

Article

Magic at the Crossroads: Moral Dissonance and Repair in the Wizarding World

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Abstract

The Harry Potter fandom community around the world prefers a universe of wizards and witches that includes all people, but also has concerns about the author's perspective regarding gender identity. This disjunction paralyzes the cultural reader with moral confusion, which is a danger to their emotional investment in the text. Although scholars have analyzed this phenomenon using fragmented prisms, such as social media activism, cognitive engagement, translation, pedagogy, and fan creativity, there is no unifying model that can be used to understand why reading pleasure endures. This article aims to fill this gap by examining these strands of research in a divergent manner, adopting a convergent mixed-methods study approach. Based on neurocognitive (EEG) values, cross-cultural focus groups, social media analysis, and corpus linguistics, we outline the terrain of reader coping mechanisms. We identify separate fan fractions and examine the corresponding practices. The results are summarized by proposing a model called the MDRL (Moral dissonance repair loop) which is a theoretical model that shows how translation smoothing, pedagogical reframing and fan-based re-moralization interact with one another in creating a system that enables the reader to be collectively able to obtain their relations with the text back to a manageable point and continue being engaged. This model makes a theoretical contribution to new areas in the study of fans, moral psychology, and cognitive literature.

Keywords: moral dissonance; Harry Potter; fan studies; cognitive literary studies; translation; cancel culture



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1. Plain Language Summary

This study examines how Harry Potter fans continue to enjoy the story, despite the author, J.K. Rowling, becoming a subject of controversy. Readers, teachers, and translators continue to use books. Instead, they find ways to make the stories feel new and more ethical than they were. They change how they talk about books, how they teach them, and even how they emotionally understand them. This helps people maintain their love for stories while distancing themselves from the author. This research demonstrates how popular books can continue to be used in classrooms and culture, even after public concerns about the author.

2. Introduction

The enduring worldwide euphoria surrounding the Harry Potter book series is a cultural paradox on a deeper level that has come to characterize the connection of a generation to a shared understanding of their thoughts. Over more than 20 years, its fictional

universe, based on the premise of love, acceptance, and resistance to discrimination, has engaged millions, having become not just a set of books but a cultural reference point (Webster et al. 2025). It was the world that was home to many, a place where the normal coexisted with the fantastic, and the point being made was one of deep empathy (Chang 2021; Thomas 2018). Nevertheless, all this beloved heritage currently exists under a strained synergy with the extreme denunciation of its author, J.K. Rowling. Since 2020, multiple declarations of trans-exclusive and transphobic views changed her image permanently, making her a villain in the minds of many who once considered her a hero (Breslow 2021). To so many widespread and varied audiences whose identities, values and even social groups had been partially formed through the book, this clash between a cherished text and a reviled author produces a condition of deep and dangerous moral dissonance, an affective, cognitive discord that promises to destroy the very basis of the pleasure that they take in the book and the fan identity that it constitutes. It is not just an academic discussion; it is an emotionally devastating experience for many fans who feel deeply betrayed.

This rift has not been taken lightly in the academic world; in fact, it has led to a surge in academic research. Nevertheless, this work has progressed in non-continuous and perhaps unrelated silos. On the one hand, media and communication scholars have studied the processes of canceling Rowling symbolically and understand these phenomena as a form of new digital activism (Hobbs and O’Keefe 2024). Second, cognitive neuroscientists have identified distinct neural markers of sustained immersion in expert Potter readers using EEG and concluded that their cognitive attention continues to be maintained even when reading poorly produced fanfiction (Weitin et al. 2024). In other places, the losses in the cultural and semantic dimensions of translating the wordplay of the series into other language systems, such as Malay or Chinese, are criticized by theorists of translation (Frydrychová 2023; Zabir and Haroon 2018). At the same time, teachers continue to use the series in classrooms across the globe to learn about everything from the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals to critical empathy in TESOL programs (Zorba et al. 2024; Thomas 2019). Lastly, scholars of literary and fan studies have examined the extraordinary prolificacy of fan fiction in which readers are involved in writing, rewriting, and re-moralizing the wizarding world according to their own, more inclusive values (Duggan 2021; Ashton and Sackville-McLauchlan 2025).

Although each research strand is quite informative in its own way, they are all disjointed. They discuss different aspects of the phenomenon but do not specify the mechanism by which it can persist. However, the kind of thing that is obviously underrepresented in the literature is an overarching characterization of how all those diverse activities—pedagogical, neural, translational, and creative—come into action as the dynamic repair system they are. The main question (which seems to be unanswered) is not whether Harry Potter is still used as a fan object, but in what ways. What does the reading community around the world do when it seems that the imaginative and moral investment that they previously made in a secondary world must now be experienced as a problem, as a conflict, and as suffering, given the fundamental ethical impurity that is the primary creator of that world? How does the enjoyment of reading live after the death of the author’s reputation?

The research is multi-methodological and integrative, which is its greatest strength. This is the first study to utilize neurocognitive, sociocultural, and linguistic evidence to construct a comprehensive model of reader coping mechanisms applicable to readers worldwide. Uniting social media ethnography, cognitive neuroscience, and translation studies, this study ventures beyond atomized studies to chart the interconnected strategies by which reading communities may learn to navigate this ethical maze. We want to learn

not only the tactics of repair on an individual level but also the system that emerges from the tactics.

The key aspect of this work is the emergence of the concept of the so-called “Moral Dissonance repair loop”, a new theoretical framework that allows describing the active and collaborative efforts of wizarding world readers to maintain their connection with the story and stay engaged. According to this model, readers do not passively consume a broken cultural commodity; on the contrary, they employ a reparative practice involving a well-harvested set of reparative strategies through a comprehensive toolkit. Such operations enable them to renegotiate their relationship with a text that has been seriously disrupted by its author-brand. The repair loop is a visual representation of the idea that mechanisms such as cultural insulation offered in translation, critical reframing that occurs in classrooms, and creative re-moralization that fanfiction executes are not isolated phenomena but are interdependent parts of a constant loop of a community taking care of itself. This article finally attempts to address a burning cultural conundrum that is more applicable than ever in this fandom specifically: how do we continue to love a story, yet its creator has become morally problematic? In a post-digital world of accountability and divided public conversation, this process needs to be understood by educators, publishers, and cultural critics.

3. Literature Review

J.K. Rowling has garnered both positive and negative media coverage, resulting in a heterogeneous yet disjointed scholarly legacy. The idea of creating an overall model of moral dissonance repair relies on the necessity of first combining all these different areas of research, ranging from author branding and fan activism to cognitive neuroscience and translation studies, and mapping the gaps in the connections within them.

The modern world shapes its attitude toward authors as a sort of brand, and public images are determinants of their marketability and cultural importance (Cordón-García and Muñoz-Rico 2019). This author-brand is an intricate merger of ideas and expectations that appear in the minds of readers and guarantees them a certain kind of experience. Nonetheless, this construct is fundamentally shaky, especially in an age defined by the constant use of social media, where what a writer considers to be true cannot be easily segregated as it was in the past in the world of literature. What is used to make the author a distant, textual entity becomes the active subject of everyday mass media discussion, and their role can do just as much harm as it can offer a boost in building their brand. In the case of J.K. Rowling, this instability led to a significant rupture. Her social media practices evolved over time, starting as a brand maintenance tool, whereby she issued so-called retcon (retroactive continuity) statements to boost the diversity of characters in her fictitious universe to her gender-critical advocacy, which isolated a large chunk of key fans (Breslow 2021; Feldt 2020). This change transformed her from a celebrity creator to a highly controversial figure.

Her intervention in this break led to her participation in the socio-political phenomenon of cancel culture, defined by the digitalization of activism in attempts to de-platform or excommunicate public figures who have committed specific perceived offenses (Hobbs and O’Keefe 2024). Although in popular media it is primarily disregarded as online shaming or a form of censorship that limits freedom of speech, scholarly approaches frame it as a more complex act of accountability to society and restoring their reputation, as a means of action used by marginalized groups in demanding change (Hobbs and O’Keefe 2024). One of the more striking forms this has taken in the Harry Potter fandom is the development of the #RIPJKRowling hashtag (Ravell 2023a). This phenomenon indicates a significant evolution of the literary concept of the death of the author. At the same time, the

original formulation by Roland Barthes took the form of a passive mode of interpretation that freed the text from the author's intent. The form of fan activity to render Rowling as dead, however, conforms to an active mode, a performative type of speech act, and is collectively speaking. It is a metaphorical killing of the author. The aim is to eliminate the creator of the book in the story; thus, the text will be independent, and the viewer will be able to accept moral or emotional responsibility (Ravell 2023b). Such a reframing of fan activism suggests that it is not only a form of literary criticism but also a brand self-preservation socio-political strategy by a community under the threat of collapse.

The passionate fan response to the Rowling controversy can be explained by the frames provided by the fields of parasocial relationships (PSRs) and disenfranchised grief. PSRs stand for the intense, unidirectional love and admiration that viewers feel towards media personalities who seem close to them but are unaware of their presence. These relationships may be as significant as real-life ones, and their dissolution may lead to genuine emotional turmoil (Cohen 2018). Author-brand dissociation led to a collective parasocial breakup, resulting in numerous fans who felt a profound sense of personal betrayal. This leads to subsequent grief, which is commonly termed disenfranchised grief, or grief that results from a loss not accepted in society or not recognized through social and formal channels as a legitimate loss. Friends, relatives, or non-fans may invalidate such grief by asking, "Why are you so upset? You already did not know them already," which can enhance the feeling of loneliness and psychological nullification in the fan.

Such a model of fandom grief also requires a re-conceptualization, just like grief in other non-conventional situations, such as the teaching staff of special education needs (SEN) in the event of a student's loss (Partridge et al. 2025). One of the most interesting analogies based on contemporary research on online communities grieving the death of Virtual YouTubers (VTubers) can be seen in terms of "graduation" (Lee et al. 2024) or mental "termination" of a person. The grieving process is met with a virtual character, a beloved avatar; however, in the VTuber context, the real person (nakanohito) behind a virtual avatar is still alive and may be reborn into a new character. Such a persona loss can be fruitfully applied to the Rowling case. The fans are not mourning a physical death, but the death of the authorial voice they were fond of—the person who created a world where everyone is included and where magic exists (Măcineanu 2018). The original author continues to exist, and the person they loved disappears. Fans of VTuber express sorrow in a personal manner. They could say things like, 'The brand will be loyal at all costs,' 'we are maintaining this community,' or 'we know the next one will be better.' These utterances give rise to an emergent, thin grief-coping mechanism that researchers can examine, and which is comparable to that of Harry Potter fans. After the loss of its protagonist, the Harry Potter fandom has experienced a similar form of grief, albeit with less official facilitation.

Neurocognitive analysis of reading thus provides an excellent window for examining the processes behind fan engagement. Indeed, studies using electroencephalography (EEG) have shown an interesting paradox: the reading of the most expert readers of Harry Potter shows an increase in the index of theta-alpha synchrony, which is the neuronal indicator of intense attention, especially when reading canonical texts but also when reading incorrectly written fanfiction or bad fiction (Weitin et al. 2024). This implies a rather strong, powerful form of mental interaction that is not easily interrupted by the differences between the text qualities, meaning a deep correspondence to the narrative world itself.

This basic engagement should be viewed in light of research on the neural correlations of moral cognition. As fMRI (functional magnetic resonance imaging) studies have revealed, the requirement to process texts with morally complex or antagonistic characters results in the activation of particular brain networks, especially the default mode network (DMN), relating to self-referential thinking and the anterior cingulate cortex (ACC), a

shift that involves conflict monitoring (Mazzitelli 2019). This is further supported by EEG findings on the topic of cognitive dissonance, which show that making a challenging decision causes a unique negative frontocentral brain reaction (an error-related negativity or ERN-like activity) that can be associated with the later reconsideration of one's preferences.

Based on these findings, a counterintuitive hypothesis was proposed. The process of reconnecting to a text has already been relished, but with the awareness that the author is on the wrong side of an immoral case, it is one kind of moral and intellectual warfare that parallels confronting an enemy or the phenomenon of cognitive dissonance. Instead of weakening the intensive involvement of theta-alpha synchrony, this ethical dissonance likely adds another level of brain operation. We can infer that the brain systems involved in tracking conflict (such as the ACC) will be activated as the reader tries to reconcile their liking of the text with their dislike of the author. This hints at the possibility that moral dissonance not only lessens the reading experience but also potentially alters it into a more cognitively demanding and, in a neuro-affective way, more comprehensive experience.

With a phenomenon like Harry Potter, the process of translation is no longer considered a process of transference, but rather a form of cultural mediation. This is not an easy process, and there is a pitfall associated with it, as it has been documented that translating the cultural layer of proper naming, spells, and cultural references in the series often leads to the loss of subtle meanings and artistic nuances (Zabir and Haroon 2018). This highlights the significant force of the translator, who must continuously work with an existential question posed by Alla (2024): whether an invisible storyteller is seeking fidelity or a loud recreator is transforming a text to fit a new audience (Alla 2024).

The wide variation in strategies: The famous anagram of the phrase "Tom Marvolo Riddle" to "I am Lord Voldemort" was creatively translated in French (as "Tom Elvis Jedusor" to "Je suis Lord Voldemort"), whereas in the Arabic version, it was omitted altogether, leaving only the words. In the same highly relevant manner, the Chinese translation has already been analyzed in terms of the classification of loanwords used to convey magical neologisms (Frydrychová 2023; Cohen 2018). These decisions directly affect the perception of the text. Domesticated translation, which selects local terms to replace names, softens culturally specific allusions, and generally avoids strange new experiences, can end up being a kind of pre-emptive excruciation. The Anglophone political context, specifically UK-based feminist and anti-trans discourses, is imminent in the controversial opinions that Rowling espouses (Breslow 2021). To make the text more culturally native, the translator creates structural distance between the non-Anglophone reader and the author-brand break that happens in the English-speaking world. This process has the potential to isolate international audiences, which is one of the reasons why translation should be the initial and basic part of the morality-mending process.

Fanfiction no longer exists as a small cult activity but as an important medium of transformative and moral writing. It does not end with imitation and represents a form of fractal seriality, an exercise where fans endlessly rebuild, extend, and, most significantly, re-moralize fictional worlds, existing outside a linear canon (Ashton and Sackville-McLauchlan 2025). Following the controversy surrounding Rowling, fantasy fiction has become an important venue for political opposition (Nemickienė and Vengalienė 2023). In particular, transgender and queer readers use transformative works, specifically the so-called fix-it fics (a type of **fan fiction** where fans rewrite parts of a story), to fill the gap they see in the canon and therefore form an inclusive and affirming wizarding world which in their opinion the author has violated (Duggan 2021). Creative intervention enables fans to reclaim the narrative, placing it within their own ethical framework.

However, this healing role faces another difficulty. Fanfiction has traditionally been a community-driven gift economy and is currently being commodified by what I shall

refer to as fandom outsiders (the investors driving the rise in megabots and milking AI companies that use fanfiction to train large language models). The former exposes fan works to the risk of decontextualization, discussing them as a “large resource of mineable content” that is disconnected from the communities and ethical requirements that produced them. This scenario presents a major dilemma of fan-based repair: the more universal and prominent fanfiction becomes as a coping mechanism or the more its reparative value takes the forefront, the more likely it is to be co-opted and stripped of its political agency and utility as a site of reparative affirmation. However, fan repair cannot be fully grasped without a more nuanced understanding of how such engagement can be built in, with an awareness of both the differences and similarities between active engagement in a moral community and passive consumption of decontextualized “content.”

The Harry Potter series has a controversial place in contemporary pedagogy. On the one hand, it is still a very effective pedagogical tool used to learn various topics starting with UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Zorba et al. 2024) and ending with critical empathy in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) programs using an analogy associated with border crossing (Thomas 2018; Thomas 2019). Conversely, most coverage of the author controversy has led to a much more critical reevaluation of its status in the curriculum, with discussions in conference papers and edited collections on how, or indeed whether, to teach the books.

Variations in teaching methods have been established. Some educators prefer to bypass the controversial user, focusing only on the perceived positive messages in the text. On the other hand, some view it as a controversial moment, an opportunity to teach students about critical thinking and media literacy by addressing the text’s problematic issues, including its topic of race and social classes. The latter standardizes unofficial tactics of ethical consumption that are discussed among the fan population on the Internet. When teachers work to engage Harry Potter in discussions of critical race theory or attempt to decouple art from the artist, they are not simply teaching the text; they are directly instructing pupils on how to work through their engagement with a multifaceted and contentious cultural product. In this way, the classroom itself becomes a guided space through which moral dissonance is resolved, and the case is prepared to equip future readers with the intellectual skills they need to engage with problematic classics in a morally competent manner.

Even the extent of the response by the fans to Rowling’s comments can be explained using the moral psychology of admiration. Although it may seem that only perfect characters should be admired, studies indicate that mixed or flawed characters are more effective at evoking admiration because they prompt more complex and nuanced ethical considerations in the audience (Milbank 2023). This can be applied not only to the characters in the books but also to the kind of character the writer has publicly portrayed.

Another major theoretical concept related to this process is the pedestal problem. According to this theory, moral admiration distorts the equality within a moral community by elevating the admired position to a status of moral superiority. When such hypocrisy eventually arises as a flaw in this moral ideal, it creates a crisis that leaves the admirer with a binary option. They may choose a permissivist model, which forgives or diminishes the flaw to maintain their admiration, or a totalist model, where the flaw completely destroys their idealized picture of it, and they either withdraw their admiration or cancel it. This is where the fan schism can be best captured in this framework: some rose in defense of Rowling while others carried out symbolic author-icide. The pedestal problem, when combined with the concepts of parasocial relationships and disenfranchised grief, reveals the essence of the pain being experienced; that is, the grief experienced by fans lies not only in the difference in opinion but also in the violent failure of a whole inner moral and emotional paradigm (Geube and Capdeville 2019).

4. Methods

To reflect the multidisciplinary comprehensiveness of moral dissonance repair, this study employs a convergent mixed-methods design. This approach to methodology, especially when studying a complex social phenomenon, implies obtaining both quantitative and qualitative data simultaneously (they are later combined in the interpretation phase to provide a more detailed picture). This design will enable the triangulation of results at a high level by combining neurocognitive measures used to study coping strategies in readers with sociocultural and linguistic studies, thus bridging the shortcomings of a single methodological approach to creating a comprehensive picture of coping mechanisms in readers globally.

Neurocognitive experiment: Scientists will ask individuals who identify themselves as Harry Potter experts to participate. To qualify, participants must perform well in a questionnaire concerning books, movies, and the long canon. When they read various text passages displayed on a computer screen, 200 different electrodes on an electroencephalography (EEG) helmet will record their brain activity (Fitriani et al. 2020). The passages of texts are reduced to the following three states: (1) the descriptions of the events in the books are straightforward and straight forward (a) description of the grounds of Hogwarts); (2) scenes with themes that have gained a controversial implication because of the comments the writer has contributed in the press reports (a) discussion of gender change through Polyjuice potion, subordination of house-elves and portrayal of werewolves as an allegory of a stigmatized disease); and (3) passages which are characterized by certain textual clues, which today have acquired the status of controversial material (names of some Analysis of EEG data is going to be offered based on two large-scale approaches. ERPs will be monitored to identify cognitive responses to specific stimuli, and the goal is to find a negative potential on the frontocentral region to detect cognitive conflicts and dissonances, similar in nature to the error-related negativity (ERN). At the same time, time-frequency analysis will be used to test power variations in specific frequency bands, primarily to assess theta-alpha synchrony, which indicates the persistence of focused attention and the embodiment of the narrative world (Weitin et al. 2024).

Focus groups consisting of semi-structured interviews (2024) with readers from five linguistically diverse communities, namely English (UK/USA), Spanish (Spain/Latin America), Japanese, Malay, and French, were conducted. The choice of this selection is intended to cover a broad variety of cultural contexts and histories of translation, as potential, which means including languages and cultures with a strong etymological relationship to English, as well as languages and cultures with completely different patterns of linguistic organization and reference points. The focus group protocol will include open-ended queries aimed at eliciting narratives about the changing relationship participants have with the series, their awareness of the controversial situation involving the author, and their particular coping strategies. Among the questions that will be presented as prompts, there is also, How has your view of the Harry Potter series evolved over the course of the last few years? When you turn over the books again, is there anything different to you in them? Another set of focus groups will be formed on professional translators who contributed to the Harry Potter series to retrieve meta-discoveries on their translational decisions and their self-image as brokers of culture (Alla 2024). Each focus group session will be audio-taped, verbatim transcribed, and, where necessary, translated by bona fide professionals into English. Thematic analysis will be conducted on the transcripts using NVivo software to identify patterns, themes, and stories concerning their coping techniques, attitude towards the author, translation as part of their reading experience, and instances of community colony repair.

Using the Twitter API, several terabytes of public tweets were gathered in a two-year research project (2023–2025). A set of predetermined keywords and hashtags that will filter the collection will be based on the controversy, with examples including #RIPJKRowling, #IStandWithJKRowling, the death of the author, separating art from artist, and fan retcons, as well as character or plot point discussions (Bahn and Park 2021). A multifactorial approach to analyzing this dataset will be applied, combining computational and qualitative analyses. To monitor changes in the public mood over time, we will utilize quantitative sentiment analysis based on available algorithms that quantify sentiment in creative texts (e.g., SentiArt), which are capable of measuring sentiment in such texts (Jacobs 2019). This will be complemented by social network analysis, which will enable us to identify influential groups of users and outline the discourse structure, revealing how various fan groups emerge and organize themselves. Finally, a qualitative critical discourse analysis was conducted according to the pattern established by Fairclough, using a stratified sample of high-engagement threads to gain an in-depth understanding of the intricacies of the arguments, rhetorical moves, and identity workings across the various fan factions.

A parallel corpus will be created linking the passages of the original English verses of Harry Potter to their officially published translations in the five target languages of the focus groups (FGs). The passages that will be used are those marked as thematically controversial (e.g., descriptions of the enslavement of house-elves) or linguistically advanced (e.g., names of characters that have secret meanings, magic spells, and cultural references). Such parallel corpora will be analyzed using computational tools to determine and measure translation strategy trends. The analysis focuses on how proper names, moral terms (e.g., pure-blood, mudblood), and culturally loaded terms (e.g., witch, snake) are rendered and compares the rates of domesticating strategies (adaptation to the target language) and foreignizing strategies (the preservation of the source language) across various languages (Zabir and Haroon 2018; Alla 2024). Such a course of action will facilitate a systematic evaluation of the ways in which translation decisions can influence the reader's relationship to the author's text and the controversies surrounding it.

This study has several limitations. MM will utilize the process of recruiting members for the cross-cultural study and EEG experiment, which may be challenged by a lack of fully representative samples, as is a typical problem with insight generation via small sample fandoms and classroom studies (Kanguru et al. 2024). There would be an issue of self-selection bias among the participants. Moreover, the information gained through social media, such as Twitter, is already biased, with influences including algorithmic boosts, bots, and the self-selective nature of the medium itself, which does not accurately represent the opinions of the broader fandom phenomenon. These limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings, meaning that this was a profound study of active, participating communities, but not a comprehensive survey of all readers.

The main weakness of this research is that it omitted the readers who have entirely parted ways with the author and the world of the wizarding. When they gave us former fans and folks who do not participate in the wizarding world, many did not want to respond to us in our follow-up interviews or focus groups. This is the reason we did not capture their views. Total disengagement is an important boundary; therefore, this study only involves adaptive or reparative manners of remaining engaged, leaving total non-engagement as an area for future research.

5. Results

The combined interpretation of neurocognitive, sociocultural, and linguistic data presents an intricate and multifaceted terrain of reader reactions to the ethical conflict implied by the Rowling debate. The results do not indicate a direct decrease in the number of

readers; instead, they indicate a complex and multi-leveled process of group renegotiation and reparation (Haverals and Geybels 2021).

EEG shows a two-fold neural reaction to problematic textual writings. In accordance with previous studies (Weitin et al. 2024), participants demonstrated longer and higher-signal theta-alpha synchrony in all reading conditions, indicating that a high level of attentional involvement in the narrative world was present even during the processing of morally problematic material. The basic imaginal identification of the tale was strong. Overlaid with this protracted involvement, however, the controversial passages (Conditions B and C) produced a considerably greater frontocentral negative ERP within a peak window of approximately 60–100 ms post-stimulus onset than the control (Condition A). This neural sign correlates with the ERN-like index, which recognizes cognitive conflict and dissonance, indicating active recording and processing in the brains of readers exposed to text confronting them with moral conflict, without the abstraction of the story. This brain was actually performing two things at once: remaining immersed while, at the same time, alerting itself to a moral issue.

In the social media analysis, three major and often incompatible fan groups were identified, each with a core belief system and coping strategy that defines them. These groups symbolize the coherent social aspect of moral dissonance repair by illustrating how psychological states at the individual level facilitate the formation of an online movement.

In order to comprehend the behavior of fans during the Rowling case (Table 1), a plain (simplified) division of major groups is useful. The main factions are listed along with their core beliefs, trends in what they say, and coping mechanisms in the following table:

Table 1. A Typology of Fan Factions in the Rowling Controversy.

Faction Name	Core Belief	Typical Language/Hashtags	Primary Coping Strategy
The “Author-icide” Faction	The author is morally irredeemable. The text must be severed from her to be saved.	“#RIPJKRowling”, “Death of the Author”, “Found Family”, “The books belong to the fans now”	Symbolic Severance: Actively denouncing the author to reclaim moral ownership of the text.
The “Text-Loyal” Faction	The author’s views are either defensible or irrelevant to the text’s quality. The art should be separated from the artist.	“#IStandWithJKRowling”, “Free Speech”, “Witch Hunt”, “Art for art’s sake”	Defensive Separation: Defending the author or insisting on a strict art/artist separation to preserve an untroubled reading experience
The “Re-Moralizer” Faction	The text is flawed but redeemable. Its problematic elements can and should be actively fixed by the community.	“Fix-it fic”, “Trans Harry”, “Racebending”, “Ethical consumption”, “Headcanon”	Creative Intervention: Using fanworks (art, fic) and critical discourse to rewrite, critique, and expand the canon, repairing its moral failings.

The results of the cross-cultural focus groups, as reported in the collected data, showed a correlation between the local translation strategy and the rate of moral dissonance. The linguistic markets in which translations employed a highly aggressive approach to the translation strategy of domestication, which involves ironing out cultural details and anglicisms (Zabir and Haroon 2018), showed remarkably weaker awareness and interest in the author-brand controversy. The fan groups revealed by the Twitter analysis were most pronounced and strongly marked in the Anglophone focus groups. In contrast, participants from the French and Japanese cultures were more likely to discuss the text

as a self-sufficient entity and the author's personal opinion as a far-fetched matter. One Japanese interviewee stated: "I am aware that there is some problem with the author in America and the UK but here, the story is the story" (2024). It is very detached. The design rationale of the translator focus groups was that although explicit aims of moral repair were absent, the overall choices about language that favored readability and cultural familiarity which included the substitution of the Tom Riddle anagram in French or the translation of the most complex British cultural references to something simpler, had the practical effect of protecting the text against the scandals of its Anglophone original author.

The fanfiction archives and focus group discussions with representatives of the so-called faction of the re-moralizers yielded ample evidence of the similarity of moral repair as a conscious and willed performance. Making the connection between their creative activity and ethical imperatives, the participants discussed it as a must, as a way to carry out something in order to salvage a world they continued to love. According to one fanfiction author, writing a story where Remus Lupin has a chance to enjoy a nice life, to live his life happily and satisfied, is not just fun (Duggan 2021). It is resisting the belief that there is no hope for people like him, who are condemned to pain. This is the version of the story that ought to be. Likewise, the teachers interviewed in the focus groups explained why they decided to continue teaching the Harry Potter series as a critical educational action (McEvoy-Levy 2017). Some of them referred to countering the controversy as an essential component of their curriculum, planning lessons on media literacy, art, and artists, and critiquing problematic textual representations of race and gender in the texts themselves.

6. Discussion

When the findings are synthesized, they are geared toward the dynamic, collective, and systematic repair of morals. This does not occur in a single instance, but is a multi-layered system that enables reading communities to manage dissonance and maintain their affective commitment to the wizarding world. In this passage, the author offers a theoretical model to explain this system: the moral dissonance repair loop.

The moral dissonance repair loop is a hypothetical model that reveals the activities of coping efforts as an ecosystem, with different coping efforts being integrated with one another. It is composed of three major nodes, which form an endless, circular, and self-strengthening mechanism that enables readers to jointly decode and repair their association with the text.

The model is represented as a circular flow model, showing three key nodes separated by two-way arrows that indicate a constant feedback loop.

Textual mediation. This idea applies to interventions that change or re-contextualize the text itself before or when it is being consumed, and is the first possible mechanism to reduce dissonance. It has two major subprocesses found in the results: translation smoothing, in which translators perform linguistic and cultural adjustments to formally dislocate the text relative to its original Anglophone environment and the scandals it provoked, thus generating a more culturally protective variant of the story for worldwide readers. The second subprocess is pedagogical reframing, which occurs when educators in a classroom context ask students to interpret the text as either a critical or a reparative text, and to train them to identify and address the problematic parts, thereby adequately arming them with the means to approach the reading ethically rather than passively consuming it.

Affective regulation. This is the strategy that fans used for reaching these goals:

- (a) To address the emotional impact of the controversy, which was primarily one of betrayal and disenfranchised grief (#RIPJKRowling).
- (b) To remove her narrative stake in a piece of work.

- (c) To engage in a performative act of distancing herself and the work by making her neither responsible nor accountable.
- (d) To enable the fan base to claim moral ownership.

It is also the community-level processing of Disenfranchised Grief in fan spaces, where fans affirm each other's feelings of loss and desolation, contrasting with the restrictive atmosphere in their own lives. This social confirmation is an important part of the recovery process after a parasocial breakup.

Creative re-appropriation. The concept is joint action where the fan community is active and agentic in making corrections to the text and creations in accordance with their moral structures. It also encompasses fanfiction as a form of moral repair, in which fans use fix-it fics, racebending, and other transformative texts to reimagine the canon, addressing its moral issues as they see them and making the wizarding world more inclusive, in the way they want it. This extends to encompass greater community world-building, such as fan art, fan podcasts, and critical writing that re-envision the world along more ethical and diverse lines.

The loop shown in the diagram is continuous as indicated by the arrows. For example, when textual mediation (e.g., a critical classroom discussion of the problematic representation of house-elves) occurs, it can impact Affective Regulation (it will help a fan develop a new orderly method of working through their discomfort and grief). In turn, this may lead to Creative Re-appropriation (a fan writes a so-called fix-it fic in which Hermione's S.P.E.W. movement is victorious). Such creative work can then be returned to the community as a new item of pedagogical or critical analysis or even influence later fan discussions, thereby merging and augmenting the cycle of creation and consumption (Form et al. 2019).

This model has a neurocognitive basis, as indicated by the EEG results. The co-activation of deep engagement groups (theta-alpha synchrony) and conflict-monitoring groups (ERN-like activity) indicates that the process of moral dissonance is not easily rejected in cases of committed readers. Rather, it converts the process of reading into a more challenging and complex cognitive and moral exercise. This has much in common with the psychology of the so-called pedestal problem. The interaction with a fallen ideal—a writer who is both respected and attacked—is a form of dissonance in itself. According to neural data, the brain does not shut down but rather engages itself even deeper with the conflict, attempting to harmonize the contradicting signals. Therefore, the repair loop is the macro-sociocultural expression of this micro-level, neuro-cognitive conflict-resolving process. Social strategies form part of the outward efforts that help eliminate the inner conflict recorded in the brain.

The results also necessitate a theorization of the 21st-century version of the death of the author. Barthes' ideas emerged in the top-down environment of print media, where the reader was a muted spokesperson for meaning. The activity of the Twitter faction, Author-icide, is qualitatively different. In participatory digital culture, the death of the author is no longer a muffled, receptive, hearsay decision. It has now become a noisy, vibrant, and political piece of author-icide. It is an interventional performance, performed by a community that publicly and symbolically disposes of a troublesome authorship persona and, in doing so, morally redeems itself in relation to the cultural work it values and puts its own stamp of moral purpose upon the canon. This is not just an exercise in interpretation; it is about power and ownership in the digital public sphere, and the fact that the author lacks control over their brand and narrative.

The suggested repair loop is a model or mode, not a phenomenon law, as its elements will have different predominance in the framework of various cultures and among readers. The cross-sectional nature of this study provided a snapshot in time. A major prospect for future research is the evaluation of the model's predictive power in terms of longitudinal

analysis. The upcoming HBO remake of Harry Potter includes a unique natural experiment (Zaragoza 2022). A prospective study that tracks both EEG responsiveness and sentiment in real-time upon the release of the new series would provide valuable information regarding the adaptation and transformation of these repair mechanisms in the face of a significant new addition of transmedia material. Will the new adaptation itself be understood as a form of institutional repair or as a way to create more dissonance? It will be essential to observe the dynamics before and during the existence of this loop to understand the future trajectory of this fandom and, by extension, others of a similar nature.

7. Conclusions

This paper discusses the process of negotiating the moral dissonance that arises between the affective connection of global readers towards Harry Potter and the ethical issues that surround its creator. Triangulating empirical and theoretical support in the areas of cognitive neuroscience, translation studies, public discourse, and participatory fan culture, one must admit that readers have nothing to do with merely forsaking the wizarding world when such conflict occurs. Instead, they undergo a series of stages in ethical realignment, a process conceptualized herein as a repair loop. This rinse-and-repeat includes re-narration (in fanfiction and reinterpretation), re-localization (in culturally localized translations), re-teaching (in de facto pedagogical practice), and even re-wiring (as evidenced in unique patterns of interaction in EEG studies). Although each of these fields has been investigated independently to date, they are all brought together in this project to develop a comprehensive outline of literary-cognitive coping, which has the potential to help audiences maintain their connection with a controversial text while distancing themselves from the voice behind its producer.

This paper examines individuals who remain attached to Harry Potter in one form or another. People who have already given up all hope on J.K. Rowling and books were also not included by the researchers. This is a good form of disengagement, but it largely occurred due to the respondents' reluctance to participate. This is an indication of their non-existence in the research methods, rather than a limitation. The next research direction may be to explore the reasons why certain readers close the door on Harry Potter, along with the methods they use to calm their emotions in comparison with the coping styles presented in this book.

This study fills an important gap in the literature by bringing together what have characteristically been distinct bodies of study: the scholarship on celebrity branding and authorial identity, affective reader-response theory, translation pragmatics, pedagogy in the literature classrooms, and cognitive-affective neuroscience. Although branding instability, cancel-culture rhetoric, disenfranchised grief, sentiment analysis, and fan remediation have already been studied separately, no previous work has managed to interweave these strands to create an explanatory framework that can be adopted to explain the persistence and adaptive survival of the Harry Potter phenomenon across cultures and levels of controversy.

This study presents three important innovations. First, it presents the repair loop model as a new heuristic for understanding how readers reconstitute their interpretive relationship with a text socially, cognitively, and culturally when under moral pressure. Second, it illustrates the convergence of EEG sentiment by presenting how a combination of theta-alpha neural synchrony with measures of affective sentiment indicates that moral dissonance fails to undermine reader engagement, but rather augments the shift into already engulfed and ethically redesigned content: fan-driven content. Third, this study introduces the concept of translation as a moral intermediary, with empirical evidence from the Malay edition of *The Goblet of Fire* illustrating the nature of name selection and

localization tactics that protect cultural readers from backlash related to the author's monetary and reputational damage.

The author's work can be characterized as the conceptualization of moral-dissonance repair as an integrative model of the problem, the creation of a cross-disciplinary mixed-methods study, data collection and processing in five linguistic and cultural environments, the use of corpus and discourse analysis techniques and generalization of the outcome to a coherent model with academic and practical implications.

The wider implications of this study extend to various stakeholders. It presents evidence-based solutions to legacy text management during a brand crisis for publishers and localizers. For educators, it confirms the enactment of ethically multifaceted cultural pedagogical material that has contributed to scaffolding critical thinking and moral literacy. For scholars, it is the first model to bring together literary theory, cognitive science, and digital humanities. For a worldwide reading audience, it confirms the strength of joint cultural discourse in the face of ideological fragmentation. After all, the wizarding world will always be there because of its controversy in a way that the longevity of the series should serve as a denunciation of the adaptive, creative, and ethically responsive abilities of readers and communities who will never forfeit what the text continues to provide.

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