surrounding her island after restoring the heart of Te Fiti. In the final section of my analysis, I will analyze how the WWOHP invites guests to experience

---

12. Vogler, "Joseph Campbell Goes to the Movies," 18.

13. Darbellay, "From Monomyth to Interdisciplinary Creative Polymathy," 46.

14. Williams, "The Hero's Journey: A Creative Act," 73.

15. Sheehan and Riddle, "The Hero's Journey: Understanding the Experiences and Motivations of International Secondary Students," 974.

the return with the elixir stage of the hero's journey, completing the adventure for the guest and culminating in one large, immersive experience.

In *Harry Potter*, Harry is a helpful narrator because everything that is new and unique to him is also unheard of by the reader. He often comes across treats, clothes, and other magical objects that he is unsure how to use and that would not be available to him in the ordinary (Muggle) world. In the Wizarding World, the theme park capitalizes on these numerous objects by offering them for sale in various shops throughout the park. These objects serve as an elixir that guests can take back with them into the ordinary world where they would not be able to acquire them.

At this point in their adventure, guests have spent hours, if not days, exploring the WWOHP, accepting calls to adventure, crossing thresholds, and being subjected to trial after trial in their hero's journey. The theme park has interpellated the guests into various roles and identities, setting up a standard and precedent for how the guest should behave by using discourse and physical spaces to provide a set of actions and practices the guest should partake in. Guests have been visitors, students, witches, wizards, rule-breakers, allies, and more. They have flown with Harry and Ron, escaped from Voldemort, and embarked on an adventure with Hagrid. At this point, they still have one last stage that they need the audience to be hailed to experience; they need them to retrieve an elixir.

The success the WWOHP achieves here is dependent on their ability to reconstitute simple objects into things of extreme importance to the guest or in the world that they have been participating in. Rather than reconstituting what a box of jellybeans should mean to the audience, however, the theme park attempts to create moments throughout the park where the guest observes a certain object being utilized or consumed.

Obviously, this object is of some kind of importance in this unknown world and is a part of the narratives being presented to the audience. Following the jellybean example, the theme park does not attempt to reconstitute the literal meaning of the jellybeans. Rather, they reconstitute the importance of them to the world and represent them as a necessity or a shared knowledge among those in the unknown world. Saunders notes that mundane objects "need a context to have any significance."[16] Because of popular scenes in *Harry Potter,* the guest already has a pre-existing knowledge of the rhetorical symbolism of these objects, and the theme park builds on this notion through branding and incorporating these objects into other various scenes that the guest is subjected to while in the park. These objects have some kind of importance, and acquiring them is another way to fit into the identities that belong in these narratives.

In various shops throughout the theme park, guests can buy wizards attire, Chocolate Frogs (a type of candy that comes with a collectible wizard card), or broomsticks. During their time on the adventure they have just taken, the theme park has presented these objects (and more) as artifacts that are meaningful in this unknown world, thus reconstituting the importance of them in the guests' mind.

On the Hogwarts Express, the guest watches as students try and catch Chocolate Frogs that have escaped from the trolley cart. On various rides and among team members, they have observed the attire that is more commonplace in this world, which differs from the ordinary world. On "Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey," they flew with Harry and Ron on broomsticks.

---

16. Saunders, "Public Memory Relics," 171.

Fig. 4.4. Rider POV on Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey, showing the use and importance of broomsticks in this world. Photo by Universal.

Fig. 4.5. Attire worn by team member, also sold in shops. Author photo.

While a piece of chocolate, unfamiliar clothing, and an ordinary broomstick would not mean much to the guest in the ordinary world, they have been subjected to the importance of them in this world, and thus park guests acknowledge that the acquisition of these materials is another way to align their actions with the expectations of their new role. Furthermore, while none of these souvenirs could realistically be used for some life-changing importance in the ordinary world, as the hero's journey suggests, the guests are expected to take them back home with them; therefore, these souvenirs do act as an elixir of some sort with which the hero returns home.

Conclusion

During the return phase of the hero's journey, the guest is invited to participate in various stages in the conclusion of their adventure. The return phase is the shortest that the guest will experience in their journey, but it is still impactful in the overall narrative. In the return phase, the WWOHP invites the guests to experience the road back and the return with the elixir.

During the road backstage, the theme park utilizes the Hogwarts Express to convey the guests traveling back to the ordinary world from the unknown world by supplying the guest with a narrative structure to follow in various physical spaces. On the Hogwarts Express, the theme park allows guest to view what is happening outside from a window in their carriage. Being subjected to various characters and creatures from their adventures allows the hero to reminisce on their time spent in the unknown world. Furthermore, design choices made in other potential exits from the park create a rigid dichotomy between the ordinary world and the unknown world.

In the return phase, the guest is also subjected to the return with the elixir phase. I argue that in the WWOHP, this elixir is seen as souvenirs that the guest leaves the park with. The theme park reconstitutes the importance of regular objects by reframing their importance or meaning during the guests' time at the park. When done successfully, the guest recognizes the acquisition of these objects as an important way to belong to certain identities in the narratives into which they are being interpellated. By buying wizard's attire, Chocolate Frogs, or broomsticks, the guest is taking their last step at being interpellated as the hero and acquiring objects that they can bring back with them to the ordinary world and remind them of the field of adventure until they, like many park guests, return for more. By inviting guests to return from their hero's journey, The Wizarding World of Harry Potter concludes its highly immersive narrative for their audience and positions the park guest as a full-fledged hero on par with the signature characters from the franchise. They have hailed the guests to align with various identities and reconstituted the meaning of terms and shared identities to keep the guest immersed in their journey—and perhaps, like Harry returning to Hogwarts each year, wanting more.

In my final chapter, I consider my rhetorical analysis as a whole and explain how I have answered my research question: How does The Wizarding World of Harry Potter immerse guests through the stories they tell? I will explain how the theme park accomplishes this and the impact and importance of the success of theme parks.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

A Hypothetical Hero's Journey Through The Wizarding World of Harry Potter

At The Wizarding World of Harry Potter, there are a variety of ways that the hero's journey can unfold. This thesis explores how many areas of the park subject guests to various stages of the journey to create rhetorical effects on the audience. Next, I will offer a hypothetical experience of just one version of the journey that a guest (here imagined as "Maya") might experience while in the park.

When first arriving at the WWOHP, Maya enters into a replica of London. Iconic London architecture and settings will let her know the physical place in the story she is entering. A key feature in this area that she will notice is a triple-decker purple bus with a driver standing outside of it, waiting to answer questions. When Maya approaches the bus, the driver informs her that this is the Knight Bus which provides transportation to stranded witches and wizards, before asking Maya where she would like to go. Regardless of her answer, the driver will inform her to come back later as the bus is currently "being faulty" and will encourage Maya to venture into Diagon Alley where he just dropped off a busload of passengers. The driver will explain that Maya can shop for a new quill at Scribbulus, stop by the Leaky Cauldron for a bite to eat, or venture down to Gringotts to tour the vaults. Maya has just experienced a call to adventure. By acknowledging that the driver is addressing her and by following his suggestions, Maya has just been hailed and interpellated into the role of the hero.

While Maya will face an array of decisions to make once she enters Diagon Alley, the long pathway with a stark-white building at the end of it might pull her down to the end of the alley where she will find Gringotts Bank. As a hero who has accepted a call to adventure, Maya will soon encounter a mentor who will help her on her journey. This could be the team members present at the park to subtly encourage guests on their next step (similar to the Knight Bus driver), or Maya might find her mentor on one of the various rides. If she continues along and embarks on Escape from Gringotts, she will encounter this stage with Bill Weasley. On the ride, Maya is a potential client of Gringotts and is being taken on a tour of the underground vaults. When Bill Weasley encounters Maya's group, he offers to lead their tour, ensuring that they remain safe on their journey. Because an important aspect of constitutive rhetoric is repeatedly hailing guests into their roles, this scene embeds Maya further into the narrative where she is now an active participant. While she will encounter various stages of the hero's journey on the ride (it could be argued that each ride is its own journey), in her personal metanarrative, Maya will move onto the next stage—crossing the threshold.

As she exits Escape from Gringotts, Maya may choose to visit one of the various shops in the Diagon Alley, venture down Knockturn Alley, or stop to explore the Leaky Cauldron. Each would subject her to stages of the hero's journey. However, if she continues to the other side of the park (Hogsmeade), she will continue to move through the typical narrative structure of the journey. At King's Cross Station, Maya will find herself back in the ordinary world of London. With old, scuffed luggage lining the walls, a Muggle convenience store, and flyers that mark traditional London sight-seeing activities, the rhetorical decisions made from the park communicate to her the physical

place she is "in." Soon Maya will "pass through" the famous brick wall onto Platform 9 3/4. As she does, the music of the space will change, and light will begin streaming in from overhead skylights marking the transition of one place to another. Maya has now passed over into the unknown world. This is further marked by magical creatures in cages and luggage that moves about on its own as if filled with magic.

On the other side of the park, Maya will encounter various tests and trials and as well as a number of enemies or allies that either aid her on her journey or hinder her from accomplishing tasks. She will also obtain a reward for the journey that she has been on so far.

Once arriving in Hogsmeade, Maya might choose to visit Ollivander's Wand Shop to acquire a wand, a rite of passage for witches and wizards. In the shop, Ollivander will remind her that the wand chooses the witch or wizard, not the other way around. After trying a variety of spells that go awry for one reason or another, Maya will eventually pick up a wand that changes the physical space she is in. Soft music will begin playing, a warm light will appear on her, and a gust of air will move through the space, signifying that something has occurred. Ollivander will declare that the wand has chosen Maya, providing Maya with a reward in her journey as it also serves to continuously interpellate her into the narrative. With her reward, Maya can venture back out into the narrative, armed and ready to encounter various tests and enemies.

One specific instance of tests she will face lies in the physical space around her. Magic spell stations are dotted throughout the entire park. To test the accuracy of her wand work, Maya might choose to visit various stations and practice casting spells to levitate objects, repair them, or make them disappear entirely. Whichever ones she

decides, the agency to perform these tasks is an important part of Maya's journey. Her decision to practice magic in a moment when she is not confined to a ride or sitting at a restaurant, instead of opting out of the story at that point, is a testament to how Maya's immersion into her environment.

At some point in her journey, Maya will feel as though she has accomplished everything expected of her. It is time to venture back to the ordinary world, which Maya will do by encountering a road back to the world she previously left. At the theme park, this could happen through various ways, but one option is embarking on The Hogwarts Express, which will carry her back to London. While on the train, Maya will have time to reflect and reminisce about her journey and will be subjected to reminders of her time in the special, unknown world. Through her window, she will wave goodbye to Hagrid, catch last glimpses of Hogwarts and the magical creatures roaming the grounds, and see Harry, Ron and Hermione before the view eventually returns to London, marked by stereotypical architecture and the Knight Bus darting through the streets.

The prominence of various gift shops that Maya has encountered on her journey will have invited her to purchase some kind of elixir that she can take back home with her after her long journey. The theme park has successfully reconstituted these objects by branding them to fit the unknown world Maya has been experiencing. Because she will not be able to purchase these in the ordinary world, Maya might choose to buy souvenirs as tokens of the journey she has just embarked on. As she leaves the park, her journey ends, but the theme park has been successful at sending Maya on an adventure by relying on the familiar narrative structure of the hero's journey.

The ability of humans to craft meaning and persuade others through narratives has transcended time and cultures. The power of storytelling and its rhetorical effects can be traced throughout history and is embedded throughout disciplines, research, and spaces. Humans are drawn to these narratives as "storytelling and story-loving animals."[1] Over time, humans have developed in their ability to weave narratives. Instead of sharing folk tales around a fire, we now have the ability to tell large and complex stories on a massive scale. From movies to video games and even through physical spaces, such as theme parks, we can involve large audiences into a rhetor's scope of impact.

The WWOHP is an example of storytelling in a big way. The success of most theme parks rests in their ability to keep audiences coming back to the park. One way they accomplish this is through expansion and the consistency of their quality storytelling. A clear point of evidence of the effective storytelling that occurs at the WWOHP is the park's expansion and growth. Universal is currently in the process of expanding their theme park with the addition of a fourth park to their Orlando site. Epic Universe will be the home to a new land marketed as The Wizarding World of Harry Potter and labeled "Ministry of Magic," similarly to how the park has Diagon Alley and Hogsmeade. Eve Chen reports that it is set to open in 2025 and will be the home to a Paris-inspired wizarding world as well as the British Ministry of Magic both scenes are present in the *Harry Potter* spin-off series *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them.*[2]

---

1. Lang, *Small Teaching*, 182.

2. Eve Chen, "Universal Orlando Resort reveals first details on highly anticipated Epic Universe," *USA Today*, January 30, 2024, https://www.usatoday.com/story/travel/experience/theme-parks/2024/01/30/universal-epic-universe-orlando-details/72404801007/.

The last time Universal expanded was the addition of Diagon Alley in 2014. Eleven years later, this new land will draw millions of guests in with the promise of new stories and attractions. In 2014, the expansion of the park with Diagon Alley increased park attendance by over 38 percent. In fact, within hours of opening, the park was hosting a six-hour line for those interested in riding "Escape from Gringotts."[3] The addition of the Wizarding World – The Ministry of Magic in 2025 is projected to attract between five and six million visitors in its first year alone.[4] The additions to these parks will draw more guests in than ever before.

Once the theme park has a guest walk through the gates, however, they face a new challenge: keeping them there. Dewayne Bevil suggests that it is not enough for a guest to have a basic interest in riding a thrilling ride—in fact, this is why amusement parks do not see a quarter of the success that theme parks do.[5] Theme parks have to offer something that typical parks do not. Thus, they utilize the timeless tool of storytelling. Magic Kingdom tells the story of fairytales. Animal Kingdom tells stories of how nature and humans interact, while EPCOT tells the story of innovation. The Wizarding World of Harry Potter tells the story of magic and adventure and how each guest that visits their park has the ability to become the hero of their own, magical story.

---

3. Hugo Martin, "The Muggles Are Coming: Harry Potter Boosted Attendance at Universal Studios, Apps Show," *Los Angeles Times*, July 21, 2016, https://www.latimes.com/business/la-fi-theme-park-attendance-20160720-snap-story.html.

4. Dewayne Bevil, "Universal's Epic Move Could Prompt Disney to Up Its Game, Experts Say," *Orlando Sentinel*, February 1, 2024, https://www.orlandosentinel.com/2024/02/01/universals-epic-move-could-prompt-disney-world-to-up-its-game-too-experts-say/.

5. Kevin Williams, "The Future of the American Amusement Park in a Disney, Universal Dominated World of Thrills," *CNBC*, January 27, 2024, https://www.cnbc.com/2024/01/27/six-flags-future-in-a-disney-universal-dominated-theme-park-world.html.

This thesis has shown how The Wizarding World of Harry Potter tells that magical story by performing a close reading analysis of the park's spaces through the lens of constitutive rhetoric. The most critical job of the theme park is not to just tell a story; it must make the audience believe that they are a part of the narrative and provide them with the agency needed to choose their own adventure. To do this, the theme park relies on Joseph Campbell's monomyth, or the hero's journey. While the rhetors, park designers, team members, and J.K Rowling influence the stages of the journey that a guest will go through, the guest has free will to experience these stages in the order they desire, crafting their own narrative within the larger metanarrative going on at the WWOHP.

The theme park is meticulous in this attempt and carefully crafts spaces that beckon their audience to embark on adventures and stay immersed throughout the entirety of their journey. By relying on the familiar narrative of *Harry Potter*, the park invites guests to experience unique adventures and write new stories. They constitute new roles for the "hero" and interpellate them into those roles through rhetorical devices such as discourse and physical spaces.

Constituting these identities for guests is beneficial for the WWOHP because it creates a shared sense of identity among the guests, immerses them into the narrative space, and encourages them to continue looking for adventure. Of course, this is the main goal of the theme park as it keeps guests returning.

The success of the park's ability to do this lies in the numbers. The number of guests, the number of dollars generated at the parks, and the number of expansions the park continues to experience. Within each chapter of my thesis, I analyzed in depth how

the WWOHP immerses their guests into the hero's journey by constituting certain

identities for them. In the next part of the conclusion, I will summarize each stage before

touching on main takeaways and future implications.

The Departure

In the departure phase, I analyzed how the WWOHP invites guests to experience

a call to adventure, meeting the mentor, and crossing the threshold. This phase at the

theme park is important for a several reasons. It hooks the guest from the beginning by

immediately offering them a place in the story. I discuss how the park accomplishes this

in a few ways: the driver of the Knight Bus works as an important rhetorical tool to hail

audiences into the narrative, as does the London-esque architecture. Throughout the rides,

guests are subjected to discourse aimed at them that works to continue their departure

phase, providing them with a call to adventure to accept. This is one critical reason for

this phase.

The other reason is the consistency with which the guest receives the call to

adventure. Multiple rides and spaces at the park extend this call to the guest, making it

impossible for them to ignore. It is the most prominently featured stage throughout the

WWOHP, which serves the park's purpose of ensuring that no guest is left out of the

journey. The constitution of roles such as "co-conspirator," "rule-breaker," "visitor," and

"student," during these rides provide the audience with their personal place in the story—

it makes them feel as though this story could not be happening without their presence and

the repeated discourse directed at them by the team member characters confirms it.

The Initiation

The initiation phase serves the purpose of orientating the guest into this new world they have stepped into by explaining the rules and introducing them to key characters. In this stage, I analyzed how the spaces of the WWOHP presented trials, enemies, and allies to the guests, and how they presented each guest with a reward in their long journey. In this stage, the key to the theme park's success is in the agency a guest has at this point. Up to and including their decision to obtain the award, guests have free will to move about the narrative space through the variety of well-spaced magic spell stations throughout the park. This is an added benefit for the rhetors as this opens up the possibility of the guest exploring more and stumbling into new stories, thus increasing their immersive experience.

The Return

The final phase of the journey I analyzed was the return phase. In this section, I performed a close reading of spaces around the park that invite the guests to experience the road back to the ordinary world, as well as the return with the elixir. In this space, the rhetors are especially successful for two reasons: their positively keeps the guest immersed into their narrative, while they add incentives that the guest can purchase. Universal profits from the sales of souvenirs and other memorabilia around their park. To increase sales, the parks set up spaces where additional tools are required, e.g., a magic wand, for the guest to be able to continue along their quest. These "elixirs" serve an additional purpose of reminding the guest of their time on their hero's journey throughout The Wizarding World of Harry Potter, facilitating narrative enmeshment, and encouraging their return to the park.

Research Contributions

From my project, I identified three key contributions of my research that are important to note. The first is that while the use of the hero's journey as an analytical lens has been done before, most of this research covers the journey of one, singular person through a story. Harry in *Harry Potter* is an example, as is Frodo in *Lord of the Rings,* and Simba in *The Lion King.* This framework has also been applied in legal studies to narrate a defendant's journey and in medical scholarship to analyze the role of a nurse and the different identities they can adopt. My research looks at the hero's journey from a fresh, wider perspective and considers the implications of the ability to perform storytelling on a larger-than-life scale. Additionally, there is very little research on how individuals might experience the monomyth in a physical space as most research is dedicated to how subjects experience these stages throughout time.

The second contribution my research makes is to the scholarship on the rhetoric of space and place. From my research performed in this project, it appears that there is a very niche amount of literature on constitutive rhetoric in physical spaces and almost none on the potential constitutive rhetorical effects in theme parks. This paper adds to the conversation on how theme parks can constitute identities for their guests and immerse them into various roles by addressing this gap in rhetorical scholarship.

Building on that note, my third contribution is the combination of my critical framework. Viewing the WWOHP through the combined lenses of constitutive rhetoric and the hero's journey is unique and shows the intellectually invigorating possibilities of blending narrative analysis with other critical concepts from the communication studies field. This research adds to our understanding of the depth of immersion experienced in

theme parks and to our conversations around theme parks in general. Future projects and scholarly research could build upon this research by looking at other narrative structures seen in theme parks.

Conclusion

The use of narratives in theme parks have rhetorical effects on their audience. Whether to immerse them, guide them, or just entertain, theme parks are a powerful tool for telling stories on a massive scale. The popularity of theme parks and the rate at which they are growing and expanding necessitates more research on them as the rhetorical effects they can have on an audience hold the possibility of creating a larger impact. While the hero's journey is a popular archetype, more scholarship should be provided on varying narrative structures used and seen throughout theme parks. The stories we tell each other are powerful and full of meaning. As research expands to incorporate more stories, more voices, and more interpretations in the field of rhetorical analysis, theme parks—especially The Wizarding World of Harry Potter—will remain integral to our understanding of how constructed narratives shape our experiences, identities, and collected imagination, demonstrating the profound impact of storytelling in both everyday life and extraordinary realms.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Althusser, Louis. *Lenin Philosophy and Other Essays*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1970.

Andrew, Scottie and Brian Ries. "Harry Potter Fans Battle Crowds and Lightning in 10-Hour Wait to Ride New Hagrid Roller Coaster." *CNN*, June 13, 2019. https://www.cnn.com/travel/article/harry-potter-ride-10-hour-wait-trnd/index.html.

Azaryahu, Maoz and Kenneth Foote. "Historical Space as Narrative Medium: On the Configuration of Spatial Narratives of Time at Historical Sites." *Geo Journal* 73, no. 3 (January 2008): 179-194.

Bares, Annie, Francesca Samuel, and Daniel Keefe. "Close Reading For Visualization Evaluation." *IEEE Computer Graphics and Applications* 40, no. 4 (2020): 84-95. https://doi.org/10.1109/MGC.2020.2993889.

Bevil, Dewayne. "Universal's Epic Move Could Prompt Disney to Up its Game, Experts Say." *Orlando Sentinel*, February 1, 2024. https://www.orlandosentinel.com/2024/02/01/universals-epic-move-could-prompt-disney-world-to-up-its-game-too-experts-say/.

Bizzocchi, Jim. "Ceremony of Innocence: A Case Study in the Emergent Poetics of Interactive Narrative." Master's Thesis, University of Michigan, 1968.

Bizzocchi, Jim and Joshua Tanenbaum. "Well Read: Applying Close Reading Techniques to Gameplay Experiences." In *Well Played 3.0: Video Games, Value and Meaning*, edited by Drew Davidson, 289-316. Pittsburgh: ECT Press, 2011.

Blumenthal, Veronica and Oystein Jensen. "Consumer Immersion in the Experiencescape of Managed Visitor Attractions: The Nature of the Immersion Process and the Role of Involvement." *Tourism Management Perspectives* 30, no. 1 (2019): 159-170. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2019.02.008.

Bogicevic, Vanja, Soobin Seo, Jay Kandampully, Stephanie Liu, and Nancy Rudd. "Virtual Reality Presence as a Preamble of Tourism Experience: The Role of Mental Imagery." *Tourism Management* 74, no. 1 (2019): 55-64. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2019.02.009.

Bostdorff, Denise M. "George W. Bush's Post-September 11 Rhetoric of Covenant Renewal: Upholding the Faith of the Greatest Generation." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 89 no. 4 (November 2003): 293-319. https://doi.org/10.80/0033563032000160963.

Botterill, Jackie. "The Fairest of Fairs: A History of Fairs, Amusement Parks, and Theme Parks." Master's Thesis, Simon Fraser University, 1993.

Brown, Emily and Paul Cairns. "A Grounded Investigation of Game Immersion." *Human Factors in Computing Systems* 4 (2004): 1297-1300. https://doi.org/10.1145/985921.986048.

Brummett, Barry. *Techniques of Close Reading*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2010.

Busch, Carsten, Florian Conrad, and Martin Steinicke. "Digital Games and the Hero's Journey in Management Workshops and Tertiary Education." *Electronic Journal of E-Learning* 11, no. 1 (2013): 3-15.

Butler, Judith. *The Psychic Life of Power*: *Theories in Subjection.* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997.

Cabanas, Edgar. "Experiencing Designs and Designing Experiences: Emotions and Theme Parks From a Symbolic Interactionist Perspective." *Journal of Destination Marketing and Management* 49, no. 1 (2017): 1-9.

Caldwell, David and Peter White. "That's Not a Narrative; This is a Narrative: NAPLAN and Pedagogies of Storytelling." *Australian Journal of Language and Literacy* 40, no. 1 (2017): 16-27. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF03651981.

Campbell, Joseph. *The Hero With a Thousand Faces.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1949.

Car, Antonella and Bernard Cova. "The Impact of Service Elements on the Artistic Experience: The Case of Classical Music Concerts." *International Journal of Arts Management* 7, no. 2 (2005): 39-54.

Charland, Maurice. "Constitutive Rhetoric: The Case of the Peuple Quebecois." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 73, no. 2 (1987): 133-150. https://doi.org/10.1080/00335638709383799.

Chen, Eve. "Universal Orlando Resort Reveals First Details on Highly Anticipated Epic Universe." *USA Today*, January 30, 2024. https://www.usatoday.com/story/travel/experience/theme-parks/2024/01/30/universal-epic-universe-orlando-details/72404801007/.

Cohen, Elizabeth L., Joe A. Wasserman, Lea M. Schlue, Christina Keely, and Angus Russell. "Seeing is Believing: The Role of Imagery Fluency in Narrative Persuasion Through a Graphic Novel." *Psychology of Popular Media Culture* 1, no. 2 (2020): 176-183. https://doi.org/10.1037/ppm0000218.

Rafael T da, Marcele de Carvalho, Pedro Ribeiro, and Antonio E. Nardi. "Virtual Reality Exposure Therapy for Fear of Driving: Analysis of Clinical Characteristics Physiological Response, and Sense of Presence." *Brazilian Journal of Psychiatry* 3, no. 1 (2018): 192-199. https://doi.org/10.1590/1516-4446-2017-2270.

Cuccinello, Hayley C. "How J.K. Rowling Earned $95 Million in AYear." *Forbes*, June 19, 2017. https://www.forbes.com/sites/hayleycuccinello/2017/06/19/how-j-k-rowling-earned-95-million-in-a-year/#1945a015d429.

Darbellay, Frédéric. "From Monomyth to Interdisciplinary Creative Polymathy." *Journal of Genius and Eminence* 2, no. 2 (Winter 2017): 44-53. https://doi.org/10.18536/jge.2017.02.2.2.05.

DeHart, W. Brady, Brent A. Kaplan, Derek A. Pope, Alexandra M. Mellis, and Warren K. Bickel. "The Experimental Tobacco Marketplace: Narrative Influence on Electronic Cigarette Substitution." *Experimental and Clinical Psychopharmacology* 27, no. 2 (2019): 115-124.

Duffy, Jason Thomas and Douglas A. Guiffrida. "The Heroic Supervisor: Using the Hero's Journey to Facilitate Development in Supervisors-in-Training." *The Clinical Supervisor* 33, no. 2 (2014): 144-162. https://doi.org/10.1080/07325223.2014.978587.

Dyer-Witheford, Nick and Greig de Peuter. *Games of Empire: Global Capitalism and Video Games*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013.

Endres, Danielle and Samanatha Senda-Cook. "Location Matters: The Rhetoric of Place in Protest." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 97, no. 3 (2011): 257-282. https://doi.org/10.1080/00335630.2011.585167.

Evans, Evan. "The history of London architectural styles." *Evan Evans Tours*, July 5, 2024. https://evanevanstours.com/blog/the-history-of-london-architectural-styles/.

Expat in UK. "Edinburgh – Beyond cobbled streets and Georgian architecture." *Medium,* August 29, 2021. https://medium.com/show-your-city/edinburgh-beyond-cobbled-streets-and-georgian-architecture-20865cbcc73e.

Fourie, Reinhardt. "Narrative Enmeshment" in Rockstar's *Red Dead Redemption 2*." *South African Journal for Communication Theory and Research* 49, no. 3-4 (2018): 1-22. https://doi.org/10.1080/02500167.2023.2279320.

Freitag, Florian. "Like Walking Into a Movie": Intermedial Relations Between Theme Parks and Movies. *The Journal of Popular Culture* 50, no. 4 (2017): 704-722. https://doi.org/10.1111/jpcu.12569.

Gallastegui, Samuel. "Between Immersion and Emersion: Orientating Digital Games Towards Virtual and Physical Spaces." IADIS *International Journal on Computer Science and Information Systems* 11, no. 1 (2016): 49-62.

Goodwin, Victoria. "Theme Park as Interface to the Wizarding (Story) World of Harry Potter." *Transformative Works and Cultures* 25, no. 1 (2017): 1-25. https://doi.org/10.3983/twc.2017.01078.

Grigorovici, Dan. "Persuasive Effects of Presence in Immersive Virtual Environments." In *Being There: Concepts, Effects, and Measurements of User Presence in Synthetic Environments*, edited by Giuseppe Riva, Fabrizio Davide and Wijnand Ijsselsteijn, 191-207. Amsterdam: IOS Press, 2003.

Halstrom, Per L. and Per Galle. "Design as a Co-Evolution of Problem, Solution and Audience." *Journal of Design Practice* 3, no. 4 (2015): 3.1-3.13. https://doi.org/10.14434/artifact.v3i4.12815.

Hansen, Ann Heidi and Lena Mossberg. "Tour Guides' Performance and Tourists' Immersion: Facilitating Consumer Immersion by Performing a Guide Plus Role." *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism* 17, no. 3 (2017): 259-278. https://doi.org/10.1080/15022250.2016.1162347.

Harris, Christina. "Out of This World: The Amusement Landscape and Our Escape to Elsewhere." PhD diss., University of Manitoba, 2002.

Hill, Jim. "Exclusive: A Detailed Look at Diagon Alley, the Highly Anticipated Expansion of the Wizarding World of Harry Potter at Universal Orlando Resort." *HuffPost*, May 8, 2013. https:// https://www.huffpost.com/entry/a-huffington-post-exclusi_b_3233177.

Hohenadel, Kristin. "What is Georgian Architecture?" *The Spruce*, December 8, 2023. https://www.thespruce.com/georgian-architecture-4846979.

Jasinski, James. "A Constitutive Framework for Rhetorical Historiography: Toward an Understanding of the Discursive (Re)constitution of 'Constitution' in *The Federalist Papers*." In *Doing Rhetorical History: Concepts and Cases*, edited by Kathleen J. Turner, 72-92. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama, 1998.

Jasinski, James, "C," in *Sourcebook on Rhetoric: Key Concepts in Contemporary Rhetorical Studies*, ed. Herbert W. Simmons (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2001): 107. "C," in *Sourcebook on Rhetoric: Key Concepts in Contemporary*

Rhetorical Studies, ed. Herbert W. Simmons (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2001): 107.

Jasinski, James and Jennifer R. Mercieca. "Analyzing Constitutive Rhetorics: The Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions and the 'Principles of '98.'" In *The Handbook of Rhetoric and Public Address*, edited by Shawn J. Parry-Giles and J. Michael Hogan,313-341. Oxford: Blackwell, 2010.

Jenkins, Henry, Jon McKenzie, Markku Eskelinen "Game Design as Narrative Architecture." In *First Person: New Media as Story, Performance and Game*, edited by Noah Wardrip-Fruin and Pat Harrigan, 118-130. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2004.

Kischuk, Kristin. "A Prototype for Narrative-Based Interactivity in Theme Parks." Master's Thesis, University of Central Florida, 2004.

Lang, James M. *Small Teaching: Everyday Lessons from the Science of Learning*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2016.

Langhof, Jan G. and Stefan Güldenberg. "Pirates, Ghosts and Customer Loyalty – Reviewing the Dark Ride Experience." *Tourism Management Perspectives* 31 (July 2019): 398-420. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2019.06.004.

Leonard, David and Christopher Palmeri. "Disney's Intergalactic Theme Park Quest to Beat Harry Potter." *Bloomberg,* April 19, 2017. https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2017-04-19/disney-s-intergalactic-theme-park-quest-to-beat-harry-potter.

Lynch, John. "'Prepare to Believe': The Creation Museum as Embodied Conversion Narrative." *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 16, no. 1 (April 2013): 1-28. https://doi.org/10.14321/rhetpublaffa.16.1.0001.

Martin, Hugo. "The Muggles are coming: Harry Potter Boosted Attendance at Universal Studios, Apps Show." *Los Angeles Times*, July 21, 2016. https://www.latimes.com/business/la-fi-theme-park-attendance-20160720-snap-story.html.

Milman, Ady and Asli D. A. Tasci. "Exploring the Experiential and Sociodemographic Drivers of Satisfaction and Loyalty in the Theme Park Context." *Journal of Destination Marketing and Management* 8 (2018): 385-395. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2017.06.005.

Moin, S. M. A., Sameer Hosany, and Justin O'Brien. "Storytelling in Destination Brands' Promotional Videos." *Tourism Management Perspectives* 34 (2020): 1-12. https://doi:10.1016/j.tmp.2020.100639.

Moss, Jess. "The Ultimate One-Day Guide to the Wizarding World of Harry Potter." *U.S. News*, November 10, 2017. https://travel.usnews.com/features/the-ultimate-one-day-guide-to-the-wizarding-world-of-harry-potter.

Niles, Robert. "The Wizarding World of Harry Potter – Diagon Alley Opens Officially at Universal Studios Florida." *Theme Park Insider*, July 8, 2014. https://www.themeparkinsider.com/ 201707.

Pezzullo, Phaedra C. "Performing Critical Interruptions: Stories, Rhetorical Invention, and the Environmental Justice Movement." *Western Journal of Communication* 65, no. 1 (Winter 2001): 1-25.

Pocock, Emma. "Universal Orlando Announce Details of New 'Harry Potter' Thrill Ride." *Forbes,* February 21, 2019. https://www.forbes.com/sites/emmapocock/2019/02/21/universal-orlando-announce-details-of-new-harry-potter-thrill-ride/#4e8eb78f359c.

Putnam, Angela L. and Kristen L. Cole. "All Hail DNA: The Constitutive Rhetoric of AncestryDNA Advertising." *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 37, no. 3 (August 2020): 207-220. https://doi.org/ 10.1080/15295036.2020.1767796.

Quintero-Johnson, Jessie M. and Angeline Sangalang. "Testing the Explanatory Power of Two Measure of Narrative Involvement: An Investigation of the Influence of Transportation and Narrative Engagement on the Process of Narrative Persuasion." *Media Psychology* 20, no. 1 (2017): 144-173. https://doi.org/10.1080/152132269.2016.1160788.

Ransom, John Crowe. "Criticism, Inc." *Virginia Quarterly Review* 13 (1937): 586-602.

Robbins, Ruth Anne. "Harry Potter, Ruby Slippers, and Merlin: Telling the Client's Story Using the Characters and Paradigm of the Archetypal Hero's Journey." *Seattle University Law Review* 29, no. 4 (Summer 2006): 767-804. https://doi.org/10.7282/T3668GG4.

Rowling, J. K. *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone.* London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 1997.

Rowling, J. K. "PotterCast 131: Rowling Along." *PotterCast*, website, 33:20. http://www.the-leaky-cauldron.org/2007/12/24/ pottercast-131-rowling-along/.

Ryan, Marie-Laure. "Beyond Myth and Metaphor: Narrative in Digital Media." *Poetics Today 23*, no. 4 (2002): 581-609. https://doi.org/10.1215/03335372-23-4-581.

Saunders, John H. "Public Memory Relics: The Rhetorics of Personal and Public Collections of Mundane Items Imbued with Public Memory." *Journal of Contemporary Rhetoric* 12, no. 3 (2022): 171-177.

Schur, David. "An Introduction to Close Reading." *Harvard University Press* no. 2 (1998).

Sisson and Diana Sisson, "The Renaissance of Close Reading: A Review of Historical and Contemporary Perspectives, *California Reader* 47, no. 4 (2018): 8.

Sheehan, Helen and Stewart Riddle. "The Hero's Journey: Understanding the Experience and Motivation on International Secondary Students." *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education* 43, no. 6 (December 2022): 971-984. https://doi.org/10.1080/01596306.2021.1947190.

Simmons, Herbert, Joanne Morreal, Bruce E. Gronbeck. *Persuasion in Society*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2001.

Smith, Barbara Hernstein. "What Was 'Close Reading'? A Century of Method in Literary Studies." *The Minnesota Review* 87 (2016): 57-75.

Smith, Marlaine C. "Health, Healing, and the Myth of the Hero Journey." *Advances in Nursing Science* 24, no. 4 (2002): 1-13.

Sonnenburg, Stephan. "From Zero to Hero: A Narrative Amplification of Design Thinking." *Journal of Genius and Eminence* 2, no. 2 (2017): 105-115. https://doi.org/10.18536/jge.2017.02.2.2.11.

Sonnenburg, Stephan and Mark Runco. "Pathways to the Hero's Journey: A Tribute to Joseph Campbell and the 30th Anniversary of His Death." *Journal of Genius and Eminence* 2, no. 2 (2017): 1-8.

Stamp, Elizabeth. "Behind the Scenes of the Wizarding World of Harry Potter." *Architectural Digest,* April 4, 2016. https://www.architecturaldigest.com/story/wizarding-world-of-harry-potter-design.

Sturcke, James. "Harry Potter Theme Park to Open in Florida." *The Guardian,* May 31, 2007. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2007/may/31/film.harrypotter.

Tüzün, Hakan, Hatice Gökçe Bilgiç, and Sevil Yaşae Elçi. "The Effects of 3D Multi-User Virtual Environments on Collaborative Learning and Social Presence." *International Electronic Journal of Elementary Education* 11, no. 3 (2019): 221-231.

Vogler, Christopher. "Joseph Campbell Goes to the Movies: The Influence of the Hero's Journey in Film Narrative." *Journal of Genius and Eminence* 2, no. 2 (2017): 9-23. https://doi.org/10.18536/jge.2017.02.2.2.02.

Wander, Phillip. "The Third Persona: An Ideological Turn in Rhetorical Theory." *Central States Speech Journal* 35, no. 4 (Winter 1984): 197-216. https://doi.org/10.1080/10510978409368190.

Waysdorf, Abby and Stijn Reijnders. "Immersion, Authenticity, and the Theme Park as a Social Space: Experiencing the Wizarding World of Harry Potter." *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 21, no. 2 (2018): 173-188.

Wei, Wei, Ruoxi Qi, and Lu Zhang. "Effects of Virtual Reality on Theme Park Visitor's Experience and Behaviors: A Presence Perspective." *Tourism Management* 71, no. 1 (2019): 282-293. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2018.10.024.

Wells, Nick and Mark Fahey. "Harry Potter and the $25 Billion Franchise." *CNBC,* October 13, 2016. https://www.cnbc.com/2016/10/13/harry-potter-and-the-25-billion-franchise.html.

Whitten, Sarah. "10 Hour Wait: New $300 Million Harry Potter Coaster Opens at Universal in Orlando to Massive Crowds." *CNBC*, June 13, 2019. https://www.cnbc.com/2019/06/13/hours-long-wait-for-harry-potter-coaster-at-universal-in-orlando.html.

Williams, Clive. "The Hero's Journey: A Creative Act. *Journal of Genius and Eminence* 2, no 2, 2017: 69-77. http://dx.doi.org/10.18536/jge.2017.02.2.2.07

Williams, Kevin. "The Future of the American Amusement Park in a Disney, Universal Dominated World of Thrills." *CNBC,* January 27, 2024. https://www.cnbc.com/2024/01/27/six-flags-future-in-a-disney-universal-dominated-theme-park-world.html.

Willingham, David. *Why Don't Students Like School? A Cognitive Scientist Answers Questions About How the Mind Works and What it Means for the Classroom.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2014.