

CORPUS LINGUISTICS, SYSTEMIC FUNCTIONAL  
GRAMMAR AND LITERARY MEANING: A CRITICAL  
ANALYSIS OF *HARRY POTTER AND THE PHILOSOPHER'S  
STONE*

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**Abstract**

The research reported in this paper has two aims. First, to show how corpus linguistics, using word frequency and concordance data, which is then analysed according to transitivity systems of systemic functional grammar (SFG), can be useful to the enterprise of critical linguistics. Second, to investigate to what extent this critical corpus linguistics (CCL) gives a valid representation of the meanings and ideologies of a literary text. The hypothesis tested is that semiotic models of communication, in this case of popular children's literature, with their emphasis on the encoding and decoding of meanings, lend themselves to a corpus linguistics approach. But that, in fact, these mutually reinforcing approaches (SFG and CCL) with their reliance on what is encoded as text cannot entirely succeed in accounting for how literature, in particular, is understood and interpreted, and how ideology works within it and behind it. For a richer critical discourse analysis we need a pragmatic account, for example an analysis of presupposition, inference and propositional attitude. The issues here will be discussed in the light of recent debate between Michael Stubbs and

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Henry Widdowson on the strengths and limitations of corpus linguistics in critical discourse analysis.

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*Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* has had enormous influence as a book and then as a film, and is therefore very important in constructing and reinforcing ideologies of education, gender, and nature. For this reason it has been chosen as a case study on the prospects for and limits of critical corpus linguistics.

The enterprise of critical discourse analysis is an attempt to discover the ideology in and behind texts. Some of the ideological representations may be semantically encoded in the text, and analysis which takes this approach I call critical linguistics (Fowler, Hodge, Kress & Trew, 1979; Fowler, 1991 etc.). However, ideology may be just as prevalent pragmatically, behind the text in the gaps between the lines, as for example when ideologically fraught assumptions are invoked in the process of implicature, or when the speaker/writer has a complex propositional attitude to what is expressed. Critical discourse analysis, it seems to me, has to embrace both semantic encoding and pragmatic inference/propositional attitude (Fairclough, 1989).

Corpus linguistic analysis obviously aligns itself with the former of these approaches, since it uses techniques such as the calculation of word frequencies and concordancing to investigate the surface forms of the text, and manipulates these forms in a relatively decontextualised way, thereby precluding inferencing based on supplying information from elsewhere in the text. The enormous power of corpus linguistic techniques has the potential to skew critical discourse analysis in the direction of critical linguistics.

This paper falls into two halves. In Part A I use a critical linguistic approach, based on systemic functional lexico-grammatical analysis, to investigate how word frequency data and concordancing can help reveal the ideologies represented in the text. In Part B I briefly argue

that such an analysis gives only a partial view, and that, especially in the case of literature, the straightforward move from forms to meanings inherent in the semantic critical linguistics approach is problematised by factors such as propositional attitude.

In critical analysis of this kind the ideological perspectives that one takes may be of three kinds. First, one can take a deductive approach based on external ideologies, for example interrogating the text for racist or sexist ideologies. Second, one could look at the internal ideological preoccupations that are apparent from a reading of the text, for example the ideology of educational competitiveness. Thirdly, one could take a more inductive approach, and keeping “an open mind” look carefully at concordance and word frequency data to attempt to find hidden ideologies which may not be apparent from reading the text, for example the power of time and the obsession with periods of time.

In Part A I demonstrate these three approaches in my analysis of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone*. This text was chosen since, because of its phenomenal popularity, it is bound to have ideological effects on its young readers, through cultural reproduction or construction. Just exactly what kind of a world is constructed, validated and celebrated by this novel would seem to be a vital enterprise of cultural analysis.

## **Part A**

I shall be using systemic functional linguistics in Part A. Systemic functional grammar is especially useful as a tool for critical linguistics and the analysis of representational functions of discourse because, unlike formalist approaches to syntax, it attempts a more or less successful fusion of semantics with syntax (somewhat similar to case grammar). Michael Halliday, the prime mover behind this grammar, has always put an emphasis on semiotics, the code of language, and has distanced himself from approaches that make pragmatics a separate field of linguistics divorced from lexico-grammar (Halliday, 1994).

For the benefit of readers who may be unfamiliar with it I will sketch in quickly a summary of Halliday's transitivity framework (Halliday, 1994). Systems of transitivity encode the representational or experiential meanings of the clause, as follows. Any clause can be divided into

- A lexical verb—which refers to one of 5 Process types
- Subject and Object (s)/Complements realized by Noun Phrases—which, in active voice, represent the Participants corresponding to the Process referred to in the verb
- Adverbials or Adjuncts representing Circumstances

The five process types are:

- Existential: representing what exists in the world  
 Relational: representing the state of the things which exist and what relations they have to each other  
 Material: representing what is happening in the world, what actions and events are going on  
 Mental: representing how people are perceiving, feeling and thinking  
 Behavioural: representing behaving as a result of an inner process or state  
 Verbal: representing how people are communicating or expressing their perceptions, feelings and thoughts.

Different Processes will have correspondingly different participants, and those of which are relevant to the following analysis are given in Table 1.

Existential:	Existent
<i>There are</i>	<i>six moons of Uranus</i>

Relational:	Token	Value		
	(Carrier)	(Attribute)		
	<i>John</i>	<i>is</i>	<i>a stupid politician</i>	
	(Possessor)	(Possession)		
	<i>John</i>	<i>has</i>	<i>a guitar</i>	
Material:	Actor	Goal	Circumstance	
	<i>John</i>	<i>killed</i>	<i>an elephant</i>	<i>[yesterday]</i>
	Actor	Beneficiary	Goal	
	<i>John</i>	<i>gave</i>	<i>Mary</i>	<i>the tusks</i>
	Actor	Range		
	<i>John</i>	<i>climbed</i>	<i>the mountain</i>	
Behavioural:	Behaver			
	<i>John</i>	<i>shouted</i>		
Mental:	Sensor	Phenomenon		
	<i>John</i>	<i>noticed</i>	<i>the bird</i>	
Verbal:	Sayer	Verbiage		
	<i>John</i>	<i>said</i>	<i>Go away"</i>	

Table 1: Process types in Hallidayan Transitivity Analysis

### 1. A deductive approach using external ideologies.

The first external ideological perspective which I have chosen to employ is that of environmentalism or anti-speciesism. Research into the way in which nature is represented in other texts (Goatly, 2000; Goatly, 2002) has led me to consider its representation in this Harry Potter novel, and the latent effect this might have on the young minds that read it.

In the transitivity analysis in this article I adopted the following methodology. I used the Wordsmith software to compile a word

frequency list; I then selected the word categories, for example types of animals and plants, which were mentioned four times or more. I then accessed concordance lines for these categories and investigated the most common patterns in which the words (e.g. *owls*, *trees*) featured as participants or circumstances.

#### A) *Animals*:

**Owls** feature as one of the three animals that students are allowed to keep and as the postal service. They are consciously used, if not exploited, by the witches/wizards. Concordance lines for owls/Hedwig (Harry Potter's owl) do represent them as flying:

- on the first morning, when about a hundred owls had suddenly **streamed** into
- trate on drills that morning. He didn't see the owls **swooping** past in broad
- or slammed in the next street, nor when two owls **swooped** overhead. In fact, it
- off the back of his turban. The few owls that managed to **battle their way** thro
- is high chair. None of them noticed a large tawny owl **flutter** past the window.
- his armchair. Shooting stars all over Britain? Owls **flying** by daylight?
- treet did; they pointed and gazed open-mouthed as owl after owl **sped** overhead.
- they pointed and gazed open-mouthed as owl after owl **sped** overhead. Most of
- wspaper on top of Hagrid, who didn't wake up. The owl then **fluttered** on to the
- e anything to do with work, though. He watched an owl **flutter** towards the
- e lay on his bed reading late into the night, Hedwig **swooping** in and out of

All these examples have owls as Actors in intransitive material process clauses, that is without Goals—not powerful enough to affect another participant. But in the next group they are Actors in transitive clauses with Goals, which confers more power on them:

- this large parcel and was amazed when the owls **soared** down and **dropped it** rights jerked it open. The owl **swooped** in and **dropped the newspaper** on top

The main purpose of all this flying is delivering post (the Goal): this is the major contribution they make to the action of the book.

- the Slytherin table. A barn owl **brought Neville a small package** from his

- of course. Malfoy's eagle owl was always **bringing him packages of sweets**

- Then, one breakfast time, Hedwig **brought Harry another note** from H

- fluttered out of the way when another owl **dropped a letter** on top of the parcel

- **a long thin package carried** by six large screech owls. Harry was just as

- packages on to their laps. Hedwig hadn't **brought Harry anything** so f

- in to Hoover any more, because Hedwig kept **bringing back dead mice**. Eve

However, the force activating the owls' flight and delivery of messages are the human characters who send them. In the following clauses owls are the Goals of the clauses with humans as Actors:

- go straight to the owlery and **send** Hedwig to Dumbledore, we need him. I mi mother and father. '**Sent** owls off ter all yer parents' old school friend

- haven't got time to **send Charlie** another owl and this could be our only chance

- t follow. Go straight to the owlery and **send** Hedwig to Dumbledore, right?'

- away, won't you?' said Hermione. 'And **send me** an owl if you find anything.'

- right, dear, well, have a good term - **send me** an owl when you get there.' She o cry. 'Don't, Ginny, **we'll send you** loads of owls.' 'We'll send you a lems with the Dursleys, **send me a letter with** yer owl, she'll know where to find me

- ummer,' said Ron, 'both of you - **I'll send you** an owl.' 'Thanks,' said Harry.

- you later' on the back of the note and **sent** Hedwig off again. It was lucky 'You got there? **You got** Hermione's owl?' 'We must have crossed in mid-air.

- yourselves. If **I get** one more owl telling me you've - you've blown up a toilet
- she said coldly '**He received** an urgent owl from the Ministry of Magic and flew

They are also Goals (of a particular kind called "Beneficiaries") when humans pay them for their work:

- 'Hagrid!' said Harry loudly. 'There's an owl -' '**Pay him,**' Hagrid grunted into
- Hagrid rolled up **the note, gave it to** the owl, which clamped it in its beak,

In other cases owls figure as Goals because they have become commodified—bought, kept and treated as the students' possessions:

- s anything wrong with **not being able to afford** an owl. After all, he'd never
- they make me sneeze. **I'll get yer** an owl. All the kids want owls, they're dead,
- hardly ever wakes up. **Percy got** an owl from my dad for being made a Prefect,
- ure he had everything he needed, saw that Hedwig **was shut** safely in her cage
- at the nerve of Harry, **carrying** an owl in a cage in a station full of ordinary
- t another pocket inside his overcoat **he pulled** an owl - a real, live, rather
- carried **a large cage which held** a beautiful snowy owl, fast asleep with her
- rass scales. 1 **Students may also bring** an owl OR a cat OR a toad

Their treatment as a commodity also accounts for owls' representation as Possessions in Relational clauses, or Phenomena of affective Mental process:

- vnk like Harry's in front of him - and **they had** an owl. Heart hammering, Harry
- I'll get yer an owl. **All the kids want** owls, they're dead useful carry yer post

This seems to conform to a similar pattern I noticed in the BBC World Service (Goatly, 2002) of animals being most mentioned or significant when they are of use to humans— an anthropocentric attitude.

**Cats** are significant because early on in the novel Professor McGonagall is disguised as one. The cat has not entirely lost its human characteristics:

- ticed the first sign of something peculiar - a cat **reading a map**. For a second,  
- that said Privet Drive - no, looking at the sign, cats **couldn't read maps** or

Therefore it becomes the object of attention for Mr Dursley (and later Dumbledore), that is a Phenomenon with **him** as Sensor:

- it didn't improve his mood - was the tabby cat **he'd spotted** that morning. It  
- e street. For some reason, **the sight of the cat seemed to amuse him**. He  
- hed, because **he looked up** suddenly **at** the cat, which was still staring at him  
- the corner and up the road, **he watched** the cat in his mirror. It was now  
- where he sat down on the wall next to the cat. **He didn't look at** it, but after  
- light. **Mr Dursley** blinked and **stared at** the cat. It stared back. As Mr Dursley  
- sley gave himself a little shake and **put the cat out of his mind**. As he drove  
- ed. 'My dear Professor, **I've never seen** a cat sit so stiffly.' 'You'd be

Besides being a Phenomenon the cat is also a Senser/Behaver

- down into the front garden. The cat was still there. It **was staring** down Priv  
- tance, which were the eyes of the cat **watching him**. If anyone looked out of t  
- at all. A man appeared on **the corner** the cat **had been watching**, appeared so  
- light. Mr Dursley blinked and stared at the cat. It **stared** back. As Mr Dursley

- ticed the first sign of something peculiar - a cat **reading a map**. For a second,
- Privet Drive - no, looking at the sign, cats **couldn't read maps or signs**. Mr

Otherwise it is an Actor in intransitive clauses, not having much effect on the other characters or the world around it:

- ed. 'My dear Professor, I've never seen a cat **sit** so stiffly.' 'You'd be
- ad around to look again. There was a tabby cat **standing** on the corner of Privet
- eyes. 'Shoo!' said Mr Dursley loudly. The cat **didn't move**. It just gave him
- just popped out of the ground. The cat's tail **twitched** and its eyes **narrowed**.
- and he could make out a tabby cat **slinking** around the corner at the other
- In fact, it was nearly midnight before the cat **moved** at all. A man appeared

The cat would be an effective disguise, this analysis suggests, were it not for the fact that it continues to read maps. The implication is that animals are less significant than humans/witches and therefore more likely to be ignored. Nor, when acting in character, do they make much significant difference to the world.

Being turned into an animal can also be viewed as a punishment. The best example is when Dudley Dursley is turned into a **pig** by Hagrid:

- work anyway. Meant ter **turn him into** a pig, but I suppose he was so much like
- arry often said that **Dudley looked like** a pig in a wig. Harry put the plates
- ed his back on them, **Harry saw** a curly pig's tail poking through a hole in his
- g, but I suppose **he was so much like** a pig anyway there wasn't much left ter Dn

Apart from [X] disguise, **cats** and **rats**, especially the caretaker's cat **Mrs Norris**, and Ron's rat **Scabbers**, tend to be viewed negatively. As Actors in transitive material process clauses they are destructive, violent, or a threat to health:

- Goyle let out a horrible yell. Scabbers the rat **was hanging off his finger**,
- a large banner on one of the sheets Scabbers **had ruined**. It said Potter for
- through the hangings. 'Get off, Scabbers! He's **chewing my sheets**.' Harr
- **they were going to get caught by** Filch or Mrs Norris, and Harry felt he was
- years ago, yeh'd be laughed at - an' I don' like cats, they **make me sneeze**.

As Actors in intransitive clauses they are sinister:

- foot of the first set of stairs, they spotted Mrs Norris **skulking** near the top.
- Perhaps they thought there were more rats **lurking** among the sweets, or perha

So, as far as being Goals is concerned, they are viewed as justifiable potential victims:

- 'An' as fer that cat, Mrs Norris, **I'd like ter introduce** her to Fang some
- was the dearest ambition of many **to give** Mrs Norris **a good kick**. And then,
- aisies, butter mellow, **Turn** this stupid, fat rat **yellow**.' He waved his

The adjectives associated with them are also negative:

- Filch owned a cat called Mrs Norris, a **scrawny**, dust-coloured creature wit
- a grey rat, which was asleep. 'His name's Scabbers and he's **useless**, he
- Piers was **a scrawny boy with a face like** a rat. He was usually the one who held
- robes, Charlie's old wand and Percy's **old** rat. Ron reached inside his jacket

**Dogs** are viewed not only negatively, but also as a threat, especially the three-headed dog **Fluffy** who, as guardian of the philosopher's stone, has the participant role of Actor in transitive clauses:

- and Ron had finished. 'The dog **must be guarding Flamel's Philosopher's stone**
- impressively. 'And we know **what** that dog's **guarding**, it's a Philosopher's St-"
- nk about as he climbed back into bed. The dog **was guarding something** ... What
- y more. Who cared **what the three-headed dog was guarding?** What did it matter

Fluffy is also able to attack:

- 'He tried to get past that three-headed dog at Hallowe'en. It **bit him**. We think

He fulfills his role as a guard dog by being a threatening Actor in intransitive material process clauses, or nominalizations of them :

- flute over. In the few seconds' silence, the dog **growled and twitched**, but the
- press their cars to the door to cheek that Fluffy **was still growling** inside.
- met their ears. All three of the dog's noses **sniffed** madly in their direction
- roop. Harry hardly drew breath. Slowly, the dog's **growls ceased** -it tottered on
- ic stopped. **There was a loud bark from** the dog, but Hermione had already

As a Phenomenon he is repulsive:

- t towards the trapdoor. **They could feel the** dog's hot, smelly breaths

Less threatening is, occasionally, **Fang**, Hagrid's pet boarhound:

- There's **nothing in the Forest that'll hurt yeh if yer with me or Fang,**' said licking his ears. Like Hagrid, Fang was clearly **not as fierce** as he looked.
- since last night at least.' '**I want** Fang,' said Malfoy quickly, looking at

To sum up, in the general pattern of representation, animals are used and exploited (owls), regarded as insignificant relative to humans (cats) or, negatively, as inferior (pigs) and as a destructive or violent threat (rats, dogs).

The one exception is the Brazilian boa constrictor that Harry meets at the zoo. Harry has a special gift of communication with snakes, and this snake is humanized, thereby achieving significance. Even here animals are not significant in their own right, only when having qualities of humans. The communication makes this snake a Sayer in Verbal processes:

- never been to Brazil?' As the snake **shook its head**, a deafening shout be
- anyway?' Harry asked. The snake **jabbed its tail** at a little sign next
- 'It must be really annoying.' The snake **nodded vigorously**. 'Where do you c
- at the snake and winked, too. The snake **jerked its head** towards Uncle Vernon

### *B) Plants*

Plants generally function as marginal, that is are referred to by the noun phrases in Circumstantial Adjuncts. This is particularly true of **grass**:

- sighed happily, stretching out **on the grass**. 'You could look more cheerfu
- so sweet. He walked **over the damp grass**, reliving the last hour in his he
- ming out at last **on to smooth, damp grass** right in the shadow of the cas
- k and Neville lay, face down, **on the grass** in a heap. His broomstick wa
- and snatching something **out of the grass**. 'It's that stupid thing Longbott
- ight, and he toppled gently **on to the grass** with the Remembrall clutched N

And it is also true of **trees**:

- n we'll be able ter - GET **BEHIND THAT TREE!**' Hagrid seized Harry and Herm
- d loudly and Harry nearly fell **out of the tree**. He steadied himself in time to land noiselessly **in a towering beech tree**. He climbed carefully along one o

- es many secrets.' A movement **in the trees behind Ronan** made Hagrid raise  
- There were splashes **on the roots of a tree**, as though the poor creature had b  
- iling them **over the branches of the new tree**. 'The library?' said Hagrid,  
- best he could, they plunged off **into the trees**, leaving Ronan and Bane behind t  
- urt before. They walked **past a mossy tree-stump**. Harry could hear run- ning  
- ongbottom to collect - how about - **up a tree?**' 'Give it here!' Harry yelled,  
- an and Bane came bursting **through the trees**, their flanks heaving and sweaty.  
- his huge hairy face **out from behind the tree**. 'Malfoy was insultin' his '  
- bbe and Goyle pushed roughly **past the tree**, scatter- ing needles everywhere  
- stion. They made their way **through the trees** in silence for so long that Harry  
- d down to the lake and flopped **under a tree**. The Weasley twins and Lee Jorda

**Trees**, however, are also exploited and used for human cultural purposes, as with Christmas trees, which are Goals:

- he end of Potions, **they found** a large fir tree blocking the corridor ahead. Two  
- mas decorations. 'Ah, **Hagrid**, the last tree - **put** it in the far corner, would  
- n and **Hermione followed Hagrid and his tree** off to the Great Hall, where Profes

### Or intransitive Actors

- o fewer than twelve towering Christmas trees **stood** around the room, some sp

But trees in their natural state are, like animals, also regarded negatively, usually as impediments to vision, and therefore threats, either when they are parts of Circumstances:

- ng **through a particularly dense patch of trees**, however, when Firenze suddenly

- they walked on **through the dense, dark trees**. Harry kept looking nervously over
- that disappeared **into the thick black trees**. A light breeze lifted their hair as if
- like a coconut. It had short legs thick **as tree trunks** with flat, horny feet. The

Actors:

- shoulders at Ronan and Bane until the trees **blocked their view**. 'Never,' said
- rounds to the Forbidden Forest, whose trees **were swaying** darkly in the distance

or Tokens:

- in the Forest at a run. He followed. The trees **were so thick he couldn't see** where
- almost impossible to follow because the trees **were so thick**. Harry thought the

Notice the tendency for trees to collocate with *dark* and *thick*, with their sinister overtones of evil. In fact the trees in question are those in the Forbidden Forest, almost always seen as a dangerous sinister place, whether as a Token:

- 'n' find yeh -so, be careful-let's go.' The Forest **was black and silent**. A 'You had better get back to Hagrid. The Forest **is not safe** at this time -
- we're not allowed to go somewhere - the forest's **full of dangerous beasts**,

or Actor:

- a while to answer. At last, he said, 'The Forest **hides many secrets**.' A movement

or Goal as a place to avoid:

- 'First-years should note that the forest in the grounds **is forbidden to all**
- the Potter boy. **The quicker he leaves** this Forest, the **better**.' 'What have you

or a Circumstance of location where evil lurks:

- turned to Hagrid. **'I'm not going in that Forest,'** he said, and Harry was
- **They say he met vampires in the** Black Forest and there was a nasty bit o' trou
- **'There's nothin' that lives in the Forest that'll hurt yeh if yer with me or F**
- **'There's summat bad loose** in this Forest. This is Harry Potter ad Hermion
- mort ... and **Voldemort's waiting in** the Forest ... and all this time we thought
- et myself against **what is lurking in** this Forest, Bane, yes, with humans

Finally, on their way to find the philosopher's stone, Harry, Hermione and Ron encounter a particularly hostile plant, though they are slow to recognize its hostility:

- his first words. **'Dunno, sort of plant thing.** I suppose **it's here** to break t
- the school,' she said. **'Lucky this plant thing's here,** really,' said Ron.

As an Actor it is particularly powerful and nasty:

- e had managed to free herself before the plant **got a firm grip** on her. Now she
- rled Ron, leaning back, trying to stop the plant **curling** around his neck.
- moment she had landed, the plant **had started to twist snake-like tendrils**
- against it, the tighter and faster the plant **wound** around them. **'Stop moving**

They try, unsuccessfully, to fight it, to be Actors with the plant as Goal:

- as the two boys **fought to pull the** plant off them, but the more they strained

On the basis of these most frequent lexical items referring to plants we might generalize that, as with animals, they are depicted as either insignificant (a Circumstance as part of the environment in which things happen), or sinister and hostile.

There are a couple of objections to my analysis, in that I have omitted discussion of magical creatures, like Hippogriffs, and the herbs used in herbology classes. The reason for the first omission was that I do not regard magical creatures as naturally occurring objects in the real world as we know it. And in the second case herbs were not mentioned four or more times in the word frequency list, which was my criterion for analysis. But let's discuss them here, anyway.

Magical creatures tend to be, like owls, less sinister and less threatening. Their magical character makes them objects of great attention and fascination. The point seems to be that animals are represented as doing something significant, only if they are magical. So the existence of magical animals does nothing to undermine the pattern that, unless exploitable like owls, or behaving like humans, ordinary animals are not worth attention.

Plants are treasured and used for magic purposes in herbology classes. But like animals they are only valued if they can have magic results and are exploitable. Photosynthesis would not be an interesting object of study in Hogwarts.

*c) Women and men*

This is a very male children's book. Two of the three main student characters are male, Ron and Harry, and the student villain Malfoy and his mates, Goyle and Crabbe are all male. **He** occurs 1525 times, and **she** only 229 times!

Only scratching the surface of this question, for which there is too much data to analyse, I simply looked at the degree to which women are stereotypically associated with the expression of emotion. The lexical items **cry**, **tears**, **scream** and **shriek**, referring to Behavioural processes, occur disproportionately more with females than with men, bearing in mind that 6 to 7 times as many clauses feature males as females. Look at the lines for crying:

- They were all really pleased. **Gran** was crying, she was so happy. And you shog her friend Lavender that **Hermione** was

crying in the girls' toilets and wanted hape, but then he noticed that **she** was crying; smiling, but crying at the same

- **ther voices**, maybe in Harry's own head, crying, 'Harry! Harry!' He felt
- noticed that **she** was crying; smiling, but crying at the same time. The tall,
- **their sister**, half laughing, half crying, running to keep up with the train
- and **Hagrid** was so shocked, **he** stopped crying. 'I've met him and I'm calling him

Harry himself has learnt not to cry:

- In fact, **he wasn't** really crying, it had been years since he'd really cried

Notice that 50% of **tears** are female, and the others belong to Hagrid, as in the first 3 examples below: He, (along with Neville who sobs quite a lot), is the most lachrymose of the male characters, conforming to the stereotype of the gentle maudlin giant:

- took one look at him and burst into tears. 'It's-all-my-ruddy-fault!' **he** sobbed,
- **Hagrid** shaking with grief and remorse, great tears leaking down into his beard.
- e bar, rushed towards Harry and seized his hand, tears in his eyes. 'Welcome
- **Aunt Petunia** burst into tears and said she couldn't believe it was her Ickl
- her face - and was startled to see that **she** was in tears. 'I think she heard
- rms; Harry strongly suspected **she** had burst into tears. Gryffindors up and down

Turning to **shriek** and **scream** as Behavioural processes, Hermione seems the most frequent Behavior/Actor, closely followed by Dudley and Voldemort

- rm and he crashed to the floor - **Hermione** screamed but stayed on her square - t
- scat to help. 'Come on, Harry!' **Hermione** screamed, leaping on to her scat to

- hat was under Quirrell's turban, **Hermione** screamed out loud. 'So the Stone's We've won! Gryffindor are in the lead!' shrieked **Hermione**, dancing up and do  
- as rather quiet. **Dudley** was in shock. **He**'d screamed, whacked his father with  
- o let them know he was there, and **Dudley** screamed and ran from the room. 'Er -  
- ng towards the flame door, but **Voldemort** screamed, 'SEIZE HIM!' and, next efore his eyes. 'Seize him! SEIZE HIM!' shrieked **Voldemort** again and Quirrell lu  
- on as tight as he could. **Quirrell** screamed and tried to throw Harry off- the  
- **the hat** had barely touched his head when **it** screamed, 'SLYTHERIN!' Malfoy went  
- 'You knew I'm a - a wizard?' 'Knew!' shrieked **Aunt Petunia** suddenly. 'Knew! N

Notice that Harry doesn't scream, any more than he cries.

- on the spot. **Harry** would have screamed, but he couldn't make a sound.

Looking at this small selection of the data we can see crying is disproportionately ascribed to females who also display more frequent tendencies to scream and shriek.

## **2. Overt ideologies and ideological categories of the text**

To some extent the author may be aware of the cultural pitfalls of political incorrectness and attempt to overtly counter them in the text, for example the composition of the Gryffindor's Quidditch team is roughly equal male and female. However, I don't suppose anti-speciesism has emerged sufficiently as an ideology to have affected J K Rowling's consciousness in terms of political correctness.

We turn now to the more obvious ideological positions that can easily be detected in the text. Various representational preoccupations are apparent on reading the book, but concordancing techniques can make us much more aware of these obsessions and overwordings. I

look at four areas: rules and conventions; competition; food and architecture.

*A) Rules and Conventions*

One of the main preoccupations of the book is the attitude to rules and conventions. Mr Dursley is damned for his obsession with the normal and conventional. He loves the ordinary and hates the weird and unpredictable. Many of the concordance lines for **normal**, **ordinary** and **weirdo** represent his fictional point of view:

- Mrs Dursley had had a nice, **normal** day. She told him over dinner all
- Mr Dursley, however, had a perfectly **normal**, owl-free morning. He yelled at five
- were proud to say that they were perfectly **normal**, thank you very much. They
- word ('Shan't!'). Mr Dursley tried to act **normally**. When Dudley had been put to
- shocked and angry. After all, they **normally** pretended she didn't have a sister
- back and sat down as though this was as **normal** as talking on the telephone.
- as anyone else, he kept pointing at perfectly **ordinary** things like parking
- This was just an ordinary street full of **ordinary** people. Could there really be carrying an owl in a cage in a station full of **ordinary** people. Behind him
- wheel and his eyes fell on a huddle of these **weirdos** standing quite close by.
- your parents, well, they were **weirdos**, no denying it, and the world's better

But, paradoxically, Hogwarts, the school, too is a place obsessed with rules, as though the existence of powerful forces necessitates regulation for their control and for protection against them. Below we see how **rules** take the participant role of Goal:

- Hermione had become a bit more relaxed about **breaking** rules since Harry and Ron
- it made no difference - Harry hadn't **broken** any rules and Lee Jordan was still

- 'I don't think you should be **breaking** any more rules! And you were the one who  
- suppose you think that's a reward for **breaking** rules?' came an angry voice from  
- was pushing his luck, **breaking** another school rule today. On the other hand,  
- ch's. She patrolled the corridors alone. **Break** a rule in front of her, put just  
- 'I bet you'll think twice about **breaking** a school rule again, won't you, eh?'

- lly are a natural. I'm just going to **teach** you the rules this evening, then  
- side. 'They oughta **change** the rules, Flint coulda knocked Harry outta the air.'  
- and see if we can't **bend** the first-year rule. Heaven knows, we need a better  
- five points from Gryffindor.' 'He's just **made** that rule **up**,' Harry muttered

Most of these centre on the concern about **breaking** or not breaking the school rules. This obsession, indeed, overwording, can be seen in the use of modals of obligation (prohibition) **must** and **should**:

- coming to visit me next week. Trouble is, they **mustn't** be seen carrying an  
- Ron muttered.'-and you **mustn't** go wandering around the school at night  
- y, Ron, we've got half an hour before lunch, we **should** be in the library.'  
- a beautiful and terrible thing, and **should** ... be treated with great caution.  
- there, squinting at them. '**Should** call Filch, I should, if something's a-cr  
- said Neville. 'I don't think you **should** be breaking any more rules! And you w  
- Please note that all pupils' clothes **should** carry name tags Set Books All  
- one interested in playing for their house teams **should** contact Madam Hooch.  
- should carry name tags Set Books All students **should** have a copy of each of  
- 'First-years **should** note that the forest in the grounds is forbidden

- to remind you all that no magic **should** be used between classes in the corri-

We also have the modal adjectives/past participles of permission, **allowed**, and obligation, **supposed**, often used with the negative to represent prohibition, like **forbidden**. These prohibitions and controls apply both to Harry when he lives with the Dursleys:

- his longest-ever punishment. By the time he **was allowed** out of his cupboard le Vernon bought him another one and Harry **was allowed** to finish the first.  
- never ... starved Harry, but he'd never been **allowed** to eat as much as he liked  
- ever spoke about them, and of course he was **forbidden** to ask questions. There w  
- what from me?' said Harry eagerly. 'STOP! I **FORBID** YOU!' yelled Uncle Vernon

and to the pupils of Hogwarts:

- 'You'll be for it this time, Potter, first-years aren't **allowed** them.'  
- the fire from view; they were sure it wouldn't be **allowed**. Unfortunately,  
- bout a game with only one ball where no one was **allowed** to fly. Harry had  
- 'Professor Dumbledore says you are to be **allowed** to go,' she said sniffily, as  
- RE REMINDED THAT FIRST-YEARS ARE NOT **ALLOWED** THEIR OWN BROOMSTICKS 'Can  
- 'They don't know we're not **allowed** to use magic at home. I'm going to have  
- And don't forget, we're not **supposed** to know about the Stone or Fluffy. Tha  
- his voice icy. 'Students aren't **supposed** to know about the Philosopher's Sto  
- And now they knew why it was **forbidden**. They were looking straight into the  
- ars should note that the forest in the grounds is **forbidden** to all pupils. And

Ironically the same kinds of prohibitions exist both in the Dursley's world and the school which on the surface seems an escape from it.

Prohibitions apply notably to Hagrid, even to his existence:

- He thought of Hagrid, expelled but **allowed** to stay on as gamekeeper. Perhaps he
- ter do magic, strictly speakin'. I was **allowed** ter do a bit ter follow yeh an'
- 'I'rn - er - not **supposed** ter do magic, strictly speakin'. I was a
- ter take on the job 'Why aren't you **supposed** to do magic?' asked Harry. '
- when he was indoors, Hagrid looked too big to be **allowed**. He sat down next to
- He looked simply too big to be **allowed**, and so wild - long tangles of bushy

Much of the thrill of the exploits of Ron and Harry arise from the well-intentioned breaking of the rules. In this respect the two boys show themselves as more socially deviant than Hermione, in keeping with stereotypes about male and female behaviour. It is to Hermione's credit, we suppose, that she becomes more willing to break the rules as her friendship with Harry and Ron develops:

- Hermione had become a bit more relaxed about **breaking** rules since Harry and Ron

We can conclude that Hogwarts, like the Dursleys' house is a world of tight and tyrannical control, though more benevolent than the latter. It is the kind of school A.S. Neill believed contributed to the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War: the antithesis of his Summerhill (Neill, 1968).

Constitutive rules are what make possible the main sport at Hogwarts—Quidditch. This leads us to consider a second main aspect of life at Hogwarts:

#### *b) Competition.*

A look at the predominant lexis associated with competition shows how important it is (Tables 2 and 3). It is, of course, team competition between the four houses (competition in exams is hardly important). The competition is epitomized by **Quidditch** (60 tokens) **matches**

(24) in which different **sides** (40) **play** (35) **win** (32) or **lose** (49). By doing so the competing **houses** (84), **Gryffindor** (107), **Slytherin** (62), **Hufflepuff** (22) and **Ravenclaw** (12) win **points** (58)

149	GRYFFINDOR	107	GRYFFINDORS
156	HOUSE	84	HOUSES
229	SLYTHERIN	62	SLYTHERINS
583	HUFFLEPUFF	22	HUFFLEPUFFS
994	RAVENCLAW	12	RAVENCLAWS

Table 2: Frequency of Tokens for Houses

QUIDDITCH	60	
POINTS	58	POINT
LOST	49	LOSING,LOSE
SIDE	40	SIDES
PLAY	35	PLAYING,PLAYED
WIN	32	WON,WINNING
TEAM	31	TEAMS
MATCH	24	
GAME	20	GAMES
EXAMS	15	EXAM
CHESS	12	
PLAYERS	11	PLAYER
MARK	9	
TROPHY	6	

Table 3: Lexis of competition for Points

But not only are points awarded for sport and other achievements, they are also deducted as a form of collective punishment. The concordance lines for **points** will give us a fair idea of this main preoccupation of the book. They are Goals or Values of the Material or Relational (Possessive) processes most commonly of the verbs **lose, win, take, award**:

- while any rule-breaking will **lose** house points. At the end of the year, the
- And Gryffindor really can't afford to **lose** any more points, can they?' Harry
- school for the Dark Arts! **Losing** points doesn't matter any more, can't you see?
- spirits were low. He'd **lost** two points for Gryffindor in his very first week
- two Quidditch matches, had **lost** them all those points, him and a couple of
- herin to win the House Cup and you'll **lose** all the points I got from Professor
- 'They've never **lost** a hundred and fifty points in one go, though, have they?'
- a few weeks. Fred and George have **lost** loads of points in all the time they've
- A hundred and fifty points **lost**. That put Gryffindor in last place. In o
- ey still had detentions to do in the furore over the points they'd **lost**.
- school at night, think of the points you'll **lose** Gryffindor if you're caught,
  
- Hopes of **winning** fifty points for Gryffindor faded quickly from Harry's m
- You each **win** Gryffindor five points. Professor Dumbledore will be informed of
- Snitch **wins** his team an extra hundred and fifty points, so they nearly always
  
- e anywhere near here again, I'll **take** another fifty points from Gryffindor!
- Harry left, before Snape could **take** any snore points from Gryffindor. He
- 'Cheer up,' said Ron. 'Snape's always **taking** points off Fred and George. Can I

- out sweets.'Miss Granger, five points will be **taken** from Gryffindor for this,'

- it's very dangerous -and fifty points will be **taken** from Gryffindor.'

- I **award** Gryffindor house fifty points.' Gryffindor cheers nearly raised the

- ic in the face of fire, I **award** Gryffindor house fifty points.' Hermione

- I **award** Gryffindor house sixty points.' The din was deafening. Those who coul

- up to our friends. I therefore **award** ten points to Mr Neville Longbottom.'

Notice that it is Dumbledore who does the awarding and Snape who tends to take points away from Gryffindor. The climax and resolution of the tale comes at the end of the year when the headmaster Dumbledore awards the cup to the house with most points.

We can sum up by remarking on the intense rivalry and hatred between houses, especially Gryffindor and Slytherin. This produces a mind-set not far removed from that of the actors in the Palestine-Israeli conflict, with tendencies to collective punishment and fascism on both sides.

*c) Food*

Hogwarts has many of the characteristics of the typical boarding school boys' novel, not least in its obsession with food (Billy Bunter might be a precursor in this respect). The wordlist for items of food is extensive and varied (Table 4).

EAT	24	LUNCH	5	WALNUT	2
CHOCOLATE	16	TOAST	4	TRIFLE	2
EGG	15	SANDWICHES	4	TASTED	2
CAKE	14	PUMPKIN	4	TART	2

FLAVOUR	11	POTATOES	4	SUGAR	2
BREAKFAST	11	PEAS	4	RATIONS	2
FOOD	10	HAMBURGER	4	PORRIDGE	2
SWEETS	9	FUDGE	4	NIBBLE	2
SAUSAGES	9	FEED	4	MILK	2
FEAST	9	CREAM	4	MARMALADE	2
SWALLOWED	8	WINE	3	LIVER	2
LEMON	7	TURKEY	3	KETCHUP	2
BACON	7	TREACLE	3	JELLY	2
PASTY	6	PIE	3	HUNGER	2
HUNGRY	6	JAM	3	HAM	2
SHERBET	5	HUMBUGS	3	GRAVY	2
ROAST	5	CHICKEN	3	CRUMPETS	2
PUDDING	5	YORKSHIRE	2	CHOPS	2
MARS	5			CABBAGE	2

Table 4: Food Lexis

However, the food here is quintessentially English. Though there are some token gestures towards multi-culturalism in the student population, Parvati Patil and Neville with his dreadlocks, this certainly doesn't apply to food. Is this because Hogwarts represents a deliberately archaic world with its steam train and Gothic architecture? For whatever reason, this is a world which either predates or ignores the culinary delights of chow mein, kebabs, moussaka, spaghetti, tom yam gung, balti, and other staples of the English high street.

*d) Architecture*

The obsession with architectural terms and the Gothic building of Hogwarts castle is also an aspect of deliberate archaism. We might be aware of this obsession, but, again, it becomes even more obvious when we consult a word list (Table 5). Freudian analysis would have a field day with all these openings and closings, lockings and unlockings of doors, the running along corridors, the climbing of towers, the hiding around corners, the vaults, the trapdoors, the forbidden passages and the boys penetrating the girls' toilets.

DOOR	119	PLATFORM	25	TOWER	15
ROOM	96	CORNER	25	CHAMBER	15
FLOOR	57	CASTLE	23	STAIRCASE	14
WALL	52	KEY	22	UPSTAIRS	13
HALL	50	CUPBOARD	22	TOILET	12
WINDOW	44	CEILING	20	VAULT	10
CORRIDOR	38	HUT	19	TRAPDOOR	10
				STAIRS	10

Table 5: Lexis for Architectural Features

**3. Inductive discovery of representation and ideology**

An inductive method involves the use of concordance data to reveal important categories of ontological and ideological representation which might escape an ordinary reading of the book.

*a) Self-control*

For example, while the prevalence of rules and the house/points system is extremely obvious from even a superficial reading of the novel, the related notion of self-control, or self-prohibition is less obvious

and would probably only emerge from a consideration of concordance lines for *not/n't*.

Here we have a bunch of examples in which Harry and our other heroes attempt to exercise self-control,

- d what he'd promised himself about **not meddling**. All the same, he'd
- sly doubted this, but thought it best **not to argue**. He sat down at the ta
- nine and ten. Harry watched, careful **not to blink** in case he missed it - b
- Thousand, sir,' said Harry, fighting **not to laugh** at the look of horror on
- wasters. Harry was now trying hard **not to panic**. According to the large
- ich one she'd need. Harry tried hard **not to listen** to her. He'd never been
- due to start, Harry's new resolution **not to interfere** in anything that
- amage, but Harry swore to himself **not to meddle** in things that weren't
- st idea what a bezoar was. He tried **not to look** at Malfoy, Crabbe and
- He sat down at the table and tried **not to think** about how he was goin
- through it, holding his breath, trying **not to move** it, and to his relief
- already have cracked from trying **not to laugh**. There was a horrible
- ne had already agreed they'd better **not ask** Madam Pince where they

however unsuccessful they may be at times:

- Hagrid. 'Why should be?' Yet Harry **couldn't help thinking** that Hagrid did
- ills and roll up their parchment, Harry **couldn't help cheering** with the rest.
- ld him so far was unbelievable, Harry **couldn't help trusting** him. 'This is it
- t in the usual morning traffic jam, he **couldn't help noticing** that there see
- e ignored him and spoke to Harry. 'I **couldn't help overhearing** what you a

- itches and Wizards cards, but Harry **couldn't keep his eyes off** them. soo
- first-years aren't allowed them.' Ron **couldn't resist** it.
- 'It's not any old

So we observe that the external system of rules, imposed by the school hierarchy and creatively broken by our heroes is mirrored and counterbalanced by internal attempts at self-control, which are also transgressed when the pressure becomes too great.

#### *b) Process Patterns*

Another way to reveal latent ideology is to look at patterns of verbs, using systemic functional grammar transitivity analysis process categories, though doing this from a wordlist is a rather inexact method (See Table 6). Roughly speaking it would seem to be the case that Material process of action—in which the Actor has a real and important (if not irreversible) impact on the Goal—do not constitute the majority of the processes (2,400). Material processes of travel in which we have Ranges rather than Goals are also very important (1,700). Furthermore, the Mental/Behavioural (2,700) outnumber the Goal directed Processes. And Verbal processes are equally important (1760).

MATERIAL NOT ONLY MOVEMENT:	2429
MATERIAL MOVEMENT ONLY	1674
MENTAL/BEHAVIOURAL	2680
VERBAL	1759

Table 6: Frequency of Process Types

These general patterns might seem surprising in what is an adventure novel, an action adventure. However a great deal of the action actually involves our three heroes moving themselves along and through and up all those architectural features we identified in the last section, which thus become Ranges or parts of Circumstantial Adjuncts of direction (Table 7).

GO	308	SIT	82	RUN	52	STEP	38
COME	204	WALK	72	FOLLOW	49	FLY	52
LEAVE	113	FALL	57	WAIT	45	STAY	34
STAND	97	MOVE	56	REACH	43	HURRIED	3

Table 7: Verbs of Material Processes of Movement

LOOK	421	REMEMBER	54	LEARN	29
KNOW	323	SMILE	48	BELIEVE	29
SEE	300	NOTICE	46	WORRY	27
THINK	244	PLEASE	42	EXPECT	27
LIKE	210	FORGET	39	LAUGH	23
WANT	136	SOUND	38	WISH	19
HEAR	106	HOPE	37	SURPRISE	19
FEEL	95	WONDER	36	UNDERSTAND	18
STARE	63	LISTEN	30	LEARN	29
WATCH	58	SUPPOSE	29	BELIEVE	29

Table 8: Mental Process Verbs

The novel is also a mystery novel. Many of the Mental processes (Table 8) are to do with looking, watching for evidence, trying to learn and understand what is going on, wondering what the outcome of the adventures will be, and hoping it is a successful one. There is also the experiencing of surprise that Snape is not, after all, the villain, and is not bullying Quirrell, but vice-versa.

The discovery of information, often from books in which Hermione is an expert, but also from observation, leads to the sharing

of it among the three friends, which partly accounts for the importance of Verbal processes (Table 9). They share and discuss their information in the quest to understand and try to explain what it might mean:

SAY	915	MEAN	51	LIE	29	CURSE	19
TELL	190	WHISPER	48	ANSWER	26	WRITE	17
ASK	99	SPEAK	45	YELL	22	ADD	16
CALL	65	SHOUT	36	WARN	20	MENTION	12
TALK	51	MUTTER	31	EXPLAIN	20	AGREE	12

Table 9: Verbal Process Verbs

*c) Time*

*Time* is the most frequently occurring lexical item in any general-purpose corpus of English, for example the Bank of English. Despite that, it does seem that lexis to do with time is especially important in this novel (Table 10). Birthdays and Christmases recur annually. The year is neatly divided into terms, and holidays. The terms, with exams at the end and Quidditch matches punctuating them, are divided into weeks, and the weeks and days into timetabled periods. This is part of a larger pattern in which each of the five novels in the Harry Potter sequence represents one year in his school life.

TIME	146	SECOND	58	NEW	38
NEXT	96	YEARS	51	YEAR	37
LAST	84	MOMENT	50	WEEK	33
LONG	71	NIGHT	49	MORNING	32
DAY	71	PAST	44	CHRISTMAS	24
OLD	67	MINUTES	44	HOUR	22
LATE	60				

Table 10: Lexis for Time

What is most apparent from concordance lines is the sense that there is never enough time to do things. Both **late** and **time** are Values in Relational Clauses.

- 'It's **gettin'** late and we've got lots ter do tomorrow,' sai and **they were a bit** late arriving at Hagrid's hut because
- rick staircase if you met him when **you were** late for class. He would drop
- put it back in his pocket and said, '**Hagrid's** late. I suppose it was he who
- re to be punished, after all.' 'That's why **yer** late, is it?' said Hagrid,
- The minutes crept by. '**He's** late, maybe he's chickened out,' Ron whisp
- 'We've got to go, **we're going to be** late.' They hadn't even reached the end
  
- 'It was you.' 'I feared **I might be too** late.' 'You nearly were, I couldn't have
- ted around to see if it was a dragon, but **too** late - they plunged even deeper,
- rably. 'Well- no,' Ron admitted. **It was a bit** late to repair the damage, but
- leave, saying Ron needed sleep. '**It's too** late to change the plan now,' Harry
- him on the shoulder. '**Got time fer** a bite to eat before yer train leav
- smiling. 'Finished yer exams? **Got time fer** a drink?' 'Yes, please,' said Ron
- g after it. 'All right there, Harry?' **he had time to** yell, as he beat the
- **Harry and Ron barely had time to** exchange mystified looks before
- out with its own club. **They didn't have time to** come and fetch anyone. It was a
- s all dry,' said Ron. '**She hasn't got much** time,' he added quickly, 'you know,
- **Harry had even less** time than the other two, because Quiddit
- ow,' Harry told Hermione. '**We haven't got time to** send Charlic another owl and

The emphasis here is often on being too late or not having enough time, as in the last five concordance lines. Where **time** is the Goal it is therefore a commodity or gift that is highly valued:

- They couldn't afford to waste any more **time**, Snape might even now be playing
- out on the window-sill, which gave Harry **time** to dry his eyes on the sheet.
- snout towards Ron instead, giving Harry **time** to run around it. 'Come on,

The frequent and anxious racing against time is demonstrated by its occurrence in the Circumstantial Adjunct **in time**:

- the wall. Twice, Ron only just noticed **in time** that Harry and Hermione were in
- ot manage to take it from you. I arrived **in time** to prevent that, although you
- as the one I had just left. I arrived just **in time** to pull Quirrell off you -'
- he went into the living-room **in time** to catch the last report on the eveni
- foot from the ground he caught it, just **in time** to pull his broom straight, and
- He steadied himself **in time** to hear Snape say, '- your little bit
- Snape turned on his broomstick just **in time** to see something scarlet shoot pas
- ad Hagrid collected that package just **in time**? Where was it now? And did Hagrid

## Summary

The world of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* which emerges from concordance data is not a very attractive one to me, though it appears to be to juvenile readers.

- (1) From the external deductive ideological perspectives of feminism and environmentalism

- The world generally conforms to sexist stereotypes, especially in the propensities to cry, though there are some deliberate attempts to make token gestures towards a more feminist attitude
- Animals and plants are portrayed as dangerous, exploitable, or if not magic, insignificant.

The stance here, apart from the tokenism, is fundamentally sexist, and certainly speciesist.

(2) From its own overt ideological perspective

- It is reminiscent in its excessive emphasis on rules and prohibitions and self-control of the Blake poem:

I went to the garden of love/and saw what I never had seen/  
A chapel was built in themidst/where I used to play on the  
green/and the gates of the chapel were shut/And "thou shalt  
not" writ over the door.

- The regime of fierce competition between mutually hating houses breeds an unhealthy rivalry
- It is parochially and archaically English, especially in its food and Gothic architecture

The reader is, perhaps, expected to accept this world of authoritarian control and fierce rivalry and collective punishment, as natural and even exciting within the school context. And to enjoy the quaintness of the archaic, part of the commodification of history on which much of British tourism depends.

(3) From an inductive, latent ideological perspective

- The heroes spend much time ranging over Hogwarts castle in a desperate race against time

- They spend most of their remaining of time in a state of mental turbulence, wondering and worrying about things they don't understand

These observations suggest that children are being asked to accept the tyranny of time as a bureaucratic mechanism of control, and the accompanying anxieties which such a control engenders.

## **Part B**

In the second part of this paper I wish to question the validity of this kind of critical linguistic approach to literary analysis and to locate it within a recent debate on critical discourse analysis in relation to the role of concordancing and the role of pragmatics.

Widdowson (1998) launched an attack on the ad hoc kind of critical discourse analysis he found in some passages of Fairclough (Fairclough, 1992; 1995). Stubbs (2001) developed a counter argument in which he claimed that concordancing techniques of the kind which I have exemplified in Part A can give quantitative evidence to validate or challenge the kinds of analyses to which Widdowson was objecting. However, as Widdowson pointed out earlier (2000), there is an important role for Pragmatics in textual interpretation, so that meanings cannot be simply decoded from the surface of the text, as is the tendency both in Hallidayan analysis and concordancing. It's not that SFG ignores generic context, of course, but it shows a lack of interest in the inferential processes that rely on mental contexts or the pragmatics that make these work. This means that the approach I have exemplified and which I call critical linguistics, reinforced by the powerful tools of concordancing, may lead us to unwarranted conclusions.

How, then, might the conclusions of part A have been faulty? The main problem seems to be the ignoring of propositional attitude (Sperber & Wilson, 1995). Concordancing is a powerful way of gaining access to patterns of propositions at the representational level of discourse. But what is the author's attitude to these patterns?

The necessity for factoring in propositional attitude in text interpretation is nowhere clearer than in cases of irony and parody. In both these cases the surface of the text resembles almost to the point of identity an equivalent non-ironic statement or the genre or text which is being parodied. But in neither case can the author be seen as making assertions to which he/she subscribes or as observing the purposes of the genre being parodied. There is a humorous or critical distance between what is said and what is believed or endorsed.

So what of J.K. Rowling's propositional attitude to Hogwarts as she represents it in the clauses of this book? I am thinking particularly here of the linguistic representations analysed in Part A section 2—overt ideologies and ideological categories of the text. Is the obsession with food and the highly developed house system a kind of parody of earlier school novels like *Jennings* and *Billy Bunter*? And what of her attitude to its competitiveness? In a later novel, *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* she has Harry sacrifice valuable time by rescuing a competitor from a rival school, Gabrielle, from her underwater fate. Does this indicate that at the time of writing *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* she did not entirely celebrate the competitive aspect of Hogwarts' life? Or was it only later, in retrospect, that she felt she needed to move away from celebrating rivalry towards endorsing more co-operative values? It might seem that the Dumbledore's climactic speech, in which he announces that the House Cup has just been won by Gryffindor, indicates that the house system and Gryffindor's winning is being celebrated, not just by the hero, but also by the author. But could this last minute success, against expectations, have something of the parodic about it? And anyway, doesn't the whole scene remind you of those interminable hours of school speech days and prize-givings, and make you shudder? And is it intended to?

My position on the kind of approach exemplified in part A of this article is as follows. The critical linguistic approach using concordancing is extremely valuable if one is dealing with large quantities of text, and does, indeed provide quantitative evidence or patterns of representation

or ideological bias. It establishes aspects of or probabilities within a social langue (Stubbs 2001, p. 168), for example the BBC World Service on nature (Goatly, 2002). However, it may be more useful in some genres than in others (Goatly, 1997, chapter 10). Stubbs (2001, p. 153) has pointed out that in certain genres convention contributes relatively more to meaning than inference. For example, cases of irony in the language of air-traffic control are minimal (one hopes), and the same is likely to be true of news reports. In novels, however, a non-instrumental or ludic genre, with their multiple levels of discourse and interpenetrating voices—character, narrator, (implied) author—there are manifold opportunities for taking a complex propositional attitude to the meanings encoded in the text.

Children's novels, may, however, be less complex in terms of propositional attitude, and the degree of ironic distance one can expect the reader to detect. Children's capacity for detecting irony and parody are less developed than adults' (Winner, 1988). And a writer cannot therefore rely on children recognising ironic distance. The writer may have that distance herself, and expect adult readers to recognise it, but it would be naive of her to expect the children reading *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* to see the Gryffindor's success, for example, as anything other than a fact to be celebrated. Moreover, as for the representations analysed in section 1 and 3 of part A, if these stereotypes and patterns are latent and unrecognised, then the author can not have a conscious attitude towards them. For example, unless she knows how she has marginalised grass and trees by placing them as Circumstances in most of her clauses, she will not have an attitude which distances her from this marginalisation. The analysis in part A is therefore justified on two counts: ideological representations latent even to the author will escape 'attitude' altogether; and, second, children can be expected to take the deliberate patterns of representation at face value. We can conclude that the values detected in part A may have a significant effect on the construction and reproduction of ideology in young minds.

Decoding approaches, such as critical linguistics and systemic functional linguistics, with the help of concordancing techniques, can

be very useful in detecting ideological patterns in long texts. These approaches will be especially useful in detecting latent ideology, and more so for those texts where inference and complex propositional attitudes are less important for interpretation, such as news reports. In the case of adult novels, complex propositional attitudes make any conclusions about representation less certain, however. Nevertheless, applying SFG analyses based on concordancing to children's novels, whose readers have less 'ironic competence', would seem more valid in terms of the conclusions about the construction and reproduction of ideologies.

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