

**M A S A R Y K O V A
U N I V E R Z I T A**

FACULTY OF SOCIAL STUDIES

Harry Potter and Sociological Concepts

Bachelor Thesis

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Panopticon

Panopticon surveillance can be understood as a state of constant monitoring. The prisoners do not know when they are being monitored and when not, so they regulate their behavior at all times to prevent punishment (Bentham 2011).

In the wizarding world, there are several powers and objects that observe. They do not always necessarily serve as a force that regulates behavior; sometimes, the powers observe without the intention of behavior regulation.

The Ministry of Magic can monitor spells used by wizards and witches under the age of 17 with the Trace charm, under the Decree for the Restriction of Underage Wizardry (Rowling 2015). The Ministry counts on the parents that are witches or wizards to control their children, as the Ministry would not know who cast the spell (whether the parent or the child) (ibid). It is not always a spell used by them, but in one case, the spell is made by someone else, and the blame is cast on the under-age wizard. This situation happens in the second book when the elf Dobby uses a levitation spell in the presence of 12-year-old Harry. The Ministry immediately sends a letter to Harry informing him that he misbehaved and that this behavior should not be repeated (Rowling 2004b). Nobody would believe Harry that a house elf, who is typically a part of wizarding families, would suddenly appear at the home of his muggle family and cast a spell, which is why Harry was punished (ibid.).

It happens again in the third book when Harry unconsciously casts an enlargement/levitation spell on his aunt Marge. Harry instantly knows he is in trouble and proceeds to pack his suitcase and tries to flee because he thinks he will be sent to the wizarding prison of Azkaban (Rowling 2004d).

“And the worst of it was, he had just done serious magic, which meant that he was almost certainly expelled from Hogwarts. He had broken the Decree for the Restriction of Underage Wizardry so badly; he was surprised Ministry of Magic representatives weren’t swooping down on him where he sat.” (Ibid, p.29). The threat of punishment did not prevent Harry from casting a spell as he cast it in anger after his parents were insulted by his aunt Marge (ibid).

Harry consciously casts a Patronus charm in the fifth book to protect himself and Dudley, his cousin, from a dementor. He knows his actions will have consequences, but his survival instinct overrides that. He would rather be punished by the Ministry but still have his soul belong

to him. After he protects himself and Dudley, the Ministry sends him a letter informing him that he is thereby cast out of Hogwarts and ministry officials will be coming to destroy his wand. Dumbledore interferes, and the Ministry sends another letter stating there will be a trial instead. (Rowling 2003)

Mrs. Weasley has a clock that shows where her family members are instead of time. For example, it has labels such as school, work, traveling, or mortal danger. (Rowling 2015) We can imagine that the family members would not loiter around because of the fear that Mrs. Weasley would know where they were.

There is also the Marauder's Map, a paper map of Hogwarts that always shows the location of everyone on the Hogwarts grounds. The Marauders created the map, so they could sneak out of the school or make mischief without being seen by the schoolteachers. (Rowling 2015) It is not used as a punishment-prevention as it is in the hands of students, not the prefects or the teachers, except for two times when teachers come into possession of the map. During the *Prisoner of Azkaban*, Remus Lupin, a professor at Hogwarts at the time, confiscates it from Harry and, during the finale, tracks Harry, Hermione, and Ron sneaking out of Hogwarts, which he then uses to follow them. He leaves it open on his desk, where Professor Snape sees it and uses it for the same purpose. (Rowling 2004d) During the next book, *the Goblet of Fire*, Professor Moody, who is at the time a disguised Death Eater, Barty Crouch Jr., borrows it from Harry. Barty Crouch Jr. then sees his escaped father on the Marauder's map and murders him once he tracks him down using the map. (Rowling 2004a)

During the last book, when Voldemort's followers overtake Hogwarts and the Ministry of Magic, there is a hex put in place that enables the Death Eaters to know where a person that said the word "Voldemort" is. If any magical wards are placed around said person, they are destroyed by the hex. The curse was made to hunt people who oppose Voldemort, as no follower would ever call him by his chosen name and only title him "the Dark lord" or something similar. (Rowling 2007)

There is also a list of witches and wizards being born, accessible by Hogwarts teachers and headmasters. When the wizard reaches their 11th birthday, a letter is sent to them that they are accepted to Hogwarts. If they come from a muggle family, a Hogwarts official comes to explain what the wizarding world is. (Rowling 2015) It is an automatic registry. I argue that, in a way, it is used to prevent crimes as an unchecked and