

The role of Fred and George Weasley in the Harry Potter books

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1 INTRODUCTION

The Harry Potter series was first published over a ten-year period in 1997 to 2007 (www.jkrowling.com). My personal interest in the books has stemmed from the fact that I grew up with the books as well as Harry himself: my generation was in primary school when Harry's story started and about to finish upper secondary school by the time that Harry became an adult wizard. The Harry Potter books started as children's literature but turned out vastly among adults readers as well. Some of the books stayed on the New York Times Adult Literature Bestseller List for several weeks (www.jkrowling.com, www.nytimes.com).

There has been an abundance of studies on the book series as a phenomenon. My personal interest has been studying the twins Fred and George Weasley who are two years older than Harry Potter himself, and how they are depicted in the novel. Kornfeld and Prothro (2003) have studied the comical aspects of Harry Potter and I have utilized that in terms of studying the comical aspects of the twins. I also wanted to get a deeper look at the role of the twins in the novels. I have used the study of Tiiu Särkijärvi (2011) for her analysis on family ties and their depiction as a whole in the Harry Potter books and comparing them to several other works of fiction and actual studies on family ties and relationships. I am especially focusing on the first book, *The Philosopher's Stone* (1997) because this is where the twins are first introduced and from where their roles grow. I will also draw on some other examples from other books where their role is significant to Harry, the plot or both when viewed in light of the whole series through ways in which the twins provide the story with new things, whether comical, fraternal or inspirational. I was interested to know what types of family are present as a support system in Harry Potter as a background for my interest in the twins: are they part of Harry's support system? Can their interaction be described as humorous and do they solely rely on humour or are there other roles to be found for them in the books? How do they depict the level of humour in crossover literature and children's literature in general? Can we deduce that the author J. K. Rowling herself mean to say something with these two characters in placing them in the story?

The study has been done as a qualitative one on the aspects of the twins' humour and their actions and personas in the books. It was my hypothesis before starting this study that the twins were just a humorous aspect in the story. I will discuss the material itself in section 2, where the books themselves

are first introduced, along with the author, as well as the characters of Fred and George Weasley. I will introduce my method for the study in section 2.4. Section 3 introduces the theoretical background for humour, family ties and children's literature by outlining the relevant studies, concepts of humour and how humour is perceived and how these aspects are present in the books through the Weasley twins. Section 4 will analyse their various roles in light of the background. To summarize, section 5 will be a conclusion of the findings, implications and limitations of the study.

2 MATERIALS AND METHOD

This section will first introduce the author Joanne Rowling, the books being discussed with a short synopsis of the plot for everyone to be able to follow the ideas presented. Then it will introduce the characters of Fred and George Weasley, along with a general overview of their characters and roles in the books. Lastly, a section is provided to shortly go through the method that was used to open the material to the reader and make the thesis more readable and cohesive in light of the subject matter.

2.1 J. K. Rowling's works

J.K. Rowling's life's work before her author's career is depicted to an extent in how Harry is written and how she has chosen to write events and locations into the series. Her life in poverty before breaking through as an author has led her to place critique for the British society in her stories. Her roots in Scotland have inspired her to place the Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry in the North according to her web page (www.jkrowling.com). Her extensive education in the United Kingdom and France are shown in many ways in the amount of underlying knowledge visible in the books, for instance in the way she describes the British and French schools. In addition to writing the Harry Potter books, Joanne Rowling has then added to her body of work the books *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* (2001) and *Quidditch Through the Ages* (2001), both in aid of the Comic Relief charity helping people in extreme hardships by driving a positive change in their lives and the unjustness that they face through humour (www.comicrelief.com). Furthermore, *The Tales of Beedle the Bard* (2008) has been published by and for the Children's High Level Group (LUMOS), a charity founded by J. K. Rowling and Emma Nicholson "to end the systematic institutionalisation of children across Europe, and to see them placed into safe, caring environments" (J. K. Rowling homepage). Rowling states on her fan web page pottermore.com that she has thoroughly enjoyed spinning her wild imagination to stories and feels a need to give back to fans in the form of these works. Her first adult book *The Casual Vacancy* was published in 2012. She has been awarded a number of awards and honors for her work: Author of the Year in 1999 and The British Book awards' Lifetime Achievement Award in 2008 (J. K. Rowling home page).

Born in 1965 in England, Rowling has lived in England, Paris, Portugal and Scotland and has a university degree in French and Classics. While living in London she also worked for the Amnesty International. She currently lives in Scotland where she has also placed Harry Potter's wizarding school, Hogwarts. She has stated in several interviews and her fan site that the idea of Harry Potter came to her on a train on her way home and she quickly wrote down her first idea and book script. She has also been open about having difficulties to find a publisher to her story before finally Bloomsbury took her on. She was living as a single parent at a council flat with social benefits (J. K. Rowling home page). Thus both Rowling and her character rise to a higher social class during their life, starting from a very low point. Her initials J. K. don't actually represent her real second name, but were put on the book suggested by her editor. They thought a male author would spark more interest with young male readers and they felt this book would mostly be aimed at them.

2.2 The Harry Potter books

This section will focus on giving an overview of the books, the author and the phenomenon that she sparked. Furthermore, the two characters that are in focus of this study, Fred and George Weasley are talked about as well as the studies on the Harry Potter books from before. Bloomsbury records the book series to have sold over 500 million copies to date (www.bloomsbury.com, March, 2018). In 2007 the last part of the series, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, became the fastest-selling book ever, selling 2.65 million copies in its first 24 hours of release in the United Kingdom. The series is translated into over 80 languages and distributed in over 200 countries (www.bloomsbury.com). The focus of this paper will mainly be on the first book due to limitations in length. The elements of the first book in particular will be discussed in more depth in sections three and four. Some examples have been drawn from other books to demonstrate the twins' role further where needed.

All in all, the first book is a story of how Harry Potter, a boy who turns eleven, discovers that he is actually a wizard. He also learns that he is an orphan not because of a car crash as he has been told by his aunt and uncle whom he now lives with, but because the most powerful evil wizard of all time, Lord Voldemort, killed his real parents but failed to kill Harry. Harry was saved because the killing curse aimed at him backfired on Lord Voldemort causing him to die. Harry's name has been down for the Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry since he has been a baby and is considered one of the

most famous wizards of all time in the magical world of which he has known nothing about before. Even though he has no idea about his personal history, it is all revealed to him little by little. Everyone knows him in the magical world, but he knows very little of the world he enters into. Over the course of the story, Harry discovers a new world, an education for wizards, a wizarding sport called Quidditch, the wizarding laws and finds friends and people who care about him for the first time in his life and thrives in this community in many ways, including flying and defence against the dark arts. He also discovers because of his curiosity and with the help of his friends that Lord Voldemort is not, in fact, entirely dead but a part of him is still alive and fighting to come back. He has to face him personally at a very young age but comes out of it alive in the first book.

Through his best friends Hermione Granger and Ronald Weasley, Harry is introduced to Ronald's (Ron's) family, the Weasleys, who become the equivalent of a family to Harry over the book series. The family is completely of wizard ascent and live at The Burrow, a house in the village of Ottery St Catchpole, an entire wizarding village in Devon. When Lord Voldemort fully rises to power, the ones who believe Harry and that Voldemort truly is back reform a secret society, The Order of the Phoenix, that used to operate when Harry was a baby and have his parents as members as well. This society's core members become an extended family and support system for Harry. Their headquarters is held at the Burrow and at Harry's godfather's house, after his godfather Sirius Black is introduced in *PA*. Over the course of the seven-book series Harry has to face Lord Voldemort several more times. He discovers that the killing curse he survived when he was a baby has left him with a connection to Lord Voldemort's mind. Towards the end of the whole story, the reader learns that Harry is the only one who can end Lord Voldemort once and for all. What starts out as quite a light piece of reading turns more and more complex, profound, sombre and serious over the course of the series. Furthermore, where the first book can be seen more by definition as children's literature, starting from the end of the fourth book, Harry and all other child characters are starting to become young adult who have to face the dangers and challenges of adult life and the looming war thus turning the books towards more adolescent and young adult literature, two terms which in this study will be used as synonymous.

2.3 The characters of Fred and George Weasley

The characters of Fred and George Weasley are introduced to the book as the first magical people that Harry hears talk at the station of King's Cross in London. He is just starting for his life in the wizarding world on his own at the station looking for the platform for the Hogwarts Express train. Fred and George are characterized to be two years older than Harry, red-headed and identical twins. Harry befriends their younger brother called Ron, short for Ronald, much more closely in the books. However, the twins play Quidditch, the most popular wizarding sport, with Harry in their school's house teams. They are mostly described as pranksters or jokesters or at least that is implied in the way that the other characters are described to react to them. There is one example from the start of the school year feast in the Entrance Hall where the Headmaster, Professor Dumbledore addresses the newcomers to the school by repeating some of the school rules. In doing this, he also indicates insinuatingly that this applies to the twins especially.

‘First-years should note that the forest in the grounds is forbidden to all pupils.

And a few of our other students would do well to remember that as well.’

Dumbledore's twinkling eyes flashed in the direction of the Weasley twins. (*PS*, p. 94)

This can be given as an example of the kind of tone that the author sets for the role of the twins from the very beginning of the book: they twins are very early on presented by multiple accounts as pranksters known for their mischief all around the school.

It will be shown in this study that most of the things the twins are described doing in the first book has somewhat of a humorous edge. They are also described in the books by their brother Ron to be likeable, popular and funny, although they also tease their family members quite a bit. Their niche in the family is making trouble through harmless jokes and pranks. They first start out as purely pranksters and jokers but start developing into their other attributes as well, making them more complicated as characters. Later on in the books what starts out as these jokes and pranks is turned by the twins into a successful business with items that even help effectively in the war against the Dark Lord and his supporters. The twins are never described separately in the books but are always found to be doing things together. On the one occasion that George and Fred are separated during an operation to bring Harry to safety from his adoptive parents and George is delayed from the agreed rendezvous point, Fred is described at the same time to be as worried about him as the others and he has also taken

part in the operation himself, they are only apart because of a diversion tactic. When one of them dies in the final book and the final battle, they are not mentioned in the books again.

2.4 Method

This is a qualitative study of two characters in the Harry Potter books published over a ten-year period from 1997 to 2007. To be able to observe and analyse the data it has been narrowed down to mainly the first and fifth book in the series with some exemptions to the rule where necessary to bring out the twins' role in the books throughout, and to demonstrate their relevance to the story. This first part of the series seems like a logical start to the study when the twins and their personalities are initially introduced, so that even a reader who is unfamiliar with them can follow the examples on the book maybe more easily. However, some material has been added outside the first book because of its relevance in showing the roles overall and how they grow or evolve, especially in the fifth book onward. The material chosen for this study is organised in a way that supports a logical scheme: the examples have been chosen for the purpose of underlining a conclusion or idea reached on the basis of the book. The data has been collected by noting down and compiling a list of all of the times the twins are talked about in the seven books or when they themselves do or say something in them. When this list was completed, it was easier to pinpoint the types of things that seemed to be recurring with the characters and therefore could be categorized and used as relevant examples of their roles. Where there were several examples of a certain type of activity or personality traits with the twins, it was worth to discuss under its own section to be able to analyse them. Thus what started out as study of humour quickly evolved into several other categories as well, such as roles in a family-like group.

In reading the books, what started out as a research of humour quickly became more of a versatile platform throughout. That said, the aspect of humour in this is highly relevant because the evaluation of the material has shown that it is important to the twins and their personas in the books and what is first perceived as humour can have a deeper meaning within the joking. The material in the books insinuates more profound roles all in all. This then required more flexible categories for the data to be analysed. To back up the findings, these discovered roles were seen from multiple perspectives in light of the material and its background study. The material was organized into a general overview of the twins as well as the attributes that they can be considered to represent in the books. This then resulted in five

separate parts of analysis: the twins as comic relief, the twins as a support system, as representatives of alternative life choices, as a reference and control group in the family or family-like groups and the twins as unifiers.

For the sake of clarity in the rest of the paper, an abbreviation of each book has been adopted in this thesis and included after each book title in this list of the books in the series. The series includes seven parts: *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, *PS* (1997), *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, *CS* (1998), *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, *PA* (1999), *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, *GF* (2000), *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, *OP* (2003), *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, *HBP* (2005), *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, *DH* (2007). It should also be mentioned here that these same abbreviations have been used in Särkijärvi's (2011) thesis on the Harry Potter books.

3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In the theoretical framework of this thesis, there are three categories. Firstly, the concept of genre is discussed in section 3.1: what kind of literature is Harry Potter meant to be and how is it placed in the literary map? This needed to be done to clarify certain notions in the books. Some of the humour and the story itself is two-fold: literature that can be read and understood by children on the one hand and literature that requires previous knowledge about the world and the society around the story and where it is placed on the other hand.

Secondly, humour and its role in children's literature are discussed. To convey a universal and scientific notion of the types of humour to refer to and to provide a framework for the study has been necessary. Section 3.2 will discuss the different types of definitions for humour in the books and children's books in general, how humour can or may not be understood to support the theory of how humour is brought into the story through the twins.

And lastly, section 3.3 discusses the different kinds of family-like groups that appear in Harry Potter and that can be described as families even if they are not based on kin relationships. The concepts discussed in this thesis are family and family-like groups, family ties, relationships and humour in children's literature. The theories with which Harry Potter can be seen to have different family-like groups even though he is an orphan are presented. The notion of family-like groups needs to be discussed to be able to demonstrate that the twins play a part in several support systems that can be relatable to family with the profound and unwavering support that they offer.

3.1 Harry Potter as children's or crossover literature

First a few words on the genre that is Harry Potter as it is a book series that started as children's literature and developed more and more into crossover literature. Crossover here means that the lines are blurred between how the text addresses the reader and explains it to them. Särkijärvi (2011) connects Harry to children's literature based on how the story is told, its language and the events that happen there. She links Harry being an orphan strongly to children's literature. Nikolajeva (2003)

confirms that it is necessary for children's literature to remove parents from the story. "The absence of parental authority allows the space that the fictive child needs for development and maturity, in order to test (and taste) his independence and to discover the world without adult protection." (2003: p. 230) This is especially apparent in the pranks or mischief that the twins get up to as they are often described getting into trouble and finding questionable ways to solve problems or go about their school life away from their authoritative mother. As Kornfeld and Prothro (2003) mention, the parents seem oblivious to their offspring's pranks and ideas to go against rules at school as well as their deeper struggles in the world of magic.

Laakso (2014) also defines children's literature as being a notion invented, implemented and controlled by adults. She also maintains that while earlier these books were morality stories for children to teach them about things, they are turning more and more towards stories that adults writing them assume children would want to read. Barbara Wall (1991), a major representative of crossover literature researchers has maintained that there is a way to tell who the writing is intended for. She defines a children's book (writing for children) through whether it is written to children. She claims that there is a way to tell by looking at the tone that the piece of writing in question is written in and also that adult writers consider their audience by writing in a certain way that is considerate of the child reader. Wall also defines three categories: when a book is only for children it is defined as single address. If it is for both but the line is blurred and incoherent it is defined as double address and lastly, dual address refers to simultaneously addressing both children and adults in the text. Wall also places most value in what is defined as dual address considering it to be a trait of a skilful writer. Wall's theory is not entirely without fault but it is raised here to underline the fact that Harry Potter is one of the most famous works of fiction to ever address and appeal to both children and adults alike and mentioned several times as such by Laakso (2014), Särkijärvi (2011) and Kornfeld and Prothro (2003). It may seem like a side note to try to define children's or crossover literature here, but it is this thesis' idea to try to find reasons for the role of the twins and its importance, including a hypothesis that this type of literature that seems to assume children can be quite capable of discerning witty humour has contributed to some of its success and fame. On the other hand, it may be argued that some of the jokes and humour, or concepts such as empathy and righteousness presented in the books may not reach the younger readers completely or at all at some points of the story.

Where J. K. Rowling has written a book primarily for children and young adults, an abundance of elements can be seen within it that require previous knowledge of the society and the world to be able to understand these allusions. One of these is mentioned by Särkijärvi (2011) and that is the understanding of the class system in Britain and the ways in which Rowling organizes her wizarding community against the age-old notion of power and money going hand in hand. Särkijärvi continues that the four houses present in the wizarding school are clearly classes of society: Slytherin referring to the highest rank with their pure-bloodedness and social rank as well as wealth, Ravenclaw being about wittiness and education - traits usually reserved for the wealthy in the British society but given to anyone based on their abilities in Rowling's novels as a critique towards the society on the author's part. Gryffindor is about chivalry and bravery, attributes connected to soldiers and finally Hufflepuffs are the rest, the ones who nobody else has taken in as is mentioned in the Sorting Hat's song and by several people not in the Hufflepuff house themselves.

‘You might belong to Gryffindor,
where dwell the brave at heart,
Their daring, nerve and chivalry set Gryffindors apart;
You might belong in Hufflepuff,
where they are just and loyal,
Those patient Hufflepuffs are true
And unafraid of toil;
Or yet in wise old Ravenclaw,
If you’ve a ready mind,
Where those of wit and learning,
Will always find their kind;
Or perhaps in Slytherin
You’ll make your real friends,
Those cunning folk use any means
To achieve their ends.’ (PS, p.88)

Later in *OP*, the hat also sings about Hufflepuff taking in all the rest that the others would not take in according to their qualifications.

The more that these kinds of elements such as the boarding school element, the class system, the haves and the have-nots, the biblical allusions and the purity of race are found underlying in the story, the more a crossover audience for the books can be detected. The themes in Harry Potter, although traditional children's book material such as doing the right thing, being a good friend and defending the weaker ones are obvious in the books, it is also noticeable to an older reader that there are themes that are allusions to bigger issues. What a child reader may purely see as bullying or unfair and maybe frightening, may be seen by the adult reader as a clear connection with the ideologies in World War II Germany.

Finally the idea that a book is more than a children's book is considered to uplift its canonical value as books that are not merely children's literature but that can contribute to educated conversation about more profound values, morale and societal issues. Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer (1999) has studied the criterion for the canon of books and finds in her set of ideas that if a book is valued enough to become part of the canon, in other words the list of books that are set reading material at schools or universities, then their value rises because a wider audience will read them, discuss them, and this body of work then has the potential to influence many more works of literature. For instance, books like *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* (Boyne, 2006) have become part of the British school canon because of the story works on two levels of understanding: as a book written for children and its hidden innuendoes to adult readers. As much as it is a credible account of a child's version of events in Germany and Auschwitz in the 1940s, it is naïve from the point of view of an 8-year-old boy named Bruno. However, the adult reader also gets a lot of information through the innuendoes and allusions given by the protagonist who is oblivious to what is happening near his house in the nearby "farm" that is actually the area of a concentration camp and the "pyjamas" that the "farmers" wear are the prisoners' outfits that the Jewish have to wear at the camp. Bruno talks about living near "Out-With", which to an adult reader is both a clear connection to the most notorious concentration camp of the second World War, Auschwitz, as well as a play on words in connection to what is done to Jewish people in the camps. Furthermore, when texts that are part of the canon are put there, it can be seen as a nod to their literary value - there is something there to discuss. Whether or not it is relevant to the study to show the literary value of the books, it can still be argued that the multiple allusions and connotations within the

text that may not open to a child reader can still be enjoyed by the adult reader and additional depth and value can be found within the books this way.

3.2 Humour in children's literature and Harry Potter

To start with, it has been very difficult to define humour and how it is formed, as studies of humour and its definitions date back a long time and its studying in modern and up-to-date definitions is therefore challenging. It must be mentioned that humour is a subjective experience and what some people find funny, may not be funny to others. In the interest of humour and its role in children's literature the works of Laakso (2014) have been studied and referenced here. Laakso takes on the notion that no single theory of humour or its definition is in and of itself sufficient as a category for any narrative humour that is found in children's books. Although some of it can be clearly defined as wordplay, narrative humour found in longer novels is often more profound than a single theory or framework that has been predefined by humour scholars. These tend to focus more on play-by-play individual elements of humour and humour triggers at a time. Laakso bases her dissertation on the idea that she wants to study each aspect of humour and define it from its respective angles every time she encounters a certain type of humour in the works of Kari Hotakainen that she studied. However good this starting point has been for the dissertation, it must also be mentioned that this thesis is not about defining each type of humour and its aspects that come up in the Harry Potter books but to be able to show on a general level that a certain line can be found amusing. That is where some of the theories of humour and studies on it come in to provide a general idea of how to spot humour.

In the interest of studying a work of literature, the biggest emphasis on humour study has been put on the *incongruity theory* (Morreal, 2009). According to this theory on humour, it is produced by the clashing of ideas, notions and images that do not fit together. Incongruity theory focuses on how and from what kinds of elements humour is produced and what are the necessary elements for humour to be born. Other theories are more based on psychology and explaining humour through necessary functions for humans and how humour responds to them. The incongruity theory is also usually considered the theory that applies to most of the ways to explain and open the concepts of humour. Incongruity is according to Laakso (2014), a theory that requires wit and intelligence to spot. This also supports the earlier notion in section 3.1 of literature that is aimed at both child and adult reader.

Laakso (2014) also brings up the concept of nonsense and frames under it the ideas of literary tradition typically rich in wordplay, strong central placement of language, absurd content, playfulness and separation from the rules of real world and logic. Although Harry Potter books are in essence a separate unit from the real world, they are essentially not nonsense either per say. This means that even though wordplay is certainly present and there is travelling between time and space as well as locations on a level that is against common sense, it is also tied to common sense. Rowling has put in place laws for wizards that cannot be broken and are overseen by the Ministry to be followed. Furthermore, travelling by turning on the spot and appearing at another place, *disapparating*, is also a completely normal way of moving within the magical community. Even though the magical world designed and narrated by Rowling goes against reality, it is strictly tied to rules and reason by the author. However, a certain amount of humour is based on the clashing of magical and non-magical people and their concepts of things. For instance, Arthur Weasley calls a phone a *fellytone*. When Ron tries to use the telephone to call Harry, he ends up shouting Harry's uncle Vernon's ear off because he does not understand that he does not need to. In the books, Rowling has also created an abundance of words that are related to her magical realm and not real concepts in the non-magical world or the real world outside the books. She has animals such as a *hippogriff*, a *thestral* and a *bowtruckle*, people such as a *squib* (a person within the magical community born to parents that possess magic but who cannot perform magic themselves), a *muggle* (non-magical people) and a *dementor* (a soul-sucking prison guard). She has an abundance of magic-related words all in all that she invented for her books and that are not found before that. It can thus be said that nonsense is a part of the writing of the books.

This thesis has started from the same point of view as Laakso (2014) in the idea that humour can be brought out by textual means as well as perceived by dissecting the text, Laakso calls humour in this way a type of register of style. She states that humour is not a type of clear-cut text such as poetry or crime novels but a way to communicate in certain accepted and acknowledged conventions within the community. She also reminds the reader that what is perceived as funny may also be tied to a culture and a society and its norms and values. For instance, there are still societies and cultures in the world where joking about religion is prohibited whereas in some countries it is considered freedom of speech to joke about it.

The humour present in the Harry Potter books themselves is mentioned by Kornfeld and Prothro (2003) in their research. They also discuss briefly the similar idea that Laakso brings out about humour aimed at older readers in a way behind the child reader's back. They both conclude that this is a way to produce humour for adults that children cannot understand necessarily. Intertextual wordplay and previously accumulated social knowledge are concepts that come to play in both their analyses when discussing children's literature.

3.3 Families as socially constructed units

The most extensive study connected to family ties and roles in them in the Harry Potter books is made by Tiiu Särkijärvi (2011). In her pro gradu thesis she studies the different family-like groups that are important to Harry Potter in the books. The study has been a relevant source on how to interpret family roles and ties as Harry is an orphan in the books and her adoptive family, although related to him, can be seen as unwelcoming and even absurd or cruel in their treatment of Harry who has to live in a closet at the beginning of the series. Särkijärvi (2011) has discussed in her thesis the ways in which family roles can be applied and bended to fit other types of groups that are not necessarily related by blood but nonetheless form a basis for security and comfort to the people within them. The same principles that are introduced in Särkijärvi's study can be found with modern-day relationships such as children and their adoptive parents where blood is not the only measure for family either. She bases her study of a family's role as a support system on the less modern work of Gerald Caplan (1976, 1978) who was a child and community psychiatrist and the creator of the concept of the model of support systems. As the subjects of this study, Fred and George Weasley, are not blood relations to Harry, it has been important to define their role in his life. Through Caplan's (1976, 1978) model and Särkijärvi's (2011) interpretations as well as the notions of some other scholars, it has been presented in this thesis that a family is a chosen unit rather than necessarily a forced one. Indeed, L. L. Constantine (1977) has introduced the notion of an *open family*, referring to people who choose to live together even though they have the freedom to leave at any time whether for good or to return later. As long as they continue to be a part of the family unit they agree to respect and defend this choice and their family members. Deborah Chambers (2001) calls these *chosen families* that she sees being based on agreed modes of friendship, commitment and responsibility rather than biological relations, although hers is a study on real life families. She also states that as these families are based on the assertion of personal values

over biological connections, it introduces the possibility to erode declarations of racial and ethnic purity. This then brings out the simple notion that a family is a group pursuing a common goal. Her definition applies to almost all the family-like groups introduced by Särkijärvi (2011) in her study on Harry Potter. Chambers' (2001) definition is also very relevant to this study because in Harry Potter the main theme is, in fact, the purity of race and genealogy, even though disguised in the make-believe world of wizards and their ancestry.

As stated, Särkijärvi (2011) bases her study on Gerald Caplan's (1976, 1978) theory of the ways a family can act as a support system. Caplan introduces in his study nine ways in which a family can offer support. The first of these is that the family acts as a collector and disseminator of information. This first group includes multigenerational families and their value in this instance is greater because of information provided across generations: grandparents can teach valuable lessons to their offspring and children will be more and more responsible of the reciprocal role of this exchange of information the more they grow. This way generations exchange their knowledge of the past, present and future. However, this point is not exclusive to age-groups and generations, but the exchange can also happen between siblings. In this instance, Ron and Harry learn a lot from the twins in the books. Ron recognizes their house ghost when he first arrives through the walls into the Entrance Hall during the feast for the beginning of the year.

'I don't think I've introduced myself? Sir Nicholas de Mimsy-Porpington at your service. Resident ghost of Gryffindor Tower.'

'I know who you are!' said Ron suddenly.

'My brothers told me all about you – you're nearly headless Nick!' (*PS*, p. 92)

The second aspect is that a family is there to give feedback to each other and thus act as a guidance system. This means that when encountering a new situation, an individual finds help to get accustomed to it and learn about it in peace with their family. Harry gets help from various people as he is entering the magical world. In guiding him they can be considered family to him according to Caplan's (1976, 1978) and Särkijärvi's (2011) theses. Caplan (1976) also includes in this aspect the fact that when family members account to others what has happened and what kind of reactions they have received, then the family members can help them to understand what has happened. Caplan's third notion is that

a family provides its members with ideologies, values, behaviour codes and values. A person's idea of their own place in the world and their understanding of it are a part of this third notion. This can also lead to copying these adopted patterns inside the family whether consciously or not.

The fourth angle of Caplan (1978) is the role of a family as a guide or negotiator in problem solving by adding their collective strength in the pool. In this way they also take a member's problem into their hands to make it a joint problem to solve. This angle also takes into account the way adults are less tumultuous and more drawn to stability than children and can help stabilize the storms with them. Where the fourth was that of emotional aid, the fifth point is the concrete aid provided: practical aid or concrete services that help people, such as parents providing their children with food and clothes.

The sixth is more of an emotional aspect as Caplan (1978) states that a family should be a kind of haven for rest when they need it. A family will be able to monitor the state of tiredness their members are in and provide each other time to relax. Caplan sees families as private groups and it is because of this that they can relax and express themselves without the fear of being left out. This also includes the notion of not having to hide feelings from family members. The seventh point is about seeing the family as a reference and control group to monitor and judge an individual's behaviour on a steady basis. Caplan (1978) states that the family then reward or punish their members according to what is the family norm, but not too severely.

The eighth aspect according to Caplan (1978) is to help in a time of identity crisis by affirming their members' identities. The final ninth aspect overlaps with the eighth significantly because it is about the family offering emotional support in times of anxiety or negative feelings. The difference is that the first is to do with affirmation of identity whereas the latter is about negative feelings. Särkijärvi (2011) has proven that these theories are relevant this day and that even though Caplan only discusses the original nuclear family that are kin relations in real life, these theories can also be applied to Chamber's (2001) chosen families as all of the conditions or most of them are met in the family-like groups set by Särkijärvi in her thesis.

Särkijärvi (2011) concludes in her study that the family-like groups that can be considered as new families in the Harry Potter books, in addition to Harry's original but now deceased parents and

adoptive family, are firstly his friends Ron and Hermione as a triangle of their own, secondly his school house of Gryffindor where certain like-minded students with similar views and values are placed together, thirdly his Quidditch team which becomes even more important against the backdrop of the value that the British place on sports in the society, the fourth is the secret society of skilled wizards reassembled by Professor Dumbledore, The Order of the Phoenix. Dumbledore's Army is the fifth set of family-like groups and it is the one that brings together several school houses that want to form their own study group to defend themselves against Lord Voldemort's rising power when the ministry provides them with an unqualified teacher of defence. The sixth one, and maybe the most valuable for Harry, is The Weasley family. The Weasleys are not mentioned as a reference type in Särkijärvi's set model of new families, but they are mentioned by Särkijärvi in connection with her analysis on adoptive families where she likens the Weasleys to Harry's adoptive family rather than his original one with his aunt and uncle where the roles of real family are not met. By showing that the Dursleys, Harry's aunt and uncle, are not fit parents and do not provide Harry with anything more than the bare necessities and constantly treat him as inferior in the family and offer him no emotional support, Särkijärvi argues that the Weasleys are a better option to the Dursleys in terms of what is expected from a family. Harry's story begins with him living in a cupboard under the stairs with his aunt and uncle Petunia and Vernon Dursley and their son, Dudley. Kornfeld and Prothro (2003) undermine this first family model introduced in the book by calling it ridiculous.

Fred and George Weasley are part of five of these new families defined by Särkijärvi on the basis of Caplan's theory: Gryffindor, Quidditch, The Order of the Phoenix, Dumbledore's Army (*The DA*), and The Weasleys. Although they never become very close to Harry in the books, they can still be seen as significant family members based on the support that they offer Harry, which will further be shown in section 4.

4 FRED AND GEORGE WEASLEY

This section will analyse some of the aspects of the twins as comic relief, as a support system, as representatives of alternative life choices and aspirations, as a reference and control group in the family and as unifiers of the family. Some of these aspects rely on the findings of Särkijärvi, (2011) specifically the parts about the twins as a support system. This has been done in terms of the fact that Särkijärvi (2011) has concluded that even if a family is not related, it can still be thought of as a family-like support system. This part is to point out the different ways in which the twins act, pinpointing some examples and finding what the motivation behind their actions might be. Some of the analysis is based on the fact that this material is not looked at in light of literature as a work of fiction but as a reflection of real life. It will also be useful to consider what kinds of characteristics and actions the author has assigned to them in her work.

Even though the twins seem a minor addition to the set of characters in the books, they seem to be allowed a role that keeps getting bigger and bigger over the course of the book series. What starts out as merely two brothers of Harry's best friend, Ronald Weasley, keeps evolving and growing into a bigger role both in how they participate to the story and Harry's life as well as how they grow into adulthood and become businessmen in their own right. According to the Pottermore site, over 31,000 people have added Fred and George Weasley as their favourites in the books (January, 2017).

4.1. The twins as comical relief

It can be argued that the strongest role the twins have been assigned in the first book *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* is, without a doubt, comical relief. As can be seen throughout the book and the body of examples presented in this thesis, most of the conversation in which they are involved in or that is about them, suggests some kind of a joke, or that the twins are joking or misbehaving. It starts from the first chapter in which the twins are introduced getting on the train. They first appear in the story to try to confuse their mother as to who is who of the two.

(1)

'Fred, you next,' the plump woman said.

'I'm not Fred, I'm George,' said the boy. 'Honestly, woman, call yourself our mother? Can't you *tell* I'm George?'

'Sorry, George, dear.'

'Only joking, I am Fred,' said the boy, and off he went.

His twin called after him to hurry up, and he must have done, because a second later, he had gone – but how had he done it?

Now the third brother was walking briskly towards the ticket barrier –

he was almost there – and then, quite suddenly, he wasn't anywhere. (*PS*, p. 69)

In this way the reader is first introduced to the twins and their family. In the book, Harry is feeling very self-conscious and unsure about what to do when the Weasley family arrive. Harry himself is described hauling his belongings all alone without a clue on how to get to the mysterious platform numbered 9 ³/₄ and receiving no help, obviously, from the non-magical station staff. The passage talks about how he then hears the family chatter and, as seen above, one of the members disappear through the wall, which is the first clue of something funny, in other words, magical happening to facilitate the entrance to the platform that is not found in plain sight. He then not only hears the family and the twins joking, he also gets help from them as the twins also offer him a hand in getting his things on board the train. Harry is not the only one in this instance to be worried. His friend-to-be Ron is also nervous to be going to their school for the first time. The Weasleys' mother Molly is also nervous and anxious about getting her offspring safely on the train and on their way, especially since they are cutting it close. The twins are placed in this instance to be the comical relief in the midst of all the fussing and nervousness. They lighten the mood, help Harry get onto the platform by showing how it is done and also offering him help to get all his things on the train. They lead their mother to think about more trivial things, such as whether or not she actually did mix the two of them, and focusing on other things than having to send her children to school and almost being late for the train. They also go on the platform first so that their younger brother does not have to do it first now that he is going on the train for the first time to get to school. This example can be seen as a way of showing how to not take things too seriously when in a kind of chaotic situation. This is a way for the twins to break off some of the tension all around them

and provide people with a sense of ease and comfort, an idea that everything will be fine eventually. In addition, they provide a distraction for all from their current state of worry.

Humour seems to be the role in which the twins have found themselves a niche in the family. Their older brothers have all been more successful academically and they may have chosen to give up on the competition school-wise and decided to do something else instead. In *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* it is finally clear that the twins will not pursue careers requiring them to finish their school education but instead drop out of the wizarding school Hogwarts and decide to start a joke shop instead. Like every other unwanted action they take on their own, this will infuriate their mother, Molly Weasley. In the book she is described to be fuming over what will become of his sons and how they were not raised like this. In *OP* Ron is described to be dreading what their mum will say about the twins quitting the school and how she is likely to send him another Howler, an angry exploding letter that is sent by one wizard to another when they are angry and which multiplies the sender's voice in the message when it explodes. Ron is sure that the Howler will come because he did not stop his brothers from quitting school. The situation is resolved by Harry telling Ron and asking him to tell his mother that the money for the twins' joke shop came from Harry.

Even though the twins' father Arthur Weasley can plainly be seen as comic relief as well, (Särkijärvi, 2011) or a friend of Harry rather than a father-figure, his character is different from the twins. His comical side comes chiefly from the fact that he is endlessly curious about Muggles, non-magical people, and often acts in a funny way about it all unintentionally (Särkijärvi, 2011). This creates incongruity between the norms of the normal world that the reader is used to along with its basic concepts of phones, electricity and plumbing, all of which are presented in a different light from the perspective of wizards and their magical world, as the wizards are not familiar with these concepts and often see them as curious or weird phenomena. The twins, in comparison to their father, choose to do and pursue things. They have a clear understanding of the consequences, they just choose to overlook them or downplay them in their own reactions to being reprimanded.

However, the joking and pranks seem to be directed at people who can be argued to understand humour at least, or otherwise aiming jokes at people disregarding completely whether or not it is appropriate or if the recipient will understand them. The first extract is an ongoing joke throughout the book that is

about Mrs Weasley telling the twins not to do anything out of order at school this year, because she does not want to get any messages about them. The twins turn their mother's warning into a joke and tell her they love her idea because they had never thought of it before. Even though their mom knows they are only joking, she stresses the fact that their way of turning it around into a joke is not her idea of amusing. This is, however, within Caplan's theory of a family's support because it undermines the fact that the mother is the one doing the controlling and keeping in line of her sons. However, the twins do not fear her enough to not joke about her warning. They can thus be argued to understand that even though they are told what to do, and that the mother's warning includes a threat of punishment for bad behaviour, they can still safely joke about the situation because there is family present who know their personalities and they are therefore safe in being themselves and joking about the warning.

(2)

Then she turned to the twins.

'Now, you two – this year, you behave yourselves.

If I get one more owl telling me you've – you've blown up a toilet or –'

'Blown up a toilet?' We've never blown up a toilet.'

'Great idea though, thanks, Mum.'

'Its *not funny*. And look after Ron.'

'Don't worry, ickle Ronniekins is safe with us.' (PS, p.73)

There is incongruity here in two instances. The first being the idea of blowing up a toilet, because that is not what toilets are made for. The first statement of Molly Weasley is therefore funny, because it is an idea of something out of line with generally accepted behaviour, or use of toilets. She poses this idea as an example of their senseless behaviour as something that they might even do. It becomes even funnier when the twins should heed the warning and they make it out to be an idea that their mother actually gave them, as this is not the point of their mother speaking out. Even though this particular idea is clearly not something that they have ever executed, they turn the reprimand around by saying that the mother is actually to thank for this idea that they want to try, when they know perfectly well that the meaning has been completely opposite. Furthermore, when the twins are told by their mother to look after their 11-year-old brother at school they turn this into a verbal jab at their mother as well as their younger brother by belittling him and talking about him as if he were a baby. They do this when

their mother is trying to enforce her authority on them and telling them to behave themselves and what is expected from them as older brothers. The endearment term of their younger brother in this instance creates incongruity between them saying that their baby brother is safe with them but not meaning the endearment in earnest because they use language that is meant for an actual baby. Also agreeing to their mother's orders to keep their brother safe and the way they do it by making it into a joke creates incongruity.

Their youngest family member, Ginny is one that is not old enough to go to school yet and is tearful about the others getting to go. The joke presented above then goes on by the twins to their sister as someone who is later in the books shown to be very much an insider to their jokes and mischief.

(3)

The three boys clambered on the train.

They leant outside the window for her to kiss them goodbye and their younger sister began

to cry.

'Don't worry, Ginny, we'll send you loads of owls.'

'We'll send you a Hogwarts toilet seat.'

'*George!*' [original italics]

'Only joking, Mum.' (*PS*, p. 73)

In the first instance they try to lighten the mood by telling their sister that they will send her lots of mail, as owl mail is the means of communication in the wizarding world. They then turn this into a joke from consoling their younger sister to joking at their mother who is worried about the way their new year will turn out, as the twins are a constant source of worry to her. She receives a lot of post by owls about their unwanted behaviour from the teachers of the school. The twins turn this worry into a joke by downplaying the severity of it all. In this way there is a clear juxtaposition between the mother who clearly knows her children enough to both understand they are joking but also be annoyed with their nonchalant way about her warning. There is also incongruity between trying to make their younger sister feel better first and then trying to make her laugh to stop her from crying. The departing atmosphere in the book is also described to be hurried and anxious. The mother is treated by the twins

in a way that can be seen as aiming towards a lighter approach to dropping the children off and worrying about how the twins' year will play out. They also try to cheer up the only child that has to stay behind with none of her siblings for the rest of the school year. What is clear later when the reader gets to know Ginny Weasley is that the twins know for certain that their sister will appreciate their joke and understand the humour behind it. They are talking about sending her a toilet seat as something of an absolutely ridiculous idea to come true. The twins can be assumed to know that this will relieve their sister's sad mood and turn her tears into laughter as she is the one described to pick up on their jokes the fastest.

Later on, when Harry is in the hospital wing towards the end of the book, the joke goes on as the twins completely disregard what can be considered appropriate and try to send Harry a toilet seat. This would have been no doubt amusing to Harry having been in on the initial introduction to the toilet seat joke, but not so much for the school nurse who takes care of Harry after his serious injury in the hospital wing, which is meant to be a clean and sanitary space. Harry learns from this joke from Professor Dumbledore who is described to report the news with a twinkle in his eye. In this instance the joke is understood by Harry when he learns what has happened but before that, the people who thwart their idea will be without a clue as to why the seat was sent and that there is a long-running joke behind all of it. Although even though one is not in on the joke, they may take it as a prank because there is clear incongruity between what is actually sent to a person in the hospital to wish them well – chocolate, flowers, teddy bears – as opposed to what the twins do. The twins disregard authority just enough not to get them into too much trouble but to try to cheer up Harry in the hospital by continuing their private joke.

(4)

'What happened down in the dungeons between you and Professor Quirrell is a complete secret, so, naturally, the whole school knows. I believe your friends misters Fred and George Weasley were responsible for trying to send you a lavatory seat. No doubt they thought it would amuse you. Madam Pomfrey, however, felt it might not be very hygienic, and confiscated it.' (*PS*, p. 214)

There is clear incongruity between what they have sent Harry in hopes of cheering him up as well as the notion of what one usually sends a person. Toilet seats are not the norm to send someone in any conditions and this is a hospital, a place of cleanliness and hygiene. Whereas some people send traditional and what is generally considered to be comforting presents for the one on the mend, the twins resort to sending Harry a notion of a joke. This also plays into intertextuality within the joke. Someone who has paid attention to the story and the twins' mischief throughout the books will likely find this prank funnier because of its repetition and the fact that the reader is now in on the joke.

Sometimes the twins' inventions and jokes lead to their father being impressed, which is mostly overshadowed by their mother being furious with them. Either way, they mostly get attention from their parents through these jokes - be it positive or negative. In the extract from the second book in the series, the twins and their brother Ron have taken their father's bewitched car without permission in the middle of the night to fly it to Harry's house and rescue him. This is one instance in which the twins and Ron get a telling-off from their mother but their father does not know how to handle it. He actually gets confused in his words because he is so impressed with the boys' flight on the car that he himself has altered that he forgets his role as a parent and gets excited about the fact that the car has worked. Their mother is equally furious at her sons for flying and her husband for having such a car in the first place. In the extract, they have just successfully landed to the Weasleys' home known as The Burrow and are celebrating their success in getting Harry away from his adoptive relatives.

(5)

Ron had gone a nasty greenish colour, his eyes fixed on the house.

The other three wheeled around. Mrs. Weasley was marching across the yard, scattering chickens, and for a short, plump, kind-faced woman, it was remarkable how much she looked like a saber-tooth tiger.

'Ah', said Fred,

'Oh dear', said George. ---

----'Beds empty! No note! Car gone... could have crashed...

out of my mind with worry... did you care?... never, as long as I've lived...

you wait until your father gets home, we never had trouble like this from

Bill or Charlie, or Percy...'(CS, p. 30)

When Mr Weasley finally gets home after spending the night at work it gets clear, however, that he is not likely to be the best person for the role that his wife has warned their children about as he has been the one to enchant his car illegally in the first place. There is also then incongruity between the role that a society directs on the parents and how the father handles the situation by being thrilled about the car working. He is also a ministry employee working against Misuse of Magic. The reader learns that the father himself a ministry employee has written a law including a loophole so that he can also take advantage of the loophole when he tinkers with the Muggle artefacts that he is fascinated by. When he gets home his children come back in with him from the garden where they are doing work as a punishment for their reckless behaviour. Slumped in the kitchen table he starts by telling his children about the kind of hard time he has had in the department of the Improper Use of Magic Office. However, he is interrupted by his wife.

(6)

'...but the things our lot have taken to enchanting, you wouldn't believe - '

'LIKE CARS, FOR INSTANCE?' [original capitals]

Mrs Weasley had appeared, holding a long poker like a sword.

Mr Weasley's eyes jerked open. He stared guiltily at his wife.

'C-cars, Molly, dear?'

'Yes, Arthur, cars', said Mrs Weasley, her eyes flashing.

'Imagine a wizard buying a rusty old car and telling his wife all he wanted to do with it was take it apart to see how it worked, while *really* he was enchanting it to make it fly.' [original italics]---

---'Your sons flew that car to Harry's house and back last night!'

shouted Mrs Weasley. 'What have you got to say about that, eh?'

'Did you really?' said Mr Weasley eagerly.

'Did it go all right? I-I-mean,' he faltered, as sparks flew from Mrs Weasley's eyes,

'that-that was very wrong, boys - very wrong indeed...'

'Let's leave them to it,' Ron muttered to Harry, as Mrs Weasley

swelled like a bullfrog. (*CS*, pp. 34-35)

In this way it becomes clear that the twins may not be too afraid of their father as an authority figure compared to their mother. The father has no clue that his children are out of bed in the middle of the night or that he should be more concerned about what they have done than how his car has worked. There is parental authority missing in the situation and the reader is amused by the Weasley father who does not understand the gravity of the situation and even accidentally addresses the situation initially from a completely wrong point of view on impulse. This can then be drawn back to the fact that the twins know their humour and pranks will not be badly punished when their father will be impressed by what they have done. In this instance, as well, the mother is described to soften up to the situation when the twins defend their actions by telling their mother that Harry was starved at his aunt and uncle. To a mother who sees all his children as equal, this is a sign to the mother that the twins have done what they did because their heart has been in the right place to rescue Harry.

Indeed, valuing humour is also visible in the fact that the twins are both depicted until the very end as characters who still manage to maintain a twinkle in their eye throughout the ordeal. When George's ear is cursed off forever, he jokes about being saint-like because he is now holey. Fred is depicted in the end as dying with "the ghost of a laugh still etched upon his face" (*DH*, 512) after having told a joke seconds before his passing. Even though they sometimes overstep in the first books, they are still depicted as taking their roles in the Order seriously as well as dropping their jokes when someone requires their support such as when Harry is in danger on the Quidditch field. They are also awarded for their humorous characters and attitudes in a sense that even though the school headmaster Professor Albus Dumbledore knows perfectly well what kinds of pranks and jokes the twins are capable of, he never really gets angry with them, on the contrary, he seems to enjoy their attitudes towards life and he looks upon them with a twinkle in his eye. This can also be seen as a nod of approval for the twins as the headmaster can be seen as the ultimate reflection of a good authority figure. He is described to be seen by the whole community as a highly respected and the most capable wizard of all time and Harry sees him as a father figure, a notion backed up by the Särkijärvi (2011) as well, and he also becomes the leader of the movement that fights against evil and Lord Voldemort, being the highest representation of goodness against the highest representation of malice. When in the first book Professor Dumbledore is first introduced, he tells everyone to sing their school anthem to their

favourite tune. The twins decide to do this to a very slow tune and finish long after all others. Even though some might be irritated, the professor is told to conduct to the last lines of the twins' singing and be the one to clap among the loudest. He is thus giving his approval of the way that the twins have chosen to get attention to themselves by being the only two left singing.

(6)

'And now, before we go to bed, let us sing the school song!

cried Dumbledore ---

--- 'Everyone pick their favourite tune,' said Dumbledore,

'and off we go!' ---

---Everybody finished the song at different times. At last, only the Weasley twins were left singing along to a very slow funeral march.

Dumbledore conducted their last few lines with his wand, and when they had finished, was one of those who clapped loudest. (*PS*, p. 95)

The incongruity here comes from two different aspects. Singing the school hymn to the tune of a funeral march may be seen as weird, as funeral marches are meant for different kinds of occasion of far sadder circumstances. This is thus not a generally acceptable way to make humour out of the situation but not a severe enough insult towards anyone to be considered tactless. Another incongruity comes from the authoritative school system generally in place in the United Kingdom. When the twins make a silly play for attention here, the ultimate authority figure in the school, the headmaster himself, accepts the twins' joke as a part of their personalities as well as his own idea to promote and encourage different personalities in his school. This is not an obvious reaction from the authority figure of a school but in accepting the singing that takes centre stage for the twins in the end, the headmaster is giving a nod of approval to the twins' way of doing things and spreading humorous atmosphere in the school.

The longer the novel series goes on, the less cheerful it turns. In the final part, *DH*, The Order of the Phoenix collects Harry from his aunt and uncle's house by a diversion tactic that goes terribly wrong because the Death Eaters of Lord Voldemort have managed to find out about their plan and ambush the Order. Harry considers the Order his family at this point, as do most of the members within it. Even

though the original idea has been to form several pairs of people to distract their attackers in case of the ambush, it is still a chaotic situation in which most of the party get scattered and separated from the start. This is also a part where Harry loses his beloved pet and companion, the owl Hedwig, to a curse aimed at Harry himself. This is the first instance in which the twins are acting separately as one of them is paired with their father and the other with Remus Lupin, their former Defence Against the Dark Arts teacher in school. The main object of the mission is to get Harry and everyone else back to their headquarters now at The Burrow. In the midst of the fight, George loses his ear because it is cursed off. This is something that first renders Fred at a loss for words. When George is roused back, the first thing he does is joke about the gravity of the matter.

(7)

For the first time since Harry had known him, Fred seemed to be lost for words.

He gaped over the back of the sofa at his twin's wound as if he could not believe what he was seeing. Perhaps roused by the sound of Fred and their father's arrival, George stirred.

'How do you feel Georgie?' whispered Mrs Weasley.

George's fingers groped for the side of his head.

'Saint-like', he murmured.

'What's wrong with him?' croaked Fred, looking terrified. 'Is his mind affected?'

'Saint-like,' repeated George, opening his eyes and looking up at his brother. 'You see...

I'm holy. *Holey*, Fred, geddit?' [original italics]

Mrs Weasley sobbed harder than ever. Colour flooded Fred's pale face.

'Pathetic,' he told George. 'Pathetic! With the whole wide world of ear-related humour before you, you go for *holey*?' [original italics]

'Ah well,' said George, grinning at his tear-soaked mother.

'You'll be able to tell us apart now, anyway, Mum.'---

--- 'Why aren't Ron and Bill huddled around my sickbed?'

'They're not back yet, George,' said Mrs Weasley. George's grin faded. (*DH*, pp. 66-67)

The situation seems worse because of the initial setting of Fred having no words or jokes about the ordeal because there seems to be a quip ready for every situation from either of the twins so far in the novels. Then there is incongruity between the seriousness of George's injury and how he acts about it

after he wakes up. Even when his ear has just been ripped off magically by a curse, he is instantly searching for a comical outlet. What George then says sounds like nonsense and incomprehensible at first because he starts by talking about Saints that are typically connected to the Catholic Church dogmas. Then the joke is revealed as a play on words as the word connected to the church, “holy” is homonymic to the word “holey”, which means full of holes. When Fred gets over the initial shock, he is immediately ready to comment on the joke with his feedback. Even though he is clearly relieved about his twin brother being alive and well, he cannot express his true feelings in the moment. This is probably a coping mechanism in a serious situation as well as a natural way to react with the twins: turning a serious incident into humour. There is also intertextuality here that is an ongoing piece of humour over the course of all the novels. The twins regularly create confusion by trying to trick people into thinking they have mixed which of the twins is which. Even when their mother is usually always right, they still act as though she is not. The last statement of George about his joke is aimed at their mother as a way of trying to lighten the mood for their mother, the use of humour being a consoling method for her to convince her that there is no need to worry, turning the incident of losing one’s ear into a positive one in the sense that now they cannot deceive their mother – or anyone else for that matter – anymore. However, when George learns that his father and brother are not back yet, indicating that something may have gone wrong and happened to them, he immediately grows serious.

There is more intertextuality and play on words connected to the absence of George’s ear later on. They first learn that one of the most powerful and skilled wizards among them has died on the rescue mission. At this point the twins have already been joking about something else before they are told the news. They immediately turn serious at first and all the members are shocked by the news. As the party drink to the now passed member of their ranks, Harry declares he still trusts all of the people in their midst. George then echoes this with “ ‘ear, ‘ear” and is described to be looking at his twin “the corner of whose mouth twitched”, indicating that he is trying to hold in laughter in the midst of Harry’s serious declaration. Once the drink has been had, though, the twins cannot help themselves in trying to create more humour and positivity into the situation. The way George says his affirmation and acceptance of Harry’s message is really the generally used affirming exclamation “hear, hear!” used to express the hearer being of the same opinion as the talker. By dropping out the initial h-sound, George is creating a play on words connected to his now missing ear.

4.2 The twins as a support system

The twins are also a part of the Weasley family as well as various groups, for example the school Quidditch team, a sport played on brooms in the books. Through this role, it can be seen that even though the twins are mostly two joking brothers, they are also big brothers. They help Harry get his trunks on the train so he does not have to try to cope on his own, they agree with their mother never to interrogate Harry about his parents' death and they are a constant support to Harry on the Quidditch field. They force their older brother Percy to wear their family jumper to Christmas feast and sit with them instead of the Prefects' table because Christmas is a celebration for families.

In the story, Harry is described to be on the platform for the train to school all alone and not knowing what to do. By following the instructions given to him by the Weasley family, he gets into the platform but is still all alone there, hauling big trunks all by himself. By this point of the story, he has learned that everyone in the wizarding community know who he is, but even without that knowledge at first, without any idea who the boy is, the twins immediately offer him help without Harry having to ask for it.

(8)

'Want a hand?' It was one of the red-haired twins he'd followed through the ticket box.

'Yes, please,' Harry panted.

'Oy, Fred! C'mere and help!'

With the twins help Harry's trunk was at last tucked away in a corner of the compartment.

'Thanks,' said Harry, pushing his sweaty hair out of his eyes.

'What's that?' said one of the twins suddenly, pointing at Harry's lightning scar.

'Blimey,' said the other twin. 'Are you -?'

'He *is*,' said the first twin. 'Arent you?' he added to Harry.

'What?' said Harry.

'*Harry Potter*,' chorused the twins.

'Oh, him,' said Harry. 'I mean, yes, I am'

The two boys gawped at him and Harry felt himself going red. (*PS*, p. 71)

In this way the twins offer help willingly and without any prior knowledge to who they are helping. What comes after, is even more significant and revealing of their characters. They excitedly go on to tell their mother who their family has really seen on the platform. The twins know that their parents knew Harry's parents before they died in the first war against Lord Voldemort. Now they want to let her know that they have just seen the most famous wizard of their time and helped him. When their mother responds with pity and sympathy for Harry who is all alone, the twins cut her off and express the idea of asking him if he remembers how Lord Voldemort looks like. When their mother sternly explains to them that they are forbidden to ask, because this is a wizard who killed Harry's parents and made him an orphan and he does not need a reminder of that on his first school day, the twins accept this explanation and never ask about Lord Voldemort from Harry in the books. They are thus showing signs of empathy and compassion when their mother points out to them how she sees the situation and explains how it might make Harry feel dejected on a day when he has already had to face coming to the school train alone, having his first day of school and not having his parents there with him. Once Molly Weasley clarifies to her sons how she feels for Harry and how they should act towards him, the twins immediately accept her reprimand and never treat Harry poorly or inconsiderately over the course of the series. This ties in with how a family upholds its values as a unit together and follows a set of norms defined by themselves and continue to enforce them.

There are numerous accounts of the twins and how they look out for the youngest and arguably the physically weakest player, Harry, in the Quidditch team. The twins' role in the team is to protect the rest of them from Bludgers, two balls that try to hit the players of each team. As Särkijärvi (2011) points out, the roles that the characters play are metaphorical in the story to an extent. Harry is a Seeker, and in real life he is seeking a solution to facing his enemy Lord Voldemort and freeing the wizarding world from his terror as well as seeking for a family in lieu of the one he has lost as a baby. Thus it can be argued that the twins being beaters are also characters that beat the odds of succeeding on their own without academic ambitions, as well as the team protectors fill their role in the team as well as in real life when they are needed. They invent items for the war in their joke shop that help people against the dark forces in place. They also take some pressure off of Harry by downplaying the first speech their team captain gives them before the starting game of the season when Harry is especially nervous (*PS*). In this way they may be trying to get Harry to realise that he does not need to worry so much even though the speech may sound a bit daunting.

(9)

Wood cleared his throat for silence.

‘OK, men’, he said.---

--- ‘The big one,’ said Fred Weasley.

‘The one we’ve all been waiting for,’ said George.

‘We know Oliver’s speech by heart,’ Fred told Harry.

‘We were in the team last year.’

‘Shut up, you two,’ said Wood. ‘This is the best team

Gryffindor’s had in years. We’re going to win. I know it.’ (*PS*, p. 136)

The twins can therefore be seen as a kind of a safety net for Harry who is learning the game and trying his best to be good at it but is feeling the pressure of the expectations that the team captain has set for the season. By talking over their team captain they diminish the value of his speech and make it seem like it is not as important as the captain would probably like to sound. This also creates incongruity because before the first match the team captain supposedly talks encouragingly to their team and this is motivation for everyone. The captain is also usually considered as the leader and whatever they say, the other team members listen. The twins downplay his position in the team and the severity of the situation by talking over him and not letting him finish. Later on when the twins are joking around at practice and Wood as captain tells them to stop, they at first treat it as a joke, too. But when they learn that the match referee will be Professor Snape, they start to take things more seriously, because they consider it bad news. Professor Snape is often considered to be biased towards his own house, Slytherin, and unfair to the rest of the houses’ students. Thus it can be seen that even though the twins want to see their hobby being fun and playful to keep it interesting, it is also important to do well. When there is not only a chance of unfair refereeing and an unfair outcome to the game but also that of severe danger in the game for the Gryffindor house Quidditch team, they are equally worried about the situation and treat it as seriously as the rest of the team. In this instance, Harry is also the one to remind the twins to focus on the practice when he feels they are not taking it seriously enough, in this way enforcing the family-like bond between them and giving them feedback on their behaviour that he deems to be questionable. Snape is refereeing because of an earlier incident that has happened in a

previous match, to keep an eye on the game. In the earlier game Harry's broom has been enchanted and he has barely managed to stay on it. This entire time, the twins are described helping him.

(10)

The whole crowd were on their feet, watching, terrified, as the Weasleys flew up to try and pull Harry safely to one of their brooms, but it was no good – every time they got near him, the broom would jump higher still. They dropped lower and circled beneath him, obviously hoping to catch him if he fell. (*PS*, p.140)

In this way the twins fill their roles as actual family members and their role as teammates. When Harry's life is in danger, they rush to his help, abandoning their primary task of protecting the rest of the team from the two rogue Quidditch Bludger balls. None of the other team members are described trying to help Harry in any way, which underlines the fact that the twins are ready to step up and take the responsibility of keeping their team member safe.

The twins' role as big brothers is not overly underlined in the books. They do not, however, join in when their younger brother is being bullied by the other first-years. They only seem to play jokes on family members when it can be seen as a private joke or one that will not cause them public humiliation. They do not aim at embarrassing their family members in front of everyone. They also do not add insult to injury by joking or mocking someone who as a family member is already under pressure from elsewhere. In *Harry Potter and the Order of Phoenix*, Ron becomes the target of mockery of the whole school, at which point the twins do not join in on the mockery or bring it any further but rather try to cheer him up and downplay the whole ordeal.

They also lead by example in the sense that they are rarely described as being truly furious about something, giving less ammo to their possible bullies not being provoked by bullying or mockery, apart from one incident where George attacks an opposing Quidditch team member for insulting their whole family. The twins seem to be completely above such things and in this way seem to gain a power position over people who do get provoked easily by the things the twins get across. They never get angry when someone tells them to shut up for their joking but rather accept their reprimand readily. They are rarely described to be the target of jokes themselves but even if they are, they lead by example

in these instances, too, by treating the jokes aimed at them with the same humour they expect from others. The author may be trying to convince the reader that it does not matter if one is different as long as one has the strength to ignore the others' opinions and that this uniqueness should be upheld if it is something that puts one in a positive light in terms of one's personality.

4.3 The twins as representatives of alternative life choices

What becomes more evident over the course of the series but can also be seen from the first book is the fact that the Weasley twins seldom abide by rules set out by authorities. They never resort to things that might hurt someone else seriously, but on a general level seem to discard the norms of what is to be expected of them, their behaviour and how to treat authority figures. They bewitch snowballs to bounce off of one of their school professor's turban, they visit places like the Forbidden Forest and the secret passageways out of bounds of the school. They send Harry a toilet seat to the school hospital wing, not generally considered to be the gift someone recovering from something serious. They seem to want to bend the rules of authorities to an extent. Later on in the book it will become apparent that they do not want to live by the norms set by their parents and older brothers in terms of their education and living, as they leave school early and open a joke shop.

And, curiously enough, there is more material in the books where the twins get their parents' attention over the other children through their more questionable actions of pranks or otherwise forbidden activities at school. It can therefore be argued, that there is a reward in their pranks in the form of parental attention. The twins' father tries to hide his admiration for the inventions the twins have made in the books, especially later on in the series, knowing their mother is not so impressed. She is worried for the twins and their lack of seriousness and academic pursuits. This can be seen in several occasions in the books when she expresses disappointment and astonishment over the fact that the twins' older brothers never gave them as much grief as the twins. She mentions their academic shortcomings several times while playing up other family members' academic success, such as Percy or Ron becoming a Prefect, an honorary student tutor. She is not happy about the twins using their time in their magical

inventions. In the fourth book, she is described being disappointed that the twins have not given more time to their wizarding exams but rather used it on their joke shop items.

(11)

‘Accio! Accio! Accio!’ she shouted, and toffees zoomed from all sorts of unlikely places, including the lining of George’s jacket and the turn-ups of Fred’s jeans.

‘We spent six months developing those!’ Fred shouted at his mother, as she threw the toffees away.

‘Oh, a fine way to spend six months!’ she shrieked.

‘No wonder you didn’t get more O.W.Ls!’ (*GF*, p. 65)

In this way the mother is making sure that what happened earlier would not happen again. The twins feed a toffee that is enchanted to make the eater’s tongue grow substantially bigger and loll out of their mouth. She hears that the twins have used these on Harry’s non-magical cousin as well.

She is worried about what other people may think as she tells them to behave themselves so she does not have to be ashamed in several of the books. She is concerned for the twins’ pranks to be revealed to Muggles in a way that will break the secrecy treaty in place for wizards. She is also worried for the fact that the twins are not more serious about their school or that they spend little time with books and, in her opinion, too much time with nonsense such as their magical prank inventions. This is, however, a sign of the business sense of the twins developing and at the same time their own evolving into adults who have decided to pursue their dream of turning their pranks and jokes into a livelihood and profit.

Percy can be seen as the opposite of the twins with his overflowing seriousness and ambition academically. He is portrayed as the juxtaposition of the twins, in the sense that he has very little sense of humour and he constantly frowns upon their jokes whereas others perceive them as funny. Another person to be constantly ashamed of Fred and George in addition to their mother is thus Percy. Percy considers the twins’ behaviour shameful and embarrassing in several occasions throughout the books. It is especially apparent that he is embarrassed of them once he has a job at the Ministry of Magic in *Harry Potter and the goblet of Fire* when he is scared of admitting that the twins are related to him around other Ministry officials and people he is trying to impress. In the extract, the twins are offering

a ministry official money and an invention of theirs as part of a bet and Percy is embarrassed about their offer, thinking that it is uninteresting to them.

(12)

‘We’ll bet thirty-seven Galleons, fifteen Sickles, three Knuts,’ said Fred,

as he and George quickly pooled all their money,

‘that Ireland win - but Viktor Krum gets the Snitch.

Oh, and we’ll throw in a fake wand.’

‘You don’t want to go showing Mr Bagman rubbish like that -’ Percy hissed,

but Bagman didn’t seem to think the wand was rubbish at all;

on the contrary, his boyish face shone with excitement as he took it from Fred,

and when the wand gave a loud squawk and turned into a rubber chicken, Bagman roared with laughter.

‘Excellent! I haven’t seen one that convincing in years! I’d pay five Galleons for that!’

Percy froze in an attitude of stunned disapproval. (*GF*, p.81)

With these things in mind, it can also be argued that Percy, being the least favourite person of the Weasleys for Harry, and choosing his family’s opposing side in the budding war against Lord Voldemort until the last book (*DH*), is someone who takes things too seriously and therefore ends up in trouble and outside the family circle by choice. He chooses his position and ambition over his family until the last battle of Hogwarts where he comes around finally. This is also a show of strength of the Weasley family unity that Percy knows he can come back once he has forsaken his pride and is accepted back with open arms. He also comes back by declaring himself an idiot and does not argue when the twins call him power-hungry. He admits the error of his ways and realizes that his family has been right in the values they have fought for and instilled deep within Percy as well for him to come to understand what is considered the right thing to do within his own family’s circle. It can thus be that the author may value a sense of humour found with the other members more than Percy Weasley. Even though the twins show a considerable streak for joking, they take the Order seriously and fight against the dark wizard Lord Voldemort. When Percy finally decides to come back to the same side as his family, the twins accept the apology right away.

Opening a joke shop and not settling for a regular administrative post, which might be argued to be more respectable in the eyes of the wizarding community, represents alternative values. The twins decide to go against what is expected of them and what is considered to be respectable even though they know their parents may not be happy about their choice. Although their mother criticises their ideas, the father seems like their partner in crime in some instances. Where family can instill values and beliefs, it can also teach other things to its members. The twins' father is working for a low-level Ministry job in a department that is responsible for keeping the magical world a secret from the people outside it, Muggles. This is not considered a position of power or authority in the Ministry, however, but it is Arthur Weasley's passion in life to find out about Muggle artefacts that he is fascinated by. He has thus accepted a job that does not pay well to be able to follow his interest. The twins can thus be seen following in his father's footsteps not knowing if their chosen profession will provide a living for them but deciding to follow their ambition nonetheless. This, however, can be regarded as a show of courage as the twins stand behind their own life ambitions and what will ultimately make them happy and successful.

As Harry gives his Triwizard Tournament winnings to the twins for them to be able to experiment further with their joke shop ideas, the twins will quickly return what they considered to be a loan back to Harry, proving that even though their life choice has not been the most convenient and conservative, they have still worked hard and their enthusiasm and interest in the business has paid off in considerable earnings. The author has stated that she values courage over almost everything else (www.jkrowling.com). She also states that she was not interested in anything else in her life than being a published writer when she was struggling. Due to the twins' characters and determination as well as their general likeableness, it can be identified as a sign of appreciation of courage by Rowling. Choosing one's own path may be encouraged in this way through the twins the same way as the author never gave up on her dream to be a writer even when it was hard for her and even if it can be extremely difficult to get published and acknowledged, both things that are needed to be successful and make a living through the trade.

4.4 The twins as a reference and control group in the family or other family-like groups

According to one of Caplan's (1978) theories, a family will judge its members' actions. What becomes evident quickly in the twins' behaviour is that they use sarcasm, a form of irony, to joke about their elder brother Percy especially. When the twins aim their sarcasm toward Percy, they may be doing so to keep their elder brother from further promoting his own excellence. They are also described hiding his Prefect badge which is his pride and which he wears openly. Percy is described to walk with his chest almost unnaturally uplifted to show off his badge. He is also the victim of their jokes more often than the other family members as can be seen from the first conversations between them in the books. The first time the reader is introduced to the Weasley family, the twins are making fun of Percy's pride for his Prefect status.

(13)

'Can't stay long, Mother,' he said. 'I'm up front, the Prefects have got two compartments to themselves -'

'Oh, are you a *Prefect*, Percy?', said one of the twins, with an air of great surprise.

'You should have said something, we had no idea.'

'Hang on, I think I remember him saying something about it.' said the other twin. 'Once -'

'Or twice -'

'A minute -'

'All summer -'

'Oh, shut up,' said Percy the Prefect. (*PS*, p. 72)

In this instance the joke is in the clear sarcasm of the situation. First one of the twins is described to be completely surprised by their brother being a Prefect. This turns into sarcasm because the next lines indicate that the surprise is completely exaggerated and false because Percy has, in fact, been parading his Prefect status constantly over the summer ever since he has known about it. They not only use sarcasm but also control Percy's arrogant behaviour about his position. This is also a nod to family values in a sense that the moment they say their goodbyes for the school year Percy claims he has no time for it. This is also the twins' way of reminding their brother to prioritize what is important. He will have the whole year to act in his role as a Prefect but only a few minutes left to spend with his family

as they are leaving. This way the twins work as a control group within the family to bring their brother back to the family and remind him of what is important in life: family and its unity should come first. This is also apparent later on when at Christmas they make him sit with the rest of the family members at school instead of the rest of the Prefects where he usually sits.

(14)

Before he could say anything else, the dormitory door was flung open and Fred and George Weasley bounded in.---

---- ‘Merry Christmas!’

‘Hey, look – Harry’s got a Weasley jumper, too!’

Fred and George were wearing blue jumpers one with a large yellow F on it, the other with a large yellow G.

‘Harry’s is better than ours, though,’ said Fred, holding up Harry’s jumper.

‘She obviously makes more of an effort if you’re not family.’

‘Why aren’t you wearing yours, Ron?’ George demanded.

‘I suppose she thinks you don’t forget your name. But we’re not stupid – we know we’re called Gred and George. ---

--- [Percy Weasley] too, carried a lumpy jumper over his arm, which Fred seized.

‘P for Prefect! Get in on, Percy, come on, we’re all wearing ours, even Harry got one.’

‘I – don’t – want –’ said Percy thickly, as the twins forced the jumper over his head, knocking his glasses askew.

‘And you’re not sitting with the Prefects today, either,’ said George.

‘Christmas is a time for family.’ They frog-marched Percy from the room, his arms pinned to his sides by his jumper.” (*PS*, p. 149)

There are several noticeable humorous notions in the passage as well as notions of family values and acting as a controller. Firstly, the twins consider the jumpers a sign of family unity and insist everyone should wear them because of that. They are in no way surprised that Harry is now included in the family in the form of receiving his own jumper. They only mention that Harry’s looks better because he is not actually family. This portrays itself more as a malevolent joke than a jab at Harry or their mother for being included within the family unit. They insist everyone wear the jumpers and also that Percy

has to be part of the family at the Christmas table. They also joke about the jumpers having the initials of each person on them and how they know their own names perfectly well but then turning it around to saying their own names wrong, creating unexpectedness within the conversation. Another joke is stating that the P in Percy's jumper would stand for Prefect instead of his name. This again, plays into the intertextuality of the book, where the Prefect joke goes on in connection to Percy throughout. After having bullied Percy about the Prefect status they now acknowledge his status but still produce incongruity because they also turn it into a joke by repeating how important being a Prefect is for Percy.

Where Percy's strongest asset seems to be his ambition, his humility is certainly one that lacks some practice. The twins judge his behaviour as overly arrogant or pompous and therefore constantly play pranks at him, undermining the academic prowess that Percy deems to be the most important thing in the world. Percy's own sense of accomplishment is weakened by the twins who seem to be trying to instil equality and modesty when it comes to Percy.

The ideals of the family and especially of the twins and their younger sister, Ginny, are so clear in Ron's mind that when he leaves Harry and Hermione in their joint search for the weapons to destroy Lord Voldemort, he is unable to return home. When he returns back to Harry and Hermione he tells them he could not have gone back home to The Burrow when he abandoned his friends because he knew that his siblings would not tolerate his behaviour.

(15)

'I wasn't at The Burrow!' said Ron, with an incredulous laugh.

'Do you think I was going to go back there and tell them all I'd walked out on you? Yeah, Fred and George would've been great about it.

And Ginny, she'd have been really understanding.' (*DH*, p. 322)

In this way the twins' influence over their little brother is significant even when he has never seen or spoken to them. Ron knows that his behaviour is something that the twins would not approve of and would have to face the consequences and deal with how the twins would have talked to him, giving clear indication to the probability of the twins giving him a hard time and mocking him for what he has

done. In this way the whole family's set of values, as they all have been Gryffindors at school where the brave are, is ingrained in Ron in the sense that he knows what he has done has been neither brave, chivalrous nor admirable to have abandoned his friends in their time of need. However, there is also a negative tone in this account because this means, to an extent, that the family is failing as a safe haven for their individual member. Ron is too afraid to face the consequences of returning home and estimates the risk to be greater than avoiding some of his family altogether. He then seeks refuge at his eldest brother's home where he feels he can heal and gather his mental and physical strength before setting out to reunite with his friends.

Another control group outside their actual family for the twins is their Quidditch team. Under the guise of humour the twins also control the behaviour of their coach and captain Oliver Wood (*PS*). They make fun of his enthusiastic speeches that seem to depict a higher meaning than that of sports. This contradiction from the twins reflects their idea that the captain sometimes takes things slightly too seriously when he is making the team practice whatever the weather might be and thus causing them to fall behind on school work. The twins' idea of their beloved team sport should arguably be lighter and less serious when practising and playing with their team. This may be a note from the author's part on how serious sports training can be from a very early age to children when they are not ready to commit to a certain, single type of sport and giving their all into it from very early on. The author may see a strict practice schedule too demanding for young people trying to find balance between being children, having fun and taking care of their school work. The team captain is later recounted to play for a professional but minor Quidditch team after his school years. He can therefore be someone who takes his sport very seriously and aims high in his pursuit of success in it but may flatten some of the enthusiasm from the less dedicated players who still enjoy the sport and being in the team.

The twins can also be seen bending the rules of school due to the fact that they do not deem the rules as important as their exploring trips to the forest or around the castle of Hogwarts. They consider nothing wrong with being curious about seeing what is around them and this has resulted in several detentions and other punishments from the staff. They have also been rewarded for these quests in terms of finding the kitchen and being able to smuggle out food to their school house common room for feasts and parties. This leads them to be celebrated party starters in their house of Gryffindor and are described often to be the ones to smuggle food out of the kitchens or being offered it by the school

house elves who work in the kitchens. This also represents the twins being unifiers of family or family-like groups as seen further in section 4.5.

In bending the rules of school and questioning authorities, George Weasley is also described to hit a Bludger at professor Snape after having complained about his refereeing. This is the twins' way to rebel against authority through jokes or actions that are not generally accepted. Going against one's professor in a form of such a prank is not considered acceptable behaviour within the school. They are also reported to be punished for enchanting snowball to bounce off another Professor's turban in *PS*. Later on in the novel the professor that they have taunted is revealed to be an accomplice of Lord Voldemort who has given his body to Lord Voldemort's use and holds a part of Voldemort's body and soul inside his turban. The twins are thus the ones to have mocked and bullied Lord Voldemort by bouncing snowballs off him when he could not yet reveal himself without his full powers. Their strongest confrontation of authority figures happens in *OP*, when they completely undermine the dictatorship of their school High Inquisitor by showing that they are more skilled in magic than an adult wizard in a high-ranking Ministry position. This is discussed further in 4.5. It can thus be noticed that the twins have a strong inner set of norms and codes of conduct that work as a guideline for their endeavours. Whenever they deem something to be unfair, too serious or otherwise not an admirable course of action, they interfere with it. However, they have never truly rebelled against their headmaster Professor Dumbledore and only decide to leave school and take action against the High Inquisitor when Professor Dumbledore is wrongfully fired from his post.

Furthermore, they have no problem taking advice from Harry, when the school students who are worried about Lord Voldemort being back decide to assemble a club of people who want to practise Defence Against the Dark Arts now that their new professor will not let them study anything but the theory of the subject. Harry becomes the elected leader of the group called *Dumbledore's Army, The DA*, and as such is the teacher in the group. The twins never question his authority as a group leader and stand up to Harry when another student questions Harry's expertise and account of events from the night Lord Voldemort has risen back to power and killed a student of the school, Cedric Diggory. Their show of respect in the group indicates their acceptance of Harry as a leader of the movement starting and growing against Lord Voldemort. They know that Harry has a role to play in the fight and that he has had to face Voldemort several times already and trust his experience on the matter. When Harry is

questioned by another student, the twins provide a safe haven for Harry by criticizing the student who talks back to Harry which then reaffirms the idea that the twins are behind Harry and consider him their family by coming to his defences.

The twins also make fun of Harry's outburst in *OP* when Harry is frustrated for being excluded from the Order and its fight against Voldemort and being left alone at his aunt and uncle's house without any word of what is going on outside the confines of his home. In the passage, Harry has been described to be shouting at his friends Ron and Hermione at the top of his lungs because he has been excluded. Ron and Hermione try to justify their lack of contact with him and trying to downplay the significance of being in the Order's headquarters from the beginning. When he has been shouting and calmed down somewhat, the twins magically appear out of thin air into the room where Harry, Ron and Hermione are.

(16)

'Hello, Harry,' said George, beaming at him. 'We thought we heard your dulcet tones.'

'You don't want to bottle up your anger like that, Harry, let it all out,' said Fred, also beaming.

'There might be a couple of people fifty miles away who didn't hear you.'

'You two passed your Apparitions tests, then?' asked Harry grumpily.

'With distinction', said Fred, who was holding what looked like a a piece of very long, flesh-coloured string.---

---- 'Extendable Ears,' he added in response to Harry's raised eyebrows, and held up the string which Harry now saw was trailing out on to the landing.

'We're trying to hear what's going on downstairs.' (*OP*, p. 66)

They point out with help of sarcasm that Harry is overreacting and blaming the wrong people for his conditions as they deem Harry's shouting first soft-spoken, exactly the opposite of what it really was. Then they joke about some people 50 miles away who have not yet heard what Harry was saying. In this way, they criticise his outburst gently with the help of humour. There is incongruity in their way of speaking to Harry about his "dulcet tones" when everyone has clearly heard him. The incongruity also comes from the fact that Fred first sarcastically encourages him not to bottle up any emotions and then goes on to mention that if there were people living far away, they may have not heard Harry, an

insinuation to the fact that Harry has been shouting very loudly. They act as a type of control group within the family as well as trying to calm Harry down with the help of humour and also lightening the mood in the room. In this way they also come to check on Harry who they have not seen in a long time as well as their younger brother who is being yelled at for no justifiable reason of his own. They are also sharing their expertise and knowledge in the matter by bringing their invention, the Extendable Ears, with them to be able to eavesdrop on the adults' meeting in which they are not let in. This also contributes to the twins being unifiers in the family, because they are sharing the information that they have and including all of the children that are left outside of the affairs of adult wizards. This way they form a unit of their own that collects and shares the information that they should not have but still deem themselves old enough to know as they consider themselves worthy of trust and capable of handling the information that they want to access. In this way they create a juxtaposition of 'us against them' and become a more unified front against some of the adults who have decided not to inform them of the affairs of the Order.

4.5 The twins as unifiers

The twins' role as unifiers of the family may also be connected strongly to their role as the family clowns. They bring about joy to the family and make the other members, except sometimes Percy and their mother, laugh. They also put themselves on the line a number of times when they also make fun of each other and themselves. Percy is often perceived as someone who is trying to break the family values and inherent social standing by pursuing a more powerful position in life as well as in the Ministry of Magic. This makes him more distant than other members, often keeping to himself and his books and later his work with the ministry, leaving his family to live elsewhere when his own pursuit of power leads him away from his family and the Order of the Phoenix in which the rest of them are fighting against the now-corrupt ministry. The twins often make him see the rest of the family in the midst of his studies or work by pulling him in or pulling a trick that scares him and makes him observe the real world around him. Even though they tease Percy on many occasions, they are also the ones who tell him that he cannot sit with the other Prefects in their table at Christmas, because it is family time and Percy will have to sit with his. This is also a nice gesture on the twins part, as they are described dragging Percy from under his arms one on either side of him. In the story, it would be

unlikely that any other family member would even consider sitting separate from the group, so the role of the twins is important here as unifiers of the family to bring everyone together.

The twins do not exclude Ron's friends Harry or Hermione from their family either and make sure that they introduce themselves to Harry and help him out. It may be seen as an inclusion to the family when the twins start making fun of Harry as well in *The Order of the Phoenix* when Harry loses his temper. Harry is sometimes treated by the twins even better than their siblings, as can be seen when Harry is given the Marauder's Map which shows the castle's secret passageways (*PA*). This is also a show of empathy on the twins' part as before when they go and get him from his aunt and uncle's place. Despite the jokes, they have a clear understanding on where the line goes in terms of not wanting to tease Harry too much. They know that he has no real family left and understand that he needs support more than their own family members who have always grown in a safe and loving environment surrounded by real family and their support. This is also a sign of the family ideals that have been instilled in the twins. They know that Harry is the one who can defeat Lord Voldemort and want to be the ones to help him in his endeavours. Even though the Marauder's Map that they present Harry with is originally purely to get Harry to be a part of the weekend fun in the magical village of Hogsmeade near the school premises, it later proves an invaluable tool for Harry when he searches the castle for clues in his efforts to find the tools to destroy Lord Voldemort indefinitely. The twins give Harry the map originally because they feel bad for Harry who has to stay at the castle alone just because his aunt and uncle have refused to sign Harry's permission slip out of spite. Harry also treats the twins as family by giving them the prize money he gets from winning the Triwizard Tournament in *GF*.

It may not be seen as a worthy point at all that the twins treat Hermione well, but in light of the world that is set for the reader it becomes clearer and clearer that not all wizards and witches regard Hermione with any respect at all due to her Muggle parentage. As the magical world becomes more and more pronounced in its prejudice against those who are not born into magical families and are therefore deemed inferior within the magical community, the way that the twins accept Hermione as a welcome guest in their home and as Ron's friend is a show of the set of values that they uphold. It is self-evident to them to treat everyone the same under their roof and show them the same amount of compassion and loyalty as everyone else. The twins even console Hermione on some occasions over the course of the series. As Harry and Hermione can be seen as extended members of the family throughout the book it

is therefore worthwhile to consider their treatment as well.

Furthermore, their family and its set of values has automatically given them a behavioural pattern that deviates from the norm in the wizarding world. Fred and George never even consider treating the people that come to their house on Order business as any less equal or deserving of the same treatment as others. Remus Lupin, whom George is paired with during the rescue mission from Harry's house, is a wizard infected with lycanthropy, the werewolf gene. This makes him part of the lowest societal grouping within the wizarding community. The reason he is no longer a teacher after *PA* is in no way due to his lack of talent as a wizard but after Professor Snape intentionally reveals information about Professor Lupin's condition, he is immediately forced back into poverty and unemployment as an outcast of the wizarding world because of prejudice from the magical community. The members of the Order, however, along with Fred and George, genuinely like Remus Lupin and treat him no different than any other member of their secret society. This treatment of the weakest members of the society is a strong indicator of the integrity and benevolence of their characters.

Harry is one of the closest friends of the twins in the end. Even though he doesn't spend his free time with them in the school apart from Quidditch practice, they spend most of their time at the Weasleys and the Order of the Phoenix Headquarters together over the summers. When their business starts to build, the twins refuse to take any money from Harry from their joke shop products even after they have paid their loan back with interest. When the twins learn that the final Battle of Hogwarts is starting in *DH* and that Harry has returned to the school, they rush to his aid, ready to stand by him and help him in his task. Harry is the only person to believe in them enough to invest in their business, thus single-handedly enabling them to realize their business idea into a working joke shop. They also share a strong united ideology that they have been raised into about equality and integrity.

If other types of family-like groups are considered, as according to Särkijärvi (2011), then the fact that Fred and George Weasley belong to Gryffindor house at school is also important to their behaviour as unifiers. They are reported to cheer for the first new Gryffindor at the sorting ceremony, as well as boasting about the fact that their house gets Harry Potter, the most famous wizard of their time (*PS*). This kind of pride and cheering for their house is generally seen as a mark of unity – be it any type of formed group within the society. This becomes more and more visible when there is competition

between any formed groups against each other: celebrating one's own together as a team can promote unity and enforce the idea of one's own crew. Fred and George are the ones who Gryffindor house relies on to throw parties in the common room as providers of food, beverages and decorations. This is due to their extensive knowledge of the castle, its kitchens and the house elves who provide them with rations.

Later on, in *OP* the twins act as unifiers of the whole school, except Slytherin where the common idea is in favour of the new High Inquisitor appointed to the school. They do this by leaving Hogwarts before they have finished school in a way that completely humiliates the High Inquisitor Dolores Umbridge who the rest of the school, staff included, detest. This action should be mentioned as the entire book *OP* sets a tone for the saga that is considerably gloomier with few things to cheer people up. With Voldemort on the rise, the ministry denying it, and the High Inquisitor banning everything that was fun at school, including Quidditch for both Harry and the twins, the point at which the twins rise against the authority can be viewed as exhilarating for the reader. This passage in the books is without a doubt a refreshing twist in the otherwise depressing storyline that may feel somewhat hopeless at times. The role of unifying the school against the High Inquisitor and thus cheering on everyone oppressed by her, undermining her magical prowess and competence as an authority figure, is assigned by the author especially to the twins as they are the only ones who truly manage to resist her regime and rebel against her authority in an effective way.

(17)

There was a great deal of shouting and movement coming from the Entrance Hall. He ran down the marble staircase and found what looked like most of the school assembled there. ---

---'So – you think it amusing to turn a school corridor into a swap, do you?'

'Pretty amusing, yeah,' said Fred, looking up at her without the slightest sign of fear.---

--- 'You two,' she went on, gazing down at Fred and George, 'are about to learn what happens to wrongdoers in my school.'

'You know what?' said Fred. 'I don't think we are.'

He turned to his twin.

'George,' said Fred. 'I think we've outgrown full-time education..'

'Yeah, I've been feeling that way myself,' said George lightly.

‘Time to test our talents in the real world, d’you reckon?’ asked Fred.

‘Definitely,’ said George.

And before Umbridge could say a word, they raised their wands and said together:

‘Accio brooms!’ [original italics]---

--- ‘If anyone fancies buying a Portable Swamp, as demonstrated upstairs, come to number ninety-three, Diagon Alley – Weasleys’ Wizarding Wheezes,’ he said in a loud voice. ‘Our new premises!’

‘Special discounts to Hogwarts students who swear they’re going to use our products to get rid of this old bat,’ added George, pointing at Professor Umbridge. (*OP*, pp. 593-595)

In this instance there is humour found in standing up to the oppressor. Professor Umbridge runs the school with an iron grip of forced authority but without any respect from the students. She enforces discipline and limits expressions of experiences to keep the rise of Lord Voldemort under wraps. This she has done by making students write with a quill that opens the skin in their hand and makes them write with their own blood, making Harry scar for life. The reader may experience frustration and anger towards the character of the Professor and this part in the book can certainly be seen as a welcome moment of getting back at the representative of the Ministry that has removed the safety and security of the school that it used to be known for to most students. The twins not only stand up to the oppressor, they also enforce the idea that one should not take just anything from anyone as well as promoting the opening of their joke shop and the idea to keep resisting and fighting against the professor who has ruined the school for them. This all originates from the fact that Professor Dumbledore has been fired by the Ministry and taken over the school which is considered widely as a corrupt move. In leaving the school and refusing to take more of the oppressive regime, they lead by example in being faithful to Professor Dumbledore and the ideology he has stood for, believing Harry’s story about Lord Voldemort coming back and not accepting the Ministry’s policy to cover the incidents that would raise questions or give proof of Harry’s original statement.

What is more, the twins set in motion a significant movement within the school to finally stand up to their oppressor. The mood of the fifth book is joyless, discouraging and bleak when Harry no longer feels safe in the school or is allowed to speak up for anything that he has experienced. The power position in the school is askew as Professor Umbridge appoints students that are in favour of her

regime and children of significant Ministry officials as part of her disciplinary minions known as The Inquisitorial Squad. Now the awarding and removal of House Points is based on face value by peer students instead of Prefects and professors in places of authority as before. When the whole school apart from this Squad then are encouraged by the twins to start rebelling against Professor Umbridge, the book gets a more hopeful tone in it for the first time and acts as a type of relief for the reader who is on Harry's side. Everyone who has seen the High Inquisitor's power position in the school as problematic is now finding subtle way in which to rebel against Professor Umbridge. The impossible and anarchic school poltergeist, Peeves, is even taking orders from the twins to do anything in his power to aggravate Umbridge.

(18)

Fred looked across the hall at the poltergeist bobbing on his level above the crowd.

'Give her hell from us, Peeves.'

And Peeves, who Harry had never seen take an order from a student before, swept his belled hat from his head and sprang to a salute as Fred and George wheeled about to tumultuous applause from the students below and sped out of the open front doors into the glorious sunset. (*OP*, p. 595)

The twins are thus providing hope for the better to the whole school, showing by example that when something is wrong, it should be opposed by not succumbing to the doom and gloom nor the injustice within any system. In doing so they are enforcing the school spirit and unity. There is a lot of literary effect in the way the author depicts the parting of the twins into the sunset followed by a great celebration of their courage and demonstration. The fact that the poltergeist salutes the twins upon their departure gives the reader more amusement because Peeves is often described chaotic and out of the reach of control by anyone in the school except Dumbledore and the Slytherin ghost, the Bloody Baron. The meaning of this is two-fold: on the one hand the author binds together the humour of the twins with that of winning over the most unruly character in the school. On the other, there is a deeper message in the way that the author writes about the escalation of a situation where someone misuses their power and position in a way that can not be considered reliable. There is evidence in history all over that when people have been pushed to their limit unjustly and are still mistreated by anyone in a position of power, there is anarchy and rebellion to follow. When people are unable to trust their

appointed leaders and the leaders refuse to listen to their complaints, then said authority must be called to question, sometimes briefly resulting in anarchy within a society. What is thus revealed to the child reader as a justified blow to someone who has been acting wrong towards Harry and the other students who disagreed with Professor Umbridge, the adult reader may observe the beginning of a rebellion and both start to notice a steady decline and unravelling of Umbridge's power in the school.

In their complete disregard for authorities that are deemed unworthy of their power position, the twins also make fun of Lord Voldemort later on with their joke shop candy that reduces the feared dark wizard into a poo-related joke. Lord Voldemort is described in the books so frightening and terror-inducing that people are afraid to say his name out loud. Voldemort is often referred to as *You Know Who*. The twins turn this allusion to Voldemort's name into a joke shop item that is named "You-no-poo", a candy that induces constipation. When they are later forced to live in hiding because of known connections to their own family that has openly supported protecting non-magical people, they start a programme called *Potterwatch* on the Wizarding Wireless Network to keep people's hopes up by interviewing people who have resisted the rule of Lord Voldemort and his Death Eater followers. They evolve in this way from supporting not only their family and established family-like groups to resisting the entire regime and providing means to fight against it – by both physical means developed in their joke shop and moral support offered by them through the radio.

The twins seem to downplay an abundance of things, usually to counteract taking things too seriously. They do this with the help of humour, using both joking, intertextuality from existing threads of previous conversations and plays on words. This may be seen as their coping mechanism as well, but also a way for the author to lighten up the bleakness of whatever things are at hand. This is especially visible in the books that followed *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* but also in minor things, giving hints about their characters with allusions to their actions. The twins act as a support system for their various groups and these group members and also as a comical relief. These two are not always mutually exclusive as the twins put themselves on the line on several occasions as well. Their role as brothers as well as team members leads them to protect the people they consider to be close to them and within the circle of their protection sometimes by encouraging jokes and sometimes without joking but actual standing up for their family members. The twins also use sarcasm quite a bit to point out unwanted behaviour in their family. This is their way of controlling unwanted and arrogant behaviour

in the case of their older brother Percy but also to lighten the mood when their mother Molly is lecturing them or taking things too seriously in the twins' opinion. They seem to have adopted a role that fits them within their family but in the school life as well. They later go on to make a living for making people laugh which may be seen as an encouragement to the young readers to pursue the things they love in life even if the choice of profession or pursuit is not a conventional one. In turning their passion for jokes and pranks into a highly successful business with the help of hard work, they encourage entrepreneurship and pursuing one's dreams in life. They are also strong advocates of the kinds of values that are instilled in them by their upbringing in their family: equality, fairness and the protection of the family. They work hard over the course of the entire storyline to emphasise these characteristics for the wizarding world in general and are always ready to help anyone who shares their values and beliefs.

5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this study has been to study whether the role of the Weasley twins and their humour has another purpose than just joking in the Harry Potter book series, paying special attention to the first one, *The Philosopher's Stone*. This has been done by careful consideration of the type of humour they represent, with an aim to further develop the research to apply to how their role changes in the books. The study could be carried out further by investigating some of the types of humour that are present in the later volumes of the saga and if there are changes, why do they take place. However, interpreting their humour has not been the final goal of the study.

This thesis has drawn on the previous work done on the series by Kornfeld and Prothro (2003) and Särkijärvi (2011) as well as the works of Rowling (1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2003, 2005, 2007) herself. The theories of Caplan (1976) and Laakso (2014) have been utilized as well to tie together with the terminology of family and humour in children's and crossover literature. In analysing humour and its literary meaning and ways, the earlier studies of Attardo (1994, 2001) and Morreal (2009) have been used. Some of the extra features of Harry Potter have been employed to understand the possible reasoning behind her work, for example Rowling's interviews and the fan site Pottermore (www.pottermore.com) created by Rowling for Harry Potter fans.

It has been my aim to show that humour plays a significant role in this book, especially as a comical relief and an element that will be helpful in making the book a more enjoyable read for the public. Furthermore, the role of intended jokes mostly comes from the Weasley twins, whereas other characters in the book tend to be funnier by accident, without intending to be, for example in mix-ups with the Muggle and wizarding world. The twins go on to make a career out of jokes, which they excel at. Their humour and wit also act as encouragement in occasions when they try to encourage people around them not to lose their head over something that is not worth worrying about. Another way in which their humour has worked is by downplaying a situation of crisis and thus putting it into perspective for the person worried.

Even though a comical effect may have been more important at the beginning of the books as a way to lure in readers and act as an important component of a good piece of writing, the role of the twins

would then evolve after the first books when Rowling's novels really started to fly off the shelves of bookstores and became very famous. The role of the twins evolved more and more to being a part of the war, a family and its circle of support. Rowling has presumably decided to expand the role of the twins and their humour throughout the series, which may be an indication of the fact that they were needed because of their positive effect on the story: their jokes brought smiles to the readers, sometimes making it easier to bear the weight of the more serious subjects, even reminding the reader that all hope was not lost. The twins are shown as an entity that refused to succumb to despair throughout the story.

The purpose of the study was to show how humour is perceived and used in the story. There are other ways in which to further examine the humour in the books as some parts of it do not come solely from the twins. Moreover, the twins' humour could be even more of a focal point for the study, as this one has examined all of the ways in which the twins have brought something to the story. All of these roles could be looked at more profoundly, too, meaning that any of the roles that the twins have in the novels are just a first touch on the surface and could be looked at as a complete study of its own. One could analyse their roles in the family alone, or their role as unifiers, or as a reference group. I have only drawn on some examples from the books, but there is an abundance of these to be found and examined. What is more, the classifications of family as a support system could be applied to any number of the characters in the Harry Potter books to examine their role, not only that of the Weasley twins. There are also eight movies made based on the book series and those could be analysed from the point of view of comparison of roles in the books as opposed to the roles in the movies: have they grown, diminished, or stayed the same?

Harry Potter as a research question may be starting to have outrun its peak as the hype is not as strong all over the world anymore, but one only needs to look at the popularity of the books and movies still today to see that they are still relevant due to their ongoing popularity but also the themes that the author has raised which are still important and relevant themes to discuss. In addition to the eight movies made adapted from the book series, the story that was concluded now over ten years ago has since sparked a play that is about Harry's son. Two major motion pictures have also been recorded of the time before Harry, about Newt Scamander in *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*, originally a book by J. K. Rowling. It could thus also be an interesting idea to study not only the literature but the

way in which the phenomenon of Harry Potter has grown.

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