# Harry Potter and the Prisoner of White Supremacist Aesthetics

## Why do fans recreate characters of popular texts such as the *Harry Potter* series as different races to their canon race?

The lack of racial diversity has always been an issue on both the small and big screens. Even stories originally written by and about people of colour (PoC) are having white people cast in the main roles; the live-action remakes of *Ghost in the Shell* (2017) and *Death Note* (2017), both originally Japanese manga, have caused a lot of controversy over claims of 'whitewashing' (where roles that should go to People of Colour (PoC[1]) are given to white people instead)[2].

This essay, however, will look at how the *Harry Potter* fandom has taken matters into its own hands so to speak, by taking characters portrayed by white actors in the films and 'recast' them in fan art, 'fan casts' and headcanons as PoC. It will also be looking at why fans do this, issues surrounding 'textual poaching', and to conclude will discuss the potential impact on the media industry that this type of fan productivity might have.

**Literature Review**

Audiences – what is poaching, how do fans poach, and why (fan theory)

Much theoretical work has been done on audience/fan productivity, particularly how fans are productive, and why they choose to spend their time and money on these activities. This led to the idea of 'poaching' texts, outlined by Michel de Certeau in 1984, and applied to fandom theory by Henry Jenkins in his book *Textual Poachers*,

---

[1] See Appendix 1 on my use of 'PoC'.
[2] See Appendix 2 for some detail on the controversies of whitewashing in these films.

1

in which he "perceives fans as active producers and manipulators of reading" (1992; 23) through their creative productions and rewritings of the text. Fans, therefore "cease to be simply and audience for popular texts; instead, they become active participants in the construction and circulation of textual meanings" (ibid; 24). He calls textual poaching the "theory of appropriation" (ibid; 33), applying Fiske's belief that "mass culture could only become popular culture when it was appropriated by ordinary people [i.e. fans]," (Duffett, 2013; 63).

"Fiske's work leads to a model of the consumer *as a* producer," states Duffett (ibid; 63); "the aim of [fan] productivity is, therefore, to produce meanings that are relevant to everyday life," (Fiske, 1989; 6). Jenkins agrees; "fans [are] readers who appropriate popular texts and reread them in a fashion that serves different interests," (1992; 23) for instance, slash fic turns the text into erotica, or 'race-bending' re-imagines the characters as different races allowing audiences to potentially identify with them in a new way. As fans "articulate concerns which often go unvoiced within the dominant media" (ibid), such as exploring issues around gender, sexuality, and (as this essay explores) race, this shows that their motivation to actively engage with a text comes from "fascination or adoration but also frustration and antagonism," (ibid) which links with the idea of race-bending as a way to vent the audience's annoyance at the lack of representation.

Industry – affect and resistance to poaching

*"[Fans realize] their pleasures often exist on the margins of the original texts and in the face of the producer's own efforts to regulate its meanings… they are also acutely and painfully aware that those fictions [i.e. the original texts*

*they poach from] do not belong to them and that someone else has the power*

*to do things to those characters that are in direct contradiction to the fans own*

*cultural interests."* (Jenkins, 1992; 24)

Work has also been conducted analysing how 'official producers' react to 'textual poaching'. "The history of media fandom is at least in part the history of a series of organized efforts to influence programming decisions – some successful, most ending in failure." (Jenkins, 1992; 28) This is because "[Fans refuse] to simply accept what they are given, but rather insist on the right to become full participants," (Jenkins, 2006; 131) which pushes them to creating their own art, stories, etc.

There are many documented cases of publishers/studios/authors resisting fan creativity, and Jenkins notes that this is in the term we use to discuss fan productivity; "De Certeau's term, 'poaching,' forcefully reminds us of the potentially conflicting interests of producers and consumers, writers and readers." (Jenkins, 1992; 32) He claims that it is thanks to the rise of the internet that the media industry is being forced to face these copyrighting issues to protect their commercial interests. (Jenkins, 2006; 133)

"In extreme cases, producers try to bring fan activities under their supervision," (Jenkins, 1992; 30) such as Warner Bros. trying to "rein in fan appropriations of the *Harry Potter* books on the grounds that they infringed on the studio's intellectual property" (Jenkins, 2006; 170). According to Jenkins, "the studio had a long-standing practice of seeking out Web sites whose domain names used copyrighted or trademarked phrases," (ibid; 185) and so acted as they had with previous intellectual

properties, though once they realized they were primarily dealing with children, the studio did eventually stop and even reverse their actions (ibid; 187).

This is one example of where fans have changed how the industry works, and now many media producers are "reaffirming the right of everyday people to actively contribute to their culture." (ibid; 132) However, Jenkins does warn "this conflict [between industry and audience]… threatens at any moment to disrupt the pleasure that fans find in creating… their own texts based on someone else's fictional 'universe'," (1992; 32). Finally, Jenkins notes McCracken's belief;

> *"In the future, media producers must accommodate consumer demands to participate or the will run the risk of losing the most active and passionate consumers to some other media interest that is more tolerant."* (Jenkins, 2006; 133)

Representation – race in Hollywood

Hollywood had improved in terms of diversity, but true equality still has yet to be reached, as "opportunities for African Americans within the film industry are also measurably different" (Benshoff & Griffin, 2009[3]) to opportunities white people get both on and off camera. For PoC, "race is very much a part of when and where people of colour enter into the camera frame," (Reid, 2005; 2) which can cause issues if actors of colour take questionably written roles simply because they want to work in Hollywood (hook, 1996; 73) and perpetuate negative stereotypes;

---

[3] This book was read as an online PDF and as such did not have page numbers.

*"Much of what audiences tend to know and care about is based on the images, symbols, and narratives in [media]. How individuals construct their social identities… is shaped by commodified texts produced by media for audiences that are increasingly segmented by the social constructs of race and gender"*

*(Brooks & Hébert, 2006; 297)*

Actors of colour may struggle to find work because of "the Hollywood assumption that all viewers, whatever their racial identification, should be able to identify with white characters, but the reverse is seldom true," (Benshoff & Griffin, 2009). Perhaps how "whiteness is positioned as the default category" (ibid) is the reason that "even today many white viewers choose not to see films starring non-white actors or films set in minority ethnic environments, allegedly because they cannot identify with the characters," (ibid).

However, Benshoff and Griffin warn studios may not be casting PoC or 'race transcendents' like Dwayne 'The Rock' Johnson (who appeals to both white and non-white audiences simultaneously (2009)) because they think diversity is important; "it should be recognized that industry interest in such individuals is often more due to economic interest than social or political ones" (ibid). hook states care must be taken to ensure PoC characters are not just 'tokens', and are in fact well-written;

*"White directors now assume that simply putting black characters in their films means that they could not possibly be perpetuating racism by way of their work…there is a cultural failure to understand that merely putting black*

*characters in a film does not assure that the work acts, covertly or overtly, to undermine racism. Those black characters can be constructed cinematically so that they become mouthpieces for racist assumptions and beliefs"* (hook, 1996; 74)

Hostility towards white filmmakers who do attempt to go against "white supremacist aesthetics" also discourages others from doing the same (hook, 1996; 73), leading to this stagnancy in casting.

While Hollywood has been diversifying it's casting, "contemporary Hollywood images of African Americans may still leave something to be desired," (Benshoff & Griffin, 2009). Claims that a white filmmaker has cast only white people because that's their 'creative right' should be viewed with caution (hook, 1996; 69). After all, "giving audiences what is real is precisely what films do *not* do," (ibid; 1 – emphasis mine). And if we go to see films to escape our real worlds (ibid; 2), why shouldn't filmmakers *make* films to escape their real world, and not just in terms of genre and narrative. This quote summarises;

*"Strong texts work along the borders of our minds and alter what already exists. They could not do this if they merely reflected what already exists."*
(Jeanette Winterson in hook, 1996; 2)

**Methodology**

This essay will use content analysis and virtual ethnography to conduct research and draw conclusions. According to Long and Wall, content analysis is a "quantitative method of analysing the denotative content of media output"; it is "a means of counting the amount or frequency with which elements occur in media texts" (2012; 122). In this essay, a sample of fan art of the 'Golden Trio'[4] will be selected from the social media microblogging site Tumblr by using the site's search function. I will look at 40 posts, making sure they fulfil the criteria outlined in Appendix 3. Each piece of artwork will then be categorised as shown in the table in figure A below;

|  | All film-canon race (white) | Harry only is PoC | Hermione only is PoC | Ron only is PoC | Harry and Hermione are PoC | Hermione and Ron are PoC | Ron and Harry are PoC | All three are PoC |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Tally Total |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  | Total with 1 PoC |  |  | Total with 2 PoC |  |  |  |
| Number | Harry | Hermione | Ron | Ambiguous* | Notes |  |  |  |
| 1 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Figure A - Example table for results of content analysis of artwork

Virtual ethnography will be used to get examples of the opinions of fans to understand what they, as a fandom, think of 'race-bending' of the Golden Trio. Texts posts of Tumblr users will be analysed, using specific quotes and whether positive or negative language has been used to determine what the individual users think. The data will then be interpreted to see what the most popular 'race-bend' is and whether the Harry Potter fandom overall thinks this practice is a good thing or not, and why.

---

[4] The Golden Trio is understood in the *Harry Potter* fandom as referring to Harry Potter, Hermione Granger, and Ron Weasley

Care will be taken to do this as objectively as possible, however it may be the case that the interpretations come across as somewhat subjective. Long and Wall (2012; 193) believe that ethnographies should be conducted by approaching the community being analysed "as if it is an 'unknown' world". They cite Willis (1976) as suggesting "we should conduct ethnographies with the intent of accepting a 'possibility of being surprised', rather than importing to the research our existing experiences and assumptions". However, many academics of fandom acknowledge and even embrace that they too are fans, and conduct research from the stance of an 'aca-fan', described by Duffett as "researchers who self-consciously serve and speak for fan communities by using their own identities as fans" (2013; 267). Jenkins is an example of an aca-fan, and states he studies *Star Trek* "as a fan first and a scholar second. My participation as a fan long precedes my academic interest in it" (2006; 251). Duffett claims "Scholars like Jenkins and Brooker… are ethical and articulate… ready to use the space of academia to their advantage *as fans*… aca-fandom has therefore questioned the norms of academic subjectivity," (2012; 267-8) as studying one's own fandom has become fairly typical through auto-ethnography. And while the issue of objectivity still stands, understanding a fandom from a fan's point of view can also provide valuable insight that may not naturally come to ethnography conducted by a non-fan, though "simply being a fan does not qualify the writer" (ibid; 274).

The ethical concerns of using people's posts on the internet for ethnographic research without asking permission was discussed by Rebecca Williams (2013; 329). She used quotes from websites to research interloping fans, and justified not getting consent as "due to the transitory nature of online environments, obtaining

permission for the use of postings might have proven impossible". In other words, the internet is often very faced-paced, and as the users may not be active anymore (from deleting their account or simply not checking it), attempting to track them down may take a long time with no results. Williams decided that "internet postings come under the notion of 'implied consent' due to their public nature", and quotes Reid, who says that the 'original poster' (OP) "could not reasonably expect to exclude any person from gaining access to his or her words," even if they never imagined their words would be analysed for academia. Therefore I will employ this idea when collecting the art sample; however in the unlikely event that a user asks me to remove their art from the sample, I will respect their wishes in order to prevent any further issues arising.


**Research Findings**

<u>Character Canons and Magic as Metaphor</u>

In 2013-14, 75% of leading roles in films were white, despite minorities making up 40% of the US population (Hunt et al., 2016; 1). While the film adaptations of the *Harry Potter* series do have several PoC in small but named roles (such as Dean Thomas, Blaise Zabini, and the Patil twins), as well as background characters (like the boy who describes what the Grim in Harry's teacup in *Prisoner of Azkaban* means), many fans were disappointed that neither Hermione or Harry were played by PoC.


These two characters were in an interesting position during casting for the films, as neither of their races had explicitly been described in the books. Harry was often described by his "shock of black hair", his distinctive lightning bolt scar, and of

course his mother's eyes (green in book canon, but blue in the films due to Daniel Radcliffe finding it difficult to wear the coloured contacts[5]). Hermione was also often described by her hair; J.K. Rowling used the word "bushy", which to many fans suggested wild, untamable curls. Ron is the only one who's race is hinted at as he's described as 'pale', though the fact he is a redhead does heavily imply that Rowling imagined him specifically as white, as non-white natural redheads are very rare.

This lack of complete description allowed the imaginations of fans to run wild, and many people projected onto these relatively blank canvases (in terms of looks at least) in order to create their own representations. I personally don't remember thinking too much about the race of these characters, though this is likely because I am white, with a white family (excluding one mixed race cousin), who mainly would have seen white people represented in the media I (actively or passively) consumed. Because of this, if (at age 7 or so when I first read the books) I had been asked to describe the character's race, I most likely would have said 'white'.

Discovering that many people in the *Harry Potter* fandom 'headcanon' Harry and Hermione as not-white, and reading people's explanations for *why* they thought this way, made an incredible amount of sense to me, despite loving both Radcliffe and Emma Watson in their roles. Briefly, the way Rowling describes the characters' hair (as I have mentioned above) indicates to some people that Hermione has thick curls

---

[5] I saw this while participating in fandom; there was a post on Tumblr that explained this and had a gif of Radcliffe rubbing his eyes during a break between filming. This is an example of the benefits and simultaneous drawbacks of aca-fandom – I know this as a fan, but am unable to remember the source. This will also be the case for much of the information from the books, which I have read enough times to remember details from them, but as I do not have a copy at my university accommodation I cannot provide page numbers.

that are often seen on Black women with natural hair, such as the example images in figure B below.



**Figure B - Examples of natural curly Black hair. See Appendix 4 for sources**

Harry is also sometime headcanoned as black, though Asian ethnicities (particularly Indian) are also popular for him. Many people have also drawn parallels between the way that muggle-born magic people like Hermione are treated by pure blood elitist (such as Voldemort, or the Malfoy's) or the way Harry was treated by the Dursley's and how people in the real world have and still treat ethnic minorities. Both are treated badly and discriminated towards by people who see themselves as better and (at least in the case of pure blood elitists) as 'purer' than those with tainted 'half-blood' (Harry) and 'mudbloods'.

Therefore, imagining Harry and Hermione as PoC opens up the series as a way (or an even more explicit way) of teaching children about discrimination, as Voldemort clearly links to white supremacy, and the Dursley's (as white, upper-middle class suburbites) hate towards Harry even more exaggerated, as he combines 'scary magic we don't understand and therefore hate' with 'interracial offspring'. This would also make the way they describe James Potter link with the real world; in *Prisoner of Azkaban*, he is described as lazy, 'good for nothing', and unemployed by the

Dursley's – all of which are labels given to ethnic minorities in the UK and USA by tabloid newspapers and sensationalist news.

Summary and Analysis of Findings[6]

Out of the 40 pieces in the sample, I found only 5 had the Golden Trio all as their film-canon race (white), and 30 had both Harry and Hermione as PoC. Only one piece had just Harry as a PoC compared to 4 just Hermione; Ron was white in all art.

One artist described Harry's race in their drawing as "black/japanese" [sic] (post 32), and another depicts him as Indian and Hermione as black (post 10). The latter furthered showed their support for a racially diverse Golden Trio in their comment, "hell yeah, more diversity. Why not?", though interestingly this suggests that they have never considered painting the characters as PoC before. Post 20 includes a fancast of the Golden Trio; "Fancast: Amandla Stenberg, Suraj Sharma & Linus Wordemann" (pictured below), giving a clear impression that they see Hermione as black and Harry as Indian.



Figure C - One fan's 'fancast' of the Goldren Trio. Left to right: Amandla Stenberg, Suraj Sharma, and Linus Wordemann

---

[6] Please first read Appendix 4 for a preface to the findings. This is also where you will find the full results and a link to the blog with the full sample of artwork studied.

The fact artwork containing PoC Harry and Hermione is dominating the results is not surprising considering the discourses that any fan will see on a site like Tumblr. It proves Jenkins' (1992; 23) idea that fans "appropriate popular texts and reread them in a fashion that serves different interests," often in order to "articulate concerns which often go unvoiced within the dominant media".

Interestingly, in pieces 4 and 22 (by the same artist), Hermione is shown with the skin condition vitiligo, drawing attention to the fact that 'blemishes' are never shown. There is only one instance of aesthetic imperfection in one of the primary is when Hermione's teeth are 'fixed' by being shrunk to a 'normal' size in the *Goblet of Fire* book, and we only hear about this after they have been changed. Therefore it begs the question, in what other ways has the *Harry Potter* series fallen short of representation, and what other aspects of life do fans poach texts in order to project and create representations of?

**Conclusion**

In an ideal world, fans get what they want, when they want. I say this as a fan, and as someone who believes institutions like Hollywood need to further improve their diversity. But in the case of the *Harry Potter* fandom, to an extent they did get 'what they wanted'; in the play *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*, Hermione (who is now a middle-aged woman, married to Ron with two children) is played by Noma Dumezweni, a black award-winning actress. Her daughter, Rose, is played by Cherrelle Skeete, also black (their son Hugo doesn't appear in the play).

The role that fan productivity had in getting a black actress cast is unknown, but while some fans are celebrating, others are booing. Dumezweni was cast by the play's director, and Rowling has responded negatively to the trolls, calling them "a bunch of racists" and saying "Hermione's race was never specified and that Dumezweni was the best applicant for the job;"[7] "Hermione can be a black woman with my absolute blessing and enthusiasm."[8] This is a prime example of hook's belief that those who go against "white supremacist aesthetics" face severe backlash (hook, 1996; 73), and we as fans and as media studiers and practitioners can only hope that producers-to-be aren't easily swayed by potential confrontations. After all, fans only poach because the original text is lacking (Jenkins, 1992; 23).

**2,973 words**

---

[7] Joshua Kelley for PRI's 'The World', 07/06/2016; *Casting of black actressin new Harry Potter play causes controversy among 'idiots'*
[8] BBC News, 05/06/2016; *JK Rowling attacks black Hermione 'racists'*

## Bibliography

Benshoff & Griffin (2009). *America on Film* (2nd edition). Malden; Wiley-Blackwell. Ebook available online: http://web.b.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.bcu.ac.uk/ehost/detail/detail?sid=ce1d1a92-fcdb-48ec-b70a-2cbead99b358%40sessionmgr102&vid=0&hid=125&bdata=#db=nlebk&AN=1101996 [last accessed 25/04/17]

Brooks & Hébert (2006). *Gender, Race, and Media Representation*. In Dow & Woods (eds.) (2006). *The SAGE Handbook of Gender and Communication*. SAGE Publications. Available online: http://www.focusintl.com/GD142-%20Gender,%20Race%20and%20Media%20Representation.pdf [last accessed 25/04/17]

Duffett, M (2013). *Understanding Fandom: An Introduction to the Study of Media Fan Culture*. London; Bloomsbury.

Fiske, J (1989). *Reading the Popular*. Boston: Unwin and Hyman; reprint London; Routledge, 1991.

hook, b (1996). *Reel to Real: Race, Class and Sex at the Movies*. London; Routledge.

Jenkins, H (1992). *Textual Poachers: Television Fans and Participatory Culture*. London; Routledge.

Jenkins, H (2006). *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*. New York; New York University Press.

Long & Wall (2012). *Media Studies: Texts, Production, Context* (2nd edition). London; Routledge. P.122, 193.

Reid, M (2005). *Black Lenses, Black Voices: African American Film Now*. Oxford; Rowan and Littlefield.

Williams, R (2013). "*Anyone who Calls Muse a* Twilight *Band will be Shot on Sight" Music, Distinction, and the "Interloping Fan" in the* Twilight *Franchise. Popular Music and Society*, 36:3, 327-342.

## Sources

http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1219827/fullcredits?ref_=tt_cl_sm#cast

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ghost_in_the_Shell_(2017_film)#Casting_criticism

http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1241317/

https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2015/dec/28/tamir-rice-shooting-no-charges-cleveland-officer-timothy-loehmann

https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/ng-interactive/2015/jun/01/the-counted-police-killings-us-database

http://www.charlotteobserver.com/news/local/crime/article103175292.html

http://www.bunchecenter.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/2016-Hollywood-Diversity-Report-2-25-16.pdf

http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-36454875

https://www.pri.org/stories/2016-06-07/new-harry-potter-play-causes-excitement-and-controversy

## Appendix 1 – The use of 'PoC'

'PoC' is often used to talk about people who aren't white in a concise term. I have especially seen it on Tumblr when people are talking about issues that PoC face, for instance, "PoC face discrimination in the USA that white people can hardly imagine," is much easier to say and read than, say, "Black, Asian, Latinx, Native Americans, [the list goes on] face discrimination…" or even the phrase 'people who aren't white'. This last phrase raises issues as it almost acts as a way to 'other' and alienate PoC. On the other hand, 'PoC' serves to unify against the people they face discrimination from.

'Ethnic minorities' is also a phrase I considered using, but as what counts as a minority is relative to the context (i.e. there are more people living in Asia or in Africa than in Northern America, Europe, and Oceania combined, therefore we can assume that across the world white people are in fact a minority [see fig. A]; however in the USA white people made up over 77% of the population in 2015 [see fig. B]). Therefore I have only used it when talking about PoC as the minority population.

Of course, 'PoC' is not itself a perfect term, as some people feel it 'lumps everyone together' and divides the world into white and not-white while not allowing for racial issues to be tackled separately, as people of one race may face issues that another race does not, etc. However, in terms of this essay I have used 'PoC' to talk about general issues faced by all non-white races, and when talking about issues faces by a specific race I will be sure to distinguish the specific race.

| Region, country or area | Mid-year population estimates (millions) Estimations de population au milieu de l'année (millions) | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1995 | 2005 | 2010 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 |
| Total, all countries or areas | 5 735.12 | 6 519.64 | 6 929.73 | 7 265.79 | 7 349.47 | 7 432.66 |
| Africa | 720.42 | 920.24 | 1 044.11 | 1 156.65 | 1 186.18 | 1 216.13 |
| Northern America | 295.70 | 328.52 | 344.13 | 355.16 | 357.84 | 360.53 |
| Latin Amer. and the Caribb. | 487.33 | 563.83 | 599.82 | 627.64 | 634.39 | 641.03 |
| Asia | 3 474.85 | 3 944.67 | 4 169.86 | 4 349.56 | 4 393.30 | 4 436.22 |
| Europe | 727.78 | 729.01 | 735.39 | 738.02 | 738.44 | 738.85 |
| Oceania | 29.05 | 33.37 | 36.41 | 38.76 | 39.33 | 39.90 |

**Figure D - A section of a table from the UN's 2016 Statistical Yearbook (p. 13)**

The full yearbook is available from the link below:
https://unstats.un.org/unsd/publications/statistical-yearbook/files/syb59/syb59.pdf

| 👤 PEOPLE | |
|---|---|
| *Race and Hispanic Origin* | |
| ⓘ White alone, percent, July 1, 2015, (V2015) (a) | 77.1% |

**Figure E - A section of a list of the US population percentage by race from the United States Census Bureau**

Available from the link below:
https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/RHI125215/00

## Appendix 2 – Whitewashing in *Ghost in the Shell* (2017) and *Death Note* (2017)

These particular examples stand out for different reasons. *Ghost in the Shell*'s main character is the brain of a Japanese woman (who's face is never shown) in a cyborg body played by popular white actress Scarlett Johansson, therefore making the fact they cast a Japanese actress (Kaori Yamaoto) as Motoko's original body somewhat pointless. In the case of *Death Note*, the main controversy is that fans feel the story won't translate well into a Hollywood adaption, as the law enforcement system in Japan is very different to how it is in the USA where it's being set.

On top of this, there are concerns that 'white boy with a god-complex takes justice into his own hands and kills people' is actually an issue in the USA, where shootings happen all to often, usually by white males with a twisted sense of what's 'right'. This is furthered by the fact that Lakeith Stanfield – a Black actor – plays L (a top detective who comes very close to discovering the true identity of the killer 'Kira' – Light Yagami/Turner's[9] pseudonym – but is killed by Light before he can do anything about it).

Considering the current political climate in the US, where events such as Ferguson have brought attention to what many are calling 'unjustifiable' and 'unnecessary' police killings of Black people, including children (Tamir Rice aged 12 in 2014), elderly (Deborah Danner aged 66, also mentally ill, in 2016), and disabled people (Keith Lamont Scott, suffered brain damage that limited his ability to communicate, in 2016)[10], many people are worried about this reaffirming the underlying racist hegemony that has created a society that will acquit a killer who mistook his victim's toy gun for a real one, or book for a gun.

---

[9] The 2017 adaption changed the name of the protagonist from Light Yagami to the more 'white' name of Light Turner, again drawing criticism from fans.
[10] See Sources page for links to articles discussing these deaths.

## Appendix 3 – Criteria for artwork selected for the sample

The artwork used for the analysis in this essay is not random from everything in the 'golden trio' tag on Tumblr. This is because not everything is for the *Harry Potter* fandom, and I did not want to include certain types of 'art' for several reasons that would complicate my analysis;

1. Cosplays will be disregarded as the cosplayers own skin is coincidental (unless black/yellowface has been used, which is problematic in itself and will be disregarded as potentially racist and upsetting for viewers)
2. 'NSFW' (not safe for work) art will be disregarded as it has the potential to cross into fetishization of a particular race which again is problematic and potentially upsetting
3. Edits of stills/gifs of the film will be disregarded as 'non-original'

I also created a few rules, again to simplify the analysis process;

1. Duplicates will only be counted once (for instance if an artwork has been reposted, the second version will be disregarded)
2. If art is part of a series of comics and more than one post in the series shows up, it will be counted as one

The art selected must follow the below criteria. If a piece is found after the analysis is complete to break one of these, it will be mentioned in a footnote in the essay, along with briefly how this affects the statistics.

- Art must include all 3 members of the 'Golden Trio'
- The characters' skin colour must be clearly visible (i.e. silhouettes and line art will be disregarded)
- Art can original digital or traditional drawings/paintings/etc. of the characters
- 'Genderbend' artwork, where one or more of the characters in question are portrayed as a different gender to their canonical one, will be included as gender portrayal in this case has no effect on the portrayal of race
- Artwork including other characters from the series will also be included as again, this has no bearing on the racial portrayal of the Golden Trio

All art used as part of this sample has been reblogged onto the Tumblr I made specifically for this research, which can be accessed from the link below;
https://rknight-potterandrace.tumblr.com

## Appendix 4 – The sample and findings

<u>Preface to the Analysis</u>
Before discussing the analysis of the artwork sample, I want to preface it by saying that the exact numbers of artwork in each category may not be completely accurate for two reasons. Firstly, 40 pieces is very small sample for a fandom of this size and longevity (*The Philosopher's Stone* was published 1997). Secondly, in some cases the race of the characters in the artwork came across as ambiguous, due to lighting, colouring style, etc. of the piece. While every effort was made to select artwork that was not too ambiguous, I did not want to exclude more art than necessary and potentially create a bias in the statistics. Therefore for some art, I had to pass judgment as best I could based on, for instance, relative skin colour to other characters or the shape of facial features. Unfortunately, this is problematic in itself; as 'race' is a social construct, what it is to be one race or another is always shifting, therefore visual indicators are not the most reliable. One way to not fall into this trap would be to simply ask the artists via Tumblr to describe the race of the characters as they have drawn them.

<u>Results table</u>

| | All film-canon race (white) | Harry only is PoC | Hermione only is PoC | Ron only is PoC | Harry and Hermione are PoC | Hermione and Ron are PoC | Ron and Harry are PoC | All three are PoC | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Tally Total | 5 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 30 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| | | Total with 1 PoC | | 5 | Total with 2 PoC | | 30 | | |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| Number | Harry | Hermione | Ron | Ambiguous* | Notes | | | | |
| 1 | x | x | | | | | | | |
| 2 | x | x | | | | | | | |
| 3 | | | | | | | | | |
| 4 | x | x | | | Hermione has vitiligo | | | | |
| 5 | x | x | | | | | | | |
| 6 | x | x | | | | | | | |
| 7 | x | x | | | | | | | |
| 8 | x | x | | | | | | | |
| 9 | x | x | | | | | | | |
| 10 | x | x | | | Artist proclaims "more diversity, hell yeah" in caption | | | | |
| 11 | x | x | | x | Hermione is particularly light-skinned | | | | |
| 12 | x | x | | x | Genderbend; light skinned Hermione | | | | |

Above is a section of the results of my content analysis. The full table is available from the link below.
https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1M8dDykTy4R3xozt-zPuceZJd2333IqNaj92b18mo4wc/edit?usp=sharing

<u>Art sample database</u>
All art used as part of this sample has been reblogged onto the Tumblr I made specifically for this research, which can be accessed from the link below;
https://rknight-potterandrace.tumblr.com