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Social Issues in the *Harry Potter* Books

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## **ZADÁNÍ BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE**

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### **Z á s a d y   p r o   v y p r a c o v á n í :**

Není běžné, aby se dílo dětské literatury stalo celosvětovým komerčně i čtenářsky úspěšným fenoménem, jako je tomu u románů J. K. Rowlingové Harry Potter. Jedním z důvodů je jistě i jejich syžetová a tematická mnohohrstevnatost. Jejich analýza bude tématem této závěrečné bakalářské práce.

V úvodu práce studentka stručně zasadí zvolené dílo do širšího kontextu literatury pro děti a mládež a pojedná o jeho žánrovém zařazení. Rovněž nadefinuje základní pojmy, s nimiž bude ve svých analýzách pracovat, především společenská třída (class), otroctví, gender, stereotyp, konzumerismus, apod.

Jádrem práce bude analýza vybraných děl, v níž se studentka soustředí na způsoby ztvárnění tématu společenské stratifikace, genderových otázek, apod. Své analýzy opře o relevantní kritické zdroje a doloží odkazy na primární díla. Zamyslí se také nad narativními technikami děl.

Závěrem studentka své analýzy shrne a vysloví obecnější závěry o společenském a genderovém rozměru zvoleného díla.

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## **ANNOTATION**

This thesis deals with social issues in the *Harry Potter* books by J. K. Rowling. The issues are social stratification, racism, slavery, and gender stereotypes. The septology is also stratified into relevant genres of children's literature. The analysis also shows parallels of the issues to the real-world issues.

## **KEYWORDS**

Harry Potter, class, racism, slavery, gender, stereotype, children's literature.

## **NÁZEV**

Společenské otázky v díle Harry Potter

## **ANOTACE**

Tato práce pojednává o společenských otázkách v dílech o Harrym Potterovi od spisovatelky J. K. Rowling. Součástí těchto otázek je rozvržení společenských tříd, rasismus, otroctví a genderové stereotypy. Série je také zařazena do žánrů dětské literatury. Analýza také poukazuje na paralely některých témat se skutečným světem.

## **KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA**

Harry Potter, společenská třída, rasismus, otroctví, gender, stereotyp, dětská literatura.

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## Introduction

J. K. Rowling's septology about Harry Potter gained a worldwide success among children and adults because of its innovativeness and vivid imagination. Though the series seems to be only about a young wizard encountering evil forces which need to be defeated, there are lots of themes and even parallels to the real-world society. Harry Potter, the hero of the book series, is, at the beginning, an eleven-year-old orphan living with his relatives, the Dursleys. Within the first book, Harry discovers that he is a wizard and starts attending Hogwarts, the school of witchcraft and wizardry.

The aim of this bachelor thesis is to prove that various social themes and parallels to the real-world, in fact, do exist within the context of the *Harry Potter* books. Such themes and parallels include class stratification, racism, the similarity with Nazi ideology, and slavery. Also, another aim is to determine the heavily criticised depiction of gender and to decide whether women of the wizarding world are, in fact, inferior to men. What is more, narrative techniques concerning gender will also be discussed.

Because the septology is quite new (1997-2007), there are not many academic critical sources. Thus, sites, such as J. K. Rowling's Pottermore.com, will be used to connect certain ideas.

The thesis consists of four main chapters, each dealing with a different social problem. Different genres, namely the school story, fantasy and bildungsroman, are discussed in the first chapter, along with Rowling's narrative style. Apart from individual definitions, the genres are briefly put into the context of *HP* books and thus showing the relevance of each genre.

In order to mention only the relevant information, from the second chapter onwards, the theoretical and analytical part intertwine. The second chapter consists of definitions regarding class, ethnicity and race. Then, relationships – either on a social or racial level – are analysed and the parallels are also determined, particularly, a possible Nazi influence on the purity of blood introduced by the Pure-bloods. Also, different stances on Muggles, the non-wizard people, from the viewpoint of witches and wizard will be determined.

The third chapter deals with slavery and parallels associated with house-elves, namely connection with Afro-American slavery and feminism will be regarded. Also, stances on other magical creatures will be included.



The last chapter is connected to gender and gender stereotypes. Also, narrative techniques will be mentioned and the possibility that *HP* books are sexist will be considered.

# 1 The *Harry Potter* books as a genre

J.K. Rowling's septology is known for its many layers regarding themes and genres. There are certain primary genres, such as the school story, bildungsroman and fantasy.

Also, as the series focuses on children and the youth. Thus, it is definitely part of children's literature. As noted by Encyclopædia Britannica, children's literature emerged as an independent form of literature in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Since the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it has been perceived with respect, but not solemnity. Some scholars underestimate the children's literature because of its relatively short history and the lack of a satisfactory number of masterworks. Though, others believe that even two centuries are worth noticing<sup>1</sup>. Rowling's works are also often underestimated and not respected because of its recency, juvenility and massive popularity<sup>2</sup>, as Karin E. Westman remarks. Britannica additionally describes the target readers as children up to the age of fifteen. Though it is true that even adults can still have an interest in children's books, for instance, apart from *Harry Potter*, Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* is also a children's book read by lots of adults<sup>3</sup>.

School story is a genre which uses the school setting to provide a theme and plot<sup>4</sup>, as explained by Philip Nel and Lissa Paul. All the *Harry Potter* books are set at Hogwarts and each book revolves around one school year which fulfils the criteria of the genre. Also, as Caroline Webb points out, in the school story, the first people the hero meets become his best friends and the hero usually must follow the school rules which are unusual for him<sup>5</sup>. For instance, in the context of Rowling's books, it is the ban to enter the third-floor corridor under the threat of death; and Harry meets Ron and Hermione on his way to Hogwarts for the first time. Also, a detective and mysterious story became a sub-class of the traditional school story genre, so did the bullying<sup>6</sup>, as additionally mentioned by Webb. In the Rowling's books, the main bully is Draco Malfoy, the Slytherins and Voldemort. Each of the *Harry Potter* books has a mystery that needs to

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<sup>1</sup> "Children's Literature," Encyclopædia Britannica, accessed February 20, 2017, <https://www.britannica.com/art/childrens-literature>.

<sup>2</sup> Karin E. Westman, "Blending Genres and Crossing Audiences: Harry Potter (1997-2007) and the Future of Literary Fiction," in *The Oxford Handbook of Children's Literature*, ed. Julia Mickenberg and Lynne Vallone (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 104.

<sup>3</sup> "Children's Literature"

<sup>4</sup> Philip Nel and Lissa Paul, *Keywords for Children's Literature* (New York: New York University Press, 2011), 73.

<sup>5</sup> Caroline Webb, *Fantasy and the Real World in British Children's Literature: The Power of Story* (Florence: Taylor and Francis, 2014), 50-60.

<sup>6</sup> Webb, *Fantasy*, 50-60.

be solved, thus, even the detective aspect is met. In history, this genre revolved around boarding schools and thus depicting the single-sex education from either girl's or boy's point of view. Sheila Ray describes the school story as a genre which offers

a setting in which young people are thrown together and in which relationships between older and younger children, between members of the peer group and between children and adults can be explored ... Through reading an entertaining story, children can 'test the water', learn how people may react in specific situations and see what lies ahead<sup>7</sup>

In short, the school story serves as an example of how people deal with certain situations and people.

Sarah Fielding's story *The Governess, or The Little Female Academy* (1749) is considered to be the first boarding school story<sup>8</sup>, as stated by Shirley Foster and Judy Simons.

What is less usual in the school story is a magical element which becomes significantly prominent from the fourth book onwards in the *Harry Potter* case. This leads to the second genre – fantasy. According to Edward James and Farah Mendlesohn, it is difficult to define fantasy conclusively, though major theorists have agreed that fantasy is about the impossible, whereas, science fiction is about the unlikely but possible<sup>9</sup>. Nevertheless, fantasy is usually described as a genre with magic or supernatural elements as the main device in the plot and the setting. Also, magical creatures are quite common in the fantasy genre. As Timmerman declares, fantasy originates from Romance, the fairy tale and fable. What is more, fantasy may be used to reflect certain aspects of the real-life world<sup>10</sup>. This applies to the wizarding world of the *Harry Potter* books, as there are many themes and social issues from the real-world, particularly, racism and the Nazi ideology, and slavery. Karin E. Westman thus classified the septology as “a hybrid fantasy” with a powerful social message<sup>11</sup>.

As the series documents Harry's individual school life years, the school story is also closely connected to another genre – bildungsroman. David Rudd explains this term,

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<sup>7</sup> Sheila Ray, “School Stories,” in *International Companion Encyclopedia of Children's Literature*, ed. Peter Hunt (London: Routledge, 2004), 467.

<sup>8</sup> Shirley Foster and Judy Simons, *What Katy Read: Feminist Re-readings of “classic” Stories for Girls* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1995), 195.

<sup>9</sup> Edward James and Farah Mendlesohn, *The Cambridge Companion to Fantasy Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 1.

<sup>10</sup> John H. Timmerman, *Other Worlds: The Fantasy Genre* (Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1983), 2.

<sup>11</sup> Westman, “Blending Genres,” 101.

originating in Germany, as “a novel that charts an individual’s development, showing that people do, in fact, develop and that childhood experiences are the bedrock of this process”<sup>12</sup>. At the beginning of the story, Harry is a small eleven-year-old boy who has just found out that he is a wizard. Throughout the series, Harry discovers what life and death are, what is love, loyalty, morals. He also learns from his mistakes and becomes mature. At the end, he is a seventeen-year-old wizard who defeats the evil forces. Westman additionally highlights that Rowling emphasises “Harry’s moral and emotional development, as her [Rowling’s] choice of narrative style places the emphasis upon subjective, internal experience as much as an external action within the world”<sup>13</sup>. As the story is told through Harry’s point of view, Rowling uses a limited, third-person, omniscient narrator<sup>14</sup>, as Westman additionally points out.

All in all, the septology consists of lots of genres and themes which are usually perceived by adults, whereas children are interested in the fantasy element.

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<sup>12</sup> David Rudd, *The Routledge Companion to Children’s Literature*, ed. David Rudd (New York: Routledge, 2012) , 237.

<sup>13</sup> Westman, “Blending Genres,” 95.

<sup>14</sup> Westman, “Blending Genres,” 95.

## **Class, ethnicity and racism**

According to the Macmillan Dictionary, the definition of a class is “one of the groups into which people in a society are divided according to their family background, education, job, or income”<sup>15</sup>. Such meaning came to use in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, replacing terms, such as rank and order, formerly used for describing the hierarchical groups in society<sup>16</sup>, as mentioned in Encyclopædia Britannica.

There are several social theories of class, though, most of them derive from Karl Marx.

As explained by Ken Browne, Karl Marx believed that most of the class inequality lies in the ownership of production. One’s social class was defined by the ownership of the means of production. One class (the bourgeoisie), owns the means of production and directs the workforce (the proletariat), the other class, or classes, are direct producers of goods and services to the dominant class. Also, the dominant class establishes a political doctrine and a cultural style because it also owns the production of ideas. A conflict of classes and antagonism arises from this division. Marx wanted the proletariat, the working class, to destroy capitalism and establish a socialist system<sup>17</sup>.

According to Encyclopædia Britannica, there is a general agreement among scholars regarding the division of principal classes. There are three main ones. Firstly, it is the upper class which is closely connected to one’s high income and social prestige. This class is usually not the majority of society. The members of upper class usually have a lavish lifestyle and extensive leisure activities. Secondly, it is the middle class which consist of “the middle and upper levels of clerical workers, those engaged in technical and professional occupations, supervisors and managers, and such self-employed workers as small-scale shopkeepers, businessmen, and farmers”<sup>18</sup>. On the other hand, those from the upper class usually work in the positions of leaders, for instance, as a large employer, company director or a senior military office, as mentioned by Browne. Though, the most prestigious members only own property and, in fact, do not have any occupation.

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<sup>15</sup> “Class,” Macmillan Dictionary, accessed February 20, 2017, [http://www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/class\\_1](http://www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/class_1).

<sup>16</sup> “Social Class,” Encyclopædia Britannica, accessed February 20, 2017, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/social-class>.

<sup>17</sup> Ken Browne, *An Introduction to Sociology* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011), 400-404.

<sup>18</sup> “Social Class.”

The last class is called the working class which includes people who work manually, for instance, blue-collar and some white-collar jobs and service-work jobs<sup>19</sup>.

Now that the relevant facts concerning social class were mentioned, for this paper, it is important to explain why I divided Rowling's world of *Harry Potter* into ethnic groups and also races.

As explained by Margaret L. Andersen and Howard F. Taylor, an ethnic group "is a social category of people who share a common culture, for example, a common language or dialect; a common religion; and common norms, practices, customs, and history"<sup>20</sup>. This applies to the division of the wizarding community (including magical creatures) versus Muggles, the non-magic people. Each group has its morals, customs and sometimes even languages, for instance, Merpeople have their own language. Also, by morals, one can mean that only some ethnic groups resent Muggles and are willing to eradicate them from the face of the Earth, as will be shown on Pure-bloods in the analysis. Though, within the wizarding society, different races can be perceived, namely, Pure-bloods, Half-bloods, Muggle-borns and magical creatures. The term race is explained by Andersen and Taylor as

[a] group treated as distinct in a society based on certain characteristics, some of which are biological, that have been assigned or attributed social importance. Because of presumed biologically or culturally inferior characteristics, defined by powerful groups in society, is often singled out for differential and unfair treatment.<sup>21</sup>

Consequently, in the context of *Harry Potter*, the race will not be defined by the colour of one's skin but the purity of blood.

### **1.1 Class, ethnicity and racism within the wizarding society**

At first sight, the ethnicity and race distinction in the *Harry Potter* books may appear simple and straightforward. The main clash seems to be between Muggles and wizards. However, even the wizarding world of *Harry Potter* is strictly stratified into races. There is a hierarchical division in terms of descent. The following races are ordered by the purity of blood: Pure-bloods, Half-bloods, Muggle-borns, Squibs, and Muggles. It is a purity of blood not the colour of skin what matters, as there are lots of non-white people with racial identifiers, for example, Angelina Johnson is described as "a tall

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<sup>19</sup> Browne, *An Introduction to Sociology*, 406.

<sup>20</sup> Margaret L. Andersen and Howard F. Taylor, *Sociology: Understanding a Diverse Society* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning: 2008), 270.

<sup>21</sup> Andersen and Taylor, *Sociology*, 271.

black girl with long, braided hair”<sup>22</sup>. Nevertheless, neither race nor racial hierarchy is mentioned by any of the characters.

As Lyubansky argues, though, provided that the story is told from the point of view of white characters who do not comment on race, it is not possible to know about the point of view of non-white characters. In other words, to see racism (regarding the colour of skin), “it is important to see race”<sup>23</sup> in the first place – which is not the case in the series. It seems therefore that Rowling decided to comment on racism by focusing on blood status and the rights of magical creatures.

### **1.1.1 Pure-bloods, Muggle-borns and Half-bloods**

The wizarding society can be stratified into several groups regarding the purity of blood: Pure-bloods, Half-bloods, Muggle-borns and Squibs. The most important group, Pure-bloods, consists of wizards who have well-documented and pure magical heritage dating back for centuries. However, within the pure-blood class, material wealth also plays an important role. This is reminiscent of the upper class from the real world. Also, there are several stereotypes concerning the upper class, namely, being “snooty, aloof, condescending, and phony”<sup>24</sup>, as described by Andersen and Taylor. Such attitudes are clearly demonstrated by Draco Malfoy on the first occasion he meets Potter in *HPPS*. Draco says that “some wizarding families are much better than others” and advises Harry not to “go making friends with the wrong sort [the Weasleys or Muggle-borns]. I can help you there”<sup>25</sup>. Moreover, Lucius and Draco Malfoy often express their aversion towards the Weasleys who, despite being a wizarding family with a longstanding family name and a pure-blood lineage, belong to lower ranks of the hierarchy because of their lack of property.

Other class divisions are blurred and “dislocated from the class analysis and turned into matters of individual morality”<sup>26</sup>, as Suman Gupta suggest. Gupta additionally explains that the ill-treatment of house-elves (who are depicting servants) is not rooted in the house-elves’ class but because some people, for instance, the Malfoys, are bad. What is

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<sup>22</sup> J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2014), 208. In the text referred to as *HPOP*.

<sup>23</sup> Mikhail Lyubansky, “Harry Potter and the World That Shall Not Be Named,” in *The Psychology of Harry Potter: An Unauthorized Examination of the Boy Who Lived*, ed. Neil Mulholland (Dallas: BenBella Books, Inc. , 2009), 236.

<sup>24</sup> Andersen and Taylor, *Diverse Society*, 276.

<sup>25</sup> J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2014), 116. In text referred to as *HPPS*.

<sup>26</sup> Suman Gupta, “The Question of Class,” in *Re-reading Harry Potter* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 123.

more, the economic factor regarding class, which is very important in the class stratification in the real world, is “dislocated from the concept of class and turned into endemic or inborn characteristics”<sup>27</sup>. Though, the Malfoys, being the wealthy and arrogant, seem to be the only family to mock the Weasleys for their lack of property and, more importantly, because of the Weasleys’ positive relationship with Muggle-borns, who are wizards and witches with Muggle parents.

The Malfoys are not the first pure-blood family to explicitly loathe Muggle-borns. The philosophy of Muggle-born exclusion and persecution came to light with a co-founder of Hogwarts (the school of witchcraft and wizardry), Salazar Slytherin. Despite knowing that the school was founded as a haven for all wizards, regardless of their bloodline, he wanted to restrict the privilege to study at this school only to “all-magic families” because he believed “students of Muggle parentage to be untrustworthy”<sup>28</sup>. This attitude seems to be generally adopted by other Pure-blood families, known as the “Sacred Twenty-Eight”<sup>29</sup>, who sought to preserve their lineage untainted. As Mikhail Lyubansky comments, the pure breeding is a parallel to our history “of oppression of Blacks and obsession about interracial sex and marriage”<sup>30</sup>. Also, the above-mentioned ideas of Salazar Slytherin suggest school segregation, also connected to the history of blacks. As Barratt comments, educational segregation has a ripple effect throughout society, meaning that exclusion from some kind of education causes exclusion from certain jobs in the future. Also, children learn about acceptance of others while encountering people of different backgrounds in the classroom. Thus, educational segregation may alienate, for instance, blacks from white children and vice versa. For that reason, separate public schools for blacks and whites were stated as unconstitutional based on the *Brown v. Board Education* from 1945<sup>31</sup>.

The school of Hogwarts does not separate students in the same sense, although all students are sorted into Houses and they spend their leisure time in their respective common rooms. Consequently, racist attitudes in Slytherin House are not likely to be reduced. Lyubansky suggests, that teachers who want to reduce prejudice between

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<sup>27</sup> Gupta, “The Question of Class,” 123.

<sup>28</sup> J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2014), 159. In text referred to as *HPCS*.

<sup>29</sup> ‘Who are the “Sacred Twenty-Eight?”’ [pottermore.com](https://www.pottermore.com/features/who-are-the-sacred-twenty-eight), accessed 4<sup>th</sup> November, 2016, <https://www.pottermore.com/features/who-are-the-sacred-twenty-eight>

<sup>30</sup> Lyubansky, “the World That Shall Not Be Named,” 237.

<sup>31</sup> Bethany Barratt, “Purebloods and Mudbloods: Race, Species, and Power” *The Politics of Harry Potter* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 75.



Houses should draw on contact theory because “according to contact theory ethnic and racial group prejudice can be reduced or even eliminated by bringing group members (in this case, half-bloods and pure-bloods) into cross-group contact with each other”<sup>32</sup>. The problem of ethnic and racial prejudice is almost solely connected to the Slytherin House. Other houses, for instance, Gryffindor, are not interested in blood status at all. As Lyubansky highlights, the environment in Slytherin is so hostile that even the head of the House, Severus Snape, is reluctant to disclose his half-blood parentage and does not do anything to reduce the intolerance and prejudice in his students<sup>33</sup>.

The racial attitude of Pure-bloods towards Muggle-borns and Half-bloods is best demonstrated in *HPOP* on the portrait of Sirius’s mother:

“Filth! Scum! By-products of dirt and vileness! Half-breeds, mutants, freaks, begone from this place! How dare you befoul the house of my fathers” ... “Yooooou!” she howled, her eyes popping at the sight of the man [her son, Sirius Black]. “Blood traitor, abomination, shame of my flesh!”<sup>34</sup>

This utterance implies that Half-bloods, those having a Muggle and also a wizarding parent in their family line, and Muggle-borns are undesirable, and, as Lyubansky additionally highlights, that their existence “threatens the purity and cleanliness of both their surroundings and their selves”<sup>35</sup>. Therefore, Sirius’s mother loathes also her son, Sirius, who befriends Half-bloods and Muggle-borns and invites them to the House of Blacks. By doing so, Sirius contaminates not only the house but also himself. Lyubansky observes that this view is similar to the beliefs of supporters of anti-miscegenation laws in the United States<sup>36</sup>. Such laws criminalised interracial marriages and even racially mixed sex. As Lyubansky comments (based on a study conducted in 2001 by *the New York Times* and published in *How Race is Lived in America*, even though the laws were held to be unconstitutional in 1967, such marriages continue to be sometimes viewed as controversial<sup>37</sup>.

What is more, Sirius’s mother uses racial slurs developed against racial minorities. The minorities are often regarded as dirty by nature, thus being compared to parasites, rats and even diseases. For instance, Voldemort himself stresses that he “shall cut away the

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<sup>32</sup> Lyubansky, “the World That Shall Not Be Named,” 239.

<sup>33</sup> Lyubansky, “the World That Shall Not Be Named,” 239.

<sup>34</sup> Rowling, *the Order of the Phoenix*, 72.

<sup>35</sup> Lyubansky, “the World That Shall Not Be Named,” 237.

<sup>36</sup> Lyubansky, “the World That Shall Not Be Named,” 237.

<sup>37</sup> Lyubansky, “the World That Shall Not Be Named,” 237.

canker [Muggle-borns] that infects us until only those of the true blood remain”<sup>38</sup>. Draco Malfoy, for example, in *HPGF* in one case refers to Hermione, a Muggle-born, as an object, rather than a human being: “You’re not telling me someone asked *that* to the ball?” and even calls her “Mudblood”<sup>39</sup>. “Mudblood” is “a really foul name for someone who is Muggle-born”<sup>40</sup>. Ostry connects this insult to an equivalent used against African Americans – “mud people”<sup>41</sup>.

Jews were often called and compared to rats. For instance, in a Nazi documentary film called *The Eternal Jew* from 1940, there are montages depicting Jews in ghettos and then rats in the sewers meaning that Jews are, based on the Nazi ideology, the vermin of the human race<sup>42</sup>. Similarly, in the graphic novel by a cartoonist Art Spiegelman called *Maus*, Jews are also portrayed as rodents.

The majority of the Pure-bloods are also fond of Voldemort, the arch-villain who wants to eradicate Muggle-borns from the face of the earth. The pure-blood attitude towards magical creatures, particularly house-elves, giants, and werewolves, is almost identical to the one towards Muggle-borns. The Death Eaters are followers of Voldemort. They consist of Pure-blood radicals who practice the Dark Arts thus fearlessly breaking the wizarding laws. The main aim of the Death Eaters is to purify wizarding community from Muggle-borns.

It is important to point out that Voldemort (as Hitler) does not meet the conditions of his very own ideology. Voldemort is a Half-blood but, as Barratt states, he seems not to have mentioned his true blood status to his fellow Death Eaters. As pointed out, many Death Eaters do not know Voldemort’s true Muggle name and consequently are misinformed about his pedigree,<sup>43</sup> as for instance Bellatrix when she rebukes Harry in *HPOP*: “You dare speak his [Voldemort’s] name with your half-blood’s tongue.”<sup>44</sup> Harry then reminds her of the Dark Lord’s actual parentage. In other words, Voldemort mentions his connection to Salazar Slytherin to persuade others of his pure blood

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<sup>38</sup> J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2014), 9. In text referred to as HPDH.

<sup>39</sup> J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc. , 2014), 341. In the text referred to as *HPGF*.

<sup>40</sup> Rowling, *the Chamber of Secrets*, 121.

<sup>41</sup> Elaine Ostry, “Accepting Mudbloods: The Ambivalent Social Vision of J. K. Rowling’s Fairy Tales,” *Reading Harry Potter : Critical Essays*, ed. Giselle Liza Anatol (Westport, Conn: Praeger Publishers, 2003), 92.

<sup>42</sup> *The Eternal Jew*. Directed by Fritz Hippler. Berlin: Deutsche Filmherstellungs- und -Verwertungs-GmbH, 1940.

<sup>43</sup> Barratt, “Race, Species, and Power,” 73.

<sup>44</sup> Rowling, *the Order of the Phoenix*, 722

heritage. This may be seen as a parallel to Hitler in the sense that Adolf Hitler was actually a quarter Jew – a fact, which he never pointed out himself<sup>45</sup>.

Consequently, there is a strong link between Voldemort's followers and the followers of the Slytherins. On the contrary, each good character opposes the radical ideology of Pure-bloods.

For instance, the Weasleys are friends with Muggle-borns, a werewolf and a half-giant, all who are often rejected by the mainstream society and Pure-bloods. Thus, the Weasleys are called "blood-traitors" because of not privileging the blood-purity. Ron comments that being a blood-traitor is "as bad as Muggle-borns"<sup>46</sup> in the eyes of Pure-bloods. Put simply, targeting Muggle-born sympathisers is essential to weaken Muggle-born's popular support. Lucius Malfoy, for instance, sneers at Mr Weasley when he sees him together with the Grangers (parents of Hermione Granger, a Muggle-born): "Dear me, what's the use of being a disgrace to the name of wizard if they don't even pay you well for it... The company you keep, Weasley... and I thought your family could sink no lower."<sup>47</sup> The Weasleys are not intimidated by such remarks and defend people of lesser pedigree in front of the Malfoys. For instance, when Hermione Granger says to Draco that his father bought him his way into the Quidditch team and he thereafter foully calls her a Mudblood, Ronald Weasley is not afraid to jinx Malfoy publicly<sup>48</sup>.

There is a political allegory concerning Voldemort and his agenda. His ideology concerning blood purity, status and prejudice against Muggle-borns is almost identical to the Nazi programme against Slavs, Gypsies and Jews. In other words, Voldemort and Hitler both promoted the idea that some humans are less human than others. Also, in *HPDH*, the Ministry of Magic agenda changes under the influence of Voldemort although before, the Ministry was welcoming towards a whole variety of creatures and did not bother investigating one's blood status.

Under the influence of Voldemort, the institution even replaced a statue (showing friendship among all magical creatures) in the Ministry's Atrium by a fascist monument depicted as "a sculpture of a witch and wizard sitting on ornately carved thrones"<sup>49</sup> and

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<sup>45</sup> Barratt, "Race, Species, and Power," 73.

<sup>46</sup> J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Half-blood Prince* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2006), 287. In text referred to as *HPHP*.

<sup>47</sup> Rowling, *the Chamber of Secrets*, 65-66.

<sup>48</sup> Rowling, *the Chamber of Secrets*, 118.

<sup>49</sup> Rowling, *the Deathly Hallows*, 195.

the thrones were “actually mounds of carved humans”<sup>50</sup>. According to Wolosky, this description suggests concentration camps<sup>51</sup>. Similar monument by Dušan Kuzma can be found in Banská Bystrica. The monument called “The Victims’ Warning” depicts a pair of figures rising from the mound of corpses as a warning against wars and killings. It serves as a symbol of Slovakian anti-fascist resistance.

Also, pamphlets of racial propaganda are similar to those against Jews. The ones from the wizarding world are entitled “Mudbloods and the Danger They Pose to a Peaceful Pure-blood Society”<sup>52</sup>.

As Barratt highlights, such propaganda directs “general public dissatisfaction toward a particular (usually vulnerable) target”<sup>53</sup> and, in reality, Jews were blamed for several problems in Germany, for instance, for the loss of World War I or the credit crisis. Wolosky also claims that the Muggle-born Registration Commission imitates Hitler’s racial programme<sup>54</sup> by issuing every “so-called Muggle-born to present themselves for interview”<sup>55</sup>. The creation of the commission also represented a shift from name-calling to a legal political statement, which is far more dangerous for the oppressed. Those registered could not possess a wand without which a wizard/witch cannot perform magic, thus making them weak.

As already mentioned, Voldemort is the villain, the evil that needs to be defeated. As an evil, he is quite different from other evil powers in literature. For example, J. R. R. Tolkien’s Sauron. Sauron is abstract, not a physically present creature. The main characters only talk about his followers but do not come across the actual evil itself in a physical form, apart from the all-seeing eye. Voldemort, on the other hand, is much more present – either as a half-human form in *HPPS* or in his final physical form in *HPGF*. As Wolosky suggests, the portrait of evil in *the Harry Potter* books is sometimes drawn from the inside point of view - through Harry’s visions or scar. The latter providing him with an entry into Voldemort’s consciousness which makes the evil force, even more, real and present. Whereas, Tolkien uses only the outside image of evil<sup>56</sup>.

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<sup>50</sup> Rowling, *the Deathly Hallows*, 196.

<sup>51</sup> Wolosky, *the Riddles of Harry Potter*, 35.

<sup>52</sup> Rowling, *the Deathly Hallows*, 201.

<sup>53</sup> Barratt, “Race, Species, and Power”, 68.

<sup>54</sup> Wolosky, *the Riddles of Harry Potter*, 35.

<sup>55</sup> Rowling, *the Deathly Hallows*, 169.

<sup>56</sup> Wolosky, *Riddles of Harry Potter*, 113.

Nevertheless, Wolosky, later on, asserts that there is a resemblance between Voldemort and another literary figure - Milton's Satan<sup>57</sup>. She comments that Voldemort, like Milton's Satan, is not just an abstract or metaphysical representation of evil, but rather has a history in the form of motives and relationships<sup>58</sup> which are in Voldemort's case explained in *HPHP*.

In the wizarding society, there are also those who think of themselves as tolerant towards Muggle-borns. However, as Barratt highlights, they still subconsciously "see Muggle-borns as a category apart"<sup>66</sup>. For example, Professor Slughorn said to Harry: "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"<sup>67</sup>. This makes Harry think that, in fact, Slughorn pays attention to one's parentage and is perhaps even prejudiced because of it<sup>68</sup>. Barratt compares this utterance to a real world situation when, during the 2008 US presidential campaign, Joe Biden referred to Senator Barack Obama as "the first mainstream African-American who is articulate and bright and clean and a nice-looking guy". This remark was controversial because it implied that such characteristics are not the norm for blacks and thus sounded insulting and racist<sup>69</sup>.

Pure-bloods seem to be one of the most radical thinking parts of the wizarding society, even though they are slowly dying out<sup>71</sup>. The most common are Half-bloods, descendants of a Muggle or Muggle-born parent and a magical parent. Examples of such characters would be Harry Potter, Voldemort, Severus Snape and Albus P. W. B. Dumbledore. It is interesting that all these Half-blood characters play a crucial role in the story of the books. Also, Half-blood parentage is more or less accepted by Pure-bloods and, what is more, Half-bloods are generally tolerant towards a mixed-blood status.

Dumbledore, for example, employs a half-giant, a centaur and also used to employ a werewolf. When Hagrid's, the half-giant's, blood status is revealed in the press, Dumbledore and the central trio convince Hagrid that blood status is irrelevant. To illustrate, in *HPGF* Dumbledore says that "it matters not what someone is born, but

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<sup>57</sup> Wolosky, *Riddles of Harry Potter*, 113.

<sup>58</sup> Wolosky, *Riddles of Harry Potter*, 114.

<sup>66</sup> Barratt, "Race, Species, and Power," 70.

<sup>67</sup> Rowling, *the Half-blood Prince*, 89.

<sup>68</sup> Rowling, *the Half-blood Prince*, 93.

<sup>69</sup> Barratt, "Race, Species, and Power," 70.

<sup>71</sup> Rowling, *the Chamber of Secrets*, 122.

what they grow to be”<sup>72</sup>. It is now apparent that Rowling’s stance on racism is negative. It can be easily illustrated on the Gaunts, Voldemort’s ancestors – the descendants of Salazar Slytherin. The Gaunts, namely Marvolo, Merope and Morfin, were obsessed with pure lineage to such an extent that they began showing signs of inbreeding. For instance, Marvolo is strangely proportioned with elongated arms, almost ape-like. As Anatol comments, Rowling connects racism with de-evolution and “regression, not progress”<sup>73</sup>.

All of this demonstrates that even though they are all Pure-blood or Half-blood, they do not necessarily share the same morals or values. It seems as if Rowling wanted to demonstrate that even the wizarding society is diverse and that being Pure-blood does not necessarily mean that you must feel superior to others.

Since the relations within the wizarding society have been discussed, now the relations towards the world of Muggles shall be described in more detail.

### **1.1.2 The wizarding world and Muggles**

There are several constant attitudes towards Muggles, according to Barratt. The first regarding Muggles as equals, the second regarding the Muggle world to be separate and not worth mentioning, the third perceiving Muggles as not fully human and the last attitude is connected to a fascination with Muggles<sup>74</sup>.

To illustrate the first, most tolerant, attitude, let us take the case of Kingsley Shacklebolt. In *HPDH*, he declares: “I’d say that it’s one short step from ‘Wizards first’ to ‘Purebloods first,’ and then to ‘Death Eaters,’ ” replied Kingsley. “We’re all human, aren’t we? Every human life is worth the same, and worth saving.”<sup>75</sup>. As Barratt proves, Kingsley is not talking about only wizards but also Muggles – if Muggles are deemed as lesser humans, the same can then apply to Muggle-borns and Half-bloods<sup>76</sup>.

The second attitude, not noticing Muggles, is illustrated by Dumbledore who explains in *HPGF* that “I read the Muggle newspapers, unlike most of my Ministry friends”<sup>77</sup>. He also points out that the Ministry of Magic does not take into account the suspicious

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<sup>72</sup> Rowling, *the Goblet of Fire*, 595.

<sup>73</sup> Giselle Liza Anatol, “The Replication of Victorian Racial Ideology in Harry Potter,” in *Reading Harry Potter again : New Critical Essays*, ed. Giselle Liza Anatol (Westport, Conn: Praeger Publishers, 2009), 110.

<sup>74</sup> Barratt, “Race, Species, and Power,” 65-67.

<sup>75</sup> Rowling, *the Deathly Hallows*, 359.

<sup>76</sup> Barratt, “Race, Species, and Power,” 65.

<sup>77</sup> Rowling, *the Goblet of Fire*, 507.

disappearance of Frank Bryce, which may be connected to Voldemort's corrupt practices, "for it concerns a Muggle"<sup>78</sup>. Barratt correctly connects these examples to "the relative inattention some city newspapers pay to crimes that happen in more impoverished areas"<sup>79</sup>.

Also, Cornelius Fudge (the Minister of Magic) usually informs the Muggle Minister in a way which conveys only formality, not a sincere effort to inform the British Prime Minister. In one instance, Fudge talks to the PM like to "an ignorant schoolboy"<sup>80</sup> which suggests Fudge sees the other Minister as a child, not as his equal. The same applies to their first meeting when Fudge patted the Prime Minister "in a fatherly sort of way"<sup>81</sup>.

Now, let us move from complete indifference to pure admiration of Muggles, at least in some instances – Mr Weasley. Some wizards are genuinely curious how Muggles can function without the use of magic. Though some are curious, they still usually perceive technology as something to look down upon. According to Barratt, such fascination is similar to the exoticism expressed during the colonial period. Another example could be the Misuse of Muggle Artifacts Act evoking "the excavation of some long-extinct, more primitive culture"<sup>82</sup>. Barratt also points out that such fascination is derived from a subconscious paternalism and "a sense of wonder at how Muggles get along without magic"<sup>83</sup>.

Lastly, Muggles are perceived as not fully human by some group of society, obviously by Pure-bloods. For example, Sirius's cousin wanted to make Muggle-hunting legal. Also, when Voldemort oversees Hogwarts, students are taught that "Muggles are like animals, stupid and dirty"<sup>84</sup> which is again connected to the previously mentioned miscegenation attitude.

### 1.1.3 Name symbolism

J. K. Rowling uses name symbolism to accentuate certain features of most of the characters. For instance, when characterising the social differences between the Weasleys and Malfoys, there is a telling difference between the meaning of their

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<sup>78</sup> Rowling, *the Goblet of Fire*, 507.

<sup>79</sup> Barratt, "Race, Species, and Power," 66.

<sup>80</sup> Rowling, *the Half-blood Prince*, 12.

<sup>81</sup> Rowling, *the Half-blood Prince*, 13.

<sup>82</sup> Barratt, "Race, Species, and Power," 66.

<sup>83</sup> Barratt, "Race, Species, and Power," 66.

<sup>84</sup> Rowling, *the Deathly Hallows*, 467.

names. The meaning of the Weasleys' surname is, perhaps, a weasel which is indicated in Mr Weasley's Patronus having the form of the animal. On the other hand, Shira Wolosky believes that the surname is a plural of "we as in (we's)"<sup>85</sup>. Furthermore, the Weasleys' first names are not common. As for the male names, they are of royal origin: Arthur, William, Charles, Frederick, and George are all kings' names and Percival was a Knight of the Round Table. Ronald, from Rögnvaldr, means "having the god's power". As for the female names, Ginevra (Ginny) means "Jupiter" in Italian and also belongs to Arthurian legends. Mrs Weasley's name, Molly, suggests "mollycoddling" and "to mollify"<sup>86</sup>, although, she is a stricter parent than Mr Weasley. Judging by her frequent, but justified, yelling at the Weasley twins, she has a rather fierce temper, albeit she also has her soft motherly side as shown when dealing with dangerous circumstances regarding her children and even Harry.

The surname Malfoy is derived from French. As Elaine Ostry highlights in her analysis, the surname "Malfoy" in French means "bad faith" which "implies that their philosophy, or faith, is evil"<sup>87</sup>. The fact that French is usually associated with aristocracy is crucial when determining the attitude and characteristics of this clan which can be categorised as the upper class due to its wealth and prestige. Furthermore, Shira Wolosky claims that in the books there is a tendency to give French names to negative characters and Anglo-Saxon names to more positive ones, e. g. Dumbledore originates from Old English, whereas Voldemort from French. Also, to emphasise that the Malfoys are one of the villains, Rowling chose names with negative denotations and connotations for them. Draco means dragon, Lucius indicates Lucifer and Narcissa narcissism. Draco's son's name is Scorpio, which suggests a predator. Bellatrix, Narcissa's sister, means "the tricks of beauty" or "those of war"<sup>88</sup>.

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<sup>85</sup> Shira Wolosky, *The Riddles of Harry Potter* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 14.

<sup>86</sup> Wolosky, *The Riddles of Harry Potter*, 14.

<sup>87</sup> Ostry, "Accepting Mudbloods," 92.

<sup>88</sup> Wolosky, *The Riddles of Harry Potter*, 12.



## 2 Slavery, house-elves and other oppressed creatures

The term slavery is briefly explained in Encyclopædia Britannica as “[a] condition in which one human being was owned by another. A slave was considered by law as property, or chattel, and was deprived of most of the rights ordinarily held by free persons”<sup>89</sup>. Slaves were usually owned by slave-owners.

The wizarding world is not only occupied with witches and wizards, but also with various peculiar creatures and beasts. The relationships between animals and wizards are frequent topics of the book series. Harry comes across house-elves, werewolves and Animagi. At Hogwarts, students are often supposed to transfigure certain animals or learn how to defend themselves from harmful creatures in case they encounter them. The moral relationship between certain species and the wizarding society is to be discussed in this chapter.

The society does not perceive certain creatures, such as werewolves, giants, house-elves and goblins, as individuals. Rather, they have prejudices against them as a group and judge them accordingly. The most discussed creatures, within the series, are definitely house-elves and their rights.

### 2.1 Slavery and House-elves

House-elves are little, rather funny-looking, creatures with “large, little bat-like ears”, “eyes the size of tennis balls”<sup>90</sup> and high pitched voices, thus they appear harmless. House-elves are enslaved for life and unless set free, their descendants carry on their enslavement. They pose as a status symbol for very wealthy and ancient families, while the house-elves remain as second-class citizens. Those creatures are not allowed to wear any clothes, instead, they wear pillow cases or rags. They are set free in case their owner gives them an item of clothing. They are deprived from certain rights, for instance, they cannot carry a wand. Also, house-elves must fulfil their master’s desires, some may even physically punish themselves if they disobey an order. House-elves are introduced in the second book, *HPCS*, but the serious problems and inequalities are developed mainly in the fourth book, *HPGF*. In later books, the theme of house-elf slavery is not as prominent as in *HPGF*. It seems that Rowling decided to shift the focus of the series from the issues concerning house-elves to other events.

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<sup>89</sup> “Slavery,” Encyclopædia Britannica, accessed February 20, 2017, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/slavery-sociology>

<sup>90</sup> Rowling, *the Chamber of Secrets*, 12.

The wizarding society does not perceive the slavery of house-elves as something immoral. Even Mrs Weasley, a positive character, expresses her desire to have a house-elf to help her with housework<sup>91</sup> but because the Weasleys are not wealthy, they cannot afford to have one. Hagrid, for instance, thinks that house-elves would not be happy if they could not serve wizards<sup>92</sup>, though one would have thought that, as also an oppressed creature, Hagrid would have shown compassion for the elves.

Harry's assessment of the injustice towards house-elves is a personal one, as Carey pinpoints. He sympathises with Dobby because they are both mistreated by tyrants. Even though Harry is instrumental in Dobby's freedom, Harry seems untroubled by the situation of other house-elves. As Carey claims, Harry frees Dobby behind closed doors, "and the motivation is explicitly that of personally rewarding Dobby for his individual good behaviour"<sup>93</sup>.

Hermione, the female protagonist of the *Harry Potter* books, seems to be one of the few people bothered by the social norms concerning the creatures, unlike, for instance, Harry and Ron. Hermione thinks that the creatures are indifferent to their enslavement because they are "uneducated and brainwashed"<sup>94</sup>. Her ideas develop in a political statement. She is the first person in the series pointing out the house-elves condition as slavery. Also, she demands action but without clearly identifying who should be responsible for the house-elves mistreatment. Later, Hermione founds SPEW (the Society for the Promotion of Elvish Welfare). As Carey claims, Hermione runs the society "as a classic pressure group, with membership fees, committees, badges and a consumer boycott"<sup>95</sup>. Rowling presents the plight of house-elves as an opportunity for political activism available to the young generation in the real world. Even the different opinions of characters demonstrate possible responses to political and social issues, whilst reflecting political debates.

It is true that Harry frees Dobby and regards him as a friend, but Harry does not care about other house-elves that much and joins Ron to mock Hermione's attempts in improving the rights and laws of house-elves. Rowling herself seems to be rather

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<sup>91</sup> Rowling, *the Chamber of Secrets*, 30.

<sup>92</sup> Rowling, *the Goblet of Fire*, 223.

<sup>93</sup> Brycchan Carey, "Hermione and the House-Elves: The Literary and Historical Contexts of J. K. Rowling's Antislavery Campaign" *Reading Harry Potter : Critical Essays*, ed. Giselle L. Anatol (Westport, Conn: Praeger Publishers, 2003), 104.

<sup>94</sup> Rowling, *the Goblet of Fire*, 201.

<sup>95</sup> Carey, "Antislavery Campaign," 105.

ambivalent about house-elves and does not depict Hermione's campaign in a respectful way. For example, the name of Hermione's organisation for the welfare of house-elves, S. P. E. W., makes fellow students at Hogwarts and the reader snigger. As Keller argues, Rowling indeed supports the idea that house-elves and witches and wizards should be equal<sup>96</sup> but still seems to have a changing attitude. For example, Dumbledore even offers Dobby a salary for his service at Hogwarts. Though, in *HPGF*, Rowling undercuts the significant message by turning it into a joke because Dobby persuades Dumbledore to be paid less than Dumbledore offered<sup>97</sup>. Rowling thus seems to be supportive of Hermione's attempts but, at the same time, making fun of "do-gooders [Hermione] who want to 'improve' the status of people who are content to be what they are" or is alternatively criticising society tolerating class oppression<sup>98</sup>.

Hermione founded S. P. E. W. and started her political activities during *HPGF*. Carey describes the activities as pressure politics which shift to direct action in the following books<sup>99</sup>. To illustrate, in later books, Hermione starts knitting hats for the house-elves of Hogwarts and leaves them in the Gryffindor common room for the house-elves to pick them up while cleaning and, consequently, set them free. Ron argues that Hermione's tactic is not fair for the house-elves: "You're trying to trick them into picking up the hats. You're setting them free when they might not want to be free."<sup>100</sup> By this plan, Hermione alienates herself from the house-elves, as Carey comments. Dobby says that "[none] of them will clean Gryffindor Tower anymore, not with the hats and socks hidden everywhere, they finds them insulting, sir."<sup>101</sup> Consequently, Dobby is the one cleaning the Gryffindor Tower – ironically, Hermione increases "the workload of one of the few free house-elves"<sup>102</sup>. Thus, it seems that Rowling wants the reader to show "how not to run a political campaign"<sup>103</sup>, as Carey mentions.

Moreover, according to Barratt, one of the biggest weaknesses is the fact that SPEW was not initiated by the oppressed. The organisation may be hence regarded as not genuine. Barratt compares this with real world human rights organisations which are

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<sup>96</sup> Keller, "Women in Disguise," 372.

<sup>97</sup> Rowling, *the Goblet of Fire*, 317-321.

<sup>98</sup> Keller, "Women in Disguise," 369.

<sup>99</sup> Brycchan Carey, "Hermione and the House-Elves Revisited: J. K. Rowling, Antislavery Campaigning, and the Politics of Potter" *Reading Harry Potter again: New Critical Essays*, ed. Giselle L. Anatol (Westport, Conn: Praeger Publishers, 2009), 162.

<sup>100</sup> Rowling, *the Order of the Phoenix*, 237.

<sup>101</sup> Rowling, *the Order of the Phoenix*, 357.

<sup>102</sup> Carey, "House-Elves Revisited", 163.

<sup>103</sup> Carey, "House-Elves Revisited", 161.

sometimes “accused of failing to understand the real policy priorities of people in poor countries”<sup>104</sup>. In this sense, SPEW may be compared, in the wizarding world, with the very successful Dumbledore Army which was formed within the affected group of students. Barratt argues that “the most successful movement for change generally arise from within the affected population” and thus it seems unlikely that the SPEW movement will be successful because she imposes rights on those who evidently do not want them<sup>105</sup>.

The term house-elves brings us to a theory that there also may be field-elves which would parallel the enslavement of Afro-Americans on plantations<sup>107</sup>, as Carey notes. Also, Barratt stresses that the dialect of house-elves is similar to the slaves from the American South: “house-elf diction is distinguished by frequent reference to titles as terms of respect, use of the third person almost exclusively, eschewing of personal pronouns and disagreement between subject and verb tenses”<sup>108</sup>. In *HPGF*, there are several instances of the dialect, for instance, when Winky talks to Dobby: “you is a bad elf, Dobby! . . . My poor Mr Crouch, what is he doing without Winky?”<sup>109</sup>. Connected to the American slaves is also Hermione’s stance on wizards calling a house-elf just an “elf”. Ostry points out that it reflects the terms “‘boy’ and ‘gal’ that whites have historically used to depersonalize and infantilize African Americans”<sup>110</sup>.

Another parallel, according to Barratt, is that the paternalism of wizards is similar to American slave-owners. Both wizards and slave-owners referred to slaves as to a class “needing guidance and protection”<sup>111</sup>. Also, Hermione’s anger stems from pity and the same applies to many abolitionists<sup>112</sup>.

On the other hand, according to Barratt, the house-elves’ “helplessness and submission” can be viewed in a negative way by the wizards<sup>113</sup>. Sirius, for instance, often insults Kreacher for his admiration for the Blacks<sup>114</sup> and also, the fact that Dobby’s loyalty originated in the threats issued by the Malfoys. The latter is similar to the allegiance of

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<sup>104</sup> Bethany Barratt, “Azkaban: Discipline, Punishment, and Human Rights” *The Politics of Harry Potter* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 53.

<sup>105</sup> Barratt, “Human Rights,” 53.

<sup>107</sup> Carey, “Antislavery Campaign,” 104.

<sup>108</sup> Barratt, “Human Rights,” 48.

<sup>109</sup> Rowling, *the Goblet of Fire*, 322.

<sup>110</sup> Ostry, “Accepting Mudbloods,” 96.

<sup>111</sup> Barratt, “Human Rights,” 48.

<sup>112</sup> Barratt, “Human Rights,” 48.

<sup>113</sup> Barratt, “Human Rights,” 49.

<sup>114</sup> Rowling, *the Order of the Phoenix*, 107.

slaves who were afraid of “whipping, burning, mutilation and death”<sup>115</sup> and, in fact, did not want to honestly serve their family, as explained by Howard Zinn.

In the *Harry Potter* books, there two main elf characters: Dobby and Winky, a male and a female – both freed from slavery. The difference between them is the way in which they deal with their freedom. Dobby is happy and tries to find a paid job, whereas, Winky becomes an alcoholic and is depressed because she is ashamed of her freedom. Other house-elves working at the kitchen of Hogwarts treat Dobby as if he were infectious. This leads to the fact that, as Ron points out, house-elves “like being enslaved”<sup>116</sup>. According to Ostry, such attitude and willingness to serve one’s master were also attributed to slaves and depicted in books and films, for instance, a film called *Gone with the Winds*<sup>117</sup>.

Such behaviour, however, cannot be found in the real-world history of slavery. Carey connects the house-elves’ “internalised logic of bondage”<sup>118</sup> to William Blake’s “mind-for’ed manacles”<sup>119</sup> which represent self-imposed self-limitations.

## 2.2 House-elves and Feminism

The fact that house-elves need clothes to be free leads to the parallel of oppressed women, as women are stereotypically obsessed with garments and so the use of clothing is crucial. In many cases, house-elves resemble oppressed and unemancipated women in chauvinist cultures, as Kellner points out<sup>120</sup>. House-elves are uneducated, much like uneducated women who were not allowed to enrol at schools for a considerable part of history. Also, like house-elves, women are those who clean, cook and are unseen (do not bother husbands, owners in the wizarding world) while managing the household.

According to Keller, it is important to review relevant historical stages of feminism in order to fully discuss the unfortunate situation of house-elves with relation to the rights of women. There are three important stages of the phenomenon, namely Liberal feminism, Marxist Feminism and Multi-Cultural Feminism, defined by Rosemarie Tong.

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<sup>115</sup> Howard Zinn, *A People’s History of the United States*, (London: Longman, 1995), 35.

<sup>116</sup> Rowling, *the Goblet of Fire*, 189.

<sup>117</sup> Ostry, “Accepting Mudbloods,” 96.

<sup>118</sup> Carey, “Antislavery Campaign,” 104.

<sup>119</sup> “London by William Blake,” Poetry Foundation, accessed March 1, 2017, <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poems/detail/43673#poem>.

<sup>120</sup> Rivka Temima Kellner, “J. K. Rowling’s Ambivalence Towards Feminism: House Elves – Women in Disguise – in the “Harry Potter” Books” *The Midwest Quarterly* 51, no. 4 (2010), 370.

Liberal feminism is concerned with a problem that the public sphere is dominated by men and women are supposed to stay at home to take care of children and the household. Also, Liberal feminism does not differentiate men and women according to their sex but rather perceives men and women as vessels of intelligence<sup>125</sup>. Keller thus correctly classifies house-elves into the private sphere, as their name implies, simultaneously “having no public voice whatsoever”. Keller adds that, at Hogwarts, the creatures are restricted to stay in the kitchen or common rooms whilst cleaning after the students. Also, house-elves are not perceived as vessels of intelligence and thus some wizards think that the elves are not capable of betrayal because they simply do not perceive the house-elves as beings capable of independent thought<sup>126</sup>.

Marxist feminism classifies women as a kind of proletariat. What is more, women who are doing housework are perceived as an underclass. On the other hand, men are thought to generate “a superstructure (a layer of legal, political, and social ideas) that in turn reinforces the mode of production.”<sup>127</sup> An important aspect of the Marxist feminism is that housework should be treated as a real work which should be paid for.<sup>128</sup> Keller illustrates this issue on Dumbledore who admits that house-elves, witches and wizards should have equal rights. He even offers Dobby a salary. Rowling, as has already been mentioned, turns this important message into a joke (Dobby persuades Dumbledore to offer him less money) and thus makes her views on house-elf slavery ambivalent. Though, it is obvious that Dumbledore is open to treat house-elves as employees rather than slaves<sup>129</sup>.

The third concept regarding feminism is Multi-Cultural feminism which deals with the idea that women of different backgrounds can suffer a different kind of oppression. Also, the fact that women may oppress other women is stressed. According to Keller, to overcome these problems, Multi-Cultural feminists “seek to create ad-hoc coalitions among oppressed women” of various backgrounds<sup>130</sup>. Also, Keller perceives house-

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<sup>125</sup> Rosemarie Tong, *Feminist Thought: A More Comprehensive Introduction* (Boulder, Colo: Westview Press, 2009), 11-38.

<sup>126</sup> Keller, “Women in Disguise,” 371.

<sup>127</sup> Tong, *Feminist Thought*, 97.

<sup>128</sup> Tong, *Feminist Thought*, 39-71 and 173-194.

<sup>129</sup> Keller, “Women in Disguise,” 372.

<sup>130</sup> Keller, “Women in Disguise,” 372.

elves as doubly-oppressed because even witches (suffering from similar kinds of oppression suffered by Muggle women) abuse and exploit house-elves<sup>131</sup>.

To the concept of feminism being reflected in house-elves also explains Dobby's tendency to harm himself. Keller highlights that Dobby behaves like battered women "so convinced that he deserves to be punished" that he ends up beating himself which makes the phenomenon grotesque<sup>132</sup>. Keller also raises a question whether Dobby punishes himself because he is bound to do so by a spell or because he "confuses social norms with the demands of morality"<sup>133</sup> – similarly, women in patriarchal societies perceive their subordination to be not only a societal norm but also a moral requirement<sup>134</sup>.

### 2.3 Goblins, Hagrid and other oppressed creatures

House-elves are not the only language speaking species. There are many others who also have several conflicts with wizards: namely merpeople, centaurs and, the most prominent species, goblins. Goblins are somewhat like house-elves, especially when talking about race and class. Though, according to Peter Dendle, Goblins serve as a parallel to stereotypical Jews, not Afro-American slaves. For instance, Goblins have pointed noses, ears and beard, plus the film representation evokes Jews from Nazi cartoons. They are wealthy and in history had lots of conflicts with wizards, as Professor Binns often mentions during his lectures. Goblins are considered not to be trustworthy and have their specific sense of ownership<sup>135</sup>:

Bill: To a goblin, the rightful and true master of any object is the maker, not the purchaser. All goblin-made objects are, in goblin eyes, rightfully theirs. "

Harry: But if it was bought —

Bill: — then they would consider it rented by the one who had paid the money. They have, however, great difficulty with the idea of goblin-made objects passing from wizard to wizard. ... They consider our habit of keeping goblin-made objects, passing them from wizard to wizard without further payment, little more than theft<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> Keller, "Women in Disguise," 373.

<sup>132</sup> Keller, "Women in Disguise," 375.

<sup>133</sup> Keller, "Women in Disguise," 375.

<sup>134</sup> Keller, "Women in Disguise," 375.

<sup>135</sup> Peter Dendle, "Monsters, creatures, and pets at Hogwarts: Animal stewardship in the world of Harry Potter," in *Critical Perspectives on Harry Potter*, ed. Elizabeth E. Heilman, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2009), 165.

<sup>136</sup> Rowling, *the Deathly Hallows*, 421-422.

This view is very similar to the to the Georgist economy: a belief that a person owns only what he/she produces, anything bought is seen as rented<sup>137</sup>, as explained by Obeng-Odoom. Also, the fact that Hitler considered Jews as a threat was connected to their wealth and consequently banks. Goblins in the wizarding world are bankers and gold miners.

Goblins are not as innocent as house-elves and usually care only about themselves and their belongings. Thus, they do not give rise to sympathetic attitude as house-elves do. For instance, in *HPGF* Ron teasingly asks Hermione whether she wants to start up S. P. U. G. (Society for the Protection of Ugly Goblins) she matter-of-factly replies that “goblins don’t need protection” because “they’re very clever. They’re not like house-elves, who never stick up for themselves”<sup>138</sup>. Though, it is apparent that Rowling is not trying to be anti-Semitic because Rowling clearly demonstrates that wizards feel superior to Goblins – Goblins and some other creatures are not allowed to carry a wand.

There are some creatures which are treated in an abusive and exploitative way – at least for the contemporary real-world citizens, as Dendle points out. For instance, in the narrative, the de-gnoming of the Weasleys’ garden and de-infesting the drapes in the Number Twelve Grimmauld Place serve to entertain the reader. Rowling does not even consider abuse of such lesser creatures as gnomes or pixies<sup>139</sup>. Dendle additionally points out that some creatures may not willingly serve wizards, for example, absurdly dressed dwarves distributing Valentine’s Day cards at Hogwarts look “surly”<sup>140</sup>. Also, we are not sure about the willingness of the intelligent Mandrakes to fight during the Battle of Hogwarts. Finally, a dragon at Gringotts who is bound in chains and thus restricted to live in a dark and small place, trained by the means of abuse inflicted by goblins. Though, wizards did not show “any moral outrage about the means used to keep their treasure safe”<sup>141</sup>.

So far, the wizarding world seems to be almost purely against lesser creatures. However, such assumption is wrong. In fact, as Dendle notices, empathy for animals is the core (among other issues, such as racism) of the set of morals Rowling seems to cherish and wants to present to the reader, consequently rising reader’s sympathy

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<sup>137</sup> Franklin Obeng-Odoom, "Sustainable urban development: A Georgist perspective," in *Untamed urbanisms*, ed. Adriana Allen et al. , (New York: Routledge, 2016), 191-196.

<sup>138</sup> Rowling, *the Goblet of Fire*, 378.

<sup>139</sup> Dendle, “Pets at Hogwarts,” 164.

<sup>140</sup> Rowling, *the Chamber of Secrets*, 250.

<sup>141</sup> Dendle, “Pets at Hogwarts,” 168.



towards certain species<sup>142</sup>. She does so by the means of one character, Hagrid – the ambassador to the world of magical creatures. He shows empathy for various creatures, “especially the ugly, repulsive, or dangerous ones least like to garner sympathy from most casual animal enthusiasts”<sup>143</sup>.

Hagrid cares not only about majestic beasts, such as Hippogriffs, but also about small creatures, for instance, Bowtruckles. Hagrid himself is a half-giant and thus serves as “the boundary, a messenger, a mediator between species and realms, even between culture and nature”<sup>144</sup>, as Iver B. Neumann mentions. Dendle regards Hagrid as “the conscience of the wizarding world at its simplest, purest, and perhaps finest”<sup>145</sup> and states that Hagrid has “primal empathy”<sup>146</sup>. Later he compares Hagrid’s actions with Hermione’s and so the SPEW campaign comes across as dogmatic<sup>147</sup>. Thus, Hagrid is more tolerant than most of the wizarding society. Though, Dumbledore employed Hagrid and a centaur to teach at Hogwarts.

Another species suffering from the stereotypes is a werewolf, namely professor Remus Lupin. As Barratt points out, this species is oppressed because of fear<sup>148</sup>. Lupin’s condition is complicated. He was bitten and thus involuntarily turned into a werewolf. Being a werewolf made him an outcast of the wizarding society: “You don’t know how most of the Wizarding world sees creatures like me! When they know of my affliction, they can barely talk to me!”<sup>149</sup>. He was a popular teacher at Hogwarts before his condition was disclosed in *HPPA*: “This time tomorrow, the owls will start arriving from parents. . . . They will not want a werewolf teaching their children, Harry”<sup>150</sup>. Lupin’s condition can be suppressed by a potion, yet the society still seems to prefer oppression and control. This condition seems to be a metaphor for disability or a handicap. Though, Rowling seems to focus on the society’s reaction (in this case refusal) to diseases and a handicap<sup>151</sup>, as Barratt comments.

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<sup>142</sup> Dendle, “Pets at Hogwarts,” 164.

<sup>143</sup> Dendle, “Pets at Hogwarts,” 165.

<sup>144</sup> Iver B. Neumann, “Naturalizing Geography: Harry Potter and the Realms of Muggles, Magic Folks, and Giants” *Harry Potter and International Relations*, ed. Daniel H. Nexon et al. , (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2006), 165.

<sup>145</sup> Dendle, “Pets at Hogwarts,” 165.

<sup>146</sup> Dendle, “Pets at Hogwarts,” 165.

<sup>147</sup> Dendle, “Pets at Hogwarts,” 165.

<sup>148</sup> Barratt, “Race, Species, and Power,” 79.

<sup>149</sup> Rowling, *the Deathly Hallows*, 172.

<sup>150</sup> J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc. , 2014), 450. In text referred to as *HPPA*.

<sup>151</sup> Barratt, “Race, Species, and Power,” 79.

### 3 Gender issues

#### 3.1 Gender, gender stereotypes and sexism

Gender is a polysemous word, as mentioned in the Oxford English Dictionary, it means a grammatical term referring to nouns designated as masculine, feminine or gender neutral; also, there are two sub-definitions. One meaning “[e]ither of the two sexes (male and female), especially when considered with reference to social and cultural differences rather than biological ones”. The second meaning gender as a biological aspect, not mentioning the social environment. All definitions introduce classificatory words describing groups that share certain features. Though, the meaning considering the social aspect, not the biological one, came to a common use in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century<sup>152</sup>.

The intention to differentiate gender and sex was not unconscious. As Lauren Posey argues, it was an “effort to make English reflect that how a person self-identifies in relation to social factors can be completely separate from biological sex”<sup>153</sup>.

In other words, sex and gender have different connotations. Sex means the biological reality – being either a man or a woman. On the other hand, gender takes into account the social and cultural differences resulting in identities such as masculine, feminine and queer – gender identity not corresponding to heterosexual norms<sup>154</sup>, as stated in the OED.

Social and cultural differences have different effects on males and females resulting in different expectations and behaviour. According to Sandra Bem, an individual acquires the sex-specific skills and personality corresponding with his/her sex as defined by a specific culture while growing up. This concept is called sex-typing<sup>155</sup>. Also, according to March, Smyth and Mukhopadhyay, differences in gender behaviour are defined by a gender analysis. Such analysis focuses on differences between men and women concerning society and culture, for instance, in the economic field. The aim of the analysis is to find whether there are any inequalities between men and women in a

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<sup>152</sup> “Gender” Oxford English Dictionary, accessed February 20, 2017, <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/gender>. Oxford English Dictionary abbreviated as OED.

<sup>153</sup> Lauren Posey, “Gender,” in *Critical Quarterly*, 58, no. 3 (2016), 95.

<sup>154</sup> “Queer” Oxford English Dictionary, accessed February 20, 2017, <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/queer>.

<sup>155</sup> Sandra Lipsitz Bem, “Gender Schema Theory: A Cognitive Account of Sex Typing,” in *Psychological Review*, 88, no. 4 (1981), 354.

specific field<sup>156</sup>. Gender analysis can also be applied to literature. The focus is on the way gender identity influences both the author and reader. Such analysis also examines whether characters reflect social norms, which keep usually one gender unequal, or are against them<sup>157</sup>. Such analysis is part of my research on gender depicted in *Harry Potter*. Parts of the gender analysis, relevant to this thesis, are gender roles and stereotypes.

As Linda Lindsey explains, gender roles are closely associated with status and social norms:

The status of mother calls for expected roles involving love, nurturing, self-sacrifice, homemaking, and availability. The status of father calls for expected roles of breadwinner, disciplinarian, home technology expert, and ultimate decision maker in the household.

Though society provides space for a degree of flexibility, in some areas concerning women and a change in a society, it is difficult for a woman to be an excellent mother and to comply with employer's requirements at the same time. For instance, during the 20<sup>th</sup>-century trend of women becoming part of the workforce<sup>158</sup>.

Social statuses and roles help form gender stereotypes, meaning "oversimplified conceptions that people who occupy the same status group share certain traits they have in common", as Lindsey explains. She also divides stereotypes into those with negative or positive traits, though the negative ones are more frequent. Also, such traits are to be acquired by virtue or biological predispositions. For instance, women are considered flighty because of their "uncontrollable raging hormones"<sup>159</sup>. Consequently, negative traits may result in sexism – "prejudice, stereotyping, or discrimination, typically against women on the basis of sex"<sup>160</sup>, as explained in OED. Also, sexism targeted against men is called misandry, and a term misogyny is related to women.

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<sup>156</sup> Candida March, Ines A. Smyth and Maitrayee Mukhopadhy, *A Guide to Gender-Analysis Frameworks* (Oxford: Oxfam, 1999), 8-17.

<sup>157</sup> Shari Benstock, Suzanne Ferris and Susanne Woods, *A Handbook of Literary Feminisms* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 153.

<sup>158</sup> Linda L. Lindsey, *Gender Roles: A Sociological Perspective* (London: Routledge, 2016), 3.

<sup>159</sup> Lindsey, *Gender Roles*, 3.

<sup>160</sup> "Sexism" Oxford English Dictionary, accessed February 20, 2017, <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/sexism>.

### 3.2 Gender and gender stereotypes in the *Harry Potter* books

The *Harry Potter* books are narrated through a male hero and the most powerful figures (either evil or good) are male – for instance, Dumbledore, Severus Snape being the double agent or Voldemort. Gender issues are widely discussed among scholars and there are lots of different opinions and points of view on this topic. Though, most of the academics agree on the fact that the first four books are not as progressive as later instalments, and that the series is not feminist.

Elizabeth Heilman and Trevor Donaldson argue that, in the first four books, females are featured only in inferior positions of power and authority, replicating certain common cultural stereotypes, for instance, girls are portrayed as emotional, giggly, and gossipy<sup>161</sup>. They also argue that, by the end of the series, there are approximately two hundred male characters and around one-hundred and fifty female ones. What is more, the males have a much important role in the narrative<sup>162</sup>. For instance, in the first four books, we get to know that there were mainly male ministers and employees at the Ministry of Magic, except for Bertha Jorkins, who is considered gossipy, forgetful and is not respected by others.

Heilman and Donaldson additionally argue that most of the irritating characters are female, for instance, Mrs Figg, Professor Trelawney and Rita Skeeter<sup>163</sup>. On the other hand, they also consider the latter to be “the most powerful, independently professional woman in the series” who is constantly disrespected by Harry because she is untrustworthy<sup>164</sup> as “her lies define her career”<sup>165</sup>. Skeeter is, in fact, influencing almost the whole male-dominant society and its public opinion, by exposing the truth about Dumbledore. She also influenced the public opinion through *The Daily Prophet* which is the most-read newspaper in the wizarding world. The wizarding community took the news from it as facts and began to question it only when Harry Potter and Dumbledore contradicted certain facts concerning Voldemort. Still, the majority of the community took the side of the newspapers which suggests the lack of independent thought in the society.

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<sup>161</sup> Elizabeth E. Heilman and Trevor Donaldson, “From Sexist to (sort-of) Feminist: Representations of Gender in the Harry Potter Series,” in *Critical perspectives on Harry Potter*, ed. Elizabeth E. Heilman, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2009), 139 and 150.

<sup>162</sup> Heilman and Donaldson, “Representations of Gender,” 141.

<sup>163</sup> Heilman and Donaldson, “Representations of Gender,” 142.

<sup>164</sup> Heilman and Donaldson, “Representations of Gender,” 144.

<sup>165</sup> Heilman and Donaldson, “Representations of Gender,” 145.

Another woman who seems to portray certain gender stereotypes is Molly Weasley, the mother of seven children and a wife. In the first four books, she is depicted only as a housewife in a very traditional relationship as Molly is at home, whereas her husband Arthur Weasley works at the Ministry of Magic. Sarah Zettel argues that the depiction of a traditional relationship is justified. Traditional relationships, in fact, do exist. Zettel additionally suggests that to erase the traditional family structure, it would take a lot of space and it would need to be explained in much more detail<sup>166</sup>. Consequently, Rowling seems to depict family in an authentic way and shifts the focus from gender issues to the more discussed racial issues. It is important to point out that from *HPOP*, Mrs Weasley is also a member of the Order of the Phoenix – an organization of wizards fighting against Voldemort and the Death Eaters. Thus, she is not only a good housewife but also a powerful witch. In *HPDH*, Mrs Weasley even fights and kills one of the maniacal Death Eaters, Bellatrix Lestrange, in order to protect her daughter Ginny Weasley.

Heilman and Donaldson further point out Dolores Umbridge as another female character affecting the entire wizarding community by running the registration of Muggle-borns.<sup>167</sup>

In *HPOP*, new, strong female characters are introduced, namely, the already mentioned Dolores Umbridge and Nymphadora Tonks. According to Ximena C. Gallardo and C. Jason Smith, both women challenge “traditional notions of femininity as displayed in the previous four volumes”<sup>168</sup>. To illustrate, Tonks is unconventional, not good at household spells, “is a forceful, opinionated and independent woman”, who “eventually marries a werewolf”<sup>169</sup> and is also a powerful Auror – an officer investigating crimes related to dark wizards, witches and the Dark Arts. By marrying a werewolf, Tonks shows that she does not care about social tolerance because the marriage makes her also an outcast, just as werewolves are.

Gallardo and Smith further comment that Tonks’ death challenges expected female roles. As a new mother, she actively participates in the Battle of Hogwarts and in the end dies. Also, along with Ginny and grandmother Augusta Longbottom, they reject the

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<sup>166</sup> Sarah Zettel, “Hermione Granger and the Charge of Sexism” in *Mapping the World of the Sorcerer’s Apprentice: An Unauthorized Exploration of the Harry Potter series*, ed. Mercedes Lackey and Leah Wilson (Dallas: Benbella Books, 2005), 91.

<sup>167</sup> Heilman and Donaldson, “Representations of Gender,” 144

<sup>168</sup> Ximena C. Gallardo and C. Jason Smith, “Happily Ever After: Harry Potter and the Quest for the Domestic,” in *Reading Harry Potter again : New Critical Essays*, ed. Giselle Liza Anatol (Westport, Conn: Praeger Publishers, 2009), 92.

<sup>169</sup> Gallardo and Smith, “Happily Ever After,” 93.

cultural imperative that they as women – either as mothers, the youngsters or elderly – should be hidden away from danger while males fight<sup>170</sup>.

Gallardo and Smith additionally emphasise that Tonks is a clear parallel to Fleur Delacour who is “an object of desire for teen boys and of envy for girls, a victim in need of rescue in the Triwizard Tournament”<sup>171</sup>.

Another new, evil character is Dolores Umbridge. At first sight, she reminds Harry of “a large, pale toad”<sup>172</sup> but Umbridge almost performs in a feminine way because we know that she is in fact quite sadistic. To seem sweet, she speaks “in a fluttery, girlish, high-pitched voice”<sup>173</sup>, wears a bow in her hair and her office is decorated with images of kittens. Gallardo and Smith consider her appearance and fashion to be only props “in her crusade for power and control”<sup>174</sup>. What is more, they compare Umbridge with Nancy Reagan, because they both epitomise the ideal and proper women who are also politically powerful, consolidating powers behind the scenes<sup>175</sup>. Umbridge would even use the Unforgivable Cruciatus Curse against a student because she believed it is for the good of society. Gallardo and Smith claim that her excessiveness in femininity and evil-doing put her beyond gender stereotypes she embodies<sup>176</sup>. Even Stephen King in his review of *HPOP* compared Umbridge with a male serial killer, labelling her “the greatest make-believe villain to come along since Hannibal Lecter”<sup>177</sup>, meaning that her “villainy [is] beyond simple considerations of sex”<sup>178</sup>, as Gallardo and Smith further comment.

### 3.3 Witches and sexism

Since the series is not feminist, it is important to decide whether it is sexist. Sarah Zettel rejects such a sexist notion and proves her point by analysing three different articles<sup>179</sup>. Those claim that the series is, in fact, sexist by portraying women inferior to men, less

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<sup>170</sup> Gallardo and Smith, “Happily Ever After,” 94.

<sup>171</sup> Gallardo and Smith, “Happily Ever After,” 93.

<sup>172</sup> Rowling, *the Order of the Phoenix*, 134.

<sup>173</sup> Rowling, *the Order of the Phoenix*, 135.

<sup>174</sup> Gallardo and Smith, “Happily Ever After,” 94.

<sup>175</sup> Gallardo and Smith, “Happily Ever After,” 94.

<sup>176</sup> Gallardo and Smith, “Happily Ever After,” 94.

<sup>177</sup> Stephen King, “Potter Gold,” review of *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, by J.K. Rowling. *Entertainment Weekly*, August 1, 2009, <http://ew.com/books/2009/08/01/harry-potter-and-order-phoenix-4/>.

<sup>178</sup> Gallardo and Smith, “Happily Ever After,” 95.

<sup>179</sup> By Christine Schoefer, Natasha Whitton and Jane Elliott.

likeable than men and that the main female character, Hermione, is less powerful than men.<sup>180</sup>

Zettel additionally explains that all three essays share one weakness which is a lack of context. For instance, one article describes gender issues only in the first book without taking into consideration the other already released books. Another article, by Schoefer, uses quotes without context when assessing Ginny's character:

"Stupid little Ginny" unwittingly becomes the tool of evil when she takes to writing in a magical diary. For months and months, "the foolish little brat" confides "all her pitiful worries and woes" ("how she didn't think famous good great Harry Potter would 'ever' like her") to these pages. We are told how boring it is to listen to "the silly little troubles of an eleven-year-old girl."<sup>181</sup>

Zettel correctly objects to this evidence because it is not uttered by an omniscient narrator but by the villain and a mass murderer, Lord Voldemort. Thus, readers do not take his statements as accurate but as flawed. In fact, as Zettel further suggests, Ginny is intelligent, brave, and adept at magic and athletics<sup>182</sup>.

Also, Schoefer and Elliott support the sexist view because, according to them, the authority of women is not appealing in the books. In Elliot's essay "Stepping on the Harry Potter Buzz", published in bitchmagazine.com, Elliot claims that the female authority is closely connected to a recital of rules, demonstrated by Hermione predominantly<sup>183</sup>. Melanie J. Cordova interprets Hermione's position as a knowledge-bearer. Cordova additionally explains that, in the narrative, the position is rendered as "hysterical" or as a "behaviour that renders her servile"<sup>184</sup> which is Harry's interpretation. For instance, in *HPDH*, when Ron returns to Harry and Hermione who are hiding in the forest, Harry observes that "[h]er voice was now so shrill only bats would be able to hear it soon, but she had reached a level of indignation that rendered her temporarily speechless"<sup>185</sup>. Also, he described her laugh as "a high-pitched, out-of-control sound"<sup>186</sup>. Cordova views Hermione's behaviour as hysterical<sup>187</sup>, which I think

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<sup>180</sup> Zettel, "the Charge of Sexism," 84.

<sup>181</sup> Christina Schoefer, "Harry Potter's girl trouble," *Salon*, January 13, 2000, accessed March 20, 2017, <http://www.salon.com/2000/01/13/potter/>.

<sup>182</sup> Zettel, "the Charge of Sexism," 86.

<sup>183</sup> Zettel, "the Charge of Sexism," 87.

<sup>184</sup> Melanie J. Cordova, "'Because I'm a Girl, I Suppose': Gender Lines and Narrative Perspective," in *Mythlore* 33.2, Spring/Summer 2015, 23.

<sup>185</sup> Rowling, *the Deathly Hallows*, 311.

<sup>186</sup> Rowling, *the Deathly Hallows*, 310.

<sup>187</sup> Cordova, "Narrative Perspective," 26.

is appropriate for the situation. It also suggests, that Hermione may be viewed as a motherly figure, not just a teenage girl. Also, Hermione's reaction is understandable, provided that we later on find out that she is in love with Ron and was scared to death what may happen to Ron when he left her and Harry in the forest.

Harry and Ron are usually annoyed at her for her constant remarks about rules, though, in the end, Hermione proves to be right and thinking ahead about consequences. It is important to realise, as Zettel stresses, that "the disdain comes from the other characters, not from the author"<sup>188</sup>. If so, "Hermione would fail ... apologize and change her mind ... She would be untrustworthy and belittled. She's not"<sup>189</sup>. What is more, even though Harry and Ron often scold Hermione, she does what her judgement (not the boys' judgement) tells her it is right, which makes her strong and independent character<sup>190</sup>.

Regarding girls at Hogwarts, academics criticise that the girls cry and even Hermione is portrayed crying, which makes her vulnerable<sup>191</sup>, as Heilman argues. On the other hand, Zettel disagrees because she believes that Rowling depicts people in "all shapes, sizes and mode of behaviour"<sup>192</sup>. Some real girls do giggle, shriek and cry, whilst some are different, thus, Zettel rejects the notion "that we must tell girls that the only way to be valid human beings is to turn themselves into boys"<sup>193</sup>.

The remark about Hermione's vulnerability is connected to the often-criticized troll incident in *HPPS* – Hermione is trapped in a girl's bathroom with a troll. It is true that Hermione needs rescuing but there are several pieces of context which shed a new light on the situation, as Zettel explains. Hermione is in trouble because the boys and other men made a series of mistakes, not because she is crying. First, the troll is released by a male professor Quirrell, second, Hermione flees to the bathroom because of Ron's insults directed at her and lastly, ill-informed Harry and Ron lock Hermione inside the bathroom which prevents her from escaping. In the end, the males (including the hero) are the source of Hermione's jeopardy, not Hermione herself<sup>194</sup>.

Zettel also disagrees with frequent claims that, in the narrative, Hermione serves as a poor girl who needs to be rescued and exists to let the boys show their heroism. Zettel

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<sup>188</sup> Zettel, "the Charge of Sexism," 94.

<sup>189</sup> Zettel, "the Charge of Sexism," 95.

<sup>190</sup> Zettel, "the Charge of Sexism," 95.

<sup>191</sup> Heilman and Donaldson, "Representations of Gender," 149.

<sup>192</sup> Zettel, "the Charge of Sexism," 98.

<sup>193</sup> Zettel, "the Charge of Sexism," 98.

<sup>194</sup> Zettel, "the Charge of Sexism," 93.



further points out that Hermione is “a friend and an advisor... able to protect and defend, and think ahead when the boys are going along blindly”. The latter demonstrated by her plan how to keep Dumbledore Army confidential<sup>195</sup>. Zettel’s reasoning regarding sexism seems right, provided that one looks at the presented evidence, as other scholars do not provide their readers with the context.

All in all, scholars have agreed upon the fact that the first four books are less gender-balanced. From *HPOP*, the roles of women shift to different views, resulting in evil and independent characters, meaning, they are traversing gender stereotypes previously presented at the beginning of the septology.

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<sup>195</sup> Zettel, “the Charge of Sexism,” 93.

## 4 Conclusion

This thesis explores various social issues in the wizarding world of Harry Potter. The analysis of all seven books revealed that some issues are more similar to the real-world ones and that some are not. For instance, the wizarding world class stratification is not based on the wealth and property but on the biological characteristics – the purity of blood, but not colour of skin. The society is divided into Pure-bloods, Half-bloods and Muggle-borns. Pure-bloods can be radical regarding their lineage purity which results into hatred towards Muggle-borns, Muggles and magical creatures – suggesting racism. Various themes have been proved regarding Pure-bloods. For instance, the resemblance of the pure-blood radicals and Voldemort with Nazi agenda and Hitler. Thus, Muggle-borns and Muggles are perceived almost in the same way as Jews and other groups targeted by the Nazi. Also, there is a parallel between the school segregation in the US and the one proposed by Salazar Slytherin, the co-founder of Hogwarts. Though, Muggle-borns were not forbidden to enter the school eventually. Also, the obsession with pure lineage is similar to the US miscegenation laws.

The wizarding world has four main stances regarding Muggles. They either hate them, are indifferent to them, are interested in them, and they sympathise with them. Though, in most of the cases, the people of the wizarding world feel superior to Muggles. Some attitudes resemble white men's stances on less developed cultures during the Victorian period, for instance, the fascination with exotic and also the superiority of white/pure race.

Regarding slavery, in the thesis, two aspects proved. The house-elves, in fact, do resemble Afro-American slaves, particularly, the attitude of house-elf owners resembles that of slave-owners. Also, the inherited enslavement is the same. What is different, though, is the fact that house-elves do not mind being enslaved which leads to the second attitude – resembling women. House-elves do the same chores as housewives did throughout history. Also, house-elves reflect some historic characteristics of women, namely, not having the freedom of choice, being inferior to their husband/owner in the case of house-elves. Even some attitudes towards women of extremely patriarchal societies are similar, for instance, no education and restriction of basic rights.

With house-elves, Hermione's view is crucial because it seems to be one of the few critical voices of the wizarding society. Though, Rowling makes her efforts vain.

Hermione is often depicted as a naïve teenager who serves as an example how not to run a political campaign, signifying Rowling's uncertainty as she raises the awareness of the house-elf welfare and then sabotages Hermione's efforts.

Other creatures are also oppressed. Though, the oppression of some creatures, for instance, gnomes, is not pointed out by Rowling. Also, the oppression of Goblins is connected to their mean nature. Some scholars connected the depiction of Goblins to Jews and agreed that Rowling is not anti-Semitic. Werewolves, on the other hand, are pitied and the society's reaction to their condition is what matters. Werewolves are parallel to people with chronic diseases and how their condition changes their social status, the result being an outcast.

In terms of gender, it was proved that the series does present some gender stereotypes (mainly in the first four books) which are later challenged with characters who represent completely new roles, such as an evil female character and a woman who does not comply with deeply established gender stereotypes and roles. It was also proved that the series is not sexist, as the main female character Hermione is not a weak character. She is often crucial for the unravelling of mysteries and is also the rational one in the trio, as she often warns the boys of the dangers and problems which may lay ahead of them.

## Resumé

Díla J. K. Rowling pro mnohé dospělé změnily pohled na dětskou literaturu. Ta většinou není brána tak vážně, jako jiné literární žánry. Důvodem je poměrně krátká historie dětské literatury a také menší množství mistrovských děl. Knihy o Harrym Potterovi jsou také často znehodnocovány, jelikož jde o poměrně novou sérii, která je i marketingově velice úspěšná, tudíž ji někteří akademici neberou tolik vážně.

Hlavní tezí této práce je dokázat mnohohrstevnost kouzelnického světa a najít paralely se světem reálným, které se týkající společenských otázek. Dále také poukázat na zobrazení genderu a související genderové stereotypy.

Série o Harrym Potterovi se dá zařadit do tří žánrů: school story, fantasy a bildungsroman. School story je žánr, ve kterém se příběh odehrává ve školním prostředí. V britském prostředí se příběh většinou odehrával na internátních školách, proto byly postavy převážně jednoho pohlaví. Pro school story je také typické, že první lidé, které hrdina potká, se stanou jeho nejlepšími přáteli. Dále hlavní hrdina musí dodržovat nová pravidla. Toto také platí o sérii o Harrym Potterovi, jelikož Harry potká Rona a Hermionu během cesty vlakem do Bradavic a tam se dozvídá o nových, pro něj podivných, pravidlech.

Dalším žánrem je fantasy. Akademici se shodují, že je velmi těžké tento žánr přesně definovat, proto se většinou vysvětluje v porovnání se science-fiction. To znamená, že fantasy je o nereálných a nemožných věcech, kdežto science-fiction je o nereálných ale vědecky možných věcech. Fantasy žánr mnohokrát autorům slouží k tomu, aby mohli vytvářet světy, které se podobají tomu skutečnému. To samé se dá říci i o kouzelnickém světě Harryho Pottera, kde existuje mnoho paralel s tím skutečným, ať už jde o rasismus nebo otroctví. Ve fantasy světech se často také vyskytují různé nadpřirozené bytosti.

Žánr Bildungsroman se zabývá psychologickým i společenským vývojem hlavního hrdiny, především jeho dospíváním. Rowling klade téměř stejný důraz na emocionální vývoj hlavního hrdiny jako na popis děje.

Prvním rozebíraným tématem jsou otázky týkající se společenské třídy, etnicity a rasismu. U společenské třídy je důležité rozlišení tříd podle výše příjmů. Etnicita je užita při rozlišení kouzelníků a mudlů (nekouzelníků), jelikož nejde o jiné rasy, ale pouze o skupiny s jinými zvyky, dějinami, a náboženstvím. S etnicitou je také často spojen pojem rasa, který popisuje biologické vlastnosti. V kontextu rozebíraných knih

jde o čistotu krve neboli původu. Společenská třída není v kouzelnickém světě založena na výši příjmu, jako spíše právě na oné čistotě krve. I když je pravda, že rod Malfoyových spadá do vyšší společenské třídy, jelikož jde o movitý rod s čistokrevným původem. Další třídy jsou nejasné a těžko se určují. Proto se akademici zaměřují především na rozdělení společnosti podle čistoty krve: čistokrevní, ti se smíšeným původem a ti, kteří pocházejí z mudlovské rodiny.

Radikální čistokrevní kouzelníci se netají tím, že nenávidí kouzelníky z mudlovských rodin, jelikož je považují za nečisté a za odpad. Tento postoje je často spojován s rasismem a nacistickou ideologií. Co se týče rasismu, podoba je tu hlavně v odporu k míšení ras, jelikož i Voldemort (zloduch celé série) dává najevo znechucení nad představou míšení mudlovské a kouzelnické krve. Ve Spojených státech amerických byly teprve až v roce 1967 zákony proti rasovému míšení označené jako protiústavní. Další paralelou k americké historii je rasová segregace ve školních institucích, které chtěl v kouzelnickém světě zavést Salazar Zmijozel, který je mnohými považován za prvního čistokrevného radikála, co se týče omezování práv kouzelníků z mudlovských rodin.

V mnoha bodech se ideologie čistokrevných a nacistů shoduje, například: plán vymýtit nečisté z povrchu země, dále povinná registrace určité skupiny a ve světě Harryho Pottera dokonce dojde k odebrání kouzelnické hůlky těm, kteří patří do mudlovských rodin. Voldemort a jeho stoupenci, především Smrtijedi, mluví o mudlech a mudlovských dětech jako o nemocech a parazitech, což je podobné zobrazení židů v nacistickém dokumentárním filmu z roku 1940 zvaném *Věčný žid*, kde jsou židé v ghettech srovnáváni s krysami ve stokách. Čistokrevní sympatizanti s kouzelníky z mudlovských rodin jsou často také označováni za zrádce a jsou považováni za ostudu čisté kouzelnické krve.

Samotný Voldemort je paralelou Hitlera. Oba nesplňovali charakteristiky jejich rasové ideologie – Voldemort je míšenec a Hitler nebyl árijec, ale za to byl částečný žid – navíc oba se o jejich pravém původu nikomu nezmiňovali.

J. K. Rowling se ale nesnaží rozdělovat společnost černobíle, jelikož existují i čistokrevní kouzelníci, kteří jsou tolerantní vůči mudlům, mudlovským kouzelníkům, a i různým kouzelným bytostem. Autorka se snaží na takovýchto sympatizantech a

protikladném Voldemortovi, který je vlastně smíšeného, nečistého původu, ukázat, že nezáleží na tom, do jaké rodiny se narodí. Spíše záleží na tom, co z nich vyrostе.

Další rozebírané téma je vztah kouzelníků k mudlům. Jsou zde čtyři hlavní postoje: nenávisť, netečnost, obdiv a sympatie. Radikálové se například snažili prosadit zákon, který by povoloval lov mudlů. Co se týče netečnosti, kouzelnická společnost si při povstání Voldemorta a Smrtijedů nevšímala podezřelých úmrtí mudlů, které byly jednoznačně způsobeny oním zloduchem a jeho stoupenci. Navíc se ministr kouzel, Cornelius Popletal, k britskému premiérovi choval jako k dítěti, a ne sobě rovnému. Arthur Weasley zde představuje onen zmíněný obdiv. Na druhou stranu, i odbor který se zabývá zneužíváním mudlovských artefaktů naznačuje, že mudlovské věci kouzelníkům připomínají artefakty primitivních kultur, což je podobným představám o méně vyspělých kulturách během viktoriánské doby. Poslední postoj vůči mudlům značí sympatii, která vychází z představy, že pokud se k utlačování mudlů kouzelníci postaví zády, mohou být další v pořadí kouzelníci s mudlovským původem a po nich klidně ti se smíšeným původem. Jednoduše se cítí být, co se týče biologického hlediska, sobě rovni.

Poslední část se zabývá symbolikou jmen, která podtrhává rysy a postoje některých postav v příběhu.

Třetí kapitola se zabývá otroctvím domácích skřítků a dalšími utlačovanými tvory. K otroctví skřítků se vážou dvě paralely. První je spojená s otroctvím Afro-Američanů a druhá s vyobrazením žen v patriarchální společnosti, tudíž jde o feministický pohled. Stejně jako otroci v USA jsou skřítki považováni za věc, která se dědí a jsou jí odepřena základní práva. V kouzelnickém světě je to např. zákaz nošení hůlky. Označení domácí skřítek naznačuje, že mohou existovat i jiní skřítki. Zde se akademici shodují, že jde opět o paralelu k černošským otrokům, kteří pracovali na plantážích, jelikož mimo domácí skřítky mohou existovat i plantážní skřítki. I mluva domácích skřítků je podobná mluvě černochoů amerického jihu.

Kouzelníci se k problému práv domácích skřítků staví netečně, jelikož sami skřítki chtějí pracovat pro své pány. Proto jsou zde dvě paralely a druhá je právě spojená s onou touhou sloužit. Mnoho badatelů toto spojuje s ženami v domácnosti minulých století, kdy byly odkázané na práci v domácnosti a byla jim odepřena práva, která byla

vyhraněna pouze pro mužskou část společnosti. Keller zde určuje tři druhy feminismu: liberální, marxistický a multirasový feminismus.

Domácí skřítci nejsou jedinými utlačovanými tvory. Jsou tu třeba skřeti, vlkodlaci, a i takové výjimky jako Hagrid, šafář a klíčník v Bradavicích, který je poloobr. Skřeti jsou většinou zaměstnanci v bankách nebo dolují zlato. Proto zde existuje paralela s židy. Skřeti mají dokonce židovskou stereotypickou podobu, jako je například dlouhý, křivý nos. Skřeti jsou v sérii zobrazeni jako nevypočitatelná a zlá stvoření, což vede k možnému anti-semitismu. Tento názor je ale vyvrácen většinou akademických badatelů, jelikož skřeti jsou přeci jen jsou považováni za podřadné kouzelníků a také nemohou vlastnit hůlku.

Co se týče vlkodlaků, u nich není kladen důraz na jejich hendikep, ale na reakci společnosti. Ten, kdo je pokousán vlkodlakem a později se v jednoho přemění, se automaticky stává vyvržencem společnosti. Tato tendence naznačuje, že kouzelníci nepovažují magické bytosti za individuální entity, ale za skupiny, které podrobují zažitým stereotypům. Již zmíněný Hagrid je jakýmsi velvyslancem utlačovaných bytostí, protože on sám jakožto kříženec, podřadná bytost, se stará o malé, velké, majestátní i ošklivé a nebezpečné tvory, které zbytek společnosti zavrhuje. Společně s Brumbálem se tedy snaží přistupovat k jednotlivým tvorům bez předsudků, protože i Brumbál zaměstnal poloobra a kentaura jako učitele.

U společenských otázek týkajících se genderu bylo zapotřebí nadefinovat role a stereotypy genderu a také sexismus, který je s těmito stereotypy úzce spojen. Genderová role je taková role, kterou společnost od určitého genderu očekává, ať už v rámci společnosti nebo biologie. Gendereové stereotypy jsou zjednodušené představy o maskulinním muži a femininní ženě, tedy jak se správný muž a žena má či nemá chovat. Tyto stereotypy mohou negativně hodnotit postavení žen a tím způsobovat sexismus, který postihuje především ženy (misogynie).

Mnoho akademiků sérii o Harrym Potterovi kritizuje právě kvůli zobrazení genderu. V kouzelnickém světě jsou totiž také určité stereotypy. Paní Weasleyová je v prvním čtyřech knihách zobrazená jako typická žena v tradiční domácnosti – vaří, uklízí, stará se o děti a nechodí do práce. Pravdou ale je, že od pátého dílu je to i matka, která se nebojí bojovat proti silám zla, jelikož je aktivní členkou Fénixova řádu. Od pátého dílu také přibývá více ženských postav, především Nymfadora Tonksová a Dolores

Umbridgeová. Obě boří zažitá stereotypy. Tonkssová není zběhlá v uklízacích kouzlech a pracuje jako bystrozor, což je velmi nebezpečná práce, při které bojuje s uživateli černé magie. Umbridgeová boří zažitá měřítká v jiném směru. Její vzhled je sladký a dívčí. Ve skutečnosti je to ale sadistická žena, která by pro dobro společnosti klidně mučila i studenty Bradavic. Stephen King ji dokonce přirovna k Hannibalu Lecterovi.

Postava Hermiony Grangerové je častokrát rozebírána z pohledu sexismu. Někteří tvrdí, že je Hermiona zobrazená jen jako malá, slabá a uplakaná dívka, která ostatní neustále obtěžuje připomínáním různých pravidel. To ale Sarah Zettel povedeně vyvrací tím, že mnoho kritiků při prezentování svých názorů vynechává důležitý kontext. Hermiona je otravná jen z pohledu postav, ale ne autorky, jelikož Hermioně nakonec dává za pravdu. Co se týče pláče a slabosti, mnozí mluví o incidentu s trollem v *Harry Potter a kámen mudrců*, kde ji musí zachránit Harry a Ron. Zettel opět chytře uvažuje, že nebýt série chyb mužských postav, nemusela by se vůbec do takovéto situace dostat. V genderové části jsou také zmíněny narativní techniky, ve kterých někdy autorka dokonce podtrhuje onu kritizovanou hysterii postav, která má ve výsledku své odůvodnění.

V závěru práce je shrnuto, že některé sociální aspekty jsou velmi podobné těm z reálného světa (rasismus, nacismus, otroctví a genderové stereotypy) a jiné už méně, především rozdělení do společenských tříd se liší už v základní definici.



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