

– *Unicorns are pure and innocent*

*Insights from a case study on nine teenagers' response to reading Harry Potter and the
Philosopher's Stone*

Thea Kadri Vikebø



Oslo Metropolitan University

Fakultet for lærerutdanning og internasjonale studier

Institutt for grunnskole- og faglærerutdanning

Thesis supervisor: Hilde Tørnby

Assisting thesis supervisor: Colin Haines

Acknowledgments

First, I would like to thank my thesis supervisor, Hilde Tørnby, for her invaluable input and guidance. Thank you for your support and for believing in my project. I would also like to thank Colin Haines, for his assistance in advising me and helping me to look at my project differently.

I would like to thank Hani and Jeanett for their love, encouragement and for picking me back up when I thought I couldn't do this. Thank you both for believing in me when I did not.

Another big thank you goes to my friends, who cheered me on and supported me. Thank you, Marthe, for helping me with this thesis. Camilla, thank you for reminding me that there is nothing wrong with doing things my own way.

Finally, I would like to thank my mother, for raising me to be an enthusiastic reader and for having *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* waiting for me on the bookshelf when I was ready.

Abstract

This case study is an in-depth look into nine students' responses to reading *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*. The study aimed to analyze and discuss what those responses might reveal about the book. Readers' response to the Harry Potter books have been greatly overlooked as scholars attempt to understand the series' massive success. Some have argued that the books are merely a marketing phenomenon, overlooking how the text is experienced by the readers.

The data for the study was collected through participant-observation of literary conversations with a 10th grade English class and students' own reading logs. Four of these literary conversations and nine student logs were analyzed. The responses of the nine students revealed that *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* concerns complex ethical, philosophical and moral issues that engaged the readers. The case illustrates how the students connected the story to their own lives, as well as to the world at large. The students exemplified the ability to understand and engage with abstract concepts. The responses of the nine students challenges critical perspectives on the characters and the book itself. This thesis proposes that the book can be used in English teaching in Norway to facilitate critical discussion and development of ethical awareness, central components of an all-round development (Bildung). The case study aims to be an addition to the understanding of the literary work but is not fit to generalize. The thesis suggests that further research on reader response to Harry Potter is needed.

Table of contents

1.0	INTRODUCTION	6
1.1	HARRY POTTER AND THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE.....	6
1.2	BACKGROUND.....	7
1.3	THE PRESENT STUDY.....	8
1.4	OVERVIEW.....	10
2.0	THEORY	11
2.1	READING IN ENGLISH, IN NORWAY.....	11
2.2	READER-RESPONSE THEORY.....	13
2.2.1	<i>Theory in Practice</i>	15
2.3	READING AS EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT.....	18
2.4	TEACHING LITERATURE THROUGH DIALOGUE.....	19
2.5	LITERATURE IN THE CLASSROOM.....	23
2.6	THE HARRY POTTER SERIES.....	24
2.6.1	<i>The Harry Potter-debate</i>	28
2.6.1	<i>The Harry Potter Phenomenon</i>	29
3.0	METHODOLOGY	32
3.1	DESIGN OF THE STUDY.....	32
3.1.1	CHOICE OF RESEARCH DESIGN.....	33
3.1.2	<i>Case study</i>	35
3.2	PLAN AND PROGRESSION OF THE READING PROJECT.....	36
3.3	COLLECTION OF DATA.....	38
3.3.1	<i>Sampling</i>	38
3.3.2	<i>Survey on reading habits and attitude</i>	39
3.3.3	<i>Observation of literary conversations</i>	40
3.3.4	<i>Student logs</i>	42
3.4	SELECTION OF CASE AND DATA.....	43
3.5	ANALYZING THE CASE.....	44
3.6	ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS.....	45
4.0	STUDENTS' RESPONSE WHILE READING HARRY POTTER AND THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE	49
4.1	LITERARY CONVERSATIONS.....	49
4.1.1	<i>Literary conversation about The Mirror of Erised</i>	50
4.1.2	<i>Literary conversation about The Philosopher's Stone</i>	53
4.1.3	<i>Literary conversation about unicorn blood</i>	55
4.1.4	<i>Literary conversation about Through the Trapdoor & The Man with Two Faces</i>	58
4.2	STUDENT LOGS.....	61
4.2.1	<i>Emotional response</i>	62
4.2.2	<i>Involvement</i>	63
4.2.3	<i>Interpretation</i>	63
4.2.4	<i>Criticism</i>	64
4.2.5	<i>Enjoyment</i>	66
4.3	COMPARING LITERARY CONVERSATIONS AND LOGS.....	68
5.0	DISCUSSION	71
5.1	THE VALIDITY OF THE STUDY.....	71
5.2	STUDENTS' RESPONSE TO ABSTRACT CONCEPTS.....	72
5.3	STUDENTS' CONNECTION TO OWN LIFE.....	74
5.3.1	<i>Closing the gaps</i>	75
5.4	THEMES THAT FUELED CONVERSATIONS.....	76
5.4.1	<i>The Mirror of Erised</i>	76
5.4.2	<i>The Philosopher's Stone</i>	79
5.4.3	<i>Unicorn blood</i>	81
5.5	THE PROBLEM WITH HERMIONE.....	83

5.6 HARRY POTTER AND THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE.....	86
5.6.1 <i>Harry Potter as Bildung</i>	87
6.0 CONCLUSION.....	89
6.1 IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH.....	89
6.2 IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING.....	90
6.3 HARRY POTTER, A PHENOMENON?.....	92
REFERENCES.....	94
APPENDIX 1.....	102
APPENDIX 2.....	103
APPENDIX 3.....	104

1.0 Introduction

He'll be famous – a legend – I wouldn't be surprised if today was known as Harry Potter Day in future – there will be books written about Harry – every child in our world will know his name!

(Rowling, 2018, p. 10)

When *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* was published in 1997, no one could know how true these words would be. The story of a young boy who lived under the stairs until he one day learns that he is anything but ordinary, has captured audiences across all ages for over 20 years. Only the Bible has been translated into more languages than the Harry Potter series (Pattison, 2001). If you have read the entire Harry Potter series, you have read 4,224 pages (Peppler, 2017). As the best-selling book series of all time, no story has been pored over for more hours combined and never before has anyone rallied the masses with a fantasy novel like Joanne Rowling has. Rowling's enormous success has been analyzed and discussed for over 20 years. What was it about these books that captured children and adults alike? As with any success, be it within the works of literature, movies or tv shows, there is no way of saying definitely and conclusively what made this exact one renegade with such a varied crowd. Some will argue that this is merely a marketing success. A greater machinery that knows how to sell to the public (Zipes, 2009). Others argue that the books must be seen as classics and great children's literature. Its ability to engage a young crowd, a mark of quality and literary worth (Knapp, 2003).

1.1 Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone

Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone is the first of seven books in the best-selling series. The book is our introduction into what is now known as *The Wizarding World*. Harry Potter is a young orphan boy living in a cupboard under the stairs in his aunt and uncle's house. Friendless, unloved and mistreated, Harry has little joy in his life. On his 11th birthday Harry learns that he is not an ordinary boy, but a wizard, when he receives his acceptance letter to Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. As Harry ventures into the magical world he learns that he is no ordinary wizard. Harry Potter is famous for being the only one to have

survived the attack of an evil wizard named Voldemort. The same wizard who killed his parents.

At Hogwarts Harry makes his first ever friends, in a boy called Ron and later a girl called Hermione. Together they start to uncover a secret within the school. Their Headmaster, Albus Dumbledore, is keeping safe a Philosopher's Stone: "The ancient study of alchemy is concerned with making the Philosopher's Stone, a legendary substance with astonishing powers. The Stone will transform any metal into pure gold. It also produces the Elixir of Life, which will make the drinker immortal" (Rowling, 2018, p. 178). The three friends eventually learn that there is something dangerous living just beyond the school grounds. As they realize that someone might be out to steal the Stone, they take it upon themselves to try and protect it. This leads to a dangerous quest culminating in Harry being face to face with his parents' killer. Harry's life is saved at the last moment by Dumbledore, but Voldemort escapes.

1.2 Background

In my first year as a substitute English teacher in a lower secondary school west of Oslo, I was still a student myself. When the time came to write a master's thesis, the idea of researching a reading project in English surfaced. Just before it was decided that I would step permanently in as English teacher in what would become "my class", another teacher had brought the group to the library and told them to choose an English book. The students had chosen and started to read both in class and as homework. They had been working on this for a few weeks when we met. I noticed a reluctance in the group every time I told them to get their books out. What was called the "My book"-project was to be concluded with a book talk, a short oral presentation about the book they had read. As I sat there listening to them, I thought "No wonder so many of them don't like to read". Over half of the students seemed to have either picked a book at random or just chosen a book remotely connected to something that interested them. They read the books when they were told, never voluntarily, and retold the storyline with little reflection on what they had actually read. The class' reluctance to reading persisted. Their endurance with longer texts was low and when talking to them about reading, many expressed a real dislike for it as an activity. We once played a game where one student makes a statement about themselves and those who relate to the statement stand up

and switch places. When one student said "I like to read" only four others stood up. One of them was me.

I developed good reading habits at a young age, but it was not until I read Harry Potter that I actually became fascinated with literature. There was just something about it. I could not put it down. Just like so many others, I waited impatiently for each publication and when a new part of the story was in my hands I did not put it down. It even went as far as me faking illness on family vacation so that I could stay at the hotel reading. At one point, about book 5, waiting for the Norwegian translation was no longer an option. Learning how to read for enjoyment in English had a big impact on my language skills, but mostly on my interest in literature. I read classics and best sellers, but I always returned to Potter. I have read the series more times than I can count, discovering something new every time.

This was the experience I wanted to give my students. The joy of Harry Potter. But at the same time, I was growing more and more curious about what actually made this series so important not only to me, but to millions of other readers. Through my teacher education I was introduced to many great stories aimed at the same audience as the Harry Potter series has captured, but by looking at the sales numbers these stories do not have the same success with readers. What was it? Why could so many of us never leave this story behind? Might I find some answer in my students?

There have been many approaches to Rowling's novels about Harry Potter. The text has been analyzed and critiqued within numerous academic traditions. The fan culture it has inspired has been described and studied. However, while reading and preparing for my project there was one approach that seemed to have been largely left out. Because, when looking into and discussing why this series renegades with a young audience on this scale, why not look to that audience? What response do they actually have to the text? What is it they respond to, and what might that tell us about this work?

[1.3 The Present Study](#)

How would my students respond to reading a Harry Potter book? I decided to base my master thesis on this. I knew that I wanted to talk to the students about the book in a way that was

different from the traditional approaches to literature in Norwegian English classes. I wanted an insight to their experience of the book and started getting familiar with a teaching method most commonly used in Norwegian classes, *litterær samtale* or *literary conversation*. Students' responses in these literary conversations were selected as a set of data for the thesis. The analyzing of literary conversations was thought to give insight into students' reading experience and engagement with the novel. Those responses might then open up to a new and extended understanding of the text. Therefore, this thesis is investigating the following research questions:

How do students respond to reading *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*?

and

What might those responses reveal about *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*?

Using four literary conversations with nine students as a case study I will try to answer these questions. The decision to study this selection was made due to challenges that arose during the reading project with the entire class. The reasons and justifications for this decision will be explained in detail. In addition, I will comment on how literary conversations as a teaching method facilitated insight to students' response and why that might be beneficial to teaching English in Norway. Because a number of students did not participate fully in the project, I will offer some thoughts on why this might be.

A look at the entire series would be a too large an undertaking for a master thesis and because of this I've decided to focus only on the first book. However, it is not just the size of the project that led to this decision. *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* is the book least mentioned and analyzed in recent critical literature. I will therefore discuss whether this means that the book is in any way a less significant and valuable work or if it is overlooked or maybe overshadowed by the books that follow it. Scholars are in general very split in the view of what makes Harry Potter a success and I will analyze and discuss my findings against theories that both praise and critique Rowling's novel.

The research questions of this thesis are, as mentioned, "How do students respond to reading *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*" and "What might those responses reveal about *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*". In order to study these issues, I will start by looking at the reader-response theory and how it can be used in practice. I will present some perspectives on reading as emotional development. Because the study explores literary conversations as a teaching method, I will provide an explanation of what these are and present similar methods and their benefits. As the thesis concerns one specific text, I will provide multidisciplinary theories and perspectives on the text. This will be presented in Chapter 2.

The methodology of the case study will be described in Chapter 3. There I will provide an explanation of how the study changed in nature as the focus shifted from a whole 10th grade class to nine students. I describe the plan and progression of the reading project conducted for this study and how the data was collected. Because this study was conducted with my own students I will present both limitations and benefits of that choice. Subjectivity, validity and reliability will be addressed.

In Chapter 4, I present the data collected through participant-observation of literary conversations, teacher reflection recordings and student logs. These data will be analyzed and interpreted, separately and together. The chapter, answers in part the first research question of this study. Four literary conversations about *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* are presented, each one with a short plot-summary of the chapters they concerned. The students' logs are presented by the patterns they revealed. The findings will be discussed in light of relevant theory in Chapter 5. There, I aim to answer the two research questions by discussing interpretations of the responses of the nine students. In Chapter 6, I will make suggestions for follow up studies on Harry Potter and reader-response, in addition to possible implications for teaching English literature in Norwegian lower secondary schools.

2.0 Theory

Reading and discussing texts in the English subject in Norwegian schools have changed greatly over the years. This study was conducted during the final years of the curriculum implemented in 2006, "Kunnskapsløftet" (LK06). With the new curriculum "Fagfornyelsen 2020" comes new approaches to reading, discussion and interpretation of text that make studies like this even more relevant to the subject. As teachers of English in Norway work with literature with their students, theories such as the reader-response theory might be valuable. The theory has been central in this study and I therefore aim to provide an explanation of the theory and its use in practice. In conducting this study, I have explored a teaching method traditionally used in teaching Norwegian; literary conversations. Literary conversations have many similarities with other teaching methods such as grand conversations, philosophical conversations and book clubs. I will therefore provide a description of the principles of each and present studies that show how students can benefit from their implementation. The effect reading and discussing literary texts might have on emotional development support and serve as encouragement for teachers to familiarize themselves with different methods for teaching literature.

This thesis aims to describe reader-response to a specific text as well as discuss what those responses might reveal about that text. I will therefore provide multidisciplinary perspectives on the text. *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* is the first of seven books in the Harry Potter series. It is rarely approached on its own and so studies and perspectives on the series as a whole is also included. The enormous successes of these books have led to a large debate concerning their effect on readers, their value as literature and how they differ from other works of fantasy. Many critics have attempted to pinpoint why these books have engaged such a large number of readers.

2.1 Reading in English, in Norway

The view of reading in the English subject in Norway has changed almost with every new curriculum for the past 80 years, from it was first introduced as a compulsory subject in 1939 to the newest curriculum "Fagfornyelsen 2020", which will be implemented later this year. At the start of English learning in Norway, reading was used for exposure to language. During

the 1960s and 1970s it was a tool for practical language skills. But when Norway changed its view of the pupil, from empty recipient to active and at the center of learning, the view of reading changed too. During the late 80s and 90s the students experience of reading became more important. They were to encounter authentic text, but the reasoning was that they needed to be prepared when met with the language in real life (Bakken, 2017; Department of Church Affairs and Education, 1987, 1996).

In the 2006 curriculum, "Kunnskapsløftet" (LK06), reading was implemented as a basic skill in all subjects. In English the students were to encounter a range of different types of text and reflect on these, but the main objective was the outcome of the reading, not the response or interpretation the student may have to the text (Bakken, 2017). The competence aims for the subject at a lower secondary level were for the students to discuss English literature and to be inspired by English literature in creating their own texts. The purpose of the student's interaction with literary text was to inspire reading enjoyment, personal expressions and creativity (Department of Education and Research, 2013).

In the school year 2020/2021 the new curriculum "Fagfornyelsen 2020" will be implemented. Several big changes have been made in most subjects. English for a lower secondary level now have two aims that highlights reading and literary discussion.

- read, discuss and communicate content from different types of text, self-chosen texts included
- read, interpret and reflect on English fiction, fiction for young adults included

(Translated from Department of Education and Research, 2020)

The new curriculum has been drafted and revised several times before its final edition was published. In the second to last draft there was no mention of fiction. The aims relating to reading English texts were specified as to relate to young adult culture and identity and text about and by Indigenous peoples. A summary of the responses to the suggested aims was published, but there was no mention that teachers protested to the lack of focus on literature. However, there seems to have been some discussion regarding the decision because when the final draft was sent to the Department of Education the change was made (Directorate of

Education, 2019). With the new aims, the new curriculum opens even more up for the approaches to reading that are presented in this chapter. Since Norwegian teachers have freedom of method, a teacher may choose to meet the aims through dialogue-based methods with a focus on reader-response.

2.2 Reader-response theory

This project was based on a wish to explore the students' response to the text *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (Rowling, 1997) and it is then naturally connected to the reader-response theory. There are many literary critics central in pioneering this approach to text, such as David Bleich, Norman Holland, Stanley Fish, Wolfgang Iser and Jonathan Culler (Davis, 1992). However, one of the scholars closest connected to the theory in the field of pedagogy, is Louise Rosenblatt. Her work *Literature as Exploration* (1995) was first published in 1938. Since then, five editions have been published and the work is still influential.

Reader-response theory is often referred to as the transactional theory due to Rosenblatt's claim that reading can be seen as a transaction between the reader and the text at a particular time, in a particular place. The term was taken from John Dewey to emphasize the equal contribution of each party, reader and text (Rosenblatt, 2005). The text itself is nothing until it interacts with the reader. The reader brings his or her life experiences to the process, and therefore no transaction can be the same. Rosenblatt stresses that the transaction will be affected by the readers stance, this meaning the object of the reading. Is the reader looking for information or reading for pleasure? To describe the different stances Rosenblatt coined two terms, *efferent* and *aesthetic* reading (Rosenblatt, 1994).

In *The Reader, the Text, the Poem* (1994) Rosenblatt explains *efferent* reading as when the readers primary concern is what he will take away from the reading. The text is sifted through for information, and only the essential or useful information is picked up. The process of reading a manual will in most cases be efferent and the stance will be taken naturally by the reader. It is however, quite possible to read any text efferently. It is, as Rosenblatt sees it, one of the mistakes a teacher might do in teaching literature. Asking for information from the text, under the assumption that there is a right or wrong answer. This will lead the student to read efferently, looking for the clues to what is 'correct' (Rosenblatt, 2005).

As any text can be read efferently, so can any text be read *aesthetically*. The term aesthetic is taken from Greek meaning "to sense" or "to perceive". The stance of someone reading aesthetically is the experience during the reading and not the information one seeks to take away. The emotions, ideas and references that is awoken when reading is part of what makes the action meaningful. Rosenblatt claimed that aesthetic reading was the most neglected in schools (Rosenblatt, 1994, 2005). When reading for or with children the adult reader can see signs of aesthetic reading. These might take the form of questions, comments, comparisons with life experiences and with other stories, and rejections because the story puzzles or offers no links with past experiences (Rosenblatt, 2005, p. 79).

Efferent and aesthetic reading differ with the stance of the reader, not the intention of the author of the text. Rosenblatt (2005) claimed that aesthetic reading opens up the possibility of more concepts rising to the reader's consciousness. The reader will be aware, and capable of grasping more abstract concepts, and noticing details like rhyme and rhythm. This will not be the case when the reader is looking for specific information through efferent reading. Letting go of the notion that the text or author of the text, dictates the stance of the reader is described by Rosenblatt as difficult. An experienced reader will identify the intention of a text easily and automatically, or subconsciously adapt to it. She claims however, that any text can be read either way. To understand the transactional nature of reading, we as adults must change the way we look at the intention of the text or author and take seriously what children actually make of it (Rosenblatt, 2005).

The result of the transaction between the reader and text is what Rosenblatt calls the poem. This is the individual, new meaning the words on the page take when met with the readers own experience. It is a give and take process. The poem exists within the transaction at that time and place (Rosenblatt, 1995). In creating the poem, the reader applies his or her experiences, passions, emotions, intentions and knowledge to the text. These abstract parts of the individual might be altered during the interaction with the text. Because of the equal importance of the individual reader's experience of the text, the reader has not fully read the first line before he has read the last (Rosenblatt, 2005). What the readers bring to the text influences what they take from it, and therefore every reading experience is unique. Students for instance, might comprehend a text similarly but will interpret its meaning in personal ways (Mills, Stephens, O'Keefe & Waugh, 2004).

What Rosenblatt calls the transaction between reader and text has also been described by Wolfgang Iser (1978). He believes that the literary work cannot be identified simply in the text or in the reader but between the two. He suggests that a literary work can be seen to have two poles; one *artistic* and one *aesthetic*. According to Iser, the *artistic* pole is the world and framework created by the author. The *aesthetic* pole is the understanding and realization accomplished by the reader. The reading process is active and creative as the reader's own understanding of the text provides interpretations that fills the gaps in the story left by the author. Iser calls these narrative gaps. The author draws up the world but cannot completely fill it and can neither control nor dictate the understanding of the reader. In writing the text, the author can apply various strategies and devices to provide and limit the implications provided, but those implications are understood and interpreted by the reader. In attempting to understand the world provided by the text, especially those parts that are unfamiliar to us, Iser believes that the reader to some degree leaves behind some of his or her own reality and enter the reality of the text (Iser, 1978).

2.2.1 Theory in Practice

Rosenblatt (2005) suggests that teachers, especially of older students, let them read for the pleasure of the experience. By doing so one will allow for aesthetic reading. She presents it as a paradox that once the student is relieved of directions of their stance, they will through aesthetic reading develop favorable skills as a byproduct from the transaction between themselves and the text. It is important to present reading as a meaningful and positive activity, and by doing so, the different stances will emerge naturally on their own. The teacher cannot define what are good and worthy works but must let each one experience and use their own judgment to decide (Rosenblatt, 2005). The teacher can provide the text but has no opportunity to decide how the work is perceived if he or she wishes the students to read the work aesthetically. The teacher can however observe if an aesthetic transaction is taking place, by looking for the signs previously mentioned, for example through conversations with the students. In her own works Rosenblatt has collected student notes and logs as well and used this to analyze their interpretations and understanding of text so as to look and see if their reading can be described as efferent or aesthetic (Rosenblatt, 1994, 1995, 2005).

In *Literature as Exploration* (1995), Rosenblatt suggests that literature is an extension of life itself. Taking this into consideration, one might argue that literature provides additional experiences to students. Through literature one might give the students a broader understanding of the world and give opportunity for them to develop life skills such as empathy towards others. According to Mills, Stephens, O'Keefe and Waugh (2004) it is this quality that is the value of literature, not the information the students might acquire from it. They argue that teachers who understand this can use text to help students "live beyond their ordinary lives", instead of using them solely to teach main ideas. Students with a better understanding of other peoples' worlds can envision futures more just and equitable (Mills et. Al, 2004, p. 49).

Mills et al. described in the 2004 1st edition of *Language Arts* their methods of reading and discussing literature with students, in accordance with Rosenblatt's theories. They applied her theory to interpret conversations and look for transactive moments. As the children engaged with the text they observed the poems created, understandings that were neither in the text nor in the child but emerging in the interaction between the two. Their method of analyzing the responses the children gave, will together with the signs of aesthetic reading provided by Rosenblatt (2005), be the inspiration of how I will later analyze my own students' responses. Mills et al. (2004) claim that students who are active participants in the literary experience construct new understandings of themselves and their world. As students interact with text together with other students they are prepared to participate in a democratic future. They write: "Rosenblatt's theory and vision for a democratic society come alive when students and teachers engage in authentic dialogue around literature" (Mills et al., p. 47, 2004). The students might have similar comprehensions of the text, but what each of them brings to it affects what they take away. Mills et al. (2004) claim that young readers grow if their teachers embrace this idea.

When applying Rosenblatt's theory to the classroom, teachers must remember to avoid looking for the right answer (Mills et al., 2004). The value of using this approach must be the rich and varied interpretations of the text that each student might provide, and one should avoid trying to lead the students towards a desired answer. The student's personal experiences can give new insight to a text that others, like the teacher, never had thought about. Rosenblatt (1995) argues that every poem is unique. Heilman (2009) disagrees on this point, specifically in regard to Harry Potter, as there is undeniably something uniting about the books. She does

however, believe that Rosenblatt's theory is a useful approach to try to answer what it is that resonates with the books' audience. Might it be then, that even though each experience of the text is unique, just like the reader is, there is something within this text that stirs something the readers all share (Heilman, 2003, 2009).

How students understand and process the text can evolve with age. According to Jean Piaget's theory on cognitive development a child goes through four stages of development; sensorimotor, preoperational, concrete operational and formal operational (Woolfolk, 2007). During the two last stages, as the child develops from preadolescent to adolescent, they begin to develop the ability to think abstract and hypothetical thoughts. This starts with the concrete operational stage, where the child gains an understanding that one's own thoughts are unique and not necessarily shared by others. They begin to show the ability to think logically and concrete. When the child reaches the formal operational stage he or she can understand abstracts concepts, such as algebra and science, but also abstract ideas. Piaget claimed that children can begin to reach this stage from the age of 11, but a child's development can differ, and some might never be completely capable of these processes. Though the formal operational stage is the final stage of cognitive development, it can continue to develop if one as an adult continue to accumulate knowledge (Milevsky, 2015; Woolfolk, 2007). Rosenblatt (1994, 1995) applied Piaget's theory in her works when describing and understanding the reader and the processes that enabled their transaction with text. The theory can provide a wider understanding of reader-response and the ability for abstract and complex thoughts.

Piaget believed that the child developed through active participation in the world. However, he was criticized for portraying the child as a lonely participant, able to construct meaning on his or her own (Woolfolk, 2007). Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky emphasized the role of culture and society in this learning process, in what is known as the Sociocultural theory. Interaction with others is central for a child's development and can have a great influence on the child's understanding of the world. The language the society provides can aid the child as they develop their mental capacities (Milevsky, 2015). Vygotsky named a child's potential for learning the zone of proximal development, a range from what the child might learn on his or her own to what he or she can learn with assistance from others (Woolfolk, 2007). Teachers must be aware of this zone as they help and support students' learning. Too much help can stifle learning, but with proper scaffolding, tailored to the students own capacities, the students can further develop their thinking. This support can also come from their peers, as

talking and working with others might further develop their cognitive capacities as they construct meaning and new understandings.

2.3 Reading as emotional development

Reading is for many an emotional experience, especially when reading fiction. Who has not been thrilled, provoked, happy, scared or charmed by a story they have read? From a very young age we are able to be emotionally moved by the lives of people who never lived. Even when we move from the age where the divide between fantasy and reality is blurred, these stories still have the ability to stir something within us (Hogan, 2011; Nikolajeva, 2013; Rosenblatt, 2005). Hogan (2011) argues that not only the emotional effect literature has on us but the way it has the *same* emotional effect on many different people makes it an interesting field to explore.

In recent years there have been several studies on the effect literature can have on readers emotional development. Some have suggested that literary works of fiction might enhance Theory of Mind (ToM), a concept within psychology that describes the ability to detect and understand others' emotions as well as put oneself in others' way of thinking (Kidd & Castano, 2013; Nikolajeva, 2013). Researchers behind one of these studies argue that literary fiction affect development of ToM because it engages readers in mind-reading and character development. Because delving into the minds of the characters of fiction poses no risk in one's own life, one is more susceptible to engage. Because the reader is at the mercy of the author in regard to information on a character's motive the reader must engage in the ToM process to develop an understanding of the world presented. Kidd and Castano (2013) argue that ToM is a complex and critical social capacity and that the development of this is important. The ability fiction has to sharpen this capacity promotes its use in e.g education.

Rustin and Rustin (2001) suggest that fiction within the fantasy genre holds a distinctive place in emotional development for children and young adults. They argue that the fantasy genre fits well with the emotions and worries of children. Many stories discussed in their book *Narratives of love and loss: studies in modern children's fiction* (2001) are full of metaphors for good and bad parents, sibling rivalry and can be seen as an interesting test of a child's capacities. The stories they brought forward were appreciated by both children and adults who

could still identify with the imagination of a child. They believe that what distinguishes those stories is a "combination of imaginative creativity, with a sense of underlying emotional 'realism'" (p. 264, Rustin & Rustin, 2001).

The fantasy genre has been the object of discussion and research in many capacities that are beneficial in work with children and young adults. Results show positive effects on development of empathy, understanding of marginalized groups, reduction of prejudice and possible relief of stress and anxiety (Fuxa, 2012; Mulholland & Mulholland, 2006; Vezzali, Stathi, Giovannini, Capozza & Trifiletti, 2015). The best-selling work of fantasy that is the object of this study, has even been used in therapeutic treatment. Psychologist Neil Mulholland (2006) has developed a form of therapy that he calls "Harry Potter Therapy" because of the effects that he believes the story has on his patients. These effects being, amongst others, reduction of moderate feelings of stress, anxiety and depression. In *The children who lived : using Harry Potter and other fictional characters to help grieving children and adolescents* (2008) psychologists Makrell and Makrell suggest using the books to talk about death. They present different themes from the series that they believe children and adolescents might benefit from reading and talking about.

The works of Joanne Rowling have also been used in some of the studies mentioned in relation to the emotional development fantasy might facilitate. Vezzali et al. (2015) claim that Harry Potter can reduce prejudice towards out-groups. During 3 studies with 3 different age-groups they found that identification with Harry increased the effect, but only in the age-groups that were close to the characters in the book. There were indications that disidentification with the antagonist Voldemort might also give the same affect, but this is less clear in their findings. These specific books' suggested effects on emotional development might therefore only be relevant within the 11-17 age group.

2.4 Teaching literature through dialogue

Although talking about literature is a well-known and widespread method in classrooms in the English-speaking part of the world, the term literary conversations (*litterær samtale*) relating to a specific teaching method is more closely connected to a Norwegian context, in particular to the teaching of Norwegian. There, this method is widely spread and even highlighted in the

curriculum (Directorate of Education and Training, 2015). As mentioned, discussing and reflecting on literature has not previously been made relevant in the aims for English teaching in Norway, until now. However, many teachers of English have long used the methods by their own accord, as it is a common way to teach texts around the world.

Although the term literary conversation is not traditionally used in English to mean 'discussing literature with students', that does not mean that the method is not widely described and evaluated by English scholars. Professor Judith Langer (1998) has done a lot of studies on literature learning and teaching. Influenced by, among others, Louise Rosenblatt, she divides discourse and thinking into two categories, literary experience and discursive experience. Literary experience can be compared to Rosenblatt's aesthetic reading where ideas are subjective, and the individual have an inquisitive approach, while discursive experience, where one approach ideas in an objective and logical manner, can be connected to efferent reading. Langer wished to explore Rosenblatt's ideas further and examined what happened when students entered literary worlds and participated in class activities centered around literature. Langer believes that the reading experience coincides with social constructivism, arguing that classrooms are good environments for students to develop more skills than just reading, but critical thinking and empathy as well. The way people think is heavily influenced by the society they are a part of, but by broadening their worlds through literature they will develop more human sensitivity (Langer, 1998).

Langer (1994) presents no specific teaching method concerning what a teacher should or should not do when working with literature but she proposes an approach to teaching and uses the terms *response-based instruction* and *instructional support*. There are two kinds of support that the teacher provides; ways to discuss and ways to think. The first, support for ways to discuss, is important for a good learning environment and focuses on discussion routines, like taking turn, listening to others and handling disagreements. Support for ways to think is a form of scaffolding, where the teacher helps the students think further, without interfering with their subjective experience of the text. The teacher should not focus on the author's intended message, the theme or genre and not approach the students with an idea that there is a right way to understand the text (Langer, 1994, 1998). Though Langer is not describing a specific teaching method, she is describing a classroom culture that parallels the following approaches to dialogue-based work with literature.

The Norwegian view of the method literary conversation is based on Langer's views on reading. The Directorate of Education and Training (2015) has published a document describing how to use the method. They present a series of principles that will help the teacher succeed with the method:

- A literary conversation is a collective exploration of the different understandings of a text
- The class can develop an understanding of the text that is dynamic and open, through reading and discussing specific parts of the text and explore their part in the text as a whole
- The literary conversation can be prepared by asking the students to read certain parts to a deadline, activating their engagement and thought process
- The class can agree upon proper etiquette for discussion
- Teachers may support and help the group, but take a step back during the conversation
- It is preferable that the students write logs post-conversation

(Translated and adapted from the Directorate of Education and Training, 2015)

The Norwegian version of the method also draws on the reader-response theory, stressing the importance of the relationship between the individual's experiences and the way the text gains meaning from these. The author's intended message is not mentioned in the description of the method provided by The Directorate of Education and Training (2015).

Though the term literary conversation can be said to be a very Norwegian term, there is no lack in other dialogue-based teaching methods that function under the same or similar principles. Among these are grand conversations, literature instruction, philosophical conversation and book clubs. Peterson and Eeds (2007, as cited in Fuxa, 2012) use the term grand conversations for a method that is equal to the Norwegian model. They argue that

children practice critical literacy through thinking and talking about books during these grand conversations. In addition, conversations like these will have a greater effect if they are systematically modeled. Through conversations, children and young adults can find meaning in literature by connecting the stories to their own life and discover new interpretations when talking to their peers.

Philosophical conversations differ some from literary conversations in both form and topic. Philosopher Matthew Lipman (1980, as cited in Børresen, 2015) developed a structure for these conversations, that stresses the importance of students working with questions formed by themselves. The method is not necessarily connected to reading but can have a text presenting a philosophical story as its starting point. As the text chosen for this project basis itself on many well-known philosophical ideas, the conversations that took place bears many similarities with the conversations described by Lipman, but without the structural guidelines that he presents (Lipman, 1980, as cited in Børresen, 2015).

Book clubs are in many ways similar to literary conversations, but different cultural contexts give the terms different meanings. A book club is not necessarily connected to teaching or even a school. A book club can be started and led by students themselves in their spare time, by friends who like to read or by a host of daytime television. As a teaching method however, it is very much the same. Under that presumption, the tendencies found by studies of American book clubs can in many aspects be relevant for using the method in Norwegian classrooms. Book clubs have been found to benefit students socially and cognitively, they help them explore different perspectives and develop students critical thinking. Teachers are important moderators but should intervene as little as possible. Participation in book clubs has a positive effect on students' reading enjoyment (Alvermann, Young, Green, & Wisenbaker, 1999; Park, 2012; Whittingham & Huffman, 2009). Book clubs' role in developing autonomy was studied by the NYC Department of Education in 2012. They concluded that book clubs used in education promoted positive attitudes towards reading and love of literature, encouraged intensive and extensive reading, nurtured reflection and critical thinking and supported diverse responses to text (Center for the Professional Education of Teachers, 2017).

All these methods have one thing in common, they are in most cases based on a group of students reading and discussing the same text. Choice of text is a widely-discussed topic and there are many differing perspectives on who should choose the text, under what criteria and

for what purpose. This paper will now present some of these perspectives and shed light on why a teacher might choose to ask a class to read the same book, even though it might go against some of the principles of extensive reading, where students' choice of what they read is brought forward as an important factor in success (Harmer, 2007).

2.5 Literature in the classroom

How literary texts are used in a particular classroom depends on a teacher's knowledge of and interest in literature. With the continued tradition for freedom of choice of method and syllabus in Norwegian schools, this becomes even more the case (McKay, 2014). There are many discussions to be had in regard to this, but no matter the interest of the teacher, the aims of the curriculum require work with literature. How one goes about it, bringing literature into the classroom differs. With the increasing focus on extensive reading, the students own choice of text has become a natural part of Norwegian English classes. However, there are reasons to argue that the teacher might sometimes choose the text and require all students to read the same work.

Leland and Harste (2000, as cited in Fauxa, 2012) argue that there are some books that lend themselves more to critical thought than others and suggest criteria for the selection of books that can enlarge the space of possibilities for the students. If the criteria they suggest is to be followed, the teacher must provide the students with a choice of books that meet these. This has however, been brought forward by many advocating for extensive reading as well (Harmer, 2007). Having students choose the text they wish to read does not mean that the teacher will allow anything but may provide good options. But if one wishes to explore the teaching methods previously described, the students will need to read the same text at the same time. It is the stance of this paper that it need not be one way or the other. Students may read extensively, choosing the literature themselves, but they may also share the experience of the same text. One is not better than the other, both provide valuable learning.

The purpose of reading can provide guidance for the teacher in deciding on what text to provide the students with. If a teacher wishes to facilitate aesthetic reading, one might wish to provide the students with literature that they can connect with and that might engage emotional development. Wolf (2004) argues that children will have no problem relating a text

to their own lives if there is a quality to the emotional dilemmas of the characters. This quality can be difficult to identify for children and adolescents. To provide such texts the teacher might choose the work a class will discuss, much the same as one would for a philosophical conversation (Lipman, 1980, as cited in Børresen, 2015).

2.6 The Harry Potter series

This study was conducted using one specific text and the interest was to see how students respond to that text. Previously in this chapter I have presented theories on working with reader-response and methods that support the choice to let the students read the same work. I will now present some theories and perspectives on the text itself. Since its release in 1997 *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* has been analyzed and critiqued. During the following 10 years, six more books were published, and with every publication, scholars took a stab at understanding its massive success. As the books became longer and more complex the focus was less on this first introduction to Harry's world, though it was naturally included when the series was looked at as a whole. There are therefore few recent publications that focus on the first book alone. One might think that to be because a series will naturally be connected every time the work is discussed, but the other books of the series are regularly looked at on their own. None of those theories are included here. The works cited look at the series as a whole, parts of the series where *Philosopher's Stone* is included or where it is the only focus.

Many larger edited publications were first published as the series was still being written (Anatol, 2003; Heilman, 2003; Whited, 2003). A second edition of Elizabeth Heilman's *Critical perspectives on Harry Potter* (2009) was published after the series completion, as well as Giselle Liza Anatol's *Reading Harry Potter again: New Critical Essays* (2009). Yet, there are fewer larger publications providing collections of different critical perspectives on the series as a whole, published after 2010. Though there still seems to be a great interest in the work, it manifests as individual papers, research and articles. It is therefore somewhat of a challenge to find recent critical texts on the subject that are relevant to this thesis. Since this thesis bases itself on the first installment of the series, this might not be seen as a problem. However, one needs to understand in what climate many of its sources was written under. During the 10 years from first to last book in the series the Harry Potter books were highly debated, not only by critics of literature, but in the public debate. Other authors, scholars and

even politicians were at times outraged at its success. Some objected to the topics the books presented, thinking it inappropriate to present ideas of death, racism and evil to children and young adults. Others were infuriated by the growing number of adults who read and enjoyed the books, claiming them to be without substance and a serious message (Anatol, 2003; Cockrell, 2002). As you will later read in this chapter, parents tried to ban the book from schools in some countries (Knapp, 2003). These attitudes might have changed in the years after the series completion. It is interesting if the view of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone's* depth and literary worth changed as a result of the last books. In any case, the work cannot stand alone. The lack of literature exclusively devoted to the first book does not exclude the works that deal with the entire, or parts of, the series. It is a central part of what has been named by many as the "Harry Potter phenomenon" (Heilman, 2009; Zipes, 2009).

The Harry Potter series deals with a long list of major themes. The second book, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (1998), is often brought forward as a story of racism, slavery and critique of class-based society. The third, *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (1999), deals with justice and revenge. *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* (2000) brings back the themes of the second book and together with the remaining books, 5, 6 and 7, it becomes a story of a society much like our own but wrapped up in a package that communicates with the younger generation that tales of our history might not always do (Witschonke, 2006). The first book, however, is different for several reasons. Firstly, it is our introduction to this world and its inhabitants. As the shortest novel in the series (17 chapters to 36 + epilogue in the last and longest *Deathly Hallows*) it spends much of its time giving us an insight into the world that, those of us who had to wait for the novels to be published, spent 10 years in. Secondly, the book deals with Harry's life at the youngest age of the series. As the books were written as a chronological story, the first book is also the "least mature" (Westman, 2011).

Many of the things that can be said about the Harry Potter series can also be said about other works of fantasy. Why then, should one choose to look at this text specifically and not the genre in general? There are many studies, books and articles on fantasy novels, their use, their position in modern literature and the effects they have on their readers. However, there is no way of denying that something is different with this series. No work of fantasy has sold as many copies, been translated into as many languages and engaged the masses like Harry Potter has. Many have tried to pinpoint the difference between this work and others like it. According to Amanda Cockrell (2002) where Rowling's story differs the most from those of

such authors as C.S Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien is foremost at her choice to leave the realm of high fantasy. Rowling brought not only magic to our world, but our world to magic. Instead of bringing the reader through a wardrobe or a looking glass, she created a subculture that existed parallel to the world the reader was very much familiar with. The decision might explain how so many readers quickly 'get it'. They don't need to understand all the complex rules of a new world but can explore the different and fantastic because they have already laid the groundwork in knowing their own reality.

Cockrell (2002) believes one of the reasons that Harry Potter is less esteemed in some circles of academia than many other works of fantasy, might be the way it balances its tone. The combination of humor with a fight against the darkest forces in life challenges the genre and is ambiguous to some. The stories alter quickly from schoolboy pranks and worries of homework, to situations of mortal peril. Harry's experience of severe neglect by his aunt and uncle is portrayed both with harsh reality as well as ridicule and humor. Take for instance a running gag with the Christmas presents he receives. Though there is an underlying cruelty in sending him 50 pence coins, a toothpick and a tissue, it is received by Harry with a shrug and a "nice of them to remember". This can be an example of situations that distract and give the impression that the works lack depth (Cockrell, 2002).

There are many who have tried to fit the story about Harry Potter into a specific genre (Pennington, 2002 as cited in Turner-Vorbeck, 2008; Zipes, 2017). However, some argue that placing the series in one category is close to impossible (Anatol, 2003, 2009; Heilman, 2003, 2009). Nikolajeva (2009) believes that the way the books have interwoven several genres is part of its attraction. The books are an excellent example of what literature for children is and what it does, making them 'well over the mediocre' (Nikolajeva, 2009, p. 240). The books present the reader with multi-dimensional characters to be both admired and judged. Harry's conformity to the idea of a romantic hero is part of the lure. The genre eclecticism of the story gives the readers a range of ideals to mimic, such as bravery, wisdom and patriotism. Stories like Harry Potter allow for children and young adults to be brave, powerful and independent (Nikolajeva, 2009).

Another aspect that makes Harry appealing to reader, is his ordinariness. Nikolajeva (2009) points to his name. Potter fades in comparison to such names as Dumbledore, McGonagall or Sir Nicolas de Mimsy-Porpington. She argues that contemporary characters are not to be

admired by the reader but viewed as equals. Harry has certain qualities that makes him superior to his peers, his flying skills and being the only to survive the killing curse, but he is also a boy who struggles to get his homework done, loses his way to class and is bullied by his cousin. Harry is also a rebel. He repeatedly breaks school rules, but usually with good intentions. Nikolajeva points to how these storylines often give a comic effect, as Harry is both punished and rewarded by the schools point system. At the same time, there are certain parts of his story that separates him from some readers while bringing him even closer to others. Harry's story of loss can to some readers invoke sympathy, while too others it can make the character even more relatable.

The story about Harry Potter starts the day he loses his parents. With that, the character joins a great many other bereaved fictional heroes. Philip Pullman claims that "the orphan is an excellent protagonist for any story, because they are free, but yet they are bereft" (Pattison, 2001, 23:22). The removal of parental guidance is instrumental in children's literature and central in Harry Potter. It allows for adventure and independent choices. Still, there needs to be some parental figures, so that the protagonist has someone to rebel against. In the first Harry Potter book these figures are mainly Harry's aunt Petunia and uncle Vernon, Hagrid and Dumbledore (Nikolajeva, 2009).

The Harry Potter books have been criticized for their lack of representation of sexual orientation, ethnicity and gender (see Anatol, 2003; Griesinger, 2002; Heilman, 2009; Heilman & Donaldson, 2009; Horne, 2010; Powers, 2007). In regard to the latter, critics have suggested that Rowling upholds gender stereotypes. The character Hermione Granger is often brought forward to exemplify this. Hermione is a clever, academically adept and eager character, who Harry and his friend Ron view as a nuisance when they first encounter her. As the first novel progresses, they become friends and Hermione take part in their adventures. She is often the one who gets the friends out of dangerous situations, as she has a great capacity for knowledge. Heilman and Donaldson (2009) claim that Hermione is portrayed unfavorably during the first book, powerless relative to Harry and Ron. They believe that she is simply a 'helper', who enables the boys' yearn for adventure. However, Anatol (2003) points out Hermione's willingness to participate in these adventures and highlights points in the story where she is not only partaking but encouraging breaking the rules.

Montgomery and Watson (2009) have categorized *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* as a classic in their book *Children's literature: classic texts and contemporary trends*. It is presented alongside works such as *Little Women*, *Peter Pan* and *Treasure Island*, and though they stress that their selection is not to be seen as a canon, it does show that the work is seen as influential. *The Oxford Handbook of Children's Literature* (Mickenberg & Vallone, 2011) includes a chapter on the series, where the story is described as a Bildungsroman (Westman, 2011). A Bildungsroman is a story that focuses on the personal development of a protagonist, moving from youth to adulthood. The term comes from the German *Bildung*, educative-self formation. The concept of *Bildung* concerns transcending beyond mere acquisition of knowledge, but also developing moral and aesthetic concerns (Bleicher, 2006). Westman (2011) suggest that the Harry Potter series is a seven-volume study of one character's development and therefor fits well within the genre. Peter Appelbaum (2009) argues the same point but adds that it is not only Harry's development that is explored, but that of other characters, like the professor Severus Snape, as well (Appelbaum, 2009).

2.6.1 The Harry Potter-debate

Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone was published in the USA in 1999 as *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, due to Scholastic's belief that it sounded 'more magic'. As Rowling had also published the second and third part of the series, the three books quickly gained popularity and received critique. They hit the New York Times Best Seller-list and Rowling stayed there for 10 years (Errington, 2015). However, while it was gaining success it was also becoming one of the most challenged books in the US. Some adults believed that the books promoted Satanism and the occult. During that one year at the end of the decade, the series became one of the 100 most challenged books of the 90s in schools and libraries (American Library Association, 2013).

Professor Nancy Knapp was one of the scholars who decided to address the discussion and argue for the continued use of the books in schools. Knapp (2003) contests the claims of the dangers of Harry Potter and argues that this is high quality literature that should be included in schools to encourage reading enjoyment. Her article was published at a time where several schools and libraries in the USA, Australia and the UAE had already banned the book. Knapp addresses this development and argues that Harry Potter exemplifies three essential qualities of great children`s literature; they are intensely engaging; they have significant literary worth;

and they raise questions of deep significance to children's social and ethical development (p. 78). Her claim is that these qualities support the use of the books. She argues that Harry, Hermione and Ron are good heroes for young readers to identify with. The characters make good choices, choosing good over evil, community and the greater good. The issues the books raise stimulates conversation and discussion. Knapp concludes that the books are: "good reading, good literature and good for our children" (Knapp, 2003, p. 89).

Elizabeth Heilman (2009) has edited a collection of essays on Harry Potter and argue that its immense success makes the work important. The books present its readers with thought-provoking literary themes. The effect it has on its audience and the way in which it infiltrates the imagination as well as the life of the reader, make it a work that "deserves serious critical attention" (Heilman, p.2). Professor Jack Zipes (2001, 2009) agrees that there is a need for serious critical attention, but contests that it makes the work of any importance. When he first took a look at Harry Potter in his book *Sticks and Stones: The Troublesome Success of Children's Literature from Slovenly Peter to Harry Potter* (2001) he argued that the problem with these books was capitalism.

2.6.1 The Harry Potter Phenomenon

With the enormous popularity of Harry Potter, it is not surprising that many view it as a phenomenon. Many critics dispose a neutral use of the term, but others argue that it is all the series is. Zipes (Zipes, 2001, 2009, 2017) describes the books as ordinary and simplistic. He claims that it is all the 'extra' components surrounding the books, movies, toys, etc. that blinds us and fools us to believe that the books have any significance. Zipes (2001) writes that what makes the phenomenon of Harry Potter is its predictability. We know that good will conquer and everything works out in the end. He also points to what he sees as two-dimensional generic characters. At the core of this view is the attitude that the books' success stems from good marketing, using an appealing backstory through the publicity of the author (Zipes, 2001, 2017). Zipes (2001, 2009) argues that the Harry Potter books cannot be viewed as individual works of literature, if literature at all, but part of a phenomenon. He does not clarify how big the phenomenon must be to disqualify it as literature. He believes that Harry Potter is simply a marketing success and references Maslin (2000) and Sutton (1999) to support his claim. However, Maslin's review *At last, The Wizard Gets Back to School* (2000), does not simply write off the books as pure marketing, but comments on the hysteria that

takes place at the launch of the fourth book. She then goes on to describe Rowling as a "fantasist with a thrillingly fertile imagination". Editor Roger Sutton's editorial 'Potter's Field' (1999) viewed the books as being 'critically insignificant' and like Zipes (2001, 2009) believe that it is mainly a marketing phenomenon.

In a review of his book *Sticks and Stones: The Troublesome Success of Children's Literature from Slovenly Peter to Harry Potter* (2001) Zipes is criticized for his approach to the Potter books. Donald Hettinga (2003) believes that Zipes is participating in a troublesome trend within the field of children's literature; that popularity raises suspicion and devalues the work. Zipes goes far in attempting to disprove and problematize the response and enjoyment that young readers experience when reading Harry Potter. Hettinga argues that his arguments become circular; "If a book enjoys phenomenal success, it necessarily becomes corrupt; a successful book is a bad book" (Hettinga, 2003, p. 275-276). Professor Amanda Cockrell (2002) believes that we are preconditioned to see something that is popular on a large scale as no good. She argues that this is in many ways what has happened to the Harry Potter series. The fact that 'everybody' is reading it must mean that it has no depth or substance, because both a nine-year-old boy and his mother can understand and enjoy the same text. However, the very fact that so many are reading the series, with constant reports from parents with children 'who never used to read', Cockrell argues that it is a sign that they are finding something more than simply a literary escape.

Wolf (2004) claims that "children's uptake of literature depends on there being something substantive to take up" (p. 14). If children are to engage and talk about literature, we as adults need to present them with something to think about. As children and adults alike engage with Potter, there must at least be something that they are responding to. Anatol (2003) uses Harry's fear of being revealed as a fraud and sent back to the Dursleys, as an example that real-life concerns hold powerful resonance with younger audiences. Critically acclaimed author of the highly debated and popular series *His Dark Materials*, Philip Pullman, was interviewed for the BBC documentary *Harry Potter and me* in 2001. He observed that many popular adult books dealt with trivial questions, while literature aimed at a younger audience dared to challenge the reader. He said that works like Harry Potter present its audience with the ultimate questions: "Where do we come from and what's the nature of being a human being? What must I do to be good?" (Pattison, 2001, 46:10).

In many of these critical texts, Rowling is compared to other authors of books aimed at children and young adults. They all acknowledge her success, but there is a clear distinction in the way she is described compared to her peers. Most common is accrediting the books' popularity to her sympathetic personal story that has been widely publicized (Heilman, 2009; Montgomery & Watson, 2009; Zipes, 2001, 2017). Other authors are put under no such scrutiny in the same texts. An example of this can be seen in this observation by Ron Charles: "Philip Pullman's 'His Dark Materials' is a dazzling fantasy series that explores philosophical themes [including a scathing assault on organized religion] that make[s] Rowling's little world of good vs. evil look, well, childish" (Charles, 2007, as cited in Heilman, 2009, p. 2).

Westman (2011) argues that some of the limitations that Rowling has been criticized for can be defended with her narrative style. As the story is told from a limited omniscient point of view, we the readers learn nothing before Harry does. Thereby there is no "greater view" or more sophisticated one, than the one of a boy age 11-17. Westman herself describes *Philosopher's Stone* as relative simplistic and that it disappears in the complexity of the following volumes. Rowling emphasizes Harry's emotional and moral development and therefore this is natural. Her narrative style focuses on the subjective, internal experiences of the character, just as much as the external actions of his world. Westman argues that the narrative style evokes sympathy for others. The narrative technique Rowling uses is shared by writers like Jane Austen and is described as Sympathy through Control of Inside Views (Westman, 2011).

The debate surrounding the Harry Potter books has provided criticism and analysis from multiple critical perspectives. The critical views and theories presented in this chapter will be used to discuss the findings of this study. What happens when the reader meets the text? Rowling's use of language, inspiration or personal story is not what will be in focus, but how teenagers meet her text, what it did to them, what took their focus and why. The students' responses to the text will be analyzed and discussed in connection with theory to provide an understanding of the text itself.

3.0 Methodology

The aim of this study is to find insight into how teenagers respond to *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* and discuss what those responses might tell us about the text. It was conducted, analyzed and discussed as a case study. The data was collected through a reading project during a fall semester with a 10th grade class. This was done through participant-observation of literary talks with my own students. The observation of their talks helped pinpoint what themes they responded to and what content from the book lead to discussions. Teacher-reflections gave additional insights to the feel of the room, how the students acted and what they seemed most engaged in. Student logs provided the students opportunity to describe their own experience of the book and in theory enabled all students to participate in the project.

The design of the study became a process that was revised and redeveloped several times, also during the conduction of it. When working with people, things don't always go as planned and it became necessary more than once to change the plans to accommodate to the needs of the students. Only the response of students who read *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* during the duration of the project are part of the case studied. This led to a reduction in sampling of students, based on fitness of purpose. The initial decision to divide the class into groups was made as a teacher, but the decision to not analyze the data collected from the rest of the class was made as a researcher. The case study therefor provides insight into nine students' response to the text.

3.1 Design of the study

As I planned to explore my research questions it was clear quite early that a flexible research design would be beneficial. As the response to text would be the focus, it was natural to choose a descriptive methodology. Describing, analyzing and discussing students' response would include many components and it would need a design that allowed for both the complex and the subtle. The decision to conduct the study in one's own classroom also affected the choice of both methodology and collection of data. It therefore appeared natural to conduct a case study. Nisbet and Watts (1954, cited in Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2017) claim that case study is a beneficial method for a researcher to undertake without a full

research team, as is the case with this study. I was familiar with the method in both design and analysis.

3.1.1 Choice of research design

Cohen et al. (2017) explains that case studies are 'methodically eclectic', meaning they can consist of a variety of both research methods and data collection. In this study there are elements of both action research and ethnography. Implementing literary conversations as a new part of teaching English can be seen as a form of intervention. Action research in education often test new teaching methods to try and improve practice at a local level. Yet, the object of the study was not how the method worked, but the transactional response that appeared as a result of it.

The starting point of this study being curiosity into what would happen when introducing a specific literary text to a specific group of students, it initially took the form of an exploratory ethnographic case study. Avineri (2017) writes that ethnography at its core is one human being's interpretation of other human beings and it does therefore involve a great deal of subjectivity. It will inevitably be conducted and analyzed from a particular set of perspectives. It is important to acknowledge one's perspectives and identities that might impact the findings and conclusions. This will be addressed in detail later in this chapter. Ethnographic methods are useful when one aims to capture interactions and practices in a classroom. Though most common in social anthropology, the methods have become more and more common in school research during the 21st century. The methods try to make what is familiar into something strange and vice versa. It consists of taking in-depth views at cultures, describing and analyzing without necessarily looking to generalize what one might find. One can argue that a class can be seen as its own culture, and in this study that was essential. (Christoffersen & Johannessen, 2012; Avineri, 2017).

There are multiple reasons for the choice to conduct the research in my own classroom. The main one was a wish to see how my own students would react to the book. I decided to write a master thesis to develop my own skills as a teacher. I felt that it would serve more of a purpose to me if I could study something that would help develop my teaching and communication with the students. There are also several practical reasons, for example time

and resources. What I was planning would require time to be set aside for both reading the actual book and discussing it with the students. There would need to be room for this in the yearly plan for the class. The school would also have to be in possession of the book. On this point I was lucky. I presented my project to the school's principal and was allowed to order one class set of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* to the school's library. In addition, I acquired copies of the audiobook to help differentiate and accommodate certain students' needs.

Using my own class gave a range of opportunities that I would not have had anywhere else. In this chapter I will describe problems and obstacles that occurred during the duration of the study, and I would argue the majority of these could not have been solved as they were if this study had been conducted in a class that was not mine. I was also planning on doing something I did not know if they were doing anywhere else. The concept of literary conversation is greatly linked to the Norwegian subject, and though I have no doubt that many English teacher use this method in their classes, finding one who was doing it that fall, with that book, was too big of a chance to take.

As I wished to explore literary conversations as a method of teaching English in a case study, it would be natural to be a participant in the study. Participant-observation is fundamental in ethnography and it is not uncommon to use an emic view, in other words an insider's view. The researcher might over time shift from an expectation of how the culture in question should be understood to understanding it on its own terms. It is a method that is complicated in regard to subjectivity, bias and ethics. It is therefore necessary for the researcher to also apply an etic view, or an outsider's view, so as to remove oneself from subjectivity and bias (Avineri, 2017). It has been essential for me to reflect much on this aspect. I have therefore chosen to address it through a positionality statement at the end of this chapter.

As the project progressed, challenges arose that complicated the initial decision to sample the entire class. These challenges and the decisions they led to, will be described later in the chapter. Case studies allows for an in-depth look at a case with a small number of people, and this made the change possible, though it changed the ethnographic approach. The focus of the study therefore became a single-bound unit of a group of nine students. However, the methods of data collection still have ethnographic elements.

3.1.2 Case study

The term 'case study' can easily be misunderstood as it is also a term used outside of research. To make a clear distinction Yin (2018) provides names for three different types of case study; *popular case studies*, *teaching-practice case studies* and *research case studies*. *Popular case studies* often appear in popular media, such as newspapers, magazines and blogs. These are usually not scientific and follow no research procedures. *Teaching-practice case studies* are used for professional development and aim to provide training in solving relevant challenges. Many students in higher education are familiar with the method. *Research case studies* or *case study research* is a research method where a 'case' is the main unit of inquiry. It has been the object of some discussion and has a 'mixed reputation as a research method' (Yin, 2018, p. xx). Yin theorizes that the unclear distinction might play a part in a 'sometimes disparaging reputation of *research case studies*' (2018, p. xxi).

In a wide sense, case studies aim to take a deeper look into something (the case). Any research in social science can be argued as a case. A more specific definition can be complicated to form, as there are many differing perspectives. Cohen et al. (2017) argue that forming a single definition is elusive and unnecessary. They ask, "Is it, for example, a method, a process, a methodology, a research design, an outcome, a research strategy, a focus (Verschuren, 2003; Stake, 2005; Tight, 2010; Thomas, 2011; Yazan, 2015)?" (Cohen et al., 2017, p. 375). This makes understanding the nature of a case study complicated, much like working with a case might be. To explain the complexity of case study Yin (2018) provides a trilogy where case is *mode*, *method* and *unit*. This study is a case study in all three inquiries, but both mode and method share traits with ethnography.

Though a single definition is complicated to phrase, there are certain characteristics. Case studies are in-depth studies of a phenomenon, setting, group or situation. They can for instance focus on interactions. They often blend types of data as they try to 'explain, describe, illustrate and enlighten' (Cohen et al., 2017, p. 376). Case study research is often holistic and therefore usually include several methods for collecting data. Hitchcock and Hughes (1995, cited in Cohen et al., 2017) provide hallmarks of a case study that fit to describe the study at hand. A case study focuses on specific events relevant to the case and individuals or groups involved. It provides a rich description of the events and blends these with analysis. The researcher is integrally involved and attempts to portray a rich description in his or her report.

3.2 Plan and progression of the reading project

The reading project was conducted in the fall semester as part of English lessons. Notably the logs are one of the student assessments from the reading project and a data set for this thesis. Six weeks were initially set aside for work with the book. During these weeks the students were to read the entire *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* in English. Because I was conducting research in my own classroom, I planned a variety of activities targeting different skills, in addition to the literary conversations that were to be the focus of my research. I set aside nine of the lessons for discussing the book, where in half of those it would be possible to divide the class in two, resulting in fourteen actual literary conversations. When the project was done we had spent eight weeks finishing the project. Nine literary conversations had been conducted, though eleven had been attempted but with varying success.

To illustrate the initial plan for the project and how it was conducted in the end, I have used two tables. Table 1 shows the plan I had for the six weeks and Table 2 shows how the project was conducted in reality. Lessons set aside for literary conversations with the whole class are marked in green, if the class was to be divided in two the class is marked in yellow. In Table 2 the lessons marked with purple are literary conversations where less than half the students participated. Those are the conversations analyzed as the case. All yellow lessons, where the class was divided in two, could be practically solved in one of two ways. Each week we had a 1 hour and 30 minutes lesson divided between English and Science. Usually the lesson is 45 minutes of one subject and then 45 minutes of the other, but teachers can choose to split the class in two and have lessons simultaneously at two different locations. I made arrangements with the science teacher to do just that during the project. The other opportunity I had was to let half the class work on different tasks while the other half joined me in a different classroom for literary conversations. Because I was accompanied by teacher aides in these lessons, this could be a possibility.

Table 1: Initial plan for the project

	<u>Class 1</u>	<u>Class 2</u>	<u>Class 3</u>	Chapter
Week 1		Survey Hand out books	Introduction First chapter read out loud	1
Week 2	Students away	Literary conversations Class divided in two	Literary conversation Whole class Tasks on comprehension	2-5
Week 3	Vocabulary tasks	Literary conversation Whole class	Literary conversations Class divided in two	6-8
Week 4	Mid-terms	Reading	Literary conversations Class divided in two	9-12
Week 5	Literary conversations Class divided in two	Writing	Writing	13-15
Week 6	Class rotates between discussion, writing and reading	Literary conversations Class divided in two	Literary conversation Whole class	16-17

Table 2: Final implementation

	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3	Chapter
Week 1		Survey Hand out books	Introduction First chapter read out loud	1
Week 2	Students away	Discussion in groups of 4 Reading	Tasks on comprehension	2-3
Week 3	Vocabulary	Literary conversation Whole class	Literary conversations Class divided in two	4-7
Week 4	Mid terms	Mid terms	Literary conversations Whole class	8-9
Week 5	Mid terms	Mid terms	Midterms	10-11
Week 6	Literary conversations with those who have read the ch.	Literary conversations with those who have read the ch.	Literary conversations Class divided by how far they read	12-15
Week 7	Literary conversations with those who have read the ch.	Conversation with those who did not finish the book	Literary conversations with those who had finished the book	16-17
Week 8		Final deadline for hand in of log	Literary conversation Whole class	

As Table 2 illustrates, the plan had to be altered during the project. Most notably and relevant; the change from whole or half class conversations to groups divided by how far they had read in the book. The largest difference between the two tables is the amount of "yellow" conversations, those that would in theory provide double the amount of data as there would be the possibility of two conversations in one day. The reason for the change is the fact that a

large number of students did not follow the reading plan and were not prepared for the lesson. The division between those who prepared and those who did not, eventually became a hindrance for my planned conversations and in 'Week 6' I decided to only include students who had read the chapters in focus. The topics were such that the students who had not read would be unable to participate. They were therefore given alternative tasks to work on. The exclusion left me with a problem. I would not gain insight into their response to the book. The challenge presented itself early on in the project and in 'Week 4' the students were informed about and given a reading log task. The initial reason was to gain insight into the rest of the class' response to the book, but as I will later explain in detail I have judged their logs as unreliable data. However, it did provide valuable data about the response of the nine students who did follow the reading plan.

3.3 Collection of data

I will now present the methods of data collection. Initially the hope was that I could collect all the data for this study by observation and field notes. I visualized that I would participate only at the start, getting the class warmed up by asking them about the chapters that was the focus that day. I had decided against recording video or audio of the students and because of this I supplemented my fieldnotes with audio recordings of myself, reflecting on the experience and looking through the notes if anything needed clarification. However, because the students did not participate actively the way I had imagined, there arose a need for a different way to gain insight into their experience reading. This led me to ask them to write logs. Cohen et al. (2017) explains that case studies are 'methodically eclectic', meaning they can consist of a variety of both research methods and data collection.

3.3.1 Sampling

Since this thesis has case study as mode, method and unit the sampling of the case was a circular process. The case existed to be studied because of the choice I made as a teacher to have a reading project using literary conversations as a teaching method. Initially, the whole class was sampled, under the premise that reading *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* made them eligible and of interest to the case. The school was very positive to the idea of me

conducting research in my own classroom and after receiving a description of my planned project I was given the greenlight to go ahead. Before the project started, the students and their parents were informed about the plan and asked consent for me to describe them in my research and possibly use their school products. Both the school and the parents were assured that the project would not deviate from the curriculum or interfere with ordinary school life. There would be an assessment, and the students' participation would affect their grade the same way any other topic could. The students were also made aware that the topic would be on the "Fagplan" that I would hand in to the school before their oral exams.

The project was met with positivity and enthusiasm from students and parents. As students would be 15-years old at the time of the project, and since I had no plans to collect sensitive data, the students could in theory give consent without their parents (NSD, 2019). However, I decided that it would be best for the validity of the project, as well as the teacher-parent relationship, to collect consent from parents as well. The parents were first informed in an information letter (Appendix 1) sent out per e-mail. Students and parents were later asked to sign consent forms (Appendix 2) during teacher-parent meetings. All consented to participation and allowed me to collect and use student products in my research. However, as the study progressed there were several challenges in regard to the sampled participants and whether data from them would be valid and reliable. In case studies, the researcher must sample participants by *fitness of purpose* (Cohen et al., 2017). The selection of participants therefore changed from a whole class to nine students.

3.3.2 Survey on reading habits and attitude

Before we fully started the project, I had the class answer a survey to get an overview of their reading habits and attitudes towards reading, as well as their familiarity with the Harry Potter series. The survey showed that 17.8% of the class had never read an entire book in English, 28.5% said they did not like to read and 35.7% said they only read when asked to do so in school. When asked specifically about *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* only 1 (3,5%) had read it in English and 25% in Norwegian. However, fantasy was the most popular genre amongst the students.

3.3.3 Observation of literary conversations

Observation is a central part of data collecting in many case studies. It is beneficial to the holistic nature of a case study. In this study the observations were conducted under the principles of participant observation, where the researcher engages in the activity he or she observes (Cohen, 2017). It is not uncommon that the researcher participates so as to provide an emic view. The researcher might then provide insights that can clarify situations that occur. However, the researcher also needs to take an etic view, the view of an outsider, to approach the data with less subjectivity (Avineri, 2017).

I observed and documented 11 classes, including the four that provide the data for this case study. However, two of those observations boiled down to descriptions of a silent class who needed more help to get started. As previously described, the situations I observed took three different forms. Whole class in the classroom, half class in the classroom and nine students in alternative room. In each situation I would start the lesson with an introduction to our focus of the day. I would also tell them that they were welcome to speak their mind without raising their hand, as long as they did not interrupt each other. This was to insure both a free discussion but also allow me to take notes without as much interruption as possible.

The observations were documented in two ways, field notes and teacher's reflection recorded as audio files. It is both useful and important to supplement fieldnotes with post-observation remarks as immediately after observation as possible so as not to forget important remarks or clarifications (Cohen et al., 2017). With observation it is also important to ensure that one is ethical in what one chooses to document (Avineri, 2017). I therefor did not record, nor later reflect on behavior that I as their teacher deemed too sensitive to be included or irrelevant to the study. This distinction would have been even more challenging had I been observing a group I was unfamiliar with.

Observations can travel on a scale from structured to unstructured. A highly structured observation might include an intervention of some kind, while the unstructured is 'naturalistic' without interference (Cohen et al. 2017). The observations in this study where semi-structured. In this study structure was initially provided through the teaching method. Literary conversations have some structure, but the teacher's role is much the same as a researcher

participating in an observation. In addition, the students were provided with given chapters, topics and focus points for the day. These were communicated to the students both online and in the classroom, before the class took place. After the change in sampled participants, the observations became more structured because the students were familiar with the form. Yet, on the other side, it might also be described as more naturalistic, as they formed a sort of culture as a group.

3.3.3.1 Field notes

Field notes are a common way to record data from observations in case studies. Cohen et al. (2017) explains that while recording and dictating is possible, writing has the advantage of being thought-stimulating. They advise that the notes are supplemented with fuller accounts, as things can happen quickly in an observation situation. During each class I would take as detailed notes as I could. The notes are mostly transcripts of the conversations with some notes for clarification, to describe mood in the room or details of interest. So as to not have to write down my own questions I prepared conversation starters beforehand and tried to stay out of the discussions as much as possible. I could thereby just mark my questions as *TQ*, teacher question, and then fill in the actual question straight after class. I wrote down the students' comments using codes. This was because of the guidelines given by NSD as to how one might conduct a study without having to report it to them (NSD, 2018). The transcripts never consisted of identifying information. They only record how many students were present, never who. The codes were later changed to aliases for the benefit of this thesis.

3.3.3.2 Reflection logs

Immediately after each literary conversation, I would sit down with my field notes and record myself as I reflected on today's experience and read through the notes for clarification. These recordings would later provide valuable information on the atmosphere in the room and the difference in the students' engagement and participation. The audio files were transcribed, and the transcriptions password protected. In the audio files I never reference students by name but use the same codes that I used in the field notes.

3.3.4 Student logs

Student logs were included for assessment purposes and to give insight into the students' comprehension of the reading project. Additionally, the logs are data for this research. The choice to include a reading log was divided. In regard to this study I was afraid that the project would not give me enough data to gain insight into student response to the text. Avineri (2017) writes that the collection of artefacts can provide additional information about the patterns in the data material. Because it would add an additional layer of information and possible understanding I deemed it beneficial to the study.

The description of and requirements for the student logs were retrieved and adapted from the article *How to Keep a Reading Log or Book Journal* by Esther Lombardi (2017). This article was chosen for its focus on the emotional and personal response to the text, instead of asking the students to summarize the text and give detailed character descriptions. I tried with this to avoid efferent reading, where the students might just skim the text to look for information to fill their logs with. If I were to enable aesthetic reading I could not test them in the content (Rosenblatt, 2005). Therefore, I would have to accept that all would not read, all would not do as asked, and focus on the ones who did. The task asked the students to record their general thoughts while they read, as well as their emotional response to the book. They were specifically asked if they could connect their own experiences to the text, as well as which characters they liked or disliked and why. The students were asked to include favorite quotes from the text and reflect if the book had an impact on them while reading. In addition, the task encouraged them to include 'lightbulbs', questions or ideas that appeared while they read. The task given to the students can be found under Appendix 3.

The students were asked to not use their name in their logs, but they would have to hand it through the school's digital systems. I had to download the files from there and when doing so I used a code for each one and password protected every file in accordance with guidelines from NSD (2018). The code for logs of the students who are a part of this case, were later changed to aliases, with no connection to the students' real name. The area in the school's data system where the logs were handed in has since been archived.

Rosenblatt (1995) describes a process where every reading experience is a unique and individual occurrence involving that particular reader. That would mean that this project had the potential of almost 30 individual understanding and responses to the text. An overwhelming amount of data for a study of this size. Not knowing what would come of it, and also with a divided role as teacher/researcher I decided to collect it all and look what might be most of interest to the study and what would serve as useful in exploring my research questions.

When all the data was collected I began to look for patterns of interest. Quite quickly it became clear that the amount of data would be time consuming to analyze. With nearly 30 individual responses it would be difficult to sufficiently describe and analyze the data in a paper of this size. I debated different solutions, but when I turned to my own recollections of the project, in the form of my audio files, the solution became clear. There were four conversations with the students that stood out and all four were with the same nine recurring students. Case studies are often focused on an individual classroom or a small set of participants so to be able to have a deep, inductive analysis of the data (Avineri, 2017). I therefore felt that I could defend the choice to change the focus from the whole class to a small group of students. There are additional reasons. These are the students I can with as much certainty as possible say have read the complete novel.

I decided that it would not compromise my research to make a selection of nine students, though it would change the nature of the study, presentation of data and analysis. I decided to analyze the data in the form of a case study. Case study is a method suitable for in-depth examinations of situations (Avineri, 2017). It provides a rich collection of data and can with a single bound unit focus on a specific and unique case (Christoffersen & Johannessen, 2012). The effect the Harry Potter books has on the readers has as I presented earlier, been described as a phenomenon. When studying phenomena and asking questions using 'how' case study is a valuable way to describe and analyze situations (Yin, 2018). From the point of the change it became an in-depth look at nine individuals' response to a specific text. In some ways it can be compared to studying a book club. Nine already engaged students' reflections and thoughts on a book that has in some way already drawn them in enough to continue reading. Though

the data analyzed is collected from nine participants, I will reference some observations from the reading project as a whole, which I believe will be of interest.

3.5 Analyzing the case

The data from the project was analyzed on three levels. First, the field notes, supplemented by teacher reflection logs and the students' logs were analyzed individually. Their content was coded using five categories:

1. *Emotional response*: the students expressed or showed signs of emotions, such as happiness, sadness, anger.
2. *Involvement*: the students showed signs of engagement, either by connection to own life or the world in general.
3. *Interpretation*: the students reflected on the content of the story and provided an interpretation of its meaning, symbolism or message.
4. *Criticism*: the students critiqued the book, storylines or character. Whenever they questioned the text, specifically or hypothetically, it was categorized here.
5. *Enjoyment*: students expressed liking or disliking of the text, characters or storyline.

In addition, the students' choice of direct quotes in the logs were categorized by topic and character providing the quote.

Their responses were then analyzed in connection to elements from the book. What event, statement or character led to the response in the literary conversations and logs? This revealed patterns and themes in both the logs and the conversations. It was however, still important to not exclude or overlook individual responses that did not occur within a pattern across data. Statements of interest was therefore cataloged separately. Later, the patterns in response from the conversations were compared with the patterns from the students' logs. The same was done with the elements from the book provoking the response. The third stage was comparing the findings in students' response to relevant theory on the specific text. The second research question, *what might those responses reveal about Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*,

requires a comparative analysis of the data in light of theory. This is done and presented in chapter 5.0.

The report of the case study has both a comparative and descriptive narrative style (Cohen et al. 2017). It strives to provide a rich account of the case and give the reader insight into to the process of selection, explanations, and possible conclusions. In Chapter 4, the first section where the four literary conversations conducted are presented, gives a chronological account of the project. It is supplemented with reflections from the teacher reflection logs. The second section is a summary of the main patterns within the students' logs. These are the findings where patterns only appeared in the logs, but not the conversation. The third and last section compares conversations and logs and provide an analysis of their similarities and differences.

3.6 Ethical considerations

Case studies where the researcher is participating in the object of the study, leads to questions of bias. The researcher can have made selections of what he or she presents, samples for the case and data for analyzation. The researcher has the opportunity to do this within the framework of a case study as long as the choice is made ethically and not to manipulate the results (Cohen et al, 2017). Though since the objective of a case study is to describe the case in as much detail as possible and seldom aim to prove a hypothesis, selections might not be as problematic as with other methods of research. However, in writing this thesis I have strived to be transparent in my decisions on selection. This choice was made so as to illustrate the whole picture and give the reader a true understanding of how this study was conducted. I will also provide the reader with information on the reading project in its entirety. Yin (2009, cited in Cohen et all, 2017) calls this a 'chain of evidence'.

Another issue with subjectivity in case studies, is the uniqueness of the case. It is complicated to discern what is the result of e.g. the researcher's involvement, the external factors of where the study takes place or the individuality of the sampled participants. This is one of the objections to generalization based on case studies. Cohen et al. (2017) argue that this can be said about single experiments as well. It is the reproduction and cumulative data that makes it possible to form theories and generalizations. However, in the case of this study there is no denying that it is subjective. What happened with this class could only happen there. The findings are from very specific situations effected by everything from the students present, the

classroom used, to the presence of me as both teacher and researcher. It is therefore a very specific study and that is what makes it a good fit as a case to be analyzed (Christoffersen & Johannessen, 2012).

3.6.1 Reliability and validity

As the project progressed it had become clear that not all students were motivated to read. Though an interesting development, my research question aimed to look into the readers response to the book, and by not reading the students were unsuited for the study. The decision was made to look at the response of the nine students who participated in four successful literary conversations and who I could say, with as much certainty as possible, had read the book. There is the question of how this decision effects the validity of the study. Fewer informants means less ability to generalize. However, a study of this size in a class where there are so many subjective components would have been unsuited to claim any generalization either way. As with an experiment, a study like this needs to be conducted several times over to form a theory (Yin, 2018). Case studies do not necessarily aim to generalize but give detailed descriptions of a case.

The choice to reduce the informants to nine also effects the representativeness. Though the study would never have been suitable to generalize, it is important to consider that this reduction does not make the informants representative for an ordinary Norwegian English class. The size being one thing, but the participants themselves is the major factor that sets them apart. Students who have the capacity to read a 17-chapter book in English and then discuss its content in a foreign language are not the students who struggle with the subject. These are students who personally are well-fitted to participate in such a project and cannot be seen as every teenager. Their responses are only theirs and cannot necessarily tell us anything about how teenagers in general experience this text. However, that is not the intent of this thesis.

There was also the question of the data's validity. Firstly, the research question is not formulated so that data showing negative attitudes toward reading is relevant, and had I included it would have weakened the validity of the results as I aim to answer the research questions. Secondly, if I had included data from the students who did not follow the reading

plan it would not be valid, as I have no way of knowing if they actually read the book. The data is therefore unsuited to answer my research questions.

Case studies research specific situations and can be complicated to reproduce. There are many factors that might have affected the data, and it's therefore important to provide detailed accounts of the events and a 'chain of evidence' (Yin, 2009, cited in Cohen et al., 2017). It would be an extremely complex and near too impossible task to separate the student's innate response from the responses that might be affected by the presence of me or their classmates. The same can be said of my interpretation. Studies like this one would therefore benefit from reproduction and additional studies.

3.6.2 Positionality statement

During the planning of this study it became clear to me that there would be issues concerning my personal connection to the project. In any study using participatory observation leads to issues regarding subjectivity (Avineri, 2017). It is important to me to stress that I am very aware of these issues. However, I wished to attempt a study that would benefit me as a teacher. I wished to explore and learn about working with text with students. Also, as I have stated earlier, it was complicated to conduct a study such as this without doing it myself.

The decision of text raised other questions. As I have explained in my introduction, the Harry Potter series had been a favorite of mine and these were books I believed to know well. As the work with the students started I realized that this might not be the case after all. I initially feared that my ideas about the book might taint how I viewed and analyzed the data, but I believe that their insights and reflections have had the opposite effect. The way the students viewed the book challenged the way I had viewed it and in doing so I believe it gave me a unique opportunity to analyze the transaction between reader and text.

In my participation in the literary conversations I was very conscious of how I formed questions and did an effort not to intervene when students started to speak. In the first attempts with the students I chose to end the conversations when I sensed that my questions were becoming to leading. As it became clear that I would have to be very involved to get the

conversation flowing, I made the decision to divide the class by how far they read. When that resulted in the students speaking freely I kept with the strategy.

As their teacher it has been extremely important not to let my knowledge of the students effect the way I analyzed the data. As a primary contact teacher, one knows a great deal about the personal lives of the students and I have been very cautious not to read more into their statements than I have data to support it with. It has also been important to be aware of this so as to protect their anonymity and not include sensitive data. I believe that I, as a researcher, have done the above considerations well and to the best of my ability.

4.0 Students' response while reading *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*

This chapter presents the findings that in part answer the first research question; "How do students respond to reading *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*?" The first section is a chronological narrative of the reading project. It is therefore natural to give a detailed description (Cohen et al., 2017). To give the reader a better understanding of the data I have in the second part of this chapter chosen to present the reading logs by the patterns they reveal. In case studies it is natural to provide a rich description of the data, while blending it with analysis (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995, as cited in Cohen et al. 2017). Last, I compare the patterns and findings from both literary conversations and logs. The findings will be further discussed in Chapter 5.0 where I aim to answer the second research question; What might those responses reveal about *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*?

4.1 Literary conversations

As previously described, eleven literary conversations were attempted, but nine were successful. Success is here counted as conversations where the students participated and voiced opinions giving an insight in to their response to the text to any extent. As I analyzed this data I looked for transactive moments where the students reflect on the text by discussing, asking questions and making connections. I categorized the transcripts using five main categories; emotional response, involvement, interpretation, criticism and enjoyment. The same categories were used to analyze the data from the students' reading logs. After categorizing the conversations, I looked to see what storylines lead to the discussions where the students were most involved, the moments of transaction. Out of the nine literary conversations, four stood out. Those four needed little guidance from the teacher and were mostly driven by the students. In these conversations they discussed and questioned the text, reflecting on the content. The students showed signs of engagement and emotional response. As I have described previously, not all students followed the provided reading plan and came unprepared. The issue this raised for the validity of the study supported the decision to only analyze and discuss four conversations and the logs of the nine students present at these.

These four conversations are the ones that will be discussed in the next chapter. To give the best possible understanding of the situation I have given summaries of the storylines they are based on. I have then provided as much relevant information about the situations as I can. They are presented in chronological order to provide the best understanding of how the conversations developed (Cohen et al., 2017). The information about the conversations are based on the transcripts of my field notes and supplemented with details from the transcribed audio files that I used to reflect post-conversation. The students have been given aliases with no connection to their real names.

4.1.1 Literary conversation about *The Mirror of Erised*

For this literary conversation I had planned to ask them about the 12th chapter, *The Mirror of Erised*, and this was the initial reason for asking only students who had read the chapter to participate. During the previous week I had asked the class to report their progress and saw that a large number had not read very far since our previous attempt at a literary conversation. They were therefore asked to continue reading while the nine students who had, joined me for a literary conversation.

In the chapter Harry Potter celebrates his first Christmas at Hogwarts. He awakes to a pile of presents, an entirely new experience to him. One of the presents is from an anonymous sender and contains a cloak of invisibility that belonged to his father. Harry uses the cloak to explore the school library at night, but when he encounters the caretaker he hides in an abandoned classroom. There he discovers the Mirror of Erised. When he looks into it he sees the room filled with people. He soon realizes that this is the image of his family, that he has never known. The next night, Harry brings his best friend Ron to show him the mirror and his family. The boys are surprised to find that they see different images as they gaze into the mirror. Ron, the youngest boy in a family with 7 children, sees himself, all alone, as a successful Head Boy and captain of the Quidditch team. The boys start to fight about who should get to look. Harry returns to the mirror the next day, to spend the night looking at the family he never knew but finds to his surprise Professor Dumbledore waiting for him. Dumbledore tells Harry of the mirror's power and possible danger:

Men have wasted away before it, entranced by what they have seen, or been driven mad, not knowing if what it shows is real or even possible. (...) It does not do to dwell on dreams and forget to live, remember that. (Rowling, 2018, p. 174).

We started off the conversation talking about Harry's choice to use the cloak to explore the castle and library. The students agreed that they would have done the same as Harry. I challenged them and asked if they would rob a bank if they had a cloak of invisibility. The students unanimously agreed that they would never, one of them exclaiming "We have higher morals than that!". Four of them defended Harry's decision to break the rules because he had good intentions. One student argued that it was a bit wrong, because the rules were there for a reason.

We moved on to the part of the story where Harry encounters the mirror. The students expressed sadness, especially because it was Christmas. The copy I used for this project was an illustrated edition. In it there was an illustration of Harry leaning against the mirror in a dark room. As I myself was very moved by the illustration I was interested to hear their reaction to it. The students said it made them feel sad. It helped the conversation continue on its own without my guidance. They reflected how, even though the idea of never knowing your family and only seeing them through a mirror was heartbreaking, it was still kind of nice. Harry now knew what his family looked like. He had interacted with them in a way someone in his position never could in the real world. One student, Marcus, described this as the first time Harry was almost corrupted. The mirror took his focus, and he changed his behavior towards his friend. It proved the warning from Dumbledore was justified. It was an interesting thought, especially because if Harry had not been warned by the possible dangers of the mirror, the story that followed could not happen.

The students then discussed the actual function of the storyline with the mirror.

Penelope: *I didn't see the point.*

Marcus: *It establishes the Dumbledore and Harry relationship.*

Justin: *I agree. Its non-discreet. It clearly leads up to something.*

Penelope: *Yes. You knew what was coming.*

Teacher: *Did it ruin the experience?*

Katie: *No. It's one of the best books I ever read.*

Penelope: *You kind of forget it before you get to the end.*

Justin: *And you didn't know what it would be used for.*

The above interaction led the group into a conversation about how they found the book more interesting than the movie. Penelope admitted that she had intended to simply watch the movie and pretend to have read. She explained: "But then when I started watching it I realized there were too many details missing. And then when I started reading I couldn't stop. I've finished the book". Out of the nine students present, six of them had finished the book by this time, two weeks early. Penelope's declaration led the others to share how they were experiencing the book. Katie was the only one in the group who had never read any of the books in the series or watched the movie. She explained how the book had changed her mind about the genre. She was surprised at how much she enjoyed it. Katie was one of the students who would continue reading the series before the school year was over.

The discussion on whether they liked the book or the movie led them to reflect on how different they were and what details were left out. Marcus told the group that he had researched the Mirror of Erised after reading the chapter and learned that the inscription above it that reads '*erised stra ehru oyt ube cafru oyt on wohsi*', was meant to be read backwards so that it says '*I show not your face but your heart's desire*'. I had intentionally decided not to provide them with this information myself to see if anyone had realized. The students agreed that it gave the story even more depth, but it also unveiled a difference in understanding. Justin, who was one of two in the group to have read the entire series, believed that the mirror showed Ron the future. This was not necessarily a sign of misunderstanding the mirror's function, because in the case of Ron almost all that he sees in the mirror will come true during the series. Because the rest of the group did not know this, I decided against asking him to elaborate and reflect on the possible meaning of this, as it would spoil major storylines for the rest of them. We ran out of time at that point and had to end the conversation.

In my own reflections post-conversation, I was clearly elevated. This conversation was what I had hoped to see. The students were engaged and talked with little guidance from me. They reflected on the content of the story, instead of summarizing the plot like previous conversations. The students had made many interesting comments and I was looking forward to continuing the discussions.

I also reflected on the group that had not been present. We had attempted three conversations previously. Two of these had been unsuccessful as the students stayed near to silent throughout. The conversation previous to the current one had relied too much on my guidance, as many of the students had not read the chapters for that lesson. That was still the case, and they were unwilling to provide any suggestions as to how they could meet the deadline in two weeks. An addition of five of them had been given access to the audiobook in hopes that it would help, but they had not gotten any much further. I hoped that the success of that day's session would have contagious effect on the others. The group of nine were still engaged and discussing our conversation when they had lunch with the others.

4.1.2 Literary conversation about The Philosopher's Stone

The fifth conversation took place two days later. I asked the class if anyone else had read any further and would be able to join the nine students, but none had. It was therefore the same students as previously. The rest of the class were provided with some tasks and allowed to read when they had finished. The topic for the conversation was the Philosopher's Stone and the Elixir of Life it is used to make.

The Philosopher's Stone is an ancient myth not only in Harry Potter's world. It was the ultimate goal of alchemists and even Sir Isaac Newton made attempts to possess the Stone. The legend said that the Stone could turn any metal into gold and could also be used to brew the Elixir of Life, that would provide the drinker with eternal life (Pruitt, 2018). In the book, Harry Potter and his friends, Ron and Hermione, suspect that there is something valuable hidden in the school. After Hagrid slips up and say the name Nicolas Flamel, the friends discover that he is the only known maker of the Philosopher's Stone.

I started off the conversation by asking them if they would drink the Elixir of Life if they had the chance. The students were skeptical and quickly voiced that they viewed it as a selfish choice. Molly stated that she thought it was wrong that only one person could live forever and pointed out that it would mean that you had to watch everybody else die. Angelina also made this point and said that you probably wouldn't want to have kids as you would have to outlive them too. Justin said that he would probably try it but regret it because life would eventually become boring. The others agreed and pointed out that you would probably not value the little

things in life. Marcus made a case for giving it to the sick and dying and the others agreed that if they actually had the elixir they would at least use it for good. They kept on reflecting on what one might give up if you lived for hundreds of years.

Angelina: If everyone grew really old there would be no new ideas. We need new generations so we have new ideas and thoughts.

Penelope: Yes. If you did (drink it) everyone around you would develop and you would stay the same.

We went on to discuss the actual stone. I asked them if they figured out the way, would they use that knowledge to make it. They quickly started discussing the negative consequences but then returned to the idea of using it for good. They played with the idea of giving it to scientists or doctors but agreed that it might fall into the wrong hands.

The stone also has the property of turning metals in to gold. They were more negative to the idea of making it for that purpose.

Lisa: Still doesn't sound like a good idea.

Molly: It would be selfish to keep it to yourself.

Angelina: I think people with less money enjoy life more. They appreciate the things that actually matters.

Marcus: But what if you give it to the poor?

Justin: But the stone would always end up in the wrong hands. I wondered about something. If you drank the elixir, would you die if someone shot you?

Katie: Even if you don't, it sounds like there's more bad than good

Marcus: Not if you do like Robin Hood and give it to the poor?

Penelope: I'd give it to scientists or other really smart people who would change the world.

They were united in the notion that there were more arguments against than for, but some thought that the positive sides might weight heavier. One thing they all agreed on was that the way our world might be going, none of them wished to live for five hundred years.

The conversation was the first where we did not really talk about the story itself but the ethical and moral questions it raised. Nonetheless, they were equally engaged as they were with the previous class. They appeared to have taken the dilemma into their own reality and given it a lot of thought before they came to class. It was interesting to see how they tried to weight the positive against the negative consequences. The reflections made by Angelina and Penelope concerning personal development made it clear that they thought that the value of life need not be connected to the length of it.

4.1.3 Literary conversation about unicorn blood

This literary conversation took place the same week as the previous so the number of students who had read to the end of the book had not changed. The conversation would concern chapter 15. In the chapter *The Forbidden Forest*, Harry is given detention for sneaking out during the night. His punishment is to go into the Forbidden Forest together with three other students and the gamekeeper Hagrid to look for an injured unicorn. While in there, Harry finds the unicorn dead, with someone drinking from its wounds. Harry is saved by a centaur who tells him the properties of unicorn blood.

That is because it is a monstrous thing, to slay a unicorn,' said Firenze. 'Only one who has nothing to lose, and everything to gain, would commit such a crime. The blood of a unicorn will keep you alive, even if you are an inch from death, but at a terrible price. You have slain something pure and defenseless to save yourself and you will have but a half-life, a cursed life, from the moment the blood touches your lips.

(Rowling, 2018, p. 210)

This conversation became the most heated they had. The plan was to start off with a question phrased much the same as the hypothetical ones concerning the Philosopher's Stone and the

Elixir of Life, and then go on to talk more about what happens in the forest. We never got past the first question.

Teacher: *Would you drink the blood of a unicorn to save yourself?*

Molly: *You have to be some kind of evil. Maybe if you don't have anyone you love.*

Angelina: *Unicorns are pure and innocent.*

Molly: *Maybe the curse is to live with the knowledge of having killed something beautiful?*

Marcus: *I think maybe the blood could represent drugs? You live a half-life driven by addiction, and that's kind of like a curse.*

The point Marcus made was interesting and it had everyone stop for a moment. Looking at the last line in the centaur's statement, it was a very reasonable comparison. The students agreed with him that it could very much be the same thing. They discussed how making the choice to drink unicorn blood could be the same lifechanging choice as taking drugs for the first time. They connected it to being at a low point in life and making selfish choice, knowing the consequence it would bring. The drinker of unicorn blood would be reliant on continued use and Marcus pointed out how this was similar to one addicted to narcotics.

All the students had finished the book at this time and therefor knew that the person drinking the blood in the forest was Voldemort. I asked them if they thought Voldemort cared about the consequences. Molly and Marcus reflected together that he probably didn't understand the punishment. We learn by the end of the book that Voldemort does not love and does not understand it. He might then not know anything but a cursed life. Katie stated that it was like 'the mirror thing', referring to the last chapter. In it, Harry gets to the Philosopher's Stone before Voldemort. He looks into the Mirror of Erised, re-enchanted by Dumbledore, and finds the stone in his pocket. Dumbledore later explains that only one who wanted to find the stone, but not use it, could retrieve it from the mirror. When Harry does, Voldemort has been attempting to get to the stone for some time. The connection was very perceptive of Katie, as Voldemort's inability to understand selfishness becomes his eventual downfall. Not having read the series before, Katie did not know this.

Marcus wondered why the teachers would put the students in danger by sending them into the forest. Ernie thought it might have been planned so that Harry would learn that Voldemort was back. However, as Justin pointed out, Harry is saved by the centaur and makes no attempt at defending himself. The students agreed that it was a huge risk to take. I asked what their reaction would be if he was sent in there to learn about Voldemort. The students thought it was a 'stupid' approach and wondered why Dumbledore didn't just tell him. Neither did they understand why he would let a 11-year-old face off with the most dangerous wizard in the world.

The students themselves brought back the topic of drinking unicorn blood. Their engagement was high, and it turned in to a discussion about the hypothetical killing this mythological creature.

Angelina: I would rather die than kill something that symbolize love and peace.

Molly: The elixir of life can do something good, but this is just evil.

Penelope: It's selfish. The stone could help others.

Katie: It's wrong to make someone else suffer for my gain.

Justin: What if the unicorn was injured?

Katie: The blood will still curse you. Even though you don't kill it, it's still wrong.

Justin continued to test the limits of the centaur's statement. What if you were to inject it? What if you drank it without letting it touch your lips? What if a unicorn died upstream and then you drank the water? Ernie joined in making up scenarios where the literal meaning might not come in to play. I was surprised to see that the others were not willing to bargain. Where they had been playing with scenarios with the Philosopher's Stone and the Elixir of Life, killing a unicorn was where they drew the line. At one point they seemed genuinely upset with the two others, leaning across the table towards them.

Katie: Would you not rather die than do something like this?

Justin: I wouldn't refrain if I found unicorn blood.

Katie: *But would you live a half-life?*

Marcus: *It's not a life worth living.*

Justin: *Maybe age would change your opinion? We're young and death seems far away.*

Ernie: *If I was a bad person I would.*

Angelina: *But it's wrong to make someone else suffer for your gain.*

Teacher: *But then why would someone still choose to do it?*

Katie: *I don't understand how.*

Molly: *If you don't care about anything or anyone you have nothing to lose.*

Terry and Lisa were staying out of the disagreement. Lisa seemed to agree with the more outspoken, Angelina and Katie, but was not angered in the same way they were. Terry seemed amused but did not actively participate in the discussion. Throughout all the conversations Terry had been the least outspoken, but also the most pragmatic. He had been the only one that though Harry and his friends deserved the punishments they had received, because they had after all broken the rules. Molly and Marcus who often provided interpretations and questions were quieting down as the discussion became more driven by emotions. The exchange was still in good humor. The students were smiling and sometimes laughing, and I could sense that Justin and Ernie were somewhat enjoying the reaction they had produced by challenging the girls' definite no. All too soon we had to end the class.

[4.1.4 Literary conversation about *Through the Trapdoor* & *The Man with Two Faces*.](#)

This was the final literary conversation with the group of nine students. Following the reading plan, this was the day after the entire class should have finished reading the whole book. As previously mentioned six students had finished the book two weeks ahead of time, and by the time we discussed unicorn blood all were done. However, only one additional student from the rest of the class had finished reading and would be able to join us for a literary conversation. The student did not participate much in the conversation but mostly observed. I wondered if the nine other students had formed a kind of group dynamic that made it difficult

for her to join in, but the student was usually not an active participant in ordinary class discussions neither.

The final two chapters of the book are called *Through the Trapdoor* and *The Man with Two Faces*. We follow Harry, Ron and Hermione on a quest to stop the stealing of the Philosopher's Stone. The stone is protected by many different magical obstacles like a murderous plant, a three-headed dog, an enchanted chess set and a riddle. The three friends combine their skills and knowledge to solve the tasks, but at the last one only Harry remains. There he discovers that the person behind all the mysterious events at the school is stuttering Professor Quirrell. The only object in the room is the Mirror of Erised. When Quirrell looks into it the only thing he sees is himself presenting the Philosopher's Stone to Voldemort. He forces Harry to look into the mirror and as he does the stone appears in his pocket. Harry tries to lie, but as he does a voice speaks. Sticking out of the back of Quirrell's head is Voldemort and Harry comes face to face with his parents' killer. Harry fights Quirrell and discovers that his touch gives the professor great pain. The fight exhausts Harry and he loses consciousness. He awakes in the school infirmary with professor Dumbledore at his bedside. Dumbledore explains that when Harry's parents died, his mother sacrificed her life to protect him. It created an ancient magic that saved his life, both then and now. The love from his mother made it impossible for Quirrell, who was sharing his soul with Voldemort, to touch him. Quirrell perished but Voldemort escaped.

The plan for that day's literary conversation was to discuss these events. We started off by talking about the different skills that the three friends contributed to the quest for the stone. The students all enjoyed that all three were instrumental in getting to the stone. They commented that none of them would have been able to do it alone. Hermione used her cleverness and memory to save them from a plant that she had learned about in class. She also solves the second to last task, a riddle where a mistake could end your life. Ron, who is an exceptional chess player got the other two through by sacrificing himself in a game of real-life chess. The students described it as impressive and some said they believed him to be the bravest of the three. Harry used his flying skills to get them forward and, in the end, it was his decision to find the Stone to keep it safe, not use it, that led him to it. Marcus made a point that Harry might have had the determination to finish the test because he knew it would save a lot of people. This quality was probably why the Mirror deemed him worthy of the stone.

The students then, by their own accord, lead the conversation over to the subjects taught at Hogwarts. It came about when they were talking about a comment made by Hermione when she first reads the riddle: "Brilliant," said Hermione. "This isn't magic – it's logic – a puzzle. A lot of the greatest wizards haven't got an ounce of logic, they'd be stuck in here for ever" (Rowling, 2018, p. 229). The students questioned this. Why didn't wizards use logic? Was it right to exclude all other knowledge because they were learning magic? There is no mention of 'normal' subjects at Hogwarts. The school only offers classes in subjects that are relevant for life in their world, but through the book we hear how witches and wizards live alongside, and sometimes with, muggles (non-magic people). Would they not then need the skills that muggles are required to learn? Some of the students speculated that this was why they didn't start at Hogwarts before age 11. However, many of them pointed out that characters like Ron show no signs of having been to a muggle-school. He and others like him are puzzled by things like fifty-pence coins and posters where the objects don't move.

Up until then, I had not participated in their conversation, but decided to ask them if they thought it was a good thing to be isolated like that. The students were negative to the idea. Ernie thought that the school at least should have a class about muggles. The others agreed. They reflected how important it was for us in our world to know about people in other countries. The knowledge helped them understand other people and why they live like they do. They brought up the character Draco Malfoy, a bully who makes several negative comments about muggles and students descended from muggles. Angelina commented that his idea of muggles as stupid, might stem from fear. Her argument was that 'the more you know, the less scared you are'.

The topic of fear naturally led us to the next question. Throughout the book, Voldemort is referred to as You-Know-Who by everyone but Harry and Dumbledore. When talking about this, Dumbledore tells Harry that 'fear of a name increases the fear of the thing it self' (Rowling, 2018, p. 238). We read this quote before discussing.

Penelope: If you're too scared, you put it on a pedestal. Naming it takes away something. If you face it, you get over it.

Angelina: If a parent says 'You-Know-Who' the child will think it's more scary than it is.

Teacher: *What if we did that with Hitler?*

Justin: *He would gain more of a reputation. Or, Hitler already has that, but it would make him almost mythical.*

Angelina: *Yes, it would give him more power.*

Teacher: *After 22nd of July we used the initials of the terrorist instead of the name?*

Katie: *Yes, but that was so we don't make the name special. We forget the person and only focus on the action.*

Marcus: *I think the terrible things he did should be marked with his name.*

They continued talking about how terror, like that performed by the 22nd of July-terrorist and the fictional terror by Voldemort, is meant to create fear. They all agreed that it was important to make sure that people like that didn't become notorious through their names, but at the same time disagreed on how to prevent that. Some agreed with Dumbledore, that fearing to use the name gave these people a new victory. Others thought that you might want to prevent using the name because people like that wanted to be famous. By using their name, you would be giving them what they want.

Before we ended the class, we talked for a few minutes in Norwegian about how they had experienced the project. All agreed that they had enjoyed it, especially the last four talks we had. The students reflected that they might have needed some time to 'get into it', but that what really made the change was the topics. They had enjoyed the first part of the book, but it had not been as engaging as the last part. Out of the ten present, seven said they wished to continue reading the series after the project ended, in English.

[4.2 Student logs](#)

As described in the previous chapter, the students wrote logs while reading. The task given focused on their response to the text, and therefore took more the form of a reflective paper than a classic day-to-day log. By the end of the project 24 students handed in their logs. Initially I cataloged all 24 but discovered that many had not done as asked. Several seemed to be based on the movie, one was plagiarized, and most were summaries of the text, not logs

retelling their response. This, together with the concerns of validity and reliability addressed earlier, lead to the decision to only analyze these nine.

The logs were categorized and compared to look for similarities and patterns. Each log was also analyzed by the same five categories as the conversations; emotional response, involvement, interpretation, criticism and enjoyment. When logs were placed in the categories I looked to see what part of the story they referenced to. This created patterns between the logs. Though many had very individual responses and reflections, they seemed to react to many of the same points in the story. Five out of the nine logs were multi-modal, where the students included pictures and drawings. They were not asked to do this but did by their own accord. One example of this is provided.

I have decided to present the patterns and findings from the logs instead of giving a detailed description of each one. This choice is made because I believe it's more beneficial for the reader as it enables me to highlight the parts that are of interest to this study. Because the logs are naturally connected to the conversations, references to these are also made. However, the following patterns were most commonly found in the logs.

4.2.1 Emotional response

The students were asked to include their emotional responses to the book in their logs. Some students highlighted this in a separate section, while others described their responses to the text chronologically and specified emotions during this. The most reoccurring theme in the logs when students described emotional responses were how adults treated children. There were two circumstances that the students mainly reacted to. The first was the conditions under which Harry grew up. Reading about the Dursleys' mistreatment of him was described with specific emotions like sadness and anger. The students used terms like 'abuse' to describe his circumstance. Some reflected that this instantly helped them connect with Harry as a character. His then escape from the Dursleys' home became a joyful development that made them happy. Some of the students questioned the decision to leave Harry in such a home instead of letting him stay with a wizarding family. In her log, Angelina, wondered why Hogwarts School specifically did not intervene in Harry's situation. The other circumstance that the students questioned was the lack of adult supervision and at times endangerment of

the students at Hogwarts. This was presented in such a way that it was categorized under Criticism and will be detailed in 4.2.4.

4.2.2 Involvement

Involvement concerns indications that the students connected with the story on a personal level or with realities of their world. In their logs the students reflected throughout by connecting the story to their own life. When connecting the story directly to their own life the most common, reoccurring topic in the logs was Harry's initial fear of not fitting in at Hogwarts. The students expressed sympathy and several of them gave specific examples from their own life, when they had felt they did not belong. The issue was never addressed in the conversations, but as many of them provided quite personal stories, this was not surprising. A few students also referenced own experience when criticizing the lack of responsibility and understanding from the adults in the book. They connected it to situations where teachers or parents did not take the time to listen to them or believe that there might be a reason for their actions. Some gave specific examples, while others were more general and gave the impression that it was not an uncommon situation.

Harry's experience when coming to Hogwarts was addressed by several of the students. Ernie and Justin explained that they related to his nervousness and wonder at encountering a new situation and people. They addressed the fear of not finding anyone to relate to or befriend, and the relief it was when they did. Marcus reflected how the story can show that one can be loved and accepted by others even though you don't expect them too. He commented that sometimes this acceptance came from others rather than from one's own relations. He explained how the book presents situations that he himself was familiar with. In this moment of transaction, Marcus' own experiences led to his interpretation of the message of the text. His experiences in life had affected how the message was conveyed.

4.2.3 Interpretation

Interpretation was the category used when students reflected on the story and provided interpretations of meaning, symbolism or message. To many of the students, friendship was a theme in the book that stood out to them. Ernie explains how, to him, the books message is

that your life can change, no matter how bad it is, and that "you can always find friends if you follow your heart". Justin, who was the student most familiar with the book series previously to the project, writes that the friendship between the characters was what he enjoyed the most. He described the Harry Potter series as some of his favorite books and explained that it was the quality of these characters and their friendships that help him involve with the story.

Marcus choose a quote that was also the object of discussion in the last literary conversation, Dumbledore's statement about fear of a name. He reflected how calling 'Voldemort You-Know-Who' was similar to how we in our world deal with taboos. He drew a line between how Voldemort is an incarnation of evil in the magical world and the how the devil serves the same purpose in our world. He gave specific examples of names for the devil such as Prince, the Antichrist and Father of Lies. Marcus had not only reflected on the meaning of Dumbledore's statement, but also made a direct connection to his own world.

Six of the students offered interpretations of the character Hermione. Hermione Granger is a smart, clever, somewhat socially inept girl, who comes across as bossy. Katie wrote that she immediately liked her because she reminded her of her best friend. She commended that the character was portrayed as annoying, but that she thought that was because she had poor social skills. She admired Hermione for always being herself. Molly on the other hand, did not like the character when she first appeared. However, Molly changed her mind when she realized that Hermione was lonely, and that might be why she came across so strong. Hermione turned out to be a clever and supportive friend. Justin believed that Hermione was a good fit for Harry and Ron, because it was apparent that she was not used to having friends, just like them. Lisa, Terry and Molly all highlighted Hermione's dedication to her friends. As Lisa pointed out, Hermione thought that it was better to die than be expelled from school, but when her friends needed her, she was there to help. Lisa also believed that Hermione is a good role model. Hermione is a muggle born, a witch from a non-magic family, and by some in their community this is looked down upon. Lisa points out how proud Hermione is of her heritage and that pride might be inspiring to many people.

[4.2.4 Criticism](#)

When students offered critique of or questioned the book, storylines or characters it was categorized as criticism. In the logs, one of the most reoccurring themes was the lack of adult

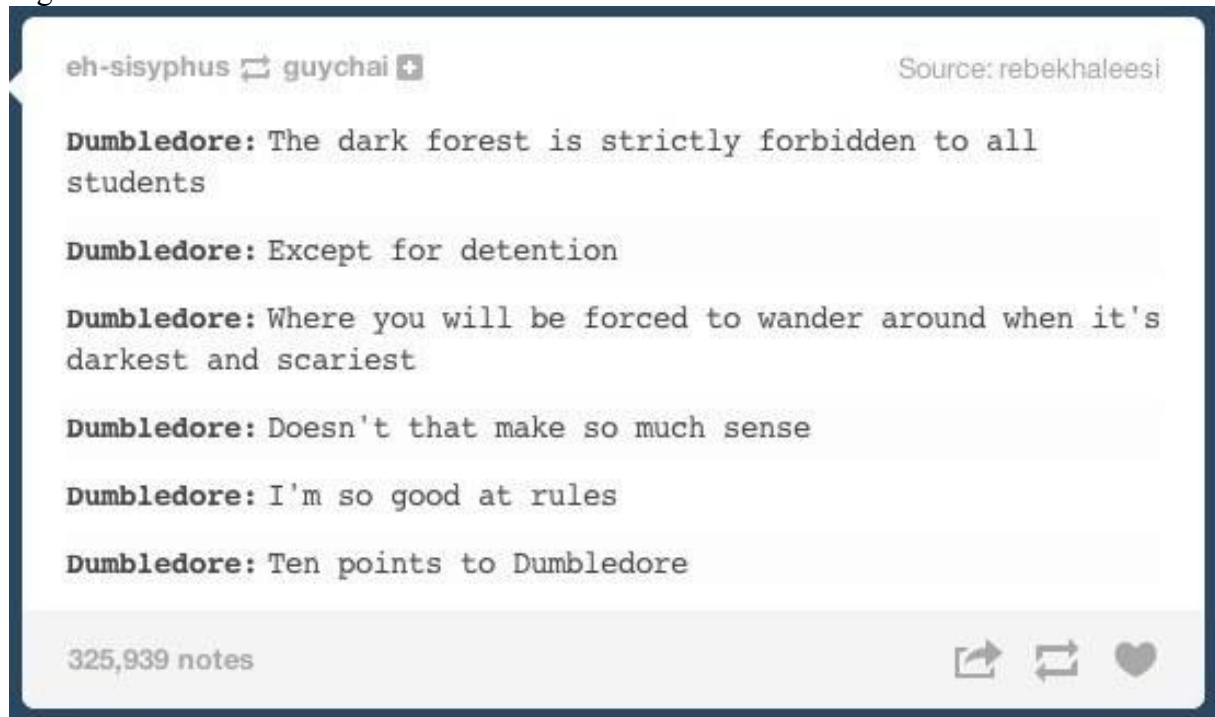
supervision at Hogwarts School. Some wondered why it was so easy for the students to get into dangerous situations. They acknowledged that Harry and his friends were breaking clear rules in most of the cases but seemed to believe that there should be other things to hinder them. During the course of the book Harry encounters a troll, a three-headed dog and a dragon but the situation that many students pointed to was the night he was sent into the Forbidden Forest. That excursion was his punishment for sneaking out the night before. The students claimed that the teachers must have known the danger he'd be in, even if they didn't know that he would encounter Voldemort. Katie made the point in her log that even if Dumbledore wanted Harry to go into the forest to learn about Voldemort, there were other students present and their lives were endangered. Katie commented on this as if it was a real situation.

Albus Dumbledore, the headmaster at Hogwarts, was the most criticized character, as the students questioned his decisions both in the logs and conversation. They shared the understanding that Dumbledore knew to some degree what was going on in the school but decided to let things play out. They questioned the choice and seemed to view him as irresponsible. At the same time, he was the most quoted character in the logs and was described as the favorite character by several of them. It seemed that even though they questioned his methods, the character still earned quite a lot of respect and was viewed by the students as wise. Six out of the nine choose to directly quote Dumbledore in their logs. All but one of the quotes were philosophical statements relating to abstract concepts such as fear and love. Not all students provided explanations for their choice, but some reflected on why they chose them. Molly decided to include a quote from the last chapter where Dumbledore speaks to Harry about the permanent mark his mother has put upon him as a result of her sacrifice: "Not a scar, not a visible sign ... to have been loved so deeply, even though the person who loved us is gone, will give us some protection for ever " (Rowling, 2018, p. 239). Molly wrote that she initially thought the statement was strange and mysterious, but she liked it because "it emphasizes how important true and pure love is".

Angelina created a multi-modal log and one of the items she chose to illustrate with was a screengrab from the social networking website Tumblr (Figure 1). The screengrab was a humorous illustration of Dumbledore's logic, where the detention into the Forbidden Forest was the object of the joke. Angelina's decision could be an indication of two things. Firstly, it could be a sign of aesthetic reading. Choosing to make a multi-modal text showed that she had been affected by the story and found inspiration in it (Rosenblatt, 2005). Secondly, it

provided additional information on how she viewed the character. Had she been angered by Dumbledore it's unlikely that she would have chosen this representation. She still made the point of his logic being faulty, but without necessarily condemning it.

Figure 1.



(knowyourmeme.com)

4.2.5 Enjoyment

Students who were unfamiliar with the book enjoyed the experience. Four of the students had never read the book in any language, and one of them had never seen the movie either. Some of the students noted that they thought they were too old for Harry Potter. Two, Marcus and Katie, specifically stated that they did not enjoy the fantasy genre, but that this reading experience changed their opinion. This was also the case for Molly, who had read the book previously. Rosenblatt (2005) claimed that a text can lead to change within a reader. In the case of Marcus and Katie, the change came about as the text 'disproved' an idea they had about it. The change in Molly was somewhat different, as I will analyze later. Terry, who had only seen the movie, said his enjoyment in reading the book made him regret having watched it. Knowing what would happen took some of the excitement away, but he still described it as a very positive experience. In the conversation about the Mirror of Erised, Terry stated that he preferred the book over the movie.

Three of the students, Marcus, Katie and Penelope, described being drawn in by the book, unable to put it down. Both Katie and Penelope express surprise by this effect. These two were also the most enthusiastic in sharing their experience in the conversation about the *Mirror of Erised*. Both volunteered praise of the book in their logs and commented that it was one of the best they have read. Katie wrote that she would go and buy the second book that day. This can be seen in connection with Knapp's (2003) claim that these books are intensely engaging. The story has a way of capturing its audience, and though it is not clear exactly why this was, the effect appeared to be lasting. I observed several of these students reading the books during their lunchbreak following the project.

Students who were familiar with the story, said their experience changed. Out of the nine students, five had read the book previously in Norwegian. Four of these students wrote that they experienced the book differently this time. Justin, who did not address this, was the only one in the class who had previously read the book in English. All four students thought that reading it in English was part of the change. They believed the book was more detailed in its original language. Lisa wrote that even though she had read the books before, she would try to read the second one in English, as it made the story come alive even more. Molly too wrote that it had motivated her to continue the series, as the project had changed her mind about how much she enjoyed the story.

Molly addressed her change in experience and though she speculated that it might be because the language was more detailed, she ultimately believed that it was because she was focusing on other things. Interestingly, she also commented on the fact that she was older than the first time she read the book and that it might mean that she understood it more. Molly was describing a process central in Rosenblatt's (1994) theory. Through both her log and in conversations, Molly showed clear signs of aesthetic reading. As her experience with life change with age, so did her transaction with the book. This might also be seen in light of Piaget's theory on cognitive development. A child of 7-10 years might not have the capacity to deal with abstract concepts and therefore will view the story differently than a teenager who has reached the formal operational stage (Woolfolk, 2007). It is however, as Elizabeth Heilman (2009) points out, important to remember the individual speed at which children and teenagers develop. One cannot simply use their age-group to explain what stage of cognitive development a teenager is at. An 8-year-old might be just as perceptible to abstract ideas as a 15-year-old. Molly did not provide information about the age she was when she last read the

book, but as teenagers are a group in rapid cognitive development in general, there is a great chance that the difference in capacity had changed since (Woolfolk, 2007).

All the students who had read the book previously still wrote their logs as if reading the book was an entirely new experience. This can be a sign of aesthetic reading. Though we can assume that they previously had read it, alone or with a parent, for enjoyment, they seemed to view it in a different light. None of them had read it recently, so their age might be a part of the reason. Just like Molly, the added experience with life and the world might have provided the opportunity to understand the book differently.

4.3 Comparing literary conversations and logs

The most notable difference between the students' response in their logs versus the literary conversations was the themes that engaged them. The responses in the logs were of a more emotional nature. They highlighted points in the story that made an impact on them but provided less interpretation of the story itself. Several of the students wrote that reading about Harry's life with the Dursleys made them sad but did not reflect on why. Only Angelina provided a more detailed description of what she was feeling. She expressed anger that no one was interfering as Harry was being abused. She wrote that it was not a life for an eleven-year-old boy or anyone else for that matter.

Though it was more natural for them to focus on the specific content of the text in the logs, due to the task they were given (Appendix 3), they did not do the same when given the opportunity in conversation. In the logs they were encouraged to include questions and ideas that arose while reading, but they seldom touched on the philosophical or ethical topics the text presented. Though they made many interesting remarks in their logs, their overall focus was less on the ethical and moral dilemmas and more on the subjects that related to them personally. This might indicate that the teachers facilitating of discussion is central in their creation of a higher meaning within the text (Langer, 1998).

In the literary conversations the students responded most eagerly to discussions concerning the Philosopher's Stone, the Mirror of Erised and unicorn blood. These three magical artifacts raise questions of right and wrong, self or community and the value of life. In the literary

conversation about the Philosopher's Stone, the students related and justified their personal choice. Together they discussed the implications of eternal life and discussed issues that could arise if there was a possibility of such a thing. In the literary conversation about the Mirror of Erised the students described emotional responses to the text. They also provided interpretations of the storyline. The literary conversation about unicorn blood led to discussions about whether or not it was right to use the death of a unicorn for one's own gain. It was the conversation where the students had the highest level of engagement. They provided different interpretations of the text and challenged each other's responses. How they dealt with these topics differed in the students' logs. There, five of them referred to the Mirror of Erised and their emotional response to Harry's discovery of it. Two mentioned the Philosopher's Stone but did not reflect on the concepts of eternal life. Only one log mentioned unicorn blood and the curse that follow drinking it. The student, Ernie, commented that he believed that people who did bad things for their own benefit in real life, did live a half-life. He did not expand on the idea.

Moments of transaction were present in all four conversations as well as the logs. The students often used their own experiences to explain their understanding of the text. In the logs this was more outspoken, but in literary conversations it was visible as the students showed differing understandings of the text. When connecting the story to their own lives the students applied the ethics of 'our world' when they commented on the moral dilemmas of the fictional universe. They made no distinction between what was right and what was wrong in each of the 'realms'. The more specific connections to their own lives can be seen as they reference terrorism, school systems and the importance of knowledge when participating in a global community. However, they also did this in their logs, although sometimes in a subtler manner. A good example of a moment of transaction can be found in the literary conversation where students discuss fear of a name. The students discussed whether or not they believed we should use the names of people who wished to be feared. The comments of the students were very reflective and showed a great capacity to link the fictional universe to their own. In the logs however, only Marcus spent time on similar reflections on the concept of fear of a name. Angelina included the quote in her log but provided no explanation for her choice. In the same literary conversation, the students questioned Hogwarts and the subjects taught there. They criticized the school for not teaching students about non-magic people and for devaluing 'ordinary' subjects. They reflected on how knowledge about other people and cultures were an important part of their own education. Some students believed that

knowledge about 'others' could decrease prejudice and fear, a claim that is supported by research (Vezzali et al. 2015).

The storylines the students responded to differed in the student logs and literary conversations. This was expected, because of the nature of each one. In the literary conversations the students discussed the chapters in chronological order and our time limited the number of topics we could discuss. The initial questions of each literary conversation were provided by me, but where the conversation took them was up to the students. I only provided some questions when students raised issues of interest, facilitating further conversation (Langer, 1994). In the logs they were asked to highlight parts of the story that had an emotional impact on them, as well as discuss characters of their own selection. This enabled them to choose which parts of the story they wished to highlight. Though the storylines they focused on differed between conversation and logs, both sets of data showed signs of aesthetic reading. The students questioned the text, commented on parts that interested or confused them, compared the storylines to their own life and sometimes referenced other stories or events (Rosenblatt, 2005).

5. Discussion

The previous chapter answer to some extent *how* the nine students responded to reading *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*. Students enjoyed reading *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* and responded with emotion, enthusiasm and involvement (4.1.1, 4.2.1, 4.2.2, 4.2.5). The data shows that the students were able to connect the story to their own lives and construct meaning with their personal experience (4.1.1, 4.2.3, 4.3). As literary conversations and student logs provide the data for the case, these will be discussed both comparatively and together in this chapter.

During the literary conversations there were three artifacts that lead to active literary conversations and moments of transaction (4.1.1, 4.1.2, 4.1.3). Those conversations had student participation, high engagement and signs of aesthetic reading. All concerned ethical, moral and philosophical questions. The same themes and topics were rarely mentioned in the logs, suggesting a difference in experience between conversations and logs (4.3). This will be discussed further. The analysis of data reveals that all nine students enjoyed reading the book, both those who were reading it for the first time and those who were rereading. Three of the students experienced a change in their attitude towards the book. Students who were already familiar with the story expressed that the project provided a greater understanding and appreciation of the book. In their logs, students provided responses that could be categorized into five categories for analysis; emotional response, involvement, interpretation, criticism, enjoyment. However, interpretations of meaning, symbolism and message differed between the two data sets. In this chapter I will further discuss these findings. I will also provide a discussion on what those responses might reveal about *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*.

5.1 The validity of the study

Case studies can provide valuable insights. However, the findings of a case study are rarely fit to generalize (Cohen et al., 2017; Yin, 2018). This study has limitations. It is a case study in nine student's response to reading *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* and the responses provided are the students own subjective understanding of the text. What those responses can tell us about the literary work are suggestions, challenges and support to relevant theory. Some of the findings of the study are supported by theory on the reading process and

literatures role in readers development. Critical literature on the book is both supported and challenged by the study. By providing a chain of evidence and give detailed descriptions of the data I wish to provide the reader with an understanding of how the study was conducted and the data analyzed. In doing so both the validity and reliability of the study is increased, but it is still a unique case. These students were not individually selected, but the way the group was formed suggest that they are not representative for all 10th grade students. They were able to read and discuss a novel in English, suggesting that they did not struggle with the subject. Because they are a small selection of readers in a specific situation, the findings of this study cannot be generalized to all readers of Harry Potter either. However, they do represent some readers of the text. These issues, as well as my own subjectivity, is addressed and discussed in Chapter 3.6.

5.2 Students' response to abstract concepts

When studying the case, the most notable difference between the nine students' response in their logs versus the literary conversations was the themes that engaged them. In the logs their focus was mainly on situations or characters that angered, saddened or pleased them. In the literary conversations the topics that lead to discussion and reflection concerned life, death, right and wrong. Both are signs of aesthetic reading, but still the two datasets came across as different. In conversations, the students showed the capacity to think and reflect on abstract and hypothetical ideas. According to Piaget's theory on cognitive development, adolescents can start to develop this ability from age 11 in what is called the formal operational stage (Milevsky, 2015; Woolfolk, 2007). The data indicate that students practice this ability more in the conversations than in their logs. This can be seen in connection with Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory of Development (Milevsky, 2015; Woolfolk 2007). When participating in a social construction of meaning the students were able to reflect more in-depth and form questions and ideas on these highly abstract topics. In sharing their experience and interpretation of the text they could further develop their understandings of the text. Reading the same book enabled this and opened up for a collective construction of meaning. At the same time, the students provided individual descriptions of how the story appeared to them and as some were rereading the book, they could also give insight to how the experience had changed this time around.

Recall that Molly felt that how she experienced the story had changed from the first time she read it. The point made by Westman (2011), that Rowling's narrative style limits the reader to Harry's level of cognitive development is both supported and challenged by Molly's statements. At a younger age, Molly did not understand and reflect on the story the way she did this time, and this might be because of the limited omniscient style of the book. However, the change she described challenges the impression. She was not 'limited' as an older reader, to Harry's age and lack of development. She now saw beyond what he had capacity to see. In addition, it also challenges the claim that the first book is simplistic (Westman, 2011; Zipes, 2001). The change might be in the reader, so that when the reader is limited in its understanding of the world, so is the text. As the reader grows and develops, so does the text. This coincides with Rosenblatt's claim that the life experience of the reader is essential in how he or she transacts with text (Rosenblatt, 1994, 1995, 2005). As both Westman (2011) and Zipes (2001, 2017) are adults, I don't mean to claim that they are not developed enough as readers to see the complexity of the text, but rather that a central part of reading Harry Potter as a story with inherent meaning, is the stance the reader takes. These students showed clear signs of aesthetic reading, it might even be what differed them from the rest of the class, and in that reading experience they found complex topics and dilemmas. Zipes (2001, 2009, 2017) has spent almost two decades arguing that the Harry Potter series is little more than great marketing forces at play, repackaging ancient myths and fairytales. As a reader he takes an analytical and critical stance, which is natural for the purpose of critique, but are also typical processes in efferent reading (Rosenblatt, 1994).

Zipes' (2001, 2009, 2017) personal encounter with the text is not relevant, but the stance he as a critic takes, might explain the differing impression of the text. His claims about Harry Potter do not coincide with the reactions of the students. They, especially Katie who had never read the book or seen the movie, were not subjected to the greater machinery behind Rowling and her works. They were not presented with the personal story of the author, which Zipes believes is central in the books lure, nor did they encounter the book at the height of its mass-media publicity (Zipes, 2017). Though the idea of this phenomenon being driven by money and good PR, is interesting, it comes across as limited in its attempt to claim that this is the sole reason for the success. It portrays the readers as obedient followers and overrides the actual response that many unquestionably have to the text. The readers' response is not taken seriously and by overlooking this element I believe one cannot come to a full understanding of the forces at play when young readers engage with Harry Potter.

The difference in how the students responded and reflected on the book in logs and literary conversations suggest that it can be beneficial for students to read the same book at the same time. In providing personal responses and sharing this with their peers, the students had the opportunity to widen each other's understanding of the text. One example of this is seen in the literary conversation about the chapters *Through the Trapdoor* and *The Man with Two Faces*. During that conversation, the students provided personal reflections on what it meant to fear a name. They offered differing opinions on whether or not one should use the names of people who do terrible things and by doing so together came to reflect on the intention of terror. They discussed how terror, be it in real life or fiction, was meant to create fear and that people who commit such acts might wish to become notorious. Discussions like this are extremely valuable as students try to understand the harsher realities of the world they are a part of. As teachers a big part of our mandate in addition to provide knowledge, is to facilitate development so students can participate in society (Department of Education and Research, 2020).

5.3 Students' connection to own life

In Chapter 4, section 4.2.4, I describe how the students offered criticism of how adults treated children throughout the book. They responded in particular to the abusive treatment of Harry by his aunt and uncle, as well as the possible endangerment of the students at the hands of their teachers. In describing the later point, some students, like Penelope, offered personal accounts where teachers and other adults did not take the time to listen to them for explanations and concerns. We can connect this to Rustin and Rustin's (2001) claim that fantasy is influential in children and young adults' emotional development because it is heavy with realism. Stories that use metaphors for good and bad parents tests the readers capacities, because they fit well with their emotions and worries. Their reactions in these cases were often grounded in their own experience. They referred to situations where they too had been disappointed by adult behavior. The students gave the impression that they found the storylines from the book realistic. Rustin and Rustin (2001) believe that stories that provide the reader with that experience have a distinguished role in modern fiction for children and adolescents. Anatol (2002) suggest that it is this quality that makes the Harry Potter books a success with a younger audience.

The students expressed frustration with the lack of adult presence and the possible endangerment of Harry and other students at Hogwarts. They questioned why the adults in the book did not take more action in securing the students, as well as intervene in Harry's circumstances at home. Nikolajeva (2009) too describe that it feels irresponsible to let Harry and his friends roam around the castle at night, but asks what would ever happen if Harry slept soundly in his bed? Some students pointed to this too. It is crucial for Harry to make these experiences to learn and ultimately save the day. Marcus for instance theorized: "A lot of interesting things in this book happen by breaking the rules, anyway. Maybe this poor security system is used to experience more adventures and tension in the book". However, in conversations several of the students pointed to certain plot points as "staged" or "clearly leading up to something". The distinction between what they experienced as acceptable to build the story and unreasonable is unclear but might lie somewhere in their stance as readers. Though all students showed signs of aesthetic reading, engaging with the text and responding emotionally, the experience of being taken out of the fantasy might have been disruptive (Iser, 1978; Rosenblatt, 1994). On the other side, when asked if these moments negatively affected their experience the students stated that it did not (4.1.1).

5.3.1 Closing the gaps

This study revealed that though the nine students could to a great extent connect the story to their own life, the text provided gaps that they struggled to fill. Iser (1978) explains that when a reader attempts to fill gaps in the text it is so as to bring balance to the world provided by the text. If the gaps cannot be filled, the reader is provoked to continue to change his or her view and understanding of the text. This can be connected to the processes described by Rosenblatt (1994, 1995) where the reader takes into use his or her own experience and reality to transact with the text. As the nine students attempted to understand the world the book presents, there arose a conversation about the school system at Hogwarts. The students pointed out the lack of 'ordinary' subjects. At Hogwarts, young witches and wizards have classes in Transformations, Spells and Defense Against the Dark Arts, but there is no mention of math, languages or social studies. The students appeared to struggle with this at first. Could it really be? The gap was hard to fill, because they had no arguments in support of this reality. Some of the students suggested that maybe the knowledge the students of Hogwarts accumulated before arriving at the school, was sufficient. However, several of them used the

text to illustrate that the witches and wizards from magic families portray little knowledge of the world outside their own. This problem was discussed only in the literary conversation and suggests that this gap in understanding benefited from a social construction of meaning.

Where a problem such as a mathematical one can be solved by one student providing insight to another, there is no accurate view of a literary text (Iser, 1978). As the students realized that none of them could provide an answer as there was no information in the framework of the text, they came to accept that this was not a narrative gap, but an issue they could discuss and criticize. Students at Hogwarts did not have 'ordinary' subjects, but what would that then imply? The nine students quickly put the problem in a global perspective. In their reality and world, knowledge about people who lived different lives, was important to understand them and their cultures. Angelina presented a theory that characters who portrayed negative attitudes towards others, like Draco Malfoy, lacked knowledge and therefore feared the unknown.

5.4 Themes that fueled conversations

When analyzing the data, I noticed a difference in what themes and topics the students responded to. As I have described, the four conversations in this case study were the ones that worked the best in terms of student participation and engagement. In those four, the first three were the most active, where the students needed few prompts and where the conversations had to end due to time, not engagement. These conversations stood out as I initially analyzed all nine literary conversations from the reading project. The topics in focus were three magical artifacts; The Mirror of Erised, The Philosopher's Stone and unicorn blood. Looking closer at how the students responded to these themes, I hope to provide some insight and discuss what the students' response might reveal about *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*.

5.4.1 The Mirror of Erised

The Mirror of Erised is as previously described, an artifact that shows not your face, but your heart's desire (Erised is desire spelled backwards). The Mirror is an object constructed by Rowling. We will therefore have to trust her explanation of its function in the text. Though this thesis takes a reader-response approach to the text, Rosenblatt (1994) believed it to be

natural for a reader to sense the author behind the text. I therefore wish to provide some context as to how Rowling herself explains how the mirror came into creation. In her early work with the book, Rowling experienced the loss of her mother. She explains how this changed the book and how much emphasis she put on Harry's experience of being without parents. The mirror was a result of her own desire to see her mother again (Pattison, 2001). The nine students of this case were not provided this information. In addition to the properties described when we first encounter the mirror, in the last part of the book, it is the ultimate test and it plays on typical hallmarks of fantasy. One that is pure of heart will conquer (Rowling, 2016). Professor Quirrell, who is filled with hatred and selfish desire, can only see himself holding the Philosopher's Stone without any way of getting to it. But Harry who has no intention of using the Stone for himself, is deemed worthy by the mirror and is given the stone. The mirror thereby becomes more than just a mirror to your heart, but also a judge of your character.

In The Children Who Lived: using Harry Potter and other fictional characters to help grieving children and adolescents (2008) Makrell and Makrell suggest using the Mirror of Erised to speak to children and adolescents about loss of loved ones and the desire to see them again. They theorize that the Harry Potter books make discussing death more accessible, because the wizarding world does not offer a solution to it. Though there are objects and substances that can postpone or avoid death, death is as final as in the real world (Makrell & Makrell, 2008). The Mirror of Erised is a powerful representation of this. It acknowledges Harry's inner most desire, shows it to him, but can do nothing more. It is a brutal reality, and Rowling's decision to make it so can be seen as a testament to how seriously she takes her readers (Heilman, 2009). As previously described, there was a small disagreement between the students about the function of the mirror. Justin believed that the mirror might show the future because, having read the entire book series, he knew that what Ron saw would one day be true. Penelope and Molly were quick to answer that it was highly unlikely because Harry's parents were dead. Molly stated: "It [the mirror] can't help. They will never be what they see". Even though the story took place in a magical world, which on the surface might seem unlimited, the students both understood and accepted that in this world as in theirs, death was final.

The students described being emotionally moved by the book at several points, but in conversation this was first described when we discussed The Mirror of Erised. This

conversation stood out, as it was the first where the students were active participants in the conversation, requiring little guidance and prompts. Harry's first look into the mirror made the students feel sympathy for him and they reflected that the feeling was intensified as it was all happening during Christmas, a season that for many centers around time with family. They showed an ability to connect with the character with or without similar experiences. This ability is a part of Theory of Mind (ToM). Kidd and Castano (2013) have claimed that literature enhances ToM because the reader puts him or herself in the place of the character to understand the characters emotions. Molly for instance wrote in her log: "I do luckily have both my parents alive, but I do understand parts of how Harry is feeling". She explained how she too wondered what relatives she never had a chance to meet were like, and that like Harry, she would have liked to know who they were as people. She describes the scene as the most touching and powerful in the whole novel. Others referenced the scene as something that had a direct impact on their emotions. Angelina wrote that she was fascinated by how the story changed her mood. Harry's experience made her both excited and sad. In their responses the students show that they are capable of relating to Harry and feel sympathy for his situation, without having experienced what he has. If we look to Wolf (2004) this might indicate that there is a quality in the emotional dilemmas the character faces. She believes that if a text has this quality, the reader will have no problem relating without personal experience. She also argues that readers uptake from a text depends on whether or not there is anything substantive to take up. If a text is too saccharine and 'simple', there is nothing for the reader to contemplate, discuss and criticize (Wolf, 2004). *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* was accused of being just that by Zipes in his 2001 book *Sticks and Stones*.

In the conversation about the Mirror of Erised, one student made a comment that I would like to highlight. When talking about the effect the mirror had on Harry, Marcus pointed out that this was the moment Harry was almost corrupted. He explained that the way the mirror took his focus, almost changed Harry's path. It was a perspective new to the other students, as well as myself but it was very perceptive. Throughout *Philosopher's Stone* and all six books that follow, Harry is the perfect English gentleman. He is kind, polite and humble (Nikolajeva, 2009). Though he and his friends fight as they get older, this first year at Hogwarts he and his best friend Ron never do, with one exception. As they stand in front of the mirror, they realize that not only can they not see what the other can, but only the one closest to the Mirror is shown his desire. Harry, annoyed at Ron for wanting to see himself 'only holding the Quidditch Cup', pushes his best friend to get in front (Rowling, 2018, p. 172). The scuffle

stops as they hear a noise close by. This moment is a breach of character. Harry is not a violent character, nor a selfish one. However, the desire to see his parents overtakes him. In the story, the boys talk the next day. Harry is reserved and does not want to do anything. Ron understands that he is thinking about the mirror and tells him not to go back, because he has a bad feeling about it. Harry does not listen to his friend and goes back, where he is joined by Dumbledore. His conversation with the headmaster is what puts him back on track. Marcus' observation is a good example of how student response can provide new insight and understanding of a text. Though many essays on the series mention the Mirror of Erised, I have yet to find any that provide this interpretation of the scene or the effect it has on Harry. In the series, characters struggle with the choice between what is right and what is easy becomes increasingly important. Some critical looks at the series as a whole, largely leave out the first book when describing this development (Westman, 2011; Witschonke, 2006). Yet, if we look at Marcus' interpretation, it might show that this theme has very much been present from the start.

This literary conversation was the first time I only included students who had kept with the reading plan. There was a notable change in engagement and activity from previous, and I initially allotted this to the changed approach. However, looking closer at the conversation previous to this I noticed that by chance almost the entire group had been together previously, without this level of engagement. I have come to interpret that it was the topic, not the construction of the group that changed. Many of the students participating were already comfortable with speaking English in class, and during the first three conversations I had wondered about the reason for their silence. Only two had been active participants previously. When we concluded the project, the students addressed the change themselves. Though they enjoyed the first half of the book, they expressed that they found the topics raised in chapters 12-17 more engaging and interesting to discuss. These chapters were also the ones the students addressed in their logs when they described being unable to put the book down. This suggests that when reading *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* the ethical, philosophical and moral dilemmas is what engages the reader. The responses from the nine students support that this was the case in their instance.

[5.4.2 The Philosopher's Stone](#)

The second artifact that led to a literary conversation with high engagement was the Philosopher's Stone. Unlike the Mirror of Erised, the Philosopher's Stone is not invented by Rowling. The stone is, as previously explained, an ancient legend and has been the focus of alchemy for centuries. The stone is presented in the book in accordance with the legend, it possesses properties that can turn metal into gold and it can produce the Elixir of Life, which can keep the drinker alive forever. The stone raises the question of eternal life, which is central throughout the entire Harry Potter series. Rowling uses the stone as an ultimate test, where Harry's desire to keep it from Voldemort is stronger than his desire to use it.

Students reacted to the Philosopher's Stone much the same as Harry did. In the second conversation, none of them thought it was a good idea to use the Stone but discussed if it could be used for the good of others. Justin believed that it would fall into the wrong hands and because of that, it would be best to leave it alone. None of the students suggested to use it to become rich and live forever. Much like Harry, they approached the idea of possessing the Stone only to use it for good or hide it from those who might abuse its powers. Why they took the same stance as Harry is difficult to discern. One could venture into a discussion on the different views on ethics. Is the choice, theirs and Harry's, motivated by consequence or an inherent sense of right and wrong? Is it the students who share the ideas that the character has or are they inspired by him? Either way, it says something about their capacity to weigh right and wrong, selfishness and selflessness. The simple fact that they were able to participate in the discussion in the way that they did show signs of aesthetic reading (Rosenblatt, 2005).

It is also interesting to see how they quickly turned the question posed at them, "would you drink the Elixir of Life?", from individual to social. They gave reasons for their answers based on how it would affect their life in relation to the world. Molly and Angelina believed it to be unfair that only some could live forever. Together with Penelope they discussed how our society need new ideas and innovations to develop further. As they and the other students reflected they returned several times to one solution; give the Philosopher's Stone to doctors or scientists who could use it to help as many as possible. We can again view their response in connection to Vygotsky's theory (Woolfolk, 2007). The students were not reflecting on the dilemmas simply in relation to their own life but connected them to their entire world and the needs of others. They showed a certain maturity in their reflections, as they appeared more concerned with the greater good than their own needs and desires. The discussion also led to Angelina providing a form of criticism of a capitalist society. Angelina believed that people

with less money enjoyed life more, stating "they appreciate the things that actually matters" and implying that focusing on wealth as a goal in life, deprived you of other joys. Others, like Marcus, advocated using the Stone to help the poor. These reflections provided by the students, support Mills et al.'s (2004) claim that reading and discussing literature can prepare the students for participation in a democratic society.

The literary conversation about the Philosopher's Stone and the Elixir of Life is a good example of how reading *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* can lead students to explore complex questions and ideas. The questions the Stone raises resulted in the students asking existential questions and discussed the actual meaning of life. What would be the consequences of living forever? What is the value of life? This conversation took more the form of a philosophical conversation. The text served as a presentation of a dilemma and the students used it as such. The development was of course not unnatural as the questions posed were formulated so that they had to comment on their own personal choice. Yet, they had previously been asked similar questions but then their answers would refer more to the book. If we had more time they might have went back to the book, because when class ended they were not ready and wanted to stay longer and continue the conversation. These findings suggest that the book might serve well as the basis for exploring philosophical ideas with students. Though some critics have deemed *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* as a less mature and challenging story, these findings challenge this understanding. Zipes' (2001) claim that the story is simplistic and 'happy-go-lucky' does not coincide with what the students took away from the text. Their uptake show that the book provides themes of substance and that it challenges them intellectually (Wolf, 2004). It supports Pullman's (Pattison, 2011) claim that the books provide young readers with ultimate questions and by doing so takes the readers capacities seriously.

5.4.3 Unicorn blood

The Philosopher's Stone is not the only thing that can keep death at bay. If one is willing to pay the price, unicorn blood can "*keep you alive, even if you are an inch from death*" (Rowling, 2018, p. 210). Out of the four literary conversations, the discussion concerning unicorn blood was the one where the students were the most vocal and it sparked a new level of engagement. While they all agreed that they would not be willing to kill a unicorn, Justin

and Ernie presented hypothetical scenarios where they could avoid killing the unicorn but still drink its blood to save their life. It was interesting how many of the others objected so categorically to the idea, even if you took away the element of killing the unicorn. Their main argument was the curse described in the book. Their perception of what a 'half-life' entailed differed. Marcus' theory about the blood being a metaphor for drugs was received with interest by the others, but none of them had thought of it that way before then. Molly wondered if the curse could be that you had to live with the knowledge of having killed something beautiful. Their transaction with the text was different, and so they understood the curse differently. Later in the conversation when asked why someone would make the choice despite the curse, Molly stated that if you had nothing or no one you cared about, you had nothing to lose. In the book, Harry is told by the centaur that only someone who had nothing to lose but everything to gain would commit such an act.

The fact that the students could be emotionally engaged to this extent in the killing of an animal that is completely fictional show both a capacity for abstract thinking and aesthetic reading. They were emotionally affected by the suggestion, though it held little basis in their reality. This can be seen in connection to Iser's (1978) claim that readers can leave their own reality to enter the reality of the text. To understand the world provided by the text, this is necessary if the reader is to interpret and find meaning in the text. The students' response and reaction to the story seemed connected to their idea of the unicorn. The text provides some guidance in this. The centaur that explaining the properties of unicorn blood, described unicorns as something "pure and defenseless" (Rowling, 2018, p. 2010), but Angelina and Molly added to this that a unicorn is also "innocent" and "beautiful". Their interpretation of what a unicorn symbolizes can provide an understanding of why they reacted with such strong emotions, being provoked by the mere suggestion of using its death for one's own gain. In their wish to protect the unicorn, the students showed a great capacity for empathy. They could not only relate and empathize with human characters of the book, but also feel protective of an animal. They viewed the act of killing a unicorn as such a horrendous thing, that Molly theorized that the pure knowledge of having killed such a symbol might haunt you forever. However, they also provided a view that one would need the capacity for love to be able to feel the impact of the action. Voldemort, who through Professor Quirrell, is the one who drinks the blood in the book does not have this capacity, and therefore is able to do it. Katie displayed such a distain for the act that she asked her classmate "would you not rather die than do something like this?". It is a very powerful and telling statement. What the

unicorn symbolized was innocence to such a degree that there was no scenario that to her would justify the choice to kill one.

The literary conversation about unicorn blood was the one that seemed to make a deep impression on students. In the days following, students from other classes requested that they too could discuss the dilemma, after having the conversation retold by the nine students. It revealed a quality about the book that Knapp (2003) argue provides the work with literary worth and importance; that it is intensely engaging. Knapp writes that students often have trouble finding stories with this quality on their own and suggest that this demonstrate the need for teacher guidance when choosing texts. Her claim, in connection with the findings of this study, support Hogan (2011) and Nikolajeva's (2013) view that fantasy stories have the ability to move us even after we develop from the age where the division between fantasy and reality is blurred. At no point during the literary conversation about unicorn blood, did students comment or argue that unicorns were not real. I do not believe this to be because they do not know this, but that it portrays their ability to think hypothetically and abstract. Reality is not needed for them to emotionally and logical approach the dilemma. Iser (1978) suggest that a reader can leave his and her own reality behind when engaging with literary texts and this view supports the interpretation.

5.5 The problem with Hermione

In the multiple critical perspectives applied to the Harry Potter books, the representation of gender stereotypes has been widely discussed (see Anatol, 2003; Heilman, 2009; Heilman & Donaldson, 2009; Horne, 2010; Powers, 2007; Zipes, 2001). These approaches rarely consider the experience of young readers, but provide analysis based on theories of feminism, hegemony and conformism. These perspectives are valuable and interesting interpretations of the text. However, the way students experience characters might equally provide insight to the text and provide further discussions on the topic. All critical approaches mentioned provide analysis and discussion on one particular character; Hermione Granger. She is brought forward by critics as a problematic example of how the Harry Potter books reinforce gender stereotypes (Heilman & Donaldson, 2009). Hermione was highlighted and commented on by six out of the nine students in their logs. The students described her as clever, intelligent and highlighted her dedication and willingness to help her friends. Her choice to 'risk it all' is one of the qualities that Heiman and Donaldson (2009) believe to be problematic. They argue that

Hermione is an enabler, a happy helper, but not a hero. She is brave, but not brave enough. That is Harry's role. He is to go all the way and save the day. Hermione is portrayed as annoying, bossy and overly ambitious. However, the students' response challenges the view that she is less of a hero than Harry. Only one student, Ernie, described Harry as his favorite character. While several of the other students mention Harry as a character they enjoy, six of them chose to provide an interpretation of Hermione and described either liking her from the start or learning to like her as the story progressed. Though this does not nullify the feminist critical perspective applied by Heilman and Donaldson (2009) it does raise questions surrounding how the readers interpret the character as they place her in their reality. We must also ask, if they like her for her bravery, intelligence, loyalty and pride of heritage, is that problematic?

Zipes (2001) also criticizes the portrayal of Hermione and believes that the books are sexist. He recounts a conversation with young readers, where he presented this idea. The readers objected to the notion, pointing out that Hermione is a central character with abilities far beyond those of her peers. Zipes then explains how he provided them with examples of how Hermione was not powerful, but a victim of patriarchy. He recounts that many of them changed their objections after this. Hattinga (2003) criticizes Zipes for this approach, believing it to be problematic if one is to value young people's voice and their interpretation as readers. If one is to look closer at the gender stereotypes of the series with readers one might then wish to go about it in a different manner. As Rosenblatt (1994, 2005) stressed, the teacher should avoid looking for a right or wrong answer in the text if he or she wish to facilitate aesthetic reading. The nine students in this study were never asked explicitly about thoughts on gender representation in the book, which might be seen as one of its limitations. I agree with Heilman and Donaldson (2009) when they suggest using feminist critical pedagogy with this text, if one wishes to explore how popular texts uphold relations of power and gender experience. However, as they also point out, in such a case the critical gaze should be the objective, not necessarily the books themselves. If then the wish is to explore gender representation in literature, the Harry Potter series would be an interesting text to take into use, as the students seem to respond well to Hermione and it would be interesting to include this perspective in further studies.

Zipes' (2001) argument that the characters of Harry Potter are two-dimensional is challenged by both his own retellings of discussions with readers as well as by the findings of this study.

If readers can object to the view that Hermione is a powerless character only embodying gender stereotypes, then does that not make her multi-dimensional? Looking at the interpretation of the character provided by the nine students of this case study, Hermione appears multi-layered. She is not 'just' a good girl, enabling the adventures of boys, but partakes in those adventures. She is not simply a stereotype who «mope around, nag, or go to the library» (Greisinger, 2002, p.456). Students interpret her behavior as a sign of loneliness and lack of social skills. They applaud her for staying true to herself, her unwillingness to change for acceptance and her pride in her heritage. This can be seen as another sign that the readers are not 'limited' to Harry's experience. Though it is through his eyes we first encounter Hermione, students like Katie, explain how they immediately liked her, despite Harry and Ron's initial dislike for her. The students' ability to go against Harry's understanding of Hermione shows that *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* might facilitate a much more sophisticated view than that of its 11-year-old protagonist (Westman, 2011).

Students who provided interpretations of Hermione's behavior displayed the ability to engage in 'mind-reading', a part of the Theory of Mind process (Kidd & Castano, 2013). Because the book did not provide them with motives for Hermione's behavior and development, they had to try and understand her using their existing knowledge of the world, both theirs and the literary. Iser (1978) describes this as narrative gaps. The text implies that Hermione has no friends, and might never have had, and provides descriptions of how she is perceived by her classmates. However, the text does not provide information on how her life was before she came to Hogwarts. The narrative style also limits our knowledge of how she is feeling and why, thus providing a gap. The students then chose to fill this gap by engaging in the ToM process. Justin for example, interpreted Hermione's conduct as a sign that she has not had many friends and reflected further that this might be why she could connect with Harry and Ron. We are told that Harry has no friends, but in Ron's case it is implied. He has many siblings, but we are never told of any other peers that he spends time with. When arriving at Hogwarts he shows no sign of knowing or recognizing any one besides his brothers. Katie displayed an even more visible process in filling these gaps. She too reflected that Hermione had poor social skills and portrayed signs that she lacked socialization with peers. She then applied her own experience with a friend who the character reminded her of, to reach the understanding that Hermione was simply herself and in need of someone that accepted her for who she was. Other students described Hermione as a character they felt sympathy for her as

they came to understand that she might be lonely. In doing so they once again displayed the ability to engage in the ToM process (Kidd & Castano, 2013).

5.6 Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone

I would argue that in critical literature about the Harry Potter series, *The Philosopher's Stone* is greatly overlooked. The story is described as an introduction to the universe, but rarely the object of analysis and discussion. It is included when the work is looked at as a whole or when character's development through the series is the focus. Several scholars have described it as immature and less significant than the six other books of the series (Appelbaum, 2009; Westman, 2011; Witschonke, 2006). However, I would argue that this case study exemplifies that this book too can provide complex and thought-provoking themes, just as the following volumes. Though this case is unfit to generalize, it shows how these nine students found challenging dilemmas within the story that interested and engaged them. Their engagement in literary conversations were highest as they discussed the Mirror of Erised, the Philosopher's Stone and unicorn blood.

By including these complex and abstract ideas and dilemmas, Rowling takes both her readers and characters seriously. At no point in the story does the text imply that Harry's young age hinders him in making right decisions. She has created a character that despite abuse and neglect has developed a good sense of right and wrong. Rowling also shows a will to trust that the readers have the capacity to make moral and ethical choices. The students stated that they appreciated the opportunity to discuss these topics. Anatol (2003) believes the books give the readers a feeling of intellectual power. By presenting the reader with complicated choices and dilemmas the readers capacity is acknowledged. I would argue that this study support Anatol's claim. When the book takes the reader seriously by presenting him or her with complicated ideas, the reader takes the text and its ideas seriously. The fact that the concepts these ideas are based on were not real, was never commented or an issue. A good illustration of this is the conversation about drinking unicorn blood. At no point during that interaction did anyone point out that unicorns are not real. They participated in the book's reality, while at the same time applying their real-life morals and ethics to make a choice and argue for it (Iser, 1978). Nor did the students let their age and life experience stop them from stating their opinion on the topics. Their young age was only referenced as an acknowledgement that their views might change later in life.

Though the students described many individual connections to the text, there was a pattern in what parts of story they responded to, as well as the responses they described. Rosenblatt (1995) claims that each reading experience is unique and different, however, in analyzing the case in this study I have found several common factors in the readers' experience. This supports Heilman's (2009) claim that there is a uniting element within this book. Heilman suggests that Rosenblatt's theory on reader-response is a useful approach when trying to answer what it is with the Harry Potter books that resonates with its audience. Through my search for literature for this thesis her suggestion seems to have been overlooked. I have had no success in finding peer-reviewed studies of a larger size attempting this approach.

5.6.1 Harry Potter as *Bildung*

Westman (2011) and Appelbaum (2009) suggest that the Harry Potter series is a Bildungsroman, a story of development and coming of age. They both apply the term in relation to Harry's own development, but I would argue that the findings of this study suggest that *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* can be used as *Bildung*. The core values of the Norwegian curriculum are overriding principles for education in Norway providing direction in all subjects and is thereby equally important to facilitate in the English subject as in any other. The new edition of core curriculum, to be implemented in 2020, stresses the importance of both education and all-round development (*Bildung*). Primary and secondary education play an important part in the lifelong development of the individual and aims to facilitate "intellectual freedom, independence, responsibility and compassion for others" (Department of Education and Research, 2020, 2.0). Teaching should give the students the opportunity to understand themselves and others. It is my belief that literature that engages the students, can aid them in this development. In this case study I have found that *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* provide the students with topics and issues that can engage them in critical thought and ethical reflections. This belief is based on the theory presented in this thesis as well as the experience of literary conversations with students (Center for the Professional Education of Teachers, 2017; Hogan, 2011; Kidd & Castano, 2013; Knapp, 2003; Nikolajeva, 2013). The students find the story engaging and relate to many of the issues it raises. In connecting with the text, students are provided the opportunity to reflect on their own experiences as well as the experiences of others. In doing so, it might prove to be a resource when teachers aim to provide their students with an all-round development.

The responses' provided by the nine students of this case indicate that *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* can foster ethical awareness. Ethical awareness concerns students' ability to reflect and make ethical assessments. Students must learn to balance different considerations and develop good judgment (Department of Education and Research, 2020). The book raises issues of right and wrong and thereby enables the students to individually and collectively discuss and reflect on such concepts. The students' response to the text show that the book provides them with dilemmas that they can comprehend and connect to their own lives. Through literary conversations students were provided the opportunity to be active participants in a literary experience. Mills et al. (2004) argue that this prepares students for participation in a democratic world. As they constructed a new understanding of the text, the students may also have constructed a new understanding of themselves and their world. This is supported by the findings from the NYC Department of Education that show that this form of educational practice can nurture reflection and critical thinking as it supports diverse responses to text (Center for the Professional Education of Teachers, 2017). The data showed that the nine students had no difficulties in relating the text to their own lives and this suggests that it provides them with emotional dilemmas of high quality (Wolf, 2004). It might also suggest that the book can be influential in the emotional development of readers. As the case study include a small number of students in an isolated situation, this is just an indication. However, the case can be seen to build on the existing evidence that reading fiction can enhance students' emotional development (Hogan, 2011; Kidd & Castano, 2013; Nikolajeva, 2013).

6.0 Conclusion

With this case study I have illustrated how nine students responded to *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*. By analyzing their responses in literary conversations and student logs, the study found that the book raises ethical, philosophical and moral issues and questions that engaged the readers. That engagement has been connected to theory and studies on emotional and ethical development. The responses of the nine students challenges critical perspectives on the first book, the series as a whole and in particular the character Hermione Granger. The data indicates that the book can be used to facilitate ethical awareness, a part of an all-round development (Bildung).

Though these nine students enjoyed the text, over half the class did not keep up with the reading. Maybe this might to some degree support Zipes (2001, 2009) claim that it is major success is due to the marketing forces and publicity? The class were only provided the text itself. We did not watch a movie, play Harry Potter themed games or study the author's personal story. I would rather suggest that one of the reasons for their struggle to keep with the reading plan might be connected to their lack of experience with reading and discussing literature. Literary conversations have to be learned, and as a teacher I myself learned this the hard way. Peterson and Eeds (2007, as cited in Fuxa, 2012) state that methods like this have greater success if they are systematically modeled. Langer (1994) too stresses the importance of students learning how to participate in conversations on literature. In this class there had never been attempted a similar method and the approach was completely new to them. It is one of the limitations of this study. In addition, they had never read the same book all at once. It would be interesting to see if the same lack of participation would take place in a class which is familiar with the method. Had the aim of the study been to explore how the teaching method worked, this would have been explored further.

6.1 Implications for research

The development of the view on reading in English teaching in Norway makes case studies like this useful for teachers exploring literary conversations as well as those who might be looking for a text to use. The study fits well with the new aims in the subject as literary talks facilitate discussion, reflection and interpretation. However, as I explained in Chapter 2, the last draft of the new curriculum for English, left out literature completely (Directorate of

Education and Training, 2019). Though two aims relating to reading, discussing and interpreting literature were included in the final curriculum, I believe that it illustrates the importance of continued research on the field of literature in Norwegian English teaching. The subject has undergone many changes over the 80 years since it was implemented as an obligatory subject in Norway. Studies providing insight to the benefits of literature, may support its continued use.

The nine students of this case study provided interpretations and understanding of the text that I have not found in other critical analysis of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*. This suggest that reader-response can provide valuable, new understandings of the text. Among these nine students there were students who had read the book, students who were familiar with the story due to the movie franchise and one student who had never read the book nor seen the movie. Their experience had similarities and differences. Students who were rereading the book expressed that the experience of the text changed. Though there have been several studies on rereading books, I have not found any statistics on how common it is to read the same fictional book several times. However, it is likely to assume that many people don't. Maybe, like in Molly's case, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* deserves to be picked back up when the reader is older? It would be interesting to see a study on how readers who experienced the book at a young age, respond to the text the second time around. According to Rosenblatt's theory (1995) the added life experience should have some effect on the transaction and the finding from this study supports this claim. Case studies are rarely fit to generalize but can provide valuable insights into phenomenon. They benefit from the addition of similar case studies as well as other methods of research.

6.2 Implications for teaching

This project was conducted while the aims of the curriculum 'Kunnskapsløftet' were still in place. Since then, the new Norwegian curriculum 'Fagfornyelsen' has published its new competence aims for the English subject. In light of these new aims, this study is more relevant than ever. Students will, from the fall of 2020, be expected to discuss texts in English, and interpret and reflect on English fiction, including literature aimed at young adults. Though not new in regard to classroom practice, the curriculum has never before specifically demanded discussion, interpretation and reflection of English literature in lower secondary school (Bakken, 2017; Department of Church Affairs, Education and Research,

1987, 1996; Department of Education and Research, 2013). Though my project can in no way be generalized, my hope is that it can serve as inspiration to how one might go about discussing, interpreting and reflecting on English literature in lower secondary classrooms.

In literary conversations the students voiced their opinions and understanding of the text, challenging each other and providing new insights. It is my belief that the literary conversations and a shared text enabled them to do so. I believe that the teacher needs to provide the students with opportunities to discuss their interpretations with their peers. Though student logs provided valuable insight into students' response to the text, it was in conversation with each other that they were challenged and portrayed the ability to comprehend complex issues and ideas. Literary conversations facilitated this. It gave the students a platform where their opinions and interpretations were valued and taken seriously. This was also found in NYC Department of Education's study of book clubs (Center for the Professional Education of Teachers, 2017). It is my belief that this autonomy encouraged the students to further participation and engagement with the text. There was no need for them to come prepared to these conversations in any other way than having read the chapters in focus. Their responses were enough. It is based on this that I will argue that English teachers should familiarize themselves with this teaching method. If they wonder what text they can use, I would very much like to suggest *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*.

Though the experience with the nine students was positive and showed several advantages in this method of teaching, there was a large number of students who did not follow the reading plan provided to them. There is no data to say with any kind of certainty why so many students were not able to participate in the project. I can however, say that in conversation with those students only two attributed their lack of engagement to interest in the book itself. The most repeated reasons were lack of time and priorities. Though given aids like the audiobook, students who struggled with English did not manage to keep with the reading. It is difficult to say anything about why this is without speculating, but there are some factors I can point to. In this class there were twelve students from bilingual homes, speaking ten different languages. Three of these were among the nine students who participated in all conversations. One of those three came from a home where the language was English.

Wolf (2004) writes that one of the negative aspects of Transactional criticism is that teachers might have an 'over the top' swing towards the students' personal response, overlooking that a

study of the author, closer look at the language or links to other works might heighten the experience. I do not disagree with Wolf, but believe this to be unrealistic in an ordinary school setting. *Reading Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* took 2 months. If we were to then include similar texts, take an in-depth look at the language and learn about J. K. Rowling herself, we would have used approximately 3 months of the school year. Any teacher will see that this is unlikely unless you restructure the entire way we 'do school'. Joining the theory of how to ideally work with literature and how one might practically do it in a real-life classroom is an eternal struggle. A teacher might know what absolute best would be, but also that there are not enough resources, time and will in today's schools. As a new teacher it was never an option for me to completely separate my classes from the other 10th grades, nor was it an option to get them all to join. However, such a project where an entire grade would join in something similar would be an interesting thing to study.

6.3 Harry Potter, a phenomenon?

This thesis has presented critical views that suggest that the success of Harry Potter is simply a phenomenon and not a sign of a literary work of quality (Sutton, 1999; Zipes, 2001, 2009, 2017). A premise for Zipes' critique of the Harry Potter series, is that the reader's involvement with the text is driven by the marketing forces that surround them. However, the students participating in this project purely interacted with the text. There was no movie, action figures or fan sites. There were only nine students and a book. And they enjoyed it. Seven of them planned to continue reading. Not because the bookstore had placed the book in their display, but because they wished to know what happened next. Maybe the time has come to take a new look at the readers of these books, away from all the extra blitz and glamour that surrounded the series during the 10-year span of its publication. I believe that we need to take the readers of this series more seriously. There is something here and diminishing readers to headless sheep herded by publishing houses, will not answer what it is.

Can I say anything about what lasting effect the text had on the students, beyond what they told through their logs and conversations? No. That is beyond the scope of this project. But I can describe students reading Harry Potter books in lunchbreaks months later and of amazed parents telling how their teenagers were suddenly requesting 500-page books in English. I

cannot scientifically say that the experience changed them in the long term, but as a teacher I can say that they appeared to be fonder of reading when they left my classroom.

In working on this project, I had to ask myself, am I biased? My answer would be yes and no. Yes, because this is one of my favorite book series of all time and the story means a lot to me personally and has had direct effect on my reading engagement. This gave me certain ideas of how students would respond in this study, not unlike any researcher will have before starting their project. However, most of my ideas and hopes for this project were debunked quite quickly. The book did not have the effect that I expected, and the students responded to the story differently. I had to look at the book in a different way and learn to criticize something that I held dear. If I'm being honest, I do not encourage anyone to do an in-depth study to something they hold dear. It will taint it. I can never read the book the same way again. I have read too much critical literature about the books. On the other side, the response from the students and the reflections they made has enriched the experience. I will never pass through the chapters on unicorn blood or the Elixir of Life the same way again. Whenever I read about Harry sneaking out to look into the Mirror of Erised I will remember that yes, this was the first time the character was tempted by a selfish choice. A student taught me that.

References

Alvermann, D., Young, J., Green, C., & Wisenbaker, J. (1999). *Adolescents' perceptions and negotiations of literacy practices in after-school read and talk clubs*. *American Educational Research Journal*, 36(2), 221-264.

Anatol, G. L. (2003). *Reading Harry Potter : critical essays* (Contributions to the study of popular culture, Bind no. 78). Westport, Conn: Praeger.

Anatol, G. L. (Ed.). (2009). *Reading Harry Potter Again: New Critical Essays*. ABC-CLIO.

American Library Association. *100 most frequently challenged books: 1990-1999*. Retrieved 25.03.2020 from: <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/bbooks/100-most-frequently-challenged-books-1990-1999>

Appelbaum, P. (2009). *The Great Snape Debate*. In Heilman, E. E. (2009). *Critical perspectives on Harry Potter* (2nd ed.). New York: Routledge.

Avineri, N. (2017). *Research methods for language teaching : inquiry, process, and synthesis* (Applied linguistics for the language classroom). London: Palgrave.

Bakken, A. S. (2017). *Notions of EFL reading in Norwegian curricula, 1939-2013*. *Acta didactica Norge [elektronisk ressurs]*, 11(2), 19-19. doi: 10.5617/adno.4474

Bleicher, J. (2006). *Bildung*. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 23(2-3), 364-365.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276406023002116>

Børresen, B. (2015). *En egen form for samtale*. In Christensen, H. & Stokke, R. I. S. (2015). *Samtalens didaktiske muligheter*. Oslo: Gyldendal akademisk.

Center for Professional Education of Teachers. (2017). *Book clubs in the Classroom: 10 tips for success*. Retrived 08.04.2020 from <https://cpet.tc.columbia.edu/one-book-book-club/book-club-in-the-classroom-10-tips-for-success>

Christoffersen, L. & Johannessen, A. (2012). *Forskningsmetode for lærerutdanningene*. Oslo: Abstrakt forl.

Cockrell, A. (2002). *Harry's Cousins in the Magical Realm*. In Whited, L. A. (2002). *The ivory tower and Harry Potter: perspectives on a literary phenomenon*. University of Missouri Press.

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2017). *Research methods in education*. Retrieved from <https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.ezproxy.hioa.no>

Davis, J. (1992). *Reconsidering Readers: Louise Rosenblatt and Reader-Response Pedagogy*. *Research and Teaching in Developmental Education*, 8(2), 71-81. Retrieved April 29, 2020, from www.jstor.org/stable/42802433

Department of Church Affairs and Education. (1987). *Mønsterplan for grunnskolen: M87*. Oslo: Aschehoug.

Department of Church Affairs, Education and Research. (1996). *Læreplanverket for den 10-årige grunnskolen*. [Oslo]: Nasjonalt læremiddelsenter.

Department of Education and Research. (2013). *Læreplan i engelsk (ENG01-03)*. Retrieved 13.01.2020 from <https://www.udir.no/kl06/ENG1-03>

Department of Education and Research. (2020). *Læreplan i engelsk (ENG01-04)*. Retrieved 13.01.2020 from <https://www.udir.no/lk20/eng01-04>

Department of Education and Research. (2020). *Core curriculum – values and principles for primary and secondary education*. Retrived 02.05.2020 from: <https://www.udir.no/lk20/overordnet-del/?lang=eng>

Directorate of Education and Training (2015) *Hvordan gjennomføre en litterær samtale*. Retrived 08.04.2020 from <https://www.udir.no/laring-og-trivsel/lareplanverket/grunnleggende-ferdigheter/lesing/lesing-i-fag/Lesing-i-norsk1/Hvordan-gjennomfore-litterare-samtaler/>

Directorate of Education and Training. (2019). *Forslag – læreplan i engelsk (2), vedlegg 2B*.

Retrieved 15.02.2020 from:

<https://www.udir.no/globalassets/filer/lareplan/fagfornyelsen/lareplanutkast/eng1-04---lareplan-i-engelsk.pdf>

Directorate of Education and Training. (2019). *Høring – læreplaner i engelsk*. Retrieved

23.03.2019 from: <https://hoering.udir.no/Hoering/v2/338>

Errington, P. W. (2015). *JK Rowling: a Bibliography 1997-2013*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

Fuxa, R. (2012). *Finding fantasy: the genre that makes difficult topics easier for students to discuss*. (Fantasy literature). *Reading Today*, 30(2), 26.

Gallardo C, X., Carey, B., Anatol, G. L., Anatol, G. L., Mills, A., Damour, L., . . . Smith, K. M. (2003). *Reading Harry Potter : critical essays* (Contributions to the study of popular culture, Bind no. 78). Westport, Conn: Praeger.

Griesinger, E. (2002). *Harry Potter and the "deeper magic": narrating hope in children's literature*. *Christianity and Literature*, 51(3), 455.

Harmer, J. (2007). *The Practice of English language teaching : with DVD* (4th edition. utg.). Harlow: Longman.

Heilman, E. E. (2003). *Harry Potter's World. Multidisciplinary Critical Perspectives*, RoutledgeFalmer, New York.

Heilman, E. E. (2009). *Critical perspectives on Harry Potter* (2nd ed. utg.). New York: Routledge.

Heilman, E. E. & Donaldson, T. (2009). *From Sexist to (sort-of) Feminist*. In Heilman, E. E. (2009). *Critical perspectives on Harry Potter* (2nd ed. utg.). New York: Routledge.

Hettinga, D. R. (2003). *Sticks and Stones: The Troublesome Success of Children's Literature from Slovenly Peter to Harry Potter (review)*. *The Lion and the Unicorn* (Vol. 27, s. 272-276).

Hogan, P. C. (2011). *What literature teaches us about emotion* (Studies in emotion and social interaction). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Horne, J. (2010). *Harry and the Other: Answering the Race Question in J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter*. *The Lion and the Unicorn*, 34(1), 76-104. doi: 10.1353/uni.0.0488

Hunt, P. (2006). *Introduction: the expanding world of Children's Literature Studies*. In *Understanding children's literature* (pp. 11-24). Routledge.

Iser, W. (1978). *The act of reading : a theory of aesthetic response* (Der Akt des Lesens). Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Kidd, D. C. & Castano, E. (2013). *Reading literary fiction improves theory of mind*. *Science* (New York, N.Y.), 342(6156), 377. doi: 10.1126/science.1239918

Knowyourmeme.com. *Figure 1*. Retrieved 15.04.2020 from:
<https://knowyourmeme.com/photos/891821-10-points-fromfor-gryffindor>

Nancy Flanagan, K. (2003). *In Defense of Harry Potter: An Apologia*. *School Libraries Worldwide*, 9(1), 78-91.

Langer, J. A. (1994). *Focus on research: A response-based approach to reading lit*. *Language Arts*, 71(3), 203.

Langer, J. A. (1998). *Thinking and doing literature: an eight-year study*. (National Research Center on Literature Teaching and Learning). *English Journal*, 87(2), 16. doi: 10.2307/821546

Lombardi, E. (2017), *How To Keep a Reading Log or Book Journal*. Retrieved 29.11.18 from:
<https://www.thoughtco.com/how-to-keep-a-reading-log-or-book-journal-739793>

Maslin, J. (2000). *At Last, the Wizard Gets Back to School*. The New York Times, 10.
Retrieved 23.11.2018 from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2000/07/10/books/books-of-the-times-at-last-the-wizard-gets-back-to-school.html>

McKay, S. L. (2014). *Literature as content for language teaching*. Teaching English as a second or foreign language, 488-500.

Mickenberg, J., & Vallone, L. (Eds.). (2011). *The Oxford handbook of children's literature*. Oxford University Press.

Milevsky, A. (2015). *Understanding adolescents for helping professionals*. New York: Springer Publishing Company

Mills, H. & Stephens, D. (2004). *Theory in Practice: The Legacy of Louise Rosenblatt*. Language Arts, 82(1), 47-55.

Montgomery, H. & Watson, N. J. (2009). *Children's literature : classic texts and contemporary trends* (The open university). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Mulholland, N. & Mulholland, N. (2006). *The psychology of Harry Potter : an unauthorized examination of the boy who lived* (Psychology of Popular Culture).

Nikolajeva, M. (2009). *Harry Potter and the Secrets of Children's Literature*. In Heilman, E. E. (2009). *Critical perspectives on Harry Potter* (2nd ed.). New York: Routledge.

Nikolajeva, M. (2013). *Picturebooks and Emotional Literacy*. Reading Teacher, 67(4), 249-254. doi: 10.1002/trtr.1229

NSD (2018). *Hva må jeg informere om?*. Retrieved 18.09.2018 from: https://nsd.no/personvernombud/hjelp/informere_om.html

NSD (2018). *Vanlige spørsmål*. Retrieved 18.09.2018 from: <https://nsd.no/personvernombud/hjelp/index.html>

Park, J. (2012). *Re-imagining reader-response in middle and secondary Schools: Early adolescent girls' critical and communal reader responses to the young adult novel*. *Speak. Children's Literature in Education*, 43(3), 191-212. doi:10.1007/s10583-012-9164-5

Pattison, N. (Director). (2001). *Harry Potter and me* [Documentary], UK: British Broadcasting Corporation.

Peppler, K. (Ed.). (2017). *The SAGE encyclopedia of out-of-school learning*. Sage Publications.

Powers, A. & Berggreen, S.-L. C. (2007). *Magical triumph or miserable illusion?: Gender and race constructions in "Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone" and "Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets"*: ProQuest Dissertations Publishing.

Pruitt, S. 2018. *What was the philosopher's stone?* Retrieved 22.04.2020 from:
<https://www.history.com/news/what-was-the-philosophers-stone>

Rosenblatt, L. M. (1994). *The reader the text the poem: the transactional theory of the literary work; with a new preface and epilogue*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.

Rosenblatt, L. M. & Modern Language Association of, A. (1995). *Literature as exploration* (5th ed. utg.). New York: Modern Language Association of America.

Rosenblatt, L. M. (2005). *Making meaning with texts : selected essays*. Portsmouth: Heinemann.

Rowling, J. K. (1997). *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*. London: Bloomsbury

Rowling, J. K. (1998). *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*. London: Bloomsbury

Rowling, J. K. (1999). *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*. London: Bloomsbury

- Rowling, J. K. (2000). *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*. London: Bloomsbury
- Rowling, J. K. (2018). *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*. (Illustrated edition). London: Bloomsbury
- Rowling, Joan (2016) *Hogwarts: An Incomplete and Unreliable Guide*.
- Rustin, M. & Rustin, M. (2001). *Narratives of love and loss : studies in modern children's fiction* (Revised ed. utg.).
- Sutton, R. (1999). Potter's Field. *The Hornbook Magazine Sept./Oct*, 500-01.
- Turner-Vorbeck, T. (2009) Pottermania: Good, Clean Fun or Cultural Hegemony? In Heilman, E. E. (2009). *Critical perspectives on Harry Potter* (2nd ed. utg.). New York: Routledge.
- Vezzali, L., Stathi, S., Giovannini, D., Capozza, D. & Trifiletti, E. (2015). *The greatest magic of Harry Potter: Reducing prejudice*. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 45(2), 105-121. doi: 10.1111/jasp.12279
- Westman, K. (2011) *Blending Genres and Crossing Audiences: Harry Potter and the Future of Literary Fiction* in Mickenberg, J. L. & Vallone, L. (2011). *The Oxford handbook of children's literature* (Oxford handbooks). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Whited, L. A. (2002). *The ivory tower and Harry Potter : perspectives on a literary phenomenon*. University of Missouri Press.
- Whittingham, J. L., & Huffman, S. S. (2009). The effects of book clubs on the reading attitudes of middle school students. *Reading Improvement*, 46(3), 130-136.
- Witschonke, C. (2006) *Harry Potter Casts His Spell in the Classroom*, *Middle School Journal*, 37:3, 4-11, DOI: 10.1080/00940771.2006.11461530
- Wolf, S. A. (2004). *Interpreting literature with children* (Literacy teaching series).

Woolfolk, A (2010). *Pedagogisk psykologi*. Trondheim: Tapir akademiske forlag

Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case study research and applications : design and methods* (6. utgave. utg.). Los Angeles: SAGE.

Zipes, J. (2001). *Sticks and stones : the troublesome success of children's literature from Slovenly Peter to Harry Potter*. New York: Routledge.

Zipes, J. (2009). *The phenomenon of Harry Potter, or why all the talk?* (p. 289-296). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.

Zipes, J. (2017). INTRODUCTION: The Sorcerer's Apprentice, Harry Potter, and Why Magic Matters. In Zipes J. (Ed.), *The Sorcerer's Apprentice: An Anthology of Magical Tales* (pp. 1-82). Princeton; Oxford: Princeton University Press. doi:10.2307/j.ctvc77n1k.6

Informasjonsskriv om masterprosjekt

Hei alle foresatte i [REDACTED]

Som mange av dere vet studerer jeg ved siden av jobben på [REDACTED]. Jeg er for tiden i gang med oppgaven til min mastergrad i engelsk didaktikk. Noe av datainnsamlingen til denne vil foregå i klasserommet [REDACTED]. Tema for oppgaven er fantasy litteratur i engelskundervisningen og målet er å se nærmere på de samtalene som oppstår i klasserommet underveis mens vi leser en fantasybok sammen.

Alle elevene vil være helt anonyme og de vil ikke bli beskrevet på måter som vil gjøre det mulig å gjenkjenne dem.

Fordi jeg skal forske på egen praksis i eget klasserom har jeg valgt å ikke ta opptak eller film fra undervisningen. All data vil bli hentet inn gjennom feltnotater og observatørnotater. Dette vil være med på å videre sikre elevenes anonymitet.

Undervisningsopplegget jeg gjennomfører avviker ikke fra kompetansemålene eller faginnholdet som gjelder for [REDACTED]. Elevene følger samme undervisning som de ville gjort uten at jeg jobbet med en masteroppgave. Boken som leses vil være en del av pensum til muntlig eksamen og kan bli tema for en eksamensoppgave.

Prosjektet vil strekke seg over ca 5 uker. Elevene vil alle få låne et eksemplar av *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's stone*. De vil bli gitt en leseplan som det er viktig at de følger. Denne vil være tilgjengelig på [REDACTED] i løpet av neste uke. Hver uke vil vi gjennomføre litterære samtaler i klassen rundt kapitlene vi har lest. Det er disse samtalene jeg skal undersøke nærmere. Elevene vil også gjøre varierte oppgaver knyttet til boken. Noen ganger vil jeg be elevene om å levere inn tekster som vi arbeider med på skolen. Noen av disse tekstene kan bli brukt som datamateriell i min oppgave. Her også vil elevenes anonymitet være sikret. Vi vil også gjennomføre deler av prosjektet som vurderingssituasjoner. Elevene vil bli gjort oppmerksom på når dette er tilfellet og de vil bli gitt vurderingskriterier i forkant.

Hvis dere skulle ha noen spørsmål eller ønsker nærmere informasjon er det bare å ta kontakt.

Med vennlig hilsen Thea

Appendix 2

Samtykkeerklæring

Jeg har mottatt og forstått informasjon om prosjektet "Fantasy literature in the classroom" og har fått anledning til å stille spørsmål. Jeg samtykker til:

- At det blir laget skriftlige notater av samtaler jeg deltar i som blir observert.
- At elevprodukter jeg produserer i løpet av prosjektet blir brukt som datamateriell.

Jeg samtykker til at mine opplysninger behandles frem til prosjektet er avsluttet [REDACTED]

(Signert av elev, dato)

(Signert av foresatt, dato)

Harry Potter Reading Log

Individual Work while you read Harry Potter



The task

I've decided that you are going to start keeping reading logs while you read *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*. This will be individual work that you will hand in and be graded on. Since we have already read some chapters I would like you to try and go back and recall your reactions to the text at the start of this, but pay most attention to your responses from the point you have gotten to now. I would like you to make clear in the log where in the book you are as you start your log.

Criteria

Each of you will hand in your logs no later than [REDACTED]. What your log should include is listed under «*How to Keep a Reading Log*». The finished log should be about 2-4 pages long (size 12, 1.5 space), including quotes etc. from the book. The log is individual and personal, there is no need for you to research anything on the internet.

The criteria I will use when I grade your logs will be as follows:

- Your understanding of the text, the plot and storyline
- How you give reasons for your opinions
- How you use examples from the text to illustrate your points and reflections
- What you have noticed in the text. Have you analyzed what you have read or have you just summarized the content.
- Your grammar and sentence structure.

How to Keep a Reading Log

Write Down Your Thoughts: First and foremost, start recording your immediate reactions to the text as you read it.

Record Your Emotional Response: What emotions did the book invoke: laughter, tears, smiles, anger? Or did the book seem boring and meaningless to you? If so, why? Record some of your reactions.

Connect the Book to Your Own Life: Sometimes books touch you, reminding you of your own life as part of the larger human experience. Are there connections between the text and your own experience?

Lightbulb! Is there an idea in the book that makes you stop and think or prompts questions? Identify the idea and explain your responses.

Connect with Characters: Write about the characters, considering these questions:

- Which one is your favorite? What do you like about that character?
- Is there a character you dislike? Why?

Choose one of these

- Do you think that any of the characters represent *real* people?
- Do any of the characters represent general personality types? Is the author commenting on these types of people?

Do You Have More Questions Than Answers?

- Upon finishing the book, does it leave you with questions? What are they?

Favorite Quotes: What are your favorite lines or quotes? Copy them into your reading log/journal and explain why these passages caught your attention.

The Book's Impact: How have you changed after reading the book? What did you learn that you never knew before? Capture what stands out about the book for you (or what doesn't).

Source: Lombardi, E. (2017), *How To Keep a Reading Log or Book Journal*. Retrieved the [REDACTED] 2018 from: <https://www.thoughtco.com/how-to-keep-a-reading-log-or-book-journal-739793>