



Psychoanalyzing Draco Malfoy: A Queer Werewolf?

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Drawing from psychoanalytic theory, queer theory, and folklore studies, Baylee Bozarth investigates the prevalent fan theory that Draco Malfoy – a chief antagonist of the *Harry Potter* saga – is actually a werewolf. Noting the thematic connections between lycanthropy, queerness, and racial othering, Bozarth explains why this theory holds water and potentially enhances readers’ appreciation of the *Harry Potter* universe. This essay was written for *Critical Approaches to Literature* with Dr. Shelley Rees.

WEREWOLVES HAVE LONG been studied by theorists as a symbol of queerness because of the way that they actively defy normativity in the same “beastly” way that society ascribes to queer individuals (Bernhardt-House 188). In the *Harry Potter* series, Remus Lupin and other werewolves can be psychoanalyzed as characters who are queered. The way that other characters respond to them can also be analyzed to explain fan theories, specifically the theory that Draco Malfoy is a werewolf. Combined with the significant amount of homoromantic fanfiction written about Draco, these aspects together show a connection between psychoanalysis and queerness that is expressed through werewolves in the series.

The idea that Draco Malfoy is a werewolf comes from evidence in the series, which suggests something outside of the canon. Some of the evidence is speculative, such as the fact that Harry is almost never correct in his assumptions about people, and Hermione is. Harry thinks that Draco is a Death Eater, and Hermione disagrees (Super Carlin Brothers). However, there is also evidence that, at the very least, Draco is not a Death Eater. Throughout the last two books his Dark Mark (the symbol branded on Death Eaters) is never revealed. He seemingly cannot pass through barriers intended only for people with Dark Marks. Fenir Greyback famously places himself near children of the people who have failed Voldemort, which Lucius Malfoy does the end of the fifth book. Draco might be a werewolf, assuming Voldemort had chosen to enact revenge. All of this information was gathered by fans in a productive and creative way. This engagement suggests Draco is a psychologically interesting character for fans to speculate about.

Judith Butler wrote “Passing, Queering” as an analysis of how differences of race might be derived from differences in sex and sexuality, which lead to the oppression of queerness in many ways (282). For the purpose of this essay, we can view race the way characters do in *Harry Potter*. There is a race of pureblooded wizards. To them, people who are not full-blooded wizards are seen as racially inferior. They are obsessed with keeping their lineage pure, and often marry cousins (Rowling, *Order of the Phoenix* 113). Werewolves are viewed as even worse. Lupin resigns from his post as a Defense Against the Dark Arts professor after the student body finds out about his lycanthropy (*Prisoner of Azkaban* 423). Draco Malfoy is born into one of these pureblooded families with racial prejudice, which is evident by their involvement in the Death Eaters, a group meant to racially cleanse wizardkind.

In Butler's essay, she explains that part of what connects sexuality and race is the question of “passing” (284). In the novel she analyzes, *Passing* by Nella Larson, a black woman is able to pass as white (Butler 284). In *The Prisoner of Azkaban*, Lupin is able to

pass as a wizard who is not a werewolf for most of the book. Butler suggests that the ability of a character to pass as what is considered normative stems from simple association. If Lupin associates with non-werewolves, they operate under the assumption that he is also not a werewolf. The underlying fear that presents itself to the non-werewolves is that, if Lupin can pass, then there is nothing to constitute their own non-werewolfness (Butler 285). Therefore, the purebloods' hatred of werewolves is useful to them, because it identifies them as not that.

Werewolves reflect more than race in the series. As Butler says, the underlying issue is sexuality. Medieval werewolf stories are often blatantly sexual (Bernhardt-House 165). This is not the case in *Harry Potter*. Remus actually fears intimate relationships because of the possibility of turning either the person he is with or his children into werewolves as well (Rowling, *Deathly Hallows* 213). While he eventually does choose a seemingly heterosexual partner, she also lives outside the realm of normativity in the same way that he does: transformation. Nymphadora Tonks mirrors Lupin's queerness in that way (Bernhardt-House 173). Both werewolves and metamorphmagi can represent transformation in the queer community, specifically transgender or gender-nonconforming people. Werewolves in the series are both a race of characters and a representation of sexuality and gender.

Jacques Lacan believes his theory of the mirror stage is fundamental in human development. This is the period of time when toddlers begin to be able to recognize themselves in the mirror (269). The period occurs before children have the ability to speak, and therefore it is the first time they are faced with the idea that the world exists outside themselves. This is called the *I* formation (270). They also recognize the image in the mirror as their ideal selves, which Lacan calls their ego. They become incredibly jealous and hate their reflection, while simultaneously loving and adoring it (271). Recognizing oneself in the mirror, for Lacan, is the foundation of social relationship for the rest of their life. Post-mirror stage, after

children gain language, they also recognize other people as also outside of themselves (272). This stage can lead to different results, depending on how adults deal with the pressure of society, and their own idealized self. One possibility is narcissism, in which one centers their ego, allowing for, in some cases, the manifestation of the Freudian id. The way that a person understands themselves is entirely dependent on how they compare to the world outside their own body.

Draco Malfoy, throughout the series, is obsessed with himself in relation to other characters. He has grown up in a family belonging to a racist organization. Before Voldemort even returned to power, Draco's father participated in an attack on muggles at the campsite outside the Quidditch World Cup (*Goblet of Fire* 120). Draco mocks Hermione, telling her to flee the scene, because her parents are muggles, and she is racially impure (122). We also find out that the Death Eaters have a prejudice against werewolves when they mock the Bellatrix and Narcissa for having a niece (Tonks) who married a werewolf (Lupin) (*Deathly Hallows* 10). This occurs after the speculated transformation of Draco, and the Malfoys do not laugh along with the other Death Eaters (10). Voldemort asks Draco if he would plan on "babysitting the pups." Draco looks terrified at this thought, possibly because he might be outed as a werewolf. Another possibility is that he is disgusted by the thought. Ultimately, we can assume that Draco's family held the same level of hatred for werewolves; they discriminate against all wizards without "pureblood."

Malfoy's extreme hatred for werewolves is an acknowledgment of the fragility of his pureblooded status, which constitutes his entire sense of selfhood. Lacan speaks briefly about the way that the *I* formation manifests in dreams. These dreams include a central tower of some sort, which is heavily fortified, and impossible to infiltrate (271). Draco is fortifying his inner werewolfness with an ironic aversion. Since werewolves are a representation of queer

identities in the series, he is, in another way, repressing his queerness. Psychoanalysis can explain both of these fan theories about Draco Malfoy.

In Butler's essay, she discusses more than just how being white is constituted by through aversion to black people or other people of color. She also, when talking about the relationship between the white husband and his wife, points out that he both idealizes and loathes her. The feelings he places upon her create her, and by association himself (285). This is similar to the way that Lacan describes how people feel about their ideal-*I*. Both the hatred and love of someone seemingly outside themselves creates their personality and selfhood. Therefore, Draco's hate for werewolves might actually be a repression of his true self. When fans theorize about Draco being queer, they most commonly write fanfiction and create fanart about Draco and Harry Potter, whom he hates diligently throughout the series. On the Hogwarts Express during their sixth year, he stuns Harry, hides him under his invisibility cloak, breaks his nose, and then leaves him on the train to be taken back to London (*Half-Blood Prince* 153-54). This relationship is often viewed as homoerotic from both sides, because their hatred for each other is a product of separating themselves from their queerness.

On the popular fanfiction website *Archive of Our Own*, it is possible to sort stories by "pairing," or romantic relationship. The most popular is Harry and Draco, which has over twice as many as the next most popular: Remus Lupin and Sirius Black. This makes Draco and Remus two of the most commonly queered characters in the *Harry Potter* series. P.J. Falzone talks about the history of what has been known as slash fanfiction, or simply slashfiction, including common tropes used in stories, as well as possible reasons for the popularity of the genre among heterosexual women. He quotes Camille Bacon-Smith, who states, "the homoerotic stories stimulate sexually through the fantasy while at the same time they distance the woman from the risk sexual relationships with men represent" (qtd. in Falzone 248). Remus Lupin is a known werewolf, and Draco

Malfoy is a suspected Death Eater or werewolf. Both of these characters symbolize possible dangers, which make them interesting to queer for fans.

The psychoanalytic function of werewolves in the *Harry Potter* series is to express queerness. Remus does this by transformation, and by the reception he receives from wizarding society. By exemplifying werewolves as a symbol of the queer in the series, Draco Malfoy becomes a much more interesting character, because he is often theorized to be queer or a werewolf. According to Lacan's mirror stage theory, and Judith Butler's analysis of race and sexuality, the act of identifying himself against queerness and werewolfness stabilizes his own identity in his mind, but not in actuality. In fact, the stronger his aversion becomes, the weaker his identity becomes with it, making it possible for him to be both. While this is not canon in the series, fan participation helps create the story and the characters within it. ►►

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