

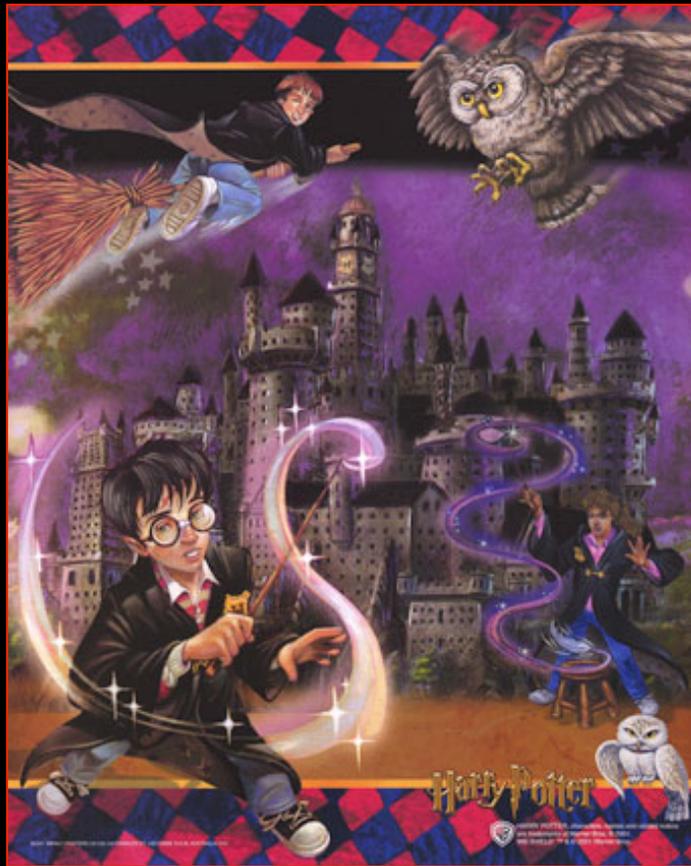
# Harry Potter:

And the controversy within Christian  
Audience communities

Today: Potter as Menace



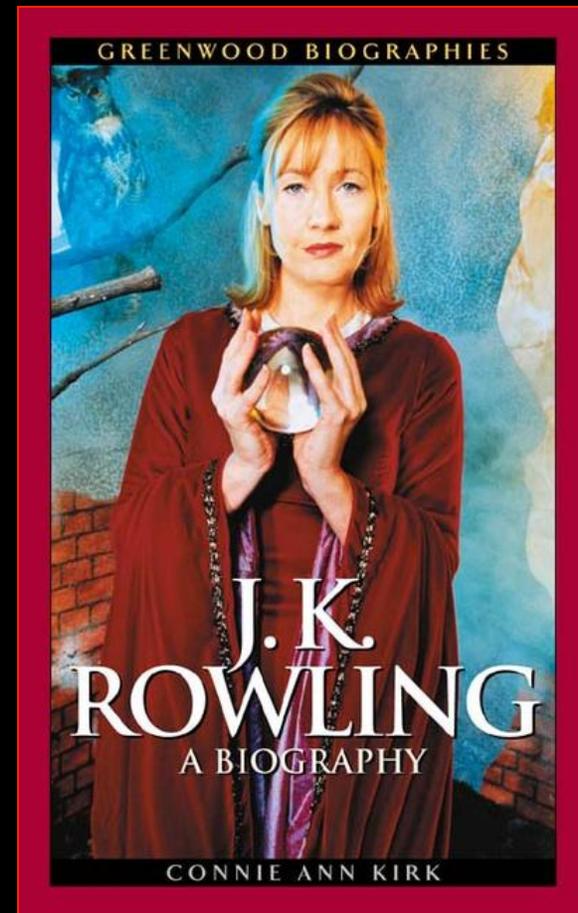
# Harry Potter as a “menace”



- Argument 1: The books promote occultism and witchcraft
- Argument 2: The books promote moral ambiguity and un-christian ethics
- Argument 3: The books are inappropriate for children

# J.K. Rowling... modern witch?

- “(J.K. Rowling remarked,) ‘I don’t believe in magic in the way I describe it in my books.’ ...Many people have completely overlooked the obvious qualifiers in these statements... Is there another ‘sense’ in which Rowling does believe in witchcraft?” (Richard Abanes, “Harry Potter and the Bible, Pp. 22-23)



# What's in a name?

- Nicholas Flamel - alchemist (14th c.)
- Adalbert Waffling (author, “Magical Theory”) = Archbishop Adalbert of Magdeburg (8th c.)?
- Cassandra Vablatsky (author, “Unfogging the future”) = Helena Blavatsky, founder of Theosophy?



J.K. Rowling



Helena Blavatsky

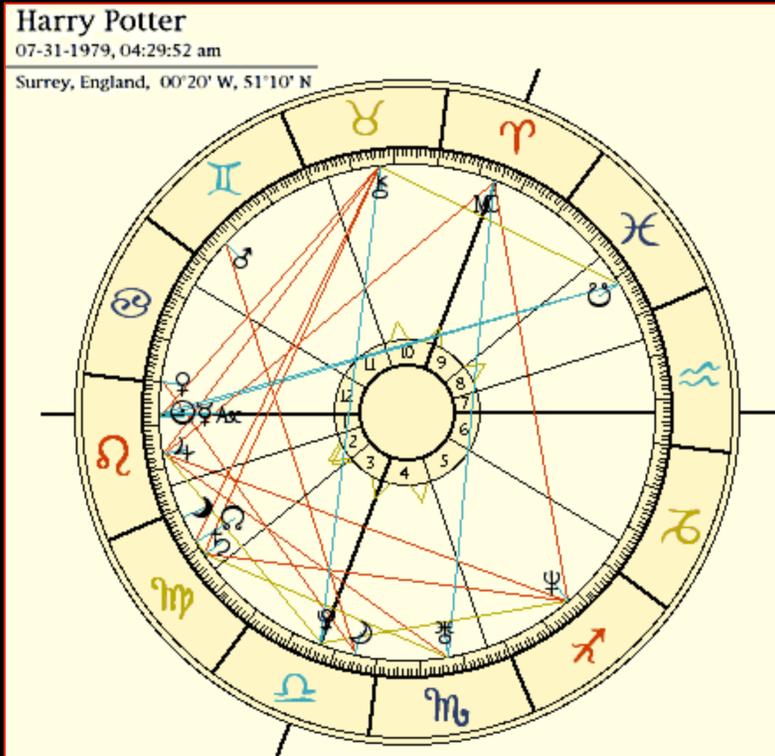
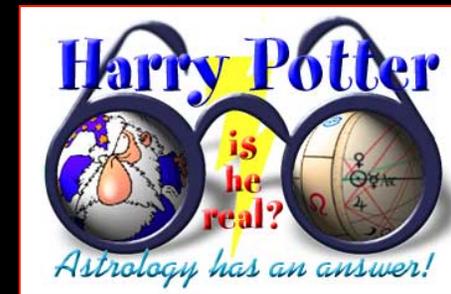
# Historical accuracy = contemporary occult practice?



Image by Nathaniel Dailey

- “More significant is the fact that not everything in the Potter series is imaginary. During a 1999 interview, Rowling admitted that she had studied mythology and witchcraft in order to write her books more accurately” (Abanes, p.23)
- “What Rowling fails to mention is that a vast amount of the occult material she has borrowed from historical sources still plays a significant role in modern paganism and witchcraft. Consequently, her writings merge quite nicely with contemporary occultism.” (Abanes, p. 24)

# Magical Practices



Harry Potter's birth chart, from:  
[www.astrologyalive.com/](http://www.astrologyalive.com/)

- “It is neither absurd nor laughable, to suppose that the Harry Potter books might lead some children into the world of occultisms since the series contains actual beliefs and practices associated with witchcraft and paganism, including: divination, astrology, numerology, familiars, pagan gods/goddesses, spell-casting, potions, necromancy, mediumship/channeling, crystal gazing, palmistry, charms, arithmancy and magick.” (Abanes, p. 173)

# J.K. Rowlings' pagan beliefs?

- “Magic... is obeying laws that the observer has not yet understood. A Sixteenth century scientist, for example... if he could have seen television might well have branded it as supernatural.” Janet and Steward Farrar, “The Witch’s Bible Compleat”

- “I don’t believe in it (magic) myself [but] we shouldn’t be too arrogant. Some stuff we believe today will be considered rubbish in years to come, and things we think of as rubbish now will be considered true.” J.K. Rowling.

# J.K. Rowlings' pagan beliefs?

- “The number seven was considered sacred not only by all cultured nations... the astronomical origin of this number is established beyond doubt... hence, in nearly all the religious systems we find seven heavens...” Helena Blavatsky.

- The number seven “is a magical number, a mystical number.” - J.K. Rowling.
- Release date for final book:



# Death in Harry Potter



- “Dumbledore tells Harry that they are not afraid because to them (Nicholas Flamel and Perenelle) dying will simply be “like going to bed after a very, very long day.” ... Such a position echoes current pagan/Wiccan thinking [where ] death is not an end; it is a stage in the cycle that leads on to rebirth... To Christians, of course, this is an inaccurate and spiritually dangerous view.” (Abanes, p.27)

# PotterEthics



- “The threefold moral message that Rowling presents through her characters is clear: 1) rules are made to be broken if they do not serve one’s own self-interests; 2) rules need not be obeyed if no good reason seems to exist for them; and 3) lying is an effective and acceptable means of achieving a desired end.” (Abanes, p. 38)

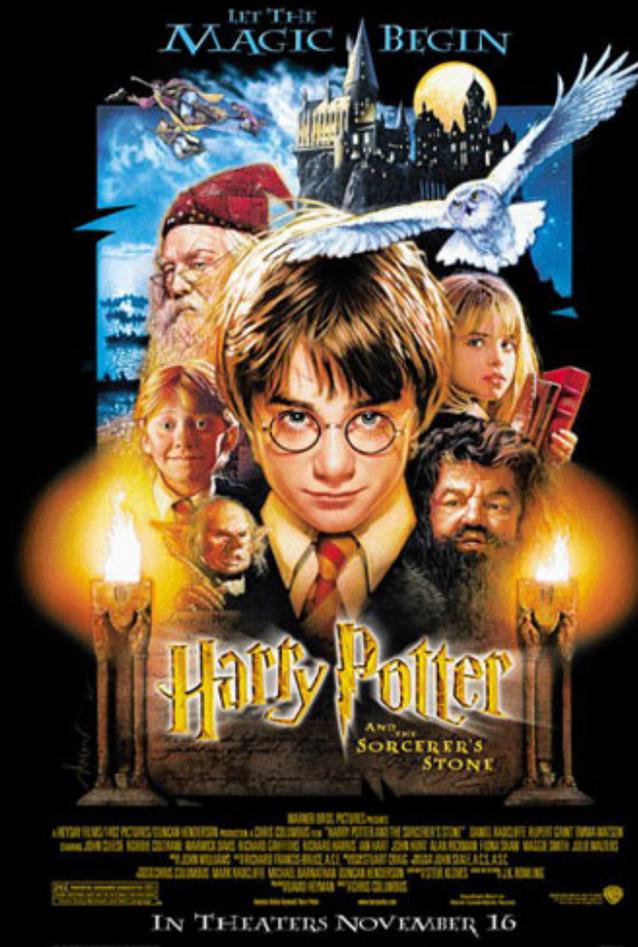
# PotterEthics



- “...cruelty/vengeance are presented as acceptable. Hagrid, for instance, performs an illegal spell against Harry’s cousin, Dudley... [In the Potter series’ it is appropriate to return evil for evil, and treat others well only if they treat you well... contrast this approach with what Scripture says...” (Abanes, pp.40- 41.)

# Harry Potter as Wiccan immoralist?

- “This is consistent with modern-day Wicca, as the Wiccan Creed says: “If it harm none, do what you will. The creed would apply to such things as unbiblical sexual encounters, use of illegal drugs and lying.... Whether Rowling realizes it or not, she is promoting witchcraft/occultism/Wicca in the form of ethical and moral subjectivism.” (Abanes, pp.38-39.)



# PG-13?



- “Rowling apparently feels that adult-oriented material is perfectly suitable for children, which may explain why forty-three percent of her books sold in 1999 were to readers older than fourteen...” (Abanes, p. 39)

# PG-13?



- “But adult Harry Potter fans need not scan the Internet for “mature” material, especially when it comes to scenes involving gratuitous violence, gruesome images, cruelty and humor that often borders on perversity...” (Abanes, p. 40)

# Harry Potter as demonic?



- “Occultism provides access to certain powers that are demonic in nature and as such are spiritually deadly... the enemy is not J.K. Rowling, the American public school system, Harry Potter fans, pro-Potter journalists or the publishers of the Harry Potter series. The true enemies are the spiritual forces of darkness seeking to overshadow Christian values and virtues with occult myths, practices and morals. But this should come as no surprise. God warned believers long ago that there would appear many deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons to draw people away from truth.” (Abanes, p. 273.)