

# Correlation Of Fantastic and Realistic Categories In Joanne Rowling's "Harry Potter And The Philosopher's Stone"

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**Abstract.** This article is considering the combination of fantastic and realistic categories in modern English children's literature, in particular in Joanne Rowling's novel about Harry Potter. The article shows that realistic elements, such as toponyms, zoonyms, phytonyms, people, physics, natural phenomena and laws of nature in fantasy works bring the world of fantasy closer to the real world and, as a result, lead to mutual understanding, harmony of realistic and fantastic elements.

**Key words:** literary chronotope, space and time, realism, fantasy, Harry Potter, mythology, Philosopher's Stone, Elixir of Life, real world, imaginary world.

Fantasy literature is literature set in an imaginary universe, often but not always without any locations, events, or people from the real world. Magic, the supernatural and magical creatures are common in many of these imaginary worlds.

Magical fantasy world has its own magical creatures, flying carpets, magic rings, mighty giants and flying dragons. But this does not mean that we should abandon all evidence of logic and realism when creating an image of the magical world.

Creating a fantasy world begins with creating the rules by which it lives. This is the unspoken basis of agreement between the author and readers who expect to read an interesting story without illogical events that undermine the credibility of the plot. For example, a fantasy story might have dragons, wizards, dragons and tree-shaking giants but the main character is a peasant boy; he is the same as the boy from the real world, so he cannot uproot trees. And if such an event occurs, then the elementary laws of physics will be violated.

In fantasy, two worlds – the real and the imaginary are opposed to each other, and in this process, these two worlds become mixed with each other. It is worth noting that the presence of magic in this kind of works affects its chronotope. As O.A. Kostrova noted "it is the fantastic chronotope that causes curvature, stretching and compression of space, acceleration and deceleration of time, rapid movement and displacement of the heroes of the work in space and time, and allows moving quickly, appearance and the disappearance of other objects" (Kostrova 2009, p.29).

"Harry Potter" is one of the most famous novels by the English writer J. K. Rowling. The novel is a combination of features of different genres: fantasy, adventure, detective, and thriller. The events of the novel are described in a world similar to real life in England in the 1990s. Unlike real life in the world of Harry Potter among ordinary people live wizards and witches who have the ability to use magic. Ordinary people, that are Muggles, do not know about the existence of wizards, since they are well hidden. Even though wizards live among Muggles they have their own world. They live independently of Muggles without contact with them. The author of "Harry Potter" does not idealize the world of wizards: there, as in the real world, there is good and evil, life and death, happiness and problems.

The real-world chronotope is represented by house №4 on a narrow street in the fictional town of Little Wing: "A breeze ruffled the neat hedges of Privet Drive, which lay silent and tidy under the inky sky, the very last place you would expect astonishing things to happen." (Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone, p.18)

The wizarding world is represented by chronotopes of official institutions such as schools, banks, and chronotopes such as residences and individual regions of the wizarding world. The link between the real and magical worlds is Diagon Alley, located in London. You can only magically get there if you know the secret code through the Hole Boiler Inn. And the train to Hogwarts leaves from platform 9 ¾:

He was about to go back upstairs when Uncle Vernon actually spoke.

'Funny way to get to a wizards' school, the train. Magic carpets all got punctures, have they?'

Harry didn't say anything.

‘Where is this school, anyway?’

‘I don’t know,’ said Harry, realizing this for the first time. He pulled the ticket Hagrid had given him out of his pocket.

‘I just take the train from platform nine and three-quarters at eleven o’clock,’ he read.

His aunt and uncle stared.

‘Platform what?’

‘Nine and three-quarters.’

‘Don’t talk rubbish,’ said Uncle Vernon, ‘there is no platform nine and three-quarters.’

‘It’s on my ticket.’ (Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone, p. 68)

For ordinary people in London, platform 9  $\frac{3}{4}$  at a railway station is an imaginary fiction. However, magicians do not think so. You can get there from the usual London Kings Cross railway station. However, for this it is necessary to pass through the railway and the wall. Ordinary people cannot do this. It is noteworthy that, Kings Cross is a real and existing train station in London. In the novel, this place is described as a place where not only people but also wizards gather. This is where the adventures begin and where the school year ends. The barrier between the platforms is the border between the magical world and the world of ordinary people. In general, we think that the number 9 on the platform was not chosen by Joan Rowling in vain. Because in the decimal number system, the number 9 is the last number, that is, the limit number. In our opinion, the number 9 here has a symbolic meaning, that is, the end of the real world and the beginning of the imaginary world, or vice versa.

The wizard world in Joan Rowling's “Harry Potter” is not separated from the real world by an impassable border. These worlds are constantly interconnected, and the magical world is depicted within the real world. The world described by J.K. Rowling is carefully thought out, characterized by an abundance of descriptions and details, quasi-historical dates and a clearly developed internal mythology.

As T.V.Volkodav states that in the “Harry Potter” there is a mixture of two narrative styles: fantastic (in which the laws of nature are allowed to be violated) and realistic. During the narrative, sometimes one of these two styles prevails, and sometimes the other. Realistic backgrounds have fantastic additions, and on the contrary, fantastic backgrounds have realistic layers. For example, the main character Harry is described as both a fairy tale hero and a contemporary of the students of the present time. The anthropomorphic space of the novel allows reflecting both the real, existing world and the fantastic, fictitious, magical world at the same time (Volkodav 2006, p. 24).

In addition, many things that exist in real life can be found in the novel. For example, we can see real plant names in it:

‘For your information, Potter, asphodel and wormwood make a sleeping potion so powerful it is known as the Draught of Living Death.’ (Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone, p. 103).

Asphodelus is a species of perennial flowering plant in the Asphodelaceae family, first described by Carl Linnaeus in 1753. This plant grows around Europe, the Mediterranean basin, Africa, the Middle East, and India.

The leaves of this plant are used in Italy to wrap cheese for a short time. In Eastern Anatolia of Turkey, this plant is also used for a certain purpose in cooking. Asphodel is a popular plant in Greek mythology and is used in connection with visions of the dead and the underworld. Homer described the place where the dead gather - a large meadow as a covering plant. Usually, this plant was planted around graves and was associated with Persephone, the goddess of the underworld. Its general connection with the concept of death is explained by the tendency of its leaves to gray and yellow colors, because for the Greeks these colors meant the darkness of the underworld and the paleness of death. The very poor Greeks ate the root of this plant, so it was considered a delicious food for the shadows. Asphodel was also considered an antidote to snake venom and an antidote to witchcraft. This plant was used to kill mice. Libyan settlers used this plant to build huts.

The second plant in the example also exists in real life. Artemisia absinthium is popularly known as wormwood. It is a widespread plant in North Africa, Eurasia, and North America. Some species are grown as decorative plants, and some species are used in the preparation of spicy drinks. It was also used in the preparation of remedies for some gynecological diseases, so it is also called by the name of Artemis, the goddess of childbirth in Greece.

In his first year Harry learns about the bezoar stone from Professor Snape:

‘A bezoar is a stone taken from the stomach of a goat and it will save you from most poisons.’ (Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone, p. 103).

Factually, bezoars exist in our real world. Bezoars are indigestible masses of food commonly found in the stomachs of goats and were known as antidote as early as the Moorish conquest of Spain.

There is another plant – Mandrake in the novel that can be seen in the real life. Harry and his friends meet Mandrakes for the first time in their second year of Botany. Mandrake roots are collected because they have the ability to return Petrificus Totalus - Dark Spell victims back to normal. But these are not just simple roots; they are intelligent little creatures whose screams can be deadly when they reach adulthood. That is why those who are new to the science of magic study young Mandrakes. Mandrake root has been of great importance in folklore since ancient times, and they are sometimes depicted as wrinkled people. Fearing the death cry, people tied a dog to the plant to pull out its roots, which is described in the encyclopedia "The Book of Plants", which explains the healing and occult properties of these plants. Mandrakes are also known for their hallucinogenic and narcotic effects.

Besides, you will come across the names of some famous people who lived in history. Take, for example, the character of Nicholas Flamel. According to the book, Hermione reads information about Flamel from the book to her friends. It says that Flamel was 665 years old and was the sole owner of the Philosopher's Stone. With the help of this stone, it was possible to turn any metal into gold and prepare the Elixir of Life, which gives eternal life. The fact is that Nicolas Flamel was a real person who lived in France in 1330-1418. He was engaged in book sales. He also practiced alchemy to create the Philosopher's Stone and the Elixir of Life.

Birds and animals such as an owl and a rat also take part in the “Harry Potter”, which is another proof that objects familiar to us in the real world also participate in Joan Rowling's fantastic world.

In essence, fantasy is a fairy tale, which differs from an ordinary fairy tale only by a slight difference in its chronotope, as well as by the fact that it contains a strong charge of realism. In fantasy, the space is wider than in a fairy tale, and the time is closer to the present. Fantasy is a fairy tale, but a very realistic one as many elements in it are objects that exist in the present time. The category of time in most fairy tales is abstract and vague. But it is clear that in fairy tales actions take place in the past. The category of time in fantasy refers to the time that is close or connected to our days.

It should be emphasized that realism may not exist in fantasy, but reality must exist. The author is forced to use real things in order to believably and logically describe and convince the reader of the world he created, its laws, realities, the mentality of its peoples, heroes, and similar details. Realism is lost as the characters and the author begin to break the law in various ways. Even the most incredible and beautiful world loses its attractiveness in the eyes of the reader if the laws established by the author begin to be violated without any reason. How to come up with these laws, how to justify them and make them work depends on the skill of the writer. After all, nothing can be "just". Be it in the real world or in the imaginary world, everything must be grounded.

While talking about this topic, it is worth noting Brandon Sanderson's approach to creating a fantastic world. Because when he creates another world, he not only describes the rules by which magic works, but also pays attention to the rules of physics, biology and nature. For example, the world of Roshar has strong storms, so all forms of life have some form of protection: animals grow chitinous shells, and plants learn to hide underground (Sanderson, 2008). This creates a sense of confidence in the students.

No matter what world a fantasy writer creates in his imagination, his work is read taking into account the experience of our world. Let's say there is a fighting army in a fantasy work - that means it needs to be fed and supplied like a similar army in the history of the world. The author may not tell us about the supply, but this should not contradict the realism of the events. If this army is forced to march through snowy peaks to besiege the Ice Queen's castle, and the soldiers do not suffer from hunger and cold, the author must create a convincing rationale for this. Otherwise, involuntarily mistrust of what is happening in the reader's mind will appear and the charm of the novel will be lost.

Realism is a direction that aims to faithfully reproduce real reality in its typical features in literature and art. So, how can a depiction of fantasy worlds that never existed be called realism, how can a fantasy world be realism with its witches, unscientific and not-so-intelligent animals? However, it should be noted that for the people of the imaginary world created by the author, existence in this world is in some sense realism.

Magicians, imaginary peoples and their culture, dragons, gods, spirits, unprecedented animals and others are an integral part of the inhabitants of this world; they live according to certain realistic rules.

Every author, especially the author of his own world, is an unlimited creator in his imagination. He has the right to create a world similar to ours or completely different, to fill it with anyone, to define certain concepts with familiar terms or to invent his own. At the same time, he has to invent the laws that exist in his world. The level of realism is shown within these laws. In our opinion, it is often wrong to confuse the concept of "realism" with completely historical or one hundred percent life realities.

In conclusion, it can be said that some toponyms, zoonyms, phytonyms, people, physics, natural phenomena and laws used in works written in the direction of fantasy bring the world of fantasy closer to the real world, and as a result, realistic and fantastic elements are combined in works of this category. This leads to the fact that the work is perceived by readers as relatively real events. The reader perceives realism embodied in the fantastic world as a normal phenomenon. This increases the reliability of the events in the work.

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