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Prejudice and inequality in the Harry Potter series by J. K. Rowling

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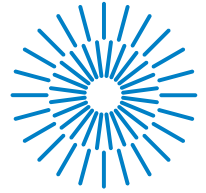
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Obsahem bakalářské práce je analyzovat složitost a hloubku sociálních nerovností prezentovaných v knižní sérii Harry Potter od anglické spisovatelky J.K.Rowling. Cílem práce je vymezení problémů týkajících se ideologií, rasové, sociální a třídní nerovnosti mezi postavami objevujícími se v knihách a jejich boj proti nim.

Tato práce tak může předvést odlišný pohled na knižní sérii a povznést tak její hodnotu v literatuře.

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Anotace

Bakalářská práce, která nese název “Předsudky a nerovnost objevující se v knižní sérii Harry Potter od J. K. Rowlingové”, obsahuje analýzu složitosti a hloubky sociálních nerovností prezentovaných v knižní sérii Harry Potter.

Úvodní část práce zahrnuje stručný popis knižní série a její zařazení do žánru dětské fantasy literatury. Následující kapitoly se věnují vzniku předsudků a nerovností v knižní sérii, přičemž hlavními tématy jsou zacházení s domácími skřítky, diskriminace na základě čistoty krve a ideologie Lorda Voldemorta. Každá kapitola se zaměřuje na popis tématu a následné zobrazení paralel mezi fiktivním světem a reálnými problémy, jako jsou etnická diskriminace, sociální stratifikace a extremistické ideologie v minulosti i současnosti.

Cílem této práce je analyzovat knihy o Harrym Potterovi, které jsou primárně považovány za fantasy sérii pro mladé čtenáře, jako prostředek pro prezentaci témat souvisejících s ideologiemi a rasovou, sociální a třídní nerovností mezi postavami, a jejich způsoby boje proti nim.

Tato práce tak může poskytnout odlišný pohled na knižní sérii a povznést tak její hodnotu v literatuře.

Klíčová slova

předsudky, diskriminace, rasová nerovnost, sociální nerovnost, ideologie, fantasy, Harry Potter, J.K.Rowling, otroctví, Lord Voldemort

Annotation

This bachelor's thesis called *Prejudice and Inequality in the Harry Potter series by J. K. Rowling* contains an analysis of the social inequalities presented in the *Harry Potter* book series.

The introductory part of the thesis includes a brief description of the book series and its classification in the genre of children's fantasy literature. The following chapters discuss the origins of prejudice and inequality in the book series, with the main themes being the treatment of house-elves, discrimination based on purity of blood, and the ideology of Lord Voldemort. Each chapter is dedicated to analysing a specific theme, which is then compared to real-world issues such as ethnic discrimination, social stratification, and extremist ideologies. This thesis aims to analyse the *Harry Potter* books, which are primarily considered a fantasy series for young readers, to present themes related to ideologies and racial, social and class inequalities among the characters and how they combat them.

Consequently, this thesis offers a different perspective on the book series, thereby enhancing its value within the context of literary analysis.

Keywords

prejudice, discrimination, ethnic discrimination, social stratification, ideology, fantasy, Harry Potter, J.K.Rowling, slavery, Lord Voldemort

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1 Introduction

1.1. Brief overview of the Harry Potter series by J.K.Rowling

The Harry Potter series, written by J.K. Rowling, is considered one of the most culturally significant literary series of our time. The series was published between 1997 and 2007 and consists of seven novels. It explores the magical world of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. Throughout the story, Rowling interweaves themes of friendship, courage, morality and the fight against evil that have captivated readers across generations.

Each book in the series covers a significant year in Harry's life as he navigates the challenges of adolescence and confronts the secrets of his past and the prophesied destiny that awaits him. Characters struggle with moral dilemmas and face the consequences of their actions; love, sacrifice and the power of choice emerge as recurring motifs. Rowling skilfully addresses issues of prejudice and discrimination, drawing parallels with real-life social dynamics and promoting inclusiveness and acceptance.

It is hard to believe that the beginning of Rowling and her fantastic story about the Wizarding World was hard, she struggled a lot to find a publisher for her first book, the book was rejected by dozens of publishers and then British publisher Bloomsbury agreed. Harry Potter became a worldwide phenomenon with readers of all ages. The series has a dedicated fan base and has been the subject of numerous film adaptations, merchandise and academic studies, a testament to its ongoing relevance and influence.

This thesis will examine how Rowling draws attention to the prejudice and inequality within her internationally popular narrative. The following chapters analyse how prejudice and inequality develop through the book series. These include the treatment of house-elves, blood discrimination based on social hierarchy and blood status and Lord Voldemort's ideology. Each chapter will provide a comparison in parallels to real-world issues such as discrimination based

on ethnicity, social status, or extremist ideologies that have appeared in history or the contemporary period. These points provide profound commentary on social prejudices and their final impact on both worlds, the wizarding world and the real world.

1.2. The Harry Potter series as children's fantasy

Before a more comprehensive examination of the chapters that will be described in this thesis, it is important to introduce the series as a genre of children's fantasy. The genre of children's fantasy can be defined by its ability to transport all young readers into alternative worlds that differ from their real world. However, it still resonates with familiar emotions and experiences. The feature elements of these stories include magic, mythical creatures, and epic quests, which provide a remarkable space where the ordinary and the extraordinary merge seamlessly. This allows children and other readers to explore complex themes and moral lessons in a context that is engaging and accessible.

Initially, Mendlesohn in her *Rhetoric of Fantasy* identifies four distinct types of fantasy literature: immersive, liminal, intrusion and portal-quest fantasy (Mendlesohn, *Introduction*). The immersive fantasy takes the story immediately inside a constructed fantasy world where magical and unexpected elements are considered normal by its inhabitants. The reader of this type of fantasy is immersed in the fantasy world without any explanatory passages (Mendlesohn, *Introduction*, xx) in the *Harry Potter* series, the fantastic is presented to readers as a matter of course. The story is set in the wizarding world of Hogwarts where magic is a natural part of life and characters accept the existence of magic.

Liminal fantasy includes stories with subtle and ambiguous fantastic elements blurring the lines between reality and fantasy. Mendlesohn assigns this type as the most interesting because it is so rare (*Introduction*, xxiii). Rowling uses liminal fantasy through the fantastical subtle and ambiguous element of Harry's experience with the Mirror of Erised (Rowling, *The*

Philosopher Stone, 243). The mirror shows the deepest desire of one's heart which is connected to the characters' emotions and psychological state as well, therefore the fantasy is blurred especially in the way of how the mirror affects those who look into it.

Another type where the fantastic intrudes into the real world is called intrusion fantasy (Mendlesohn, *Introduction*, xxi-xxii). It is well known that the series features instances where magical elements intrude into the Muggle world. One such example can be observed in the situation depicted in *The Order of the Phoenix*, where dementors from the wizarding world attack Harry, accompanied by his Muggle cousin Dudley, in the Muggle world, specifically in the Little Whinging (Rowling 2015, 22).

The entrance to Platform 9¾ at King's Cross Station defines the portal-quest fantasy, thanks to all mentioned features and types of fantasy fiction, Mendlesohn classifies Rowling's series as an irregular type of fantasy, due to its inclusion of all elements mentioned above or in the following paragraphs of this chapter.

The transportation of all readers into different worlds is significant in portal fantasy as Mendlesohn in her *Rhetoric of Fantasy* notes, "when we think of portal fantasies, we commonly assume that the portal is from "our" world to the fantastic" (Mendlesohn, *Introduction*, xix). In the series, there exist two worlds that Rowling shows us. The normal world, where readers can find themselves and the other, at Hogwarts, covers the wizarding world full of magic and mythical creatures. For instance, Catherine Butler in her book *Modern Children's Fantasy* states that Rowling's fantasy has two aspects of fantasy literature, the first Butler calls as mundane landscape that is secretly peopled with magical beings carrying on the real business under the noses of the general populace", and the second as portal fantasy (Butler, 233). The portal fantasy part is represented by Harry's transportation into another world with its history and traditions – the wizarding school of Hogwarts. According to Mendlesohn, for portal fantasy, it is important to focus on entry, transition and negotiation (Mendlesohn, *Introduction*,

xix). As the series proceeds, Rowling shows the readers that those two worlds inhabited by Muggle and Wizard communities still interpenetrate and influence each other. As an example, Butler presents the Weasleys family living in modern Britain. She assigns modern Britain as a place, where it is typical to interact between the wizarding and muggle world even get intermarriage with a muggle or wizard. As an example, Butler states the Weasley family and their behaviour to Muggles. Although the appropriate expectation for portal fantasy would be that a magical family, as the Weasleys are, should ignore non-magical ways, Mr Weasley is the exact opposite due to his job at the Ministry of Magic focusing on Muggle's technology (Butler, 233). It can be said Rowling uses some conventions of portal fantasy but transforms them creatively.

Rowling's wizarding world excitingly differs from our own but it is similar to it at the same time. She is fantastically innovative and bases the wizarding world even the normal world on familiar literary models. "Rowling applies a systematic set of transformations to the mundane in order to produce her brand of the fantastic," writes Butler (233). All of that involves common fantasy transformation of things that exist as myths in the normal world, such as magic wands or another systematic set of transformations including substitution. "Substitution occurs when something in the magical world exhibits a structural correspondence with something in the mundane world likewise the equivalent of a real-world newspaper, *The Daily Prophet*", notes Butler (234). Moreover, Rowling uses exaggeration such as the reproduction of something from the normal world to a greater degree. So for example the fact that ordinary sweets have many flavours; but Bertie Bott's have every flavour. Some people keep dangerous pets, but Hagrid keeps extremely dangerous ones.

Animation is another type of Rowling's transformation; it means giving movement to inanimate objects. At Hogwarts, there are hanging portraits or pictures with characters which can move and even talk, and written correspondence can yell at its recipients. The last point of

transformation Butler presents as antiquation: “Rowling’s magical world is old-fashioned in many ways that have nothing to do with magic: the Hogwarts train runs on steam, children write with quills” (234). These things are typical for magical history and set the magical world apart from the normal world (Butler, 234). As a result, Rowling’s wizarding world is a combination of her two favourite elements – representing unusualness and cosy familiarity.

It is also important to realize that Rowling's series can be not only classified as ordinary fantasy but also as a school story with elements of heroic fantasy and with the usage of forms that engage the child readers with specific concepts of agency. For instance, Hermione Granger with her loving relationship to books becomes a model for the readers as a reader. As Webb in her book *Fantasy and Real World* states, Rowling in her series tries to demonstrate that reading books is important not just for reading but for comprehension as well (Webb, 13). Due to Hermione’s reading and her ability to make sense of what she reads, Hermione becomes an important companion in Harry’s quest within the series (Webb,13). The school story is the genre which is classified as dominant in the first three books, where Harry makes new friends, starts to do a new sport in which he is the best and defeats his nasty rival, and the Headmaster after recognising his talent rewards him. Moreover, Webb notes:“the early novels of the Harry Potter sequence shape expectations even of a young reader unfamiliar with the boarding school story and how characters will behave” Webb (50).

Additionally, certain aspects characterize the series as heroic fantasy: “most significantly the identification of Lord Voldemort being a superhuman force of evil and the scar that marks Harry as the Boy Who Lived” (Webb, 51). However, sometimes Rowling differs in her writing from basic elements or genres in literary composition. For example, Rowling uses the character of Ron in contrast to the conventions of heroic fantasy, where readers expect faithful companionship from the main characters. In *The Deathly Hallows* Ron's departure is filled with anger due to his jealousy, misery, impatience and all other feelings that

are appropriate to his situation connected with a bad injury, these psychological elements make Rowling's books different and they are not typical for fantasy fiction because the hero or his companion usually experiences fast miraculous healing (Webb, 57).

Finally, it is possible to state that in the series, the school story model, elements of heroic fantasy, magical and portal fantasy elements are intertwined and this makes the book series unique in its way and accompanied by the statement of Mendlesohn the series can be classified as "Hybrid form" of fantasy (*Introduction*, xxiv).

Rowling's main purpose can be considered as educative in the process of reading the world. Therefore, throughout the series, young readers can explore complex themes and moral lessons. The main character, Harry, has to solve many troubles. The plot is growing and Harry's life becomes more complicated than readers could expect after reading the first book. The story about a boy who discovered a new world full of magic and magical creatures rapidly changes into a story about searching for identity, fight between good and evil and a journey to understand human relationships.

Although the victory of the main characters representing the good side might be expected, the way how they achieve the victory is unpredictable. This can be seen as both Rowling's try to engage her readers and as a reflection of the experiences of readers in pre-teen and teenage years. During this period, relationships are often characterised by their dynamism and potential for unease, and the outcomes frequently fall short of expectations or desires. Everyone must make decisions that do not always lead to a convenient result.

The genre of children's fantasy literature uses magical elements to reflect real-world issues. The following chapters will examine how Rowling uses these magical elements and characters to draw attention to prejudice and inequality within her narrative focusing on topics including the treatment of house-elves, blood discrimination based on social hierarchy and blood status, and Lord Voldemort's ideology.

2 House - Elf Slavery

“Halfway down the hall was a fountain. A group of golden statues, larger than life-size, stood in the middle of a circular pool. Tallest of them all was a noble-looking wizard with his wand pointing straight up in the air. Grouped around him were a beautiful witch, a centaur, a goblin, and a house-elf. The last three were all looking adoringly up at the witch and wizard. Glittering jets of water were flying from the ends of the two wands, the point of the centaur’s arrow, the tip of the goblin’s hat, and each of the house-elf’s ears.”

Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix (Rowling 2015,123)

2.1 Introduction to House-Elf Servitude

This quote describes the Fountain of Magical Brethren. It used to stand in the Ministry of Magic, the most powerful magical institution, in the same place as the statue of Magic is Might. The statue is notable for its depiction of non-wand-wielding figures in lower, subservient positions, reflecting traditional ideas that have influenced the hierarchy of magical classes. The Fountain of Magical Brethren can be interpreted as representing inequality and prejudice within the magical world.

House-elves are a human-like species that exist in the wizarding world of the Harry Potter series and due to their appearance and magical ability, they are part of the characteristics of fiction fantasy. Unlike other magical creatures in the series, they are subject to a system of enslavement and subjugation in wizarding society, regardless of their magical abilities. They are bound by ancient magical contracts or familial obligations to serve their masters without questioning or complaining. The servitude of house elves lasts for generations. During this time, they obediently carry out the tasks assigned to them, regardless of their well-being or desires. These tasks include cooking, cleaning and housekeeping.

The practice of enslaving house-elves is deeply rooted in wizarding culture and is generally regarded as a form of slavery. These families may treat house elves with indifference, disrespect, or even cruelty, often viewing them as obedient servants. As a result, the individuals

are often deprived of adequate living conditions, proper care and fair treatment. The mistreatment of house-elves is compounded by the lack of legal protection or recourse against abusive behaviour by their masters. The significant imbalance of power in the wizarding world is highlighted by this systematic exploitation. Wizards and witches hold power over a subordinate and marginalised race of beings.

2.2 Description of the treatment of house-elves in the series

The book series introduces four non-human creatures known as house-elves, although one of them, Hokey, mentioned in *Half-Blood Prince*, does not play a significant role. The following paragraphs briefly introduce each of them and describe how they are treated by the families they serve and the conditions in which they live.

Dobby, a house-elf, was introduced in Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*. He is an enslaved and mistreated creature who has served the Malfoy family for three generations. During this time, he has endured significant physical and emotional abuse. The treatment which Dobby has to face is shown by Lucius Malfoy in the form of physical blows and emotional abuse. The family treated him as a possession rather than a living being, and his feelings were never taken into consideration. Even though the Malfoy family treated Dobby badly, it was still considered as normal within the wizarding world. However, the story about him reveals, how bad the treatment is and denies that house-elves even enjoy being enslaved, their servitude is tied to the consequences of fear of being set free. During the first meeting of Dobby with Harry and the reply Harry gets after he asks him to sit down, "Dobby has never been asked to sit down by a wizard-like an equal" (Rowling, *The Chamber of Secrets*, 13), and Dobby's reaction in the way that he started to self-punish himself by smashing his head against or with different objects, shows how terrible treatment Dobby has to face during his servitude. He also explained the reason why he did that to himself, whenever he talks about his masters

in a bad way or he disobeys the orders somehow, he has to punish himself. For an elf, Dobby's behaviour is rebellious. This behaviour runs counter to the wishes of his master and the traditions of the house-elves, particularly when he attempts to protect Harry, which is contrary to the values and rules of his master. On the other hand, Dobby is aware that this behaviour towards his wizarding family is disrespectful and that it is the greatest sin he can commit. This illustrates how discipline is so deeply ingrained in the house-elves. As Dobby says after breaking some rules "[...] Dobby had to iron his hands afterward" (Rowling, *The Chamber of Secrets*, 193).

Even though the treatment and the life conditions are bad for him, Dobby's friendship with Harry is built on mutual respect and loyalty, which develops into setting Dobby free as a trick on Lucius Malfoy at the end of the second book, "What's that?" spat Mr. Malfoy. "What did you say?" "Got a sock," said Dobby in disbelief. "Master threw it, and Dobby caught it, and Dobby — Dobby is free" (Rowling, *The Chamber of Secrets*, 379). Dobby is thrilled to live as a free elf and after this, he finds a job in Hogwarts, and thanks to Hermione Granger and her S.P.E.W. advocating for a social change he receives a salary every single week.

Kreacher is one of the four main house-elves, who serves the noble House of Black. The Black family's treatment of Kreacher reflects the abuse and disregard for the welfare of house-elves within the wizarding world, which is also evident in the Malfoy family's treatment of Dobby. Kreacher has to face verbal abuse and derogatory language from members of the Black family. For instance, Sirius's mother Walburga Black, whose portrait hangs in their family's former house at 12 Grimmauld Place, constantly berates Kreacher. Even though Kreacher is a loyal house-elf he receives minimal care and attention, and is forced to live in squalor within the confines of the Black family's home.

Kreacher differs a lot from the free-spirited, rebellious Dobby, he is kind of a grumpy house-elf. He constantly mutters something in a whisper about Sirius and the others who are in

that house, for instance, the members of the Order of the Phoenix after they have taken over the House of Black as their headquarters. He uses words like his masters did and he keeps a kind of contempt for wizards with impure ancestry. This probably has something to do with the fact that the Black family were seen as Voldemort-sympathizing, and anyone who supported Voldemort's ideology supported the idea of blood purification within the wizarding world. This means that only pure-blood wizards should be in charge. A bit ridiculous fact is that the only one who has ever defended this house-elf is Hermione, despite Kreacher rudely calling her a 'Mudblood'.

The last house-elf to appear is named Winky. As previously mentioned with Dobby and Kreacher, the treatment of Winky by the Crouch family is based on the same principle. The members of the Crouch family often disregard her opinions, which reinforces her position as a subordinate member of the household.

In the story, Winky is caught using magic outside of her master's orders during the Quidditch World Cup. As a result, she is publicly shamed and dismissed from her position by Barty Crouch Sr., who states, ' "Winky has behaved tonight in a manner I would not have believed possible," he said slowly. "I told her to remain in the tent. I told her to stay there while I went to sort out the trouble. And I find that she disobeyed me. This means clothes"' (Rowling, *The Goblet of Fire*, 153).

The term 'clothes' in the Crouch Sr. statement refers to the act of setting the house-elf free, as was previously mentioned with Dobby and the sock situation. However, not every elf desires to be set free, especially Winky, who, after being free, experiences a deep sense of isolation and loneliness. The reactions to being a free elf are different from Winky and Dobby. As Carey examines, "Dobby embraces his rise in status from slave to proletarian by a brave attempt to embrace the realities of the free market economy" (Carey, 161).

In addition, Dobby after being a free elf, has tried to apply for a job, however, he is not successful, because it is difficult for him to get the job when he requires payment. All potential employers “[...] slammed the door in Dobby’s face” (Rowling, *The Goblet of Fire*, 404) because there are different elves who want to work without receiving money for their serving. Dobby also experiences difficulty in accepting his new identity. He mismatches the clothes he is wearing, and when he finally finds a job at Hogwarts, he struggles due to a lack of knowledge of the working system. When negotiating the working conditions with Dumbledore, Dobby refuses an offer of free weekends and ten Galleons a week, instead he agrees on one day off in a month and one Galleon a week. But still, Dobby is trying to not give up and get used to his new way of life. On the other hand, Winky feels desperate and falls into alcoholism, drinking butterbeer. Moreover, the other Hogwarts house-elves started to fade into the background from him, like he would be contaminated because Winky’s example and Dobby’s two years of finding jobs do not make a good advertisement for the need to feel and experience freedom.

This whole depiction of the treatment of house-elves at Hogwarts offers a complex, measured portrait of the house-elves servitude within the wizarding world. It is necessary to not forget about the respectful and considerate treatment of house-elves as shown by some members of the Hogwarts staff, including Professors Dumbledore and McGonagall. They treat the house-elves with kindness and appreciation, recognising the significant contribution they make to the running of the school. Hogwarts house-elves are provided with appropriate working conditions, including suitable accommodation and food. The kitchens where the elves work are described as busy and neat, which suggests that efforts are made to provide for the comfort and welfare of the elves. Although they are in a servant's position, some of the House-elves at Hogwarts show a sense of belonging and pride in their work. They are proud to serve the school and its inhabitants and consider it as an honour to be part of the Hogwarts community.

Finally, the experiences of house-elves, challenge readers to critically examine the ethical implications of house-elf servitude and the treatment of marginalised beings in society, and underscore broader themes of power, privilege and inequality. All readers may encounter these depicted themes in society.

1.3. Comparison to real-world issues

In comparison to real-world issues, it is possible to examine the topic by focusing on the life of house-elves as the issue of slavery, and Rowling indirectly uses them as a metaphor for slavery, appropriate to children readers, to make them easily understand this problematic. However, the issue of enslavement on a legal basis of portal fantasy within the wizarding world differs from the Muggle world. This type of slave, house-elves, cannot be bought or sold, they can be only inherited; hence Barrat states that “they are therefore less explicitly commodifiable than slaves were in the transatlantic slave trade” (Barrat, 47-48).

Moreover, house-elves are never expressed or called slaves when they are described within the series. As mentioned before, they are bound to wizarding families until they are freed by receiving a piece of clothing. Similarly to human slaves, house-elves have their master and are often treated as if they would be the property of the serving family.

Presenting the house-elves can be also understood as a profound allegory for real-world injustices, echoing themes of exploitation, oppression, and resistance. Dobby and other elves have to live in terrible conditions and experience treatment like they would be puppets, which is similar to the life of human slaves.

It is important to mention that Rowling has put a plot in the story, which is resistance and a fight against the inequality and enslavement of house-elves by Hermione Granger and her campaign, Society for the Promotion of Elfish Welfare (shortly S.P.E.W.). The S.P.E.W is an organisation which should fight for the rights of house-elves and other magical creatures

who are being enslaved. As Carey states, "Rowling uses Hermione's actions to highlight the moral imperative of advocating for the rights of marginalized groups, urging readers to reflect on their own complicity in systems of oppression and the importance of taking a stand against injustice" (Carey, 15). Furthermore, the systems do not only parallel slavery in North America; they also present a parallel to the exploitation of immigrant workers or working people in developing countries, even in China, where the conditions for workers are not optimal and human rights are not respected.

Hermione is trying to do her best to save and support the house-elves' rights, for instance by knitting and leaving hats in the Hogwarts common room, with the hope that they will be found and set the elves free. Hermione's decision to knit hats for house-elves shows that she cares about them and her intention to reform Hogwarts, even the habits within the wizarding world. Nevertheless, she receives a lack of support from her friends, Ron replies to the question of why nobody does anything to stop that: "Well, the elves are happy, aren't they [...] You heard old Winky back at the match ... "House-elves is not supposed to have fun" ... that's what she likes, being bossed around..." (Rowling, *The Goblet of Fire*, 125). Hagrid responded when she had asked him to support S.P.E.W. that it is in their 'nature' to look after humans (Rowling, *The Goblet of Fire*, 256). In general, Hermione's effort is regarded as useless by her closest friends, and sometimes they make fun of her S.P.E.W.

The lack of support comes even from the house-elves. The Hogwarts house-elves share these thoughts about Hermione's madness and danger. They also refuse to even do the cleaning in Hogwarts's rooms because they are scared of accidentally touching a piece of clothing. In response to this, Hermione attempts to convince herself and maintain a positive outlook, suggesting that the house-elves are "brainwashed" and therefore unaware of the concept of freedom and equal treatment. Commenting on this, Barrat writes that "Arguments abounded that African Americans constituted a "natural" slave class, based on their reputed physical

strength, intellectual unsophistication, and psychological docility. Such arguments were based on pseudoscientific notions of racial hierarchy” (Barrat, 51). It is necessary to point out that according to historical facts, even Abraham Lincoln was not able to see slaves as equal, he emancipated the slaves in the South due to his political interest to keep the commitment of Unity not according to his attitude or moral position (Barrat, 51).

Despite Hermione’s considerable intelligence and cleverness, she lacks knowledge of social feeling, which is necessary in politics and organisations for resistance. As a result, she made several mistakes, for example, the basic one according to house-elf slavery, she never asked personally if the elves wanted to be set free. Hence, her organisation is not as successful as the other larger or better-resourced movements such as Dumbledore’s Army, Order of the Phoenix and the Werewolf Rights movement.

In addition, Christine Schott's example illustrates how the institution of house-elf slavery can be interpreted as symbolising the enslavement of African-American people. Schott states that "Dobby and his death represent an African-American slave, invoking the trope of People of Colour sacrificing themselves for the sake of saving white protagonists." Moreover, there are parallels between house-elf slavery and modern forms of exploitation, such as human trafficking and forced labour. It is evident that individuals are subjected to involuntary servitude in both fictional and real-world contexts., they often suffer from severe mistreatment and abuse (Schott, 262). The mistreatment of house-elves reflects wider patterns of discrimination and marginalisation based on factors such as race, class and social status.

The series, particularly through the character of Hermione Granger and her advocacy for the rights of house-elves, offers a reflection on real issues of exploitation and oppression. It is a bit mystery, why the purpose and the end of S.P.E.W. during the next books of the series softly disappear. Even The Fountain of Magical Brethren after being replaced by Magic is Might statue lost its possibility of successor. According to the main characters it could be

replaced by a monument representing their fight for equality. However, the problematics about house-elf slavery are too extensive, there is only awareness that Hermione continues even in her later age to fight for their rights and equality. Perhaps, Rowling realised that such a deep and complex issue could not be believably sold by the action of one character, this might take generations of gradual change, however, the truth is that the topic is quietly abandoned in the series without any explicit conclusion which is a shame.

The question of what young readers can find by comprehensive reading can be answered not only by its classification as a parallel for slavery but by drawing a parallel with domestic violence as well. The mistreatment of the house-elves displays some aspects of this type of violence, including the elves' loyalty to their masters, their tendency to blame themselves, and even a fear of leaving their family, no matter how cruel and abusive their masters may be. This theme can be discovered by some readers who have some knowledge about or, in a worse case, personal experience.

Readers are unable to identify a comprehensive guide on how to avoid violence and prevent it. Consequently, some may perceive this as a deficiency in the author's work. However, each individual who has read the series can derive their insights on how to navigate and resolve these conflicts in society.

3 Blood Purity and discrimination

“I’d say that it’s one short step from ‘Wizards first’ to ‘Purebloods first,’ and then to ‘Death Eaters,’” replied Kingsley. “We’re all human, aren’t we? Every human life is worth the same, and worth saving.”

Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows (Rowling 2015,440)

3.1 Blood Purity in Wizarding World - explanation of the concept

In the series, there is an invisible line dividing the magical and non-magical world. Human beings living in the non-magical world with no magical ability are called 'muggles'. On the other part of the dividing line, there is the magical society. This society contains groups that take positions in hierarchy according to their blood status, these positions play a significant role within the wizarding world. Blood purity is a controversial and longstanding aspect of the magical society and it refers to the belief that witches and wizards with pure magical ancestry are superior to those with non-magical or mixed. There are four groups allocated to names based on the purity of the blood. This could be found as a hierarchy within the wizarding world that places those with 'Pure-blood' ancestry at the top. They are followed by 'Half-bloods' who have both magical and non-magical heritage, another group are 'Muggle-borns' who have magical abilities but come from non-magical families, and finally, the last group within the magical world and also important to mention, 'squibs' who have no magical abilities but come from magical families.

Historically, the belief in blood purity has been associated with elitism, prejudice, and discrimination within the wizarding community. Wizards and witches of pure-blood descent often consider themselves superior to those with less pure lineage, leading to the systemic bias of individuals with Muggle-born or mixed ancestry. On the other hand, some challenge and attempt to not pay attention to hierarchy based on bloodlines and make such an effort for the equality and inclusion of all magical beings, regardless of their ancestry.

It is necessary to briefly describe the meaning of these terms called pure-blood, half-blood, muggle-blood wizard or witch for better understanding. Important things to focus on are magical lineage, social beliefs, and historical context.

3.2 Examples of discrimination based on blood status

As previously mentioned, the highest position in the wizarding society belongs to 'Purebloods'. A pure-blood wizard or witch is someone who can trace their magical lineage back through the generations, without any known muggle ancestry and any outside influences from the non-magical world. Thanks to this relation they are considered to have pure magical blood. These wizards and witches are often regarded as the aristocracy of the magical community. Pure-blood status can be understood as an ideology that keeps a sense of elitism and exclusivity by those of pure-blood descent. Barrat states in her book *The Politics of Harry Potter* that they consider themselves in higher esteem than their 'less pure' individuals.

This attitude is reflected in families such as the Malfoys or the Blacks. These families are proud of their pure-blood ancestry and constantly look down on wizards and witches of mixed or Muggle-born heritage. For instance, the pureblood fanaticism of Bellatrix Lestrange is deeply rooted in Black's family. Furthermore, Walburga Black's portrait, hanging in the house on Grimmauld Place, constantly screams vicious insults at visitors of impure ancestry. It is possible to see her pride in her family's bloodline and her disdain for offspring whose support of superiority has disappeared or has been associated with impure families on the ancient tapestry of the Black's family tree where there are black burnt holes instead of names. Another proponent of the superiority of pure-bloods is Lord Voldemort. His belief in pureblood superiority supports his despise of Muggles and his effort for magical dominance.

There is no exact definition or criteria for determining pure-blood status in the series. However, according to Barratt, pure-blood wizards and witches or families often have a long

and outstanding genealogy, with ancestral ties to prominent magical figures and wizarding institutions (Barrat, 2012).

The term 'Half-blood' describes wizards and witches with magical abilities who also have non-magical ancestry. This term refers to those whose ancestry includes both magical and non-magical lineage. They are in a middle ground between pure-blood wizards and muggle-born wizards, this means having one parent from a pure-blood family and another from a muggle-born family. Half-blood wizards and witches often face challenges and prejudice due to their mixed ancestry. Purebloods view them with suspicion or disdain due to their values in magical lineage. However, Half-bloods can also face discrimination from some Muggle-borns who consider them a threat on account of their dual identity. Despite these prejudices and discriminations, Half-bloods are important in building relations between the magical and non-magical worlds. For instance, the main character of the series, Harry Potter, represents the complexity of the Half-blood life, which connects these two worlds. Even though Harry has two parents with magical abilities, his mother comes from a non-magical family, which means that Harry automatically belongs to the Half-blood part of the hierarchy within the magical society.

In addition, it is important to mention that Half-blood characters are often called “blood traitors”. A wizard or a witch who disagrees with the racial superiority of Purebloods or who supports equality in the division of the magical world between Purebloods and Muggle-borns or Muggles is classified as a Blood Traitor, generally by elite pure-blood families. Characters such as Sirius Black were called blood traitors and the Weasleys family as well. The Weasleys are considered as traitors to the bloodline due to their relationship with Hermione, their father's passion for Muggle technology, and his work at the Ministry of Magic in the Office for the Misuse of Muggle Artefacts. Lucius Malfoy holds the Weasleys in scorn when he sees them and the Grangers together: “Dear me, what’s the use of being a disgrace to the name of wizard

if they don't even pay you well for it . . . The company you keep, Weasley . . . and I thought your family could sink no lower“ (Rowling, *The Chamber of Secrets*, 62).

Following the Half-bloods is a group known as 'Muggle-borns'. This term is used to describe wizards and witches who possess magical abilities and were born to non-magical parents. Muggle-borns, as well as Half-bloods, often face discrimination and prejudice from purebloods based on their non-magical ancestry within the wizarding community. Two of the main proponents of Muggle-borns in the series are Lilly Potter, the mother of Harry Potter, and Hermione Granger. There has appeared one situation in *The Deathly Hallows* when Lily asks Severus Snape: “Does it make a difference, being Muggle-born?” Snape hesitated. His black eyes, eager in the greenish gloom, moved over the pale face, the dark red hair. “No,” he said. “It doesn't make any difference” (Rowling, *The Deathly Hallows*, 666). However, for purebloods, it is enough to be different. Even though their ancestry is considered by purebloods as ‘impure’, they often prove to have even better magical capabilities than purebloods. Lily was remembered as talented by one of the Hogwarts professors: “One of the brightest I ever taught. Vivacious” (Rowling, *The Half Blood Prince*, 70).

Hermione, who has both non-magical parents working as dentists, is an intelligent witch with exceptional magical skills. Despite her intelligence and skills, she faces many times to disdain from purebloods such as Draco Malfoy who calls her “you filthy little Mudblood” (Rowling, *The Chamber of Secrets*, 127). The term Mudblood signifies a “dirty” blood status and later in the series, it is shown as a verbal abuse of those who have non-magical ancestry. Barratt claims that the term Mudblood serves as a tool for enforcing social hierarchies (Barrat, 2012).

Finally, there is the last group within the wizarding world called “Squibs”. They are the offspring of magical parents without possessing any magical ability themselves. Barrat states that “parentage is no guarantee of wizarding ability, because the wizarding gene is one that can

crop up in some unexpected places, according to Rowling'' (Barrat, 2012, 8). Characters such as Argus Filch or Mrs. Figg are squibs. However, some situations suggest that even squibs without magical abilities can possess magical genes expressed in different ways. For instance, Harry saw a book correspondence called QuickSpell on the table of Argus Filch. Mrs. Figg was able to describe dementors; these creatures should be invisible to someone without magical ability.

Even though squibs often find ways how to contribute to the wizarding world in other ways, they face, as well as Half-bloods or Muggle-borns, prejudice and discrimination within the magical society.

3.3 Parallels to real-world issues of discrimination based on ethnicity and social status

Discrimination based on ethnicity and social status in the series will be discussed in this section. The text will compare Rowling's hierarchy, which is based on blood status, with the real world. There will also be an examination of the political similarities between the wizarding and the real world. Additionally, the text will examine how the series reflects real-world issues of prejudice and gender roles.

The theme of blood status in the series highlights the dangers and power of racial and genetic politics. It reflects supremacist ideologies that have fuelled discrimination in the past and present. Additionally, there are hidden parallels that reflect real issues in both magical and Muggle societies. Pureblood wizards and witches, led by Lord Voldemort, seek the eradication of Muggle-borns and long for a hierarchy based on magical ancestry. In the series, it can be seen as a parallel of promoting ideologies of racial purity that oppress or eliminate inferior groups.

Furthermore, Rowling cites the clear examples of Nazi racial ideology and practice. As written in *The Deathly Hallows*, the statute, standing in the Ministry of Magic: "Engraved in

foot-high letters at the base of the statue were the words MAGIC IS MIGHT” (Rowling, *The Deathly Hallows*, 258). This statue represents the values of the purebloods manifesting the superiority of genealogy and ancestry. However, Harry, as a half-blood wizard with limited knowledge of magical ancestry, needed an explanation, as he was unable to understand the statue's significance to other wizards in the magical world.

“You got in all right, then?” Hermione whispered to Harry [...] It’s horrible, isn’t it?” she said to Harry, who was staring up at the statue. “Have you seen what they’re sitting on?” [...] Harry looked more closely and realised that what he had thought were decoratively carved thrones were actually mounds of carved humans: hundreds and hundreds of naked bodies, men, women, and children, all with rather stupid, ugly faces, twisted and pressed together to support the weight of the handsomely robed wizards. “Muggles,” whispered Hermione, “In their rightful place” (Rowling, *The Deathly Hallows*, 258).

Finally, regarding the parallels in certain political issues, Brycchan Carey states, that according to the personal struggle of Harry with Voldemort, there is a place for discussion about democratic society and its response to elitism, totalitarianism, and racism. Through the series, the main characters start to behave less as students and more as fighting soldiers in a war between those who uphold the ideals of freedom, and equality and those who advocate for a repressive government based on principles of racial segregation, using indiscriminate terror to conquer their subjects (Carey, *Reading Harry Potter again*, 159). There barely appear wizards or witches who are not either politically or socially active in the series. Only Dursleys, and Muggles, living on a suburban estate are inactive and disinterested in political affairs. “The French Revolution; the Second World War; the War on Terror: all these and more are being fought again and again in Rowling’s books”(Carey, 2009).

It is possible to have a variety of attitudes towards Muggle-borns. Some wizards and witches regard all wizards as equal before the law, which is the official position of the Ministry of Magic. Other wizards present themselves as tolerant, although they may subconsciously regard Muggle-borns as different from themselves. As Barrat states, “Many will recall Joe Biden referring to then-Senator Barack Obama as “the first mainstream African-American who is articulate and bright and clean and a nice-looking guy,” during the 2008 US presidential campaign. The remark caused an uproar because logically, his comment implied that such qualities were not the norm. Biden caught flak for giving a backhanded compliment at best, and being a closeted racist at worst.” (Barrat, 70) A similar attitude appears in Rowling’s story as well. It is the belief of Professor Slughorn when he is sharing his memory with Harry about his mother, Lily Potter: “Your mother was Muggle-born, of course. Couldn’t believe it when I found out. Thought she must have been pure blood, she was so good” (Rowling, *The Half-Blood Prince*, 70).

To summarise, issues of discrimination based on ethnicity and social status are mirrored in the distinction between magical bloodlines and social hierarchies within the wizarding world. Within the wizarding community, the hierarchy is based on blood status and maintains elitism and sentiments of superiority among those witches and wizards of pure-blood origin. As was stated above, the Malfoys and the Blacks are precious examples of this attitude. They proudly display their ancestry and disdainfully decrease those with impure or Muggleborn heritage.

Following the previous comments on the discriminatory practices of dividing the wizarding society according to blood status and the hierarchy within the wizarding world, it is possible to note that Rowling may also wish to present and educate her readers about another form of discrimination that can regularly appear in society.

Initially, the most significant institution in human life is family. The family can be classified as an institution that transmits and acquires culture, values, and attitudes within a society where individuals become part of it and strive to integrate. The family also plays a key role in providing fundamental education, primarily to younger individuals, and offers guidance on appropriate behaviour, social norms, and expectations. Family dynamics also influence social roles, with members of the family often serving as sources of information and advice for young people on matters related to gender.

Rowling uses what might be defined as a conservative type of family. In this type of family, it is possible to match the parents with conservative social roles. Fathers are usually classified as those who work to earn money for a better living, while mothers are typically seen as the family's primary caretakers, responsible for cooking and maintaining a clean home. Within the series, fathers such as Mr Weasley and Lucius Malfoy even Remus Lupin go to work while mothers: Tonks, Molly Weasley and Narcissa Malfoy are presented to be homemakers. It is noteworthy how Rowling portrays almost all of the families within the series, despite her own experience of divorce and the subsequent raising of her children as a single parent.

Molly Weasley, at first, can be viewed with prejudice by the readers, because they define her as a typical loving mother, moreover, she relates to the stereotypical example of the mother as Margaret S. Mauk notes: "Mrs. Weasley constantly nurtures, scolds, and mothers the characters around her. Frequently depicted cleaning, cooking, knitting, or even disciplining her children, Mrs. Weasley acts as the emotional foundation for the gang" (Mauk, 123). However, Rowling attempts to educate her readers that the role of the mother does not have to be the same as it is usually described.

Rowling presents those female characters as "maternal warriors" (Mauk, 126). Although their roles as maternal warriors might initially seem surprising, readers quickly

accept Molly, Narcissa, and Tonks on the battlefield. This acceptance stems from their clear motivation to fight for their children. For instance, a loving mother, Molly, fights and protects the children at Hogwarts' war against a vicious enemy when she says “You—will—never—touch—our—children—again!” (Rowling, *The Deathly Hallows*, 736), and subsequently kills Bellatrix Lestrange.

Furthermore, Narcissa Malfoy and her maternal love for her son Draco Malfoy represent the most powerful force in the world, as well as, Lily's maternal love of Harry. In *The Deathly Hallows*, Narcissa acts as an independent woman when she examines Harry for signs of life. She protects him in front of Voldemort and his followers by confirming Harry's death. She did this intentionally to gain permission to enter Hogwarts as a part of the conquering army, in order to find her son and save him after the defeat of Voldemort's main enemy. „While she does not go as far as Molly Weasley to defend “our children,” she protects Harry as a child, allowing him the chance to secretly revive and defend his cause and her own son,” as Mauk writes (139). After this, Narcissa and Lucius can no longer serve Voldemort because their priority becomes saving their son, indicating that parental love can overcome even the strongest ideologies.

Although Rowling depicts traditional gender roles and upholds the traditional nuclear family as an ideal, this does not imply that her mother characters are weak and dependent. It may be the case that Rowling's own life experience of raising, protecting, and securing her children's needs, and the fight against prejudice as a single mother, has influenced her portrayal of women in the series as powerful and skilful characters. Therefore, she considered herself a "Queen Mother" (Mauk, 123).

The narratives within the series provide readers with the opportunity to adopt an objective perspective on gender and its role within society. They encourage readers to consider the idea that not only men, but women can also provide a secure place for others.

In the end, it is possible to note that Rowling explores themes of discrimination and social hierarchy, using the concept of blood status to parallel issues of racial and genetic politics in the real world. By the struggles within the wizarding world, Rowling highlights the dangers of supremacist ideologies and totalitarian regimes and she encourages readers to reflect on the importance of equality and the fight against oppression. Presenting family dynamics and both men and women as powerful, nurturing, and capable of profound impact enriches the objective insight of readers on social roles.

To conclude this chapter, it is not the purity of a person's or wizard's blood that defines them, but the strength of their character and the choices they make.

4 Lord Voldemort and Racial Purification

“Welcome, Death Eaters,” said Voldemort quietly. “Thirteen years . . . thirteen years since last we met. Yet you answer my call as though it were yesterday. . . . We are still united under the Dark Mark, then! Or are we?”

Harry Potter and The Goblet of Fire (Rowling, 2015, 684)

4.1 Introduction to Lord Voldemort’s Ideology

This chapter is going to discuss the conflict between the opposing sides in the series. However, it is necessary to note that this is not merely a matter of contrasting stories about good versus evil. As it was mentioned in the previous chapter, racial and blood status hierarchy appears within Rowling’s series from its beginning. This part aims to be more focused on racial ideology and will try to explain the hidden ideology of “You-Know-Who” in Rowling’s narrative.

At the beginning, it is necessary to introduce the main protagonist, Lord Voldemort, and his life story, for a better understanding.

Lord Voldemort is a name which he started to use after some time, before renaming himself, he used to be called Tom Marvolo Riddle, Tom after his father and Marvolo after his mother’s father. “[...] You think I was going to use my filthy Muggle father’s name forever? I, in whose veins runs the blood of Salazar Slytherin himself, through my mother’s side?” (Rowling, *The Chamber of Secrets*, 314).

His mother was a witch and his father was a Muggle from the non-magical world. As a child, Voldemort was born and raised in an orphanage in the Muggle world. Later, in the series, he admits, that his mother died while giving birth to him and that he killed his father, who left his mother alone while she was pregnant, and lived in the Muggle world. “He left her and returned to his Muggle parents before I was even born, Potter, and she died giving birth to me, leaving me to be raised in a Muggle orphanage . . . but I vowed to find him . . . I revenged

myself upon him, that fool who gave me his name . . . Tom Riddle. . . .” (Rowling, *The Goblet of Fire*, 683).

During his childhood he lacked knowledge and interest in racial ideas that appeared in the wizarding world, however, it changed from the time he met Dumbledore and joined Hogwarts school. It is important to mention that any institution, such as a school, has its social dynamics, often full of stereotypes and prejudices. During Voldemort’s childhood in the Muggle’s orphanage, he was lonely, he did not experience popularity, love or happiness. Despite the lack of positive emotions, he still felt special and sometimes in a superior position: “I knew I was special. [...] I can make things move without touching them. I can make animals do what I want them to do, without training them. I can make bad things happen to people who annoy me. I can make them hurt if I want to” (Rowling, *The Half-Blood Prince*, 271). Other children in the orphanage often felt scared of Tom’s superiority, even Mrs. Cole, who worked as a matron of this institution. She noted to Dumbledore that some strange things had happened and Tom was constantly part of it, however, it was hard to accuse him of committing them. At the end of the discussion between her and Dumbledore, Mrs. Cole says: “ I don’t think many people will be sorry to see the back of him.” (Rowling, *The Half-Blood Prince*, 268).

As was noted in the paragraph above, Voldemort was not a person abounding with love, understanding or sincerity. This probably did not help the personality he became as an adult wizard. Furthermore, attending Hogwarts every day, and becoming a member of the Slytherin House did not help either.

The Slytherin House was established by Salazar Slytherin, one of the four founders of Hogwarts. Salazar believed pure-blood wizards and witches were superior to other “impure” origins. He, therefore, established the principle that only students from pure-blood families could join the studies at Hogwarts, however, the last three co-founders stood against this idea, therefore he left the school. Before his resignation, Slytherin constructed the secret chamber as

a residence for Basilisk. His intention was that one day the Heir of Slytherin would arrive at Hogwarts and perpetuate Salazar's former ideas about the pure-blood wizarding world. This may be connected to Voldemort's childhood, but it is evident from the series that he identified with Salazar and began to regard himself as Slytherin's heir.

Salazar's belief greatly influenced the attitudes of both the mentality of the Slytherin House and Lord Voldemort. It is believed that thanks to these values and the obvious discussions of the students around Voldemort, who was part of Slytherin, he learned about the social hierarchy within the wizarding world. During his empowering magic skills, Voldemort began to delve deeply into the Dark Arts, and anyone can guess why. Perhaps it was because he felt decreased and undervalued due to his origins, or perhaps it was because he was afraid of revealing his origins, so he found it easier to learn something unforgivable, such as spells that are against the law in the wizarding world, to make others around him feel threatened so that he could avoid being ridiculed for his origins.

Moreover, the disdain and contempt, that Voldemort keeps against Half-bloods and Muggle-borns, could reflect his self-hatred towards his half-blood ancestry. When Voldemort learns of his half-blood heritage, he seems unable to bear the truth, which is clear from Dumbledore's narration to Harry about how Voldemort murdered the Muggle man who had abandoned his pure-blood witch mother and Muggle grandparents to wipe out the unworthy Riddle lineage and revenge his own father's rejection (Rowling, *The Half-Blood Prince*, 367). Voldemort's purpose was to destroy any remaining evidence of his heritage.

Soon after graduating, Voldemort left Hogwarts and began working at Borgin & Burkes, a shop in Diagon Alley known for its dark magic that means his interest in Dark Arts was higher so he started to go deeper into this type of magic to gain further knowledge and power. During his discovery and gaining new information, he met various wizards and witches declaring the supremacy of pureblood ancestry over those with Half-blood or Muggle-born

ones. This group, known as the Death Eaters, came to obsess over Voldemort, admiring him for his ideas, his values and his promise to bring the whole world under his control.

Ideology is a concept that embraces the beliefs, values and principles that form a group's or an individual's worldview. It affects their decisions and actions. A desire for world leadership and immortality characterises Voldemort's ideology. He sees mortality as a kind of weakness and his desire for power and immortality leads him to commit inexcusable and terrible acts of violence against those who do not share his type of dark ideology of prejudice and inequality.

4.2 Parallels to real-world Ideologies and the Impact on Wizarding World

Lord Voldemort was determined to build an empire that would restore the status of the pure-blood lineage as the only one existing within the wizarding world. His obsession with power and immortality drove him towards this goal, and significantly his ultimate goal was to unite the wizarding world under his ideology.

When comparing ideologies with the real world, it is useful to look at examples such as Nazism and Fascism. As Sarah Rangwala explains in her essay "A Marxist Examination of J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter", Voldemort's desire to control death, while cloaked in the rhetoric of pure-blood superiority and social engineering, ultimately stemmed from personal fear rather than genuine ideological conviction (Rangwala, 133). To explain the aforementioned quote, it is important to note that Voldemort is fearful of death. Consequently, he employs the use of his followers, acts of violence and the reign of terror in an attempt to maintain his immortality. This is a common element found in both of these ideologies.

Ideologies such as Nazism and Fascism represent authoritarianism with a focus on supremacy; Nazism demands racial superiority, while fascism includes a range of nationalist

and authoritarian principles. For instance, taking Lord Voldemort as the protagonist of an empire filled with pure-blood wizards is a clear allegory of the Third Reich of Adolf Hitler.

Both Lord Voldemort and Hitler faced similar prejudices in their childhood. Hitler's hatred towards Jews may have been influenced by his belief that his grandparents were Jewish, although this was merely speculation and lacked historical evidence. It has been suggested that Hitler considered the idea of Jewish religion as a mere imagination, leading him to define it in a negative light. This is similar to Voldemort because he rejected his former ancestry by murdering his ancestor to delete Muggle lineage. Besides their ancestry, they both shared an effort to gain racial purity. Barrat quotes Staudinger: "Hitler established the link between himself and the leading group, the acting forces and the masses, and created from the beginning of the movement a firm mutual interrelationship between those above and below—a plan that guaranteed action as well as continuous control of the followers" (Barrat, 63). There is a similarity between Voldemort and his group of Death Eaters because of their loyalty to him and their shared values, but also a fear of becoming at odds without Voldemort's protection within the wizarding world.

Barrat also observes that even Lord Voldemort in the wizarding world acts "[...]to a great extent like a conventional political entrepreneur" (Barrat, 63). His relationship with Death Eaters is not only filled with fear, but it also contains a sense of family relationship "But look, Harry! My true family returns. . . ." (Rowling, *The Goblet of Fire*, 683). In the same way that Hitler skilfully used symbols of traditional German nationalism to legitimise his racial ideology, Voldemort claims to be restoring lost traditional standards of magical behaviour, selectivity and power. As the Purebloods lost power after Voldemort disappeared, they became increasingly resentful and looked for someone to blame. Similarly, Hitler was aware that an inspired middle class was eager for a scapegoat. For them, to blame the Jewish corner shopkeeper was the first step to improving their situation. They could not blame the victorious

Allies or the world economy directly. For example in Nazi propaganda, Jews were blamed for various problems, including losing the First World War, the Great Depression and spreading disease. This strategy has been so effective that it is now known in social psychology as “blaming the victim” (Barrat, 68). For example, Draco accuses Hermione of receiving special treatment from the professors at Hogwarts, despite her Muggle origins (Rowling, *The Chamber of Secrets*, 63).

To make ideologies, such as those mentioned in the previous paragraph, effective, it is important to have some support for values and concerns that are easily understood by the audience. Hence, Voldemort used the idea of a better world full of pure-bloods superior not only to the ones with impure ancestry but also to the Muggles. This idea developed in history probably thanks to Grindelwald and it was supported by the Fountain of Magical Brethren at the Ministry of Magic, so Voldemort used it as a help to build an unbreakable ideology.

In the Third Reich, labels or symbols such as the yellow star were used to identify Jews as an impure race. Similarly, after his return to power, Lord Voldemort created the Muggle-Born Registration Commission in the Ministry of Magic. Barrat notes a similarity between the Third Reich and Lord Voldemort's regime in their use of identification to single out members of a target group. This practice can lead to verbal or physical violence constructed by individuals or society, not by the state (Barrat, 69).

The ideas of both Hitler and Voldemort were attractive because they offered a new, optimistic view of the world, and at the same time, they contained familiar cultural ideas. Not everyone supported those discriminatory ideas or propaganda in both cases, however, it was dangerous to speak out loud about the disagreement. It was approved by Remus Lupin: “Naturally many people have deduced what has happened: There has been such a dramatic change in Ministry policy in the last few days, and many are whispering that Voldemort must be behind it. However, that is the point: They whisper. They daren’t confide in each other, not

knowing whom to trust; they are scared to speak out, in case their suspicions are true and their families are targeted. Yes, Voldemort is playing a very clever game (Rowling, *The Deathly Hallows*, 2008). A similar phenomenon occurred in Nazi Germany, with fears that speaking out could endanger one's family or job.

In addition, each ideology has its resistance in its form regarding collective action for the public good. The series includes resistance groups such as the Order of the Phoenix and Dumbledore's Army. These groups played a crucial role in resisting Voldemort's oppressive ideology. A secret society of experienced witches and wizards, the Order of the Phoenix was led by Dumbledore. They defended those who were attacked and worked in secret to disrupt the plans of both Voldemort and the Death Eaters. Dumbledore's Army was formed by Hogwarts students, led by the main character Harry, with the aim of learning practical defence against the Dark Arts and preparing for the war against Lord Voldemort and Death Eaters. Similar resistance can be seen in various acts and movements against ideologies in the real world, such as the French Resistance led by Jean Moulin during the Second World War, or the Civil Rights Movement, including the Southern Christian Leadership Conference led by Martin Luther King. All these movements share a collective power in their resistance to oppression, inequality and division.

On the other hand, it is possible to draw parallels between Voldemort's ideology and racial segregation, as well as the promotion of a racist agenda, such as that of White Supremacists, who intend to use violence to humiliate and intimidate non-Whites. As previously mentioned, Voldemort's regime aims to oppress wizards with impure lineage and magical creatures, reflecting systemic racism and discrimination.

For instance, at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, Jim Crow laws were introduced in the South of the United States. These laws enforced racial segregation and discrimination against African Americans. The doctrine of white supremacy

was widely supported politically and by contemporary European colonial regimes. It was associated with violent groups such as the Ku Klux Klan. Similar practices are evident in the series, as Voldemort surrounds himself with Death Eaters who use terror tactics against those who do not share their ideology or who show any resistance to them.

In her essay, Shama Rangwala suggests that the terror tactics used by the Death Eaters during the Quidditch World Cup resemble those used by the violent Ku Klux Klan. The Death Eaters manipulate their victims like puppets, which serves as a manifestation of Voldemort's fascist ideology. Their main aim is to gain absolute power and control for the elite classes and to brutally oppress others (Rangwala, 132).

The comparison between Hitler and Voldemort provides almost the same life story, moreover, tactics in which is possible to find how racism was prevalent within their communities. Both used ideologies to maintain power, they used similar ways of using symbolism either wearing of yellow star or the Muggle-Born Registration Commission. They also used fear and from their admirers, they made a tool to keep the values even within the society. Each of these similarities can provide the view that Voldemort and his Death Eaters, blood purification and trying to rule the world, is an allegory of the Second World War. Nevertheless, the parallels that can be drawn between real-world ideologies such as Nazism and Fascism and Voldemort's ideology reveal similarities in tactics, terror, propaganda, division and oppression.

The examination within this chapter shows its impact on the wizarding world, which is driven by fear, destruction, and resistance by characters such as Harry Potter and groups such as the Order of the Phoenix and Dumbledore's Army.

5 Conclusion

The main aim of this thesis was to analyse the complexity and depth of social inequalities presented in the *Harry Potter* book series written by J.K. Rowling. The main purpose was to define the issues concerning ideologies, and racial, social, and class inequalities among the characters appearing in the books and their struggle against them.

This thesis examined how Rowling highlights prejudice and inequality within her internationally popular narrative. The text was divided into chapters containing the description of the topics presented by characters and subsequent comparison to real-world issues. The preceding chapters analysed the development of these themes throughout the book series, focusing on the treatment of house-elves, blood discrimination based on social hierarchy and blood status, and Lord Voldemort's ideology. In each chapter, the text draws comparisons between the issues discussed and encountered in the real world, including examples of discrimination based on ethnicity, social status, or extremist ideologies, whether historical or contemporary.

Moreover, it was important to demonstrate how fantasy fiction works. The topics of each chapter were therefore presented in a manner that would enable readers to comprehend that these books are not merely narratives about the characters engaged in a fight against evil, but Rowling has successfully integrated typical life situations and social topics into the realm of fantasy literature, as was mentioned in previous chapters.

This analysis leads to the conclusion that the series employs fantasy fiction elements to entertain readers while also educating them on the significance of prejudice in all its forms. Those who read these series should be able to identify the themes that Rowling wished to convey, such as the fact that not everyone who needs help actually wants it, as well as the issue of discrimination based on heritage and stereotypes.

The main characters of J. K. Rowling's magical world, Harry, Ron, and Hermione, consistently reject and combat discrimination and prejudice. This enables young readers to recognise these issues in their own lives and to follow the example set by their literary heroes.

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