

12-2014

Magic Wands, Aliens, and the Truth: Rowling and Card's Depiction of the Adult, the Child, the Shadow and the Other

Yoshie Manaka
University of Redlands

Follow this and additional works at: http://inspire.redlands.edu/cas_honors



Part of the [Children's and Young Adult Literature Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Manaka, Y. (2014). *Magic Wands, Aliens, and the Truth: Rowling and Card's Depiction of the Adult, the Child, the Shadow and the Other* (Undergraduate honors thesis, University of Redlands). Retrieved from http://inspire.redlands.edu/cas_honors/118

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the College of Arts & Sciences at InSPIRE @ Redlands. It has been accepted for inclusion in Undergraduate Honors Theses by an authorized administrator of InSPIRE @ Redlands. For more information, please contact gabriela_sonntag@redlands.edu.

Magic Wands, Aliens, and the Truth:
Rowling and Card's Depiction of the Adult, the Child, the Shadow and the Other

By
Yoshie Manaka

A Thesis
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Graduation with Honors
in the English Literature Department

College of Arts and Sciences
University of Redlands
December 2014

Young Adult (YA) fiction is a fast-growing genre geared towards adolescents approaching adulthood, and it, as well as Children's literature, is widely expected by adult consumers to be educational. Authors are certainly attempting to explore moral questions. But the nature of the genres themselves present a contradiction, as the psychoanalytic critic Jacqueline Rose so accurately describes in *The Case of Peter Pan*. Children's fiction, she says, is impossible, "not in the sense that it cannot be written (that would be nonsense), but in that it hangs on an impossibility...the impossible relation between adult and child" (1). Children's fiction, she says, is about this relationship, yet "has the remarkable characteristic of being about something which it hardly ever talks of." Children's fiction "draws in the child, it secures, places, and frames the child," and because it is typically written by adults for children, the framing of the child is a projection of what the adult author desires the child to be (1). Rose uses *Peter Pan* as an example; she argues that it shows innocence not as a property of childhood, but as a part of an adult desire for innocence. Rose identifies a danger in Children's fiction of depicting child characters based on adult expectations—child characters are saddled with unrealistic responsibilities, and then based on how the characters "measure up" to these expectations, they are either romanticized or depicted as Other. Though she does not say it, I would argue that the danger also exists in YA fiction, which is a genre that tries to place and frame the adolescent, the non-adult. The *Harry Potter* series by J.K. Rowling and the *Ender* and *Shadow* series by Orson Scott-Card straddle the worlds of Children's and YA fiction due to the initial age of their protagonists. Both try to capture the transition from child to adult, or from child to not-child, and ultimately establish childhood as the shadow to adulthood: something that must, yet cannot, be accepted. Children and adolescent readers, looking for knowledge, are thus

presented with a contradictory, isolating depiction of themselves within literature marketed to them.

One common projection onto child characters in literature is the “romantic” child, who is innocent and trusting, and whose adventures seem to have moral lessons attached to them. This image dates back to Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Rousseau believed in the inherent goodness of children, and wanted to protect that goodness from the corrupting influence of adults. He believed that children under twelve years of age lacked the power of reason, and that until they become adolescents, they should not read—it would confuse them. In *Emile* (1762), Rousseau designed and described his ideal book-free education. The outdoors, he argued, should be a child's only classroom. This image of the spiritually knowing child with a “natural” education became a starting block from which many children's book authors drew inspiration. Rousseau’s concept of natural education is a large part of the romantic child, so the term “natural” is used in this essay interchangeably with “romantic.” According to Leonard Marcus' NYC Public Library exhibit, “The ABC of It: Why Children's Books Matter,” “Young heroes radiated inner knowledge and strength, unafraid to say when the emperor had no clothes.” The natural, romantic child thus became a traditional staple in literature: wise beyond his years and innocently good, depicted as a ray of hope in an otherwise dreary world.

The romantic child may radiate strength, but in many works the child became a one-dimensional character, existing only as a symbol of innocence, hope, and salvation. This phenomenon reflects a similar one in the American educational setting. Philosopher Hannah Arendt, in “The Crisis in Education” (1954), observes the desire of the parents to shelter their child from the world. Thus, the home and family which have been constructed by adults as a shield for themselves, also shields the child. Arendt says that this private shelter is necessary as

“a shield against the world and specifically against the public aspect of the world. They enclose a secure place, without which no living thing can thrive...However strong its natural tendency to thrust itself into the light, it nevertheless needs the security of darkness to grow” (8). That is why fame, which takes privacy away, can be so destructive. The word “natural” here seems to echo Rousseau, and reveals that Arendt's theory depends on romantic assumptions. She claims, however, that “exactly the same destruction of the real living space occurs wherever the attempt is made to turn the children themselves into a kind of world” (10). In the minds of adults, the family, the private space, the child, is a place to retreat to—but Arendt argues that forcing the child to become a place of refuge and a symbol of comfort, responsible for somebody else's happiness and mental well-being, will have the same negative effect that a life in the public eye has on many celebrities. Despite her dependence on Rousseauan ideas, I find Arendt's description of the negative effects of forcing responsibility onto the child a useful way to examine how the depiction of romantic children in literature affects modern readers.

The tendency to turn the child into a place of refuge is common in western culture; thus the symbol of the romantic child is prevalent in Children's literature, because it evokes very strong emotions. Maria Warner, in “Little Angels, Little Monsters,” discusses the reason why it is regarded as so unforgivable for a child to display cruel tendencies. According to Warner, there is an age-old belief “that the child and the soul are somehow interchangeable, and that consequently children are the keepers and the guarantors of humanity's reputation” (46). Because of this, the child is almost a holy object in today's culture. If this symbol of innocence is violated, it is either heart-wrenching, such as the “images of ...starving...orphaned...children” that charities use to raise money, or it is disgusting and frightening (46). If a child in literature does not measure up to the projected desire for innocence, the effect is jarring. The children are

not perfect, therefore they must be monstrous. Warner analyzes news stories and cultural phenomena; I think this threat of monstrosity is apparent in YA fiction.

Of course, the romantic child is not a realistic depiction of childhood. I argue that the relationship between adulthood and childhood in literature therefore is fraught: authors simultaneously desire the idealized innocence of children and fear the unromantic monster. Arendt attempts to describe the contradictory effect this unresolved relationship creates:

Conservatism, in the sense of conservation, is of the essence of the educational activity, whose task is always to cherish and protect something—the child against the world, the world against the child, the new against the old, the old against the new...Our hope always hangs on the new which every generation brings; but precisely because we can base our hope only on this, we destroy everything if we so try to control the new that we, the old, can dictate how it will look (Arendt, 192, 193).

Arendt, like Rose, sees the attempt of authors to “secure, place and frame” the child, and points out the complications that must arise in doing so. Attempting to stuff the definition of childhood into a box is impossible. Books about adolescence do not present one-dimensional, allegorical characters. Surely the romantic image is there, but the “framing” of the child, as Rose calls it, is not so simple in YA fiction. Children are often depicted with a darker side—one that they as characters struggle to embrace, which reflects the struggle of the adults to reconcile the romantic with the realistic.

I find Ursula Le Guin’s formulation helpful in discussing this tension. This darker side, and the struggle to embrace it, is reminiscent of a theory put forth by Carl Gustav Jung, which Ursula Le Guin, a YA author herself, succinctly summarizes in “The Child and the Shadow.” Jung believed that the ego or the part of the self that is aware, is just one part of the self, which

desires to connect with something bigger. Jung says that in order to connect, the ego can either look outside itself, in which case it connects to a “mass mindset,” or it can look within itself to the “deeper parts of the self.” When it does that, it connects to the “collective unconscious, the source of true community, of felt religion, of art, grace, spontaneity, and love” (59-65). In order to connect to the collective unconscious, one must follow her own shadow, that “repressed” part of oneself that stands on the cusp between conscious and unconscious: the baser, scarier part of ourselves that we are afraid to look at, afraid that others will see. When one is able to fully accept the shadow as a part of oneself, Le Guin says, “then the self is capable of thinking of and feeling a deeper dimension” (65). To Le Guin, the key to crossing successfully into adulthood is the ability to embrace one’s shadow. On the other hand, Le Guin tells us that if we ignore our own shadow, the blacker and denser it becomes, until it becomes “a threat within the soul.” If the shadow remains “unadmitted to consciousness, the shadow is projected outward, onto others. There’s nothing wrong with me—it’s *them*. I’m not a monster, other people are monsters. All foreigners are evil.” I think this leads us to a clear progression: those who have embraced their own shadow do not project fear onto others. Once someone embraces the shadow within himself, he can also embrace other shadows.

This discussion of the self and the Other comes up a lot in YA literature. The *Bedford Glossary of Critical and Literary Terms* describes the Other as a term that “refers to any person or category of people seen as different from the dominant social group,” (359). In this essay, adults and the self are the dominant social groups. I must re-frame the definition of Other to refer to any person, magical creature, and alien that is separate from the self. I argue that the child is set up as the shadow to adulthood—the thing that adult authors are not able to fully embrace. This essay looks at the representations of childhood and adulthood, and the fraught transition

between the two in the *Harry Potter* series and the *Ender* and *Shadow* series. The *Harry Potter*, *Ender* and *Shadow* series are easy to bring into conversation with each other because they are all contemporary, popular works of YA fiction, in which the world is threatened and children are identified and groomed as the “chosen ones” who will save humanity. The books are written with some attempt at exploring moral questions, and characters are taken from their homes and educated in an isolated place. These books, wildly popular in their own right, can reveal how we as a society both desire and fear the child; we simultaneously frame the child as our shadow and our savior. Children are both romanticized and portrayed as Other. These are two sides of the same coin: both are projections of adults' nostalgic desire for innocence and their fear of losing it. YA fiction aims to explore the moral questions children must encounter as they become adults, yet it reveals a problematic depiction of the relationship between the adult and child. The contradictory placement of the child in YA fiction seems isolating to the adolescent reader, but by reading against the grain, we find that YA texts offer a strategy for connection.

Card and Rowling's Depiction of Childhood

If we only look at the obvious images associated with the romantic child, it seems like Rowling is very dependent on images of the romantic child, while Card steers clear of them completely. However, when we dig deeper, it becomes clear that Card references Rousseau's romantic child in a nuanced, less conspicuous way, while Rowling brings the image into question. Both sets of heroes move into adulthood with heavy responsibility projected onto them by adult characters. The characters are subjected to the negative ramifications of what Arendt calls being made into “a kind of world” (10).

The *Harry Potter* series follows Harry Potter, a young English orphan raised by his oppressively “normal,” aunt and uncle in an English suburb, as he discovers magical abilities and

is introduced to an entirely new society of witches and wizards. The series takes Harry from ages ten to seventeen, and each book is structured around the school year: beginning in the summer and ending as the students return home from Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. Harry makes friends and has magical adventures, and each book culminates in Harry's struggle to overcome evil, usually in the form of a very evil wizard, Lord Voldemort, who lost his power after murdering Harry's parents and attempting to kill Harry as a toddler. Nearly every year, Harry faces off against Voldemort as the evil wizard regains strength and followers. Harry is destined to defeat Voldemort or die trying—and he ultimately does both. He sacrifices himself in a very messianic way, and is then resurrected to complete his victory over Voldemort.

Rowling uses the pre-existing mold of the romantic child and echoes traditional fairy tales to garner emotional responses from her readers. Even Harry's appearance and living situation is designed to evoke pity. In true rags-to-riches form, he is depicted as a scrawny, underfed orphan abused by his aunt and uncle, bullied by his cousin, and ignored by everyone else. He wears broken glasses and baggy hand-me-downs. Like Warner tells us, this violated image of the child is heart-wrenching, and it immediately draws the reader's attention. The fact that Harry has this terrible upbringing and can remain kind is incredibly romantic. Through these images, among others, Rowling perpetuates the symbol of the romantic child.

In addition to the romantic parallels to fairy tales and images of the violated child, Rowling's young protagonists all exhibit romantic innocence, compassion, and kindness, and show great regard for life. Harry, even though he is fighting against truly evil wizards who are actively trying to kill him, sticks mainly to stunning and disarming spells. Some adult characters criticize Harry for this, but Harry continues to choose relatively harmless spells. Even Harry's school nemesis, Draco Malfoy, is unable to kill the headmaster Dumbledore under threat of

death. Rowling spends some extensive time on the relationship between killing and the soul. “The soul,” Professor Slughorn says, “is supposed to remain intact and whole. Splitting it is an act of violation, it is against nature” (*Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, 498). Here, nature means innocence, and in order to irrevocably lose innocence, one must commit “the supreme act of evil. By committing murder. Killing rips the soul apart.” Rowling’s texts reveal a desire to preserve the innocence—and the souls—of her child characters, who are “naturally” innocent.

Jack Zipes, a prolific critic and scholar of Children’s literature, takes issue with the supposed simplicity of the *Harry Potter* series in “Sticks and Stones: The Troublesome Success of Children's Literature from Slovenly Peter to Harry Potter.” Zipes tells us that [the first four books] of Harry Potter resemble fairy tales, especially in terms of the “modest little protagonist, typically male...who departs from his home on a mission” (177, 178). Like the traditional fairy tales, Harry is a “noble soul” who “will defend the righteous against the powers of evil.” Zipes claims to be bored by typical fairy-tale novels where a happy ending is eminent, and calls Rowling unimaginative, because “you know from the beginning to the end that Harry will triumph over evil, and this again may be one of the reasons that her novels have achieved so much popularity” (182). Zipes aptly describes Rowling’s use of fairy tale tradition, especially in her creation of romantic protagonists whose souls are not only intact, but “noble.” However, in dismissing Rowling’s texts, Zipes does what he accuses Rowling of: he oversimplifies. Zipes may call Rowling’s texts “formulaic,” and he may be correct in accusing Rowling of dabbling in “conventionality.” However, Zipes does not consider that Rowling simultaneously harnesses and challenges the romantic trope. I argue that the depiction of childhood, and it’s relationship to adulthood, is much more complex than Zipes gives Rowling credit for.

While Rowling uses the image of the romantic child to inspire emotion and pity, she also brings the image of the romantic child into question through her satire of adults who over-romanticise children. Rowling's texts make fun of the unrealistic projection of innocence with the relationship between Aunt Petunia and "Ickle Duddikins," more commonly known as Harry's cousin Dudley. Aunt Petunia infantilizes her son repeatedly, and clearly sees him through a romantic lens. She thinks he is perfect, believes everything he says, and romanticizes him to no end. There is no correlation between who Dudley really is and who his parents believe Dudley to be, and the clear difference between the two has a humorous effect, until the sixth book, when Dumbledore tells the Dursleys that romanticizing their child in such a way is a type of child abuse. He tells them that Harry "has known nothing but neglect and often cruelty at your hands. The best that can be said is that he has at least escaped the appalling damage you have inflicted upon the unfortunate boy sitting between you" (*Half-Blood Prince*, 55). Dudley's parents respond by looking around "instinctively, as though expecting to see someone other than Dudley squeezed between them." Until this point, the disjointedness between the way Dudley is seen by his parents and who he really is seems silly and slightly infuriating. But the over-romanticisation of Dudley is revealed as sinister by Dumbledore's comment. The statement brings to light the crippling effect their treatment had on Dudley: he is unable to become an adult because of how his parents projected the romantic child onto him. Rowling both uses and challenges the use of the romantic trope in the Harry Potter series.

Orson Scott-Card initially seems to resist the image of the romantic child, but I argue that his texts rely on the trope as much as Rowling's texts do. *Ender's Game* and *Ender's Shadow* are the first books of two separate series. They have different protagonists and were published fourteen years apart, but are set in the same time, at the same place, from two different points of

view. The respective protagonists, Ender Wiggin and Bean are being groomed to save humanity from an alien race, called the Formics, or, in slang terms, “Buggers.” The boys are “discovered” because of their unusual brilliance and taken from their respective homes to a Battle School in space.

Even though he kills two human boys in hand-to-hand combat and eradicates an alien species, Ender still exhibits qualities of a romantic child. Ender is depicted as an almost perfect human being. He is sincere, intuitive, sensitive, empathetic, and creative, which are recognizably Rousseain attributes. When asked why he’s so popular, his friend describes him as, “*good*, man. You just—he doesn’t hate anybody. If you’re a good person, you’re going to like him. You want him to like you...Ender, he tries to wake up the good part of you” (*Shadow*, 198). He is taken from his home in America where he is romanticized in the narration, and placed into a completely different environment. Unlike Hogwarts, where Harry receives adult support and guidance when he needs it, Battle School is extreme—the environment is far from nurturing. The adults there do not idolize him or coddle him or tend to his emotional needs. There is no expectation, as Warner describes it, for him to be the “savior of humanity’s soul”—but he is expected to be humanity’s literal savior. The expectation is the same, but the responsibility, while no less weighty, is different. Card takes Ender out of one construction of the romantic child and places him in a less obvious, but parallel construction. He literalizes the romantic child, perhaps to make the expectations of the romantic child seem ridiculous. Though not consistent, this series seems to be a chronicle of Card’s attempt to amplify the negative effects of romantic expectations upon children.

The character Bean in *Ender’s Shadow* is similar to little orphaned Harry. He is introduced as a toddler named for his size, struggling to survive on the streets of Rotterdam. He

sees himself as potential prey, and there are no adults around to idolize him. He, like Harry, is orphaned and starving and alone, but Harry is at least in the presence of adults, who can be shamed into treating him better (*Sorcerer's Stone*, 37). Bean cannot fit into the category of the romantic child. Before he is marked as a potential “chosen one,” he has already advocated the murder of another child. His “kill-or-be-killed” attitude is jarring—it goes against our presupposed idea of how children should act. Card seems to slap us with our own expectations, described by Warner. But, despite his refusal to place Bean on a pedestal, Card succeeds in making him a likeable character because of his narration style. For instance, when he fought under Ender against the Formics and picked up the slack when he saw Ender’s “decreasing alertness,” some of the other children began to notice his silent support and would “speak to Bean. Nothing major. Just a hand on his shoulder, on his back, and a couple of words....He hadn’t realized how much he needed the honor of the others until he finally got it” (442). We see Bean observing and analyzing, but we also see his desire for appreciation and love, his normal range of human emotion, and his response to praise. We are offered a view of Bean’s thoughts, and this makes him a likeable character, despite his refusal to act as a child “should.” Still, Bean does not garner the same pity as Harry because he refuses to be pitied. This could be because of the impersonal way he manipulates the pity of adults:

Bean, seeing that Achilles was trying to get the adults to protect them in line, decided the time was right for him to be useful. Because this woman was compassionate and Bean was by far the smallest child, he knew he had the most power over her. He came up to her, tugged on her woolen skirt. “Thank you for watching over us,” he said. “It’s the first time I ever got into a real kitchen. Papa Achilles told us that *you* would keep us safe so we little ones could eat here every day.”

“Oh, you poor thing! Oh, look at you.” Tears streamed down the woman’s face. “Oh, you poor darling.” She embraced him (25).

Bean understands the romantic, heartbreaking image of violated innocence that Warner describes, and purposefully manipulates it to get what he wants. But because he lives in a society where adults have no power, Bean is quite unconcerned with adults. This separates him from the other characters of the *Ender* and *Shadow* series. When he reaches Battle School, Bean realizes that he needs to win their approval in order to fit in, but he does not expect anything from them. He isn’t used to adults having power, so where Ender always feels betrayed by the inaction of adults, Bean takes it for granted. Adults are obstacles that need to be maneuvered around in order for him to accomplish what he wants. In this sense, Bean actually does have a very “natural” childhood—absolutely unencumbered by adults. Of course, it can also be argued that he didn’t have a childhood at all. He didn’t play games, and he had a great responsibility to preserve his own life. Until he realizes that building a community will preserve his own life, he has no interest in it. Because Bean grew up relatively untouched by adult influence, he is presented as a child untethered to all expectations and responsibility, unlike the character Ender. Maybe this was Card’s second attempt to write a child character free from the image of the romantic child. Bean is much less compassionate than Ender, although he sees why compassion is good and tries to emulate it, especially when he realizes that it might save his own life. It’s off-putting that Bean recognizes the value of these characteristics, but from an analytical standpoint, rather than a moral one.

Despite the apparent dissimilarities between the two authors’ use of romantic imagery, the image of the “child as savior” is heightened in all three texts. Both authors depict characters who are burdened with messianic missions. This responsibility to save humanity is reminiscent

of the responsibility often given to the romantic child, who Warner calls the “keepers and guarantors of humanity’s reputation” (46). Radhiah Chowdhury, in “A Chosen Sacrifice: the Doomed Destiny of the Child Messiah in Late Twentieth-Century Children's Fantasy,” addresses the common phenomenon of the child messiah, who “stands representative for the younger generations who will continue the world that the Child Messiah has saved” (108). She tells us that the worst fate that child messiah is subjected to is not death, but the loss of childhood. The child messiah must sacrifice not their life, but their childhood, in order to save the world:

It is the ultimate irony that the Child Messiah is not permitted to be childlike, and must forego the essence of the 'child' identity in order to fulfill the messianic destiny. In this they have no choice—the idea of the 'fated' or prophesied Child Messiah removes agency from the child. Their heroic destiny is literally forced upon them...In any case, Child Messiahs cannot turn their backs on an imperilled world, particularly as they are invariably burdened by the traits of decency and selflessness (108).

Chowdhury focuses only on Philip Pullman’s *His Dark Materials* trilogy and *Ender’s Game*, but her argument can be superficially applied to the *Harry Potter* series and the rest of Card’s texts. Like Chowdhury says, Harry and Ender and Bean all reach a point of “decency” and “selflessness.” They are aware of their responsibility from a very early age, and thus sacrifice their childhood, which Chowdhury defines as the state of being unbound by social and legal obligations. Chowdhury attempts to distance her definition of childhood from “works such as Wordsworth's 'Imitations' ode, where the child is almost divine in its innocence.” (108). However, her argument depends on the Romantic paradigm; we will address this later. In *The Deathly Hallows*, Harry says, “I’m going to keep going until I succeed — or die. Don’t think I don’t know how this might end. I’ve known it for years” (568-569). Even though he does not

know until the end of the final book that victory over Voldemort must end in the sacrifice of his own life, Harry admits to knowing that it might be that way even before he is explicitly told. He lives for years with this unspoken knowledge, and like Chowdhury says, this leads to a sacrificed childhood. Ender, though he does not know when he is going to face the Formics, knows that he is being groomed to lead soldiers to war. From the moment he walks onto a space shuttle on his way to Battle School, he is isolated by Graff, the man in charge of Ender's special education and is told:

“Human beings are free except when humanity needs them. Maybe humanity needs you. To do something. Maybe humanity needs *me*—to find out what you're good for. We might both do despicable things, Ender, but if humankind survives, then we were good tools”
(*Ender's Game*, 35).

Like Harry, Ender is not explicitly told what he is expected to do, but he is not spared the knowledge that his purpose is to save the world. At six years old, he is told that he is different, and the knowledge of his responsibility, again, leads to the sacrificed childhood that Chowdhury describes. It is also interesting to note Graff's use of the word, “tools,” a somewhat dehumanizing word. He includes himself as one of the tools in this statement, although later, the dynamic shifts and Ender becomes the tool that Graff, as a representative of humanity, uses. But this excerpt suggests that no individual is safe from being used when humanity needs them, whether they are child or adult.

Bean is marked by the adults as the “safety net:” if Ender proved unable to complete his task, then it was Bean's job to complete the mission. Bean is the only “child messiah” of the three to know the whole truth of his mission: “Bean wanted to demand [of Ender]...Have you finally seen and understood who I am? That I'm *you*, only smarter and less likeable, the better

strategist but the weaker commander? That if you fail, if you break, if you get sick and die, then I'm the one?" (*Ender's Shadow*, 296). Bean's genetic alteration gives him unparalleled intelligence, which means he finds things out despite the adults' attempts to keep knowledge from him. His intelligence, his ability to analyze and strategize, and the need that arose for infant Bean to preserve his own life, are all factors that kept Bean from having a childhood that Chowdhury defines, thus he too sacrifices his childhood. These characters all experience great responsibility and sacrifice at a young age; and this is not dissimilar to the responsibility that the literary romantic child is framed by and is burdened with; and their acceptance of the burden is a part of their romanticized nobility.

The three characters who sacrificed their childhood, all ultimately participate in the salvation of humanity, but seem not to have much agency. Their choices are limited by the situations that are constructed by adults. Ender defeats the alien race and destroys their home planet, thinking that he is playing a computer game to practice strategy. He is horrified when he learns what he did, and the adults tell him that if he had known that he were commanding real people to kill an entire race of aliens, he couldn't have done it. They also tell him that the commander had to be a child:

“And it had to be a child, Ender...you were reckless and brilliant and young. It's what you were born for...”

“You had to be a weapon, Ender. Like a gun, like the Little Doctor, functioning perfectly but not knowing what you were aimed at. *We* aimed you. We're responsible. If there was something wrong, we did it.” (*Ender's Game*, 298).

In this passage, Card has his adult characters admit to the way they used Ender for his brilliance and for his recklessness. They tell him that saving the world is what he was born for—his only

purpose is this responsibility for the future of mankind. That's a rather heavy responsibility for an eleven-year old, and it echoes the responsibility that authors heap onto their symbolic romantic children. Card's adults go on to call Ender a weapon. They dehumanize Ender, describing him as an object of destruction, rather than a human being. This is problematic to the reader, who has followed Ender, and knows that he is a character full of intelligent thoughts and deep emotions. Card allows the reader to see the dishonesty and contradictions in using a child as a symbol and taking away his humanity. The comparison of Ender to a gun is further complicated by Graff's (the speaker's) parental feelings for Ender. He is worried for Ender's well-being, and clearly tells Ender that humanity makes exceptions when their future is at stake. Torn between his love for Ender and his desire to preserve his own innocence, Graff makes the decision to distance himself from that affection and treat Ender like a weapon.

Harry begins to realize in the final book of the series that Dumbledore kept much from him. Pieces of Voldemort's soul were split and kept in various magical objects, called Horcruxes—but right before he faces Voldemort himself, Harry learns that one piece of soul is attached to himself, and that he must die in order for Voldemort to be overthrown. He learns that Dumbledore suspected it for years and kept this information from him, raising him, in Snape's words, "like a pig for slaughter" (687). Harry responds to this revelation calmly but cynically:

Dumbledore's betrayal was almost nothing...He had never questioned that Dumbledore wanted him alive. Now he saw that his life span had always been determined by how long it took to eliminate all the Horcruxes. Dumbledore had passed the job of destroying them to him, and obediently he had continued to chip away at the bonds tying not only Voldemort, but himself, to life! How neat, how elegant, not to waste any more lives, but to give the dangerous task to the boy who had already been marked

for slaughter, and whose death should not be a calamity, but another blow against Voldemort.

And Dumbledore knew that Harry would not duck out, because he had taken trouble to get to know him, hadn't he? (*Deathly Hallows*, 692, 693).

Harry had always felt close to Dumbledore. He was a parental figure, and Harry mourned his death as much, if not more, than the other parental figures whose deaths he had to endure. This revelation made Harry question his loyalty to the deceased headmaster, but not his commitment to the mission he was assigned. Harry walks willingly towards death and chooses to sacrifice himself, but his choices are limited. Like Ender, Harry is the one who has to take action, but as Chowdhury argues, his “heroic destiny is literally forced” on him. Also like Graff’s love for Ender, this is complicated by Dumbledore’s affection for Harry, as well as Dumbledore’s insistence on the importance of choice. In Harry’s fifth year, Dumbledore explains his desire to protect Harry from knowing his fate, and its consequences: “‘I cared about you too much,’ Dumbledore said simply. ‘I cared more for your happiness than your knowing the truth, more for your life than the lives that might be lost if the plan failed. In other words, I acted exactly as Voldemort expects we fools who love to act’” (*Order of the Phoenix*, 838). Dumbledore freely admits his fatherly affection for Harry, and this complicates the comparison of Harry to a pig. He loves Harry, but knows that for the sake of the wizarding world, Harry must be sacrificed. Therefore, like Graff, Dumbledore makes the decision to send Harry to certain death, for the sake of the whole.

Chowdhury argues that the child messiahs have little agency, and thus their worst fate is the burden of responsibility at a young age, which leads to the loss of childhood, in the romantic sense. However, these texts push back against her reading: Dumbledore impresses upon Harry

the importance of choice. It isn't he who ultimately forces Harry to make the sacrifice, but Harry himself. Chowdhury argues that this limited decision is not agency at all, but Rowling's sixth book pushes back against her statement:

But he understood at last what Dumbledore had been trying to tell him. It was, he thought, the difference between being dragged into the arena to face a battle to the death and walking into the arena with your head held high. Some people, perhaps, would say that there was little to choose between the two ways, but Dumbledore knew—*and so do I*, thought Harry, with a rush of fierce pride, *and so did my parents*—that there was all the difference in the world (*Half-Blood Prince*, 512).

While Harry and Ender and Bean are left with little agency besides acting as child messiah, Rowling's texts seem to argue that this little agency is enough for Harry to be a hero instead of a pawn. These excerpts argue that Dumbledore's affection, and his insistence upon choice relieve him of some fault; they make his actions more forgivable. This extends to Card's texts as well: Bean is aware of the adult's deceit while Ender is not. Bean's agency extends only enough for him to decide not to let it affect his work and choose not to share his knowledge with the other children. These choices are difficult ones to make, because he knows that Ender's actions will lead to the demise of an entire alien race, as well as the lives of the soldiers he commands.

Again, his agency does not extend far, but gives him an appreciation of the sacrifice of others:

On those ships, thought Bean, there are individual men who gave up homes and families, the world of their birth, in order to cross a great swatch of the galaxy and make war on a terrible enemy. Somewhere along the way they're bound to understand that Ender's strategy requires them all to die...And yet we who command them, we children in

these elaborate game machines, have no idea of their courage, their sacrifice. We cannot give them the honor they deserve, because we don't even know they exist.

Except for me (*Ender's Shadow*, 453).

Card's texts, like Rowling's, suggest that what little agency their protagonists have, make a big difference. Bean is able to send a message to the soldiers awaiting death, quoting for them an excerpt from 2 Samuel 9:14 in the Bible, in the hopes of conveying how Bean valued each soldier's life: "O my son Absalom,' Bean said softly, knowing for the first time the kind of anguish that could tear such words from a man's mouth. My son, my son Absalom. Would God I could die for thee'...He had paraphrased it a little, but God would understand" (454). While the adults intend for those soldiers to die without a thought, Bean's agency allows him to acknowledge them as heroes. In Rowling's texts, Harry becomes a hero through his little agency; in Card's, Bean's agency allows all who fought to become heroes. It is also interesting that in this excerpt, the anguish is torn from a man's heart, rather than from a child's, and he chooses to quote this verse, which, in the repetition of "my son" equates the soldiers to his own sons. Perhaps Bean considers himself responsible for the lives of the soldiers who are seconds from death, and he thus sees himself as a parent.

The Boundaries Between Childhood and Adulthood

It seems that Rowling's definition of adulthood is more aligned with the accepted societal notions demarcating adulthood than Card's. Card's characters seemed to enter into adulthood with no mention of any legal age of adulthood. In the *Ender* series, Ender skips from being a young adolescent to a middle-aged man. There is no mention of him between the ages of twelve and forty. In the *Shadow* series, Bean's growth is very different from everyone else's. He is born genetically altered, which means that his brain and body never stop growing. He is doomed to

die before he reaches the age of twenty-three. He looks like a toddler for a very long time, even though his brain works as an adult's, and then he speeds through puberty. He gets married and has children and his age isn't mentioned for several books—and then when it is mentioned, we learn that he is still only seventeen years old.

It's a similar story with all the Battle School graduates in the *Ender* and *Shadow* series, except for Petra, Bean's eventual wife. They come back to earth and are enlisted to fight the adults' world war. On Earth, they are forced to make war against each other, and if they are brilliant and succeed the adults get the praise, and if they fail, the children are blamed. Even so, some of them are at least symbolic leaders of countries, some of them get married. They act in a way that is typically considered adult, but they still have a “Battle School grads” vs “the adults” vernacular, and it seems that they are unable to grow up until they leave earth and colonize other planets.

It seemed simple enough to argue that Card could not bridge the gap between childhood and adulthood. However, both Card's and Rowling's texts call into question the transition between adulthood and childhood by depicting the contradictory quality of socially accepted boundaries between childhood and adulthood. The *Ender* and *Show* series focus on identifications of responsibility, respect, parenthood, and sexual maturity, and the *Harry Potter* series focuses on experience, age, and sacrifice. All three series also include knowledge as a sign of maturity.

In looking at the way some of the characters view themselves in the process of moving from childhood to adulthood, we begin to see that the children have different definitions of adulthood themselves. Ender's brother Peter, for instance, seems to believe that the physical process of puberty is one aspect of moving from adolescence into adulthood: ““Not bad for two

kids who've only got about eight pubic hairs between them,' Peter said," in reference to his and his sister Valentine's writing having gotten adult respect (*Ender's Game*, 138). Card chose to bring attention to the words "pubic hairs" specifically, which highlights not only their early pubescent states but also Peter's knowledge of sexuality. Peter seems to think that sexual maturity will be the point when society will consider him an adult.

Valentine Wiggin, on the other hand, seems to focus more on the relationship between adult and child rather than attempt to define childhood and adulthood. In an offhand comment to Peter, she says, "Peter, you're twelve years old. I'm ten. They have a word for people our age. They call us children and they treat us like mice" (127). The word "mice" has many connotations: first, it is an animal. Describing children as mice dehumanizes them, which turns children into symbols instead of people. Mice are also very small. They are prey, they are vermin, they attract disgust and absolutely no respect, and aren't considered very smart. They are also considered domestic animals, which allows us to bring in Arendt's discussion of the child as a place of refuge. In a single word, Valentine says that adults both romanticize children and are disgusted by them. Lastly, mice are often used for experimenting with, which Valentine has indirect experience with, because of Ender. In her life, she has been told that children are expendable, that there should only be two children in each family, unless the government deems it necessary for a family to have more. And on the whim of adults, a sibling can be pulled away from his family. His own parents don't seem to give a second thought to him: they move to the country, away from the "last place Ender would know to find them."

While Peter considers physical adulthood the point at which he will be respected as an adult and Valentine focuses on how adults treat children, one of the students in Battle School, Dink Meeker, has a different view of the distinction between childhood and adulthood:

“I know, you've been here a year, you think these people are normal. Well, they're not. WE'RE not. I look in the library, I call up books on my desk. Old ones, because they won't let us have anything new, but I've got a pretty good idea what children are, and we're not children. Children can lose sometimes, and nobody cares. Children aren't in armies, they aren't COMMANDERS, they don't rule over forty other kids, it's more than anybody can take and not get crazy” (108).

This is a very telling excerpt—it tells us how Card sets up the Battle School students to have atypical childhoods. However, Dink is unable to say clearly what childhood is. Sandra Day tells us that rather than focus on the definition, “he focuses on what these children are that they should *not* be....Dink’s commentary...approaches a definition of childhood against its apparent opposite. Although he does not emphasize innocence, as the adults implicitly do, his view of childhood is based on his understanding that children should be free of the burden of responsibility because their actions should not be treated as having weight or worth” (“Liars and Cheats: Crossing the Lines of Childhood, Adulthood, and Morality in Ender’s Game,” 216). Children, to Dink, should be allowed to make mistakes. Like Chowdhury, Dink argues that the Battle School students are being forced to give up their childhood, their freedom from responsibility. Day goes on to argue that Card’s depiction of Dink suggests the shared construction of childhood and adulthood between children and adults. While it has become clear that adults unfairly project the desire for innocence onto children, Dink is also projecting his own expectations of childhood onto the title “child.” He is resentful that his own childhood does not match up to this “shared construction.”

Day’s reading of Dink’s “shared construction” of childhood can also be applied to Rowling’s texts. In *Order of the Phoenix*, Harry, full of adolescent angst and unexpressed resentment towards Dumbledore, finally confronts him. When Dumbledore reacts unexpectedly,

by sighing and covering his face with his hands, Harry “felt even angrier that Dumbledore was showing signs of weakness. He had no business being weak when Harry wanted to rage and storm” (834). Harry knows that his outburst is immature, but the way Dumbledore is acting: like his anger is valid, showing weakness and preparing to explain, does not allow Harry to stay in that immature state. Part of Harry’s anger at Dumbledore at this point is in his refusal to allow Harry to stay in the position of child in this interaction. Harry sees that Dumbledore means to treat him as an equal, and the discomfort of taking away the childhood expectations fuels his anger. This is a form of negotiated construction that Day describes with Dink.

Bean, as a character who is not necessarily human, again has a different perspective on adulthood and childhood. He thinks that adulthood has to do with order and responsibility. In a conversation with Sister Carlotta, the nun who “discovered” him, he “looked at her like she was crazy. ‘Isn't that what it means to be civilized? That you can wait to get what you want?’”(52). From the perspective of the adults, the children on the street had absolutely no civilization until Achilles, “the civilizer,” started changing things. It was about the clarity of organization, and the figurehead. But for Bean, civilization means waiting to get what you want. Both he and Sister Carlotta agree that Achilles is a “civilizer,” but for different reasons. This shows Bean’s mistrust in civilized people, and therefore adults. He assumes that everyone is selfish and seeking “what they want.” Once the streets of Rotterdam became “civilized,” the children became split into “papas” and the kids. The title “papa” was earned once the bigger kid began taking care of his “family.” It was the responsibility that defined them as quasi-adults.

Because he comes from a society that does not depend on adults, Bean seems to think of adulthood as a much more fluid concept. By creating a society “emancipated from the authority of adults,” Arendt argues that Card runs the risk of subjecting the child to “a much more

terrifying and truly tyrannical authority, the tyranny of the majority,” for children cannot reason (5). However toxic and tyrannical this society might be, Bean succeeds in creating a society where the older kids take care of the younger ones, where his life is temporarily secure. By placing children in the role of parent, Bean preserves his own life, so he seems to do the same thing when he reaches Battle School. He seems to think of Ender as an adult or potential surrogate father, maybe even a Christ figure. He sees Ender’s shortcomings, but decides that Ender is somebody to look up to anyway. He sees the way people react to Ender, and notices how they respond differently to himself. He also desperately wants to be loved and noticed by Ender. Bean does not react to any fully grown adults the way he does to Ender. An adult, to Bean, is somebody who wins his respect, and takes care of those weaker than him. In Rotterdam, the bullies became “papa’s” when they took care of younger children. This term was created by Achilles, but it seems like Bean’s admiration for Ender echoes the admiration children had for Achilles on the streets. To Bean, an adult or someone in a parental position is responsible, cares for the well-being of those under him, and inspires emotional loyalty. While Ender and Achilles are young, they take on these adult responsibilities. Perhaps Ender is the successful version of a parent in Card’s eyes, while Achilles (a charming, psychopathic serial killer) is not. Bean wants somebody to fit into a parental role, and therefore projects some expectations of adulthood onto Ender. But Ender fills the shoes pretty well—Bean was looking for certain characteristics to match his expectation, and found them in Ender. In Card’s series, children, especially Ender, have some qualities that could be characterized as childish as well as mature qualities. Other characters project onto them, and they also project how they want to be seen. Bean’s projection onto Ender, another example of Day’s description of shared construction, is as equally romantic as adults’ projection onto children in Card’s texts. This shared construction, and the projection of

adult roles onto children by children, blurs the lines between childhood and adulthood. Child characters have typically adult characteristics in Card's texts, which calls into question the popular definitions of adulthood and childhood.

Though Bean is depicted as a tough, independent character, he also desperately needs somebody to act as a parent to him, which is why we see his attachment to Ender. When Bean meets his biological parents for the first time, and they welcome him with joy, the reader is offered a glimpse of the extreme relief he feels. His father speaks in Greek, and his brother translates it for him. Bean recognizes the quotation as a favorite of Sister Carlotta and repeats it:

“Let us eat, and be merry, for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.” Then the little one burst into tears and clung to his mother and kissed his father's hand” (467).

Bean, the orphan, who grew up on the streets of Rotterdam, always the smallest, always the Other, not quite human, never accepted by his peers, and with the exception of Sister Carlotta, never loved by adults. Sometimes feared, often hated. Card also reminds us in this passage that Bean is little, he is young. His reaction to his parents' elated acceptance puts his isolation and struggle for survival into sharp relief, but also echoes the need of the child to be accepted and loved by the adult. In this scene, it seems like Card is depicting adults as they *should* be acting, if they are placed and framed as children are. It reveals the hope and expectation that adults comfort and protect those weaker than they, and reminds us of Day's reading of Dink's statement: that childhood and adulthood are shared constructs. Harry shows a similar longing in *The Goblet of Fire*:

Mrs. Weasley set the potion down on the bedside cabinet, bent down, and put her arms around Harry. He had no memory of ever being hugged like this, as though by a

mother. The full weight of everything he had seen that night seemed to fall in upon him as Mrs. Weasley held him to her. His mother's face, his father's voice, the sight of Cedric, dead on the ground all started spinning in his head until he could hardly bear it, until he was screwing up his face against the howl of misery fighting to get out of him.

There was a loud slamming noise, and Mrs. Weasley and Harry broke apart (714). Unlike Bean, Harry does not receive the relief of being held and letting go of the burden of responsibility by crying. His reaction to being held by an adult who loves him is just as indicative of Harry's desire for somebody to act as a parent to him. While he may not necessarily expect Mrs. Weasley to act as a parent to him, his response reveals the desire and expectation of being comforted by the adult. He wants to be taken care of, and perhaps because of our own romantic expectations, this moment is all the more heartbreaking because it is cut short.

Rowling allows her child characters to grow up in what seems to be a more consistent way. The readers watch every moment from ages 10-17, the point when wizards and witches “come of age.” Harry moves from being a parentless child who wants to belong, to finding a place where he belongs and can have fun exploring with his friends, to going through the emotional angst of adolescence, magnified because of the existence of Lord Voldemort, to wanting to preserve the world to which he belongs. Harry seems to have more desire to complete his mission than Ender and Bean do. His agency, though limited, seems to mean more to him, so his investment is higher. Rowling shows the progression of life and responsibility. This could be because she had ample development time for her characters, but it is clear that her adolescents become adults at a more traditional age than Card's.

At a time when Harry is arguably most unlikable, he reveals his own definition of adulthood:

“I’VE BEEN STUCK AT THE DURSLEY’S FOR A MONTH! AND I’VE HANDLED MORE THAN YOU TWO’VE EVER MANAGED AND DUMBLEDORE KNOWS IT —WHO SAVED THE SORCERER’S STONE? WHO GOT RID OF RIDDLE? WHO SAVED BOTH YOUR SKINS FROM DEMENTORS?” (*Order of the Phoenix*, 67).

Harry seems to think that his experience should allow him more access to knowledge. Because he’s experienced more things than his friends have, he deserves to be told what’s going on—which is a mark of respect given to adults. This means, to Harry, experience and knowledge are not the same, but they should come in conjunction with each other. The fact that they do not is upsetting to him.

All of Rowling's and Card's protagonists desire knowledge and either resent adults for keeping it from them, or go about finding knowledge on their own. Adults seem to keep knowledge from them for myriad reasons, including power as well as the loving desire to preserve innocence. The person with authority is usually the one with knowledge, and the child is never in a position of authority. This causes a strange relationship between children and adults, because the child resents the withholding of knowledge, while the adults either keep it from them out of love or out of the desire to remain powerful. In some cases, the interactions in these texts between children and adults are rather antagonistic, and the adults are the ones coming off as unreasonable. Harry’s first experience with adults withholding information from him comes from his aunt and uncle:

The only thing Harry liked about his own appearance was a very thin scar on his forehead that was shaped like a bolt of lightning. He had it as long as he could remember, and the first question he could ever remember asking his Aunt Petunia was how he had gotten it. “In the car crash when your parents died,” she had said. “And don’t ask questions.”

Don't ask questions—that was the first rule for a quiet life with the Dursleys. (*Sorcerer's Stone*, 21).

At this point in the series, the Dursleys are the only adults in his life. It's interesting to note that they are absolutely against telling the truth to Harry, because they think that the truth will make him “not normal.” In this case, lying to Harry is literally keeping Harry from his power, and figuratively keeping Harry from discovering his own agency. As Harry's tale progresses, he comes into contact with various other adults with varying degrees of the same opinion. This can be compared to Ender's attitude toward adults:

“It was a lie, of course, that it wouldn't hurt a bit. But since adults always said it when it *was* going to hurt, he could count on that statement as an accurate prediction of the future. Sometimes lies were more dependable than the truth” (*Ender's Game*, 2).

Ender doesn't trust adults from the very beginning. He only expects interference when something serves their purpose. Ender especially focuses on knowledge—he seems to resent adults for either keeping knowledge from him or distorting it in some way, especially because they expect so much from the students at Battle School. He has come to expect lies, and believes them to be more dependable than the truth—at least from adults.

Ender believes that he will be an adult once adults begin to communicate with him without holding anything back. He is forced to find new ways of gaining information—by scheming and being resourceful and trusting his analytical mind. Ender reacts towards the adults with frustration, resentment and anger—and then by circumventing the system to receive knowledge anyway. The common denominator seems to be the fact that adults do not trust children with knowledge because they are afraid of its effect on them. Like Ender, Bean pursues knowledge without letting adults impede him. He tells Graff, “after this conversation, you may

be sure that I'll be looking very hard for any secret that might be lying around where a seven-year-old might find it" (*Ender's Shadow*, 424). Unlike Ender, there Bean has no real resentment towards adults attempting to keep information from him, and he's very upfront about his desire to discover the truth. This is in keeping with the way Bean seems mostly unaffected by adults, except for the ones he decides deserve his trust.

Knowledge is also kept from Harry time and time again, out of love, or out of a desire to prolong Harry's childhood:

"The truth." Dumbledore sighed. "It is a beautiful and terrible thing, and should therefore be treated with great caution. However, I shall answer your questions unless I have a very good reason not to, in which case I beg you'll forgive me. I shall not, of course, lie."

(*Sorcerer's Stone*, 299).

Immediately following this, Harry asks Dumbledore why Voldemort wanted to kill Harry in the first place, and Dumbledore apologizes, but refrains from answering him. Harry realizes the futility in arguing, and keeps his mouth shut. Dumbledore keeps information from Harry, but in a gentle, digestible way. He seems to have Harry's best interest in mind, and, although Harry wants to fight for the information, he trusts Dumbledore enough to accept his judgment. The relationship between children and adults, for the most part, is much more cordial in the *Harry Potter* series than in the *Ender* series and *Shadow* series. Although he doesn't trust all adults. Harry has mutual trust and respect for some adults, which doesn't seem to exist in the either of Card's series. Harry has no reason to trust adults in the way he does—his only frame of reference is the Dursleys. It isn't the adulthood that makes Harry obedient, but the fact that Dumbledore seems to respect him and value his opinion. Although Dumbledore keeps things from him, he is forthright and does not lie, and promises the information at a later time.

Harry pushes back against others who decide to keep information from him for his own good, however. In *The Order of the Phoenix*, Mrs. Weasley is very adamant about keeping underage wizards from knowing the issues of The Order. In this scene Mrs. Weasley is portrayed as irrational and rather hysterical (89-91). From the perspective of Harry who has been kept in the dark all summer and who has ample experience, her rigid concepts about age are stifling. Mrs. Weasley does not offer any reasons for her wanting them to be kept out of it, except for the one repeated argument: "You're too young." Because Mrs. Weasley is portrayed so, as the only one who is in favor of defending innocence through ignorance, and all other characters take a stance against her, Rowling displays her own opinion that age and authority should not be a reason to keep information from someone.

Mrs. Weasley has a say in what her own children can and cannot hear. She even has authority over Hermione, acting as a surrogate mother. However, Harry essentially grew up without a guardian and his current guardian is in the same room as them. It seems, in this situation, Harry is choosing who deserves authority in his life. For instance, in order to be part of a family, one has to have respect for authority within that family. Mrs. Weasley is irrational, but she is the mother, and Ginny is forced to listen to her, however grudgingly. As Sirius points out, Harry is "not [her] son. (90)." In this scene, Harry chooses not to give Mrs. Weasley authority over him. He therefore receives what he wants, but a line is drawn. At this moment, he chooses not to treat Mrs. Weasley like a mother, but temporarily separates himself from Mrs. Weasley in the process. Of course, just like the relationship between Dumbledore and Harry, and Graff and Ender, Harry's relationship with Mrs. Weasley is also complicated by love. Only a few chapters later, Harry encounters Mrs. Weasley facing off against a boggart, a magical household pest that takes the image of the viewer's worst fear, taking the shape of each of her family members in

turn—and Harry (175, 176). She makes it clear on several occasions that she sees Harry as her own son. Harry responds to this by reciprocating affection. Although he desires knowledge, Harry realizes that Mrs. Weasley’s attempts to keep him from it stem from worry and love, and this makes her “misguided” actions forgivable to Harry, though he still chooses not to defer to her opinion. This series of events suggests that part of growing up for sons is separation from the mother.

Card challenges these ideas of what makes an adult and what makes a child by blurring boundaries: his children have both “adult” and “childlike” thoughts and actions. Day, in “Liars and Cheats,” focuses on these blurred lines, but also discusses the complicated relationship between adults and children. She brings attention to adult’s dependence on children in the book: “adults’ ability and willingness to lie to children reveals an implicit construction of childhood, in that adults assume that children will lack the ability to perceive dishonesty, that children need to be protected from the truth, and that it is more important for adults to control children’s behaviours, even through deception, than it is for the children to have access to information and a potential freedom of movement.” At the same time, “adults...are totally dependent upon the guidance and orders of others; they rely on someone else (in this case, a child) to protect and save them; and, most importantly, they retain the possibility of moral goodness, innocence, and trust, even as they make morally questionable decisions in their treatment of Ender in their final battle” (219-220). This, more than anything, blurs the line of childhood, adulthood and the romantic. The adults in the book give all of the responsibility of killing to the children, and are able to retain their own innocence, making them more childlike than the Battle School children. In order to preserve their own innocence, they must frame and define childhood in a way that is advantageous to themselves. Day says that Card acknowledges the difference between children

and adults, but he challenges boundaries, especially ones that insist upon a definition of childhood.

The *Harry Potter* series shows similarities to the *Ender* and *Shadow* series in that the protagonists resent the adults for keeping knowledge from them. This might be because keeping knowledge from the child heroes is indicative of a lack of respect. In the attempt to save the innocence of children, some adults are unable to see what knowledge is necessary to share, assuming that all children should be treated the same. This is indicative of romanticizing children, and the child protagonists push back against this adult tendency. However, they do not necessarily have power to change the situation—and even when adults do decide to share information with Harry and his friends, the information is highly censored. In *Order of the Phoenix*, Harry and his friends want to know what Voldemort is planning and what is being done to stop him, and after a heated struggle, the adults share some information with them. The children are not told anything they hadn't guessed already, however (99).

Rowling's underage characters often exhibit the desire to be treated as adults, but are kept from participating because they have not turned seventeen yet. Harry is allowed to be protected by living in his aunt and uncle's house only until he turns seventeen; all magical traces are lifted once a wizard or witch turns seventeen; apparition, or traveling through thin air, which requires a permit, is allowed after the age of seventeen. Because she is underage, Ginny is the only Weasley not allowed to take part in the final battle between good and evil in the seventh book. This dependence on age is sometimes depicted as problematic: Harry and Dumbledore set off to find one of Voldemort's Horcruxes and the magic does not register Harry's presence because he is underage at the time. Dumbledore notices Harry's offense at this, and tells him, "Voldemort's mistake, Harry, Voldemort's mistake...Age is foolish and forgetful when it underestimates

youth” (*Half-Blood Prince*, 563-564). Nevertheless, in Rowling’s universe, children are legally and magically accepted as adults after the age of seventeen—not before. But the arbitrary age limit is also called into question in Rowling’s series: in *The Goblet of Fire*, fourteen-year-old Harry qualifies for the Triwizard tournament, only open to students over the age of seventeen, by fluke. He is bound by magic to compete, even though he does not want to. Throughout much of the book, Harry is ridiculed for being so small, so inexperienced. He is helped through the tournament by various different people, but he is not the only one: he is told that “cheating’s a traditional part of the Triwizard Tournament and always has been,” and he wins (343). Does he win because a follower of Lord Voldemort posing as a professor fixed the competition? Does he win because of the help of professors and friends, or because, despite his age, he is as adept as the other competitors? The text gives us no definitive answer, and the distinction between age and adulthood is once again called into question, and he subsequently claims authority based on this expertise.

The lines between childhood and adulthood are blurred by the contradiction between age and maturity by the discussion that arises out of Harry’s involvement in the Triwizard Tournament, but it is also called into question through Voldemort’s description in the same book:

It was as though Wormtail had flipped over a stone and revealed something ugly, slimy, and blind—but worse, a hundred times worse. The thing Wormtail had been carrying had the shape of a crouched human child, except that Harry had never seen anything less like a child. It was hairless and scaly-looking, a dark, raw, reddish black. Its arms and legs were thin and feeble, and its face—no child alive ever had a face like that—flat and snakelike, with gleaming red eyes (640).

Rowling brings back the imagery of the unnatural child to describe evil. He is described with childlike features, and thus Voldemort is at once tied to childhood, yet “no child alive had a face like that.” This is clearly what Warner calls a violation of the image of the romantic child, making this description very unsettling. Also, Voldemort’s physical form in this scene is indicative of his internal self. He is arrested, emotionally not grown up, stuck in the narcissistic stage of childhood. This description, while unsettling, contributes to Rowling’s definition of adulthood. Voldemort, while he is technically an adult, has not gone beyond the narcissistic stage of love, and he is thus not grown up. For Rowling, adulthood is caught up with degrees of selflessness. Harry reaches a point where he chooses to sacrifice himself for the sake of the world that he loves, and is thus more mature than Voldemort, despite his age.

Like Voldemort’s younger self, Tom Riddle, Achilles is depicted as a handsome, charming boy who easily gains the affection of adults. He is called a “civilizer,” because, like Bean says, he can wait to get what he wants. Like Voldemort, Achilles is absolutely selfish. He cannot bear for another person to think of him as weak, so he systematically kills everyone who sees him in a compromising state. Achilles believes that “the universe [was] created to serve him, with all the people in it tuned to resonate with his desires” (*Ender’s Shadow*, 374). Like Rowling, Card’s texts depict selflessness as mature, and the inability to develop selflessness a mark of the deranged and dangerous.

Rowling’s texts suggest that the coming-of-age process has to do with the willingness to sacrifice, and thus the development of charity and love. Sirius Black tells the Weasley twins who are worried about the health of their father who underwent a serious snake attack, “This is how it is—this is why you’re not in the Order—you don’t understand—there are things worth dying for!”(477). Sirius draws a distinction between childhood and adulthood, even though he wants

Harry to have access to knowledge. His view of childhood doesn't seem to be romantic, he just seems to think that children's way of viewing and processing things are different. To Sirius, children aren't able to understand the concept of sacrifice. This is an interesting, plausible way to think about childhood. The point where Harry is willing to sacrifice himself is when he really becomes an adult. The texts stray from Chowdhury's argument: she argues that child messiahs do not have agency and are sacrificed by adults, but the characters of Rowling's and Card's texts decide to sacrifice themselves. They reach a point where they choose sacrifice, for the greater good, and this marks the characters' movement into adulthood.

Of course, Rowling blurs the line of maturity even more. Characters move between immaturity and maturity, because there is no clear, absolute moment when a character has reached adulthood. Sirius Black, Harry's godfather, is regarded by many of the adult and child characters to be immature and rash. Instead of seeing Harry as a child who needs to be nurtured and taught, Sirius is often accused of treating him as a best friend with whom to break the rules (*Order of the Phoenix*, 89, 377-378). Dumbledore describes Harry's relationship to Sirius as "a mixture of father and brother" (831). He is not depicted as absolutely adult, even though he is the same age as Harry's father and many of his professors, and even though he considers sacrifice a sign of maturity. Hagrid, half man, half giant, with his illogical love for highly dangerous magical creatures and his inability to keep a secret, with his broken wand, hidden in a frilly umbrella, is technically a fully grown wizard. But he is under worse restrictions than underage wizards, not allowed to practice magic following his unfair expulsion from Hogwarts. Likewise, twelve-year-old Ron Weasley sacrifices himself in a very violent life-size game of chess in order for Harry to stop Voldemort from returning in the first book (283).

The *Harry Potter*, *Ender* and *Shadow* series seem to be telling us that children can make very mature, adult-like actions, and adults can be immature. The definitions of childhood and adulthood seem to have both fluid and static components.

The Child and His Shadow

While Card and Rowling's series focus on different aspects of adulthood that might be used to define the distinction between childhood and adulthood, those same aspects are contradicted in the same texts. If we only look at these facets of childhood and maturity, it seems that there is no distinction between childhood and adulthood. These obvious traits of childhood and adulthood are only surface-level, however. I argue that in both sets of text, the process through which the protagonists accept their own shadows marks the point where each moves from childhood into adulthood. Le Guin's presentation of Jung's theory is useful in finding a more consistent moment of transition into adulthood in Rowling's and Card's texts.

According to Le Guin, many fantasy books depict the shadow as a being outside of the child, like a familiar, and most great works of fantasy seem to be about the journey of accepting one's shadow as a part of growing up:

The normal adolescent...begins to take responsibility for his acts and feelings. And with it he often shoulders a terrible load of guilt...The only way for a youngster to get past the paralyzing self-blame and self-disgust of this stage is really to look at that shadow, to face it, warts and fangs and pimples and claws and all—to accept it as himself—as *part* of himself. The ugliest part, but not the weakest. For the shadow is the guide. The guide inward and out again, downward and up again...The guide of the journey to self-knowledge, to adulthood, to the light (“The Child and the Shadow,” 65).

If we look at these scenes through the lens Le Guin provides, we realize that the process of maturity, tied up in knowledge of oneself, happens in both Rowling and Card's work. Ender especially struggles with guilt when he sees himself displaying violent tendencies, afraid that he is just like Peter, his brother who terrorized him and threatened to kill him:

“He hadn't meant to kill the Giant. This was supposed to be a game. Not a choice between his own grisly death and an even worse murder. I'm a murderer, even when I play. Peter would be proud of me” (65).

In this passage, Ender is playing a therapeutic video game that allows adults to analyze what is going on psychologically with the Battle School students. Here, it seems that Peter represents Ender's “shadow” in Le Guin's sense of the word: all that has been repressed in the process of becoming a positive member of society, all that would make him a social outcast, his urge for violence and pain. Le Guin says that in order to fully become an adult and reach deeper realms of the self, one must accept the shadow as a part of oneself. While growing up, there is so much guilt and fear when one glimpses that part of himself out of the corner of his eye, but it isn't half so bad as really looking upon this dark reflection. Ender doesn't seem to be able to do that. His worst fear is being meaninglessly cruel like Peter. To Ender, the name “Peter” is synonymous with “murderer” or “monster.” We later see Peter as a relatively well-adjusted man, and even in this first book, we are treated to some emotional moments that convince us that Ender's perception of Peter is at least slightly skewed. And he is never able to accept Peter, or fully trust him. In a different part of the video game, however, Ender is able to accept what might be considered his shadow. In the video game, he comes across a serpent in a tower. When he had visited the tower before, he had ground it underfoot. He had also watched the pixelated version of Peter devour the snake. But this time, Ender does something different:

This time he caught it in his hands, knelt before it, and gently, so gently, brought the snake's gaping mouth to his lips.

And kissed.

He had not meant to do that...then the snake in his hands thickened and bent into another shape. A human shape. It was Valentine, and she kissed him again. The snake could not be Valentine. He had killed it too often for it to be his sister. Peter had devoured it too often for Ender to bear that it might have been Valentine all along...Together, arm in arm, he and Valentine walked down the stairs. Tears filled his eyes...And because of the tears, he didn't notice that every member of the multitude wore Peter's face. He only knew that wherever he went in this world, Valentine was with him (152).

The fact that Card chose for Ender to kiss a snake makes for a very interesting conversation. The imagery of a snake is related to many things: first, the fall of man. The serpent represents temptation, and by kissing it, Ender is somehow succumbing to that temptation. This passage also mentions that Ender overlooked the snake, crushed it under his feet, watched as Peter devoured it, more horrified with Peter's presence than his action. Ender dismissed the snake, rejected it, until this moment. Since Peter had repeatedly eaten the snake, Card suggests that the snake and Peter are one and the same. Because the snake turns into Valentine (who was rejected from Battle School because she was too compassionate), it is revealed that Ender considers his tendency towards softness and tenderness to be as dangerous as his murderous tendencies. But by kissing the snake, Ender symbolically accepts his own shadow. Ender is then described as feeling warm and happy in the knowledge that he would never be without Valentine. It can be argued that Valentine is another form of Ender's shadow, and that Ender is learning here that his shadow is not as alien as he originally thought. Le Guin and Jung would call this moment

Ender's acceptance of his shadow, which allows him to connect to the “collective unconscious, the source of true community, of felt religion, of art, grace, spontaneity, and love” (Le Guin, 65). It is also interesting to note in this passage, that once Ender discovers that the snake is Valentine, “every member of the multitude wore Peter’s face.” While he does not notice it in the moment, this sentence seems to suggest that Ender will need to learn to accept the shadow within others, as well as within himself.

Like Ender, Bean is forced to come to terms with the knowledge of himself—knowledge that he would rather not know. Once he is told the truth about his genetically modified condition and the span of his life, Bean becomes unafraid of death (*Shadow of the Hegemon*, 376, 377). This is a turning point for Bean. Before this point, he is very concerned with the preservation of his own life. However, this revelation frees Bean from this fixation. He still has purpose, but his focus is not solely on himself anymore. Accepting his shadow leads to Bean’s willingness to sacrifice himself for the sake of a higher purpose.

Harry also has a shadow, although the concept of the shadow is complicated, because the shadow shows itself in the parallels Harry draws between his own and Voldemort’s life, and ultimately turns out to be a piece of Voldemort’s soul, lodged in Harry’s body. The acceptance of this part of himself must therefore lead to Harry’s death and resurrection. This is not the only time Jung’s shadow is accepted in Rowling’s texts: Ron Weasley is confronted by a Horcrux of his own, which speaks all of his worst fears as if they were true:

“Who could look at you, who would ever look at you, beside Harry Potter? What have you ever done, compared with the Chosen One? What are you, compared with the Boy Who Lived?” ... “Who wouldn’t prefer him, what woman would take you, you are nothing, nothing, nothing to him,” crooned Riddle-Hermione, and she stretched like a

snake and entwined herself around Riddle-Harry, wrapping him in a close embrace: Their lips met.

On the ground in front of them, Ron's face filled with anguish. He raised the sword high, his arms shaking....Ron looked toward him, and Harry thought he saw a trace of scarlet in his eyes (*Deathly Hallows*, 376-77).

Ron is faced with the insecurities that he hides from the world, and as they are spoken by these lifelike apparitions, they seem to be true. In the moment that Ron destroys the Horcrux, he is forced to face these insecurities in front of an audience. Harry is the one he is closest to, but who also makes him feel most insecure. Ron then accepts these insecurities as a part of his shadow, acknowledges that while they are a part of him, they do not define him. This moment is a turning-point for Ron: even though he has been legally adult for a year, this moment marks a step away from adolescence and into maturity. It is worth noting that in both sets of texts, the shadow seems to appear in the form of a serpent. The same analysis of Card's excerpt can be applied here: a serpent has biblical implications, and thus is connected to temptation. Ron is tempted to succumb to the debilitating insecurities, and for a moment, Harry fears that Ron will kill him. However, Ron overcomes the temptation and destroys the Horcrux, thereby becoming adult.

In the *Ender*, *Shadow*, and *Harry Potter* series, characters reach a point of maturity when they accept their shadows. Rowling and Card also depict their protagonists accepting the Other as similar to themselves as a sign of maturity. Jordana Hall, in "Embracing the Abject Other: The Carnival Imagery of Harry Potter" tells us that "the feature that stands out is Harry's empathy with the Other, his willingness to accept that which is visibly different from himself, that marks Harry as hero" (80). I think that these things are all comparable: just as Harry is able to accept the shadow within himself, he is also able to accept the cycle of life and embrace the uncertainty

of death. Similarly, he is able to embrace the unknown in others. Harry accepts Dobby the house-elf and other non-human magical creatures as his friends, but he also sees Voldemort as similar to him. He aligns himself with Snape and Voldemort, “the abandoned boys who had found homes [at Hogwarts]” (*Deathly Hallows*, 697). The traits seen in the foreign Other are the same as Le Guin and Jung describe as the shadow within the individual. The Other is the shadow, and victory comes when the shadow is embraced within oneself, as outside of oneself. This is what makes sacrifice possible.

Both Rowling and Card’s texts suggest that the acceptance of the Other is indicative of maturity. Ender is able to love the Formics, as Harry identifies with Voldemort, his enemy. Of course, this too is complicated by the fact that Harry discovers that he is one of Voldemort’s Horcruxes, and that a piece of Voldemort’s soul resides in him. Harry allows himself to be killed so that Voldemort might become mortal once more. Ender, like Harry, accepts the Other—loves the Other, in order to beat them:

"I've been thinking about myself, too. Trying to understand why I hate myself so badly...And it came down to this: In the moment when I truly understand my enemy, understand him well enough to defeat him, then in that very moment I also love him. I think it's impossible to really understand somebody, what they want, what they believe, and not love them the way they love themselves. And then, in that very moment when I love them -"

"You beat them." For a moment she was not afraid of his understanding.

"No, you don't understand. I *destroy* them. I make it impossible for them to ever hurt me again. I grind them and grind them until they don't *exist*" (238).

Both Harry and Ender see the necessity of loving and understanding the Other, and this understanding of them ultimately leads to victory, as well as maturity. However, Ender admits that this ability to love and then destroy is why he hates himself. It isn't his ability to love the Other that he hates about himself, however. It's his tendency towards violence, despite his ability to love the Other. This takes place after Ender kisses the snake in the video game, where Peter's face appears in the multitude. Even though he has accepted his own shadow, the two excerpts reveal the necessity for a renewed acceptance of the shadow and the Other. The first time the shadow is embraced is just that: a first time; it proves an individual's ability to do so. Once the character has done it once, they have crossed the threshold into maturity. But new situations will arise, facing new aspects of the same shadow, and new Others will appear, and protagonists will not cease to be confronted by challenges.

The Child as Adulthood's Shadow

Holly Blackford, in "Private Lessons from Dumbledore's "Chamber of Secrets": The Riddle of the Evil Child in Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince," reads *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* as a retelling of *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, "in that both concern the discovery of old, unauthorized books that corrupt the "innocent" children who find and use them—and who, like Dumbledore, ultimately erase their own blame, conveniently externalizing the essence of evil as Other (87). Blackford aligns texts with adults, like Arendt and Rose. Adults choose when to share knowledge and what kind of knowledge they share, but then, Blackford says, they attempt to extricate themselves from blame. The projection of blame, this time from the adult onto the child, is a clear reflection of the way Le Guin and Jung describe the tendency of the person who has not accepted their own shadow. By applying the concept of the child and the shadow to Blackford's article, I argue that YA fiction sets children up as the

shadow to adulthood. Just as Blackford argues that Dumbledore shifts blame, Card's adults retain their own innocence by allowing Ender to kill the Formics, and this is reflective of the same cultural phenomenon that Arendt, Warner, and Rose describe; where the child is both revered and feared, shielded and shielded against.

Blackford continues, saying that there are two curriculums at Hogwarts: the official and unofficial, and that "the child who internalizes unauthorized school lessons—about needing pedigree, winning, and dominating—is symbolically the "secret" chamber embedding the very walls and chamber of the school. Tom (Voldemort) is a monstrous creation of school culture that, in the paradigm of Frankenstein's monster, Dumbledore does not wish to acknowledge." While Blackford says that Tom Riddle internalizes the "secret" curriculum and puts too much stock in the unspoken values of the school, Dumbledore's description of Tom in the Muggle orphanage shows that he had already developed the desire to be "special" and "different" before entering Hogwarts:

"I can make bad things happen to people who annoy me. I can make them hurt if I want to...I knew I was different," he whispered to his own quivering fingers. "I knew I was special. Always, I knew there was something."....His face was transfigured: There was a wild happiness upon it, yet for some reason it did not make him better looking; on the contrary, his finely carved features seemed somehow rougher, his expression almost bestial (*Half-Blood Prince*, 271).

Blackford's reading of *Harry Potter* does well in conjunction to the adults in *Ender's* series, whose adults do not have responsibility over the actions of children, while simultaneously molding them through education, and attempting to protect them from the world and from themselves. They place responsibility on the children, but, like Arendt and Warner tell us, create

what they fear in the process. However, Blackford does not account for the fact that Rowling's texts depict Voldemort as having been born with evil tendencies. This description of Riddle clearly shows an unnatural child, in every sense of the word. His happiness is described as inhuman; he already has spiteful and violent tendencies. He is the antithesis of the romantic child, and is never able to embrace his shadow. He refuses to accept his Muggle lineage, and drops his non-magical father's name as soon as he is able, rather than accept that aspect of himself. This tendency to ignore what he does not understand reveals itself multiple times throughout the series, and eventually leads to his own demise. No matter his age, Voldemort is always straddling the line between childhood and adulthood. In this excerpt, Riddle repeats the words "I knew" over and over. Even as a young child, he has "adult knowledge," but he uses it for very negative purposes. He is too knowledgeable and analytical to seem childlike at the orphanage, so he is never truly a child. Yet he is never truly depicted as adult: his Horcruxes are trinkets similar to ones a child would save, he keeps his pet snake with him as if it is a comfort blanket, and there is repeated infantile imagery connected to his adult self. He is a clear contrast to Harry, who, while they have some similarities, consistently makes more mature decisions than the much older villain.

Like the unauthorized books that are a part of the unofficial curriculum at Hogwarts, the *Ender* and *Shadow* series also offer an unofficial curriculum, with the videos that Ender watches in order to study the Formic's strategy, and the psychological video game that introduces Ender to his shadow. Harry and his peers must be wary of the corrupting aspect of these unauthorized texts: one of them is one of Voldemort's Horcruxes, and the other has maiming curses hidden in the margins, but they act as potential paths to accepting the shadow. Harry hopes that his father was the previous owner of the Potions book, and the diary-turned-Horcrux is the first to point out

the similarities between Riddle and Harry (*Chamber of Secrets*, 317). Likewise, in the *Ender* and *Shadow* series, the psychological video game is helpful in making children confront their shadows, but the characters are mistrustful of them: Ender struggles against it and Bean flat-out refuses to play (*Ender's Shadow*, 281). The one time he is tricked into playing, the face of Achilles appears, the one person Bean fears and hates. Rather than face it, Bean walks away from the game. I argue that while Peter may be Ender's shadow, Achilles is not Bean's. As an adult construction, the video game was meant to get the same reaction out of Bean that it did with Ender. But Achilles is a psychopathic killer, and Bean does not see himself in Achilles. However, Bean associates the guilt of letting Achilles kill his companion Poke, when she was the first person to show pity on Bean, with Achilles' face. This is the shadow that Bean needs to come to terms with. When the video game tries to force him to embrace this shadow, however, Bean chooses not to engage.

Blackford also discusses the language of shame, as a way to discover “what happens when repressed 'monsters,' or feelings of shame (whatever the source of shame), are not expressed, shared, and discussed.” This language of shame can be read as the shadow and the abject Other. She then continues, telling us about Dumbledore’s passionate defense of choice in *Half-Blood Prince*, where he tells Harry that, regardless of whether or not he’d heard the prophecy, Harry would choose to fight Voldemort anyway. She acknowledges that Dumbledore must believe in the power of choice, as an admirable educator who stands for the Enlightened mind:

However, in championing free will, Dumbledore transfers responsibility for Harry’s present and future choices squarely onto Harry rather than on the institution molding him,

even though in prior books, actions Dumbledore took that were beyond Harry's control had grave consequences for Harry.

By giving them undeserved, unasked for responsibility, Blackford argues that adults seem to set children up as abject. Dumbledore seems to project responsibility onto Harry as much as he projects blame onto Tom Riddle, young Voldemort. Voldemort is described as infant-like several times throughout the series, but Dumbledore's description of young Tom Riddle before he enters Hogwarts is just as unsettling a depiction of the twisted child. Hall tells us that imagery like this, of the evil child, along with projected responsibility and blame, situates "the revulsion of the reader upon a child, the novel reifies the child's position as abject, that which society rejects and pushes aside as disgusting, different, or Other for representing their own weakness and fragility, and especially in the case of Harry Potter and Voldemort, their human mortality" (Hall, "Embracing the Abject Other: The Carnival Imagery of Harry Potter," 79).

Blackford only offers one reading of the *Harry Potter* series, and again, Rowling's texts refuse to be simple. They cannot be interpreted only one way: Blackford admits that Dumbledore is depicted as a successful, popular educator who allows Harry time to grow before sharing troubling information with him, who empowers and assists Harry without interfering in his learning process. But the discussion that arises here out of the dual image that Dumbledore represents, like the complicated emotions of the educator Graff, who loves Ender but uses him as a weapon, reveals the contradictory way adults view children in YA fiction: both desiring the innocence of the child, loving them, educating them, and fearing them as Other. Surely it can be argued that because of the complicated loving, fearing relationship between adult and child in YA fiction, children are not framed as abject, as much as they are framed as Jung's shadow to adulthood. They are Other, they are alien, and yet they exist within adulthood and must be

embraced. The fact that the first book of Bean's series is called *Ender's Shadow*, and the third is called *Shadow of the Giant*, is impossible to ignore. Throughout his short life, Bean is called both Shadow and Giant, and it is rather ironic that we are looking at the shadow as something that Ender needs to embrace, yet he kills the Giant in the video game. It seems to suggest Ender has the potential to either destroy or uplift Bean. Because Bean seems to project the role of parent onto Ender, this works in conjunction with the framing of childhood as the shadow to adulthood.

Knowledge and the Written Word

Knowledge, in these texts, is clearly not the easiest thing to digest, and the knowledge that Harry, Ender and Bean ultimately have to accept is knowledge of their shadow, information about themselves that they'd rather not be true. Like the shadow, the child fears knowledge, but desires and chases it. One way that children go about discovering knowledge is from the written word. Because adults are the authors, they have ownership over the written word, and thus the knowledge that children covet. In each book, protagonists and their friends do research, looking to find information that adults keep from them—some with more success than others. Rose sets the terms of the debate on the instability of language. She tells us that “we need to ask why interpreting Children’s fiction—reading it for the child—seems to be untouched by this idea that language itself might be unstable and that our relationship to it is never safe” (41). She says that J.M. Barrie challenges language as an adult construct, especially in “The Blot on Peter Pan,” undercutting its “transparency of ease” and challenging “adult forms of speech.” This practice [of printing nonsense] has “largely been kept out of Children’s fiction.” This brings up two issues: “that of our relationship to childhood and language, and the way in which we constantly gloss over what is most uncomfortable and yet insistent” (*The Case of Peter Pan*, 39-41).

The written word, whether or not it is intentionally shared with children, is a way that adults give information to adolescents. Written text, like the society that Arendt describes, introduces “an old world, that is, a pre-existing world, constructed by the living and the dead” (193). Rowling depicts an unsafe way of censoring the written word with the depiction of two adults who have an unhealthy view of the innocent child. Her most recent supplement to the *Harry Potter* series, *The Tales of Beedle the Bard*, a book of wizarding fairy tales, was published after the completion of the seven-book series. She uses Professor Dumbledore’s commentary following “The Wizard and the Hopping Pot” to introduce her objections to the image of the censorship:

The final objection [to *The Tales of Beedle the Bard*]...was summed up best, perhaps, by Beatrix Bloxam (1794-1910), author of the infamous *Toadstool Tales*. Mrs. Bloxam believed that *The Tales of Beedle the Bard* were damaging to children, because of what she called “their unhealthy preoccupation with the most horrid subjects, such as death, disease, bloodshed, wicked magic, unwholesome characters, and bodily effusions and eruptions of the most disgusting kind.” Mrs. Bloxam took a variety of old stories, including several of Beedle’s, and rewrote them according to her ideals, which she expressed as “filling the pure minds of our little angels with healthy, happy thoughts, keeping their sweet slumber free of wicked dreams, and protecting the precious flower of their innocence” (17, 18).

Rowling creates an unsavory picture of Bloxam, first by drawing parallels to a familiar, unlikable character from *Order of the Phoenix*. Mrs. Bloxam rewrote Beedle’s stories in a book called *The Toadstool Tales*; Professor Dolores Umbridge is introduced to us as resembling a “large, pale

toad” (*Order*, 146). Bloxam’s over-description of the sweetness and innocence of children is similar to Umbridge’s introductory speech:

“Well, it is lovely to be back at Hogwarts, I must say!” she smiled, revealing very pointed teeth. “And to see such happy little faces looking back at me!”

Harry glanced around. None of the faces he could see looked happy; on the contrary, they all looked rather taken aback at being addressed as though they were five years old (581).

Through almost directly addressing the image of the romantic child and then bringing her readers’ attention back to Umbridge, Rowling reveals her opinion of the overuse of the trope of the romantic child. Umbridge is a despicable character; the renowned thriller author Stephen King, in an article for *Entertainment Weekly*, calls her “the greatest make-believe villain to come along since Hannibal Lecter” (“Potter Gold,” 2). Umbridge is memorable as a villain because of her stubborn refusal to think of children as human beings. While Bloxam and Umbridge have an unrealistically romantic image of children, their view of children is also skewed from the viewpoint of Rousseau’s natural childhood. Rousseau argued for a childhood of experiential learning, away from books. Umbridge refuses to let her students practice the theories they read about. Bloxam also writes children’s stories, and must expect children to read them, or have the stories read to them. However, both characters are strong believers in withholding reality from children, and framing them with Rousseau’s natural imagery, as innocent “precious flowers.”

Recently, a news story of an Evangelical Christian mother who rewrote Harry Potter to be “safe for her children to read, so they wouldn’t turn into witches,” went viral. The fanfiction story, which takes a lot of artistic license, is called “Hogwarts School of Prayer and Miracles;” and in it, Harry’s aunt and uncle are atheists, and each of the Hogwarts houses: Gryffindor, Ravenclaw, Hufflepuff, and Slytherin represent different branches of Christianity. While there is

debate about whether the “retelling” is written in seriousness or is just a parody, the attention the story received reminds us that many of the moral issues YA fiction authors explore are based in real-life discussions. One of these issues is the relationship between childhood and adulthood. Like child characters fear and desire their shadow, child readers covet knowledge. The characters in the *Harry Potter*, *Ender* and *Shadow* series read books and look there for answers, just as children and adolescents are reading YA fiction, looking for answers from Rowling and Card’s texts.

Even if authors, readers, and critics don't expect YA fiction to have moral lessons attached to them, popular debate continues to raise questions about the message and morality presented in these books. While it may not be addressed in scholastic criticism, there is a prevalent adult consumer expectation for moral messages. Since parents are often the ones who buy books for their children, these expectations impact market creation. The framing of the child in Children's and YA fiction matters because of its cultural implications.

Jacqueline Rose calls Children’s fiction impossible because it hangs on the impossibility of the relationship between adult and child, and that it is always “about something which it hardly ever talks of” (*The Case of Peter Pan*, 1). However, Children's and YA fiction repeatedly address the relationship between adult and child in very complex ways. The *Harry Potter*, *Ender*, and *Shadow* series show us that the child is romanticized, projected upon, protected, feared, and loved. Rowling and Card have written very different texts, yet their differences are trivial in relation to their overarching depictions of the complicated and many-layered path through adolescence and into adulthood, and the necessity for embracing the shadow within oneself. In both authors' texts, the child is often pitted against the adult and assigned the role of

Other, the shadow. On the surface, this is an isolating depiction. However, the lesson of embracing the shadow is also a strategy for connection.

The questions explored in YA fiction and Children's literature so closely resemble popular debate taking place outside of books. Therefore, despite aliens and magic wands, the texts are at their core about real life. Texts are such a compelling way for readers to encounter one's own shadow, and the Other. Like Le Guin says, "the way you can speak absolutely honestly and factually to a child about both good and evil, is to talk about himself. He needs to see himself and the shadow that he casts. That is something that he can face, his own shadow, and he can learn to control it and be guided by it" (70). By presenting children with the contradictory relationship between adulthood and childhood, and by depicting childhood as the shadow to adulthood, Children's literature and YA fiction offer the truth. While the written word may represent what Arendt calls the old world, child interpreters will look at it with new eyes. The adult expectations of YA fiction and the market creation cannot have predicted the overwhelming fan response, the communities that have formed because of these wildly popular texts. No matter what Umbridge-and-Bloxam-like attempts are made to prescribe lessons for young readers, adults cannot control how young readers synthesize what is given them. Rowling and Card's texts present the many-layered, complex relationship between the adult and the child, the self and the shadow. Through a deeper reading of the *Ender*, *Shadow*, and *Harry Potter* series, a new kind of reader-citizen is created, one who looks beyond the superficial, who seeks to embrace the shadow within themselves, and within others. Readers are presented with a deeper means of connection.

Works Cited

- Arendt, Hannah. "The Crisis in Education." *Between past and Future; Eight Exercises in Political Thought*. New York: Viking, 1968. N. pag. Print.
- Blackford, Holly. "Private Lessons from Dumbledore's "Chamber of Secrets": The Riddle of the Evil Child in Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince." *The 'evil Child' in Literature, Film and Popular Culture*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2013. 87-104. Print.
- Card, Orson Scott. *Ender's Game*. New York: Tor, 1991. Print.
- Card, Orson Scott. *Ender's Shadow*. New York: Tom Doherty Associates Book, 1999. Print.
- Card, Orson Scott. *Shadow of the Giant*. New York: Tor, 2005. Print.
- Card, Orson Scott. *Shadow of the Hegemon*. New York: Tor, 2001. Print.
- Card, Orson Scott. *Speaker for the Dead*. New York, NY: TOR, 1986. Print.
- Chowdhury, Radiah. "A Chosen Sacrifice: The Doomed Destiny of the Child Messiah in Late Twentieth-Century Children's Fantasy." *Papers: Explorations into Children's Literature* 16.2 (2006): 107-11. *ProQuest*. Web. 28 Jan. 2014.
- Davies, Madeleine. "Mom's Evangelical Christian Rewrite of Harry Potter CANNOT Be Real." *Jezebel*. N.p., 23 Sept. 2014. Web. 14 Nov. 2014.
- Day, Sara K. "Liars and Cheats: Crossing the Lines of Childhood, Adulthood, and Morality in Ender's Game." *English Studies in Canada* 38.3 (2012): 207-25. *ProQuest*. Web. 28 Jan. 2014.
- Doyle, Christine. "Orson Scott Card's Ender and Bean: The Exceptional Child as Hero." *Children's Literature in Education: An International Quarterly* 35.4 (2004): 301-18. *ProQuest*. Web. 28 Jan. 2014.

- Grace Ann. "Hogwarts School of Prayer and Miracles, a Harry Potter Fanfic." *Fanfiction*. N.p., 24 Oct. 2014. Web. 14 Nov. 2014.
- Hall, Jordana. "Embracing the Abject Other: The Carnival Imagery of Harry Potter." *Children's Literature in Education* 42.1 (2011): 70-89. Web. 18 Oct. 2014.
- King, Stephen. "Potter Gold | EW.com." *EW.com*. N.p., 11 July 2003. Web. 14 Nov. 2014.
- Le Guin, Ursula. "The Child and the Shadow." *The Language of the Night: Essays on Fantasy and Science Fiction*. New York: Putnam, 1979. 59-71. Print.
- Marcus, Leonard. "The ABC of It: Why Children's Books Matter." New York: NYC Public Library, August 2014. Plaque.
- Rose, Jacqueline. *The Case of Peter Pan, Or, The Impossibility of Children's Fiction*. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania, 1993. Print.
- Rowling, J. K., and Mary GrandPré. *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*. New York: Arthur A. Levine, 1999. Print.
- Rowling, J. K., and Mary GrandPré. *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*. New York, NY: Arthur A. Levine, 2007. Print.
- Rowling, J. K., and Mary GrandPré. *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*. New York: Arthur A. Levine, 2000. Print.
- Rowling, J. K., and Mary GrandPré. *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*. New York, NY: Arthur A. Levine, 2005. Print.
- Rowling, J. K., and Mary GrandPré. *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*. New York, NY: Arthur A. Levine, 2003. Print.
- Rowling, J. K., and Mary GrandPré. *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*. New York: A.A. Levine, 1998. Print.

Rowling, J. K. *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*. New York: Arthur A. Levine, 1999.
Print.

Rowling, J. K. *The Tales of Beedle the Bard*. New York: Children's High Level Group in
Association with Arthur A. Levine, 2008. Print.

Warner, Marina. "Little Angels, Little Monsters: Keeping Childhood Innocent,." *Six Myths of
Our Time: Little Angels, Little Monsters, Beautiful Beasts, and More*. New York: Vintage,
1995. N. pag. Print.

Zipes, Jack. *Sticks and Stones: The Troublesome Success of Children's Literature from Slovenly
Peter to Harry Potter*. New York: Routledge, 2001. Print.