

Power and Evil in J. K. Rowling's  
*Harry Potter* Novels

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J. K. Rowlingin *Harry Potter* -romaanit kuvastavat pahuuden ja vallan yhtenäisyyttä monin eri tavoin. Valta ja pahuus ovat intiimisti yhteydessä toisiinsa. Valta on lähes poikkeuksetta korruptoitunutta, olivatpa valtaa pitävän alkuperäiset tavoitteet kuinka hyviä tai ihailtavia tahansa. Täten valtaan sisältyy aina eräänlainen pahuuden taso. Samaan tapaan myös pahuus on sekoittunut valtaan, sillä paha käyttää usein vallan koneistoja hyväkseen. Tämän tutkielman työvälineinä toimivat Michel Foucaultin teoriat vallasta sekä monenlaiset psykologiset, filosofiset ja uskonnolliset teoriat pahuudesta. Lisäksi tutkimus hyödyntää erityisesti Ilkka Mäyrän teoriaa ”toiseudesta”.

Harry Potterin maailma on kaikkea muuta kuin täydellinen, sillä Taikaministeriö hallitsee sitä erittäin epäpätevästi. Ministeriö laatii epäoikeudenmukaisia rasistisia ja lajistisia lakeja, jotka syrjivät esimerkiksi kotitonttuja ja ihmissusia. Lisäksi oikeuslaitos on pohjimmiltaan korruptoitunut, sillä viattomia ihmisiä tuomitaan vankilaan ilman oikeudenkäyntiä, kun taas syylliset ovat vapaalla jalalla. Taikaministeriön epäpätevyys ja korruptoituneisuus muodostaa kuitenkin vain osan siitä, mikä on vialla Harry Potterin maailmassa. Velhomaaailma on pohjimmiltaan rasistinen ja lajistinen. Se syrjii jästejä, jästisyntyisiä, puoliverisiä, puolilajisia ja taikaolentoja sekä lainsäädännössään että jokapäiväisessä elämässä, jossa syrjintää kohtaavat myös surkit. Tästä johtuen suuri pahuus on soluttautunut velhomaaailmaan: se on synnyttänyt kammottavat hirviöt, siis Voldemortin ja Kuolonsyöjät. Pirullinen Voldemort edustaa kirjoissa paha totalitaarista valtaa. Kuolonsyöjät ovat vuorostaan sadistisen pahoja hahmoja, jotka saavat valtavasti tyydytystä ihmisten kiduttamisesta ja tappamisesta. He haluavat eliminoida kaikki, jotka eivät ole puhdasverisiä velhoja tai noitia, ja he haluavat tehdä puhdasverisestä velhoväestöstä kannattajiaan.

Pahuus ei kuitenkaan ole absoluuttista Harry Potterin maailmassa. Teokset kuvaavat pahuutta hyvin monimuotoisesti, ja korostavat sitä miten jokainen ihminen on sekä hyvä että paha, sillä jokaisella ihmisellä on sisäsyntyinen taipumus sekä hyvyyteen että pahuuteen.

”Toiseus” on eräs tämän tutkimuksen avainkäsitteistä. Se liittyy keskeisesti sekä valtaan, pahuuteen, että pahaan valtaan. ”Toiseus” tarkoittaa ominaisuuksia, joita ihminen ei tunnusta itsellään olevan. ”Toiseuttaminen” viittaa tilanteeseen, jossa ihminen kieltäytyy hyväksymästä tiettyjä ominaisuuksia itsestään ja ”toiseuttaa” ne johonkin toiseen ihmiseen/ihmisryhmään ja/tai muodostaa näistä epätoivotuista ominaisuuksista hirviökuvan. ”Toiseuttaminen” on vallankäytön muoto, jolla saadaan potentiaalisesti paljon paha aikaan, kuten *Harry Potter* -kirjat osoittavat monin eri tavoin.

Avainsanat: Harry Potter, valta, pahuus, paha valta, ”toiseus”

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## 1. Introduction

J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* novels (1997-2007) take place in our time. They are situated in England: Surrey, London and especially Scotland (where Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry is probably situated, as the journey from King's Cross is northbound and takes all day). The *Harry Potter* novels are written for children, but adults appreciate them at least as much as children do, because they are very well-written, in a manner which captivates the reader. The novels include features of fantasy, gothic, and horror literature. Another reason why the novels are so popular and captivating, is that they are filled with fantasy, magic and adventure, but they are very realistic as well, because they describe Harry's normal school life and exams, human relationships, such as fights with relatives and friends, infatuations, etc.

The *Harry Potter* novels tell the story of Harry, a boy who loses his parents in a cruel way, when an evil wizard called Voldemort kills them. Harry is only a year old at the time. Voldemort tries to kill Harry too, but he cannot, since the killing curse, *Avada Kedavra*, he casts on Harry, bounces back on him. However, Voldemort does not die from the killing curse, but he becomes a bodiless, spirit-like creature for a while (until *Goblet*<sup>1</sup> where he is resurrected). The curse is not able to harm Harry (although Harry does get a lightning-shaped scar on his forehead), because his mother died in order to save him, and this provided Harry with the strongest possible protection: the protection of love. Interestingly, a part of Voldemort's powers are transferred to Harry, which Harry gets in addition to the scar. Harry Potter has struggled against Voldemort and various other enemies and difficulties in six books thus far, and the seventh (which will be published 21.7.2007) will be the last one.

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<sup>1</sup> J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* (London: Bloomsbury, 2000).

The aim of this thesis is to explore various issues related to power, evil and evil power in the world of Harry Potter. The issue of *power* is approached mainly through Foucaultian concepts of power. According to Foucault, power is something that is exercised: “there would be no power if it were not exercised by agents”, and “power is exercised by individuals or groups of individuals”<sup>2</sup>. Furthermore, Foucault approaches the concept of power in the following manner in *The History of Sexuality*:

By power, I do not mean “Power” as a group of institutions and mechanisms that ensure the subservience of citizens of a given state. By power, I do not mean, either, a mode of subjugation which, in contrast to violence, has the form of the rule. Finally, I do not have in mind a general system of domination exerted by one group over another, a system whose effects, through successive derivations, pervade the entire social body. The analysis, made in terms of power, must not assume, that the sovereignty of the state, the form of the law, or the over-all unity of a domination are given at the outset; rather, these are only the terminal forms power takes. It seems to me that power must be understood in the first instance as the multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organization; as the process which, through ceaseless struggles and confrontations, transforms, strengthens, or reverses them; as the support which these force relations find in one another, thus forming a chain or a system, or on the contrary, the disjunctions and contradictions which isolate them from one another; and lastly, as the strategies in which they take effect, whose general design or institutional crystallization is embodied in the state apparatus, in the formulation of the law, in the various social hegemonies. [...] Power is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere. And “Power”, insofar as it is permanent, repetitious, inert, and self-reproducing, is simply the over-all effect that emerges from all these mobilities, the concatenation that rests on each of them and seeks in turn to arrest their movement. One needs to be nominalistic, no doubt: power is not an institution, and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with; it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society.<sup>3</sup>

Thus, Foucault defines power as an overreaching and omnipresent concept: power is everywhere, and it has many forms. One of the focuses of this thesis is indeed to demonstrate how Rowling incorporates Foucault’s concepts, as well as other concepts of power, in her description of power in the wizarding world.

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<sup>2</sup> David Couzens Hoy, “Power, Repression, Progress: Foucault, Lukes, and the Frankfurt School”. In David Couzens Hoy (ed.), *Foucault: A Critical Reader* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd, 1986), p. 134.

<sup>3</sup> Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality. Volume 1: An Introduction* (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), pp.92-3.

In addition to Foucaultian concepts of power, Noel Chevalier's ideas are highly useful. Chevalier approaches the issue of power in the *Harry Potter* novels by remarking how especially *Order*<sup>4</sup> reveals the limitations of structures of power and how it is abused in various ways:

Harry's battle with Lord Voldemort and the consequential heroic status he endures are thus set within a social and political context that repeatedly reveals the limitations of the very structures – education, law, government and science – that enable the wizard world to function. *Order of the Phoenix*, in particular, develops the themes of power and its abuse, as seen in the control of information, the use of punishment, and the discrepancy between official truth and perceived reality.<sup>5</sup>

Noel Chevalier also points out that “Rowling wants to highlight that magic neither eliminates social and economic inequalities, nor does it allow wizards and witches to move beyond their social station” (413).

With regards to *evil*, the aim of this thesis is to explore different concepts of evil and how they fit into the world of Harry Potter. Rowling clearly has used several different theories of evil, some of which are even highly contradictory, in constructing the boundaries between good and evil in the world of Harry Potter. Thus, the focus of this thesis is to describe and analyse the way Rowling has constructed the concepts of evilness and goodness in her novels.

Defining *good* and *evil* as terms is very difficult, because the concepts of good and evil vary a lot in different cultures and at different times<sup>6</sup>. It can be defined in relative and in absolute terms, in religious and in secular terms. In this thesis, I shall explore various, and at times even conflicting, definitions of evil that I find to be best suited for the world of Harry Potter. For example, the following definition is a modern, Western, philosophical definition for good and evil:

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<sup>4</sup> J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* (London: Bloomsbury, 2003).

<sup>5</sup> Noel Chevalier, “The Liberty Tree and the Whomping Willow: Political Justice, Magical Science, and Harry Potter”, in *The Lion and the Unicorn* 29 (2005), pp. 397-415, p.400.

<sup>6</sup> Ilkka Mäyrä, ”Nykykauhun iloiset pirut – kauhukulttuurin muuttuva minähirviö”, *Kirjallisuudentutkijain Seuran vuosikirja 1998* (Vaasa: SKS, 1999), p. 44. Quoted as Mäyrä1 from here on.

Evil is something that is reverse to good or that destroys good. People, actions, circumstances, constructions, values, and ideologies can be named evil.<sup>7</sup>  
(My translation.)

Paul Ricoeur<sup>8</sup> defines evil in terms of actions. According to Ricoeur (636) “to do evil is always, either directly or indirectly, to make someone else suffer.”

Evil can also be defined through Manichean and Christian concepts of thinking. In Manichean thinking, “two eternal principles, good and evil [are] at perpetual war with each other”.<sup>9</sup> In Christian thinking evil equals Satan and his demons. Some Christians perceive Satan as inferior to God, which means that good is more powerful than evil; and some believe (the author of this work included) that Satan and God are equally strong, which means that God and Satan, good and evil, are constantly battling against each other. This idea actually is quite close to Manichean way of thinking.

Social psychologists approach evil from a rather different perspective compared to religion and philosophy, although Ricoeur’s thinking is quite similar to theirs. According to Philip Zimbardo, “[e]vil can be defined as intentionally behaving, or causing others to act, in ways that demean, dehumanize, harm, destroy, or kill innocent people”<sup>10</sup>. In my view this definition is somewhat inadequate, as one can also be evil if one intentionally harms animals, or harms the environment in irreparable ways (such as by destroying rainforests). Ervin Staub is somewhat along the same lines as Zimbardo. According to Staub<sup>11</sup>, “[e]vil is an extreme and sometimes repeated form of people harming others.”

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<sup>7</sup> Martti Linqvist, *Hyvä, paha ja pyhä* (Keuruu: Otava, 2002), p. 41.

<sup>8</sup> Paul Ricoeur, “Evil, a Challenge to Philosophy and Theology”, *Journal of American Academy of Religion*, Vol. 53, No. 4, 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Meeting of the American Academy of Religion (Dec., 1985), pp. 635-648.

<sup>9</sup> Catholic Encyclopedia, “Sin”, <<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14004b.htm>>.

<sup>10</sup> Philip Zimbardo, “A Situationist Perspective on the Psychology of Evil: Understanding How Good People Are Transformed into Perpetrators”, in Arthur G. Miller (ed.), *The Social Psychology of Good and Evil* (New York: The Guilford Press, 2004), p. 22.

<sup>11</sup> Ervin Staub, “Basic Human Needs, Altruism and Aggression”, in Arthur G. Miller (ed.), *The Social Psychology of Good and Evil* (New York: The Guilford Press, 2004), p. 51.



Ervin Staub has also developed a definition for goodness, which is rather unique considering that most people simply define what evil is, and then state that goodness is the opposite of it, or they define evil as being reverse to good, as Linqvist (quoted above). Either way, goodness is usually considered as something that is self-explanatory, whereas evil is something much more complicated and needs defining. According to Staub (52), “[g]oodness refers to actions that benefit others; it is an extreme form of helping others.”

Finally, with regards to *evil power*, the aim of this thesis is to describe and analyse instances of evil power, namely racism and speciesism, Nazism, and Diabolism (i.e. likeness to Satan), in the world of Harry Potter. The main focus is on exploring how racism and speciesism are means of using power against those without power in an essentially evil manner. This focus of racism and speciesism as evil power is elaborated when comparing Death Eaters and Nazis: the action of Voldemort and his Death Eaters is essentially an equivalent instance of power in its most evil form as the one of the Nazis in the real world. The third instance of evil power explored is Diabolism, namely Voldemort’s likeness to Satan. The aim of this part of the thesis is to compare and contrast the character of Voldemort to the mythical (or spiritual, depending on one’s interpretation) character of Satan. Thus, the concept of *evil power* refers to issues that are related both to power and evil, and where these two concepts are interrelated and intertwined

The reasons issues of power, evil and evil power in the world of Harry Potter are both viable and worthwhile investigating is that the difficult issues related to both power and evil in the wizarding world are presented in all the complexity of the real world. This complicatedness is made extremely clear throughout the novels. The child reader is the one who benefits most from this setting, as s/he will learn early on in life to perceive issues of evil and power in all their complicatedness in a safe environment through reading a novel, instead of learning it later on in life the hard way: S/he will learn that good and evil are not black and white concepts taken at

their face value, but s/he is encouraged to ponder these issues from various moral viewpoints in the novels. In addition, s/he will learn how complicated a concept power really is. S/he will also become familiar with the fact that power is almost invariably corrupted, and that power at its worst might corrupt the people in power (as is demonstrated throughout the novels). All this is extremely useful for the child reader, as s/he will appreciate not to take the difficult and complicated issues related to evil and power at face value in the real world, but to think of them her/himself. Thus, the child reader will thus be challenged to the limits of her understanding of abstract issues. This will prepare children to face difficulties related to power and evil in the real life, and also on a more general level it develops her/his abstract thinking.

This thesis essentially falls well within the category of scholarship already produced on the *Harry Potter* novels. It refers to various studies done by Harry Potter scholars and generally tends to agree with them. However, there are some major differences in the way I perceive some issues in the *Harry Potter* novels as compared to other scholars. For instance, my views on class and gender issues, evil, and sexuality, as well as on house-elves are somewhat different from most scholars (though not all). Furthermore, most research concerning issues of power done on the novels is centred on *Order*. Research on issues on evil, in its turn, is mainly concerned on issues of whether or not the novels should be considered as religiously damnable, i.e. being against the teachings of the Bible and promoting witchcraft. Above all, the main difference between this thesis and other works of Harry Potter scholarship is that I emphasise and explore the concept of “the other” in relation to issues of power, evil and evil power in the world of Harry Potter, which no other scholar has done<sup>12</sup>. Therefore, this research is in many ways similar

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<sup>12</sup> Only one piece of research comes even close to the concept of “otherness” in the sense that I employ, and it mentions the issue only briefly: Ximena Gallardo-C. and Jason Smith. “Cinderfella: J. K. Rowling’s Wily Web of Gender”. In Giselle Liza Anatol, *Reading Harry Potter*, (Westport, Connecticut, London: Praeger, 2003).

than the research already conducted within the *Harry Potter* scholarship, but it is also very different in many of its central assumptions, and it is by far the most extensive one conducted on the issues of power and evil. In addition, the concept of evil power is something entirely new, as I devised it myself.

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I base this evaluation on what has been done in the area of *Harry Potter* studies to the following works: Lana A. Whited (ed.) *The Ivory Tower and Harry Potter. Perspectives on a Literary Phenomenon*; Andrew Blake. *Harry Potterin ilmestys. Lastenkirjallisuus globalisoituvassa maailmassa; Topic: The Washington & Jefferson College Review*. Volume 54, *Harry Potter*; Philip Nel. *J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter Novels. A Reader's Guide*; Suman Gupta. *Re-Reading Harry Potter*; and Giselle Liza Anatol (ed.) *Reading Harry Potter*. In addition I have browsed the Internet and especially Nelliportaali extensively in search for works related to the concepts of power and evil.

## 2. Power

‘Yeah, size is no guarantee of power,’ said George. ‘Look at Ginny.’  
 ‘What do you mean?’ said Harry.  
 ‘You’ve never been on the receiving end of one of her Bat-Bogey Hexes, have you?’ (*Order*, 94.)

‘*Ministry of Magic?*’ bellowed Uncle Vernon. ‘People like you in *government?* Oh this explains everything, everything, no wonder the country’s going to the dogs.’ (*Order*, 32.)

### 2.1 Ministry of Magic

The Ministry of Magic is the representative organ and decision-making body of the wizards of the United Kingdom. It supervises the operation of the wizarding community in Britain. The Ministry of Magic is a part of the International Confederation of Wizards, and the Ministry is to obey the International Laws and Codes of it, such as the International Code of Secrecy, which states that Muggles<sup>13</sup> are not to know about the existence of magic, witches and wizards. Presumably, each country has its own Ministry of Magic, as can be inferred from the fact that Bulgaria has its own Minister for Magic, who we meet in *Goblet*. Hagrid explains the purpose of the Ministry of Magic to Harry thus:

‘But what does a Ministry of Magic *do?*’  
 ‘Well, their main job is to keep it from the Muggles that there’s still witches an’ wizards up an’ down the country.’  
 ‘Why?’  
 ‘*Why?* Blimey, Harry, everyone’d be wanting magic solutions to their problems. Nah, we’re best left alone.’<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> *Muggles* are people who have no magical powers. *Muggle-borns* are witches and wizards that are born to Muggle parents. *Half-bloods* in turn are witches and wizards whose other parent is a Muggle. *Squibs* are born to wizarding parents but they have no magical powers. *Half-breeds* are creatures such as werewolves, vampires and merpeople that are half-human and half something else. *Magical Creatures* are creatures such as house-elves, goblins and centaurs.

<sup>14</sup> J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone* (London: Bloomsbury, 1997), p. 51.

The Ministry of Magic is divided into seven different departments: the Department of Magical Games and Sports, the Department of International Magical Co-operation, the Department of Regulation and Control of Magical Creatures, the Department of Magical Transportation, the Department of Magical Accidents and Catastrophes, the Department of Magical Law Enforcement, and the Department of Mysteries

The Ministry of Magic also employs an office called Magical Maintenance. It is their job to decide what kind of weather the Ministry sees from its enchanted windows, as the Ministry is situated underground. According to Arthur Weasley, the Ministry had to endure “two months of hurricanes last time they were angling for a pay rise” (*Order*, 121).

There are various wizarding offices at the Ministry of Magic, such as the Minister, Junior Minister, Senior Undersecretary, Junior Assistant, Head of a Department, Member of the Magical Law Enforcement Patrol, Hit Wizard of the Magical Law Enforcement Squad (this is probably equivalent to the American S.W.A.T. team member), Obliviator (member of the Accidental Magic Reversal Squad, Unspeakable, and Auror (“a Dark-wizard-catcher” (*Goblet*, 144)).

### **2.1.1 Laws and Restrictions**

The purpose of this chapter is to explore what kind of laws and restrictions there are in the wizarding world and how they operate. There are various laws and restrictions in the world of Harry Potter. However, the novels do not provide a very clear picture of the legislation system in general, and they only provide a rather vague image of the exact laws and restrictions that exist. Restrictions of magic use and especially of under-age magic use are the most clearly defined

restrictions in the *Harry Potter* novels, and they are emphasised throughout them. “Be grateful if yeh didn’t mention that ter anyone at Hogwarts [...] I’m – er – not supposed ter do magic, strictly speakin’. I was allowed ter do a bit ter follow yeh an’ get yer letters to yeh an’ stuff [...]” (*Stone*, 48). This is the first time that we encounter the concept of restricting magic use. Later on, we learn that Hagrid is not allowed to do magic without a special permission (as can be inferred from the expression “I was allowed to” in the above quotation), as he is not a qualified wizard; he was expelled from Hogwarts in his third year, and thus he has not completed his OWLs or NEWTs which would have made him a qualified wizard. However, after Hagrid becomes the teacher of Care of Magical Creatures he is allowed to use magic.

From very early on in the *Harry Potter* novels, it is made clear that underage wizards are not allowed to use magic outside school, and this information is further enforced at the end of *Stone*, when “notes were handed out to all students, warning them not to use magic over the holidays” (*Stone*, 222).

In *Chamber*<sup>15</sup>, it becomes clear that the Ministry of Magic actually supervises under-age magic. Harry gets an official warning from the Ministry after Dobby the house-elf hovers a cake around the Dursley house (*Chamber*, 21). Thus Harry is actually blamed for performing the Hover Charm that Dobby performed. This fact raises a question of how exactly the Ministry is supervising magic use. After all, it did not seem to notice Hagrid doing non-permitted magic in *Stone*. We are left pondering about this until *Prince*<sup>16</sup>, where Dumbledore finally explains the situation to Harry, when Harry wonders how Morfin (Voldemort’s uncle) got the blame for a spell that Voldemort performed and how the Ministry did not notice that Voldemort had altered Morfin’s memory:

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<sup>15</sup> J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (London: Bloomsbury, 1998).

<sup>16</sup> J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* (London: Bloomsbury, 2005).

‘But how come the Ministry didn’t realise that Voldemort had done all that to Morfin?’ Harry asked angrily. ‘He was under age at the time, wasn’t he? I thought they could detect under-age magic!’

‘You’re quite right – they can detect magic, but not the perpetrator: you will remember that you were blamed by the Ministry for the Hover Charm that was, in fact, cast by –’ ‘Dobby,’ growled Harry; this injustice still rankled. ‘So, if you’re under age and you do magic inside an adult witch or wizard’s house, the Ministry won’t know?’

‘They will certainly be unable to tell who performed the magic,’ said Dumbledore, smiling slightly at the look of great indignation in Harry’s face. ‘They rely on witch and wizard parents to enforce their offspring’s obedience while within their walls.’ (*Prince*, 344-5.)

Thus, the Ministry’s way of supervising magic use, and other wizarding laws as well, is done with the principle of a panopticon. They have created an image of all magic use being monitored constantly and the wrongdoers getting caught instantly, and it is not generally known that the perpetrator of magic cannot be caught, as only the act of magic use (i.e. which spell is used and where) gets registered and not who exactly performed the spell. Therefore, everyone expects to be under constant surveillance, when in reality the surveillance is mostly done by the people’s minds. Jeremy Bentham describes the idea of a panopticon thus:

the more constantly the persons to be inspected are under the eyes of the persons who should inspect them, the more perfectly will the purpose X of the establishment have been attained. Ideal perfection, if that were the object, would require that each person should actually be in that predicament, during every instant of time. This being impossible, the next thing to be wished for is, that, at every instant, seeing reason to believe as much, and not being able to satisfy himself to the contrary, he should *conceive* himself to be so.<sup>17</sup>

Michel Foucault in his turn expands Bentham’s idea of the panopticon as applying to various institutions of power, such as prisons and schools, to the whole society<sup>18</sup> which is how Rowling seems to perceive this concept as well. To a British person, which Rowling is, the idea of a panopticon, where every move one makes is monitored, and everything you do is under

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<sup>17</sup> Jeremy Bentham, *The Panopticon Writings*, Ed. Miran Bozovic (London: Verso, 1995), p. 29-95.

<<http://cartome.org/panopticon2.htm>>.

<sup>18</sup> Michel Foucault, *Tarkkailla ja rangaista* (Otava: Keuruu, 2000), p. 280.

constant scrutiny, is horrifying and evil, something reminiscent of the times of the Second World War, when every aspect of life was supervised constantly.<sup>19</sup> This is probably why Rowling has explored the concept of panopticon in her work: she wants to point out what an unfair system of supervision it is, and how it is always imperfect as it is not a 100% reliable. Thus, she has devised an especially poorly working panopticon in the wizarding world, where true lawbreakers are not always caught, as some of them (for example Voldemort) are aware of the flaw in the supervision system of under-age magic, and innocents get the blame.

Magic is restricted in other ways too, in addition to restrictions to under-age magic and magic by unqualified wizards. For example, witches and wizards need to pass a test in order to be allowed to Apparate, so as not to get injured by for example leaving a half of their bodies behind (*Goblet*, 63). Perhaps the most disturbing way of restricting magic use is portrayed in how non-human creatures are not allowed to perform magic with a wand or even hold one: “[Winky] Had it in her hand. So that’s clause three of the Code of Wand Use broken for a start. *No non-human creature is permitted to carry or use a wand*” (*Goblet*, 119). The reason why I find this disturbing is that I consider this an example of both racism and speciesism: witches and wizards think themselves superior to those without magic power similar to theirs (house elves have their own kind of magic as well as many other magical creatures do) and to other species. (Racism and speciesism will be discussed in more detail in 4.1.)

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<sup>19</sup> I would like to thank David Robertson for pointing this out.



### 2.1.2 Discipline and Punish

In this chapter, the wizarding justice system is explored and analysed. The purpose is to demonstrate how the wizarding system of discipline and punish is far from a perfect one, in very much the same manner as the justice systems of the real world. The wizarding justice system consists of the Department of Law Enforcement (which is equivalent to the police force), which apprehends criminals and the wizarding high court Wizengamot, which hands out punishments. One of the most severe crimes that a wizard can commit is to use an Unforgivable Curse on a human, as the students of Hogwarts are told in a Defence Against the Dark Arts lesson: “Now ... those three curses – Avada Kedavra, Imperius and CruciatuS – are known as the Unforgivable Curses. The use of any one of them on a fellow human being is enough to earn a life sentence in Azkaban” (*Goblet*, 192). *Avada Kedavra* is a killing curse: it kills in an instant, all the victim sees is a green light. With an *Imperius* curse a witch or a wizard can make another person or creature do whatever s/he wants, for example jump in a well: it is rather like hypnosis. *CruciatuS* curse is a torturing curse with which a witch or a wizard can inflict excruciating pain.

The wizarding prison Azkaban is where criminals are sent. It is closely reminiscent of at least two prisons in the real world, to which Rowling is obviously making allusions. The first one is Alcatraz (and the second one is presented later on in this chapter), which was the world’s most closely guarded prison, where the most dangerous of criminals were sent, and it was set on an island in the middle of a sea, in the same manner as Azkaban is, and the two prison names even sound somewhat similar. Alcatraz is one of the most classic examples of miscarriages of justice. In Alcatraz, the prisoners had very strict rules of conduct, and if they broke them, they were isolated. However, the isolation cell also contained some prisoners that had done absolutely nothing wrong, and thus it is just an arbitrary act of the prison guards using their power in an

unjust manner. Prisoners had to spend even months in the isolation cells, which were completely dark and small, utterly depressing places, where the prisoner had to live in deprivation of all his basic needs except for food, drink and toilet. They had no chance of exercise or human contact. It was virtually impossible to escape from Alcatraz as it was a long way from shore, on a solitary island, where the water currents were strong, and the water was cold and filled with sharks.

Azkaban is a very similar prison to Alcatraz indeed. It is guarded by horrible creatures called Dementors. Remus Lupin describes Azkaban and the Dementors thus:

‘Get too near a Dementor and every good feeling, every happy memory, will be sucked out of you. If it can, the Dementor will feed on you long enough to reduce you to something like itself – soulless and evil. You’ll be left with nothing but the worst experiences of your life.’ [...]

‘Azkaban must be terrible,’ Harry muttered. Lupin nodded grimly.

‘The fortress is set on a tiny island, way out to sea, but they don’t need walls and water to keep the prisoners in, not when they’re all trapped inside their own heads, incapable of a single cheerful thought. Most of them go mad within weeks.’ [...]

‘Dementors are supposed to drain a wizard of his powers if he is left with them too long ...’,<sup>20</sup>

In my view, the effect of the Dementors is very similar to that of the Alcatraz isolation cells: the lack of light and contact most definitely sucked out all happy feelings a person might have had in the same manner as the Dementors. Thus, being subjected to the Dementors is a very cruel form of punishment, equally cruel to that of the Alcatraz isolation cells. Therefore, it can be assumed that the purpose of the wizarding penitentiary system is to punish criminals and not to rehabilitate them into decent citizens, as the modern penitentiary system of the real world is supposed to do nowadays. However, Alcatraz provides an excellent example of how the penitentiary system does not actually always work in that ideal way in the real world either. Noel Chevalier also notes the punishing quality of Azkaban by stating that “Rowling does not construct Azkaban as a place of reform; it is like prisons of the eighteenth century, a holding tank for vice, with no

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<sup>20</sup> J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (London: Bloomsbury, 1999), pp. 140-1.

distinction made between petty offenses and more serious crimes” (407). As Ilpo Helén states in the foreword of the Finnish translation of Michel Foucault’s *Tarkkailla ja rangaista* (Discipline and Punish), Foucault points out in the book that the purpose of modern day’s sentence is not to exact revenge on the lawbreakers and to demonstrate the power of the legislators, but to educate the criminal and strive to make him/her adjust to “normal life” (471). Furthermore, according to Foucault prisons are very important power machines in general, as

Prison is the only place where power is manifested in its naked state, in its most excessive form, and where it is justified as a moral force ... What is fascinating about prisons is that, for once, power doesn’t hide or mask itself; it reveals itself as tyranny pursued into the finest details; it is cynical at the same time pure and entirely ‘justified,’ because its practice can be totally formulated within the framework of morality.<sup>21</sup>

Interestingly, some wizards are less affected by Dementors than others, thus making the form of punishment not only cruel but also unequal, in the same manner as the prisoners being subject to the isolation cells of Alcatraz was unequal in nature as the prisoners were sometimes put there randomly. However, an even crueller form of punishment than subjection to Dementors in Azkaban is the Dementor’s Kiss. The Dementor’s Kiss is probably rather equivalent to what I imagine a prolonged stay in Alcatraz must have done to prisoners: sucking out of all the humanity of them and turning them into soulless and empty creatures. Lupin describes the Dementor’s Kiss to Harry thus:

‘They call it the Dementor’s Kiss,’ said Lupin with a slightly twisted smile. ‘It’s what Dementors do to those they wish to destroy utterly. I suppose there must be some kind of mouth under there, because they clamp their jaws upon the mouth of the victim and – and suck out his soul.’

Harry accidentally spat out a bit of Butterbeer.

‘What – they kill –?’

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<sup>21</sup> Barry Cooper, *Michel Foucault. An Introduction to the Study and His Thought* (New York and Toronto: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1981), p. 94.

‘Oh, no,’ said Lupin. ‘Much worse than that. You can exist without your soul, you know, as long as your brain and heart are still working. But you’ll have no sense of self any more, no memory, no ... anything. There’s no chance at all of recovery. You’ll just – exist. As an empty shell. And your soul is gone for ever ... lost.’

Lupin drank a littler more Butterbeer, then said, ‘It’s the fate that awaits Sirius Black. It was in the *Daily Prophet* this morning. The Ministry have given the Dementors permission to perform it if they find him.’

Harry sat stunned for a moment at the idea of someone having their soul sucked out through their mouth. But then he thought of Black.

‘He deserves it,’ he said suddenly.

‘You think so?’ said Lupin lightly. ‘Do you really think anyone deserves that?’

‘Yes,’ said Harry defiantly. ‘For ... for some things ...’ (*Prisoner*, 183.)

This quotation also touches on the subject of the fairness of the punishment: does anyone, no matter how horrible a criminal deserve to have his soul sucked out? At first thought, Harry feels that Black would deserve it, as he at this point believes that Black was responsible for the death of his parents, before he learns that he was actually innocent. Interestingly, the Dursleys’ concept of justice is in a way even firmer than the wizarding justice’s: they feel that capital punishment is the only way to deal with dangerous criminals: “‘When will they *learn*,’ said Uncle Vernon, pounding the table with his large purple fist, ‘that hanging’s the only way to deal with these people?’ ‘Very true,’ said Aunt Petunia” (*Prisoner*, 19). The reason why Rowling brings up the question of death penalty, as well as of taking away one’s soul, and the justification for it is that Rowling wants to emphasise the risks of irreversible forms of punishment, such as the death penalty: there is always a possibility that the one facing execution might be innocent.

The reason why Rowling has probably become so concerned with issues of miscarriages of justice and putting innocent people to prison is that these issues were a great scandal in Great Britain in the 1990s, when Rowling started writing her novels. There were various cases brought out in the media about people put to prison for several years even though they were innocent. For example, “the Birmingham Six” were six innocent men who had to spend sixteen years in prison

for two pub bombings that killed 21 people. They were released 1991.<sup>22</sup> Two similar examples of British miscarriages of justice were “the Guilford Four” (released 1991) and “Maguire Seven” (released 1994) (BBC News: Timeline: miscarriages of justice). These cases resulted in an absolute outrage in the Brits, as before these revelations, they had always assumed their justice system to be infallible, fair, and just, where prisoners were treated with dignity, i.e. a total opposite to the totally corrupt legal system in America, where there are horrendous and unfair prisons such as Alcatraz.<sup>23</sup>

The second real-life prison that Rowling is alluding to in her novels is a high-security prison called Guantanamo Bay Detention Camp, which is situated on an island in Cuba. It was set up after the terrorist attack to the World Trade Center 11.9.2001. The main residents of the Guantanamo prison are Taliban guerrillas that have been caught in Afghanistan. (Again even the name Azkaban itself seems to echo this connection Rowling is trying to make: Taliban, Azkaban). Various prisoners accused of being Taliban guerrillas have been recently released from the prison, as it was proven that they were in fact innocent of any terrorist acts.<sup>24</sup> This allusion to the Guantanamo prison in relation to Azkaban applies to the wizarding justice system in a wider sense: it points out how innocent people are placed in Azkaban according to the very same logic that those considered as Talibans were placed in Guantanamo, as will be proven by the examples below.

Thus, in a similar manner than the justice system of the real world, with for example Alcatraz, Guantanamo and the innocents convicted in Britain, the wizarding justice system is far from infallible, as for instance Bartemius Crouch’s behaviour as the Head of the Department of

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<sup>22</sup> BBC News. <[http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/march/14/newsid\\_2543000/2543613.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/march/14/newsid_2543000/2543613.stm)>.

<sup>23</sup> John Oakland, *British Civilization, An Introduction* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), pp. 151, 159.

<sup>24</sup> The Guantanamo Project, <<http://guantanamo.org/detainees.php>>; <<http://guantanamo.org/timeline.php>>.

Law Enforcement shows. (The character of Barty Crouch will be discussed further in 3.6.3.) Crouch sent a great many people to Azkaban without a trial. One of them was Sirius Black, who had to spend 13 years in Azkaban for killing 12 Muggles and the wizard Peter Pettigrew, even though he was innocent, and Pettigrew was the guilty one. In addition, the trials that were held by Crouch as the chairman were not always just: he did not allow some of the accused to defend themselves properly, for example he refused to hear what his own son had to say in his defence.

Further proof of the unfairness of the wizarding justice system is provided in the way that Hagrid is treated when students of Hogwarts are being attacked, and the school governors are pressuring the Ministry, as they want to see something done with the situation. Hagrid is sent to Azkaban, even though it is known that he is innocent, so that the Ministry appears to be doing at least something to end the attacks (*Chamber*, 193-4). This is how the Ministry of Magic generally operates while in crisis: it sends innocent people to prison just to create an image to the public that the Ministry is actually doing and achieving something. The Ministry's way of operating in this situation is equivalent to what the Americans were doing in the real world, while placing innocent people in prison and accusing them of being Taliban guerrillas, so that the American public could perceive the President, the government and the soldiers as doing something concrete about terrorism. This tactic works disturbingly well on ordinary people, both in America and in the wizarding world, as they are prone to see the Ministry's (and the American President and the government's) actions as just and infallible, as the following example points out: "My dear young man, the Minister of Magic wouldn't have taken Hagrid if he hadn't been one hundred per cent sure that he was guilty,' said Lockhart, in the tone of someone explaining that one and one made two" (*Chamber*, 200).

Harry's disciplinary hearing in front of the whole Wizengamot in *Order* is another example of how Cornelius Fudge abuses the wizarding justice system. Harry stands accused of

knowingly, deliberately and in full awareness of the illegality of his actions, having received a previous written warning from the Ministry of Magic on a similar charge, produce a Patronus Charm in a Muggle-inhabited area, in the presence of a Muggle, on the second of August at twenty-three minutes past nine, which constitutes an offence under Paragraph C of the Decree for the Reasonable Restriction of Underage Sorcery, 1875, and also under Section 13 of the International Confederation of Warlocks' Statute of Secrecy. (*Order*, 128.)

Normally, these kinds of disciplinary hearings are conducted by the Head of the Department of Law Enforcement, Madam Bones, in her office, where she simply questions the accused herself and decides on the verdict. Cornelius Fudge, however, puts this case before the full wizarding high court, and in a place where the most dangerous criminals, such as Death Eaters are normally put in trial. In addition, he ridicules the whole concept of a *hearing*<sup>25</sup>, where the defendant would actually have a chance to say something in his defence, as he does not allow Harry a chance to say anything in his defence, but he just keeps interrupting him after reading him what he is accused of. Harry is only able to defend himself after Dumbledore points out that Harry should be allowed to recount the circumstances that required his using of the Patronus charm. Still, Fudge ridicules Harry's statement of a Dementor attack, he tries to make him seem like a liar who tells tall tales and should under no circumstances be believed, and he tries to prevent Dumbledore from calling a witness to prove Harry's argument:

'We haven't got time to listen to more tarradiddles, I'm afraid, Dumbledore. I want this dealt with quickly –'

'I may be wrong,' said Dumbledore pleasantly, 'but I am sure that under the Wizengamot Charter of Rights, the accused has the right to present witnesses for his or her case? Isn't that the policy of the Department of Magical Law Enforcement, Madam Bones?' (*Order*, 131.)

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<sup>25</sup> Jennifer Flaherty, "Harry Potter and the Freedom of Information: Knowledge and Control in *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*", in *Topic: The Washington & Jefferson College Review*, Volume 54, *Harry Potter*, (Washington & Jefferson College, 2004), p. 94.

Thus, Dumbledore manages to point out how Fudge is actually breaking the Wizengamot rules and policies of law enforcement by trying to prevent Harry from receiving proper defence. This tactic proves useful, as Madam Bones, as a character with integrity backs up Dumbledore's argument, thus giving Harry a chance of a proper defence in the court.

The fact that Harry was attacked by Dementors is crucial to his defence, as even an underage wizard is allowed to do magic in order to save his life. That is why Dumbledore emphasises the importance of the attack repeatedly, and in addition he points out to the members of the Wizengamot and especially to Madam Bones that there must something odd in how Dementors attacked Harry. However, Fudge tries to undermine the whole Dementor attack as an irrelevant issue with regards to Harry's charges.

'I would remind everybody that the behaviour of these Dementors, if indeed they are not figments of the boy's imagination, is not the subject of this hearing!' said Fudge. 'We are here to examine Harry Potter's offences under the Decree for the Reasonable Restriction of Underage Sorcery!'

'Of course we are,' said Dumbledore, 'but the presence of Dementors in that alleyway is highly relevant. Clause Seven of the Decree states that magic may be used before Muggles in exceptional circumstances, and as those exceptional circumstances include situations which threaten the life of the wizard or witch him- or herself, or any witches and, wizards or Muggles present at the time of the –'

'We are familiar with Clause Seven, thank you very much!' snarled Fudge.

'Of course you are,' said Dumbledore courteously. 'Then we are in agreement that Harry's use of the Patronus Charm in these circumstances falls precisely into the category of exceptional circumstances the clause describes?' (*Order*, 135.)

Thus, Dumbledore manages to convince the Wizengamot that Harry was entitled to perform a Patronus Charm under the special circumstances of a Dementor attack, and Harry is cleared of all charges, even though Fudge does his utmost to get Harry declared guilty. Furthermore, by referring to Clause Seven Dumbledore makes Fudge seem utterly incompetent in his not considering Dementors as relevant for Harry's defence; it makes Fudge seem as though he does not really know or understand the wizarding laws the way he is supposed to as Minister for



Magic. Another interpretation for Cornelius Fudge ignoring Decree Seven is he does not care about wizarding laws, just as long as he gets what he wants. He appreciates some laws above others, and chooses to ignore the ones that do not match his plans. As a matter of fact, this is essentially what all systems of justice are like in the real world as well: they emphasise some laws above others, and choose to ignore some laws all together.

The wizarding justice system is not only unfair towards humans, but towards animals as well. For example, when a Hippogriff called Buckbeak bites Draco Malfoy, because Draco insults him, he is given a death sentence solely because the Committee for the Disposal of Dangerous creatures is in Lucius Malfoy's control, as he has bribed and threatened them to do his bidding. This situation is described in the following way:

‘Yeh don’t know them gargoyles at the Committee fer the Disposal o’ Dangerous Creatures!’ choked Hagrid, wiping his eyes on his sleeve. ‘They’ve got it in fer interestin’ creatures!’

[...] ‘Them Disposal devils, they’re all in Lucius Malfoy’s pocket! Scared of him! An’ if I lose the case, Buckbeack –’

Hagrid drew his finger swiftly across his throat [...] (*Prisoner*, 162.)

Hagrid tries to change the committee's decision to execute Buckbeak: he makes an appeal for Buckbeak's case, but it does not help, as the committee has determined its verdict before even hearing what Hagrid has to say in Buckbeak's defence as Hermione states: “They’re bringing the executioner to the appeal! But that sounds as though they’ve already decided!” [...] But Harry had a horrible feeling that the Committee for the Disposal of Dangerous Creatures had had its mind made up for it by Mr Malfoy” (*Prisoner*, 232). Ron also comments on the injustice of this as he hears from Fudge that he has come to witness the execution of “a mad hippogriff”, but the appeal has not yet even taken place: “Did you see them? They’ve even got the axe ready! This isn’t justice!” (*Prisoner*, 235). Thus, as Ron correctly states, this situation is far from being just: it

is a clear example of blatant corruption. However, even Dumbledore can do nothing about this unfair situation, as the committee will not listen to him, since it is under Lucius Malfoy's control.

Another case, which could be considered as an example of the Ministry's blatant corruption and of the falsity of the wizarding justice system is provided in *Order* when a criminal escapes justice by making a deal with the Ministry.

'I have testimony from Willy Widdershins, Minerva, who happened to be in the bar at the time. He was heavily bandaged, it is true, but his hearing was quite unimpaired,' said Umbridge smugly. 'He heard every word Potter said and hastened straight to the school to report to me –'

'Oh, so *that's* why he wasn't prosecuted for setting up all those regurgitating toilets!' said Professor McGonagall, raising her eyebrows. 'What an interesting insight into our justice system!'

'Blatant corruption!' roared the portrait of the corpulent, red-nosed wizard on the wall behind Dumbledore's desk. 'The Ministry did not cut deals with petty criminals in my day, no sir, they did not!' (*Order*, 541.)

However, this situation is not uncommon in the justice system in general: it is in fact rather common to cut deals with petty criminals, in order to get a chance to capture bigger ones. Thus, it can be questioned, whether this is in fact an example of corruption or not.

In my view, the reason for why Rowling emphasises miscarriages of justice of the wizarding world and the horrors of Azkaban, is that she wishes to point out to the (child) reader that horrible prisons and miscarriages of justice do not just happen in the world of fantasy, but in the real world as well. Rowling is trying to get people to think about issues of discipline and punishment, and to make people realise that justice just is not always just, even though it claims to be.

### **2.1.3 Ministers for Magic: Cornelius Fudge and His Successor Rufus Scrimgeour**

This chapter is designed to describe the characters of the Ministers of Magic, Cornelius Fudge, and his successor Rufus Scrimgeour. The personal qualities and characteristics of the leaders of a society are very important in relation to how they handle the power that they are given, and they influence the corruptibility of the leader. The character of Cornelius Fudge is an excellent example of how power can corrupt a person and make him make unfair and illogical decisions to hold on to the power given to him no matter what. The character of Rufus Scrimgeour, in the same manner as Fudge, in turn points out how one is not supposed to abuse power by putting innocents to prison. Scrimgeour's character also serves as an indication of how being a powerful and forceful character with a determination to eradicate evil terrorists (i.e. Voldemort and his Death Eaters) does not mean that the actions he takes to achieve his goals are just and cannot be questioned. Essentially, I see Scrimgeour as a similar character to Bartemius Crouch, who tried to fight Death Eaters by allowing the usage of the Unforgivable Curses on them and thus being as evil as the people he tried to fight against (as is described in 3.6.3), even though Scrimgeour's means are a bit more subtle. More importantly I perceive Scrimgeour as being similar as the American President George Bush, who tries to fight terrorism by spreading terror around the world himself.

Cornelius Fudge is a very power-hungry character, who likes being Minister for Magic, but is not very good at his job. He makes various stupid mistakes that eventually ruin his career and get him fired: for example, he refuses to believe that Voldemort has returned, which allows Voldemort to operate in secret for a year, he interferes at Hogwarts and lets the evil Dolores Umbridge (who is described in more detail in 2.3 and 3.6.2) create a reign of terror and tyranny there, he tries to destroy Dumbledore's reputation and he hires Percy Weasley (who appreciates

power more than his own family) as his junior assistant so that he would spy on his family and Dumbledore. In addition, Fudge is a rather corrupt character, as he takes bribes from Lucius Malfoy. He is also corrupt in the sense that he wants to have total control of the media, and the public opinion, with no freedom of speech allowed. He pressures the *Daily Prophet* to publish things that he wants published (such as vilifying information about Harry and Dumbledore) and not publish things that would harm his objectives (such as Harry being attacked by Dementors).

In *Prince* the Ministry gets a new Minister for Magic, Rufus Scrimgeour. He was previously the Head of the Auror Office in the Department of Magical law Enforcement. Albus Dumbledore describes the new Minister thus, when Harry wonders about his ability to be a good Minister: “He is able, certainly. A more decisive and forceful personality than Cornelius. [...] Rufus is a man of action and, having fought Dark wizards for most of his working life, does not underestimate Lord Voldemort” (*Prince*, 62). Thus, Dumbledore does not clearly answer whether or not he considers Scrimgeour as a good choice for Minister, but he does state that he finds him to be better and more efficient than Fudge in the current political situation, with Voldemort creating chaos and terror in the wizarding community.

Scrimgeour has a very different approach to Harry than Fudge did: he tries to get Harry to work for the Ministry and lift the spirits of people by convincing them that the Ministry is doing a good job of protecting them from Voldemort, instead of trying to make him seem like an insane, attention-seeking brat. However, Harry does not wish to support Scrimgeour, as in Harry’s mind he is not doing a much better job than Fudge:

‘You see, I don’t like some of the things the Ministry’s doing. Locking up Stan Shunpike for instance.’

Scrimgeour did not speak for a moment, but his expression hardened instantly.

‘I would not expect you to understand,’ he said, and he was not as successful at keeping anger out of his voice as Harry had been. ‘These are dangerous times, and certain measures need to be taken. You are sixteen years old –’

‘Dumbledore’s a lot older than sixteen, and he doesn’t think Stan should be in Azkaban either,’ said Harry. ‘You’re making Stan a scapegoat, just like you want to make me a mascot.’

They looked at each other, long and hard. Finally Scrimgeour said, with no pretence at warmth. ‘I see. You prefer – like your hero Dumbledore – to dissociate yourself from the Ministry?’

‘I don’t want to be used,’ said Harry.

‘Some would say it’s your duty to be used by the Ministry!’

‘Yeah, and others might say it’s your duty to check people really are Death Eaters before you chuck them in prison,’ said Harry, his temper rising now. ‘You’re doing what Barty Crouch did. You never get it right, you people, do you? Either we’ve got Fudge, pretending everything’s lovely while people get murdered right under his nose, or we’ve got you, chucking the wrong people into jail and trying to pretend you’ve got the Chosen One working for you!’ (*Prince*, 324-5.)

In this discussion, Harry raises some very important questions about how politics should be conducted and how the justice system functions. He questions the Ministry’s decisions to throw innocent people into prison without a proper trial (in the same manner as Barty Crouch did many times before Scrimgeour and as Fudge did to Hagrid, as is pointed out in 2.1.2). Thus, Harry points out, that the Ministry of Magic is doing a very bad job at selecting its leading figures, as all of them (Fudge, Crouch and Scrimgeour) are corrupt or unjust in one way or another.

#### **2.1.4 Arthur Weasley vs. Lucius Malfoy**

In this chapter two politically powerful character of the wizarding world, Arthur Weasley and Lucius Malfoy, are compared and contrasted. Their relationship with power is described in some detail. In addition the amount and quality of the power that Arthur and Lucius hold is described and analysed, and their powers are contrasted with one another.

‘What does your dad do at the Ministry of Magic, anyway?’

‘He works in the most boring department,’ said Ron. ‘The Misuse of Muggle Artefacts Office.’

‘The *what?*’

‘It’s all to do with bewitching things that are Muggle-made, you know, in case they end up back in a Muggle shop or house.’ (*Chamber*, 28.)

Arthur Weasley’s job at the Ministry is thus described as boring by his son Ron. However, Arthur himself finds his job very rewarding and he has chosen to stay in this low-paying job because he likes it very much, even though he could get a better job anytime he wants. However, he does take on a different job in *Prince*, as the Head of a new office, the Office for Detection and Confiscation of Counterfeit Defensive Spells and Protective Objects, which the new Minister for Magic, Rufus Scrimgeour founded in order to protect people from counterfeit defensive spells and objects, which are potentially harmful and planted by the Death Eaters. Mrs Weasley explains Arthur’s new job as being a very important one, as he has 10 people reporting to him (*Prince*, 84).

Arthur’s job at the Misuse of Muggle Artefacts office is a more powerful job than one would assume by his low pay and tiny office. For example, he has apparently drawn up many different laws concerning Muggle artefacts and for the protection of Muggles; the most important which is the Muggle Protection Act.

However, the reason why Arthur is so fond of his job at the Misuse of Muggle Artefacts Office is not because of its power, as Arthur is not a power-hungry character, but because he is obsessed about Muggles and Muggle artefacts. His obsession is described in the following way: “Yeah. Dad’s mad about everything to do with Muggles, our shed’s full of Muggle stuff. He takes it apart, puts spells on it and puts it back together. If he raided our house he’d have to put himself straight under arrest” (*Chamber*, 29). This remark of Fred’s brings to light the fact that Arthur is in fact breaking some of the very laws he has written himself, and is supposed to uphold. In *Goblet* Arthur uses a colleague of his as an assistant in breaking wizarding law, and he considers it as a normal thing to do: “Muggle fireplaces aren’t supposed to be connected,

strictly speaking – but I’ve got a useful contact at the Floo Regulation Panel and he fixed it for me” (*Goblet*, 44). In addition, he has made a loophole to one of the laws he has written so that he could do as he pleases, as Mrs Weasley point out in the following argument:

‘Imagine a wizard buying a rusty old car and telling his wife all he wanted to do with it was take it apart to see how it worked, while *really* he was enchanting to make it *fly*.’

Mr Weasley blinked.

‘Well, dear, I think you’ll find that he would be quite within the law to do that, even if, er, he maybe would have done better to, um, tell his wife the truth ... There’s a loophole in the law, you’ll find ... as long as he wasn’t *intending* to fly the car, the fact that the car *could* fly wouldn’t –’

‘Arthur Weasley, you made sure there was a loophole when you wrote that law!’  
(*Chamber*, 34.)

However, it is made clear that Arthur doing all this is a harmless hobby of his, and not to be taken as if Arthur is doing something seriously wrong and illegal, even though he does get into trouble when it is found out that he has bewitched the car to fly, as the *Daily Prophet* reports:

#### *ENQUIRY AT THE MINISTRY OF MAGIC*

*Arthur Weasley, Head of the Misuse of Muggle Artefacts Office, was today fined fifty Galleons for bewitching a Muggle car.*

*Mr Lucius Malfoy, a governor of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, where the enchanted car crashed earlier this year, called today for Mr Weasley’s resignation.*

*‘Weasley has brought the Ministry into disrepute,’ Mr Malfoy told our reporter. ‘He is clearly unfit to draw up our laws and his ridiculous Muggle Protection Act should be scrapped immediately.’ (Chamber, 165-6.)*

Thus, unfortunately, Lucius Malfoy gets a chance to discredit Arthur, and he takes advantage of the situation by trying to prevent the new Muggle Protection Act’s coming into full force. Lucius is worried about the new law, because it would seriously harm his reputation, if objects that the law defines as forbidden were found in a raid, and he is very bitter towards Arthur for creating such a law that he finds utterly ridiculous and unnecessary, not to mention inconvenient for him: “I have not been visited yet. The name Malfoy still commands a certain

respect, yet the Ministry grows ever more meddlesome. There are rumours about a new Muggle Protection Act – no doubt that flea-bitten, Muggle-loving fool Arthur Weasley is behind it –” (*Chamber*, 43).

Lucius Malfoy is rather a powerful and corrupt character. He has a lot of influence at the Ministry, as he uses bribes to get what he wants: for example, he gives money to various charities and to Cornelius Fudge, as Arthur Weasley points out in the following quotation:

‘I don’t think private matters between myself and the Minister are any concern of yours, Potter,’ said Malfoy, smoothing the front of his robes. Harry distinctly heard the gentle clinking of what sounded like a full pocket of gold. [...]

‘What private business have they got together anyway?’

‘Gold, I expect,’ said Mr Weasley angrily. ‘Malfoy’s been giving generously to all sorts of things for years ... gets him in with the right people ... then he can ask favours ... delay laws he doesn’t want passed ... oh, he’s very well-connected, Lucius Malfoy.’ (*Order*, 141-2.)

In addition, the Department for the Regulation and Control of Magical Creatures is basically in Lucius Malfoy’s control as he has a lot of friends there and he has bribed them to do his bidding. For example, when a Hippogriff bites his son, he manages to get it a death sentence even though Hagrid points out that the Hippogriff was provoked to attack (This issue is also discussed in 2.1.2). Malfoy is also one of the school governors in the first two novels, and this provides him with the power to control the administration of Hogwarts and Dumbledore, by for example suspending Dumbledore from his office, as the following quotation points out:

‘*Dreadful* thing, Dumbledore,’ said Mr Malfoy lazily, taking out a long roll of parchment, ‘but the governors feel it’s time for you to step aside. This is an Order of Suspension – you’ll find all twelve signatures on it. [...]

‘An’ how many did yeh have ter threaten an’ blackmail before they agreed, Malfoy, eh?’ he [Hagrid] roared. (*Chamber*, 194-5.)



However, as Hagrid correctly guesses here, Malfoy had to threaten and blackmail the other school governors in order to get Dumbledore suspended. Dumbledore finds this out, after talking to the other school governors: “Very strange tales they told me, too. Several of them seemed to think that you had threatened to curse their families if they didn’t agree to suspend me in the first place” (*Chamber*, 246). As the school governors did not appreciate being blackmailed by Malfoy, they fire him at the end of *Chamber*.

With the character of Lucius Malfoy, Rowling is probably parodying the way laws are passed in Britain. Even though we are not told in the novels how the laws are passed in the wizarding world (but we can infer that the Muggle Parliament is in no way involved in wizarding legislation, as the Parliament is unaware of the very existence of the wizarding world), we can assume that the procedure is somewhat similar to that of Britain. In Britain the Ministry first writes a bill, and then it is passed on to the House of Commons, who can make some changes to it. Then it is passed on to the House of Lords who can suggest changes to it or accept it as it is. If they wish to for example delay some law into coming into effect, they can suggest changes to the bill and then it goes to the House of Commons again. After the bill is accepted in the Houses, the Queen signs it. When Tony Blair became the Prime Minister in 1997, it was his intention to reform the House of Lords, so that there would not be unnecessary delays to passing legislation, but it has not yet taken place. Essentially, Lucius Malfoy represents the image of a member of House of Lords, who has the power to delay the laws he does not like into coming into effect.

When analysing Lucius Malfoy’s political influence further, one can come to the conclusion that in fact, he has rather little political power, as he can only influence politicians with a lot of bribes, and even then to a certain degree: he is not able to, for example, prevent the Muggle Protection Act coming into effect no matter how hard he tries, even though he probably has managed to delay its coming to effect. However, Draco Malfoy has another view of his

father's influence: Draco thinks that his father has more power than Arthur Weasley, as he states to Ron: "But then, Father's always associated with the top people at the Ministry ... maybe your Father's too junior to know about it, Weasley ..." (*Goblet*, 150). Draco continues along the same lines in *Order*, when he brags about his father's influence at the Ministry as opposed to Arthur Weasley's:

'Yeah, Umbridge gave Slytherin Quidditch team permission to continue playing straightaway. I went to ask her first thing this morning. Well, it was pretty much automatic, I mean, she knows my father really well, he's always popping in and out of the Ministry ... it'll be interesting to see whether Gryffindor are allowed to keep playing, won't it?'

[...] 'if it's a question of influence with the Ministry, I don't think they've got much chance ... from what my father says, they've been looking for an excuse to sack Arthur Weasley for years ...' (*Order*, 321.)

Draco is very wrong in his assumptions though, as the following point made by Dumbledore makes clear: "On the other hand, I would advise you, Lucius, not to go giving out any more of Lord Voldemort's old school things. If any more of them find their way into innocent hands, I think Arthur Weasley, for one, will make sure they are traced back to you ..." (*Chamber*, 247). Thus, as Dumbledore points out, Arthur Weasley has the power to make Lucius Malfoy's life difficult if he chooses to, as he is in the position to arrest him for breaking the Muggle Protection Act that he has devised. Therefore, even though one initially tends to agree with Draco that Arthur Weasley is a politically insignificant person and Malfoy has a lot of power, it is essentially the other way around: Malfoy has little true political power, whereas Arthur Weasley has the power to draw up laws and make sure that people uphold them.

## **2.2 Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry and Its Headmaster Albus Dumbledore**

### **2.2.1 Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry**

In this chapter, the structure of power relations at Hogwarts is described, and various issues that the school as an institution of power entails, such as grading students and subjecting them to different examinations, are analysed. In addition, Hogwarts as a school is compared and contrasted with Foucaultian ideas of schools as places of control, indoctrination, division and discipline. Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry is a very selective public school, as it only admits students with magical abilities. Supposedly it is free of charge, as the only costs that the students are mentioned to have are books, robes and other school supplies, and even for those expenses it is possible to get assistance as the Headmaster Albus Dumbledore explains: “There is a fund at Hogwarts for those who require assistance to buy books and robes. You might have to buy some of your spellbooks and so on second-hand, but –” (*Prince*, 256). Thus, Hogwarts is very different from the elitist public schools of the Muggle world, which only the very richest people can attend: it does not select students according to their financial status, but according to their talent.

It can be assumed that Rowling devised Hogwarts as a free public school, where all talented children can attend whether they are rich or poor, because she wants to point out a serious problem of the educational system in Britain. In Britain, the educational system is essentially elitist, as only rich people can afford to provide a good education for their children. Poor people have to resort to sending their children to free comprehensive school, where the level of education is extremely low: children are lucky if they learn how to read there (Oakland,

252, 266). A slightly better school in Britain is the grammar school, where the level of education is reasonable (Oakland, 247). However, the poorest people cannot afford it, as the tuition is several hundred pounds a year. The schools with the best level of education are the public schools, which cost preposterous amounts of money, and therefore only extremely rich people, and students who get a scholarship, can afford it (Oakland, 254). Public schools will take in anyone who can afford the tuition, no matter how “dim-witted” they are. Thus, the point that Rowling wishes to make with Hogwarts is that instead of looking at the wallets of students while taking in students to schools, one should look at their talents. Another point which I feel that Rowling wants to emphasise is that all students should be entitled to an equally high level of education.

The administrative hierarchy of Hogwarts is the following: The School Governors → Headmaster → Heads of Houses → Teachers → Head Boy and Girl → Prefects. The Headmaster’s task is to take care of the administration of Hogwarts and he is responsible to the school governors, who are ultimately in charge of the running of the school. Heads of Houses are directly below the Headmaster in the hierarchy. They are responsible for handing out punishments to the students: for example, it is in their power to expel unruly students. The Head Boy and Head Girl are students in their seventh and last year at Hogwarts. Their responsibility is to help Heads of Houses and teachers to supervise the students. They are also in charge of managing the prefects: they hand out instructions to them. Prefects are fifth year students at Hogwarts. Each of the four houses has a boy and a girl Prefect. Prefects are in charge of various practical duties at school: they patrol the corridors of Hogwarts Express and they are allowed to hand out punishments for misbehaviour, they show new students to their common rooms at the beginning of school year, they supervise Christmas decorations, etc.

Being a Prefect is thus quite an important position of power for a student to have. Thus, it is quite important to be careful to whom this power should be given, as it can be and unfortunately is misused in various ways, as the following quotations point out:

‘We’re supposed to patrol the corridors every so often,’ he told Harry and Neville, ‘and we can give out punishments if people are misbehaving. I can’t wait to get Crabbe and Goyle for something ...’

‘You’re not supposed to abuse your position, Ron!’ said Hermione sharply.

‘Yeah, right, because Malfoy won’t abuse it at all,’ said Ron sarcastically.

‘So, you’re going to descend to his level?’

‘No, I’m just going to make sure I get his mates before he gets mine.’

‘For heaven’s sake, Ron –’

‘I’ll make Goyle do lines, it’ll kill him, he hates writing,’ said Ron happily. (*Order*, 172.)

‘Malfoy was being absolutely foul to a first-year back there. I swear I’m going to report him, he’s only had his badge three minutes and he’s using it to bully people worse than ever ...’ (*Order*, 178.)

Teachers possess a great amount of power at Hogwarts as well, and their power can be used wrongly in various ways, as especially Dolores Umbridge (who is discussed in 2.3 and 3.6.2) and Severus Snape (who is discussed in 3.5) demonstrate. Also Horace Slughorn, who comes out of retirement to teach Potions again in *Prince* is a rather interesting character in relation to abusing power. Slughorn has a fondness for talented and promising students, preferably with relatives in high positions in the society. He handpicks students who he feels are most likely to be successful in life. Thus he gets to become friends with those who are in positions of power in the wizarding world. With his powerful connections, he can also help the students he finds promising to get jobs. For instance he offered to assist Voldemort become Minister for Magic as he found him an exceptionally promising student: “– I confidently expect you to rise to Minister for Magic within twenty years. Fifteen, if you keep sending me pineapple. I have *excellent* contacts at the Ministry” (*Prince*, 463). Slughorn also reveals in this statement

how he is in fact rather corrupt; he is willing to do things for bribes (even though the bribe is something as insignificant as pineapple and not money).

The education of witches and wizards at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry takes seven years, and students start studying there at the age of eleven. At the end of every school year there are final exams that partially determine the grade a student is to get. In addition to the final exams, the students' grades are determined by their performance in class during practical examinations (for example, how well they manage to turn a hedgehog into a pincushion, how well they can make a feather fly, or how much their potion looks the way it is supposed to), and writing various essays. There are especially important final exams at the end of the fifth and the seventh year of Hogwarts: At the end of fifth year, students take Ordinary Wizarding Level tests (OWLs) to demonstrate their progress and level of magical learning, and at the end of seventh year they take Nastily Exhausting Wizarding Tests (NEWTs) so that their progress after the OWL level can be measured.

The OWLs consist of a written exam, where theoretical questions are answered, and a practical exam, where actual spells are performed, potions concocted, etc. (except for theoretical subjects, such as History of Magic and Muggle Studies). Each student is to take the OWLs of Astronomy, Charms, Defence Against the Dark Arts, Herbology, History of Magic, Potions and Transfiguration, which as the core curriculum of Hogwarts are compulsory subjects until the end of the fifth year. After that all subjects are optional for students to choose with their future careers in mind. However, students have to receive good grades in their OWLs in order to continue their chosen subjects to NEWT level. In addition to the compulsory subjects, students are to take the OWLs on the optional subjects (Arithmancy, Ancient Runes, Care of Magical Creatures, Divination and Muggle Studies) that they began to study on their third year. The evaluation scale for OWLs consists of six grades. The pass grades are: *Outstanding (O)*, *Exceeds*

*Expectations (E)* and *Acceptable (A)*; and the fail grades are: *Poor (P)*, *Dreadful (D)* and *Troll (T)* (*Prince*, 100). Students take the NEWTs on the subjects that they chose to continue after the OWLs. The evaluation scale for NEWTs and what they contain are not mentioned in the novels.

According to Jennifer Flaherty, “the validity of the tests as an accurate measure of knowledge is questionable” (Flaherty, 97), even though Dolores Umbridge states in *Order* that taking these tests is “what school is all about” (*Order*, 219). Flaherty demonstrates this questionability with the characters of Fred and George Weasley as opposed to Percy Weasley. Fred and George do not do well in their OWLs and they quit Hogwarts before taking their NEWTs, but still they are extremely good at developing joke items and charms for their shop, and as Ron states, “[t]hey really know their stuff” (*Order*, 328). Percy in turn does extremely well in his OWLs and NEWTs, he is a prefect and the Head Boy, but still he fails in his first job at the Ministry dismally (Flaherty, 97).

Furthermore, Flaherty (97) points out how the validity of tests in Great Britain can be questioned as well. In my view, test results affect the futures of people much too much all over the real world, as well as in the wizarding world, but this is especially the case in Britain. For example, if one does not do well in one’s A levels, which are taken at the age of 18 (similar to NEWTs), one has no way of getting into a university in Britain (Oakland, 259). There are no wizarding Universities mentioned in the novels, but the OWL and NEWT results are still extremely important as top test results are the only means of getting a good job. In Britain, also the GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education) taken at the age of sixteen is important as they influence one’s future career and further education (Oakland, 259). Thus, they are essentially similar than the OWLs in the wizarding world.

Noel Chevalier (403) notes how Rowling resonates many of principles that William Godwin presents in *Enquiry of Political Justice* in her novels. Chevalier continues his argument

by explaining how “Godwin saw the school as a site of inequality and injustice, which Rowling reproduces as well” (Chevalier, 403). Issues of inequality and injustice as related to the school system can be most clearly seen in *Order*, where the Ministry takes over Hogwarts, as is described in 2.3. To continue his description of Hogwarts Chevalier uses Michel Foucault’s ideas:

The modern idea of the school, such as Hogwarts, is, as Michel Foucault asserts in *Discipline and Punish* (1979), founded on the use of reason to maintain class structure and social order, champion science as a discourse that imposed those same hierarchies on the natural world, and reinforce the authority of centralized power (Chevalier, 403.)

The social order and class structure that Hogwarts essentially maintains is the limit between Muggles and witches and wizards. Without attending Hogwarts one cannot become a qualified witch or a wizard and thus one would be equivalent to a Muggle. Chevalier further explains how Foucault “notes the relationship between the academic term “discipline” and the more general progress of the individual’s becoming subject to the wider control of the state” (403). I however disagree with this notion of Foucault’s, as Foucault seems to fail to take into account the fact that the world discipline in the English language means essentially two different and unrelated things: an academic subject taught in schools, and an action related to punishing or reprimanding someone. Furthermore, Chevalier notes how Foucault’s suggestion of academic disciplines comprising “the political anatomy in detail” (*Discipline and Punish*, 139, in Chevalier 403), applies to Hogwarts, as it “resembles a technical training academy; the subjects offered are primarily pragmatic, either involving practical experience with the basic tools of magic [...] or with the manipulation of natural phenomena through wands and language” (Chevalier, 403-4).

Noel Chevalier (404) continues his description of Hogwarts in Foucaultian terms by stating how because of the above mentioned issues, it is not a surprise to find Foucault’s concept of discipline “as political control over the objectified (and essentially anatomized) individual



body operating at Hogwarts”. He notes how “[e]verything about Hogwarts suggests that individual students are subject to varying degrees of control” (404). I disagree with Chevalier’s notions of Hogwarts providing a good example of Foucaultian concepts of discipline, control and indoctrination. The strongest argument against Chevalier’s notions is provided by the character of Albus Dumbledore, the Headmaster of Hogwarts. Dumbledore’s educational philosophy is very different from Foucaultian ideas of discipline. He believes in setting loose boundaries for students, which they themselves are to supervise. If a student breaks rules, Dumbledore disapproves of it and shows his disappointment, but he does not punish the rule-breaker in any other way than showing how the student has disappointed him. Dumbledore’s educational philosophy is especially apparent in the way he treats especially Harry, Ron and Hermione, as he sets them very liberal boundaries. They are allowed to break school rules, if they have extremely good reasons for breaking them (such as going to defeat Voldemort in *Stone* and *Chamber*), and if they break rules for other reasons, they are reprimanded, but not punished. However, the other teachers in Hogwarts are more eager to discipline and punish the students. For example, Severus Snape and Dolores Umbridge are teachers who follow Foucault’s ideas of disciplining and punishing students for even the smallest of offences.

According to Chevalier, an example of how this control operates at Hogwarts is provided by the four school houses:

The quasi-military trappings of the individual houses (each with their own insignia, secret quarters, passwords, Quidditch teams, and ghosts as resident mascots) maintain a paradigm of division and control that mirrors the conscious effects of post-Enlightenment classrooms to transform individuals into what Foucault calls “docile bodies” (Chevalier, 404).

Thus, what Chevalier is pointing out here is that the houses operate as a means of control; as a way to make students conform to the ideologies that the different houses represent. However,

Chevalier's basic supposition is utterly wrong here: Hogwarts cannot be considered as presenting post-Enlightenment ideology in any way, as Hogwarts was founded a 1000 years ago, with its houses, insignias, etc. and it has remained essentially similar ever since.

However, Chevalier is partially correct in stating that the houses of Hogwarts are a means to control and divide the students. Students are sorted into the four houses by the Sorting Hat according to their abilities and personalities. The Sorting Hat was developed by the four founders of Hogwarts to work in their place in choosing students worthy to be in the houses that they founded: brave students belong to Gryffindor, intelligent students belong to Ravenclaw, hard-working students belong to Hufflepuff, and power-hungry students belong to Slytherin (*Goblet*, 156). The students themselves perceive those from other houses in rather different terms than the Sorting Hat, and their concepts are essentially very stereotypical: Ravenclaws are intelligent, Gryffindors are brave, Hufflepuffs are stupid, and Slytherins are evil. Thus, the houses operate as a means to separate and divide students into different groups, making a unified school spirit an ultimately incomprehensible concept. This unfortunate fact is particularly noticeable in *Order* (184-7) when the Sorting Hat encourages the students to stand united against the upcoming threat of Voldemort and his Death Eaters, as the only way to win the battle against the forces of evil is that the forces of good would fight as one (this fact is also noted by Dumbledore several times along the novels). However, as Harry points out, this is indeed an impossible idea, as he certainly would not want to have anything to do with Slytherins (*Order*, 189).

Nevertheless, what Chevalier obviously fails to take into account is that the houses are something far more than a means of controlling and dividing students (even though they do entail that aspect as well). The houses are essentially the students' family, while they are at Hogwarts, as Professor McGonagall states to the first-year students in *Stone* (85). The houses operate as a support system for the students, so that they would feel to be a part of a group,

instead of being alone. The houses help the students to endure home-sickness, as they will not miss their parents and family so much. The students of each individual house go to classes together as a group and they spend their free time in their common room together as well.

### **2.2.2 Albus Dumbledore vs. Voldemort**

The purpose of this chapter is to describe what a powerful character the Headmaster of Hogwarts, Albus Dumbledore is. He is politically and magically an extremely powerful character and many people envy his power. In addition, he has a powerful and intelligent personality, with a lot of *brainpower*. Dumbledore's powerfulness is also compared and contrasted with that of Voldemort, who is also a powerful and intelligent character, with a lot of magical power.

“*Headmaster: Albus Dumbledore (Order of Merlin, First Class, Grand Sorc., Chf. Warlock, Supreme Mugwump, International Confed. of Wizards)*” (Stone, 42). This is the description given about Dumbledore on a chocolate frog card. Chocolate frog cards present information about the most famous and powerful witches and wizards.

In *Stone*, Professor Dumbledore and Professor McGonagall discuss Voldemort's powers, and how Dumbledore feels weak compared to Voldemort, as “Voldemort had powers I will never have” (Stone, 14). However, Professor McGonagall feels that this is “[o]nly because you're too – well – *noble* to use them” (Stone, 14). Also Dobby comments on how Voldemort's powers are in a sense greater than Dumbledore's: “Albus Dumbledore is the greatest Headmaster Hogwarts has ever had. Dobby knows it, sir. Dobby has heard Dumbledore's powers rival those of He Who Must Not Be Named at the height of his strength. But sir,' Dobby's voice dropped to an urgent whisper, ‘there are powers Dumbledore doesn't ... powers no decent wizard...’” (*Chamber*, 18).

Thus, both McGonagall and Dobby emphasise that Voldemort is only stronger because he uses dark powers and Dumbledore is not willing to use similar powers because he is not evil. However, these comments hint that if Dumbledore would use the dark arts, he would be more powerful than Voldemort. The term *Dark Arts* refers to evil spells, incantations and potions that are designed to harm people or animals in some way. For instance, the Unforgivable Curses (which are described in 2.1.2) provide a good example of what the Dark Arts entail. Thus the Dark Arts can be considered as an essentially separate branch of magic, with the other forms of magic not being designed to harm anyone, but to be of some use to the witch or wizard using magic. Thus, the whole point of all magic is essentially to provide some sort of benefit for the user, as even by using the Dark Arts the user gets the benefit of being able to harm or kill someone, and the most powerful witches and wizards are the ones who are able to derive most benefit of their magic usage.

However, Harry strongly feels that Dumbledore is a more powerful wizard than Voldemort, and that he is in fact the greatest wizard in the world. He tells his belief to Tom Riddle (young Voldemort) in the following passage:

‘Not the greatest sorcerer in the world,’ said Harry, breathing fast. Sorry to disappoint you, and all that, but the greatest wizard in the world is Albus Dumbledore. Everyone says so. Even when you were strong, you didn’t dare try and take over at Hogwarts. Dumbledore saw through you when you were at school, and he still frightens you now, wherever you’re hiding these days.’ (*Chamber*, 232.)

Nevertheless, to Harry, Dumbledore is not all about power, as he also brings about a feeling of security in Harry: “He was often described as the greatest wizard of the age, but that wasn’t why Harry respected him. You couldn’t help trusting Albus Dumbledore, and as Harry watched him beaming around at the students, he felt really calm for the first time since the Dementor had entered the train compartment” (*Prisoner*, 71).

Albus Dumbledore is also politically a powerful character. He has been asked to be the Minister for Magic three times (*Prince*, 414), but he has refused. The Minister for Magic, Cornelius Fudge asks Dumbledore for advice all the time, before he becomes too power-hungry and starts to fear Dumbledore's power at the Ministry:

'Fudge thinks Dumbledore's plotting to overthrow him. He thinks Dumbledore wants to be Minister for Magic.'

'But Dumbledore doesn't want –'

'Of course he doesn't,' said Mr Weasley. 'He's never wanted the Minister's job, even though a lot of people wanted him to take it when Millicent Bagnold retired. Fudge came to power instead, but he's never quite forgotten how much popular support Dumbledore had, even though Dumbledore never applied for the job.'

'Deep down, Fudge knows Dumbledore's much cleverer than he is, a much more powerful wizard, and in the early days of his Ministry he was forever asking Dumbledore for help and advice,' said Lupin. 'But it seems he's become fond of power, and much more confident. He loves being Minister for Magic and he's managed to convince himself that he's the clever one and Dumbledore's simply stirring up trouble for the sake of it.' (*Order*, 88-9.)

Because Fudge fears Dumbledore so much, he discredits Dumbledore and ruins his reputation in order to neutralise him as a threat, which results in Dumbledore being stripped of almost all of his honours: he is voted out of the Chairmanship of the International Confederation of Wizards and demoted from Chief Warlock on the Wizard High Court, Wizengamot. In addition, his Order of Merlin, First Class might be taken away (*Order*, 90). However, when Voldemort attacks the Ministry and Fudge sees him with his own eyes, he is forced to believe Harry and Dumbledore. The following passage demonstrates Dumbledore's authority and power over Fudge after his blundering:

'You haven't got authorisation for that Portkey! You can't do things like that right in front of the Minister for Magic, you – you –'

His voice faltered as Dumbledore surveyed him magisterially over his half moon spectacles.

'You will give the order to remove Dolores Umbridge from Hogwarts,' said Dumbledore. 'You will tell your Aurors to stop searching for my Care of Magical Creatures teacher so that he can return to work.' (*Order*, 722.)

This proves just how politically powerful a character Dumbledore is. Furthermore, at the end of *Order*, Dumbledore comes out as the winner despite being discredited, whereas Cornelius Fudge gets fired. Harry emphasises this point to Rufus Scrimgeour, who becomes Minister after Fudge, when Scrimgeour tries to interfere with Dumbledore's affairs:

‘You can try,’ said Harry indifferently. ‘But you seem cleverer than Fudge, so I’d have thought you’d have learned from his mistakes. He tried interfering at Hogwarts. You might have noticed he’s not Minister any more, but Dumbledore’s still Headmaster. I’d leave Dumbledore alone, if I were you.’ (*Prince*, 326.)

In addition to being a magically and politically powerful character, Dumbledore is also extremely intelligent, in another words he has *brainpower*. Voldemort in his turn is considered “the most brilliant student Hogwarts has ever seen” (*Chamber*, 242). He received top marks in his OWLs and NEWTs, he was a Prefect and the Head Boy. He has always been eager to experiment with magic, unfortunately though this eagerness led him to the path of evil, although he himself perceives his evilness as greatness (*Prince*, 415).

Voldemort was a very powerful wizard, even as a child, before he knew what he was, as Dumbledore explains in the following quotation:

‘His powers, as you heard, were surprisingly well-developed for such a young wizard and – most interestingly and ominously of all – he had already discovered that he had some measure of control over them, and begun to use them consciously. And as you saw, they were not random experiments typical of young wizards; he was already using magic against other people, to frighten, to punish, to control. The little stories of the strangled rabbit and the young boy and girl he lured into a cave were most suggestive ... *I can make them hurt, if I want to ...*’

‘And he was a Parselmouth,’ interjected Harry.

‘Yes, indeed; a rare ability, and one supposedly connected with the Dark Arts, although as we know, there are Parselmouths among the great and the good too. In fact, his ability to speak to serpents did not make me nearly as uneasy as his obvious instincts for cruelty, secrecy and domination.’ (*Prince*, 258-9.)

Thus, Dumbledore was very concerned about Voldemort's evilness, even when Voldemort was just a child. Dumbledore was concerned that, even then, Voldemort exhibited features typical for tyrants, as he was hungry for power and he liked to make others suffer. Dumbledore actually describes Voldemort as a tyrant to Harry in *Prince* when they discuss the prophecy according to which Harry is destined to destroy Voldemort or die trying (the prophecy is described in greater detail in 3.1):

Voldemort himself created his worst enemy, just as tyrants everywhere do! Have you any idea how much tyrants fear the people they oppress? All of them realise that, one day, amongst their many victims, there is sure to be one who rises against them and strikes back! Voldemort is no different! Always he was on the lookout for the one who would challenge him. He had the prophecy and he leapt into action, with the result that he not only handpicked the man most likely to finish him, he handed him uniquely deadly weapons! (*Prince*, 477.)

Interestingly though, despite the fact that Voldemort is an extremely power-hungry character, he has never had the desire to work at the Ministry of Magic or become Minister for Magic. He was far more interested in becoming a teacher, as he considers teachers having more power than Ministry officials. M. Katherine Grimes<sup>26</sup> emphasises the importance of being a teacher. She explains that it is significant that the most respectable and admirable figure of the *Harry Potter* novels, Albus Dumbledore, is not a member of the Ministry of Magic, but a headmaster of a school. Thus, Rowling in her novels clearly suggests, that the one who helps to shape the minds and characters of the leaders of the future generation, is the most important character in any society. (Grimes, 114.) It is apparent that Voldemort also shared this view when he was younger: he wanted to mould young minds into becoming his supporters, and he

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<sup>26</sup> M. Katherine Grimes, "Harry Potter: Fairy Tale Prince, Real Boy, and Archetypal Hero", in Lana A. Whited (ed.), *The Ivory Tower and Harry Potter. Perspectives on a Literary Phenomenon* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2002), p. 114.

perceived that the most efficient way for him to do that is to become a teacher instead of a Ministry official, as Dumbledore explains:

[...] as a teacher, he would have had great power and influence over young witches and wizards. Perhaps he had gained the idea from Professor Slughorn, the teacher with whom he was on best terms, who had demonstrated how influential a role a teacher can play. I do not imagine for an instant that Voldemort envisaged spending the rest of his life at Hogwarts, but I do think that he saw it as a useful recruiting ground, and a place where he might begin to build himself an army. (*Prince*, 404.)

Thus, Voldemort and Dumbledore actually have something in common: they both perceive being a teacher more important than working for the Ministry, as Dumbledore points out:

‘I am surprised you have remained here so long,’ said Voldemort after a short pause. ‘I always wondered why a wizard such as yourself never wished to leave school.’

‘Well,’ said Dumbledore still smiling, ‘to a wizard such as myself, there can be nothing more important than passing on ancient skills, helping hone young minds. If I remember correctly, you once saw the attraction of teaching, too.’

‘I see it still,’ said Voldemort. ‘I merely wondered why you – who is so often asked for advice by the Ministry, and who has twice, I think, been offered the post of Minister –’

‘Three times at the last count, actually,’ said Dumbledore. ‘But the Ministry never attracted me as a career. Again, something we have in common, I think.’ (*Prince*, 414.)

## 2.3 Ministry of Magic Interfering at Hogwarts

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the ways in which the Ministry of Magic tries to interfere with the running and teaching of Hogwarts. In addition, the underlying reasons and motives for the Ministry to do so are analysed. Furthermore, the reasons for why Rowling might have felt a need to create such a plot, where the Ministry essentially creates a reign of terror in Hogwarts, in her novel will be explored and analysed, as well as the message that she is apparently trying to convey to her readers with all this.



‘The Ministry of Magic,’ Dumbledore continued, ‘does not wish me to tell you this. It is possible that some of your parents will be horrified that I have done so – either because they will not believe that Lord Voldemort has returned, or because they think I should not tell you so, young as you are. It is my belief, however, that the truth is generally preferable to lies, and that any attempt to pretend that Cedric died as the result of an accident, or some sort of blunder of his own, is an insult to his memory.’ (*Goblet*, 626.)

This quotation describes one of the reasons why the Ministry of Magic starts interfering at Hogwarts: it tries to censor Dumbledore from telling the truth about Voldemort’s return. The other reasons are that Fudge has become concerned over Dumbledore’s power at the magical community and he wants to stamp it down. However, most importantly, Fudge wants to interfere in the wizarding education, as he does not want the students to be trained in combat against the Ministry.

Thus, the students of Hogwarts have to endure a horrible new teacher of Defence Against the Dark Arts, Dolores Umbridge, Senior Undersecretary for the Minister of Magic. She applies an extremely boring, theory oriented approach to her teaching, where no practical magic is allowed, which the students find an utterly incomprehensible and useless teaching method, as it will be of no help at their OWLs or in real life, as the following quotations emphasise:

‘Now, it is the view of the Ministry that a theoretical knowledge will be more than sufficient to get you through your examination, which, after all, is what school is all about. [...]

isn’t there a practical bit in our Defence Against the Dark Arts OWL? Aren’t we supposed to show that we can actually do the counter-curses and things?’

‘As long as you have studied the theory hard enough, there is no reason why you should not be able to perform the spells under carefully controlled examination conditions,’ said Professor Umbridge dismissively. (*Order*, 219-220.)

‘And what good’s theory going to be in the real world?’ said Harry loudly, his fist in the air again.

Professor Umbridge looked up.

‘This is school, Mr Potter, not the real world,’ she said softly. (*Order*, 220.)

The most interesting issue that comes up in these quotations is the fact that Dolores Umbridge is clearly a very incompetent teacher: she believes theory to be everything and that by applying theory one can do well in practice without any practice. In addition, she believes that school and real life have nothing to do with one another, even though every good teacher knows that school is about preparing children for real life and about providing them with real-life skills. Keeping this incompetence of hers in mind, the following comment by Draco Malfoy is highly ironic: “Father was talking to the Minister just a couple of days ago, you know, and it sounds as though the Ministry’s really determined to crack down on sub-standard teaching in this place. So even if that overgrown moron *does* show up again, he’ll probably be sent packing straightaway” (*Order*, 235). The irony here derives from the fact that were the Ministry truly to stamp out poor teachers, the first teacher that would clearly need to be fired is Dolores Umbridge, and not Hagrid.

The Ministry of Magic interferes in Hogwarts in many practical ways, in addition to making Dolores Umbridge the Defence Against the Dark Arts teacher and devising an unbelievably useless curriculum for the subject. It all starts with the Ministry of Magic appointing Umbridge as the High Inquisitor of Hogwarts. “*The Inquisitor will have powers to inspect her fellow educators and make sure they are coming up to scratch*” (*Order*, 275). The word *Inquisitor* is quite an interesting choice to call the new position that Umbridge has. Historically, the word refers to the Spanish Inquisition, whose job was to supervise the purity of the Catholic Church, to convert people (e.g. Jews) to the Catholic faith, and to destroy all heretics that worshipped Satan, or practiced magic, and were thus against the Christian faith. Thus, it is probably the case that by using the word *Inquisitor*, Rowling is alluding to and drawing a parallel to the Spanish Inquisition. The reason for why Rowling is making the allusion and drawing this parallel might be due to the fact that both in the Spanish Inquisition and in

Umbridge's rule as the High Inquisitor of Hogwarts, many innocent people are convicted and blamed for something they did not do (e.g. Harry getting many weeks of detention for lying, even though Umbridge knew very well that Harry was telling the truth). Many innocents were convicted of being witches or wizards, and they were burned at the stake by the Spanish Inquisition. Similarly, Umbridge labels Harry as a madman and a liar who is not to be believed. Thus, this again brings in the question of miscarriages of justice (which were discussed in 2.1.2). In addition, the connection with using magic and the Spanish Inquisition is also at work here, as Umbridge prohibits the actual use of magic in her classroom. Furthermore, Umbridge's ultimate goal is to bring the whole administration of Hogwarts and its students into the control of the Ministry of Magic, in exactly the same manner as the Spanish Inquisition tried to force people under the control of the Catholic Church by converting everyone into the Catholic faith. Yet another important aspect of the Spanish Inquisition which is at work here is censorship: the Inquisition tried to censor all books that were considered as heresy, in the same manner as Umbridge censors *The Quibbler*, which has Harry's interview in it, so that no one would learn the truth about Voldemort's return.

Umbridge abuses her new position as High Inquisitor in various ways. She devises many new Educational Decrees that are utterly unfair and foolish, and she starts inspecting her fellow teachers, as she is eager to fire someone. Umbridge tries to gain control of every aspect of school life with her educational decrees: She makes herself to be in charge of deciding which clubs and organisations can continue to exist at Hogwarts, gives herself supreme authority over disciplining and punishing students, and bans teachers from talking to students about anything else than the subject that they teach (as teachers might point out the Ministry's incompetence to students, and Umbridge would not want that to happen). Furthermore, she censors the paper called *The Quibbler* (as mentioned above). The final move that Umbridge makes in order to gain

complete control over Hogwarts is to make the Minister for Magic to appoint her as Headmistress.

All in all, the character of Dolores Umbridge demonstrates how a person with power can abuse it terribly. Umbridge appears to be a very power-hungry character, who has similar ideas than Voldemort (In Quirrell's words: "There is no good and evil, there is only power, and those too weak to seek it" (*Stone*, 211)). Thus, similarly as Voldemort can be equated with a tyrant (as noted in 2.2.2), also Umbridge could be called one, as she has the desire to control everything and everyone with an iron fist. Marla Harris<sup>27</sup> argues along the same lines in her description of Umbridge. According to her, "Umbridge uses labels of liar, storyteller, and madman to censor Harry, promulgating a vision of Hogwarts more appropriate to the Muggles' St. Brutus's Center for Incurably Criminal Boys. Her obsession with surveillance transforms Hogwarts into a sort of panopticon where the inmates, including the teachers, are inspected and scrutinized" (89). (The concept of panopticon is described in 2.1.1.)

In a theoretical sense, what Umbridge and the Ministry are doing with their intervention is to prevent students from receiving various kinds of important information: information about Voldemort's return, information on how to perform defensive magic, etc. Information is a crucial thing in relation to power, as essentially information is power, as Bacon, Nietzsche and Foucault have all concluded:

[...] 'knowledge is power'. Of course, Bacon had asserted this before Nietzsche, but he meant something different. For Nietzsche and Foucault the 'is' connecting knowledge and power does not indicate that the relation of knowledge and power is one of predication such that knowledge leads to power. Rather, the relation is such that knowledge is not gained prior to and independently of the use to which it will be put in order to achieve power (whether over nature or over other people), but is already a function of human interests and power relations. (Hoy, 129.)

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<sup>27</sup> Marla Harris, "Is Seeing Believing? Truth and Lies in *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*", in *Topic: The Washington & Jefferson College Review*, Volume 54, *Harry Potter* (Washington & Jefferson College, 2004).

Also according to Jennifer Flaherty, “[i]nformation is power” in *Order* (93). She continues by stating how “[t]o the Ministry, information is not only a threat; it is also a powerful weapon to be used against its enemies” (94). Flaherty (96) also points out an interesting paradox in the Ministry and Dolores Umbridge’s thinking: they do not perceive the fact that by attempting to keep knowledge hidden from people, the people will try to obtain it even more, as people are very curious. According to Flaherty (96), the character of Hermione emphasizes this point, as she “has always shown a deep love of information and appreciation for its power”. Furthermore, Flaherty feels that “Hermione’s intellectual curiosity cannot be stifled, and her talent for understanding exactly what information the Ministry wants hidden and making that information available is part of the reason that Umbridge’s efforts at Hogwarts fail” (Flaherty, 96).

Flaherty continues her argumentation by stating that Umbridge’s crusade for the regulation of the information appropriate for students is doomed to failure from the beginning, as every new educational decree that Umbridge creates, makes the students (and the staff as well, in my view) oppose her and her ridiculous decrees even more vigorously. Thus, despite the fact that Umbridge parades her authority as absolute, she gets frustrated all the time by the school’s firm resistance of her control (Flaherty, 96).

Michel Foucault provides a good explanation for why the Ministry and Umbridge’s attempts to repress information with using measures of power fail:

[...] power would be a fragile thing if its only function were to repress, if it worked only through the mode of censorship, exclusion, blockage and repression, in the manner of a great Superego, exercising itself only in a negative way... Far from preventing knowledge, power produces it... The fact that power is so deeply rooted and the difficulty of eluding its embrace are effects of these connections. That is why the notion of repression with mechanisms of power are generally reduced to strikes me as very inadequate and possibly dangerous.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977* (New York: Pantheon, 1980), p. 59.

Foucault's statement of how power would be very fragile if it operated only repressively is very accurate in relation to the world of Harry Potter, as that is essentially what happens in *Order*: the Ministry tries to make Hogwarts to function the way it wants to by extreme forms of oppression and by repression of knowledge and information, and it fails miserably because people start to rebel against the repression. In addition, Foucault's remark of how one cannot prevent knowledge by means of power, as power produces knowledge, explains why the Ministry's effort is doomed to fail. As psychological beings, people are invariably tempted by what they cannot get, and if they are denied knowledge through official routes, they will get it through unofficial ones.

Andrew Blake (33) in his turn perceives that through the character of Dolores Umbridge, Rowling is trying to convey to her readers how harmful the supervision of teaching through means of fear is. Blake believes that Rowling is alluding to what happened in Britain in 1997 after the New Labour Party won the election. The party set out to improve the level of education through means of setting up school inspectors (which is essentially a similar post as that of the High Inquisitor), whose job it was to start unifying the level of education in all British schools. However, even though the aims of this idea was very good, as the level of education in Britain is very unequal (as is described in 2.2.1), the inspectors went about making the changes in very wrong ways. They wanted to guarantee an equal level of education through fear, in exactly the same manner as Umbridge and the Ministry of Magic are trying to do in *Order*. (Blake, 33.)

## 2.4 The Daily Prophet

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the leading wizarding newspaper, *the Daily Prophet*, and how it is not a trustworthy form of media, as it is corrupt and under the Ministry of Magic's control. The Minister for Magic, Cornelius Fudge essentially dictates what the newspaper is allowed to print, in a manner closely reminiscent of what is happening in the real world, in countries such as Russia, where the President essentially controls the media. Thus, what Rowling is most probably trying to point out with her depiction of *the Daily Prophet*, is that even though the ideal of any media is to convey information to the people in an unbiased and free manner, and a part of the newspaper reporters' ethics is supposed to be to print only the truth, it is not actually what happens in reality in many countries of the real world. For example, were the media in Russia or in the United States to mock their Presidents in a severe manner, and expose unfavourable truths about them, the reporters who had written the stories as well as the heads of the newspapers or the television channels who had the nerve to publish or air such stories, would be in serious trouble. Thus, Noel Chevalier is very accurate in describing how

the fact that the wizard press is so easily controlled by the Ministry allows Rowling to blend Harry's personal story with a wider critique of systems of authority that define the wizarding world and to raise issues of political justice within a society defined by such rigid authoritarianism. (Chevalier, 400.)

*The Daily Prophet* first starts ridiculing Harry in *Goblet*, when the reporter Rita Skeeter decides to find a new angle in her writings about Harry, as she feels that the readers would grow tired of reading what a wonderful hero Harry is all the time. Her article essentially declares Harry Potter to be a "disturbed and dangerous" character, who collapses in class on a regular basis, because his brain was damaged by Voldemort's killing curse (*Goblet*, 531). Skeeter's article sets the basis

for the ridiculing of Harry on a regular basis, when the Minister for Magic, Cornelius Fudge starts pressuring the *Prophet* to print stories where Harry is portrayed as an attention seeking madman. Fudge wants to ruin Harry's reputation by making him seem like a crazy character who tells tall tales, and whose word is not to be believed in. Hermione explains to Harry how he is described in the paper thus:

'I'm not talking about big articles. They just slip you in, like you're a standing joke.' [...]  
 'Well they're writing about you as though you're this deluded, attention-seeking person who thinks he's a great tragic hero or something,' said Hermione very fast, as though it would be less unpleasant for Harry to hear these facts quickly. 'They keep slipping in snide comments about you. If some far-fetched story appears, they say something like, "A tale worthy of Harry Potter", and if anyone has a funny accident or anything it's, "Let's hope he hasn't got a scar on his forehead or we'll be asked to worship him next" –' (*Order*, 70-1.)

The reason why Fudge wants Harry's credibility ruined is that he does not want people believing in Harry's story of how Voldemort has returned to power. For this same reason, Fudge pressures the *Daily Prophet* to ruin Dumbledore's reputation as well. In fact, the *Prophet* is so thorough in this task, that it makes everyone trying to defend Dumbledore in any way look ridiculous and even infamous, as the following example shows:

*'Wizengamot elders Griselda Marchbanks and Tiberius Ogden have resigned in protest at the introduction of the post of Inquisitor at Hogwarts.*  
*"Hogwarts is a school, not an outpost of Cornelius Fudge's office," said Madam Marchbanks. "This is a further, disgusting attempt to discredit Albus Dumbledore."*  
*'(For a full account of Madam Marchbank's alleged links to subversive goblin groups, turn to page seventeen.)' (Order, 276.)*

Jennifer Flaherty finds it interesting how, despite the fact that the *Daily Prophet* is depicted as the only trustworthy wizard newspaper in Britain, it "bends to the will of Cornelius Fudge without qualms of consequences" (Flaherty, 94). It is also peculiar how the *Daily Prophet* is susceptible to the Ministry's corruption, and how it is not held liable for ruining Harry's



reputation (Flaherty, 94), as Hermione and Ron point out in *Order*, when they discuss how the *Daily Prophet* has changed its tone about Harry, and how they do not take responsibility for spreading lies about Harry:

‘He’s the “boy who lived” again now, though, isn’t he?’ said Ron darkly.  
 ‘Not such a deluded show-off any more, eh?’ [...]  
 ‘Yes, they’re very complimentary about you now, Harry’ said Hermione, scanning down the article. “*A lone voice of truth ... perceived as unbalanced, yet never wavered in his story ... forced to bear ridicule and slander ...*” ‘Hmmm,’ she said, frowning, ‘I notice they don’t mention the fact that it was them doing all the ridiculing and slandering in the *Prophet* ...’ (*Order*, 746.)

Rita Skeeter defends the *Daily Prophet*’s corruption by explaining that it would show Harry in a bad light even without Fudge’s pressuring, since the paper essentially obeys the wishes of its readers, and as the readers do not wish to believe in Voldemort’s return:

‘All right, Fudge is leaning on the *Prophet*, but it comes to the same thing. They won’t print a story that shows Harry in a good light. Nobody wants to read it. It’s against the public mood. This last Azkaban breakout has got people quite worried enough. People just don’t want to believe You-Know-Who’s back.’

‘So the *Daily Prophet* exists to tell people what they want to hear, does it?’ said Hermione scathingly.

Rita sat up straight again, her eyebrows raised, and drained her glass of Firewhisky.

‘The *Prophet* exists to sell itself, you silly girl,’ she said coldly. (*Order*, 501.)

Hermione finds it an odd concept that the *Daily Prophet* should print lies just to please the audience and to sell itself, because she seems to hold the belief that it is the duty of the press to be objective and inform people of the truth as it is and not tell lies, even though they would be more convenient to both the general public and to politicians such as Fudge. However, as Heather Debling points out, “Rowling’s critique of the *Daily Prophet* reveals, however, that

truth, or, more specifically, the ability to have one's truth heard depends on power, and that his precisely what Harry and those supporting him are without".<sup>29</sup>

## 2.5 The Order of the Phoenix vs. the Death Eaters

The purpose of this chapter is to compare and contrast two unofficial organisations of power, the Order of the Phoenix and the Death Eaters. The way these organisations use the power that they have and how the power is structured within their organisations is explored. In addition, the organisations are contrasted with the Ministry of Magic in the way how efficiently they function. According to Philip Nel<sup>30</sup> there is a very sceptical attitude towards the official power structure (Ministry of Magic), and a much more trusting attitude towards unofficial alliances (for example the Order of the Phoenix) in the *Harry Potter* novels. Although all politicians are not corrupt, many officials appear to be very stupid and eager to push through their vested interests (Nel, 39-40). Furthermore, Nel explains that “[a]s the series develops, it grows increasingly interested in questions of power: who has it, who has the right to exercise it over another, who has the moral authority to wield it, and how it should be exercised” (Nel, 40). Thus, it can be interpreted that by creating these organisations, Rowling has wanted to point out to her readers that one does not have to rely on official structures of power to achieve important goals, such as eliminating evil or fighting unjust forms of power in the wizarding world, and that this essentially applies to all societies in the real world as well.

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<sup>29</sup> Heather Debling, “‘You survived to bear witness’: Trauma, testimony, and the Burden of Witnessing in *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*”, in *Topic: The Washington & Jefferson College Review*, Volume 54, *Harry Potter* (Washington & Jefferson College, 2004), p. 75.

<sup>30</sup> Philip Nel, *J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter Novels. A Reader's Guide* (New York: Continuum, 2001), pp. 39-40.

The Order of the Phoenix is a secret society founded by Albus Dumbledore. Its purpose is to fight against Voldemort and his Death Eaters in various ways. One of the most important tasks of the Order is to bring more members into the order: Charlie Weasley makes connections in Romania with foreign wizards as “Dumbledore wants as many foreign wizards brought in as possible” (*Order*, 67) and Bill Weasley tries to recruit goblins as he works at the wizarding bank Gringotts, which is managed by goblins. Another important task of the Order is to stop Voldemort from getting any more followers. Thus, what is essentially going on between the Order of the Phoenix and the Death Eaters is a struggle for power: both are trying to recruit as many followers as possible in order to beat the other.

The Order of the Phoenix and the Death Eaters are very different organisations in various ways. The leader of the Order, Albus Dumbledore is respected, but not worshipped, what he says is taken into consideration and his orders are obeyed, but his word is not the absolute law. Dumbledore is a fair leader, and he awakes no fear or terror in the members of the Order. If someone makes a mistake, Dumbledore does not punish the person horribly, but he merely shows his disappointment, which makes the wrongdoer feel utter remorse (as is exemplified in how he treats Harry, when he breaks rules at Hogwarts). The Order is quite a democratic organisation, where everyone has a say in matters. However, Dumbledore is not infallible as the leader of the Order, as he makes mistakes just like any other human does: for example, he blames himself that it is entirely his fault that Sirius gets killed in the Ministry of Magic, as because of his order to Sirius to stay inside the Headquarters (i.e. Sirius’s childhood home, which he hates) that Sirius develops an irresistible need to get out and help the Order in its assignment and is eventually killed. The Death Eaters in turn worship and fear their leader Voldemort, as if he was a despot and they were his slaves, as the following example, where Voldemort returns to his body makes clear:

All of them were hooded and masked. And one by one they moved forwards ... slowly cautiously, as though they could hardly believe their eyes. Voldemort stood in silence, waiting for them. Then one of the Death Eaters fell to his knees, crawled towards Voldemort, and kissed the hem of his black robes.

‘Master ... master ...’ he murmured.

The Death Eaters behind him did the same; each of them approaching Voldemort on his knees, and kissing his robes, before backing away and standing up, forming a silent circle [...] (*Goblet*, 561.)

To the Death Eaters, Voldemort’s word is the law, which is to be respected with their very lives, as Severus Snape explains to Narcissa Malfoy, when she tries to tell a forbidden thing to Snape: “‘If he has forbidden it, you ought not to speak,’ said Snape at once. ‘The Dark Lord’s word is law. [...] I am one of the few the Dark Lord has told. Nevertheless, had I not been in on the secret, Narcissa, you would have been guilty of great treachery to the Dark Lord’” (*Prince*, 37). Voldemort’s opinion is the only one that counts, it is no matter what his lowly Death Eaters think; his power is one of absolute dictatorship. He punishes those who have made mistakes most severely, and the Death Eaters are terrified that he will punish them even if they have done nothing wrong.

The Order of the Phoenix and the Death Eaters are essentially unofficial structures of power. They work outside the control of the Ministry of Magic. It can be interpreted that the Order is actually doing what the Ministry of Magic is supposed to do: to stop Voldemort and his Death Eaters from doing evil, spreading anarchy and destruction, and gaining power and control of the wizarding world. Thus, the Order can be considered as a more efficient and functional organisation than the Ministry of Magic, as in the face of danger, the Ministry fails to perform its duty and turns a blind eye to it, whereas the Order rises to the occasion. In addition, the Order is superior to the Ministry of Magic in the sense that it is a lot more flexible and democratic in its organisation, as Dumbledore is not a dictator like the Minister for Magic can sometimes be, and

it is not corrupt. The Death Eaters in turn are an essentially evil and corrupt organisation, where one man holds all power, and thus the Order of the Phoenix is a more functional organisation of power than the Death Eaters. However, when comparing the Ministry of Magic and the Death Eaters as organisations, it is hard to say which one of them is more functional, as the way Ministry has handled the affairs of the wizarding community in Britain, is essentially what caused Voldemort and his Death Eaters' rise to power (this argument will be fully demonstrated in 4.1).

## 2.6 Madness

The aim of this chapter is to describe how madness is perceived in the wizarding world. Madness is an important concept in relation to power. Declaring someone as mad is a way of using power to diminish and discredit the person that is declared mad. For example, Cornelius Fudge tries to ruin Harry and Dumbledore's reputations so that nobody would believe them, by making them seem mad. Madness is something that people cannot fully understand; it is something unknown and frightening, something "other"; something that people would not normally wish to be. Declaring someone mad is in this sense a form of "othering" (the concept of "the other" is discussed in 3.3).

"Mad" is a word that is used frequently in the *Harry Potter* novels both as a way to refer to mental illness and in its more "popular" sense. All the main characters and many of the minor ones as well, are referred to as mad at times. Harry for instance is said to be mad on many occasions or his sanity is at least questioned. Here are a few examples:

'Cut it out,' he said firmly, rubbing the scar as the pain receded.

'First sign of madness, talking to one's own head,' said a sly voice from the empty picture on the wall. (*Order*, 162.)

'Oooh, Crackpot's feeling cranky,' said Peeves, pursuing Harry along the corridor, leering as he zoomed along above him. 'What is it this time, my little Potty friend? Hearing voices? Seeing visions? Speaking in –' Peeves blew a gigantic raspberry '–*tongues?*' [...]

*'Oh, most think he's barking, the potty wee lad,  
But some are more kindly and think he's just sad,  
But Peevesy knows better and says that he's mad –'* (*Order*, 222.)

'Are – you – insane?' said Hermione in a hushed voice.' [...]  
'I don't think so,' said Harry, shrugging. (*Order*, 580.)

In addition, the *Daily Prophet* makes Harry seem like a madman that should be put in the mental ward of St Mungo's Hospital for Magical Maladies and Injuries. Voldemort, in turn, has been considered mad even as a child, probably by the staff and other children at the Muggle orphanage where Voldemort was forced to spend his childhood, as the following quotation implies:

'You can't kid me! The asylum, that's where you're from, isn't it? "Professor", yes, of course – well, I'm not going, see? The old cat's the one who should be in the asylum. I never did anything to little Amy Benson or Dennis Bishop, and you can ask them, they'll tell you!'

'I am not from the asylum,' said Dumbledore patiently. [...]

'Hogwarts,' Dumbledore went on, as though he had not heard Riddle's last words, 'is a school for people with special abilities –'

'I am not mad!'

'I know that you are not mad. Hogwarts is not a school for mad people. It is a school of magic.' (*Prince*, 253.)

The Muggles at the orphanage obviously considered Voldemort's ability to do magic as a sign of insanity, as they had no other explanation for what he could do. Thus, Voldemort being considered as mad by Muggles is an indication of the general fact that people are prone to refer to both people and things they do not understand or approve of as "mad". Thus the term *mad* is used as a device for "othering" the incomprehensible and frightening traits of other humans that one does not want to recognise as a part of oneself, as is stated above.

## 2.7 Class and Gender

The aim of this chapter is to describe and analyse the class structure in the wizarding world as opposed to the British class system. In addition, issues related to gender in the world of Harry Potter are pondered upon: are the *Harry Potter* novels sexist, or are they an example of gender equality? Both class and gender are extremely important issues in relation to power. Traditionally, the upper class always discriminates against the lower classes in various ways, and emphasises its superiority whereas the male gender dominates and is considered as superior to the female one in all areas of life. Therefore, one of the purposes of this chapter is to explore whether these traditional views of class and gender are supported in the novels.

The class system in the world of Harry Potter is rather much like the one of the real world. The rich have power, whereas the poor are frowned upon. The upper class is superior to the lower class. Both in the British society (and other societies) and in the wizarding world, the strongest determinant of nobility is the purity of blood: noble people are only supposed to marry other noble people, thus breeding noble children. However, the wizarding class system can also be considered as rather different from the real world, as in the wizarding world, there are essentially only two classes: noble and not noble. Thus, the most important difference between the British class system and the wizarding class system is that there is no real middle class in the wizarding world: there are only noble people and not noble people, nothing in between. This is largely due to the fact that the hierarchy of professions in the wizarding world is very confusing, as there appear to be no real working class professions (except for gamekeeper) in the wizarding world: there are only professions traditionally perceived as middle class professions, such as teachers and Ministry workers. Furthermore, the issue of purity of blood permeates both social classes, and not just the nobility as in the real world. In the real world, the status of the working

class and middle class people is determined solely on the job that they have and how much money they have, and one's blood is not an issue, whereas in the wizarding world money and profession are of secondary importance. Thus, I perceive the wizarding class system as set upon two different hierarchies (which no other Harry Potter scholar has done thus far): the purity of wizarding blood and socioeconomic status. The first determinant of one's class is the purity of blood and wealth is a secondary factor: if one is not pure-blooded one automatically falls into the lowest class despite one's wealth, whereas a pure blooded wealthy wizard (such as the Malfoys) are at the top of wizarding nobility.

The Malfoys, who are representatives of the wizarding nobility, perceive themselves as superior to anyone. They have an air of infinite wealth: "Judging by the fact that Draco Malfoy usually had the best of everything, his family was rolling in wizard gold; he could just see Malfoy strutting in a large manor house" (*Chamber*, 28), and even their physical appearances point out their snobbery: "Draco greatly resembled his father. His mother was blonde, too; tall and slim, she would have been nice looking if she hadn't been wearing a look that suggested there was a nasty smell under her nose" (*Goblet*, 91-2). Furthermore, the appearance of Draco is described as essentially that of an aristocrat: "'Master Malfoy moves with a nobility that befits his pure blood,' croaked Kreacher at once. 'His features recall the fine bones of my mistress and his manners are those of –'" (*Prince*, 423).

As the Malfoys feel so superior towards other wizards, they look down their noses at other witches and wizards that are not as rich or powerful or pure blooded as them. The following statement that Draco makes emphasises this point:

'You'll soon find out some wizarding families are much better than others, Potter. You don't want to go making friends with the wrong sort. I can help you there.'  
 He held out his hand to shake Harry's, but Harry didn't take it.  
 'I think I can tell who the wrong sort are for myself, thanks,' he said coolly.



Draco Malfoy didn't go red, but a pink tinge appeared in his pale cheeks.

'I'd be careful if I were you, Potter,' he said slowly. 'Unless you're a bit politer you'll go the same way as your parents. They didn't know what was good for them, either. You hang around with riff-raff like the Weasleys and that Hagrid and it'll rub off on you.' (*Stone*, 81.)

Draco Malfoy is indeed a veritable snob. For instance, he mocks Hagrid, because he perceives him as a servant, and the Weasleys and Remus Lupin because they are poor. Here are a few examples of Draco's snobbery:

'Would you mind moving out of the way?' came Malfoy's cold drawl from behind them. 'Are you trying to earn some extra money, Weasley? Hoping to be a gamekeeper yourself when you leave Hogwarts, I suppose – that hut of Hagrid's must seem like a palace compared to what your family's used to.' (*Stone*, 144.)

Malfoy gave Professor Lupin an insolent stare, which took in the patches on his robes and the dilapidated suitcase. With a tiny hint of sarcasm in his voice, he said, 'Oh, no – er – *Professor*,' then he smirked at Grabbe and Goyle, and led them up the steps into the castle. (*Prisoner*, 69.)

'Look at the state of his robes,' Malfoy would say in a loud whisper as Professor Lupin passed. 'He dresses like our old house-elf.' (*Prisoner*, 107.)

In addition, the *Harry Potter* novels contain numerous references to social class, which point to the British class system. For example, Justin Finch-Fletchey, who is apparently a member of a rich Muggle family, explains to Harry in *Chamber* how he decided to go to Hogwarts instead of Eton, one of the most prestigious and expensive public schools in Britain:

"My name was down for Eton, you know. I can't tell you how glad I am I came here instead. Of course, mother was slightly disappointed, but since I made her read Lockhart's books I think she's begun to see how useful it'll be to have a fully trained wizard in the family ..." (*Chamber*, 73). Also, the following comment by Dumbledore is one related to the British class system, as it refers to *squire*, a British landowner: "the village of Little Hangleton enjoyed a tremendous

scandal. You can imagine the gossip it caused when the squire's son ran off with the tramp's daughter Merope" (*Prince*, 202).

Farah Mendlesohn perceives the issue of class in the world of Harry Potter very differently than I. For instance, she believes that the class hierarchy in the wizarding world is essentially similar to that of Britain, with Hogwarts and Quidditch meant only for rich people<sup>31</sup>, and the only difference being that there are two kinds of aristocracy to choose from (e.g. Malfoys vs. Potters and Weasleys) (169). As I specifically state in 2.1 Hogwarts is a public school which does not appear to have other expenses than school supplies, and it is not in any sense elitist, as it takes in students based solely on their abilities and not wealth or social background. Also the claim of Quidditch being a rich-man's sport is ridiculous considering that all the Weasley children play in their Quidditch house team at one point, and the Weasleys are extremely poor.

Julia Park's conception of class in the world of Harry Potter is however the one that I most disagree with<sup>32</sup>. In fact, I find it utterly incomprehensible. She claims that the whole class system of the wizarding world is set around idolising the middle class, as Rowling is a middle class person herself. She perceives Rowling's "staunchly middle-class worldview" as colouring every aspect of her novels (180). In addition she attacks Rowling's person by pointing out that she finds her rags-to-riches story to be humbug, as Rowling clearly belongs to the middle class. Thus it would appear that Park's ideas about class in the *Harry Potter* novels are strongly coloured by her apparent personal dislike and contempt of the middle class. According to Park the novels demonstrate Rowling's ideal of a "middle class comfort zone" (179), where there are "prejudices and biases towards those with money and the status that comes with it, and those

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<sup>31</sup> Farah Mendlesohn, "Harry Potter and the Construction of Authority", in Lana A. Whited (ed.), *The Ivory Tower and Harry Potter. Perspectives on a Literary Phenomenon* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2002), pp. 167-8.

<sup>32</sup> Julia Park, "Class and Socioeconomic Identity in Harry Potter's England", in Giselle Liza Anatol (ed.), *Reading Harry Potter* (Westport, Connecticut, London: Praeger, 2003).

without” (180). She also quotes Pam Morris’s claim of the middle class as being fond of money and the lack of it signifying immorality in the eyes of the middle class as applying to Rowling. However, Park conceives the use of earned wealth vs. inherited wealth in Rowling’s novels as “a throwback to the Industrial Age and the rise of the modern middle class” (180).

The issue that I find most objectionable in Park’s theory is that she believes the *Harry Potter* novels on the other hand to be against inherited money and on the other to despise those without money. I find the situation to be exactly the opposite: There is nothing wrong with inheriting money, after all Harry inherited a great amount of money from his parents, and he generally finds it to be a very useful thing. However, he wishes that he could be able to help those without money (the Weasleys) with his money, as he feels a bit guilty about having so much when others have so little. Most importantly, the novels emphasise that there is nothing wrong or immoral about being poor! After all, for example the Weasleys are presented as very respectable characters, as well as Hagrid and Remus Lupin, with only the snobbish Malfoys sneering at them, and they are extremely poor.

What is also worth opposing in this theory of Park’s is that in the world of Harry Potter, the middle class is utterly ridiculed in the form of the Dursley family. Park does note this fact herself: “only the middle-class –Rowling’s class – seems to escape criticism, with one notable exception: Potter’s Muggle relations, the cartoonish Dursleys” (179), but the fact that she claims the middle-class being idolised is utterly ridiculous considering that I believe that there is actually no such thing as a strict middle class that would be reminiscent of the British middle-class, which Park is obviously referring to here, in the world of Harry Potter, and the only technically middle-class people there are the ridiculous Muggle Dursleys and Hermione’s Muggle parents, who are both dentists. As stated above, in the wizarding world the concept of class is much more complicated than in the real world, as the most important determinant of

one's class is the purity of wizarding blood. If one is pure-blooded, one is essentially noble. However, if one is a poor pure-blood, one is considered to be inferior to the rich ones, and the most inferior ones are those who are not pure-blooded and are not poor. Thus there is essentially no middle-class, as one is just either noble or not. In addition, in the wizarding class hierarchy there are non-human slaves (house-elves). Harry, as the most important character, can not be conceived as a middle-class character in any way: he is rich and he is essentially a pure-blood<sup>33</sup>, thus he can be considered as a member of wizarding nobility and not middle class.

In conclusion, I perceive the class system of the wizarding world to be essentially confusing, as it is similar to the British class system in many ways, but it also differs from it in various confusing ways. However, the traditional view of the social class structures as being one of discrimination is essentially correct in relation to the wizarding world: the rich and noble Malfoys discriminate against those who are poorer or less pure-blooded than them, and they emphasise their superiority in various ways. The reason for why the class system of the wizarding world is vaguely described is probably because Rowling is not interested in depicting class as such. Her intention has most likely been to set up a classless wizarding society, where a person's value is not measured by his/her social standing but with his/her morality and the goodness and morality of his/her choices. Thus, Rowling obviously has in mind a society where a person's rank is based on merit. Rowling's intention of a class free society can be made clear with the way she depicts those who pay attention to class issues in the novels: the witches and wizards who see a class division are very negatively portrayed.

In addition to class, the issue of gender is also important with regards to power. Traditionally, women are considered to be the weaker sex, with less intellect and power than

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<sup>33</sup> Harry's parents are a witch and a wizard. However, there is "dirty" blood in Harry, as Harry's mother's family were Muggles.

men. However, the rise of feminism has changed this perception to a certain degree. In the world of Harry Potter, gender issues are also relevant. Some researchers of Harry Potter feel that the novels support the old gender roles, with men being in power and women having little significance. This argument can be supported with various issues in the novels: most of the main characters are male, female main characters are less significant than male ones, women in power are portrayed as evil (i.e. Dolores Umbridge), etc. Furthermore, Rowling has decided to use the term *Headmaster* (instead of using the neutral and politically correct term *Head Teacher*) which is essentially sexist, as the female equivalent *Headmistress* entails sexual meanings and connotations. However, there are also researchers, myself to a certain degree included, who feel the case to be quite the opposite. For example Karley Kristine Adley<sup>34</sup> perceives Hermione to be a strong woman, and thus the argument that female characters are insignificant does not actually apply. In addition, I perceive Professor McGonagall as an example of a good, strong and powerful woman, and thus the claim of powerful female characters being evil does not hold water. I also perceive Ginny Weasley, the love of Harry's life, to be portrayed as a very powerful female character: the powerfulness of her Bat-Bogey hex is emphasised numerous times. The amount of Ginny's magical power is also emphasised with regards to Ginny's size (as is quoted in 2.): she is a very small girl, and yet she has enormous magical powers. Thus, in addition to power not depending on size (as George states in the quotation in 2.), it can be implied that the amount of one's magical power is not dependent upon gender either.

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<sup>34</sup> Karley Kristine Adley, "From Books to Battle: Hermione's Quest for Knowledge in *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*", in *Topic: The Washington & Jefferson College Review*, Volume 54, *Harry Potter* (Washington & Jefferson College, 2004), p. 103.

Andrew Blake's views of gender in the world of Harry Potter are essentially similar to mine. Andrew Blake<sup>35</sup> approaches the issue of gender in the *Harry Potter* novels by pointing out that the novels include some aspects of egalitarian liberal-feminism. For example, he points out that Hogwarts is a coeducational school, unlike the schools described in most British boarding school novels. Furthermore, he explains that girls are integrally involved in the plot of each novel. Blake notes how Quidditch teams are mixed-gender teams, unlike in the real world where all sports have separate teams for males and females. In addition, he perceives Hermione as perhaps the second important figure in the novels, and he notes how her expertise and wisdom comes to good use in many ways. However, Blake believes that Hogwarts is not a politically correct utopical world, as the novels are full of gender differences that are represented as being obvious. For example, he describes the ghost, Moaning Myrtle as a stereotypical image of a self-loathing woman, who is suicidal despite being already dead. He also claims that despite the fact that Professor McGonagall is an expert in Transfiguration, she is not nearly as good as Dumbledore in other areas of expertise. In addition, he points out that despite the fact that there are many evil female characters; none of them matches the evilness of the male characters. (Blake, 43-4.)

However, what Blake does not take into account when saying that the female characters have less power than male ones, is that there was actually a female Minister for Magic, Millicent Bagnold before Cornelius Fudge. Thus, Rowling is clearly pointing out that in the wizarding world women can be in as politically powerful positions as men.

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<sup>35</sup> Andrew Blake. *Harry Potterin ilmestys. Lastenkirjallisuus globalisoituvassa maailmassa*. Trans. Joel Kuortti. Saarijärvi: Vastapaino, 2002.

The issue of gender is addressed in an interesting way by Hermione in the following quotation, where she gets angry at Harry, as she thinks that Harry perceives women as less intelligent than men, when Harry refuses to believe that the Half-Blood Prince could be female:

‘Her name was Eileen Prince. *Prince*, Harry.’  
 They looked at each other and Harry realised what Hermione was trying to say. He burst out laughing.  
 ‘No way.’  
 ‘What?’  
 ‘You think *she* was the Half-Blood ...? Oh, come on.’  
 ‘Well, why not? Harry, there aren’t any real princes in the wizarding world! It’s either a nickname, a made-up title somebody’s given themselves, or it could be their actual name, couldn’t it? No, listen! If say, her father was a wizard whose surname was “Prince”, and her mother was a Muggle, then that would make her a “half-blood Prince”!’ [...]  
 ‘Listen Hermione, I can tell it’s not a girl. I can just tell.’  
 ‘The truth is that you don’t think a girl would have been clever enough,’ said Hermione angrily.  
 ‘How can I have hung around with you for five years and not think girls are clever?’ said Harry, stung by this. ‘It’s the way he writes. I just know the Prince was a bloke, I can tell. This girl hasn’t got anything to do with it.’ (*Prince*, 502-3.)

Thus, this quotation also raises the issue of women’s style writing being different than men’s, as Harry holds the belief that men write differently than women. This is an interesting argument, as it touches upon an issue of eternal debate; an issue that is under constant argument in the literary world. Many literary critics and readers of literature perceive that women write differently than men, even though there is rather strong proof that one’s style of writing cannot be attributed to one’s sex. Traditionally, women’s writing is believed to be more sentimental in style, with ample detail of emotions, scenery, etc., whereas men’s writing is more documentary-like, with detailed descriptions of for example measurements, and other mathematical issues.<sup>36</sup> Women’s genres of writing were considered to be mainly letters and love novels, whereas men were perceived to write about serious and important issues such as politics and war, in plays, poems and novels.

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<sup>36</sup> Martin Montgomery et al., *Ways of Reading. Advanced Reading Skills for Students of English Literature* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), p. 69.

What makes this issue so interesting in relation to concepts of gender in the wizarding world is that it touches upon female and male stereotypes through writing. I believe that Rowling is trying to point out with this that in the same manner as there is no essential difference between the female and male writing styles, there is no difference in the intelligence of men and women, and how men and women perceive and experience various things in life. However, what essentially contradicts this interpretation is that Rowling also tries to show in her novels how the concepts of men and women on issues such as feelings differ considerably, by making Harry not understand at all what Cho Chang (the subject of his first crush) is thinking and feeling, as she cries while kissing Harry, and by making Hermione explain it to him (*Order*, 405-6). Harry finds Hermione's explanation to be quite overwhelming, and therefore he starts to feel that "*That's what they should teach us here [...] how girls' brains work*" (*Order*, 408). Thus, perhaps, what Rowling is essentially pointing out with her approach to gender issues in her novels is that men and women are different, but not really as different as the typical stereotypes lead us to believe.

In conclusion, it seems to me that the wizarding world is rather an egalitarian one, when it comes to issues of gender, despite the fact that there are some discrepancies. Men do not hold total dominion over the women in the novels, as all the female characters are essentially independent and powerful. Furthermore men are not superior to women in all areas of life, as for example Hermione beats every male character in her age group with her intellect, and Ginny's Bat-Bogey Hex is superior to that of any male's.



### 3. Evil

‘The Dark Arts,’ said Snape, ‘are many, varied, ever-changing and eternal. Fighting them is like fighting a many-headed monster, which, each time a neck is severed, sprouts a head even fiercer and cleverer than before. You are fighting that which is unfixed, mutating, indestructible.’ [...]

‘Your defences,’ said Snape, a little louder, ‘must therefore be as flexible and inventive as the Arts you seek to undo.’ (*Prince*, 169.)

#### 3.1 The Battle between the Good Harry and the Evil Voldemort

The purpose of this chapter is to describe and analyse the battle between Harry and his antagonist Voldemort, and the various moral and ethical dilemmas that this battle brings into question. In addition, the similarities and differences between Harry and Voldemort are explored. The battle between Harry and Voldemort is an ongoing theme throughout the series. In each novel, except for *Prisoner* where Harry has other enemies to fight, Harry must face Voldemort and conquer him in one way or the other. Despite the fact that Harry has had to battle Voldemort various times along the series, he has managed to escape from Voldemort’s hands every time, but the final battle, where one of them must die, will take place in the seventh and final book of the series. It is Harry’s job to defeat Voldemort for various reasons. Firstly, there is the prophecy according to which Harry must kill Voldemort or Voldemort must kill Harry:

*The one with the power to vanquish the Dark Lord approaches ... born to those who have thrice defied him, born as the seventh month dies ... and the Dark Lord will mark him his equal, but he will have power the Dark Lord knows not ... and either must die at the hand of the other for neither can live while the other survives ... the one with the power to vanquish the Dark Lord will be born as the seventh month dies. (Order, 741.)*

Secondly, as Dumbledore states in *Prince* (478-9) (discussion quoted below), Harry would probably feel that it was his duty to kill Voldemort even without the prophecy, because Voldemort killed his parents. On the other hand, it can be assumed that if the prophecy had not been made, and Voldemort would not have heard about it and acted accordingly, Harry's parents would still be alive, and then Harry might not have had the need to kill Voldemort. However, this is a very unlikely situation, because Harry is a hero-type, as Rowling needs her main character to be one: he has a need to be the hero and save people, and that is why he would probably have a need to kill the evil Voldemort even if Voldemort had not killed his parents.

Harry's need to kill Voldemort raises very complex ethical questions: Is it right to commit murder for any reason? Is killing justified for revenge, because it is prophesied, or for getting rid of evil? Does not killing someone make you an evil person yourself? After all, one of the Ten Commandments clearly prohibits killing under any circumstances: "Thou shalt not kill" (Exodus 20:13). With Harry's character Rowling is essentially questioning the morality of hero-types, and pointing out that revenge is always morally problematic, even though it is psychologically extremely satisfying. However, it can be said that in the case of Harry needing to kill Voldemort, it is not so much an issue of revenge as it is of self-defence: Harry must kill Voldemort or Voldemort will kill him. Thus, Rowling eliminates the moral problems related to murder and revenge by pointing out that Harry's need to kill Voldemort is a question of self-defence, which is morally acceptable.

The fulfilling of the prophecy also raises a question of free will, which Albus Dumbledore addresses while discussing about the prophecy with Harry in *Prince*:

'But sir,' said Harry, making valiant efforts not to sound argumentative, 'it all comes to the same thing, doesn't it? I've got to try and kill him, or –'

'Got to?' said Dumbledore. 'Of course you've got to! But not because of the prophecy! Because you, yourself will never rest until you've tried! We both know it!

Imagine, please, just for a moment, that you had never heard that prophecy! How would you feel about Voldemort now? Think!

Harry watched Dumbledore striding up and down in front of him, and thought. He thought of his mother, his father and Sirius. He thought of Cedric Diggory. He thought of all the terrible deeds he knew Voldemort had done. A flame seemed to leap inside his chest, searing his throat.

'I'd want him finished,' said Harry quietly. 'And I'd want to do it.'

'Of course you would!' cried Dumbledore. 'You see, the prophecy does not mean you *have* to do anything! But the prophecy caused Lord Voldemort to *mark you as his equal* ... in other words you are free to choose your way, quite free to turn your back on the prophecy! But Voldemort continues to set store by the prophecy. He will continue to hunt you ... which makes it certain, really, that –'

'That one of us is going to end up killing the other,' said Harry. 'Yes.' [...]

It was, he thought, the difference between being dragged into the arena to face a battle to the death and walking into the arena with your head held high. (*Prince*, 478-9.)

In this discussion, Dumbledore basically states that the prophecy is actually what caused Voldemort to create a need in Harry to kill him, but the prophecy itself is not what makes Harry need to kill him. Harry is in no way forced to kill Voldemort, because the prophecy says so, but because he himself has an inner need to do it, which derives both from his need to revenge the death of his parents and from the desire to get rid of evil for the greater good of the wizarding world. Thus, it is Harry's free choice to kill Voldemort, and the prophecy does not in any way diminish or eradicate Harry's free will.

Another very interesting and important conversation occurs between Harry and Professor Dumbledore in *Chamber*, when Harry is concerned about how similar he is in fact to Voldemort:

'Professor Dumbledore ... Riddle [in other words, young Voldemort] said I'm like him. Strange likeness, he said ...'

'Did he now?' [...] 'And what do you think, Harry?'

'I don't think I'm like him!' he said more loudly than he'd intended. 'I mean I'm – I'm in *Gryffindor*, I'm ...'

But he fell silent, a lurking doubt resurfacing in his mind.

'Professor [...] the Sorting Hat told me I'd – I'd have done well in Slytherin. Everyone thought I was Slytherin's heir for a while ... because I can speak Parseltongue ...'

'You can speak Parseltongue, Harry,' said Dumbledore calmly, 'because Lord Voldemort – who is the last remaining ancestor of Salazar Slytherin – can speak Parseltongue. Unless I'm much mistaken, he transferred some of his own powers to you the night he gave you that scar. Not something he intended to do, I'm sure ...'

'Voldemort put a bit of himself in *me*? [...]

‘It certainly seems so.’  
 ‘So I should be in Slytherin,’ Harry said, looking desperately at Dumbledore’s face.  
 ‘The Sorting Hat could see Slytherin’s power in me, and it – ‘  
 ‘Put you in Gryffindor,’ said Dumbledore calmly. [...]’  
 ‘It only put me in Gryffindor,’ said Harry in a defeated voice, ‘because I asked not to go in Slytherin ...’  
 ‘*Exactly*,’ said Dumbledore, beaming once more. ‘Which makes you very *different* from Tom Riddle. It is our choices, Harry, that show what we truly are, far more than our abilities.’ (*Chamber*, 244-5.)

What makes this such an interesting and important conversation is that it reveals the fact how Voldemort has transferred a part of his powers to Harry, and that that is the reason why Harry can speak Parseltongue. It also draws the reader’s attention to the fact that Harry and Voldemort are similar in many ways – it can be interpreted that there is actually “a small Voldemort” residing inside Harry, since “Voldemort put a bit of himself in *me*” – but they are very different too. Indeed, Harry and Voldemort do have numerous things in common: as stated above, they both had to grow up in a horrible place without their parents, they are both parselmouths, and they have the same wand cores (phoenix feather). The two latter features are due to the fact that Voldemort transferred a part of his powers to Harry while trying to kill him, as Dumbledore said.

But Harry and Voldemort are certainly very different from each other as well. Voldemort has always been vicious and cruel towards others: he tormented and bullied other children even while he was in the orphanage. In addition, Voldemort has always felt himself to be very special, he just did not know in what way, before he was told that he is a wizard and he has been accepted at Hogwarts, whereas Harry has always felt that he is thoroughly ordinary and he could not believe it at first when Hagrid told him that he was a wizard. The following discussion between young Voldemort (i.e. Tom Riddle) reveals this:

‘It’s ... it’s magic, what I can do?’  
 ‘What is it that you can do?’  
 ‘All sorts,’ breathed Riddle. A flush of excitement was rising up his neck into his hollow cheeks; he looked fevered. ‘I can make things move without touching them. I

can make animals to 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.'

His legs were trembling. He stumbled forwards and sat down on the bed again, staring at his hands, his head bowed as though in a prayer.

'I knew I was different,' he whispered to his own quivering fingers. 'I knew I was special. Always. I knew there was something.'

'Well, you were quite right,' said Dumbledore, who was no longer smiling but watching Riddle intently. 'You are a wizard.'

Riddle lifted his head. His face was transfigured: there was wild happiness upon it, yet for some reason it did not make him better-looking; on the contrary, his finely carved features seemed somehow rougher, his expression almost bestial.

'You are a wizard too?'

'Yes, I am.'

'Prove it,' said Riddle at once, in the same commanding tone he had used when he had said 'tell the truth'. (*Prince*, 253-4.)

This discussion also reveals other rather disturbing features about Voldemort: the fact that he can cause pain and apparently enjoys causing it and the tendency to boss people in a dictator-like manner (as is also stated in 2.2.2). Thus, it is rather clear that Voldemort can be described as a psychopathic character. People with a psychopathic personality<sup>37</sup> "have little sense of responsibility, morality, or concern for others. Their behaviour is determined almost entirely by their own needs. In other words, they lack a conscience".<sup>38</sup> It becomes rather clear from this description of a psychopathic personality, that psychopathic people are essentially evil, psychopathy being only a more scientific psychological term (and perhaps even more accurate one, evil being such a multidimensional term) to describe evilness.

Essentially, the battle between Harry and Voldemort is a battle between two opposing forces: the forces of good and the forces of evil. The forces of evil use the Dark Arts, whereas the forces of good use Defence against the Dark Arts. The Dark Arts are varied and unpredictable,

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<sup>37</sup> It is also termed *antisocial* or *sociopathic* personality, *antisocial* being the current official psychological term (Atkinson et al., 554). However, I have decided to use the term *psychopathic*, as I find it the most descriptive term for my purposes.

<sup>38</sup> Rita L. Atkinson et al. *Hilgard's Introduction to Psychology*, Thirteenth Edition (Forth Worth (e.g.): Harcourt College Publishers, 2000), p. 554.

and thus Defence against them must be equally inventive (as Snape describes in *Prince*, quoted in 3). Harry describes fighting against Voldemort and his Dark Arts in the following manner:

You think it's just memorising a bunch of spells and throwing them at him, like you're in class or something? The whole time you're sure you know there's nothing between you and dying except your own – your own brain or guts or whatever – like you can think straight when you know you're about a nanosecond from being murdered, or tortured, or watching your friends die – (*Order*, 293.)

Still, even though the Dark Arts are virtually undeletable, one must keep on fighting against them, even if one is fighting a losing battle. “It was important, Dumbledore said, to fight, and fight again, and keep fighting, for only then could evil be kept at bay, though never quite eradicated ...” (*Prince*, 601). Thus, the battle between the forces of good and evil is eternal.

### 3.2 Horcruxes

The purpose of this chapter is to describe Voldemort's fear of death and how it has caused him to take extreme measures to become immortal. Furthermore, it is emphasised how Voldemort's trying to hold on to his human life so desperately has resulted in him becoming essentially inhuman. However, declaring Voldemort as inhuman goes further than this, as I will argue that the ultimate reason for why Harry and the reader are being convinced of Voldemort as an inhuman creature, something less than human, is to make it easier for Harry to eliminate him.

What is perhaps the most disturbing feature about Voldemort's character is that already at the age of sixteen, if not before, he had an obsession of becoming immortal.<sup>39</sup> Rowling's

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<sup>39</sup> His chosen name *Voldemort* is very convenient here, as the word *vol* means to steal in French, *de* is a preposition, and *mort* means death, thus *Voldemort* means “to steal from death”. Interestingly, though, his name can also be translated as “a will to die”, as *vol* means will in Latin.

depiction of Voldemort leads the reader to infer that this obsession is due to the fact that Voldemort's mother died in childbirth and left him all alone. At the age of eleven, Voldemort believed that if one has magic powers, one need not die. This becomes apparent in his following thought: "My mother can't have been magic, or she wouldn't have died" (*Prince*, 257).

It is also most definitely due to the fact that Voldemort is terrified of death, which becomes apparent in his discussion with Dumbledore in *Order*: "'There is nothing worse than death, Dumbledore!' snarled Voldemort. [...] 'Indeed, your failure to understand that there are things much worse than death has always been your greatest weakness –' [Dumbledore replied]" (*Order*, 718). Dumbledore makes a further comment on Voldemort's fears, and how they are foolish in *Prince*:

There is nothing to be feared from a body, Harry, any more than there is anything to be feared from the darkness. Lord Voldemort, who of course secretly fears both, disagrees. But once again he reveals his own lack of wisdom. It is the unknown we fear when we look upon death and darkness, nothing more. (*Prince*, 529.)

This fear of death is something that Dumbledore finds incomprehensible, as his own philosophy on the matter is completely different, as he states in *Stone* that "[a]fter all, to the well-organised mind, death is but the next great adventure" (*Stone*, 215).

Because of his fear of death, Voldemort wishes never to die, and he decides to take desperate measures to prevent it from ever happening at the age of sixteen. That is when he kills his father to revenge the fact that he left his pregnant wife. Voldemort asks instructions from gullible Professor Slughorn (who thinks Voldemort is only interested in the theory) on how to create a Horcrux in *Prince*, after he kills his father:

'Well, you split your soul, you see,' said Slughorn, 'and hide part of it in an object outside the body. Then, even if one's body is attacked or destroyed, one cannot die, for part of the soul remains earthbound and undamaged.' [...]

‘How do you split your soul?’

‘Well,’ said Slughorn uncomfortably, ‘you must understand that the soul is supposed to remain intact and whole. Splitting it is an act of violation, it is against nature.’

‘How do you do it?’

‘By an act of evil – the supreme act of evil. By committing murder. Killing rips the soul apart. The wizard intent upon creating a Horcrux would use the damage to his advantage: he would encase the torn portion –’ (*Prince*, 464-5.)

Thus, after killing his father, all Voldemort had to do was to encase the torn portion of his soul into his diary with a spell (which he found out from somewhere, as Slughorn did not know it). However, Voldemort did not settle with creating one Horcrux, but he created seven of them (as “seven is the most powerfully magical number” (*Prince*, 466)), the seventh part of his soul being inside his body. However, by doing this, he damaged himself thoroughly: his whole appearance changed from a handsome boy to a hollow, snakelike creature with slit nostrils and red eyes. Dumbledore describes his transformation thus: “Lord Voldemort had seemed to grow less human with the passing years, and the transformation he had undergone seemed to me to be only explicable if his soul was mutilated beyond the realms of what he might call usual evil ...” (*Prince*, 469).

One important question arises from this description: what exactly is usual evil? *Evil* can either be defined in very extreme terms (as for example Staub and Linqvist, who are quoted in 1, have done) or it can be defined in relativistic terms (as for example Rosemary Jackson and Ilkka Mäyrä, who are quoted in 3.3, have done). Usual evilness would perhaps be best defined in relativistic terms; as something that is evil, but not only a little evil or very evil. This description is however not very helpful, as it would need to be defined what these different levels of evilness entail. Perhaps one way to define these levels is in terms of harming and killing people: beating someone up could be considered as a *little evil*, killing someone could be considered as *usual evil*, killing many people could be very evil, and killing hundreds of people could be *extremely*



*evil*. Still, even this definition is left wanting. Thus, defining what is meant by *usual evil* adequately is essentially impossible, as it can be perceived in many ways.

Incidentally, Harry points out an interesting paradox to Voldemort creating Horcruxes: “So he’s made himself impossible to kill by murdering other people?” (*Prince*, 469). Thus, it does not matter to Voldemort that other people die, just as long as he himself does not have to. All this fits perfectly to Zimbardo’s (22) and Staub’s (51) definitions of evil (as quoted in 1.).

Voldemort’s inhumanity is emphasized throughout the *Harry Potter* novels. The first reference to this occurs in *Stone* (46): “[...] Dunno if he had enough human in him to die”. This statement Hagrid makes is indeed accurate, considering the fact that there really is not much human left in Voldemort, as he has torn his soul into seven parts, putting six into Horcruxes and leaving only one bit of his soul into his body. Thus, it could be said that he is six times less human than other people.

Voldemort’s inhumanity is also what causes the fact that he can only possess Harry for a short while in *Order* (as described above and in 4.3). Dumbledore comments on this issue thus:

You have flitted into Lord Voldemort’s mind without damage to yourself, but he cannot possess you without enduring mortal agony, as he discovered at the Ministry. I do not think he understands why, Harry, but he was in such a hurry to mutilate his own soul, he never paused to understand the incomparable power of a soul that is untarnished and whole. (*Prince*, 478.)

Dumbledore continues to emphasise the importance of the soul and Voldemort’s evilness along the same lines, when Harry asks whether Voldemort knows or feels when a Horcrux is destroyed: “I believe not. I believe that Voldemort is now so immersed in evil, and these crucial parts of himself have been detached so long, he does not feel as we do. Perhaps, at the point of death, he might be aware of his loss ...” (*Prince*, 474). I believe that the ultimate reason for why Voldemort is described as essentially inhuman throughout the novels is that by declaring

someone as less than human is to make it easier to kill him (as will also be emphasised in 4.1). Thus, Dumbledore tries to convince Harry, and the reader, that Voldemort is something less than human, so that it would be easier for him to eliminate him in their final battle.

However, this issue is not quite as simple as this, as Voldemort's humanity is also emphasised throughout the novels, especially *Prince*: We are told how Voldemort's mother died at childbirth and how his father did not care about his son, as he left his pregnant wife. Furthermore, we learn that Voldemort had to spend his childhood in a dreary orphanage, where everyone thought that he was crazy, as he was able to do magic (this issue is also discussed in 2.6). These facts create a whole new dimension to Voldemort's character, a dimension which helps both Harry and the reader to have at least some level of understanding, though not acceptance, to why Voldemort has become so evil and inhuman.

### **3.3 Harry Potter and the Horrifying "Other"**

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the concept of "otherness" in relation to the character of Harry Potter. "The other" as a concept has a long and varied history. For instance, various Psychologists, Philosophers, Feminists, Postcolonialists and Poststructuralists have used the term in differing ways. For example, Jacques Lacan considers "the other" either as a projection of the ego or as arbitrariness of language in Saussurean terms<sup>40</sup> whereas feminists, such as Luce Irigaray refer to the position of women in patriarchal societies as "other".<sup>41</sup> Jane M. Jacobs perceives "the other" to be a central concept in colonial issues: "The processes by which notions of the Self and the Other are defined, articulated and negotiated are a crucial part of what might

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<sup>40</sup> Jacqueline Rose, *Sexuality in the Field of Vision* (London: Verso, 1986), pp. 55-6.

<sup>41</sup> Luce Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman* (Ithaca and New York: Cornell University Press, 1985).

be thought of as the natural dimensions of colonialism and postcolonialism”.<sup>42</sup> James Heartfield accounts for the emergence of “the other” as a term as being the result of Hegel’s idea of a master vs. a slave, and the slave representing “the other”:

If we trace the intellectual development of the theory of the Other we can see that it always contained an absolute opposition that could not be overcome. The theory of the Other is in essence a revision of Hegel's 'Master-Slave dialectic'. It was from Hegel's account of the clash between Master and Slave that Simone De Beauvoir and Jean-Paul Sartre took the categorical opposition of Self and Other and made it into an absolute.<sup>43</sup>

Furthermore, Rodolphe Gasché perceives the Western philosophy essentially as “the attempt to domesticate Otherness, since what we understand by thought is nothing but such a project”<sup>44</sup>, thus essentially pointing out how the whole Western philosophy is linked to the concept of “the other”. Jacques Derrida offers a very interesting view to the concept of “the other”: “If the alterity of the other is *posed*, that is, *only* posed, does it not amount to *the same*”<sup>45</sup>. Thus, Derrida essentially questions the whole division of “the other” vs. “the same”. My usage of “the other” as a term is somewhat narrowed down from how it is traditionally used, essentially in the same manner as Ilkka Mäyrä narrows it down, as I refer to “the other” as being intricately and integrally linked to concepts of identity and self-image: who I am and who I am definitely not and do not want to be. *Who I am definitely not and do not want to be* is what I mean by the concept of “the other”.

According to Rosemary Jackson, the concept of the other is closely linked to the concept of evil:

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<sup>42</sup> Jane M. Jacobs, *Edge of Empire: Postcolonialism and the City* (London: Routledge, 1996), pp.2-3.

<sup>43</sup> James Heartfield, *Hegel Dispirited: the reification of the Other in Kojève, DeBeauvoir and Sartre*, <[http://www.static-ops.org/archive\\_june/essay\\_3.htm](http://www.static-ops.org/archive_june/essay_3.htm)>.

<sup>44</sup> Rodolphe Gasché, *The Tain of the Mirror: Derrida and the Philosophy of Reflection* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986), p. 101.

<sup>45</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Positions* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1981), p. 95.

The concept of evil, which is usually attached to the other, is relative, transforming with shifts in cultural fears and values. Any social structure tends to exclude as 'evil' anything radically different from itself or which threatens it with destruction, and this conceptualization, this naming of difference as evil, is a significant ideological gesture.<sup>46</sup>

Furthermore, "the other" as a concept refers to something that is not a part of you, but something else. Similarly, monsters are something that people tend to give all the features they try to convince themselves of not having (Mäyräl, 45): for example demonic, evil, ugly. Monsters are the image of what we have "othered" from ourselves, they are images of something we do not wish to be and they have properties which we do not wish to have. They are projections of our fears and anxieties. A very important part of gothic and horror literature, and a central function of the monster as a figure, is the blurring or erasing of borders, such as "self" and "other" (Mäyräl, 45). Ilkka Mäyrä describes this situation thus:

In gothic, and in fantasy in general, the imagination plays a very important role; as an opponent to conscious self (that 'I' we are aware of) imaginative fiction opens up a dialogue with the 'not-I' (something we do not see in ourselves, but can imagine elsewhere). Jackson argues that it is one of the general tendencies of the fantastic to "rediscover a unity of the self and other." "Evil" is an important term in connection to the other; it is relative and functions as a demonstration of those features that ought to be excluded from the socially acceptable self.<sup>47</sup>

However, in my view, the "not-I" and the monster are not something invariably evil. For example, we might find some features we know are not part of ourselves, and do not wish to have as parts of ourselves, as admirable (for example being a hard worker: some of us like being lazy even though we admire those who work hard), and monsters can actually be quite adorable, as for example various fairytales, such as the *Beauty and the Beast* point out.

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<sup>46</sup> Rosemary Jackson, *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion* (London and New York: Methuen, 1981), p. 52.

<sup>47</sup> Ilkka Mäyrä, *Demonic Texts and Textual Demons: The Demonic Tradition, the Self, and Popular Fiction* (Tampere: Tampere University Press, 1999), p. 124. Quoted as Mäyrä2 from here on.

According to Eugenia C. DeLamotte, “[g]othic terror has its primary source in an anxiety about boundaries” (quoted in Mäyrä2, 115), as for example the boundary between “the self” and “the other”. Mäyrä, in his turn, is of the opinion that “[t]he imperative to break all the boundaries, to confront all imaginable forms of forbidden ‘otherness,’ can be seen as the driving force behind the horror genre. The liminal character of the demonic is in intimate relation to this central feature of horror” (Mäyrä2, 115). Thus, what Mäyrä is essentially saying is that the breach of boundaries between the self and the other creates a sense of terror, as the person who experiences the break of these boundaries has to face and embrace frightening, unwanted and even demonic properties of him/herself.

The *Harry Potter* novels can be considered as gothic literature, as they include various gothic elements. For example, Hogwarts is situated in a big ancient castle with various towers and ominous corridors, and various ghosts and a poltergeist live there. There are various gothic monsters such as werewolves, and heroes and heroines are “preyed on by unspeakable terrors”<sup>48</sup>. Furthermore, Professor Snape represents a very stereotypical image of a gothic character: he is very pale and he is dressed in black.

The concept of “the other” is closely linked to what is happening in *Harry Potter* novels between Harry and Voldemort. Voldemort is the horrifying “other”, the monster of the novels, whereas Harry is pure and good. Naturally, also Harry has “a dark side” (Nel, 41), as he is no saint or a divine flawless creature, but a human being. He for example gets very angry with his friends sometimes, and he also starts yelling to Professor Dumbledore in *Order*. However, these “dark” features do not make Harry by any means evil. These are features that every human being possesses. Everybody get angry sometimes, no one is perfect, and that is what makes us human.

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<sup>48</sup> Punter, David, *The Literature of Terror: A History of Gothic Fictions from 1765 to the Present Day* (London and New York: Longman, 1980), p. 1.

“Otherness” is particularly emphasized in *Prince*, when Harry falls in love with his best friend’s sister, Ginny. However, Harry’s feelings towards Ginny are not by any means dark or evil, although Harry at first perceives them as something evil and monstrous, as a horrifying “other”, before he learns to accept them. The first sign of his awakening feelings towards Ginny occurs in *Prince*, when Ginny goes off to see her boyfriend Dean at Hogwarts Express instead of finding a compartment with Harry: “He felt a strange twinge of annoyance as she walked away, her long red hair behind her. He had become so used to her presence over the summer that he had almost forgotten that Ginny did not hang around with him, Ron and Hermione while at school” (*Prince*, 131). A yet clearer indication of Harry’s awakening feelings is that when he smells the strongest love potion in the world in Potions class which “was emitting one of the most seductive scents Harry had ever inhaled” (*Prince*, 174), he smells the flowery scent of Ginny (*Prince*, 182). Harry’s awakening feelings also become apparent, when he is unhappy about not having met Ginny at Hogsmeade, and he scowls at the idea of Ginny and Dean “cosily closeted in Madam Puddifoot’s teashop, that haunt of happy couples” (*Prince*, 233). However, at this point, it is only becoming obvious to the reader that Harry is having feelings towards Ginny, as Harry himself does not consciously recognise them.

Harry’s awakening feelings towards Ginny speed into overdrive, when he sees Dean and Ginny kissing fiercely in a deserted corridor. He becomes intensely jealous of Dean, as he would like to be the one kissing Ginny. However, Harry does not wish to accept these intensely jealous feelings as belonging to him, and that is why they are described as something monstrous and mad. The repressed feelings of jealousy, love and sexual desire that Harry has towards Ginny are transformed into an image of a horrifying monster: “It was as though something large and scaly erupted into life in Harry’s stomach, clawing at his insides: hot blood seemed to flood his brain, so that all thought was extinguished, replaced by a savage urge to jinx Dean into a jelly.

Wrestling with this sudden madness [...]” (*Prince*, 268). Ron is also very angry of seeing his sister kissing Dean, and as Harry does not wish to anger his best friend and ruin their friendship by letting his feelings towards Ginny to be known, he refuses even more vigorously to accept these feelings altogether, and he experiences them as a terrifying “other”, a monster that is not a part of himself.

The monster inside Harry (i.e. his feelings towards Ginny) is described in many parts of

*Prince*:

the new-born monster inside him was roaring for Dean’s instant dismissal from the team. [...] the monster was roaring its approval of Ron’s words. (*Prince*, 268-9.)

But unbidden into his mind came an image of that same corridor with himself kissing Ginny instead ... the monster in his chest purred ... but then he saw Ron ripping open the tapestry curtain and drawing his wand on Harry, shouting things like ‘betrayal of trust’ ... ‘supposed to be my friend’ ...(*Prince*, 270.)

[...] Ginny had argued with Dean. The drowsing creature in Harry’s chest suddenly raised its head, sniffing the air hopefully. (*Prince*, 396.)

All of these descriptions emphasise how Harry himself is not feeling jealousy, triumph etc. in these scenes, but it is the monster inside Harry, the terrifying “other” that Harry refuses to accept as a part of himself. However, as stated before, these feelings are in no way evil in themselves, but Harry just perceives them as such.

Harry’s feelings towards Ginny are described in other ways too; in ways that indicate that it is Harry and not a monster feeling these feelings, thus implying that Harry should acknowledge his feelings and act accordingly, instead of othering these feelings:

She patted him on the arm; Harry felt a swooping sensation in his stomach, but then she walked off to help herself to more Butterbeer. (*Prince*,:281.)

‘There isn’t anyone I want to invite,’ mumbled Harry, who was still trying not to think about Ginny any more than he could help, despite the fact that she kept

cropping up in his dreams in ways that made him devoutly thankful that Ron could not perform Leglimency. (*Prince*, 286-7.)

‘Harry, you’ve got a maggot in your hair,’ said Ginny cheerfully, leaning across the table to pick it out; Harry felt goosebumps erupt up in his neck that had nothing to do with the maggot. (*Prince*, 318.)

‘Ginny and Dean split up too, Harry.’  
[...] his insides were suddenly dancing the conga [...] (*Prince*, 481.)

The reason for why Harry vigorously keeps on denying that he himself has feelings towards Ginny, and not the monster inside him, is that he is afraid that Ron would not accept their relationship and that he would lose his best friend as a consequence (as also stated above). However, after a while Harry accepts in full that he is in love with Ginny, but he still does not dare to let his feeling be known because of Ron, and he starts spending most of his waking moments wishing that Ron would accept him as Ginny’s boyfriend: “Harry’s imagination zoomed into overdrive, rapidly constructing a scene in which Ginny, weeping over his lifeless form, confessed her feelings of deep attraction to him while Ron gave them his blessing ...” (*Prince*, 390-1).

After Gryffindor wins the Quidditch House Championship, and there is a celebration in their Tower, Harry can no longer control his feelings towards Ginny, he fully lets the monster, the horrifying “other” inside him loose and fully embraces his feelings:

Harry looked around; there was Ginny running towards him; she had a hard, blazing look in her face as she threw her arms around him. And without thinking, without planning it, without worrying about the fact that fifty people were watching, Harry kissed her.

[...] Hermione was beaming, but Harry’s eyes sought Ron. At last he found him, still clutching the Cup and wearing an expression appropriate to having been clubbed over the head. For a fraction of a second they looked at each other, then Ron gave a tiny jerk of the head that Harry understood to mean, ‘Well –if you must.’

The creature in his chest roaring in triumph, Harry grinned down at Ginny and gestured wordlessly out of the portrait hole. A long walk in the grounds seemed indicated, during which – if they had time – they might discuss the match. (*Prince*, 499.)



This scene reveals to Harry that he actually need not have worried about Ron's reaction. Also, if Harry had paid closer attention to Ron in *Order*, when they were at Hogwarts Express on their way home playing chess, and Ron was discussing with Ginny about her ex-boyfriend Michael Corner, he would have known that if Ron were to decide, he would not want anyone else as Ginny's boyfriend but Harry: "'Well, I always thought he was a bit of an idiot,' he said, prodding his queen towards Harry's quivering castle. 'Good for you. Just choose someone – better – next time.' He cast Harry an oddly furtive look as he said it" (*Prince*, 763).

When exploring the concept of the monster and the horrifying "other" inside Harry a bit further, it can actually be interpreted that Harry's infatuation towards Ginny can be seen as Harry's sexual awakening. According to this interpretation, the horrifying "other", the beast inside Harry, would be the unknown, unfamiliar sexuality, which feels really frightening at first, before he comes to accept the fact that sexuality is a part of humanity and a part of himself. By getting Ron's approval for his relationship, Harry finally can accept and embrace his sexual feelings. This interpretation about sexuality as a taboo at first is valid also because in *Harry Potter* novels there is in fact nothing openly sexual.<sup>49</sup> This could be due to the fact that sexuality is in fact a taboo in children's literature (even though this taboo is starting to break down, as a great many children's books explore sexual themes openly), but so is death and violence. So why would Rowling want to rule out sexuality when she ignores other taboos? One possible answer might be that Rowling has Victorian attitudes towards sexuality, according to which children could not be accepted to be sexual creatures with sexual feelings. Michel Foucault explains the Victorian attitudes thus: "Everyone knew, for example that children had no sex, which was why

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<sup>49</sup> Thus, I disagree with scholars, such as Lisa Damour, who perceives the novels in very Bettelheimian and terms: she interprets them to be filled with sexual symbols. Damour, "Harry Potter and the Magical Looking Glass: Reading the Secret Life of the Preadolescent", in Giselle Liza Anatol (ed.), *Reading Harry Potter* (Westport, Connecticut, London: Praeger, 2003). Furthermore, I disagree with Jack Zipes, who for example sees Harry's wand as a phallic symbol. Zipes, "The Phenomenon of Harry Potter, or Why All the Talk?" in *Sticks and Stones: The Troublesome Success of Children's Literature from Slovenly Peter to Harry Potter* (New York: Routledge, 2000), p. 180.

they were forbidden to talk about it, why one closed one's eyes and stopped one's ears whenever they came to show evidence to the contrary, and why a general and studied silence was imposed" (Foucault, 4). However, this is a quite far-fetched interpretation, considering how she explores other taboos in her novels. Perhaps it is the case that Rowling wishes to explore the concept of sexuality in a more hidden and intriguing manner: in the form of a monster inside Harry (and in the form of one possible sexual innuendo: "'Oh, Professor, look! I think I've got an unsuspected planet! Oooh, which one's that, Professor?' 'It's Uranus, my dear,' said Professor Trelawney, peering down at the chart. 'Can I have a look at Uranus, too, Lavender?' said Ron" (*Goblet*, 178)).

The "other", horrifying monster inside Harry is also interesting to explore through intertextuality. There are various children's novels and fairytales which explore the concept of the other in relation to the self, to which Rowling is most likely alluding. For example, *Beauty and the Beast*, a classic fairytale, has a handsome prince who is turned into a monster for his vanity and snobbishness. The one who turned him did this so as to make the prince look as ugly on the outside as he was on the inside. However, the prince/monster becomes an entirely new man after he falls in love and receives love in return: he is no longer a monster on the inside or the outside. In a similar manner, the monster inside Harry vanishes, and he becomes an essentially new and more mature man after he embraces his sexual feelings. He is no longer afraid to express feelings of love, and he does not find kissing as something shameful and even slightly disgusting, as he did when he kissed the target of his first crush, Cho Chang, for the first time in *Order*. Thus, it is perhaps accurate to say that a part of what caused the monster-image to be created inside Harry was his feeling of being a child and wanting to be a child: he did not wish to enter the adult world of love and sexual attraction. Therefore, the monster inside Harry, and

Harry's acceptance of it as a part of himself, is a presentation of Harry's rite of passage from childhood to adulthood.

Another aspect of "otherness" within Harry Potter is his connection with Voldemort. Because of this connection, it could be suggested that in *Harry Potter* novels, evil and otherness are not something that reside outside Harry, but they reside inside of him and are a part of him, as well: Harry and Voldemort's minds are connected, in other words Voldemort can be inside Harry's head almost anytime. In addition, "the other" can be seen as a part of Harry, because Harry possesses similar qualities to Voldemort, i.e. speaking to snakes and wand core. Because of this, Harry has to constantly monitor the border of good and evil within him. Here is an example, where Harry is inside Voldemort's head, when Voldemort himself is inside a snake:

Harry put out his tongue ... he tasted the man's scent on the air ... he was alive but drowsy ... sitting in front of a door at the end of the corridor...

Harry longed to bite the man ... he must master the impulse ... he had more important work to do ...

But the man was stirring ... a silver Cloak fell from his legs as he jumped to his feet; and Harry saw his vibrant, blurred outline towering above him, saw a wand withdrawn from a belt ... he had no choice ... he reared high from the floor and struck once, twice, three times, plunging his fangs deeply into the man's flesh, feeling his ribs splinter beneath his jaws, feeling the warm gush of blood ... (*Order*, 408-9.)

This example describes how the "otherness", the evil part of Harry takes over, as Harry viciously attacks a man and enjoys it, even though it is technically Voldemort, who attacks and Harry is just inside his head. But, if a part of Harry did not enjoy this, this sequence would have been described very differently (although Harry does throw up after he comes to his senses, and when his good side takes over).

In the following example it is Voldemort who gets inside Harry's head and he wants to attack his old enemy, Professor Dumbledore:

At once, Harry's scar burned white-hot, as though the old wound had burst open again – and unbidden, unwanted, but terrifyingly strong, there rose within Harry a hatred so powerful he felt, for that instant, he would like nothing better than to strike – to bite – to sink his fangs into the man before him – (*Order*, 419.)

Here, again the way this situation is described leads the reader to assume that it is Harry himself, who is feeling hate and a need to attack, in addition to Voldemort: thus his evil side gets loose for a minute. Harry explains the feelings this situation awoke in him to Sirius thus:

Sirius, I ... I think I'm going mad. Back in Dumbledore's office, just before we took the Portkey ... for a couple of seconds there I thought I was a snake, I *felt* like one – my scar really hurt when I was looking at Dumbledore – Sirius I wanted to attack him! [...] it was like something rose up inside me, like there's a *snake* inside me. (*Order*, 425.)

In this description, Harry emphasises the fact how there is a “horrrifying other” inside him, something that he fears is a part of him, something that he does not want to be in him. Thus, he would rather think of it as a sign of madness, some sort of a delusion perhaps, instead of it being something real, something that actually is a part of him.

After Harry hears Mad-Eye Moody's suspicion of Voldemort possessing Harry, and thus having been the snake, Harry becomes desperate, as he finds that his doubts and fears of the evil “otherness” taking him over were accurate:

He felt dirty, contaminated, as though he were carrying some deadly germ, unworthy to sit on the Underground train back from the hospital with innocent, clean people whose minds and bodies were free of the taint of Voldemort ... he had not merely seen the snake, he had *been* the snake, he knew it now ... (*Order*, 435.)

However, as Harry later finds out, he was not actually being possessed by Voldemort, but the matter is somewhat the opposite, as Snape explains to Harry in *Order*, during his first Occlumency lesson:

The curse that failed to kill you seems to have forged some kind of connection between you and the Dark Lord. The evidence suggests that at times, when your mind is most relaxed and vulnerable – when you are asleep, for instance – you are sharing the Dark Lord’s thoughts and emotions. (*Order*, 469.)

Thus, it is actually the case that it is Harry, who is “possessing” Voldemort and penetrating his mind, although as the reader learns later on in the novel, this connection works both ways, and Voldemort is able to penetrate Harry’s mind (this issue is discussed in more detail in 4.3). Therefore, it can be interpreted that in addition to Voldemort being the horrifying “other” inside Harry, Harry is the horrifying “other” inside Voldemort; a part which Voldemort does not wish to have, as Harry is essentially good and filled with love, and these are the things that Voldemort abhors the most. That is the underlying reason for why Voldemort starts preventing Harry’s penetration to his mind.

All in all, it is actually very good and useful that Harry has a dark side, because, as Linqvist has noted, it is through our own evil that we can recognize and deal with evil in this world. If we deny our own evil, our whole image of what is evil gets distorted. It either disappears, or it becomes an image of monster that is separate from us (Linqvist, 167). Thus, Harry is able to fight against evil much better, when he recognizes his own evil, the evil within. At best, he is able to read Voldemort’s thoughts (if Voldemort does not manage to block him by using Occlumency, that is by magically blocking his mind from intrusion), and understand and interpret these thoughts in manners which enable him to defeat Voldemort in clever ways (but he could not do this if he would not understand evil and how it works). An example of how Harry’s connection with Voldemort’s mind is useful can be found in *Order* (409-416): In the situation, which is quoted above, Harry gets inside Voldemort’s head, while he is possessing a snake, and the snake attacks Arthur Weasley. After he gets out of Voldemort’s head and realizes what has happened, he immediately seeks help, and due to his quick action, Mr. Weasley’s life is saved.

### 3.4 Nature vs. Nurture

The purpose of this chapter is to ponder upon the eternal debate of nature vs. nurture in relation to Harry's goodness and Voldemort's evilness. When wondering about the origins of evil, one of the most important questions is whether evilness is an innate property in humans (nature) or due to environmental factors, such as upbringing (nurture). According to the Christian dogma, a person is sinful, and thus evil, at birth because of the original sin that Adam and Eve committed (*The Bible*). Thus, in terms of Christian religion, sinfulness (i.e. evilness) is an innate quality, in other words people are born evil, and the environment has nothing to do with it. Immanuel Kant's concept of *radical evil* is very similar to the concept of the original sin. According to him *radical evil* means that each person has an innate, natural propensity to evil.<sup>50</sup> Many other philosophers, on the other hand, hold entirely the opposite belief: they believe that evilness is entirely environmental and not innate. For example, according to John Locke, a baby's mind is *tabula rasa*, a blank slate, which the environment and life-experience (and evilness) fills.

Within the field of social psychology, most researchers either consider that evilness is largely due to environmental factors, or that it is the result of the interaction between genes and the environment. Philip Zimbardo is a proponent of environmental factors:

[...] the human mind is so marvellous that it can adapt to virtually any known environmental circumstance in order to survive, to create, and to destroy, as necessary. We are not born with tendencies toward good or evil but with mental templates to do *either*. What I mean is that we have the potential to be better or worse than anyone who has existed in the past, to be more creative and more destructive, to make the world a better place or a worse place than before. (Zimbardo, 26.)

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<sup>50</sup> Immanuel Kant, "Uskonto pelkän järjen rajoissa", in Ari Hirvonen and Toomas Kotkas (eds.), *Radikaali paha. Paha eurooppalaisessa perinteessä* (Helsinki: Loki-kirjat, 2004), p. 51.

Thus, according to Zimbardo, it is solely the environment that makes people evil, and not their genes, as human beings are born with both the capacity to be good and to be evil. Along the same lines, Zimbardo declares that “[...] any deed, for good or evil, that any human being has ever performed or committed, you and I could also perform or commit – given the same circumstances” (Zimbardo, 48).

Also Ervin Staub feels that it is due to environmental factors only that a person becomes evil. According to him, evilness is the result of the frustration of people’s basic needs. This frustration, added with difficult life conditions makes people become aggressive and thus evil (Staub, 52, 61), as according to Staub, aggression equals evil. In addition, Staub explains that when a baby experiences ineffectiveness to his/her crying to obtain biological and social needs, it has very negative effects. For example, babies in institutions where caretaking is poor, many of them become depressed and might die. Such conditions result in the frustration of basic needs, and as the babies are fed according to a certain schedule, as opposed to when the baby is actually hungry and crying. Thus, the babies learn that their crying gets no response and they have no connection to anyone, no one to count on. (Staub, 69.)

Staub’s description of babies seems to apply rather well to Voldemort, since the orphanage where he spent his childhood was not a good place for a child to grow up: the orphans “looked reasonably well-cared-for, but there was no denying that this was a grim place in which to grow up” (*Prince*, 251). Thus, Rowling allows us to infer that the orphanage was just the sort of place where children were cared for according to schedules and not needs. An especially strong indication that this might be the case is revealed by the manager of the orphanage: “He was a funny baby, too. He hardly ever cried, you know. And then, when he got a little older, he was ... odd” (*Prince*, 250). The fact that Voldemort hardly ever cried and became odd later on indicates that he most probably was depressed due to deprivation of his basic needs.

Sigmund Freud believes that evilness is the result of nature. According to Freud (in Atkinson et al., 406) aggression is a basic drive, which results from frustration of our sexual instincts. Thus, Freud's "[p]sychoanalytic theory also paints a portrait of human nature as basically evil. Without the restraining forces of society and its internalized representative, the superego, humans would destroy themselves" (Atkinson et al., 462).

In lieu with Freud's theory, it can be interpreted that nature (genes) plays a big role in Voldemort's evilness, as he possesses very violent genes from his mother's side of the family, the Gaunts: "Marvolo, his son Morfin and his daughter Merope were the last of the Gaunts, a very ancient wizarding family noted for a vein of instability and violence that flourished through the generations due to their habit of marrying their own cousins" (*Prince*, 200-1). Harry in turn, has no aggression genes that we know of. Both his father's and his mother's families were gentle people (with the exception of wicked Aunt Petunia, who is not entirely wicked after all, since she helped Harry stay alive by taking him into her house, as is revealed in *Order*).

According to Jennifer Crocker, Shawna J. Lee and Nora E. Park<sup>51</sup> the pursuit of one's self-esteem is an important factor to cause evilness and it essentially has nothing to do with how high or low one's self-esteem is. This issue is closely related to one's personality, and personality factors are usually considered to be mainly genetical, but the environment does mould them somewhat. The pursuit of self-esteem means the desire to prove to everyone that one is wonderful and not at all worthless. Concern of one's self-worth can lead people to not be aware of the consequences of their actions. (Crocker, Lee and Park, 272.) The pursuit of one's self-esteem can in the worst case scenario lead to aggression and violence. When the ego finds itself threatened, it results in negative effects, such as anger, humiliation, shame, and this might

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<sup>51</sup> Jennifer Crocker, Shawna J. Lee, and Nora E. Park, "The Pursuit of Self-Esteem: Implications for Good and Evil", in Arthur G. Miller (ed.), *The Social Psychology of Good and Evil* (New York: The Guilford Press, 2004), p. 272.



influence emotional control by increasing aggressive behaviour (Crocker, Lee and Park, 279). Narcissistic people are most vulnerable to this unwanted way of pursuing their self-esteem, as narcissistic tendencies are closely linked to bullying behaviour (Crocker, Lee and Park, 285) and thus evilness. This vulnerability is due to the fact that even though narcissists have exaggeratedly positive self-views, they are also extremely fragile. The unstable self-views of narcissists most likely is due to their very positive views of themselves coupled with fears of being utterly worthless (Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001; Rhodewalt, Madrian & Cheney, 1998; Rhodewalt & Morf, 1995, in Crocker, Lee and Park, 284). When a narcissistic person's fragile self-esteem is under a threat, s/he might try to maintain his/her self-esteem at the expense of others (Crocker, Lee and Park, 284).

Crocker, Lee and Park's theory of pursuit of self-esteem and narcissism fits extremely well with the character of Voldemort. He has always considered himself special and he adheres to this image of himself no matter what. He derogates and kills Muggles and Muggle-borns because he does not want to admit that he has anything to do with them, he wants to be a pure-blooded wizard (this issue will be discussed further in 4.2). He gets extremely angry at Dumbledore and becomes very defensive when he thinks that Dumbledore is from an asylum, and he states that he is not the one that is mad, but that the manager of the orphanage is the one who should be put in a mental institution (*Prince*, 253) (this issue is also discussed in 2.6). Voldemort likes to surround himself with people who fear and worship him at the same time, thus making him feel that he is something wonderful and scary, almost god-like. He likes to bully those who are weaker than him, in order to prove to himself and to others that he is strong and mighty and in control.

Also attachment theory is relevant when trying to explain origins of evil. Attachment refers to the process where babies become gradually attached to their parents and this attachment

is based on their ability to discriminate between their parents and other people.<sup>52</sup> There are two main types of attachment: secure and insecure. Secure attachment means that an infant does not feel anxious when separating from his/her parent, s/he seeks closeness when feeling stressed, and uses the parent as a safe base for exploring the world (Bee and Boyd, 128). In insecure types of attachment a baby does not rely on the parent for support and security and s/he does not trust the parent to take care of him/her. Babies begin to demonstrate a clear attachment, when they are about 6-8 months old (Bee and Boyd, 127). That is when they start to experience *stranger anxiety* (Bee and Boyd, 127) and seek safety from their parents when meeting a stranger. According to Crocker, Lee and Park, insecure attachment styles function in the following manner:

Because people with insecure attachment styles lack a sense of a "secure base," they (1) are more likely to experience shame and fear negative evaluation from others (Mikulincer, 1998; Wagner & Tangney, 1991); (2) are more anxious and hostile than securely attached people (Kobak & Sceery, 1988); and (3) deal with stressful events by mentally ruminating on negative thoughts, memories, and affect, rather than engaging in more active, problem-focused coping strategies (Kobak & Sceery, 1988; Shaver & Hazan, 1993). (In Crocker, Lee and Park, 288.)

Thus, insecure attachment might make a person become evil, as an insecurely attached person does not trust people, tries to pursue his/her self-esteem in excess, is more violent and aggressive than securely attached people.

In my view, attachment theory applies very well to the *Harry Potter* novels. Voldemort can be interpreted to be an excellent example of a character with insecure attachment making him evil. He has never experienced motherly care and affection and thus he has not been able to form a secure attachment relationship with anyone as a baby. His self-esteem has become deflated though fragile, and he does not truly care about anyone. He has no problem committing violent

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<sup>52</sup> Helen Bee and Denise Boyd, *Lifespan Development*, Third edition (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2002), p. 126.

acts of evil, as he feels no compassion or affection towards anyone. Harry Potter, in his turn, can be interpreted as an example of a securely attached character, who cares a lot about his fellow humans and strives to help those in need, and has a healthy self-esteem. Harry appears to have formed a secure attachment relationship with his mother, before her death, which then has served as a protection for the neglect he was imposed to in his Aunt's family, and prevented him from becoming evil and vicious towards other people. Harry's attachment security can be mainly inferred from the fact that we are presented with an image of Harry's mother as a deeply loving character, who loved her son so much that she died for him, and thus it is highly likely that she attended to Harry's basic needs thoroughly and gave him all the love and affection that he needed in order to form a secure attachment with his mother. Also, Harry was a one-year-old when losing his mother, so he has had enough time to form a secure attachment, as at least in theory by that time a baby will have formed an attachment relationship with the primary caregiver. Thus the security of attachment towards the primary caregiver can be considered as one major difference between Harry and Voldemort and as one major reason as to why Voldemort is evil and Harry is not.

However, this issue is a lot more complicated than that, as also Harry's character shows some features that are traditionally connected to insecure attachment styles: he is very worried about what people think about him, he fears negative evaluation and he worries about things by constantly pondering about them in his mind. However, he shows no signs of anxiety or hostility towards other people before he reaches the peak of his puberty in *Order*, and thus these feelings can be said to be due to puberty. To even further complicate this issue, Dudley Dursley, Harry's cousin is a very securely attached character, but still he is essentially evil. He bullies other children and is very vicious towards them. His favourite hobby is to beat Harry and other

children, who are smaller than him and cannot defend themselves, while his evil friends hold the victim still.

Still, it can be interpreted that nurture (the environment) has turned Voldemort evil, whereas Harry's secure attachment has saved him from becoming evil despite the horrible environment he had to grow up in from 1 to 11 years old. When also considering that nature (genes) play a large part in Voldemort's evilness, the following argument is very accurate: According to Craig A. Anderson and Nicholas L. Carnagey<sup>53</sup>, the interaction between inherited biological factors and biosocial interactions, such as learning, may lead to aggression. Biological factors and environmental factors combined result in aggressive behaviour by either increasing other factors that facilitate aggression or decreasing the factors that inhibit aggression. It can also be said, that biological factors and environmental factors influence a person's "preparedness to aggress" (Anderson & Carnagey, 183). However, with regards to what makes a person evil, Anderson and Carnagey explain that "[v]iolent evil is most likely to emerge in environments with multiple risk factors, environments that provide aggressive models, frustrate and victimize people, reinforce aggression, and teach people that aggression is acceptable and successful" (Anderson & Carnagey, 182). Thus, what these theorists are basically stating is that evilness is the result of the interaction between genetical and environmental factors, and this applies very well to the *Harry Potter* novels, as the characters of Voldemort and Harry prove. However, the character of Dudley does not support this theory, as he has lived his life in a safe and happy environment, and still he has grown up to be extremely aggressive and evil.

Albus Dumbledore has a very interesting viewpoint to the issue of nature vs. nurture, as can be noticed from the following description of Hagrid's:

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<sup>53</sup> Craig A. Anderson and Nicholas L. Carnagey, "Violent Evil and the General Aggression Model", in Arthur G. Miller (ed.), *The Social Psychology of Good and Evil* (New York: The Guilford Press, 2004), pp. 178-9.

Dumbledore was the one who stuck up for me after Dad went. Got me the gamekeeper job ... trusts people, he does. Gives 'em second chances ... tha's what sets him apar' from other Heads, see. He'll accept anyone at Hogwarts, s'long as they've got the talent. Knows people can turn out OK even if their families weren' ... well ... all tha' respectable. (Goblet, 395.)

What Hagrid is pointing out here is that the only thing that Dumbledore thinks as important, in genetical terms, is the gene for doing magic, which even those of non-wizard parentage and those with giant blood in them (like Hagrid himself) can have. Otherwise, Dumbledore thinks that no matter what a person's genes or environment is, s/he can still become good or bad. This point is also emphasized in *Chamber* (244-5), when Dumbledore explains that our choices make us who we are. This is indeed a very interesting and powerful, but on the other hand a very ambiguous and complicated, statement on the eternal question of nature vs. nurture, that is whether being evil is an innate thing, or due to the environment one grows up in. According to Dumbledore it seems to be a bit of both and something more, a personal choice, because all the choices that people make are influenced by their environment, genes, personality and various other factors, although ultimately, what a person chooses is entirely up to his/her wants, needs, personality, and other very individual issues. In other words, a person is in principle free to choose whatever he/she wants, but s/he is restricted by various environment and other factors. Following this principle, Harry has chosen to be good, and Voldemort has chosen to be evil, regardless of the fact that they both grew up without their parents in a horrible environment, thus leaving out the possibility of the environment affecting their choices in principle. However, Harry's secure attachment to his mother and Voldemort's insecure attachment towards anyone may have had an important effect to their choices. Thus, the question still remains, whether Harry's goodness and Voldemort's evilness has more to do with their basic nature than their actual choices, and it is

also worth considering that their personalities are very different, even though they have similar abilities and a similar background.

From this discussion on nature vs. nurture, one difficult question still remains: which view of nature vs. nurture do the *Harry Potter* novels employ in practice? Perhaps, the correct answer is that in the novels both nature and nurture are seen as influencing evilness: Both Voldemort's aggression gene (nature), and his insecure attachment and dreadful childhood environment of the orphanage (nurture) make him evil. In turn, Harry's non-aggressive genes (nature), combined with a secure attachment (environment), protect him from the unfavourable environment of his Aunt's vicious family, and result in him becoming a good person. However, the novels emphasise that this issue is a lot more complicated than this, as our choices and personalities should be taken into account as well. Thus the question of nature vs. nurture remains an eternal mystery, to which the *Harry Potter* novels do not provide a fully satisfying answer, and in fact a mystery which no one has yet solved satisfyingly (as can be noticed from the vagueness of the theories presented in this chapter).

### **3.5 The Order of the Phoenix vs. the Death Eaters**

The purpose of this chapter is to describe and analyse the goodness of the Order of the Phoenix and the evilness of the Death Eaters. The Order of the Phoenix is an organisation that consists of good people whereas the Death Eaters are evil. The Order of the Phoenix tries to stop the Death Eaters from doing evil and from gathering more followers in many ways. They also fight directly against the Death Eaters in *Order* and in *Prince*. The Order of the Phoenix and the Death Eaters are very different in many ways, in addition to the fact that the Order is good and the Death

Eaters are evil. The Death Eaters do not value human life; they are prepared to kill anyone. The Death Eaters are racists; they do not accept Muggles, Muggle-borns or half-bloods. Many Death Eaters are very rich and are part of the oldest wizarding families, in other words they represent the peak of wizarding nobility. Most members of the Order are poor or relatively poor people, some of them pure-blooded and some of them not. In addition, the Death Eaters enjoy torturing and killing (especially Muggles); it is their idea of having fun, whereas the Order finds such acts abominable. The following passage provides a good example of how the Death Eaters enjoy torturing Muggles:

A crowd of wizards, tightly packed and moving together with wands pointing straight upwards, was marching slowly across the field. Harry squinted at them ... they didn't seem to have faces ... then he realised that their heads were hooded and their faces masked. High above them, floating along in mid-air, four struggling figures were being contorted into grotesque shapes. It was as though the masked wizards on the ground were puppeteers, and the people above them were marionettes operated by invisible strings that rose from the wands into the air. Two of the figures were very small.

More wizards were joining the marching group, laughing and pointing at the floating bodies. Tents crumbled and fell as the marching crowd swelled. Once or twice Harry saw one of the marchers blast a tent out of his way with his wand. Several caught fire. The screaming grew louder.

The floating people were suddenly illuminated as they passed a burning tent, and Harry recognised one of them – Mr Roberts, the campsite manager. The other three looked as though they might be his wife and children. One of the marchers below flipped Mrs Roberts upside-down with his wand; her nightdress fell down to reveal voluminous drawers; she struggled to cover herself up as the crowd below her screeched and hooted with glee. (*Goblet*, 108.) [...]

'What were You-Know-Who's supporters up to, levitating Muggles? I mean, what was the point?'

'The point?' said Mr Weasley, with a hollow laugh. 'Harry, that's their idea of fun. Half the Muggle killings back when You-Know-Who was in power were done for fun.'  
(*Goblet*, 127-8.)

Despite their many differences, the Order and the Death Eaters have one thing in common: they are willing to die for their cause. In fact, some of the Death Eaters, such as Bellatrix Lestrange, are so devout to their cause that they are willing to sacrifice their children as well and find it inconceivable that not all feel that way:

'In other words, it doesn't matter to him if Draco is killed!'  
 'The Dark Lord is very angry,' repeated Snape quietly. 'He failed to hear the prophecy. You know as well as I do, Narcissa, that he does not forgive easily.'  
 She crumbled, falling at his feet, sobbing and moaning on the floor.  
 'My only son ... my only son.'  
 'You should be proud!' said Bellatrix ruthlessly. 'If I had sons, I would be glad to give them up to the service of the Dark Lord!' (*Prince*, 39.)

Members of the Order, in turn, are not willing to sacrifice their children (Molly Wesley does not allow Fred and George to join the Order in *Order* as they are still at school, notwithstanding that they are of age), even though they are more than willing to sacrifice themselves.

However, not all Death Eaters are willing to sacrifice themselves for their cause in practice. Some of them are cowards, such as Lucius Malfoy who after Voldemort's disappearance pretended that he was not actually on Voldemort's side and that he felt remorse for his actions, instead of going to Azkaban. Also his son Draco Malfoy is a coward. He brags and boasts about the assignment that Voldemort gives him (to fix the Vanishing Cabinet and to kill Dumbledore), and he does manage to fix the Cabinet, but when it comes to actually killing Dumbledore, he chickens out.

Severus Snape is the most complicated character in the *Harry Potter* novels. He is a Death Eater, but he is also a member of the Order of the Phoenix. Both Dumbledore and Voldemort are sure of Snape's loyalty, but it is left unclear where his loyalties truly lie. After *Prince* the reader is left under the assumption that Snape is actually on Voldemort's side, because he kills Dumbledore at the end of the novel.

However, there are numerous interpretations to this issue. One of them is that Snape had to kill Dumbledore, because he had made "the Unbreakable Vow" with Narcissa Malfoy, in which he promised to do Draco's duty (that is, to kill Dumbledore) if Draco is unable to do it himself (*Prince*, 40-1). "The Unbreakable Vow" is truly an unbreakable vow, because if you



break it, you die. According to this interpretation Snape wanted to save his own neck rather than Dumbledore's. Another interpretation is that Dumbledore begged Snape to kill him by saying "Severus ... please ..." (*Prince*, 556). At one stage in *Prince* it is described how Snape no longer wishes to continue the job he is doing, and before Snape kills Dumbledore there is hate in his eyes: in other words he did not wish to do as he was told, that is to kill Dumbledore. A third interpretation is, of course, that Snape is truly on Voldemort's side, and he has merely tricked Dumbledore. Snape's possibility of being evil is underlined with the fact that he is "the half-blood Prince", from whose Potions book Harry learns for example an evil spell that makes a cut in the enemy's face. Snape is called "the half-blood Prince" because Snape is a half-blood (his father was a Muggle and mother a witch) and his mother's last name was Prince. Snape is also partially responsible for the death of Harry's parents, because he was the one who told Voldemort the part of the prophecy that he heard (Voldemort's defeater will be born at the end of July to parents who have thrice defied Voldemort).

In fact, from the very beginning Snape is introduced in *Stone*, he has been described in the manner that would suggest that he is evil: "His eyes were black like Hagrid's, but they had none of Hagrid's warmth. They were cold and empty and made you think of dark tunnels" (*Stone*, 102). Also the fact that Snape has been extremely interested in the dark arts all his life suggests that he is possibly evil. In addition, he is not a very nice person; he is in fact quite vicious: He is a very strict teacher, and he is vicious to many of his students. For example he bullies Harry and Neville constantly, because he thinks that they are very bad at Potions. On the other hand he treats his favourite students extremely well. Even though all vicious people are not strictly evil, most of them certainly are, so Snape's viciousness can also be considered as an indication of his evilness.

## 3.6 Ministry of Magic and Hogwarts

### 3.6.1 Dementors, Giants and Werewolves

Does allying yourself with evil make you evil? This is a question that can be raised when considering Dementors, Giants and werewolves. Arthur Weasley explains the Ministry of Magic's alliance with Dementors in the following manner: "Dumbledore isn't fond of the Azkaban guards [...] Nor am I, if it comes to that ... but when you're dealing with a wizard like Black, you sometimes have to join forces with those you'd rather avoid" (*Prisoner*, 54). Also Minister for Magic, Cornelius Fudge explains this issue along the same lines: "they are here to protect you all from something much worse ... we all know what Black's capable of ..." (*Prisoner*, 151). Thus, what Arthur and Fudge are saying is that when dealing with Death Eaters (that is what they thought that Sirius Black was) it is necessary to ally yourself with even the foulest of creatures, if they can protect the wizarding community. In other words, they feel that allying oneself with evil forces is acceptable if it is done in the name of greater good. However, as Arthur explains in the above quotation, Albus Dumbledore does not approve of Dementors, nor does he approve of the alliance between them and the Ministry. He has constantly tried to convince the Ministry to remove Dementors from guarding Azkaban, as they are natural allies of Voldemort, and would let all the Death Eaters free, if Voldemort were to ask.

However, Dumbledore is willing to make alliances with Giants and werewolves, which are both creatures that are considered to be vicious and evil. But, as is revealed, neither all Giants nor all werewolves are evil, even though some of them certainly are, and thus Dumbledore is not actually planning to ally himself with evil forces, as he would certainly pick the Giants and werewolves that are not evil, and in fact, the werewolves and Giants willing to ally themselves

with Dumbledore and not Voldemort can prove themselves as good by this choice. It is just prejudice to believe all of them evil, as Hermione explains: “But honestly, all this hysteria about giants. They can’t *all* be horrible ... it’s the same sort of prejudice that people have towards werewolves ... it’s just bigotry, isn’t it?” (*Goblet*, 377). Hermione’s theory seems reasonable when considering how Remus Lupin is good and kind, even though he is a werewolf, whereas the werewolf that bit him, “Fenrir Greyback is, perhaps, the most savage werewolf alive today. He regards it as his mission in life to bite and to contaminate as many people as possible” (*Prince*, 313-4). Similarly, Grawp is not evil at all, once he learns how to control his strength, and violent behaviour. Hagrid manages to teach Grawp this, and his remarkable improvement can be seen at Dumbledore’s funeral: “dressed in a jacket and trousers each the size of a small marquee, was the giant Grawp, his great ugly boulder-like head bowed, docile, almost human. Hagrid sat down next to his half-brother and Grawp patted Hagrid hard on the head, so that his chair legs sank into the ground” (*Prince*, 600). Grawp pats Hagrid on the head here, because he tries to comfort the crying Hagrid. Trying to comfort someone who is grieving is one of the most humane and good features there are, and this if anything should prove that not all Giants are evil.

### **3.6.2 Dolores Umbridge and Argus Filch**

The purpose of this chapter is to briefly describe and analyse the evilness of Dolores Umbridge and the Hogwarts caretaker Argus Filch. Dolores Umbridge is an example of a corrupt and evil politician, who will do anything in order to make things the way she feels they are supposed to be. The following quotation is an excellent example of Umbridge’s evilness. The quotation

describes Harry is in detention with Umbridge, and she makes him write lines in an unbelievably cruel and evil manner and how Harry feels about it:

Harry placed the point of the quill on the paper and wrote: *I must not tell lies*.  
 He let out a gasp of pain. The words had appeared on the back of Harry's left hand, cut into his skin as though traced there by a scalpel – (*Order*, 240.) [...] She's evil, he thought, as he climbed a staircase to the seventh floor, she's an evil, twisted, mad old – (*Order*, 244.)

The fact that the title of Umbridge at Hogwarts is High *Inquisitor*, is highly relevant in relation to evil. As is stated in 2.3, this title is an apparent reference to the Spanish Inquisition. The Spanish Inquisition can be considered an essentially evil organisation that prosecuted and killed several innocent people, so as to enforce their ideology upon everyone. This is essentially what Umbridge does with making Harry write the line in his hand, i.e. she tries to make Harry conform to her command of not telling “lies”, i.e. the truth about Voldemort's return, and by creating a reign of terror in Hogwarts where she is the ultimate authority in all things.

According to Heather Debling (78), the fact that Umbridge operates on her own accord, makes her such a disturbing and dangerous character. Umbridge believes in the Ministry and Fudge with such fervour that she is willing to do whatever, even use the forbidden Cruciatius Curse on Harry, because she believes that she is doing the right thing.

By showing Umbridge's readiness to use any means, including the weapons of the enemy, to uphold what she believes to be true and good, and by showing that it is the Ministry's attitude towards Harry that provokes and allows Umbridge's attacks, Rowling once again challenges a simplistic view of good and evil in her novels (Debling, 78.)

(This issue of Rowling challenging the simplistic view of good and evil is discussed further in 3.7). Furthermore, as Schanoes (142, in Debling, 78) has stated, Rowling continues to examine

“the possible interactions, alliances, and complications between good and evil” in *Order*, especially when it comes to power and the desire to hold on to power.

Argus Filch, in turn, is an example of an evil and sadistic character, who is willing to abuse his power for his own pleasure. He fantasises about torturing students who have broken rules all the time:

‘I bet you’ll think twice about breaking a school rule again, won’t you, eh?’ he continued leering at them. ‘Oh yes ... hard work and pain are the best teachers if you ask me ... It’s just a pity they let the old punishments die out ... hang you by your wrists from the ceiling a few days, I’ve got the chains still in my office, keep ‘em well oiled in case they’re ever needed ... Right off we go, and don’t think of running off, now, it’ll be worse for you if you do.’ (*Stone*, 181.)

In addition, he is also well quipped for torturing students, all he needs is permission from the Headmaster: “A highly polished collection of chains and manacles hung on the wall behind Filch’s desk. It was common knowledge that he was always begging Dumbledore to let him suspend students by their ankles from the ceiling.” (*Chamber*, 96.)

Filch finds his evil match in Dolores Umbridge, who enjoys the idea of torturing students as much as Filch does. Umbridge wins Filch’s loyalty over from Dumbledore by promising him an educational decree that would allow him to torture rule-breakers. When Umbridge becomes the Headmistress, she immediately allows Filch to start torturing: “I’ve got the form and I’ve got the whips waiting [...] ‘Very good, Argus,’ she said. ‘You two,’ she went on, gazing down at Fred and George, ‘are about to learn what happens to wrongdoers in my school’” (*Order*, 594). By this decision to torture students into obedience, Umbridge and Filch are essentially following in the Spanish Inquisition’s footsteps: the Spanish Inquisition considered that the best way to make people obedient was to torture them in the cruellest and most imaginative ways one could think of.

### 3.6.3 Bartemius Crouch Senior

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the evilness of the former Head of the Department of Law Enforcement, Bartemius Crouch. Barty Crouch senior is the kind of character who fights evil with evil. He hates Death Eaters so much that he is willing to do anything to stop them. Here are a few examples of the vile acts that Crouch committed in order to stop the Death Eaters, described by Sirius Black:

‘[...] the Ministry of Magic’s in disarray, they don’t know what to do, they’re trying to keep everything hidden from the Muggles, but meanwhile, Muggles are dying too. Terror everywhere ... panic ... confusion ... that’s how it used to be.

‘Well, times like that bring out the best in some people, and the worst in others. Crouch’s principles might’ve been good in the beginning – I wouldn’t know. He rose quickly through the Ministry, and he started ordering very harsh measures against Voldemort’s supporters. The Aurors were given new powers – powers to kill rather than capture, for instance. And I wasn’t the only one who was handed straight to the Dementors without trial. Crouch fought violence with violence, and authorised the use of the Unforgivable Curses against suspects. I would say he became as ruthless and cruel as many on the Dark side. He had his supporters, mind you – plenty of people thought he was going about things the right way, and there were a lot of witches and wizards clamouring for him to take over as Minister for Magic. When Voldemort disappeared, it looked like only a matter of time until Crouch got the top job. But then something rather unfortunate happened ...’ Sirius smiled grimly. ‘Crouch’s own son was caught with a group of Death Eaters who’d managed to talk their way out of Azkaban. Apparently they were trying to find Voldemort and return him to power.’ [...] ‘Crouch’s fatherly affection stretched just far enough to give his son a trial and, by all accounts, it wasn’t much more than an excuse for Crouch to show how much he hated the boy ... then he sent him straight to Azkaban.’ (*Goblet*, 457-8.)

### 3.7 Good and Evil as Absolute or Not Absolute

Why do Christian critics take particularly the *Harry Potter* novels in such a negative manner, instead of for example J.R.R Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings*<sup>54</sup>? One possible answer to this is

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<sup>54</sup> J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Lord of the Rings* (London : HarperCollins, 1995).

that good and evil are not absolutes in the world of Harry Potter<sup>55</sup>, and many Christians have a very limited idea of good and evil: they seem to think that the world is and should be black and white. Voldemort is a much more human character than for example Sauron from *The Lord of the Rings*. Sauron is an ominous and absolutely evil character who looms in the background, whereas Voldemort is very much present and we become familiar with his background and how he has become evil. The Hobbits and Gandalf are absolute good characters, whereas Harry and Dumbledore are no saints. *The Lord of the Rings* represents an essentially simplistic and naïve image of good and evil, whereas in *Harry Potter* the concepts of good and evil are more nuanced, as no character is purely good or purely evil, and there are various shades of gray. Thus, Rowling provides us with an accurate description of good and evil, because as DawnEllen Jacobs has pointed out:

Satan, a great deceiver, often presents himself in a form that appears to be very appealing. If evil consistently presented itself as evil, we would not be tempted by it, for we would know what it really was. The great danger of sin and evil is, precisely as Rowling has depicted, that they often present themselves as our best friend [...] <sup>56</sup>

This perception of evil not being absolute is noticeable in many modern works of popular culture, as even the absolute evil, in other words the Devil, is not merely evil, but something much more complicated. For example, The Rolling Stones has a song called “Sympathy for the Devil”<sup>57</sup>, and Clive Barker has written a play called *History of the Devil*<sup>58</sup> where the Devil is represented as a very pitiful character, who has been driven away from Heaven. His wing stumps

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<sup>55</sup> Thus I strongly disagree with Sarah Fiona Walters, who claims the wizarding world to be black and white, as compared to the novels of Diana Wynne Jones. Walters, “Good and Evil in the Works of Diana Wynne Jones and J. K. Rowling”, in Teya Rosenberg, Martha Hixon P., Sharon M. Scapple and Donna R. White (eds.), *Diana Wynne Jones: An Exciting and Exacting Wisdom* (New York: Peter Lang, 2002), pp. 84-87.

<sup>56</sup> DawnEllen Jacobs, “Tolkien and Rowling: Reflections and Receptions”, in *Topic: The Washington & Jefferson College Review*, Volume 54, *Harry Potter* (Washington & Jefferson College, 2004), p. 49.

<sup>57</sup> Jagger, Mick and Keith Richards, “Sympathy for the Devil”, album *Beggars Banquet*, 1968.

<sup>58</sup> Clive Barker, *The History of the Devil or Scenes from a Pretended Life*, in *Incarnations* (New York: HarperPrism, 1995).

are bleeding, and all he wants to do is get back to Heaven (Mäyräl, 54-5). In addition, there is a movie called *Little Nicky*<sup>59</sup> where the Devil is represented as a very sympathetic character and his son, Nicky, is a wimp. However, also some very old works of literature represent images of the Devil as a sympathetic character. For example, John Milton's *Paradise Lost*<sup>60</sup> represents reasons as to why the Devil became evil, why he fell from Heaven. Despite the fact that all these images of the Devil and Voldemort make people feel sympathy and to understand the reasons behind their evilness, people do not necessarily accept evil.

Also Steven Barfield has noted that it is useful to compare Voldemort with Sauron. He aptly points out how Voldemort's "politics and policies are based psychologically on his being a "half-blood" (his hatred of Muggles stemming from his non-Magical father's abandonment of his mother), as he himself explains", whereas Sauron has "strategies more reminiscent of the fundamental obscurity of Milton's Satan than of anything recognizable as human motivation or ambition".<sup>61</sup> Thus, what Barfield is basically saying is that Voldemort is a human-like character with complicated psychological motives and desires, whereas Sauron is an utterly inhuman creature with no human feelings, motives or desires. Therefore, the character of Sauron provides absolutely no clue to the reader of the essence of evil, as it only creates an obscure image of evil without any ulterior motives, whereas the character of Voldemort points out to the reader what a complicated issue evil is and that evilness is always a result of something (e.g. Voldemort's motive and desire to punish his Muggle father and all Muggles, as he considers them to be like his father; this issue will be further discussed in 4.2).

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<sup>59</sup> Brill, Steven (dir.), *Little Nicky* (USA: New Line Cinema, 2000).

<sup>60</sup> John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, (London and New York: Penguin, 1996).

<sup>61</sup> Steven Barfield, "Fantasy and the Interpretation of Fantasy in *Harry Potter*", in *Topic: The Washington & Jefferson College Review*, Volume 54, *Harry Potter* (Washington & Jefferson College, 2004), p. 26.



By creating confusion about the goodness and evilness of various characters in *Harry Potter* novels, Rowling probably wishes to point out that evil is not always what it seems, and that evil can appear to be good and vice versa. It is actually a very good thing that the relationship between good and evil is made so complicated in *Harry Potter* novels by first making characters seem good and then evil or the other way around. This demonstrates particularly well the most profound essence of human beings and of evil, because as Linqvist (54) has stated, people are both good and evil.

In fact, Andrew Blake (96) manages to include this concept into the wizarding world very well: in the restricted environment of Hogwarts good and evil are relative and partly overlapping concepts; Slytherin and the other houses function in a yin-yang principle. What Blake most likely means by this principle is that the Evil Slytherin house, and the Good other houses perfect each other: they can only form a whole by being together in the same manner as yin and yang, good and evil, as there can be no good if there is no evil. We would not be able to recognize something as good if there were not something evil to compare it with. As a matter of fact, it can even be said that good is inevitably combined with evil: goodness is unavoidably infected by evil and inscribed within it, and the other way around. This aspect of good and evil is what Rowling seems to especially emphasise in the character of Harry Potter, as is pointed out in 3.3 and in 4.3.

In conclusion, Rowling's depiction of good and evil as not absolutes is very accurate. The concepts of "goodness" and "evilness" are very complicated and claiming good or evil as being something absolute would be radically simplistic and naïve. As Martti Linqvist has aptly noted, "a person is both good and evil. Or s/he originally and permanently has potential for both. S/he is not split in half inside to separate worlds of good and evil, on the contrary good and evil have partially common roots. They overlap, and they might also change into each other" (Linqvist, 54, my translation).

## 4. Evil Power

There is no good and evil,  
there is only power, and those too weak to seek it... (*Stone*, 211.)

### 4.1 The Power of Discrimination: Racism and Speciesism

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the concept of racism in the world of Harry Potter. Racism in the wizarding world is not related to race per se, as it is not about one's skin colour or culture, but it is a matter of purity of wizarding blood: racism is directed towards Muggles, Muggle-borns, half-bloods, Squibs and half-breeds. The racism of the wizarding world is a matter closely related to power, i.e. those in power discriminating against those without power, in a very similar manner as in the real world. Racism and speciesism run very deep within the wizarding society, as they are embedded even in the wizarding laws. There are various wizarding laws that are derogatory towards magical creatures (e.g. house-elves, goblins and centaurs), werewolves and Muggles. House-elves and goblins (i.e. non-human creatures) are not allowed to carry or use wands, and "Law Fifteen B" (*Order*, 665) refers to centaurs as having near human intelligence, even though they are much wiser than humans. Also werewolves are discriminated against in the wizarding legislation in a very unfair manner. Dolores Umbridge drafts a law which makes it nearly impossible for werewolves to get jobs, thus forcing them to be poor, as the following quotation describes:

'I know she's a nasty piece of work, though – you should hear Remus talk about her.'  
'Does Lupin know her?' asked Harry quickly, remembering Umbridge's comments about dangerous half-breeds during her first lesson.  
'No,' said Sirius, 'but she drafted a bit of anti-werewolf legislation two years ago that makes it almost impossible for him to get a job.'

Harry remembered how much shabbier Lupin looked these days and his dislike of Umbridge deepened even further.

‘What’s she got against werewolves?’ said Hermione angrily.

‘Scared of them, I expect,’ said Sirius smiling at her indignation. ‘Apparently, she loathes part-humans; she campaigned to have merpeople rounded up and tagged last year, too.’ (*Order*, 271.)

Thus, Umbridge drafted such an unfair law because she despises “half-breeds”. For example the following comment reveals her contempt very well: “‘but you have been exposed to some very irresponsible wizards in this class, very irresponsible indeed – not to mention,’ she gave a nasty little laugh, ‘extremely dangerous half-breeds’” (*Order*, 219). The wizarding law also considers Muggles as inferior to wizards; as not having enough intelligence to receive the information that there are witches, wizards and magical creatures in the world, and that magic is something which cannot do everything and solve all human problems. The wizarding world is certain that if Muggles found out about them, they would certainly demand witches and wizards to devise magical solutions to all of their problems. Thus, the main job of the Ministry of Magic (as is described by Hagrid in 2.1) is to prevent Muggles from finding out that there are witches and wizards in Britain.

The only place in the wizarding society which has a clear ideology of being non-racist towards those whose blood is not pure is Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. Students are admitted at Hogwarts regardless of their parentage as long as they have the talent to do magic. This is the case despite the fact that one of the founders of Hogwarts, Salazar Slytherin was strongly against admitting other than pure-bloods to the school. He felt in his time that Muggle-borns were unworthy to study magic and he was willing to take desperate measures to get them out of Hogwarts:

For a few years the founders worked in harmony together, seeking out youngsters who showed signs of magic and bringing them to the castle to be educated. But then

disagreements sprang up between them. A rift began to grow between Slytherin and the others. Slytherin wished to be more *selective* about the students admitted to Hogwarts. He believed that magical learning should be kept within all-magic families. He disliked taking students of Muggle parentage, believing them to be untrustworthy. [...]

Slytherin, according to the legend, sealed the Chamber of Secrets so that none would be able to open it until his own true heir arrived at the school. The heir alone would be able to unseal the Chamber of Secrets, unleash the horror within, and use it to purge the school of all who were unworthy to study magic. (*Chamber*, 114.)

Furthermore, the racist ideology of the wizarding society penetrates even the non-racist environment of Hogwarts through its students (and staff in some cases) who have prejudiced attitudes.

House-elves are the most obvious example of how speciesism or racism (the term used depends on whether one perceives house-elves as humans or as animals) makes their life a living hell, even if they themselves do not perceive their slavery as such. House-elves are the slaves of witches and wizards: they and their children have to serve one wizarding family until they die, unless the family sees fit to set them free by giving them proper clothes. The only piece of clothing that a house-elf wears is a tea-towel, which Dobby the house-elf describes as the symbol for the house-elves' enslavement: "'Tis a mark of the house-elf's enslavement, sir. Dobby can only be freed if his masters present him with clothes, sir. The family is careful not to pass Dobby even a sock, sir, for then he would be free to leave their house for ever" (*Chamber*, 133).

House-elves can be both interpreted to be enslaved humans or animals, thus making it possible to name their treatment both as racism and speciesism. However, the more valid interpretation is that they are animals, as they are repeatedly referred to as non-human creatures, and they do not breed with humans, as for example giants do (thus pointing out that giants are humans). For example, the following quotation points out in very clear terms that house-elves are not humans:

‘The way they were treating her!’ said Hermione furiously, ‘Mr Diggory, calling her “elf” all the time ... and Mr Crouch! He knows she didn’t do it and he’s still going to sack her! He didn’t care how frightened she’d been, or how upset she was – it was like she wasn’t even human!’

‘Well, she’s not,’ said Ron.

Hermione rounded on him. ‘That doesn’t mean she hasn’t got feelings, Ron, it’s disgusting the way –’

‘Hermione, I agree with you,’ said Mr Weasley quickly, beckoning her on, ‘but now is not the time to discuss elf rights.’ (*Goblet*, 125.)

On the other hand, house-elves could also be perceived as humans, because their feelings are described as acute as a human’s (*Order*, 733) and they are described in a very humanistic manner; their feelings, such as fear and affection are emphasised as well as their diligence and dedication to their work. Also, the concept of slavery of the house-elves can either be conceived as similar to the black people, who were also actually considered more like animals than humans, before slavery was abolished in the real world, or it can be interpreted in other ways. For example, it could be perceived that house-elves are treated in a similar manner as workhorses at a farm. Interestingly, a part of the house-elves’ job description is to function as a guinea pig, and thus they can be perceived as guinea pigs subjected to animal testing, as the following example implies:

‘I have had it *all* tested for poison,’ he assured Harry, pouring most of the first bottle into one of Hagrid’s bucket-sized mugs and handing it to Hagrid. ‘Had a house-elf taste every bottle after what happened to your poor friend Rupert.’

Harry saw, in his mind’s eye, the expression on Hermione’s face if she ever heard about this abuse of house-elves, and decided never to mention it to her. (*Prince*, 454.)

Thus, in the same manner as animals are used as test subjects to ensure that the products are safe for humans to use in the real world, Professor Slughorn uses a house-elf as a poison tester. On the other hand, humans were used as poison testers in historical times: for example royalty and nobility had to have their food and drink tested, as they were in constant danger of being poisoned by enemies.

Hermione is very concerned about elf rights. She perceives the house-elves as slaves, and she believes that they should be entitled to freedom, pay and holidays. That is why she founds an organisation to promote elf rights, called Society for the Promotion of Elvish Welfare (S.P.E.W). She explains the goals of her organisation thus:

‘I’ve been researching it thoroughly in the library. Elf enslavement goes back centuries. I can’t believe no one’s done anything about it before now.’

‘Hermione – open your ears,’ said Ron loudly. ‘They. Like. It. They *like* being enslaved!’

‘Our short-term aims,’ said Hermione, speaking even more loudly than Ron, and acting as though she hadn’t heard a word, ‘are to secure house-elves fair wages and working conditions. Our long-term aims include changing the law about non-wand use, and trying to get an elf into the Department for the Regulation and Control of Magical Creatures, because they’re shockingly under-represented.’ (*Goblet*, 198.)

However, as Ron points out here, the elves are satisfied with their lives the way it is, they are happy to serve witches and wizards but for a few exceptions such as Dobby, who suffered horrible treatment while being the Malfoys’ house-elf (for example, he received death threats five times a day, and they beat him (*Chamber*, 133)).

The house-elves find it extremely insulting when Hermione goes into the kitchen at Hogwarts to talk to them about their rights; for example the right to show their emotions (the house-elves find it inconceivable that Winky should cry and get drunk everyday to drown her unhappiness instead of doing work) and they literally drive her out of the kitchen:

‘but house-elves has no right to be unhappy when there is work to be done and masters to be served.’

‘Oh, for heaven’s sake!’ said Hermione angrily. ‘Listen to me, all of you! You’ve got just as much right as witches and wizards to be unhappy! You’ve got the rights to wages and holidays and proper clothes, you don’t have to do everything you’re told – look at Dobby!’

‘Miss will please keep Dobby out of this,’ Dobby mumbled, looking scared. The cheery smiles had vanished from the faces of the house-elves around the kitchen. They were suddenly looking at Hermione as though he was mad and dangerous.

‘We has your extra food!’ squeaked an elf at Harry’s elbow, and shoved a large ham, a dozen cakes and some fruit into Harry’s arms. ‘Goodbye!’

The house-elves crowded around Harry, Ron and Hermione, and began shunting them out of the kitchen, many little hands pushing in the small of their backs. (*Goblet*, 468.)

The house-elves perceive clothes, pay and holidays as an utter embarrassment and disgrace, and they perceive Dobby as a freak for asking for days off and pay, after his emancipation from the Malfoys.

Almost everyone in the wizarding world perceives it an obvious fact that house-elves should serve witches and wizards and that they are happy to do so, as for instance Ron's statement (quoted above) and Hagrid's attitude points out: "It'd be doin' 'em an unkindness, Hermione [...] It's in their nature to look after humans, that's what they like, see? Yeh'd be makin' 'em unhappy ter take away their work an' insultin' 'em if yeh tried ter pay 'em" (*Goblet*, 233). Hermione provides a very accurate reason for this general attitude of witches and wizards towards the elf-kind and other magical creatures, and for their mistreatment and enslavement, when she talks to Lupin about the rights of house-elves: "I mean, it's the same kind of nonsense as werewolf segregation, isn't it? It all stems from this horrible thing wizards have of thinking they're superior to other creatures ..." (*Order*, 155). In addition to Hermione, only Dumbledore voices doubts about the way house-elves and other magical creatures are treated. For example, he describes how "the fountain [of Magical Brethern, where a house-elf, a centaur and a goblin look adoringly at a witch and a wizard (*Order*, 117)] we destroyed tonight told a lie. We wizards have mistreated and abused our fellows for too long, and now we are reaping our reward" (*Order*, 735). Luckily, the situation of the house-elves has generally speaking improved considerably after Voldemort's downfall (and it has probably remained better even after Voldemort's new rising): most of them are no longer "treated like vermin" (*Chamber*, 133).

The first time when we come across the concept of racism in practice in the wizarding world is in *Stone*, when Harry meets Draco Malfoy for the first time. One of the first things that Draco asks Harry is whether or not his parents were pure-blooded:

‘But they were *our* kind, weren’t they?’

‘They were a witch and wizard, if that’s what you mean.’

‘I really don’t think they should let the other sort in, do you? They’re just not the same, they’ve never been brought up to know our ways. Some of them have never even heard of Hogwarts until they get the letter, imagine. I think they should keep it in the old wizarding families. What’s your surname anyway?’ (*Stone*, 60-1.)

Also in *Prince*, this kind of thinking of Muggle-borns being somehow poorer witches and wizards with less talent, because they were not brought up in the wizarding world to the wizarding ways, is apparent. Professor Slughorn, who considers himself as not being prejudiced, in the same manner as many people in the real world do as they are consciously unaware of actually having prejudiced and racist attitudes, makes the following racist comment to Harry about the skills of Muggle-borns:

‘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.’

‘One of my best friends is Muggle-born,’ said Harry, ‘and she’s the best in our year.’

‘Funny how that sometimes happens, isn’t it?’ said Slughorn.

‘Not really,’ said Harry coldly.

Slughorn looked down at him in surprise.

‘You mustn’t think I’m prejudiced!’ he said. ‘No, no, no! Haven’t I just said your mother was one of my all-time favourite students?’ (*Prince*, 71.)

Harry finds Slughorn’s racist attitude very disagreeable, as he is a non-racist character to whom the purity of blood is not important at all. Hagrid in his turn demonstrates how silly these racist ideas of Draco and Slughorn actually are about Muggle-borns being inferior and less skilled witches and wizards when he discusses the issue of pure bloodedness with Harry:



Yer not *from* a Muggle family. If he'd known who yeh *were* – he's grown up knowin' yer name if his parents are wizardin' folk – you saw 'em in the Leaky Cauldron. Anyway, what does he know about it, some o' the best I ever saw were the only ones with magic in 'em in a long line o' Muggles – look at yer mum! Look what she had fer a sister! (*Stone*, 61.)

To return to Draco's racist ideas, he expresses his opinion of Muggle-borns even more clearly, and very nastily at that in *Chamber*, when Hermione reprimands him:

'No one asked your opinion, you filthy little Mudblood,' he spat.  
Harry knew at once that Malfoy had said something really bad because there was an instant uproar at his words. Flint had to dive in front of Malfoy to stop Fred and George jumping on him, Alicia shrieked, '*How dare you!*' and Ron plunged his hands into his robes, pulled out his wand, yelling, 'You'll pay for that one, Malfoy!' (*Chamber*, 86-7.)

Hermione's house-mates, the Gryffindors, become very angry to Draco and are ready to punch and curse him, as the term "Mudblood" which he uses is extremely insulting, as Ron explains to Harry later on: "Mudblood's a really foul name for someone who was Muggle-born – you know, non-magic parents. There are some wizards – like Malfoy's family – who think they're better than everyone else because they're what people call pure-blood" (*Chamber*, 89).

Draco continues his insulting comments about Muggle-borns and those who defend them throughout the *Harry Potter* novels. For example, the following two comments that he makes are especially interesting: "Want one, Granger,' said Malfoy, holding up the badge to Hermione. 'I've got loads. But don't touch my hand, now. I've just washed it, you see, don't want a Mudblood sliming it up" (*Goblet*, 262); and "If you're wondering what the smell is, Mother, a Mudblood just walked in" (*Prince*, 110). These two quotations are especially interesting, when considering the concept of racism. It is very common to perceive those who people are racist towards as dirty, untouchable and smelling repulsive. People do not wish to touch them, as they fear that their "Mudbloodness", blackness etc. might be somehow contagious, and that they would thus become the target of racist prejudices themselves.

Draco has essentially inherited his racist ideas from his father Lucius Malfoy, who is a veritable snob and he thinks that he is better than everyone else (as is also described in 2.7). In addition, he is one of Voldemort's biggest supporters, one of his leading Death Eaters, and he wholeheartedly believes in the extermination of those who are not pure-blooded wizards (this ideology is described in more detail in 4.2).

Lucius Malfoy's racist opinions become especially evident in *Chamber*, when he expresses his displeasure at Draco's grades at school when compared to the grades of Hermione, while they are at Borgin & Burgess shop: "I would have thought you'd be ashamed that a girl of no wizard family beat you in every exam,' snapped Mr Malfoy" (*Chamber*, 44). Draco defends himself by explaining how Hermione is a teachers' pet and that is the reason why she gets the top grades. Mr Borgin provides the following explanation for the teachers' attitude towards the Muggle-born Hermione: "It's the same all over,' said Mr Borgin, in his oily voice. 'Wizard blood is counting for less everywhere –'" (*Chamber*, 44). Mr Borgin's statement of the decreasing significance of wizarding blood seems to echo Ron Weasley's following sentiment:

'I mean the rest of us know it doesn't make any difference at all. Look at Neville Longbottom – he's pure-blood and he can hardly stand a cauldron the right way up.' [...]  
 'It's a disgusting thing to call someone,' said Ron, wiping his sweaty brow with a shaking hand. 'Dirty blood, see. Common blood. It's mad. Most wizards these days are half-blood anyway. If we hadn't married Muggles we'd've died out.' (*Chamber*, 89.)

What Mr Borgin and Ron are essentially pointing out here is the fact that the appeal of the racist ideology of Voldemort and his Death Eaters is actually losing its power, as wizards become increasingly mixed-blooded, and thus also the attitudes towards mixed blood are bound to change little by little.

Sirius Black, in turn, despises all witches and wizards with racist attitudes towards Muggle-borns and half-bloods, as he finds such racist ideas completely preposterous and

ridiculous. In fact, he despises these attitudes so much that he left home as soon as he became of age, and never contacted his family again, as his family was an extremely racist one who considered itself to be superior to other wizards: “my parents, with their pure-blood mania, [were] convinced that to be a Black made you practically royal” (*Order*, 104). Furthermore, Sirius explains to Harry how almost all Blacks, not just his immediate family, were horrible racists, who not only had racist (and speciesist) thoughts but they also acted upon them by committing heinous acts of violence: “and Araminta Melifua ... cousin of my mother’s ... tried to force through a Ministry Bill to make Muggle-hunting legal ... and dear Aunt Elladora ... she started the family tradition of beheading house-elves when they got too old to carry tea trays” (*Order*, 105).

As Sirius’s comment about Araminta Melifua trying to force the Ministry of Magic to make Muggle hunting legal points out, witches and wizards have deeply rooted racist attitudes and contempt for Muggles, whom they perceive as an inferior race of humans, for not being able to do magic. In his work as the Head of the Misuse of Muggle Artefacts Office, Arthur Weasley has had to deal with a lot of situations where witches and wizards try to harm Muggles. For example in *Order*, Willy Widdershins makes Muggle toilets regurgitate, in other words to spit their contents out instead of flushing them. (This case was briefly mentioned in relation with corruption within the Ministry of Magic, in 2.1.2.) Arthur Weasley explains to Harry why he finds such actions alarming, despite the fact that some perceive them as harmless pranks, thus: “but it’s not so much having to repair the damage, it’s more the attitude behind the vandalism, Harry. Muggle-baiting might strike some wizards as funny, but it’s an expression of something much deeper and nastier, and I for one –” (*Order*, 140).

In addition to Muggles, Muggle-borns, half-bloods and half-breeds (not to mention the speciesist attitudes towards magical creatures), also Squibs get their share of racist wizarding

attitudes. The term *Squib* refers to “someone who was born to a wizarding family but hasn’t got any magic powers. Kind of the opposite of Muggle-born wizards, but squibs are quite unusual” (*Chamber*, 111). The racist attitudes towards Squibs derive from the fact that wizarding families cannot and will not accept that one of them would be without magic abilities, a Muggle-like abnormality. Neville Longbottom provides an excellent example of racist attitudes towards Squibs in his following story, even though he does not use the actual term *Squib*:

‘Well, my gran brought me up and she’s a witch,’ said Neville, ‘but the family thought I was all Muggle for ages. My great-uncle Algie kept trying to catch me off my guard and force some magic out of me – he pushed me off the end of Blackpool pier once, I nearly drowned – but nothing happened until I was eight. Great-uncle Algie came round for tea and he was hanging me out of an upstairs window by the ankles when my great-auntie Enid offered him a meringue and he accidentally let go. But I bounced – all the way down the garden and into the road. They were all really pleased. Gran was crying, she was so happy. And you should have seen their faces when I got here – they thought I might not be magic enough to come, you see. Great-uncle Algie was so pleased he bought me my toad.’ (*Stone*, 93.)

Even Hagrid, who is otherwise always emphasising the insignificance of the purity of blood, as he himself being a half-giant is not a pure-blooded wizard, finds Squibs to be despicable, as his following comment to the Squib caretaker, Filch, reveals: “‘I’m a teacher, aren’ I, yeh sneaking Squib!’ said Hagrid, firing up at once” (*Prince*, 381).

Interestingly, it is not only witches and wizards whose racist attitudes are presented in the *Harry Potter* novels, but also those of Muggles are pointed out. Harry’s Aunt’s family, the Dursleys are portrayed as being extremely racist towards witches and wizards. The Dursleys’ attitude towards magic and magical people is described in various ways. For instance in *Chamber*, their attitude is described thus: “[t]he Dursleys were what wizards called Muggles (not a drop of magical blood in their veins) and as far as they were concerned, having a wizard in the family was a matter of deepest shame” (*Chamber*, 9). Furthermore, the following comment

where Aunt Petunia describes her witch sister Lily (Harry's mother) is one of the best examples of the Dursleys' attitude: "Oh, she got the letter just like that and disappeared off to that – that *school* – and came home every holiday with her pockets full of frog-spawn, turning tea-cups into rats. I was the only one who saw her for what she was – a freak!" (*Stone*, 44). The fact that Muggles are racist towards magical people demonstrates the paradoxicality of racism: those who are victims of racist attitudes are also racist themselves; and in this case the racism between Muggles and witches and wizards is reciprocal.

Essentially, racism and speciesism stem from fear of the unknown, fear of the horrifying and monstrous "other" (issues related to "otherness" are also described in 2.6 and 3.3). A Japanese Anime movie, *Fullmetal Alchemist the Movie: Conqueror of Shamballa*, condenses extremely well how fear affects racist acts and results in "othering" and perceiving different people as horrible monsters, and it also illuminates the Nazi way of thinking in an interesting and conceivable manner, when a Nazi explains to the main character Edward Elric why she wants to destroy his world. Ed's world is a kind of parallel world, which exists alongside the normal world, where Hitler and his Nazis are starting to gain power, and the Nazi initially infiltrated it in order to gain more soldiers for the Nazi cause.

'This is a new world... completely different from ours.'

'There is no difference. People live, weep, laugh, and die.'

'Let me ask you one thing. Why are you attacking?

Don't you want our know-how for war in your world?'

'I am... going to destroy this world!'

'Why?!'

'Because I fear it. When the Great Serpent's power opened the door to another world... with powers greater than ours... I was terrified. I knew it had to be destroyed!'

'These people have no plans to attack you!'

'How do you know?!'

'We're humans just like you!'

'No! Your form may be the same, but you're monsters!'

'So that's your bottom line...' [...]

'Humans never... accept differences. They deny and dread it. These are the beginnings of war. To me, you are a monster. That is why I can kill you.'<sup>62</sup>

Racist and speciesist thinking is rooted deep within the ideology of the wizarding world, and this attitude is precisely what made Voldemort's rise to power possible, as Sirius Black explains:

they [the Blacks] thought Voldemort had the right idea, they were all for the purification of the wizarding race, getting rid of Muggle-borns and having pure-bloods in charge. They weren't alone, either, there were quite a few people [...] who thought he had the right idea about things ... (*Order*, 104.)

By not accepting Muggle-borns and half-bloods into the wizarding world, and by segregating and mocking those of wizarding families without magic powers, the wizarding world has created a vile, cruel and evil monster called Voldemort. The ideology of Voldemort and his Death Eaters is thus indeed the direct result of a flaw within the wizarding society itself: they only take the concept of racism one step further, into similar realms as Hitler and his Nazis did in the real world.

## **4.2 Voldemort and Totalitarian Power: Voldemort vs. Adolf Hitler; Death Eaters vs. Nazis**

The purpose of this chapter is to compare and contrast Voldemort and his Death Eaters to Hitler and his Nazis, and to explore totalitarian power in the wizarding world. One of the most important features of Voldemort and his supporters, the Death Eaters, is the praising of pure-bloodedness. Actually, this praising of pure-bloodedness is very similar to what Adolf Hitler and

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<sup>62</sup> Seiji Mizushima (dir.) *Gekijouban hagane no renkinjutsushi - Shanbara wo iku mono*. English title: *Fullmetal Alchemist the Movie: Conqueror of Shamballa*. Subtitles: Kick Ass Anime. Japan: Aniplex, 2005.

the Nazis did in the real world: they praised the pure Aryan race, and they thought that all other races, especially Jews and Gypsies were to be terminated. As a matter of fact the Nazis were of a similar opinion with Voldemort that even a drop of dirty blood (Jewish in Hitler's case and Muggle in Voldemort's) in someone's family tree earned that someone a place in the concentration camp. Voldemort and his Death Eaters think that even a drop of Muggle blood makes one unworthy to study magic at Hogwarts, and to be called a witch or a wizard in general. This is actually quite an interesting fact considering that Voldemort is in fact a half-blood wizard as well as probably most of his Death Eaters are as Hermione points out: "The Death Eaters can't all be pure-blood, there aren't enough pure-blood wizards left" (*Prince*, 227). Similarly, according to Walter C. Langer, Adolf Hitler probably had Jewish roots: he was probably a quarter Jew.<sup>63</sup>

Hitler and his Nazis had a very clear view of an ideal human, as Hannah Arendt describes. The ideal human was a pure-blooded Aryan with pure-blooded Aryan roots dating back to 1750, blonde haired and blue eyed, and at least 5 feet 8 inches (172,7 cm) tall.<sup>64</sup> Interestingly, the appearance of an ideal human is very different from Adolf Hitler himself, who was a very short and dark man. This is yet another example of the issue discussed above, i.e. Hitler and Voldemort wanting and essentially pretending to be something entirely different from what they actually are, as deep down they find what they actually are to be utterly despicable.

In addition to Voldemort and his Death Eaters, one of the founding fathers of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, Salazar Slytherin, whose descendant Voldemort is, had racist ideals that were reminiscent of the Nazi ideology (as is described in 4.1). Voldemort's grandfather, Marvolo Gaunt shares the hatred for Muggle-borns with his ancestor. He is very

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<sup>63</sup> Walter C. Langer, *Adolf Hitler – mies ja myytti* (Helsinki: Yhteiskirjapaino Oy, 1972) p. 114.

<sup>64</sup> Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1958), p. 385.

proud of being Slytherin's descendant and of his pure-blooded family roots, which includes generations of pure-blooded wizards, and he deeply despises those who do not have as pure blood as his. Because of his "noble" family roots he considers himself to be above the wizarding law, and he refuses to cooperate with the Ministry of Magic when they try to prosecute his son for a crime against a Muggle in *Prince* (193-7).

Voldemort's ancestors and relatives have indeed traditionally been very racist and emphasised their blood's purity purely on the principle of it, but Voldemort has very personal reasons for being a racist and hating Muggles as well: Voldemort is most likely so strongly against Muggles, Muggle-borns and also half-bloods to a certain degree because his father was a Muggle and he abandoned his mother, when she was pregnant. Thus, what he is essentially doing by killing Muggles and organising Muggle killings is to kill his own father over and over again. The following example emphasizes Voldemort's hate towards his father and the fact how he despises the Muggle side of him because of his father and is in turn very proud of his mother's purity of blood and her "honourable" family roots:

You think I was going to use my filthy Muggle father's name for ever? I, in whose veins runs the blood of Salazar Slytherin himself, through my mother's side? I, keep the name of a foul, common Muggle, who abandoned me even before I was born, just because he found out his wife was a witch? (*Chamber*, 231.)

Voldemort also displays the hate for his father to Harry right after his resurrection, where one of the ingredients for the spell was a bone from his father:

'You stand, Harry Potter, upon the remains of my late father,' he hissed softly. 'A Muggle and a fool ... very like your dear mother. But they both had their uses, did they not? Your mother died to defend you as a child ... and I killed my father, and see how useful he has proved himself in death ...' (*Goblet*, 560.)



Thus Voldemort's reasons for his racism are portrayed as very similar to those that Adolf Hitler most likely had, as Voldemort is described as having had a very problematic father-relationship in the same manner as Hitler had. According to Langer, Hitler presumably had a violent and drunk stepfather who beat Hitler, and his mother pampered him until the age of five when a little brother was born and Hitler was no longer the centre of attention (117, 124). Langer believes that partially these reasons led his personality into becoming essentially perverted (masochism with a hidden need to eat faeces and drink urine) and effeminate, as instead of identifying himself with his father like most boys, he identified himself with his mother (see Langer, 183-8 for details). Langer perceives these issues to be the initial reasons that led Hitler to hate Jews. Hitler projected all the unwanted parts of himself (i.e. his perversion and femininity) to Jews, and thus the Jews became the personification of evil to him. Hitler perceived the Jews to be responsible for all the difficulties in the world, in a similar manner as he perceived his femininity to be the reason for all his personal difficulties. (Langer, 210.) Thus, what Langer is essentially referring to, is that Hitler "othered" his unwanted characteristics into the Jews, thus forming a "monster-image" of the Jews. "Othering" and perceiving others as "monsters" is a highly significant factor in relation to committing evil acts against those who are "othered" as monsters, in regards to racism and power, as is emphasised throughout this thesis.

In addition to being Hitler-like in having similar motives for racist terror and destruction than Hitler, Voldemort is also a very Hitler-like character in the way his personality is constructed. For example Hitler believed himself to be a great man, a great warlord, the greatest German of all time, and a historically significant figure, whose every action and phrase were historic (Langer, 38). In a similar manner, Voldemort has always believed himself to be something special, unique and great (as is mentioned in 2.2.2 and 3.1). He believes that he is the

greatest sorcerer of the world (as is mentioned in 2.2.2). Thus, both Hitler and Voldemort can be described as exceedingly narcissistic and self-centred personalities.

Furthermore, Voldemort is also equivalent to Hitler as a character in the way he treats his Death Eaters: Voldemort rules his subjects with a reign of terror in the same manner as Hitler did; being a Death Eater means a lifetime of service, in the same manner as being a Nazi meant. The following comment by Sirius Black emphasises this when talking about how his Death Eater brother, Regulus, met his death:

No, he was murdered by Voldemort. Or on Voldemort's orders, more likely; I doubt Regulus was ever important enough to be killed by Voldemort in person. From what I found out after he died, he got in so far, then panicked about what he was being asked to do and tried to back out. Well, you don't just hand in your resignation to Voldemort. It's a lifetime of service or death. (*Order*, 104.)

Hitler considered it to be almost a lese-majesty if anyone argued against him or criticised him in any way, as he believed that he is always right and invincible (Langer, 39), in the same manner as Voldemort does: his Death Eaters are to obey his every word and not to argue against it. Hitler and Voldemort's way of making people (i.e. other people than Nazis and Death Eaters) do what they want is also very similar, even though Hitler's ways were perhaps a bit more subtle. In my view, Hitler made people do his bidding by appealing to their sense of a need for a strong leader, as Germany was in a state of chaos after the First World War, and people in their despair obeyed. Voldemort however has to resort to more drastic measures, as most of the witches and wizards are strongly against him after his resurrection: he threatens people to do his bidding by threatening to unleash a horrendous werewolf upon their children, as Lupin explains in the following quotation:

Fenrir Greyback is, perhaps, the most savage werewolf alive today. He regards it as his mission in life to bite and to contaminate as many people as possible; he wants to create

enough werewolves to overcome the wizards. Voldemort has promised him prey in return for his services. Greyback specialises in children ... bite them young, he says, and raise them away from their parents, raise them to hate normal wizards. Voldemort has threatened to unleash him upon people's sons and daughters; it is a threat that usually produces good results. (*Prince*, 313-4.)

In addition, Voldemort and the Death Eaters have a trademark, which is equivalent to the Nazi swastika. The mark which is called *The Dark Mark* is a green skull, with a snake as its tongue, and it is branded on the arm of every Death Eater. With its help, Voldemort can send the Death Eaters a gathering signal.

Despite the many similarities between Hitler and Voldemort, there is one major difference: Hitler believed himself to be the reincarnated Christ, a new Messiah whom God has chosen to lead and liberate the German people (Langer, 44, 48). Thus Hitler must have essentially believed himself to be a good person, as he believed that he was chosen by God, even though he really was an extremely evil person (this is yet another proof of Hitler's narcissistic attitude: as he believed himself to be good, he must have been so no matter what he did). In fact, Hitler was indeed described in Nazi propaganda as being good in the sense that he was generous and understanding, and he loved children and animals (Langer, 60). Voldemort in turn has no such Biblical ideas, he does not believe in God or Satan, and he has no desire to be described in any way good (nor is he described as such in the novels), as his firm belief is (in Professor Quirrell's words) that "there is no good and evil, only power and those too weak to seek it" (this quotation is also discussed in 2.3 and 4.3). There is also one major difference between the Nazis and the Death Eaters, even though they have a great many similar features: Nazis were relatively normal humans who have repeatedly stated that they are not evil people, and they did nothing

wrong by killing millions of Jews and about 500,000 Gypsies<sup>65</sup>, as they were only following orders. Hannah Arendt emphasises this fact by stating how

[...] by extending complicity, [the Nazi elite formations] make every party member aware that he has left for good the normal world which outlaws murder and that he will be held accountable for all crimes committed by the elite. This is achieved even in the prepower stage, when the leadership systematically claims responsibility for all crimes and leaves no doubt that they are committed for the ultimate good for the movement. (Arendt, 372-3.)

Thus, it can be stated that the Nazis provide a good example of what Hannah Arendt refers to as the *banality of evil*. Arendt coined this term in order to describe the reasons for why normal people, which the Nazis essentially were, could do unspeakable acts of evil. This concept provides a very good explanation for the horrors of the Holocaust and the underlying reasons for the behaviour of the Nazis in general. The *banality of evil* refers to Arendt's idea of how "great evils in history generally, and the Holocaust in particular, were not executed by fanatics or sociopaths but rather by very ordinary people who accepted the premises of their state and therefore participated with the view that their actions were normal and ordinary".<sup>66</sup> Arendt describes her concept of banality to Gershom Scholem in a letter thus:

Evil is never "radical,"...it is only extreme, and... it possesses neither depth nor any demonic dimension... It is "thought-defying"...because thought tries to reach some depth, to go to the roots, and the moment it concerns itself with evil, it is frustrated because there is nothing. That is its "banality."<sup>67</sup>

This concept of the banality of evil can also be perceived as applying rather well to the wizarding world to some degree, as witches and wizards consider racism as a banal issue. In addition, the

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<sup>65</sup> This figure is found from the Internet pages of the Finnish Romanis: < [www.romanomissio.fi/romanit1.htm](http://www.romanomissio.fi/romanit1.htm) >.

<sup>66</sup> Wikipedia, "Banality of Evil", <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Banality\\_of\\_evil](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Banality_of_evil)>. Even though Wikipedia is an academically unreliable source, I have decided to quote it here, as it provides an apt and accurate account of Arendt's concept.

<sup>67</sup> Hannah Arendt, letter to Gershom Scholem, in *Encounter* (January 1964), pp. 51-56. Cited in Elisabeth Young-Bruhl, *Hannah Arendt: For Love of the World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), p. 369. In Cabinet Magazine. <<http://www.cabinetmagazine.org/issues/5/dedemonization.php>>.

concept of evilness as being a banal issue provides an interesting comparison between the Death Eaters and Nazis: the Death Eaters represent evilness in its more common sense; they kill and torture people not only because they are told to do so, but because they enjoy killing and torturing immensely. The Nazis in turn represent the banality of evil in their blind obedience to orders no matter how evil and immoral these orders are and how many people they are ordered to kill, and all the while they derive no sadistic satisfaction from heinous acts as the Death Eaters do. The Death Eaters in turn can be described as examples of evil in a more traditional sense: they are evil and sadistic characters, as they find enormous enjoyment in torturing and murdering Muggles for instance (as was described in 3.5).

In conclusion, Voldemort can be considered as an Adolf Hitler-like character: Both have the ability to charm, lure and subdue people under their power. They are both crazy: Hitler is described as having been a neurotic psychopath and a near schizophrenic (Langer, 139) and also Voldemort can be described as a psychopath (as is pointed out in 3.1). They are also extremely evil and unnecessarily cruel. The Death Eaters, in turn, can be considered Nazi-like characters, because they obey their leader blindly, and they think that they are better people than others. Muggle-borns (Mudbloods) and Muggles, as well as Harry are equivalent to the Jews and other races that the Nazis believed to be inferior; and pure-blooded wizards are equivalent to the Aryan super-race of the Nazis. Furthermore the Dark Mark is equivalent to the swastika. This interpretation can be considered as valid there being plenty of textual evidence (as is shown in this section), and as further proof, even the author of the novels, J. K. Rowling parallels Nazi and Death Eater ideologies in the F.A.Q. section of her homepage.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> “The expressions ‘pure-blood’, half-blood and ‘Muggle-born’ have been coined by people to whom these distinctions matter, and express their originators’ prejudices. As far as somebody like Lucius Malfoy is concerned, for instance, a Muggle-born is as ‘bad’ as a Muggle. Therefore Harry would be considered only ‘half’ wizard because of his mother’s grandparents. If you think this is far-fetched, look at some of the real charts the Nazis used

However, there is one but in this interpretation. In *Stone* (77) it is stated on the back of a chocolate frog card that one of the major achievements of Albus Dumbledore was to defeat a dark wizard called Grindelwald in 1945. What makes the defeat of this German-sounding dark wizard rock the foundations of my interpretation is that Adolf Hitler was defeated in 1945. Thus it could actually be interpreted that Grindelwald was the Adolf Hitler of the wizarding world. However, Voldemort could still be described as another Hitler-like character in the novel, as in a similar manner than in the real world, the totalitarian reign of terror did not end with Hitler, totalitarianism of the wizarding world did not die with Grindelwald. Thus it could be said that there is a sort of “Hitler continuum” in the real world, and in the wizarding world this continuum appears in the form of a new Hitler, a new Grindelwald-like character called Voldemort.

### **4.3 Voldemort and Satanic Power: Voldemort vs. Satan**

The aim of this chapter is to compare Voldemort to Satan or the Antichrist, and thus to explore Satanic power in the wizarding world. This is mainly done through the concepts of possession and exorcism, as in the same manner as Satan and his demons can take possession of people and animals and they can be exorcised, Voldemort can possess humans and animals and can be exorcised. The term Satanic power refers to powers that are similar than Satan has, i.e. power to lure and trick people and the power to possess people.

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to show what constituted ‘Aryan’ or ‘Jewish’ blood. I saw one in the Holocaust Museum in Washington when I had already devised the ‘pure-blood’, ‘half-blood’ and ‘Muggle-born’ definitions, and was chilled to see that the Nazis used precisely the same warped logic as the Death Eaters. A single Jewish grandparent ‘polluted’ the blood, according to their propaganda.” (J. K. Rowling, “F.A.Q. About The Books: ‘Why are some people on the wizarding world (e.g., Harry) called ‘half-blood even though both their parents we...’” <[www.jkrowling.com](http://www.jkrowling.com)>.)

In addition to comparing Voldemort as a character to Adolf Hitler, an actual historical person, it is also possible to compare him to Satan, a mythical creature or a spiritual entity. The Dark Mark can be interpreted as a similar mark than 666, in other words the mark of the beast. 666 is the mark of the Antichrist, which according to the Book of Revelations, can be found on the Antichrist and eventually from his supporters. Thus, Voldemort could also be considered as a kind of an Antichrist-figure (but then again it is said that Hitler was Antichrist). Voldemort, as the ultimate evil character of the novels is indeed a very diabolic character, and actually there are various other reasons to interpret that he is an Antichrist-figure, in addition to his mark: Voldemort is hypnotic and he can lure people into doing anything, which is a very Satan-like feature and a sign of Satanic power, in addition to being a Hitler-like feature. Voldemort is also very Satan-like in his ability to fool people, when he chooses to, and make them believe that he is a nice character, as Dumbledore's following comment points out:

He showed no sign of outward arrogance or aggression at all. As an unusually talented and very good-looking orphan, he usually drew attention and sympathy from the staff almost from the moment of his arrival. He seemed polite, quiet and thirsty for knowledge. Nearly all were most favourably impressed by him. (*Prince*, 337.)

Furthermore, the Death Eaters refer to Voldemort as “the Dark Lord”. Voldemort is able to possess people and animals, like the Devil and his demons are. Voldemort particularly likes to possess snakes, because he likes them and he can speak Parseltongue, snake language.<sup>69</sup> This partiality to snakes is also a satanic feature; after all, according to Genesis, Satan took the form of a snake when luring Eve into taking the apple. Also, as a member of the Dark Force Defence League states in Rita Skeeter's article in *Goblet* (532), “*serpents are often used in the worst kinds*

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<sup>69</sup> Also Harry can speak it, due to the fact that Voldemort transferred a part of his powers to him while trying to kill him, as is pointed out in 3.3.

*of Dark Magic, and are historically associated with evil-doers*". This comment about *evil-doers* can be interpreted as a reference to Satan.

There are essentially three cases in the novels where Voldemort possesses people. The first one occurs in *Stone* where Voldemort in a way possesses Defence Against the Dark Arts teacher, Professor Quirrell: he lives in the back of the Professor's head. Voldemort has managed to lure poor, gullible, Quirrell into the side of evil. This is how Quirrell describes the situation:

He is with me wherever I go [...] I met him when I travelled around the world. A foolish young man I was then, full of ridiculous ideas about good and evil. Lord Voldemort showed me how wrong I was. There is no good and evil, there is only power, and those too weak to seek it... Since then, I have served him faithfully [...] (*Stone*, 211.)

The idea of power that Quirrell presents here represents an evil person's way of thinking. Evil people appreciate power more than goodness, and they honestly believe that there is no good and evil, like for example Voldemort (Quirrell cited his idea) and the Antichrist from the movie *Omen III: The Final Conflict*<sup>70</sup>. In the movie, Antichrist makes very similar statements about power and evil than Quirrell did.

Voldemort tries to lure Harry as well to the side of evil in *Stone*, by telling him that if he joins him, he will get his parents back. Harry, however, stands strong in his 'faith'; he will not surrender himself to the Dark side, for he wants to be on the side of Good. Voldemort then tells Quirrell to kill Harry, but Quirrell cannot touch Harry without feeling horrible pain. After Harry realises that his touch on Quirrell's bare skin causes Quirrell horrible agony, he takes hold of Quirrell's face and hand, so as to prevent Quirrell from killing him. When Quirrell is in deadly agony after Harry's touches, Harry faints and Voldemort leaves Quirrell's body. Thus, it can be said that Harry manages to exorcise Voldemort with his touch even though he cannot save

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<sup>70</sup> Graham Baker (dir.). *Omen III: The Final Conflict*. UK/USA: 20th Century Fox, 1981.



Quirrell's life. However, Harry does this exorcism without being aware of doing so: he is not aware of the fact that by touching Quirrell he can exorcise Voldemort from inside him.

Another case which is comparable to exorcism takes place in *Chamber*. Ginny is possessed by young Voldemort, whose memory (or as is revealed in *Prince*, a part of his soul) was deposited in his diary. Ginny starts writing in Voldemort's diary, which she happened to find among her books, and the diary (=Voldemort) writes back. Ginny does many awful things under Voldemort's possession, but luckily, Harry manages to exorcise (and annihilate) young Voldemort as a memory (or to be more exact, to destroy Voldemort's Horcrux, as is stated in 3.2), by making various holes in the diary with a poisonous fang of a basilisk, and thus save Ginny.

A third case which could in a way be compared to an exorcism occurs in *Order*. Voldemort tries to take possession of Harry's body, in order to force his second worst enemy, Professor Dumbledore, to kill Harry (his worst enemy). However, Voldemort is only able to enter Harry's body and possess him for a brief moment, although long enough to say a couple of things to Dumbledore, e.g.: "Kill me now" (*Order*, 720). The reason why Voldemort had to leave Harry's body was that Harry's whole being is filled with strong feelings, love and goodness; all the qualities that Voldemort loathes the most, and "he could not bear to reside in a body so full of the force he detests" (*Order*, 743). Thus, it could be said that Harry exorcised Voldemort out of himself, with the strength of his heart.

Thus, as Harry is essentially a pure and incorrupt character whom evil cannot hold in possession, it could be interpreted that he is a kind of a Christ figure. This interpretation seems fairly logical, as if one interprets Voldemort as an Antichrist-figure that would certainly imply that Harry Potter must be a kind of a Christ figure who has come to earth to destroy evil. This interpretation is in fact valid in many ways: Harry is told in *Order* that it is actually his job to kill

Voldemort or die trying. This is so, because a little before Harry was born, a prophecy was made that states this fact (quoted in 3.1). This can be seen as equivalent to the Bible's prophecy that states the second coming of Christ and the conquering of Antichrist. On the other hand this prophecy, or rather the consequences of the prophecy (i.e. Voldemort killing Harry's parents so that he could kill Harry) could be also interpreted as similar to the consequences of the prophecy about the birth of baby Jesus: When Herod heard the prophecy that a Jewish saviour would be born, Herod wanted Jesus eliminated, so that he would not pose a threat to him. Herod ordered all baby boys to be killed that matched the description of Jesus (Matthew 2:16). In exactly the same manner as Herod, Voldemort tried to eliminate Harry as a baby, so that he would not be killed by him. Another reason for Harry representing a Christ figure is the fact that he is kind, friendly, brave and honest. Paige Byam has noted that Harry is a Christ-like character "in his status of being marked from birth by the snake-like Voldemort and destined for greatness since he has saved the wizarding world. As revealed in *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, Harry is like Jesus Christ in that his life, too, is the subject of prophecy".<sup>71</sup>

However, it is rather simplistic to refer to Harry as a wholly pure and incorrupt character (as is also demonstrated in 3.3), because he is not a saint or a divine creature but a human with human flaws. Furthermore, it is not only Voldemort who can possess people, but Harry as well. Harry is able to enter into Voldemort's mind, because the scar that Voldemort's wand caused to Harry has created a bizarre connection between Harry and Voldemort, which enables them to enter each other's minds (this fact is fully discovered in *Order*, but also in *Goblet* we have some clues of it). Thus, Harry should be considered a very human-like Christ figure, with typical human problems, for he constantly has to monitor the border of good and evil within him.

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<sup>71</sup> Paige Byam, "Children's Literature or an Adult Classic? The *Harry Potter* Series and the British Novel Tradition", in *Topic: The Washington & Jefferson College Review*, Volume 54, *Harry Potter*, (Washington & Jefferson College, 2004), p. 9.

To analyse the “exorcism sections” of Harry Potter a little further, one might say that Harry’s being was the thing that exorcised the evil, in essentially the same way as Jesus was able to exorcise demons with the mere authority of his presence and his command. This issue gives further proof to the theory that Harry could be considered as a Christ figure. But on the other hand, all this could also be considered as a part of Manichean thinking, according to which the world is a battleground of good and evil, light and dark. This battle is constant and it never stops. (Catholic Encyclopedia: “Sin”). In addition, Manicheans believe that this battle is divided in three periods:

a past period in which there was a separation of the two radically opposed substances-- Spirit and Matter, Good and Evil, Light and Darkness; a middle period (corresponding to the present) during which the two substances are mixed; and a future period in which the original duality will be reestablished.<sup>72</sup>

Thus, the middle period of Manichean thinking seems to fit the world of Harry Potter very well, since good and evil are not absolute in them, but something much more complicated: almost every character is a mixture of good and evil.

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<sup>72</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica Online, "Manichaeism", <<http://search.eb.com/bol/topic?eu=51774&sctn=1&pm=1>>.

## 5. Conclusion

This thesis has dealt with issues of power, evil and evil power in the world of Harry Potter. In chapter two, *Power*, the concept of power in the wizarding world was examined in various ways. What one can learn by analysing the structures of power in the wizarding world as well as power in its wider sense, and what Rowling is most probably trying to communicate to her readers in her description of power, is that power is almost inevitably corrupt, no matter who holds it and no matter how good one's initial motives are. Thus it can be also said that power corrupts the ones that hold power, and thus Rowling essentially disagrees with Michel Foucault's notion, according to which power is not really something that anyone can actually hold, it just is (see 1.). Therefore, it might even be useful to define power as essentially evil. However, magical power and the Order of the Phoenix somewhat challenge this very negative view on power: the Order is essentially incorrupt and good, and possessing magical powers does not necessarily corrupt one or turn one evil.

Foucault's concept of power in *History of Sexuality* (quoted in 1.) as embracing everything and essentially being everywhere in a society applies very well to the wizarding world: in the wizarding world power is not just a matter of bureaucracy, politics and control, but is an issue that influences all areas of life and even one's perception on various things, such as class, gender, madness and racism. In addition, the *Harry Potter* novels seem to support Foucault's notion of power essentially equalling information and knowledge, and on how power cannot work if it only works on the basis of repression and censorship, as the Ministry of Magic's attempt to control Hogwarts by means of repression and censorship fails miserably.

Bentham and Foucault's notions on the panopticon are also addressed in the novels: the novels demonstrate how the concept of panopticon as controlling the society does not function

the way it is supposed to, and how it thus is an essentially malfunctioning notion. Furthermore, Foucault's notion of schools being primarily places for discipline, control and indoctrination is strongly opposed in the novels through the character of Albus Dumbledore, who has an entirely non-Foucaultian educational philosophy. Interestingly, also the wizarding prison system does not apply to Foucault's views: Azkaban is a prison meant for punishing prisoners, instead of rehabilitating them, as according to Foucault a modern prison is supposed to do. I believe that this is because Rowling wants to point out how Foucault's idea is quite naïve and not really true either in the wizarding or the real world, with prisons such as Alcatraz and Guantanamo Bay Detention Camp being or having been in operation. However, the novels do seem to support Foucault's notion of prisons representing power in its most naked form.

The main focus in chapter three, *Evil*, was to describe the essence of evil in the world of Harry Potter. The essence of evil was explored through various theories of evil. I chose to use various, and somewhat conflicting theories from the fields of social psychology, religion and philosophy. Theories of evil from these different fields were explored so as to illuminate the fact that *evil* is a very complicated term which can be perceived in many and essentially conflicting ways. Evil can be perceived either in relative or absolute, secular or religious terms, or it can be perceived as a multilayered combination of all of these, as I have tried to describe in this thesis. What all of this tells us about the essence of evil is that on the one hand it is thoroughly familiar, even banal to us, and on the other it is something "other", a horrifying monster. The *Harry Potter* novels seem to support essentially all theories of evil presented in this thesis. Evil is to cause pain and suffering (Linqvist, Ricoeur, social psychologists), and thus it is a form of aggression (social psychologists). On the other hand, evil is not as simple as this, as the concept of evil is closely related to that of the "other" and of the monster-image, as Mäyrä, Jackson and DeLamotte emphasise. The wizarding world is the battlefield between forces of good and forces

of evil, and thus the Manichean ideology is supported in the novels. In relation to the nature vs. nurture controversy of the origins of evil, the novels present the view of evil as being the result of both nature (genes) and the environment (nurture) in intricate ways: as Kant has stated, people have a natural propensity for evil (genes), but environmental factors (such as the security of one's attachment) bring out either goodness or evilness or both in a person. In addition, Linqvist's notions of people being both good and evil, and that through our own evil we can understand and fight evil are strongly supported in the novels. However, the novels take the issue of nature vs. nurture one step further by declaring that evilness is also influenced by factors such as one's personality and choices.

Furthermore, the most essential concept of evil in the *Harry Potter* novels is that evil is not absolute, as both good and evil are invariably perverted, influenced and mixed with each other. Thus, all theories of evil used in this thesis are actually correct, and can be applied to the world of Harry Potter, even though they might seem to conflict, because as Snape aptly states:

‘The Dark Arts [i.e. evil in its many forms],’ said Snape, ‘are many, varied, ever-changing and eternal. Fighting them is like fighting a many-headed monster, which, each time a neck is severed, sprouts a head even fiercer and cleverer than before. You are fighting that which is unfixed, mutating, indestructible.’ (*Prince*, 169.)

However, even all these different theories do not seem to be quite adequate in trying to describe evil in the wizarding world, as they do not fully grasp what an incredibly conflicted and complicated issue evil really is: it escapes all definition. Thus, Rowling is probably trying to communicate to her readers, in a profound manner, what an impossibly complicated issue evil is, and how one can never fully describe it.

In chapter four, *Evil Power*, issues related to racism and speciesism in the wizarding world, and the power of discrimination in relation to Totalitarian Power (Hitler and his Nazis)

were discussed, as well as Satanic Power. It was made clear that the wizarding world discriminates against Muggles, Muggle-borns, half-bloods, half-breeds, Squibs, and magical creatures in many ways. As is briefly mentioned in 4.1, the most horrible and ultimate consequence of racism, even more horrible than creating monsters like Voldemort and his Death Eaters, is the extinction of the wizarding race. If all witches and wizards were to keep on desperately trying to hold the wizarding blood pure, the way that various old wizarding families (such as the Blacks) and not just Voldemort and his Death Eaters insist that one should do, witches and wizards are bound to become extinct, and develop various genetical problems as well as problems in the personalities of witches and wizards before that (as the statement about the Gaunts that Dumbledore makes, quoted in 3.4, points out). The following quotation points out the risk of the extinction of the wizarding race: “‘The pure-blood families are all interrelated,’ said Sirius. ‘If you’re only going to let your sons and daughters marry pure-bloods your choice is very limited; there are hardly any of us left’” (*Order*, 105). The conclusion that can be drawn from *Evil Power* is that in addition to power being essentially evil (as is pointed out above), evil is power: by doing evil, one is essentially using power, but on the other hand while doing good, one is using power as well. In other words, it is possible to also have *Good Power*, in addition to the evil one. Thus, power, good and evil are inevitably and intricately linked and mixed together.

One central issue that is in common to power, evil and evil power is the concept of “the other”. With regards to power, “othering” is something that those in power do to those without power. An excellent example of this is declaring someone as mad: declaring someone as mad is essentially destroying one’s credibility, as mad people are perceived as frightening monsters, horrifying “others” that are not to be believed under any circumstances. However, with regards to evil, “otherness” is an even more powerful concept: “the other” in terms of evil is something that

people create in their minds, when they project those parts of themselves into something or someone else that they do not wish to approve as parts of themselves; thus, they create an image of a monster, something horrible and evil, something that people abhor and do not wish to be. In regards to evil power, the concept of “the other” is somewhat a mixture of these two. For example the basic function of racism both in the wizarding world and the real world, is to project one’s worst qualities, qualities one does not wish to confess to have (such as evilness, deceitfulness, stupidity, etc.) to people that are essentially different (and yet in some frightening way similar) in some way than one and they usually belong to some sort of a minority group that is powerless against the racism of the majority group. As a result of this projection, the people to whom the unwanted qualities are projected become something truly monstrous and frightening, as in addition to the natural fear one has of the unknown; one projects the qualities one hates into the feared people. Thus, it can be said that “otherness” is essentially the main concept of my whole thesis.

In conclusion, the world of Harry Potter is far from perfect, as the Ministry of Magic runs it incompetently. The Ministry devises unfair laws that are racist and speciesist in nature, for example, they discriminate against house-elves and werewolves. Furthermore, the justice system is essentially corrupt, as innocent people are put in prison and the guilty ones run free. Thus, Uncle Vernon’s statement (which is also quoted in 2.) about the Ministry is extremely well-put and accurate, despite the fact that he misunderstands the Ministry as belonging to the British government: “‘*Ministry of Magic?*’ bellowed Uncle Vernon. ‘People like you in *government?* Oh this explains everything, everything, no wonder the country’s going to the dogs’” (*Order*, 32).

However, the corruptness and incompetence of the Ministry of Magic is only a part of what is wrong in the world of Harry Potter. The wizarding world is essentially a racist and a speciesist world, where Muggles, Muggle-borns, half-bloods, half-breeds and magical creatures



are discriminated against both in legislation and in everyday life. Due to this inherent racism and speciesism, great evil has infiltrated the wizarding world: the wizarding world has given birth to the abominable monsters called Voldemort and his Death Eaters. The diabolic Voldemort, who can be considered as a Satan-like or an Antichrist character represents satanically evil totalitarian power in the novels. The Death Eaters in turn are sadistically evil characters who get immense satisfaction from killing and torturing people. They want to exterminate all those whose blood is not pure, and they want to make all of the pure-blooded wizarding community their followers. Thus, Voldemort can be equated as a Hitler-like character and representing totalitarian evil power, as in addition to having similar racist goals of maintaining and creating a pure-blooded wizarding race, he also has rather similar motives for his racist ideas, and he has quite a similar personality as Hitler. The Death Eaters in turn are equivalent to the Nazis in their blind obedience to their leader. However, the Order of the Phoenix with Albus Dumbledore as the leader wishes to put a stop to Voldemort's evil plans, and they do their utmost to prevent Voldemort from getting followers, and in general in succeeding in anything that he strives to do. Harry Potter has had to battle against the evil Voldemort many times during the series, and the final mortal battle between the two of them is yet to come.

Elaine Ostry condenses the whole point of why Rowling describes racism, evil and also essentially power in her novels in the way she does. According to her, Rowling's "social agenda" is the following:

She uses the grand theme of fairy tales, the battle between good and evil, to combat two evils of our time: materialism and racism. The series enacts a "race war", in which the heroes fight against those who possess a vision of racial purity. Rowling intends to teach children that what matters is one's character, not color, pedigree, or wealth.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Elaine Ostry, "Accepting Mudbloods: The Ambivalent Social Vision of J. K. Rowling's Fairy Tales", in Giselle Liza Anatol (ed.), *Reading Harry Potter* (Westport, Connecticut, London: Praeger, 2003), pp. 89-90.

Thus, Ostry basically states that Rowling uses various themes of evil and power in order to teach and demonstrate important things about the equality of the human race, where the only thing that is important is one's actual personality. In my view, this point is made especially clear from two points that Dumbledore makes in *Chamber* (244-5) and in *Goblet* (395, where it is Hagrid who states Dumbledore's view, quoted in 3.4): our choices are what make us who we are, above anything else, and your background is irrelevant when it comes to your actual talents. Thus, Rowling is actually trying to do important work with her novels, as she tries to eliminate racist beliefs and point out that every person is potentially a nice person.

I believe that Rowling's message to her readers is that just like the wizarding world, the real world is not a perfect place. There are various things that are seriously wrong and evil in both worlds, such as injustice of the justice system, corruption and abuse of power, and evil people doing unspeakably evil things to fellow humans and to animals. What Rowling clearly wants to say to us with her novels, is that even though there are so very many things that are wrong and evil in the world, we must not just surrender to the wrongness and evilness or ignore them, but we must fight against them in any way we can. Thus, Rowling clearly wants to emphasise that just because evil will not go away completely, no matter how hard we try to eradicate it, it does not mean that we have to surrender ourselves to the forces of evil, as in the same manner as nothing can exterminate all the evilness of the world, nothing can exterminate the good. As Albus Dumbledore so very accurately states (as reported by Harry), it is very important "to fight, and fight again, and keep fighting, for only then could evil be kept at bay, though never quite eradicated ..." (*Prince*, 601).

Another issue that Rowling clearly wishes to point out in her writing is that issues related to power and evil are not black and white. Power always entails a certain level of abuse and corruption even though the one using power had the best of intentions. Similarly, evil is a very

complicated issue as good and evil are invariably merged and mixed together: goodness is without exception perverted and contaminated by evil in various intricate ways, and the other way around. No human being can be perfectly good or perfectly evil; no one is a pure angel or a demon. Sirius Black states this fact very aptly by pointing out that “the world isn’t split into good people and Death Eaters” (*Order*, 271). Furthermore, even Death Eaters are not purely evil.

After writing over a hundred and forty pages on issues of power, evil and evil power in *Harry Potter* novels, I still feel that I have barely scratched the surface of these issues. The intricate interrelationships between power and evil could still be investigated further, as well as the very basic, and yet infinitely complicated, questions of what is power and what is evil. Also, issues of class, gender and racism (and speciesism) could be studied more thoroughly. Voldemort and his Death Eaters as compared to Hitler and his Nazis could also be analysed even further, and Voldemort similarity to Satan is also worth more studying. Furthermore, it might be fruitful to compare the Death Eaters to the Ku Klux Klan, which I have not done in this study. However, the most important reason for why my thesis is still left wanting in its analysis on many important issues is that the *Harry Potter* series is not yet complete, as the final novel will be published 21.7.2007. The seventh and final *Harry Potter* is titled *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hollows*, and this novel could yet turn many of the arguments I have made in my thesis completely upside down, or then again it might further confirm them. It is clear that the novel will bring more fruitful material for my research subjects. As there is still so much to study on the issues of power, evil and evil power in the *Harry Potter* novels, and the finale is yet to come, I am hoping to be able to continue this extremely intriguing and captivating study in the form of a doctoral dissertation.

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