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„Wizarding Supremacy: Discrimination and Racist Ideologies in Harry Potter"

verfasst von / submitted by

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List of Abbreviations

HP1   *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone (1997)*

HP2   *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets (1998)*

HP3   *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban (1999)*

HP4   *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire (2000)*

HP5   *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix (2003)*

HP6   *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince (2005)*

HP7   *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows (2007)*

All quotations are taken from the 2014 Bloomsbury edition (see Bibliography).

1 Introduction

"If you want to know what a man's like, take a good look at how he treats his inferiors, not his equals." (HP4 443)

There is a widespread belief in our contemporary society that racism is a thing of the past. After all, the US had a Black president for 8 years and numerous popular celebrities and athletes are People of Color. However, even though slavery was abolished over a century ago, the gap between White[1] people and non-White people is far from closing. The fact is that in the US, arrest and incarceration rates and school dropout rates among minorities are much higher than in other countries. Furthermore, People of Color still face discrimination when it comes to income, housing and education (Delgado and Stefancic 9–11).

Numerous scholars support the view that racism is not a biological but rather a social concept that is used to maintain White supremacy (e.g. Delgado and Stefancic; Miles; Montagu *Myth*; Omi and Winant). A close look at how this concept has changed over time attests to their belief. Racism has always existed in societies and cultures throughout history. In ancient times, it manifested in oppression of peoples that had lost wars. With colonization in the 15th and 16th century, subjugation of colonized groups was legitimized by assigning inferiority to people with different religion or culture. However, with the beginning of the slave trade people began to differentiate between each other by physical features. The start of the slave trade also brought with it the idea of distinct races of humanity (cf. Singer; Arndt). This view persisted throughout the 19th century, until various scholars refuted

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[1] In this thesis, "Black" and "White" will be capitalized to emphasize the social and cultural denotation of people with different skin colors and ethnic backgrounds. Whenever the term "People of Color" is used, it refers to ethnic minorities in the United States, such as African Americans, Latinx people, Asian Americans and Indigenous peoples.

the theory (e.g. Darwin; Ananthaswamy; Hooton; Lewontin et al.). In the 20th century, notions of race and racism shifted towards a social perspective. More recent research agrees that differences between populations exist but that those differences are culturally determined (cf. Hall *Triangle*; Montagu *Concept*; Omi and Winant; Payne). In recent years, Critical Race Theory has emerged as a field of research that promotes intersectionality and relates racism to other issues such as queer theory or feminism (cf. Delgado and Stefancic).

Despite the progress that was made over the course of the 20th century, racism still affects millions of people. Systemic racism is the main problem many People of Color still face. It becomes apparent in the education system, in job opportunities for ethnic minorities and in their incarceration rates. Moreover, police brutality towards People of Color has risen during the past years. Such developments, however, are not surprising, considering that in many countries right-wing parties are once again gaining power. In contrast, numerous anti-racism organizations, too, have sprouted in recent years, for instance the Black Lives Matter movement, which pursues the goal of raising awareness of systemic violence against Black people and People of Color.

Obviously, these issues of race and racism are also reflected in literature for children. During the 20th century, children's literature was mostly one-sided and prejudiced. Stories in children's books either did not deal with ethnic diversity and racism at all, or they were biased. In the last few years, however, advocates for diversity in children's literature have emerged to not only promote diverse literature but also diverse authors (cf. Low and Ehrlich; We Need Diverse Books; Other Award). Especially discussions on race and racism are omnipresent and have been part of literary research for years. While the primary and obvious topic in the *Harry*

Potter series is the fight against evil, the veiled notions of racism are a crucial part of the wizarding world and provoked numerous studies.

From the first book published in 1997 to the latest movie released in 2018, the world of *Harry Potter* has cast a spell on its global fanbase. The wizard with the lightning scar has captured the hearts of its readers and J.K. Rowling has created an imaginary world that depicts universal problems, concerning society as well as individuals. By the end of the 20th century, possibly every person in Western society had at least once heard of Harry Potter. Whether it be through the books, the movies or merchandise such as clothes or toys, *Harry Potter* has taken the world by storm. For her books, author J.K. Rowling has won many prizes in Great Britain and the United States, and the stories dominated the bestseller lists for months, even years. By February 2020, the *Harry Potter* series was on the second place of the New York Times bestseller list for children's series, having been on the list for 569 weeks (The New York Times). As Garner notes, the decision to start a separate bestseller list for children's books, and later for children's series, was mainly due to the fact that Rowling's *Harry Potter* novels occupied the bestseller lists and kept other titles off of them. The books have been translated into 65 languages and by 2008, over 375 million copies of the series had been sold (Garner). Twenty years after the first book was published, the *Harry Potter* franchise spreads not just across books, movies and merchandise, but goes as far as amusement parks, studio tours and an original play. This is largely owed to the fandom of *Harry Potter*. In 2011, J.K. Rowling launched Pottermore.com (now wizardingworld.com), a website where additional writing, quizzes and games are released, and fans are able to connect. Moreover, a lot of fanfiction based on the stories around Harry and his friends has sprouted in recent years.

Research on the *Harry Potter* series has been vast. Rowling included various themes in her book that attracted scholars from numerous fields. Especially the topic of feminism has been studied frequently. And while some academics clearly place *Harry Potter* within feminist writing, others argue that prevailing female stereotypes hinder the series from being feminist (cf. Bell; Jones; Kellner). Another thought-provoking field of study is the notion of racism within the world of *Harry Potter*. For some people, the racist ideology is instantly obvious while others do not perceive the racism contained in the series. One reason for this could be that many people associate the notion of racism only with Black people. But in the series, racism does not occur on the basis of skin color and therefore, it might not be as straightforward on first glance. However, reflecting on the behavior of the characters in the book it becomes evident that the wizarding world is not devoid of notions of racism and discrimination.

Hence, the racist ideologies and discriminatory practices that pervade the imaginary world of *Harry Potter* and the real world are compared in this thesis. The focus lies on racist ideas that were, and still are, used to legitimate White supremacy or, in the case of the *Harry Potter* universe, wizarding supremacy. It is argued that concepts that have been used in the real world for subjugation and discrimination are also implemented in Rowling's novels. Moreover, the thesis also explores how anti-racism approaches are applied by Rowling and whether they are effective.

The thesis opens with a critical view on the history of the concept of racism and race. This historical overview provides insights about the emergence and roots of racism. Additionally, various definitions and ideas from scholars are discussed. Acknowledging that racism is still embedded in today's society, a short summary about contemporary forms of racist ideologies the United States and Britain is given.

Chapter 4 offers an insight into diversity and racism in children's literature and discusses some organizations promoting diverse literature for children. It is also discussed whether the series can be regarded as children's literature at all, as it is also loved by many adult readers. The subsequent analysis starts by categorizing the different "races" that are depicted in the books. It is continued by examining how the concept of racism is used in the series in order to maintain the social hierarchy and legitimize wizarding supremacy. Then, the discriminatory practices that are applied in the magical world are considered and the historical concept of slavery, as well as ideologies that are connected to the Nazi Era and White supremacist groups, are discussed. The paper concludes with the examination of anti-racism and its approaches in the series.

2 Historical Perspectives on Racism and Race

2.1 Overview

There were some ancient societies that had been extremely heterogeneous entities whose differences ranged from ethnicity to religious beliefs and culture. Slavery was existent even then, and it could be claimed that it was a fundamental part of societies. However, it was not a consequence of the differences between people, but rather a consequence of wars (Geulen 17 – 19). The main reason for armed conflicts in ancient times was not rooted in ethnic, religious or cultural differences, but in the desire to expand and occupy land, and to fulfill these objectives, slaves were needed (Montagu, Myth 8).

Gradually, religion began to play an important role in societies, and the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Era were characterized by the persecution and subjection of non-Christians to violent conversion (Geulen 26–32; Frederickson ch. 1). A particular example of oppression that can be compared to modern day racism is the discrimination that Spanish Jews faced in the 15th and 16th century. Conversos, as converted Spanish Jews were called, were believed to be incapable of truly converting to Christianity due to the perceived impurity of their blood, which was seen as a deficiency in their ethnicity (Frederickson 33). The doctrine *limpieza de sangre* (purity of blood) was used to discriminate against Conversos on a racial rather than on a religious basis. Therefore, what made them different was a matter of origin. This is just one example which proves that discrimination based on fundamental qualities, as previously mentioned, distinguishes racism from other types of discrimination which existed well before the term "racism" was coined.

Cases of persecution and discrimination of religious "Others" are not the only examples of discrimination in these faraway times. Enslaved laborers in industrial and domestic service, as well as in the armed forces, were used by Egyptians, Greeks and Romans. The slave trade was already a global practice; trading routes had spread all over the European continent as well as the Muslim and Chinese Empires in Asia. The main difference between this form of slavery and the enslavement of African people is, however, the racialization of slavery. Since Africans were believed to be inferior to Whites and thus lacking legal rights, it was far easier and more cost effective to enslave them than White workers, who usually did not experience permanent bondage. (Morgan "Introduction"). Due to the racialization of slavery, racism became associated as a form of discrimination usually exhibited against African Americans; however, in reality it involves

discrimination on the basis of ethnicity and other fundamental qualities of other ethnic groups as well.

For Britain, the turning point towards a slave-free society came in the late 18th century, when the Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade was formed. By then, the Enlightenment had brought with it the "birth of a humanitarian conscience to alter intellectual and religious views of slavery" (Morgan 149). Notable French philosophers like Voltaire, Rousseau and Montesquieu also proposed social reforms and the abolition of slavery. They were supported by Scottish philosophers who believed that all people had the right to political and civil liberty (Morgan 150-151). In 1807, the British slave trade officially ended with the Foreign Slave Trade Bill becoming law. However, it took another 25 years before the total emancipation of slaves in the British Empire (Morgan 170-171). One of the reasons for the delay of slave emancipation was the belief in a more gradual process of ending slavery, rather than immediate freedom. Some advocates stated that slaves needed to be educated and religiously socialized before being completely freed (Morgan 173-174).

2.2 Racism in the United States

With the start of the Modern Period, slave trading became an international practice. African people were traded for products and goods by White Europeans (Eddo-Lodge 13). The Spanish and Portuguese settlers were the first to bring slaves to their Caribbean and Central American colonies in the 16th century (Morgan "Introduction"). With this, slavery became widespread across even more parts of the world, and it proved to be fundamental to the dominant societies' understanding of the ethnic difference between people.

During the 17th and 18th centuries, the colonization of North America by English settlers already began to have effect on the wide spread of slavery. The involvement of the British Empire in the slave trade resulted in the majority of slaves being brought to the Southern states of North America, where most of the plantation work occurred. At first, British servants were used as workers on the farms, and only towards the end of the 17th century did the trading of African slaves to North America become the norm (Fields). As the indigenous peoples from North America were regarded as poor workers by the English, the transatlantic slave trade began to boom (Morgan ch. 1). During the years following the settlement of North America, British servants were used to work on plantations, fields, and in the mines. However, British servants were only indentured for a seven-year term as payment for their ocean passing before they became free men (Fields; Jordan 31). On the contrary, the servitude of Africans was extended to the length of their entire life, and in 1663, the Virginia Slave Statutes changed the system from term indenture to a hereditary slave system. In the following years, slavery became legal in the states of New York and Maryland, and soon throughout all the states in North America (Lobban 55–56). With the legalization of the hereditary slave system, slavery became the only condition which many people from different ethnicities experienced throughout their whole lives.

Current definitions of slavery describe it as "a form of extreme exploitation" used for "economic, political, and/or social purposes" (Lovejoy et al. 60). Tracing back the historical development of slavery, it seems that the reasons for enslaving Africans were primarily economic, but differences in religion, language and, most importantly, skin color made it easier to degrade people. Having a different skin color made it easier for English and other White European settlers to believe that Africans

were savages, and therefore inferior to them. Moreover, in some areas, especially in the South where slaves worked on huge rice plantations, the number of Blacks was significantly higher than the number of Whites living there. This may have furthered the development of an oppression system in order to sustain White dominance (Jordan 52). Thus, it is obvious that the difference in fundamental qualities, particularly ethnicity, was the reason for White people to think of those different from them as inferior.

In order to justify their own superiority, slaveholders would use any argument they could find to subjugate African slaves. The myth of the Curse of Ham, a religious passage in the book of Genesis, was used as justification to impose slavery on Africans. The religious justification of slavery was, however, problematic. Many catholic churches affirmed the view that any soul, also Jewish and Black, could be saved, which would make enslavement unorthodox (Morgan 22). As aforementioned, racism as a concept did not exist at this time; however, racist traits were obvious in the way people from different ethnicities were treated.

During the 18th century, slave codes were enacted with the purpose of regulating problems that arose out of slavery. These slave laws ensured that slaves did not have any legal rights, and therefore they had no other choice than to stay with their owners (Rissman 16). The laws forbade slaves to leave their plantation without their master's permission or to carry any weapons. Moreover, slaveholders were also protected from prosecution by law if they killed their slaves (Jordan, The White Man's Burden). When slaves had children, those children were automatically the property of the slaveholder, and in turn, this guaranteed the owner generations of labor. (Rissman 16). This legal regulation not only made slavery regulated, but discrimination a possible way to treat others.

Following the end of the Revolutionary War, when North America became independent from the British Empire, thus forming the United States, many Northern states advocated for the abolition of slavery. However, as the Southern states still relied upon slaves working on their plantations, the North and South became divided. By the start of the 19th century, most Northern states had already abolished slavery and many slaves were fleeing from the South to the North. After Abraham Lincoln was elected president in 1860, eleven southern states seceded from the United States and established the Confederacy. This act of secession caused the start of the Civil War, which ended in 1865 when the Confederacy surrendered and the 13th Amendment was added to the Constitution of the United States to abolish slavery in all states (Schermerhorn ch. "Abolition War").

Nevertheless, it was still a long way to true freedom for Black people. The abolition of slavery did not give them voting rights, and discrimination between Black and White people was still existent. The Civil Rights Act of 1866 was thought to be the solution; however, it only gave rise to racial hatred and violence. In 1866, the legislature in Virginia assumed every person with one-fourth of colored blood to be a colored person (Scales-Trent 265). This, nevertheless, was not connected to actual skin color, which shows that race was not connected to skin color (i.e. biology) but rather to descent. So, by using biological language for a social category, a "biological category" was constructed. This further shows that races are simply a question of definition, and therefore, they are constructed to fit political goals (Scales-Trent 266), thus proving that slavery and discrimination have a wider, social implication than it appears.

By the end of the 19th century, the Jim Crow Laws had been established all over the United States, resulting in segregation between Black and White Americans

and the abolishment of civil rights of African Americans (Schermerhorn ch. "No Justice No Peace"). Even though slavery had theoretically ended, slavery and discrimination did not cease being both practiced and experienced.

2.2.1 Jim Crow Era

In the 19th century, the term "Jim Crow" became a synonym to refer to African American people in the United States, and by the end of that century, the "Jim Crow Laws" were passed throughout the southern states, separating Americans with African from Americans with European descent (Fremon, chap. 3). The laws, however, were not only for segregation; they were also used to remind Blacks of their inferiority (Shaffer 338). Such separations were customary in many public places and institutions, such as schools, cinemas, public bathrooms, libraries, hospitals, and even cemeteries. Most of the public facilities in restaurants, hotels, or parks had signs that read "White only" or "colored only".

Other places did not prohibit Black people to use them, but what this prohibition meant was that Black people had to wait for White people to finish their doings in the given public place, for instance the post office, so that they could be allowed to enter. No matter the circumstance, Black people were always considered to be inferior to White people. Even though Blacks were granted certain rights, their lives still revolved around the limitations that were imposed upon them. Another notable aspect of the segregation in the United States is education. After the Civil War, separate schools for Blacks were opened. However, the schools had very little money, and therefore the quality of education was poor (Fremon, chap. 7). It is clear that racial segregation includes most, if not all, aspects of life. It is worthwhile then to discuss racism in the 20th and 21st centuries in order to trace the consequences

of the historical development and arrive at a clearer concept of racism as used in the context of *Harry Potter*.

2.2.2 Contemporary Forms of Racism in the United States

The topics of slavery and its roots in racism have this far been discussed in significant detail as it relates to the thesis supported in the paper, i.e. that racism is a type of discrimination based on origin.

During the 20th century, the Civil Rights movement was the pinnacle of the fight against racism, a fight which could be claimed began with the Civil War in 1861. The Civil Rights Movement was a series of peaceful demonstrations in the 1960s which ultimately led to outlawing racial discrimination.

The segregation under the Jim Crow Laws lasted until the mid-20th century. After World War II and protests that occurred in the southern states (e.g. Brown v. Board of Education), gradually a change began to take place. Black people started protesting, with the most prominent being the Montgomery bus boycott in 1955, initiated by Rosa Parks and led by Martin Luther King Jr. Under Jim Crow Laws, the first ten rows in buses were reserved for Whites, and when all those seats were taken, Blacks had to give up their seats for Whites.

In spite of facing severe consequences, Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat to a White man one day on her way back from work. After her arrest, the local Black leader Martin Luther King Jr. organized the city-wide bus boycott that would eventually lead to the abolition of the Jim Crow Laws and segregation in the United States (Fremon, chap. 8). In 1954, the US Supreme Court "ruled segregation in education unconstitutional", but still, many people in the South wanted to keep

segregation (Wormser, Epilogue). Martin Luther King Jr. played a crucial role in the events of the 1960s, launching multiple campaigns and delivering powerful speeches which not only presented the African American people's position on the issues they faced, but also raised awareness in American society about the true nature of the issues. As discrimination was prohibited by law, a gradual and slow positive change could be noted in the attitude of Americans towards African Americans.

Unfortunately, racism was not completely eradicated after the 1960s. Research shows that non-White people still face rejections for loans, apartments or jobs even though they are equally qualified compared to their fellow White American countrymen. African Americans receive worse medical care and pay more for products or services (Delgado and Stefancic 10–11). Moreover, many people of color face discrimination in housing, employment, education, public benefits, and jury service (Alexander 1-2). Moreover, there are still many racist right-wing movements across the globe whose purpose is the supremacy of White people. Additionally, many Black people are denied basic voting rights because they have been (possibly even wrongly) labeled a "felon", and therefore, they are not allowed to vote. These facts are indicative of the existence of racism in the 21st century.

Additionally, the numbers of Black people killed by police officers speak for themselves. Police brutality is currently one of the major problems facing the United States and "young black men were nine times more likely than other Americans to be killed by police officers in 2015" (Swaine et al.). Unfortunately, structural racism is deeply embedded in the American law enforcement system. In the 21st century, the movements in support of the rights of Black people are still ongoing and widespread, as racism takes different forms. Numerous incidents with Black people,

including teenagers losing their lives after contact with authorities, have led to the Black Lives Matter movement which gradually changed into a global network that supports equal social, economic, and political rights ("What We Believe"). The movement predominantly combats institutional racism, which is claimed to be the dominant form of racism in the 21st century. It includes police violence and institutional segregation, and the fight against these has led to laws being passed against police violence on both the state and federal level (Harris 40). Thus, even though racist practices seem to be morally unfitting for people in our contemporary times, they are still existent on other levels, such as institutionally.

Alexander argues that linguistic expression of racism, rather than the basic structure of society has changed since the time of Jim Crow Laws. Whilst discrimination is not permitted on the basis of skin color or heritage anymore, discrimination is typically justified when it is a legal consequence, e.g. when people of color are incarcerated and labeled as criminals (Alexander 2). She concludes that people who have been incarcerated face, for the most part, the same discrimination as Black people did under Jim Crow Laws. This is aggravated by the fact that mass incarceration of people from racial or ethnic minorities in the United States is higher than in any other country, even compared to the height of Apartheid in South Africa (Alexander 4–6). Essentially, racism never ceased to exist, it was merely adjusted to fit to the current political system – and even though the linguistic expression of racism may have changed, the ideology and processes to uphold White privilege prevailed (Alexander 21).

2.3 Racism in Britain

Due to the fact that it was an empire, Great Britain experienced extensive multiculturalism, and during the 18th and 19th century, when travelling and

immigration became more widespread, racism began to take its form. Therefore, aside from slave trading, perhaps an even bigger role in shaping racism can be attributed to immigration in Britain (Solomos 35). Seasonal migration was an important aspect of British and Irish life. Many Irishmen would settle in Britain for the summer seizing the opportunity of seasonal work on British farms. Parallel to these seasonal migrants, some Irish people settled permanently in Britain in the 18th century (Solomos 22-45). In 1851, as a consequence of the Great Famine, the Irish made up 2.9% of the English and Welsh, and 7.2% of the Scottish population (Solomos 38). However, there was an anti-Irish sentiment due to the fact that Irish people refused to renounce Catholicism, unlike most people in England, who were Protestants; combined with the fact that the government did not regulate Irish migration, British society became hostile and discriminating of Irish people (Solomos 39). It could be argued, then, that racism in Britain was not only directed toward people of a race different from White, but against a race different from the British. In the late 19th and early 20th century, another wave of immigrants hit the British Islands: Jewish migrants from Central and Eastern Europe fleeing the antisemitic ideologies in their home countries. The arrival of the Jews brought with it a whole new political debate about immigration control. These debates were triggered by the struggle for jobs and housing in many, especially urban, areas (Solomos 41). In contrast to Irish immigration, Jewish immigrants faced much more than political opposition, even though their numbers were much lower compared to those of Irish immigrants.

In the early 20th century, immigration was restricted by the Aliens Order, which only allowed entry to the UK under certain circumstances (Solomos 42). Over the next twenty years, other restrictive Acts and Orders were implemented. Moreover,

even though approximately 55,000 refugees from Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia were admitted between 1933 and 1939, widespread Antisemitism in Britain was the government's reason for not helping and admitting more Jewish refugees during World War II (Solomos 44). Furthermore, whilst Britain was fighting against Nazi Germany, the antisemitic social sentiment was an obstacle for sheltering more Jewish people than Britain did.

The Holocaust, the systematic persecution and killing of approximately six million Jewish people predominantly by Nazi-Germany between 1933 and 1945, is the most recent example of the extreme lengths to which Antisemitism can stretch. This genocide was regarded by Hitler and the Nazis as the "Final Solution to the Jewish Question" (Feinstein 103). Hitler believed that the "Aryans", as he termed White, blonde-haired and blue-eyed Germans, were threatened by the Jews because of "racial mixing and an irreversible degeneration" (McMaster 146). Despite having lived in European countries since the Middle Ages, Jews were portrayed as having Middle Eastern origins and as being "strangers", and they were feared because of their social and political upward mobility (Feinstein 104). As soon as Hitler gained power in 1933, "Rassenhygiene", i.e. eugenics, was introduced in order to "eliminate the hereditary capacity of those designated as 'cretins', 'feeble-minded', 'criminals', 'homosexuals', 'gypsies', 'Jews' and 'mixed-race Negroes'" (McMaster 150). Therefore, racism based on origin has long been existent in Europe, but in contrast to America, racism in Europe was not focused solely against African Americans, but against Jews and Irish people as well, among others. That is not to say that racism against African Americans was non-existent. Black communities existed long before 1945, especially in the port towns of Liverpool, London, Cardiff and Bristol. However, it was only after World War II that questions

of racial differences and ideologies began to play a role in immigration politics (Solomos 44). Seamen from different parts of the British Empire faced discrimination. As the British government wanted to prevent them from settling, they were bound to return to their home countries after the passage they had worked terminated. Especially after World War I, the presence of seamen in Britain increased, and therefore, such discriminatory practices were reinforced (Solomos 45). One such practice was paying different rates according to one's "race".

In contrast to the United States, racism in Europe "assumed two paradigmatic forms" (McMaster 2). While anti-Black racism can be traced back to Europe's history with colonialism and slavery, racial Antisemitism is grounded in religious prejudice against Jews, as well as in the belief that they were a danger to the economy because of their practices in moneylending and economic exploitation (McMaster). Consequently, the two forms of racism in Europe and in Britain are racism based on race and racism based on religious beliefs. Similar to the Irish people who did not renounce Catholicism, Jews were subjected to social and economic oppression due to their religious affiliations.

2.3.1 Contemporary Forms of Racism in Britain

Looking at the United Kingdom, it is argued, on one hand, that Britain's multiculturalism has paved the way for the success of many individuals from ethnic minority backgrounds, especially in the Indian/Bangladeshi food sector and the NHS[2] and that Britain is now a "post-racial society" (Redclift 579). Moreover, today it is not rare for people from different ethnicities to get married (Byrne et al. 10). It

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[2] National Health Service – publicly funded healthcare system in England.

could be argued, then, that Britain has come a long way in overcoming racist tendencies in society.

On the other hand, in the same way as in the United States, racism and racist ideology are still ingrained in institutions and practices in the United Kingdom. Eddo-Lodge considers racism to be "about the survival strategy of systemic power" (ch. 2) and to be more than just discriminatory practices embedded in institutions. Racism in the United Kingdom is covert and structural, mostly put into practice by White, wealthy, middle-aged men who have the power to impact people's lives (Eddo-Lodge ch. 2). It can be found in employment, education, health, criminal justice, and sports.

According to statistics, Black students in the United Kingdom are more likely to face permanent exclusion from school and being graded down by their teachers, less likely to be admitted to university and find a job afterward than their White counterparts – despite having the same education (Eddo-Lodge ch. 2). Moreover, Black people are more often stopped and searched by the police and are over-represented in the National Criminal Intelligence DNA Database (Eddo-Lodge ch. 2). She claims, however, that such structural racism has nothing to do with personal prejudices and discriminatory acts, but rather with the unconscious bias that is deeply entrenched in all levels of British society.

Following the terrorist attacks in the United States and the United Kingdom at the beginning of the 21st century, the United Kingdom has turned away from "celebrations of diversity towards an insistence on citizenship, community cohesion and Britishness" (Redclift 579). The success of the UK Independence Party (UKIP) and the British National Party (BNP) – both parties that target immigration and minority communities – shows the current ideology of many citizens (Redclift 579).

Furthermore, even though nowadays the United Kingdom is more diverse than ever, the rising Islamophobia and Antisemitism, as well as the "anti-immigrant and asylophobic violence", are evidence of the United Kingdom's racist culture (Byrne et al. 9). Latest data shows that approximately 20% of residents in England and Wales identify as other than White British, including Indians, Pakistanis and Black Africans as the largest "Other" groups (Byrne et al. 20). However, throughout the United Kingdom, the distribution of ethnic groups is not even, due to different migration histories (Byrne et al. 29). In the United Kingdom, as has been briefly discussed before, immigration policies have developed over the past decade in response to different movements. In particular, current policies affect members of Black and minority ethnic communities. For example, landlords, businesses and the education system are responsible for checking a person's immigration status, which could potentially lead to discrimination because of the extra levels of cautiousness (Byrne et al. 43).

Moreover, racism is also evident in the United Kingdom's criminal justice system. The Macpherson report indicated how institutional racism is ingrained in London's Metropolitan Police. Following the incident, a new Race Relations Amendment Act was passed in 2000 stating that "the police could be held accountable for acts of racial discrimination" (Byrne et al. 54). It also revealed that ethnic minority groups are still underrepresented among Britain's police force and prison officers (Byrne et al. 54-55). However, not much has changed since the report was published. The stop-and-search rate is still eight times higher for Black people than for White, thus continuing ethnic disparities (Byrne et al. 56). In addition, Black people and ethnic minorities are still criminalized through the concept of gangs even though the number of young White people committing police-defined crimes is

higher than the number of Black young people. Byrne et al. conclude that there is much to be done in order to uncover the "mechanisms [that] contribute to ethnic minority people […] being more likely to be victims of crime" (71). Hence, it is evident that even though progress has been achieved in overcoming racism, racist traits can still be noted in Britain today. It is rather interesting how people from former colonies are subjected to racism as they were once part of the British Empire. This fact alludes to the possibility that perhaps the British Empire never really wanted to assimilate the countries, but to dominate them, and those imperialist tendencies are still noted today.

2.4 Racism as a Social Concept

Etymologically, the word *race* derives from the Arabic word <raz> which means head, leader or origin, and from Latin <radix> which means root (Geulen 14). During the 18th century, a new view on "races" became popular: a biological understanding of phenotypic differences (i.e. skin color) came into focus (Fluehr-Lobban; Bulmer and Solomos). Consequently, the word was used as a synonym for *nation*, for instance, *the English race*. It is clear that this use had a significantly different meaning from the one we attach to it today; today, *race* is most often used to describe the difference in origin and culture between people.

Both the Latin and Arabic origins allude to the term being related to nobility, grandeur and noble descent of the family or the stud farm (Geulen 14). Up until the 19th century, the concept of race was still not clearly defined. It was previously used to refer to the human race, as well as to a nation or tribe or even to one single family. The only common denominator of the usage of the concept was the kinship relations between members, the characteristics that they share and the fact that these are

passed from one generation to the next (Lewontin et al. 119). Again, the relation to origin can be noted, which later became the basis for racial discrimination.

In 1972, the evolutionary biologist Richard Lewontin found that there were no significant differences in genes between humans of different races and concluded that those differences occurred because humans are individually different. His study showed that genetic variation between different ethnic groups only accounts for 7%, differences between people of the same ethnic group account for 8% and the majority, namely 85% of differences, appear in the same population (Ananthaswamy 34). Moreover, the American anthropologist Earnest Hooton believed that different groups of men are distinguishable "by obvious differences that strike the eye" (441) but that those differences may be a result of chance, heredity, environment or a combination of two or all three of them (Hooton 442).

In recent years, the concept of race has changed. Although the term *race* is used in many parts of the world to distinguish between groups of people with distinct physical features, Miles and Brown suggest that "'races' are socially imagined rather than biological realities" (71), pointing out that skin color is the feature that is mostly used for differentiation – as opposed to other possibly distinct features such as size of nose or ears. Stuart Hall describes race as a "cultural and historical fact" that simultaneously acts as a "system of meaning" to classify our world (Triangle 32–33). Hall, like many other scholars (e.g. Fluehr-Lobban; Ratcliffe; Gates), sees race as a socially constructed concept that is observed mostly through phenotypical differences, i.e. physical differences in appearance. Montagu strongly suggests that the view that race is a constant factor determining people's personalities and culture is not scientifically proven and therefore only a myth (Myth 8). Consequently, it is obvious that even though people see people from different races as different in their

origin and fundamental qualities, in reality there is no strong scientific proof that people from various origins are actually very different.

However, the socially constructed belief in the existence of races is usually an early part of socialization. When children are emotionally conditioned to the concept of human races, they are prone to accepting it as real, and without proper education, this understanding of race might not change. Children need to learn that differences in physical appearance are part of our individuality and that characteristics, such as accent and manners, are not biologically but rather culturally determined. Crucially, all those differences should not be valued as better or worse (Montagu, Myth 64–66); hence, regardless of any distinctions, no group of people should be seen as superior or inferior (Montagu, Myth 6); the main reason in support of the equality between people is the scientific proof of it.

In the 1970s and 1980s, Critical Race Theory (CRT) emerged as a different approach to the field of race theory. It has since become

> a collection of activists and scholars engaged in studying and transforming the relationship among race, racism, and power [by placing] them in a broader perspective that includes economics, history, setting, group and self-interest, and emotions and the unconscious" (Delgado and Stefancic 2–3).

According to Delgado and Stefancic, CRT includes two propositions: first, that racism is normal and people who exhibit a racist approach to others are accustomed to it, and therefore, racism is mostly not acknowledged; and second, that racism serves the White supremacy to the effect that a large part of society has no interest in eradicating it (7). Furthermore, CRT assumes that racism is a "[product] of social thought and relations. Not objective, inherent, or fixed, they correspond to no biological or genetic reality; rather, races are categories that society invents, manipulates, or retires when convenient" (Delgado and Stefancic 7).

In 1995, the UNESCO emphasized that even though "the concept of 'race' carried over from the past into the 20th century has become entirely obsolete [it] has been used to justify totally unacceptable violation of human rights" (UNESCO 1). Moreover, the UNESCO recognizes that "current scientific findings do not support the earlier view that human populations can be classified into discrete 'races' [...]" and that human diversity should not be characterized with the terms "racial categories" or "race" (UNESCO 1).

As has been shown, the concept of racism has a long history, whereas the terms "race" and "racism" are relatively young. As colonialism and globalization continued, the dominating people needed a justification for their actions and therefore turned towards biology. For some time, it was accepted as a fact that people with a lighter skin color belonged to a superior White race, while people with a darker skin color belonged to an inferior Black race. However, many scholars in the field of anthropology, biology, genetics, and social studies have since refuted the biological concept of races and the natural dichotomy between people with different skin color. Instead, it is widely acknowledged that racism is a social construct that is still in effect to maintain power structures in society.

3 Terminology

Following the discussion on the historical and social background of racism, it is worthwhile to summarize what the term includes in the context of the following analysis and how the term will be used.

As discussed, racism has existed long before the term was coined; therefore, it is important to bear in mind what shaped the action, the activity of racism and what are the traits that make it what it is. Slavery is the most evident example of an activity based on racism, and it suggests that people were subjected to oppression on the basis of their origin. Colonization of North and South America and the expansion of the British Empire suggest that the colonized territories were colonized to be dominated and not assimilated despite what the political motivations and justifications might have been. Thus, Imperialism can be blamed for the psychological condition of people who oppress others. There is no scientific proof that there are biological differences between people from different races; therefore, some people's sense of superiority and the inferiority of other races and ethnicities, as they understand it, is embedded in their way of thinking.

The Nazi idea of the purity of the 'Aryan' race is also an example of the superiority that certain people felt, but then again it is related to a psychological state and it is yet connected to territorial expansion that Hitler, for instance, attempted to achieve.

Consequently, in the context of the following analysis of the *Harry Potter* series, the term racism will be used as exemplifying the differences in origin between wizards/witches and Muggles. However, unlike in real life where there is no scientific reason to believe that people from different races are different, in the world of *Harry*

Potter there are fundamental differences between Muggles and wizards/witches, and these can also be exemplified by the abilities of the two types of people. Therefore, Muggles and wizards/witches are considered as two races; however, unlike in real life, the differences between the two cannot be contested, which poses questions about the fundamentals of the world of *Harry Potter* and broader beliefs of the author.

4 Children's Literature

In contrast to other types of literary genre, children's literature is defined according to its target audience. As stated by Grenby, Canadian literature, for example, is not written for Canadians, same as crime fiction is not only read by criminals. But children's literature is explicitly written *for* children, even though it is "written by adults, to suit adult purposes" (Grenby 227). However, there is no real consensus on the exact definition of children's literature. There are some critics who are convinced that children's books are not different from any other books and therefore should not be defined as such (Hintz 7–16). Nodelman argues that this notion rests on the assumption that literature for children is "too childish for adults to consider seriously" (139). On the other hand, some believe that common features of children's literature need to be identified. Nodelman (76–81) provides a list of such characteristics:

- children are target audience
- simple writing style
- omniscient narrator
- protagonists are usually children or childlike animals and the text is focalized through them

- the text can be engaged with by accessing previous knowledge about life
- visuals can be used to provide more information

Furthermore, Wall tries to answer the question of "Is it a children's book?" by examining different types of narrator's addresses. While the *single address* speaks specifically to children, the *double address* is the type of "narrative voice which [exhibits] a strong consciousness of the presence of adult readers" (Wall 9), and the *dual address* would be a combination of the two. In his examination of Peter Pan, Egan argues that through double address the author "glances sidelong at the adults listening in and winks [because] his jokes and references on these occasions are not meant to be understood by the children" (46). This has been identified as an important convention when writing for children (Egan 46).

4.1 *Harry Potter* – a Children's Book?

Even though Rowling once mentioned that she wrote the *Harry Potter* novels for children and adults (National Press Club qtd. in Nel, *Bewitched*), many critics still argue about it. Taking a close look at her writing, it is apparent that the writing style throughout the seven books is simple and straightforward, there is an omniscient narrator and most of the main characters are children. Nevertheless, it appeals to children as well as adults. This is likely to be one of the reasons why it became so successful. Children like the story because they can relate to the characters and the storyline: over the span of the seven books, Harry and his friends mature; and when children start reading the series, they might be about Harry's age in the first book and get to grow up alongside him while reading the novels. This makes it easier to connect with the main characters in the series. Moreover, Rowling has a talent for building a new world. According to Beach and Willner, Rowling's coalescing of the

real and the imaginary world is the key to the series' success (103). During the school year, Harry and his friends take classes, play sports, and write letters to their families. However, instead of learning about Math and Geography, Hogwarts' students learn about potions, spells, divination, and the history of magic and study magical plants and creatures; their favorite sport is not football or soccer, but Quidditch, which is played on broomsticks up in the air; and rather than mailing their letters by post, they send them through owls (103).

Additionally, the series contains many universal themes which speak to both types of audiences – adults and children. Whether it be love, friendship, death and loss, or concepts on a larger scale, such as discrimination and racism, feminism and gender issues, any reader will be able to get something out of the story. However, these themes are especially interesting for adults, as they can be read as social criticism.

Throughout the series, Rowling keeps referencing historical and political events that children and teenagers might not understand. For example, when Harry buys his first chocolate frog on the Hogwarts Express before his first year, the card says that "Professor Dumbledore is particularly famous for his defeat of the Dark wizard Grindelwald in 1945" (HP1 109). This is a clear reference to the end of World War II, but younger readers might not be aware of this. Additionally, Rowling used numerous names for her characters that are rich in history, such as Arthur and George (King Arthur and King George III). These instances can be interpreted as *double address,* which furthers the argument that *Harry Potter* is written for adults, too.

Therefore, taking into consideration what Rowling said and what can be examined in the texts, the *Harry Potter* series is clearly targeted at both types of audiences: children and adults.

4.2 Diversity and Racism in Children's Literature

It is important to note that literature for children, in contrast to adult literature, can act as a "means of socialization" (MacCann xiv). According to Stuart Hall, language "has always been regarded as the key repository of cultural values and meanings" (Hall, *Representation* 1). This includes the use of written language to convey culture, which entails that "dominant meanings get encoded in books" (Botelho and Rudman 2). Significantly, children's books are not unlike any other type of literature in that they represent what the author or publisher wants to promulgate. Therefore, they usually reflect the author's own values, beliefs and morals (Sutherland 143). According to Botelho and Rudman (1), children learn about the world, their own communities and their identity through books. Also, literature enables readers to learn about other cultures (Willis-Rivera and Meeker 269). This means that books should reflect the realities of their communities and our world in order for children to find themselves represented in books.

Nevertheless, this is often not the case. In his study of sports biographies of African American football players, Winograd argues that "the text has been 'whited out'", since the race of the players is never explicitly mentioned. For him, the underlying problem of such erasure of race is that the everyday struggle that is put upon African Americans by institutions is completely overlooked. Furthermore, Nel (*Cat*) asserts that books such as *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* or *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn* can be used in their original versions to teach children about the problems of White supremacy and racism.

However, if such books are used in teaching environments, the reading should always be guided by a teacher to make the readers aware of the racist subtext of those books (*Cat* 26).

There are some organizations that advocate more diversity and inclusion in literature for children, for example the independent publishing house Lee & Low Books in the United States, and the non-profit organization We Need Diverse Books. The publishing industry is mostly White and female, according to Lee and Low. After writing on their blog about the Diversity Gap in Silicon Valley (Low), Lee & Low Books decided that something similar could be done with the North American publishing industry. In 2015, Lee & Low Books released their Diversity Baseline Survey (DBS) to examine how diverse and including the field is. They found that 79% of publishers identified as White, 78% were women, 88% were heterosexual and only 8% had any kind of disability. This clearly showed a lack of diversity in the publishing field. Consequently, the question was raised of how such a non-diverse field would be able to represent a diverse society (Low and Ehrlich).

In 2019, the latest results of the DBS showed that the numbers had not changed dramatically, leading to the conclusion that "the field is just as White as it was four years ago" (Low and Ehrlich). It is, however, arguable that these numbers represent the demographics of today's US society. Nonetheless, it also shows that mostly White heterosexual women control the publishing industry and therefore decide what is published and what is not (Low and Ehrlich). In 2014, out of 5000 published children's books, only 84 were written by an African American author, amounting to approximately 0.01%, and only 180 were about African American characters (approximately 0.03%). This clearly shows that representation of diversity is inadequate. In America, about 14% of the population are Black, and there

are also other ethnic minorities like Hispanics, Asians and others. ("University of Wisconsin Documents a Lack of Racial Diversity in Children's Books"). It is obvious that change is essential if children's literature is to feature diversity and inclusion. For Low and Ehrlich, the solution is simple: if diversity is achieved in the publishing industry, then diversity will be achieved in the literature that is published (Ehrlich).

A similar situation can be observed in Britain. Pearson et al. point out that in Britain "the early Carnegie Medal[3] winners rarely depicted other cultures, but those that did constructed a sense of otherness against which white, English culture was positioned as the norm" (93). The criticism in the 1960s that books with a more diverse protagonists should be promoted by the Medal led to a change in the committee, and as a result, more books that describe the working-class experience of children were honored (Pearson et al. 96-7). Besides the Carnegie Medal, the Other Award also recognizes children's literature, albeit with a focus on diversity of "culture, background [and] occupation" (Pearson et al. 97). In recent years, there has been a slight increase in recognizing Black, Asian and minority ethnic writers of children's literature. Nonetheless, Pearson et al. argue that "it is not clear that specialised awards can materially affect the larger landscape of national children's literature" (101). Especially by awarding books whose stories do not take place in Britain or depict racial conflicts at different historical times, it is suggested that "histories of racism and non-white identities are extrinsic to British culture" (Pearson et al. 101). Also, by "solely championing British culture, history and value from a middle-class White Eurocentric perspective, [other] ethnic, class and cultural heritages are viewed as marginal" (Habib 117). Thus, as Pearson et al. show, the

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[3] The Carnegie Medal is a prestigious literary award for children's literature in the UK.

problem is not the absence of diversity in British children's literature, but the lack of recognition and promotion of such works and their authors.

5 Analyzing Racism in *Harry Potter*

5.1 "Races" in Rowling's Wizarding World

There are several points that need to be clarified in the context of the present paper so as to make the connection between the background on racism discussed thus far and the thesis defended understandable.

First, there are different ways in which racism can be understood in the context of *Harry Potter*. The difference between humans with magical abilities and humans without magical abilities (Muggles) is not only a difference in origin, but also a difference in capabilities as Muggles are incapable of doing magical things and of ever becoming wizards and witches if they are not naturally born as such. Therefore, being a wizard or witch is not a matter of learning a skill; it is a matter of origin.

Another level on which racism can be noted is within the wizarding world itself – there are "pure-blood" wizards/witches and "half-blood" wizards/witches, whose parents are in some way related to Muggles or have had a parent who is a Muggle, as well as the wizards and witches who have no known wizarding ancestry. Therefore, it is obvious that differentiation is again based on the origin of the person and not on their capabilities or current position. Pure-bloods can then be regarded as "the race", similar to the way the British saw themselves as a type of race, as described in the previous sections. Racism in *Harry Potter* then evolves in a twofold way – outside of the wizarding world and within the wizarding world.

Furthermore, race conceptions in Rowling's wizarding world take on different forms. While there are obviously human and non-human characters, there is also the belief that magical ability in humans is genetic and is passed down by blood. As can be observed in the series, all "races" – humans as well as non-humans – are faced with prejudices and discrimination on the basis of their "race". First of all, let us consider what types of "race" exist in the world of *Harry Potter*.

According to the *Harry Potter Wiki* ("Being"), the Ministry of Magic classifies magical creatures into three categories: being, beast and spirit. As Rowling writes in *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*, beings are creatures that have "sufficient intelligence to understand the laws of the magical community and to bear part of the responsibility in shaping those laws" (xii). All other creatures remain in the beast category. And because ghosts claimed insensitivity to their classification as beings (since they clearly were "has-beens") the spirit category was created. There were, however, some discrepancies when the categories were introduced. Some creatures were deemed beings, but wanted to stay in the beast category, e.g. centaurs and merpeople. Others, however, were placed in the beast category despite their human-like appearance, e.g. fairies, pixies, and gnomes, or because of their brutal natures, e.g. Acromantulas and Manticores. Additionally, werewolves still do not belong to any category, since they are being and beast alternately. (Rowling *Beasts* xii-xiii).

In conclusion, creatures in the magical world can be divided into three main categories, with many sub-categories. It should be pointed out that there are also non-magical creatures, i.e. Muggles and animals. The difference between the magical and non-magical "races" is obvious – magic in its various forms, which often includes the ability to cast certain spells. However, as will become apparent later in

this thesis, there might also be a difference between some wizards and witches and others.

5.2 'Us' vs. 'Them': Prejudice, Stereotypes and Discrimination in Rowling's Magical World

"It doesn't matter", said Harry.
"This isn't about wizards versus goblins or any other sort of magical creature –"
Griphook gave a nasty laugh (HP7 397).

In a world where White supremacy (or pure-blood supremacy) is upheld, the social concept of race is used at different levels. Miller and Garran (28) suggest three levels of racism, namely the individual, the group and the institutional level. Firstly, on the individual level there are prejudices, beliefs and biases that lead to exclusion of people of a different group by another person. Prejudice and discrimination play an immense role. Prejudices are hostile attitudes and beliefs about a racial minority group that grow out of stereotypes (Blauner 21). Prejudice can lead to discrimination, which consists of actions meant to physically or mentally harm a racial minority group (Blauner 21). Secondly, group racism refers to a dominant group that "discriminates against, marginalizes, or in any way oppresses another group that is constructed as being racially different" (Miller and Garran 29), for example the White police forces in communities of color. Last but not least, institutional racism happens in a systemic and societal way and is installed in institutions, organizations, laws, customs, and social practices enforcing opportunities for the dominant group while preventing the subjugated group from having the same possibilities. Furthermore, Miller and Garran mention a fourth level of racism. They claim that ideological, or societal racism, which is deeply intertwined

with societal norms and beliefs, can be used to justify and reinforce the other three levels (29).

All these levels of racism can manifest in different ways – they can be direct (overt) or indirect (covert) and either intentional or unintentional. Overt racism occurs when individuals experience discrimination that causes physical or mental harm. On the other side, covert racism is more subliminal and passive but serves to preserve racism in a society. An example of covert racism would be homeowners unwilling to sell their houses to people of color, thereby sustaining a segregated neighborhood (29). Intentional and unintentional racism are, as Miller and Garran clarify, related to awareness and motivation (31) Unintentional acts of racism are based on internal stereotypes every person has. In contrast, intentional racism is carried out with the motivation to hurt a person, either physically or mentally, because of racial bias (Miller and Garran 30).

Miller and Garran further identify two different types on the level of individual racism: intrapersonal and interpersonal racism. Intrapersonal racism refers to stereotypes and prejudice, as well as emotions, attitudes, and beliefs that are internalized through all the information people are exposed to, e.g. comments and statements made by parents or teachers, media reports etc. Intrapersonal racism occurs, for example, when we walk past someone with a different skin color and have certain feelings or beliefs about that person because of the color of their skin. Interpersonal racism, on the other hand, occurs when we act on those stereotypes or prejudices. This can be either unintentional or intentional. Unintentional acts of personal racism are still hurtful to the target of the interaction even though the offender might not be aware of it. Intentional personal racism occurs when a person is discriminated against on the basis of any cultural, religious or phenotypical

differences, which causes tension, social isolation, and even violence (Miller and Garran 32).

On the intrapersonal level, it is necessary to further differentiate between stereotypes and prejudice. According to Mcgarty et al., stereotypes are used to structure and order our society because we as individuals need to belong to a group that shares characteristics, values, and beliefs. Such stereotypes help us to categorize differences and similarities of a certain group of people, thus enabling us to make sense of the world (2–3). Prejudice is defined as a prejudgment of a group on the basis of race, religion, ethnic group, sexual orientation or other characteristics. It is important to mention that prejudice always refers to a positive or negative attitude towards a group, not an individual (Light and Keller 237). For Du Bois, racial prejudice "is a matter of ignorance and can be cured by information" (98). This would seem quite logical. However, power structures in a society can prevent people from being informed.

In the *Harry Potter* novels, prejudice is a returning notion throughout the series. It starts in the first book with the Dursleys, who are extremely prejudiced towards wizardkind. The reader learns right at the beginning of the story that Petunia Dursley's relationship with her sister – Harry's mother – is estranged because she is part of the wizarding world (HP 2). Also, Hagrid is prejudiced against students belonging to Slytherin House. This is obvious when he mentions to Harry that "[there is] not a single witch or wizard who went bad who wasn't in Slytherin" (HP1 86). In the course of the series, there are also glimpses of Ron being prejudiced when his positive stance on the enslavement of house-elves becomes apparent. This shows that not just the obviously "evil" characters hold prejudices against certain groups in

the wizarding world, but also some wizards and witches who are actually fighting against wizarding supremacy.

Discrimination is strongly linked to prejudice. However, whereas "[p]rejudice is an attitude[,] discrimination [is] an act" (Light and Keller 237). It can be defined as "injurious treatment of persons on grounds rationally irrelevant to the situation" (Antonovsky 81). People are excluded from certain services or possibilities on the basis of belonging to a designated group. In the wizarding world, discrimination happens between various groups, such as Muggles and wizards, but also other beings and wizards and even between wizards themselves. Taking a closer look at the Dursley family, it seems that Rowling created them as a paragon for the prejudices and discrimination of Muggle society towards wizarding society, since the Dursleys are the only Muggles that are described in the novels in such depth. In the very first chapter of the first book, the reader is introduced to the opposition between the normal Dursley family and their mysterious secret that they do not want anyone to find out about as if it were something to be ashamed of. Their prejudices towards wizards and witches lead not only to their discrimination of Harry, but also to hostility toward other witches and wizards they meet. For the Dursleys, magic is "dangerous nonsense" (HP1 39), and they have been trying for ten years to "stamp [it] out". Hence, they never treated Harry well: he had to sleep in a cupboard under the stairs, never got any birthday presents, and only had old hand-me-downs from his cousin. Such discriminative acts led Harry to feel out of place in the Muggle world even before he knew he was a wizard. And throughout the series, the Dursleys see magic as an abomination and Harry feels "about as welcome as dry rot" in his home (HP4 17). They also do not stop at degrading everything to do with the wizarding world. Mr Dursley insults the magical world whenever possible: "People like you in

government? Oh, this explains everything, everything, no wonder the country's going to the dogs" (HP5 28); "I hope you told them to dress properly, these people […] I've seen the sort of stuff your lot wear They'd better have the decency to put on normal clothes" (HP4 34); "I daresay their kind don't set much store by punctuality" (HP4 36). Moreover, the word "magic" is seen as a swearword in the Dursley household, as they only refer to it as "the M word" (HP2 2). This is extremely reminiscent to the term "N-word" in anglophone countries. In both contexts, the terms are used to avoid saying the actual word. And since the "N-word" is a despicable and extremely racist slur, it seems that Rowling incorporated the term because she wanted to further the reader's distaste of the Dursley family.

5.2.1 Discrimination against Muggles

Many discriminatory practices depicted in the novels are exerted by wizards and witches towards Muggles and Muggle-borns, and also toward other creatures deemed inferior. The beginning of the first book already clarifies that there is a clear distinction between the Muggle world and the wizarding world. The "perfectly normal" Dursley family represents the non-magical world, while Dumbledore and McGonagall represent the magical world. This contrast is emphasized through the use of possessive pronouns by numerous characters. When Harry meets Hagrid for the first time and finds out that he is a wizard, Hagrid tells him "[a]bout *our* world, I mean. *Your* world. *My* world. *Yer parents' world*" (HP1 54). Harry, too, chooses such pronouns frequently when talking to the Dursleys about the magical world. For example, when he tells his Uncle Vernon that Kingsley Shacklebolt, a member of the Order of the Phoenix, is protecting "the Mug – I mean, *your* Prime Minister" (HP7 25, emphasis added). Moreover, Harry says that owl post is "normal for us", i.e. the usual way for witches and wizards, to send mail (HP4 29). By using the pronoun

"us" he includes himself in the wizarding society and explicitly excludes the Dursleys. Also, Draco asks Harry if his parents were "*our* kind" (HP1 84), thereby obviously including Harry and himself in the magical world. Such oppositions, then, are what lead to prejudice and discrimination because an "Other" is constructed. This "Othering" process, "the division of the world into in(-group) and out(-group)" (Rana 45), is central to the novels. It is essential in order for the reader to see the opposition of those two worlds as a given. By experiencing the world through the wizarding perspective, the wizarding world is presented as the "norm", the "ingroup", and the Muggle world is perceived as "outgroup".

Taking a closer look at the relationship between Muggles and wizards/witches, attitudes towards Muggles go from egalitarianism to disregard or curiosity and as far as paternalism and hatred (Barrett 65). An example for egalitarianism is Kingsley Shacklebolt, Auror and member of the Order of the Phoenix, who believes that "every human life is worth the same, and worth saving" (HP7 359). Also, Dumbledore has been described as a supporter for Muggle rights (HP7 14) and finds it important to consider the news in the Muggle world (HP4 507). In addition to this, many humans of the wizarding world are completely fascinated by Muggles. Especially Arthur Weasley, Ron's Dad, is very curious about anything Muggle-related. As he is working at the *Misuse of Muggle Artefacts Office*, he has access to many Muggle items and sometimes takes them home with him. However, in some instances Mr Weasley's attitude towards Muggles seems paternalizing, as he thinks it is "ingenious, really, how many ways Muggles have found of getting along without magic" (HP2 45). His underlying paternalism is also shown when he explains that portkeys are usually "unobtrusive things, obviously, so Muggles don't go picking them up and playing with them … stuff they think is just litter" (HP4 60), indirectly

comparing Muggles to children. This demonstrates that on closer inspection, the relationship between wizards/witches and Muggles bears similarity to the relationship between colonizer and colonized – with the Muggles, surprisingly, being the colonized group, even though wizards and witches are the ones that are in hiding. It seems, though, that Rowling depicts a world where two types of colonialism clash: either the characters embrace the harsh worldview of Voldemort to suppress and subjugate Muggles, or they reject the beliefs in wizarding supremacy but still demonstrate a certain paternalism towards Muggles and their way of life. Besides Mr Weasley, also Professor McGonagall seems unaware of her paternalism when she admits that Muggles "are not completely stupid" (HP1 10) and simultaneously implying that they are not as intelligent as wizards and witches. Similarly, Stan Shunpike explains to Harry that Muggles do not hear the Knight Bus because they "[don't] listen properly, do they? Don't look properly either. Never notice nuffink, they don'" (HP3 38). Attitudes towards Muggles are also "reminiscent of the exoticism often directed toward subjugated peoples under colonialism" (Barrett 66). The term "Muggle Artefacts", for example, leads to the assumption that Muggles are less civilized, and therefore their subjugation is legitimized. Additionally, the subject "Muggle Studies" is taught at Hogwarts in order to "have a thorough understanding of the non-magical community" (HP2 266), thus further implying that it is similar to a foreign culture that needs to be studied. Hence, even wizards and witches who sympathize with Muggles and Muggle rights sometimes ascribe a certain inferiority to Muggles because of their lack of magic power.

A much harsher view is held by supporters of Lord Voldemort and his extreme ideology of "magic is might"[4]. Those wizards and witches believe that they are

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[4] This stance will be more closely analyzed in chapters 5.2.2. and 5.4.

superior to Muggles and therefore should hold the power in the wizarding and the non-wizarding world. Some even compare Muggles to animals, for example Sirius' cousin who tried to make Muggle-hunting legal (HP4 103) or Alecto Carrow, who taught students that "Muggles are like animals, stupid and dirty" (HP7 467). As Barrett sees it, the belief that "some humans are less human than others […] might be the most dangerous in all of Voldemort's […] ideology" (67). Such views are also what made it possible in the real world that millions of Jews were persecuted and killed, or Blacks stripped of their legal rights and treated as inferior.

5.2.2 Discrimination against Muggle-borns

In a similar way, also Muggle-born wizards and witches are discriminated against. Barrett (70) identifies three categories of attitudes towards Muggle-borns. Firstly, Muggle-borns are seen as equal, since they possess the ability to do magic. This stance is especially highlighted through Harry and Ron, who always rely on Hermione, a Muggle-born witch, to get them out of trouble. Even though Ron is a pure-blood wizard and Harry a half-blood, it is constantly demonstrated that Hermione is a better witch. Barrett (70) also points out that the Ministry of Magic sees all witches and wizards as equal before the law, regardless of their ancestry: when the Ministry official Mr Ogden visits Marvolo Gaunt, Voldemort's grandfather, and investigates a Muggle attack Gaunt flaunts his pure-blood ancestry; however, he tells Gaunt that none of their "ancestors […] have anything to do with the matter at hand" (HP6 174), meaning that ancestry does not help them elude punishment for their violation of law. However, the Ministry obviously changes its stance throughout the series (and throughout the decades), which makes it seem that the political ideology of the wizarding world always correlates with the witches/wizards in power.

The second, and most prominent, attitude in the wizarding world towards Muggle-borns is acceptance and tolerance, but with underlying disbelief of their magical abilities. This attitude can be seen in many different characters, for instance Hagrid and Professor Slughorn. Upon his first meeting, Professor Slughorn tells Harry that he "thought [Harry's mother] must've been pure-blood, she was so good" (HP6 59). This clearly shows that Slughorn is prejudiced, even though he claims he is not (HP6 59). His statement further indicates a false belief that Muggle-borns are less talented at magic than pure-bloods. This assumption, however, is disproved continually by Hermione, who is Muggle-born and "the best in [their] year" (HP6 59). Similarly, when Hagrid reassures Harry about going to Hogwarts, he highlights that Harry is "not *from* a Muggle family" (HP1 85), implying that if he were, it might be a problem. Even though it becomes clear throughout the series that Hagrid is extremely accepting of Muggle-borns, this statement entails unconscious bias.

Thirdly, in the world of *Harry Potter* there are some wizards and witches who believe that magic can only be passed on by blood. Therefore, in their opinion Muggle-borns must have stolen magic somehow from other witches or wizards. Dolores Umbridge, for example, accuses a Muggle-born witch of stealing her wand from someone else because "wands only choose witches or wizards" (HP7 211), and therefore she cannot be a witch. So, similarly to Hitler's techniques in Germany, a pseudo-scientific argument is used to legitimate discrimination (Barrett 70-71). Discrimination against Muggle-borns happens on different levels. On the personal level, especially the use of derogatory terms is the most notable form of discrimination . Specifically Draco Malfoy repeatedly uses the term "Mudblood" when talking to or about Hermione and other Muggle-borns. The term "Mudblood" itself already implies that Muggle-borns have "dirty blood" (HP2 122), and the

reaction towards hearing the term "Mudblood" can be compared to the shock the "N-word" in contemporary America elicits. Moreover, the portrait of Mrs Black, a pure-blood supremacy supporter, frequently shouts racial slurs, such as *filth*, *scum*, *half-breeds*, *mutants*, *freaks*, *Mudbloods* and *creatures of dirt*, that have also been used in the United States and the United Kingdom "comparing minorities to rats and parasites, implying that they are dirt by nature" (Barrett 72). According to Walters, these "verbal insults work to ensure that racial hierarchies remain in place and remain distinct" (18) and hence "perpetuate social separation" (18).

5.2.3 Discrimination against "Squibs"

There is yet another group of humans in the wizarding world that faces discrimination. In the first book Neville talks about his family believing that he was "all Muggle for ages" His uncle actually tried to "force some magic out of [him]" by pushing him into the sea where Neville almost drowned (HP1 134). When he finally showed signs of magic, they were still afraid that it was too little to be allowed to attend Hogwarts (HP1 133-134). This is one of the first instances in which Rowling talks, without explicitly naming it, about the concept of "Squibs" and their marginalization. The reader finds out that it is possible not to be able to do magic despite having wizarding parents. As Neville recounts how happy his family was when he was invited to Hogwarts, it becomes clear that not having magical powers is extremely undesirable.

In *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* the concept is finally explained by Ron after Harry's encounter with Mr Filch. Filch finds Harry dripping mud all over the castle and shouts at him that this would mean "an extra hour of scrubbing" (HP2 132). As Harry did not grow up with magic, this does not astonish him at all. For a person used to living in the wizarding community, however, scrubbing the floor by

hand instead of using a cleaning spell would be quite atypical. In Filch's office, Harry finds a letter for a "Kwikspell" course. It says: "Feel out of step in the world of modern magic? Find yourself making excuses not to perform simple spells? Ever been taunted for your woeful wandwork? There is an answer! Kwikspell is an all-new, fail-safe, quick-result, easy-learn course. Hundreds of witches and wizards have benefitted from the Kwikspell method." (HP2 133-134). This leads Harry to wonder if Mr Filch isn't a "proper wizard" (HP2 134). Ron then explains to Harry:

> "A Squib is someone who was born into a wizarding family but hasn't got any magic powers. Kind of the opposite of Muggle-born wizards, but Squibs are quite unusual. If Filch's trying to learn magic from a Kwikspell course, I reckon he must be a Squib. It would explain a lot. Like why he hates students so much. […] He's bitter" (HP2 154).

Ron's statement suggests that not being able to attend Hogwarts and being able to do magic is what made Mr Filch so nasty and cruel. Additionally, Mr Filch's reaction to realizing that Harry read his private correspondence is further proof of the marginalization that "Squibs" face. He seems furious but also extremely ashamed, urging Harry not to tell anyone about it (HP2 135). When his cat Mrs Norris is petrified, Mr Filch automatically puts the blame on Harry. Filch believes that Harry had reason to assault Mrs Norris because he knows that Filch is a "Squib" (HP2 148). This highlights how marginalized "Squibs" are in the wizarding world: they are afraid that people might find out what they are and live in fear of the possible consequences. Additionally, the portrayal of Mr Filch also shows the negative connotations with "Squibs" since he works as the caretaker of Hogwarts and mostly has to do menial work, such as scrubbing floors. He is further depicted as filthy and dirty, which is the complete opposite of the "clean" wizards and witches.

In the course of the series the concept of "Squibs" is further explained. In the fifth book, Harry finds out that his cat-loving neighbor, Mrs Figg, cannot do magic

even though coming from a wizarding family (HP5 19). When she testifies for Harry at his hearing at the Ministry of Magic, some more details about "Squibs" are revealed. For example, every witch or wizard is registered at the Ministry of Magic, except "Squibs" (HP5 132). This clearly shows wizarding society's disregard for them. According to Mrs Figg, "Squibs" are able to see Dementors, although Harry does not think her description to be reliable.

Such stigmatization can be related to the segregation of Blacks in 19th and 20th century America. Under the Jim Crow Laws, Blacks were treated as dirty and inferior. Just like "Squibs", Blacks usually did lower work and were denied attendance to White schools. If we compare this further, it becomes obvious that the term "Squib" (as well as the term "Mudblood") is also used derogatorily, in a similar way as the "N-word" in anglophone culture. One of the instances in which the negative usage of the term becomes clear is the flashback to Marvolo Gaunt and his family. Marvolo Gaunt refers to his daughter as a "disgusting little Squib" (*HP6*, 176). And even though it is not explicitly mentioned whether Merope Gaunt was actually a "Squib" or was just not able to perform magic due to her father's and brother's abuse, it is obvious that Marvolo Gaunt uses the word as an insult.

Furthermore, Dumbledore's sister, Ariana, was also rumored to be a "Squib" due to the fact that she did not attend Hogwarts but was hidden at their home (*HP7* 124). As Saraco discusses, the treatment of "Squibs" in the world of *Harry Potter* clearly resembles the treatment of people with disabilities in the real world. While the characters Mr Filch and Mrs Figg represent people with congenital disabilities, Ariana Dumbledore and Merope Gaunt, who presumably lost their powers due to trauma, are representations of acquired disabilities (Saraco 19). And just like people with disabilities, "Squibs" are stigmatized and denied access to education at

Hogwarts "for their own good". As Ron's aunt Muriel explains to Harry, "Squibs were usually shipped off to Muggle schools and encouraged to integrate into the Muggle community … much kinder than trying to find them a place in the wizarding world, where they must always be second class" (HP7 124). This marginalization is possibly the reason why Mr Filch treats students at Hogwarts so badly. It is further suggested that producing a "Squib" is considered to be a shame in the wizarding world (HP7 176). There is also one instance in which Harry is finally aware of this discrimination: he compares his being locked away in a closet by the Dursleys for being a wizard to Ariana being locked away by her family for not having magic (HP7 125).

5.2.4 Discrimination against "Blood Traitors"

A very small group of wizards and witches that also face discrimination throughout the series, especially in the seventh book, are "blood traitors". In the books, it is never explicitly stated what is meant by that notion. The context implies, though, that it is a derogatory term for pure-blood wizards who sympathize with or marry Muggles. For example, the Weasleys are regarded as "blood traitors" by many pure-blood families: "My whole family are blood traitors! That's as bad as Muggle-borns to Death Eaters" (Ron, HP6 202). "Blood traitors" are believed to be a "disgrace to the name of wizard" (HP2 65) for rejecting the belief in wizarding supremacy. The Weasleys have a history of associating with Muggles and Muggle-borns, and Mr Weasley is extremely fascinated by Muggle objects. He works at the Ministry in the *Misuse of Muggle Artefacts Office* (HP2 32), secretly collecting Muggle items and putting spells on them, which results in objects such as the flying car (HP2 32). In the seventh book, not only Muggle-borns are captured by the Ministry, but also "blood traitors" (HP7 312). Hence, discrimination is not only

targeted at humans that are deemed inferior because of their origin or abilities, but also at wizards and witches who sympathize with them. This furthers the argument that racism in the novels is used to sustain social hierarchy.

5.2.5 Discrimination against other Creatures

In a similar way, many creatures in the magical world are treated as inferior because of seemingly "innate" differences between them and wizards and witches. Especially human-like creatures are discriminated against on the basis of assumed and generalized behavior. This is evident when Ron explains that giants are "vicious" and they "just like killing", but that "it's in their nature […] everyone knows that" (HP4 363). We also learn that many giants were killed by Aurors and then left the country to hide away (HP4 363). Besides, the half-giants Hagrid and Madame Maxime face open prejudice and hatred throughout the series. Especially Draco Malfoy often shows animosity towards Hagrid ("He's a sort of servant, isn't he? […] I heard he's sort of a *savage*" (HP1 54); "That oaf teaching classes" (HP3 119)). Also, Rowling's depiction of Hagrid implies that he is not capable of speaking Standard English, and his appearance is rather disheveled. This furthers the assumption that half-giants are "wild" and less intelligent than other wizards and witches. Moreover, Rowling also makes it clear that giants and half-giants are disliked by depicting Madame Maxime's reaction to Hagrid telling her he never met another half-giant (HP4 362). She feels insulted and is outraged about Hagrid's statement because she wants to keep her parentage a secret. In the fifth book, Dolores Umbridge makes life even worse for Hagrid. When she inspects his lesson, she makes notes about Hagrid that are completely stereotypical and prejudiced ("Has … to … resort … to … crude … sign … language" (HP5 413), "Appears … to … have … poor … short … term … memory" (HP5 414), "Shows … signs … of …

pleasure … at … idea … of violence" (HP5 414)). It quickly becomes clear that Umbridge, generally, is not very tolerant of other beings and creatures, either ("you have been exposed to some very irresponsible wizards in this class, very irresponsible indeed – not to mention […] extremely dangerous half-breeds" (HP5 225). By half-breeds, Umbridge is not only referring to Hagrid, but also to Lupin, who is a werewolf. Umbridge also "drafted a bit of anti-werewolf legislation […] that makes it almost impossible for [Lupin] to get a job" (HP5 281). Werewolves are considered to be extremely dangerous and are shunned by wizarding society. Many witches and wizards believe that werewolves pose a danger even in human form. Lupin explains to Harry that "when [people] know of my affliction, they can barely talk to me" (HP7 172). In the books, the character of Umbridge is obviously used to show the common prejudice and forms of discrimination towards magical creatures that live in the wizarding community.

Besides werewolves and half-giants, goblins face discrimination, too. Ludo Bagman, for example, refers to them as an "absolute nightmare" (HP4 376). Wizardkind had been denying them freedoms for centuries, which suggests that wizards and witches deem themselves superior (HP5 79). Moreover, the goblin Griphook is very surprised by being rescued by Harry and his friends, saying that Harry is a "very odd wizard" (HP7 396) and that "goblins […] are not used to the protection or the respect that [Harry has] shown" (HP7 397). Griphook further says that "as the Dark Lord becomes ever more powerful, your race is set still more firmly above mine! Gringotts falls under wizarding rule, house-elves are slaughtered, and who amongst the wand-carriers protests?" (HP7 397). Griphook tells the trio that "the right to carry a wand […] has long been contested between wizards and goblins" (HP5 397) and that "wizards refuse to share the secrets of wandlore with other

magical beings, they deny us the possibility of extending our powers" (HP5 397). This, then, leads to one conclusion: wizards and witches have been subjugating the goblins because they are afraid of their power.

However, prejudice against other magical beings and creatures is not only demonstrated by intolerant and racist wizards and witches, but also by some who seem to be just the opposite. Ron, for example, explains that giants are "like trolls … they just like killing, everyone knows that" (HP4 363). This demonstrates that racism is very clearly imbedded in the social norms and structures of the wizarding world.

Additionally, as Barrett explains, some character's behavior becomes a "self-fulfilling prophecy" (80): prejudices and stereotypes about a minority group are accepted by members of that group who are "[passing] as […] member of the dominant group" (80). They are unable to identify themselves with the minority group out of fear of being discriminated. For instance, Madame Maxime chooses to lie about being a half-giant in order to keep her reputation. However, if she chose to tell the truth, it could help reduce prejudices against giants since she proved herself by becoming headmistress of Beauxbatons School of Wizardry. Moreover, Lupin admits that he has been "shunned all [his] adult life, unable to find paid work" (HP3 378) because he is a werewolf. He hides that part of him because he is sure that parents "will not want a werewolf teaching their children" (HP3 450). So, again, it becomes apparent that stereotypes lead to discrimination.

The great difference between the magical and non-magical world and the way the two types of people treat each other pose questions about a greater rift in the societal structure of the world of *Harry Potter*. Barbara J. Fields (qtd. in Walters 4) suggests that the history of societal struggle in the United States is secondary to the

theme of race, meaning that race differences and discriminations are related to, and partially responsible for, the class struggle. Walter sees a relation between Fields' idea of race as ideology, which is related to other issues in society, and the issues described in wizarding history, where keeping pure-bloods in a "place of power" has long been a focal point (Walters 5). Therefore, wizards and witches, and especially pure-bloods, can be compared to White people who have regarded themselves as dominant throughout history. Other races, such as Muggles and those that are possibly not pure-bloods in the world of *Harry Potter*, are inferior and should be kept low in the societal hierarchy.

A key clarification to make is that unlike the forms of racism which were realized in slavery in human history, Muggles and wizards/witches who are not pure-bloods have not experienced slavery, nor do Muggles coexist with wizardkind. There is a fundamental difference between the places where wizards/witches and Muggles live, their physical environment is different – something which is not possible in the real world, where new space and hidden realms cannot be magically created.

To summarize, numerous instances of prejudices and discriminatory practices can be detected in the story, and they occur in both the Muggle and the wizarding society. On the one hand, the Dursleys, as a paragon of Muggle society, are prejudiced against all wizards and witches and use those prejudices to legitimize their discrimination against the wizarding community. On the other hand, prejudices by the wizarding society towards Muggles lead to the ideology of wizarding supremacy. Moreover, groups within wizarding society are marginalized, too, such as Muggle-borns, "blood traitors" and "Squibs". Especially Muggle-borns are frequently discriminated through the use of derogatory terms and the implication of

inferiority. The most tragic fate, however, is faced by "Squibs"- Even though they were raised in wizarding families, they are completely excluded from the wizarding world, for not having any magical powers. In addition, also werewolves, giants and half-giants, as well as goblins are victims of prejudice and discrimination by many witches and wizards.

5.3 House-Elves: Slavery in the Magical World

"Not once, in over a thousand pages, does Hogwarts: A History mention that we are all colluding in the oppression of a hundred slaves" (HP4 201)

As has already been discussed in chapter 2, slavery as a concept and an institution has been used all over the world in order to oppress and exploit various groups of people. In a similar way, the concept of slavery is used in Rowling's novels.

In the wizarding world, house-elves are treated like slaves, working either in wizarding families or in different institutions such as Hogwarts. House-elves are introduced to the series in the second book, when the house-elf Dobby makes his first appearance. Through Dobby, the inferiority ascribed to house-elves by wizards and witches becomes apparent: Dobby is completely taken by surprise because he "has never been asked to sit down by a wizard – like an equal" (HP2 13). Dobby also explains to Harry that house-elves are bound to a family forever unless they are "freed if his masters present him with clothes" (HP2 187). This bears close resemblance to the slavery system in the United States, where African people were enslaved for life. Moreover, the term "master" is used by both oppressed groups, house-elves and African slaves, when referring to their oppressors.

For Mendelsohn, the power structure between house-elves and wizardkind is extremely problematic (178). House-elves are portrayed as happy creatures, wanting to serve their masters. A paragon for this is the house-elf Winky, who had been serving Barty Crouch and his son before being released. For Winky, it seems, there is no greater purpose than serving her master. When Winky is threatened with clothes after it is assumed that she fired the Dark Mark in the sky with a stolen wand, she begs Mr Crouch not to free her (HP4 117). As Mendelsohn further remarks, especially Winky and Dobby are reminiscent of the so-called "Sambo complex, in which oppression creates a range of childlike behavior and remakes freedom into a punishment for the institutionalized" (179). When Dobby told Harry and his friends that Dumbledore employed Winky and him at Hogwarts, Winky "flung herself off her stool, and lay, face down, on the flagged stone floor, beating her tiny fists upon it and positively screaming with misery" (HP4 320). Winky then explains to Hermione that even though she is a "disgraced elf" she has not "sunk so low" as to demanding pay for her work (HP4 321). Clearly, for Winky, freedom means punishment for not behaving and a disgrace to her family honor, as her mother as well as her grandmother had both been working in the Crouch's household. Hermione's approach to trying to make Winky accept freedom could be regarded as forcefully imposing another value system (freedom) on her and therefore showing that she does not care about Winky's desire (Schott 266). Additionally, Dobby and Winky are depicted in a very childish manner. First, house-elves are described as "little creature[s]" (HP2 12) and "looking like a large and very ugly doll" (HP2 13), and their high, squeaky voice can be compared to a child's voice. Second, Dobby is always causing mischief and joking around, and his speech is full of grammatical errors. His speech is similar to the "misconceptions of 'darky' dialect" of African Americans

(Horne 81). Moreover, Dobby also has trouble finding work after he was freed by the Malfoys – much like free slaves in 19th century America. Overall, the humorous depiction of house-elves is comparable to how African Americans were represented throughout the 19th and 20th century in popular culture: as childish, irrational Buffoons that "should be excluded from full citizenship" (Von Blum 42).

Equally important in the discussion of house-elves is Kreacher, the house-elf of the Black family. Kreacher is introduced in the fifth book, when the readers already know much about house-elves and the oppression they face. In contrast to Dobby and Winky, Kreacher is not shown as childish or humorous, but rather as bitter and hostile and a perfect example of what oppression can cause. As Dumbledore explains, "Kreacher is what he has been made by wizards" (HP5 766), and because Sirius "regarded him as a servant unworthy of much interest or notice" and mistreated him, Kreacher felt no real loyalty towards Sirius and betrayed him. As can be seen, Kreacher is the complete opposite of Dobby in his behavior towards his master and other wizards and witches. Even though he is loyal to those who treat him kindly, he never becomes as friendly and helpful as Dobby.

As Carey argues, Rowling "uses [the house-elves'] plight both as a commentary on the society and economy of the magical world she creates and as a way of demonstrating the opportunities for political activism available to young people in the real world" (8). However, taking a closer look at the "Society for the Promotion of Elvish Welfare" (or S.P.E.W.), it is difficult to take Hermione's activism seriously. Many of the characters, with the exception of Dumbledore, ridicule Hermione's campaign by stating that elves "like being enslaved" (HP4 189) and that "it's in their nature ter look after humans, that's what they like" (HP4 223), thus justifying the house-elves' enslavement by choosing not to see injustice. Rowling

creates another problem by supporting the claim of "happy elves" through Winky's despair of being freed. It promulgates the idea that "some people are by nature inferior and thrive when others have charge of them" (Schott 266).

For Mendelsohn, Hermione's activism and the resistance she encounters mirror the resistance to abolitionism in the United States at the end of the 19th century. She concludes that Rowling's inconsistency – Hermione advocating for change but all the other characters not giving her any chance – and the fact that the oppressed group has to be freed by the oppressor create a difficult dynamic (180-181). A similar stance is taken by Rana, who argues that the stereotypical depiction of house-elves, without any contradiction, supports rather than opposes enslavement (53). In contrast, Schott sees the ambiguity with which Rowling depicts the "house elf problem" as "one of the series' greatest strengths" because it leaves the young readers to discuss ethical questions (Schott 260-261). Certainly, Rowling tries to apply the concept of slavery to the magical world in order to educate her readers on its injustice and give some moral guidance.

Another interesting point to make here is that while most of the characters in the series seem to understand that the discrimination of Muggle-born wizards and witches and the unjust treatment of Muggles is wrong, they do not support Hermione's claim that house-elves are being enslaved. This shows the underlying ideology of most humans in the wizarding world that house-elves like their inferior status. Because such views are not only held by "evil" characters, such as Voldemort, but by characters that the readers, as well as Harry, Hermione and Ron, recognize and respect, they are much more difficult to oppose (Horne 88).

5.4 Wizarding Supremacy: The KKK and Nazi Ideology in *Harry Potter*

As has been established, the most prominent example of discrimination in the series is directed towards Muggles. Some wizarding families such as the Malfoys, the Blacks and the Gaunts claim superiority for being pure-bloods. They believe that wizarding families who have not intermarried with any Muggles or Muggle-borns are superior to all others. In their opinion, all pure-blood wizards and witches who sympathize with Muggle-borns are "blood traitors".

White supremacy is the concept used to describe the domination of Whites over people with different skin color, culture and/or religion. Historically, White supremacy started hand in hand with European expansionism and colonialism. Today, White supremacy primarily focuses on people of different ethnical, cultural or religious backgrounds. Especially the Ku Klux Klan and the Nazi ideology are two infamous examples of supremacist views. In a very similar matter, wizarding supremacy is a recurring notion in the *Harry Potter* series, with Voldemort and his followers claiming that pure-bloods are the elite of the wizarding world.

The activities of the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) are a pertinent example of supremacist domination in the United States. The emergence of the Klan is tied to the events after the American Civil War. While the "American Declaration of Independence" states that "all men are created equal", this assertion had not been taken to include African American slaves. Even tough in the late 19th century progress was made in favor of the former slaves, many advocates of slavery still held deep-rooted bigotry. Hence, it led to a movement whose declared aim was to protect women and property (Fremon ch.2) and to regulate legislation (Bowers 307). The Ku Klux Klan was

formed in 1866 by six former officers of the Confederate Army, originally with the intention to play pranks on people, preferably people of color (Cunningham 17–18). After their first nightly ride, during which they rode through town on their horses wearing White bed sheets, they realized that the former slaves were scared of them because they thought that the riders were ghosts on horses, and soon the Klan rode to terrify African Americans in order to restrain and control them. Due to the success of the Klan, the movement started to spread over the South to many other states (Bowers 306–10; Newton 3). In the beginning, the KKK employed only non-violent tactics, but when that did not work anymore the frustrated members of the Klan started to use violence against African Americans (Zuczek 364; Newton 18). The Klan even went as far as to commit murder and torture, because they felt that their "way of life" was threatened. Very prominent were lynchings, in which Black men were, without trial, accused of crimes and killed by hanging (Lartey and Morris).

Today, the Ku Klux Klan's core ideology is still the belief that White Americans are threatened in their way of life by ethnical minorities and that they have to fight that threat (Akins 221–222). The KKK has been described as one of the most infamous domestic terrorist organizations of the United States. (Akins 221–224). Even though there are fewer Klansmen than in earlier decades, they are still quite active, and numerous small Klan groups have sprouted in recent years. Many of those newer groups also adopt Neo-Nazi beliefs, such as anti-Muslim and Antisemitic sentiments, in addition to the original White supremacist ideology ("Tattered Robes"; Coune). According to Coune, the Klan currently numbers about 6000 members, which accounts to a slight rise since 2006. This may be due to the spread of propaganda through the internet and social media and the rise of right-wing ideology. Coune summarizes today's Klan as follows:

Although the KKK has changed a great deal over the years, particularly with regard to its size, scope, operations and internal structure, the typical mindset of its members never seems to evolve. Whether their hostility is being directed towards black people, Catholics, Jews, communists or, more recently, Muslims, their aim is always to protect "pureblood" Americans, and their understanding of what constitutes "purity" is exactly the same as it was 150 years ago, even though society has undergone profound changes since then. Unless they can break free of the twin toxic attitudes of prejudice towards anyone who is different and the need to feel superior to those around them, these attitudes will presumably remain stagnant and unchanging for another 150 years to come (ch. "Summary*").

This means that as long as prejudice and discrimination of certain groups, be it religious or ethnic, pervade in American society, the Ku Klux Klan will not cease to exist.

In the *Harry Potter* series, the Death Eaters can be seen as a reference to the Ku Klux Klan. The Death Eater's central belief is wizarding supremacy and they do not shy away from torture and murder to assert their worldview. The terror that the Death Eaters instill in Muggle-borns and Muggles is essentially the same as the KKK has been instilling in people of color, especially Blacks. In the books, the acts of terrorizing Muggles and Muggle-borns are mostly described by the omniscient narrator. Readers get the first glimpse of the Death Eaters during the Quidditch World Cup, although at that point, Harry does not realize what he is witnessing:

A crowd of wizards, tightly packed and moving together with wands pointing straight upwards, was marching slowly across the field. Harry squinted at them … they didn't seem to have faces … then he realized that their heads were hooded and their faces masked. High above them, floating along in mid-air, four struggling figures were being contorted into grotesque shapes. It was as though the masked wizards on the ground were puppeteers, and the people above them were marionettes operated by invisible strings that rose from the wands into the air. Two of the figures were very small (HP4 102).

This passage can be related to members of the Ku Klux Klan chasing and torturing African Americans. Harry later finds out that the masked wizards torturing

the Muggles were Death Eaters, Lord Voldemort's supporters (HP4 121). That same night, Harry bears witness to the Dark Mark, a "skull […] with a serpent protruding from its mouth like a tongue" (HP4 109). The Death Eaters use the Dark Mark to intimidate society as well as to show affiliation with Voldemort. In the First Wizarding War (Voldemort's first height of power) the Dark Mark was "sent into the air whenever [the Death Eaters had] killed" (HP4 120). Just before Voldemort returned to power, the Dark Mark was used again to instill fear and terror in the spectators at the Quidditch World Cup (HP4 120). The KKK, likewise, was notorious for using an intimidating sign: Klansmen burned crosses to instill fear in their potential victims (Newton 109,113).

Moreover, both groups are very secretive. The Death Eaters are described as "hooded and masked" (HP4 544), just like members of the Klan, who "wore sheets and hoods to conceal their identities in public" (McVeigh 168). This allows members of those groups to engage in torture, murder, and terrorism without being prosecuted for it. As becomes apparent at the end of the fourth book, some of the known Death Eaters, such as Lucius Malfoy, Macnair and others, were acquitted after the First Wizarding War, probably due to stating that Voldemort cursed and forced them to comply. There are also hints that Malfoy was able to buy his way out by making "donations to excellent causes" (HP4 594).

In her book "The Politics of Harry Potter", Barrett compares the Nazi ideology to Voldemort's striving for wizarding and pure-blood supremacy. She calls Voldemort and Hitler "political entrepreneurs" (63) and argues that they use public frustration and link societal problems to the target group. For their arguments to take hold, Hitler and his followers told the population that Jews were the cause for the defeat of Germany in World War I, that they were sexual predators and reasons for

other societal and economic problems (Lindemann and Levy 197). In the wizarding world, Voldemort and his supporters defend the ideology that Muggles are the reason that wizards are in hiding. The Nazis, as well as the Death Eaters, used propaganda to blame discontent of the population on the Jews/the Muggles. Propaganda can be defined as "the spreading of ideas, information, or rumor for the purpose of helping or injuring an institution, a cause or a person" ("Propaganda"). While Hitler held power in Germany and Austria, different media were used to spread Nazi views on Jews while other opinions in newspapers, books, and films were completely suppressed (Kenez 88-102). This system of repression and repetition exploited by the Nazis in order to spread their views and make the population believe them (Kenez 88-102). Antisemitic Nazi propaganda was, however, not just based on lies to manipulate the public's opinion on Jews, because in order to be effective, "propaganda [has to be] based on genuine beliefs" (Kenez 88).

In the series, propaganda works in the same way as it did during the Nazi regime. Throughout the fifth book, the Daily Prophet (i.e. the wizarding newspaper) is used by the Ministry of Magic to convince the public that Harry and Dumbledore were lying about Voldemort's return. By suppressing other media (e.g. the magazine *The Quibbler*), the Ministry of Magic ensures that no contradicting views are circulating. Also, although the Daily Prophet is known not to be particularly accurate at journalistic work, most wizards and witches subscribe to it and rely on what it says. Professor Slughorn mentions that "[…] the Prophet has been known to print inaccuracies, make mistakes […]" (HP6 122), and Ginny adds that "[…] the Prophet [is] making things up as usual […]" (HP6 122). Yet, the mother of Harry's classmate Seamus, for instance, believes that Harry is lying about Voldemort's return and that

Dumbledore cannot be trusted as headmaster anymore (HP5 201). Hence, not all members of the wizarding world realize that propaganda is issued through the mainstream media. Also, Dolores Umbridge issues propaganda material, for example, the pamphlet Harry sees at the Ministry of Magic saying "Mudbloods and the Dangers They Pose to a Peaceful Pure-Blood Society" (HP7 201). As becomes clear in *Order of the Phoenix*, Umbridge really believes in the superiority of blood (degrading Hagrid/half-giants and centaurs, as well as Muggle-borns), which is consistent with what Kenez says about propaganda representing the actual views of the totalitarian regime.

Equally important in gaining support for political ideas is the identification of, and allocation to, the target group, which can take on different forms, e.g. tagging clothes with certain signs or maintaining databases (Barrett 68). During the Nazi regime, Jews had to label their clothes with a yellow star, which perpetuated social isolation and stigmatization. In *Harry Potter*, there is no visible labelling, but a *Muggle-Born Registration Commission* is formed by the Ministry in order to identify the target group (HP7 168-169). By ostensibly leaning on "recent research" (HP7 168) the Ministry of Magic forms a scientific legitimacy for discrimination.

Additionally, this ideology is also enforced at Hogwarts. When Umbridge becomes a teacher, and subsequently High Inquisitor, during Harry's fifth year at Hogwarts, she issues numerous decrees in order to maintain the Ministry's power at Hogwarts. She not only prohibits student organizations from which she fears rebellion, but also bans the magazine *The Quibbler* to prevent students from having access to other points of view (HP5 537). Whenever someone's opinion is not in accordance with her own or the views of the Ministry of Magic, Umbridge also enforces extreme punishment.

What has been demonstrated in this chapter is that Rowling based the Death Eaters and Voldemort on historical examples, such as the Ku Klux Klan and the Nazi era. Whereas the Death Eaters roughly resemble the KKK, Voldemort and Hitler share obvious characteristics, and their pursuit of supremacy is along the same lines. There are parallels not only between those two leaders, but also between the ideologies they believe in.

5.5 The Question of "Blood Purity"

In association with the false belief that phenotypical differences such as skin color indicate mental inferiority, the concept of "Blood Quantum" was constructed in the United States. In the 18th century people with indigenous American ancestry were denied certain civil rights. Since those laws also applied to the following generations, meaning their children, grandchildren etc., a concept was needed to determine racial ancestry. Non-White people were divided into "full blood" members of a race, "half-blood" members, "quarter blood" members and "eighth blood" members. Even marriage laws existed to prohibit mixed-marriages between Whites and people of other races up to the third generation. Blood Quantum also regulated legal identity and inheritance systems. Especially among Native American tribes Blood Quantum still plays a role in everyday life; for example, the "Certificate of Degree of Indian Blood" (CDIB) is sometimes used as determiner of tribal citizenship (Campbell 222–225).

Today, Blood Quantum "refers to the amount of Native or Indian heritage possessed by an individual residing in the United States, measured by genealogical inheritance", and the CDIB is used for regulation by US governments as well as tribal authorities (Samuels 141). Opinions on the CDIB are divided. While some see

it as a necessary tool to protect tribal culture and inheritance, others feel that it is a "colonialist and Eurocentric imposition" (Samuels 141). As Barker writes, the CDIB is a means of controlling the allocation of money and services by governmental departments. However, the different departments are far from consistent in their practices. Whereas sometimes residence in a tribal community is required, other times the decisive factor is only the degree of blood (Barker 31–32). Thus, Blood Quantum is an effective way of enforcing state power over a group.

The One-Drop rule was used in the United States as a means of socially and legally classifying Blacks. Since free African Americans were seen as a social problem in the 19th century, certain laws, so-called "Black Codes", were enacted to regulate and oppress them. However, interracial relationships and the offspring they produced made it more difficult to distinguish between White and Black people on the basis of their appearance (Liz 250).

Jim Crow segregation had already started by the end of the 19th century, when the state of Tennessee became the first to put the One-Drop rule into law (Liz 251). It determined that anyone of African American ancestry, no matter how far back, was legally designated as Black (Daniel and Castaneda-Liles 324). This law was primarily used to ensure the "strict dichotomy of White or Black" (Liz 251) because interracial children were a threat to the system. Therefore, any offspring between Black and White people was identified as Black.

In the *Harry Potter* series, blood and lineage play an immense role. Humans who are part of the wizarding world are divided into three groups according to ancestry: "pure-bloods", "half-bloods" and "Muggle-borns" ("Mudbloods"). Rowling once said in an interview that "nobody knows where magic comes from. It is like any other talent. Sometimes it seems to be inherited, but others are the only ones in

their family who have the ability" ("Accio Quote"). This seems to be the underlying truth, yet many witches and wizards refuse to accept it. They strongly believe that their bloodline is the origin of their magical powers. Consequently, they are convinced that Muggle-born witches and wizards must have stolen their magic from someone else, as Umbridge implies during Mrs Cattermole's hearing (HP7 211). The importance of blood in the story also becomes apparent in the frequent use of the words "pure-blood", "half-blood" and "Mudblood". It suggests that magic comes from the blood that is passed down from ancestry. In the seventh book, the Muggle-born Register is established in order to eradicate Muggle-borns:

> "The Ministry of Magic is undertaking a survey of so-called Muggle-borns, the better to understand how they came to possess magical secrets. Recent research undertaken by the Department of Mysteries reveals that magic can only be passed from person to person when wizards reproduce. Where no proven wizarding ancestry exists, therefore, the so-called Muggle-born is likely to have obtained magical power by theft or force. The Ministry is determined to root out such usurpers of magical power, and to this end has issued an invitation to every so-called Muggle-born to present themselves for interview by the newly appointed Muggle-born Registration Commission."
> "But how are they supposed to have 'stolen' magic?" said Ron. "It's mental, if you could steal magic there wouldn't be any Squibs, would there?" (HP7 168-169)

This passage illuminates the problems involved in the notion that magic is passed down by blood. Even though for Ron it is obviously not possible to steal magic, a lot of wizards and witches believe it is, or at least promote this point of view in order to legitimize their supremacy. This clearly relates to the concept of the One-Drop Rule, although it is reversed in the book series. In the United States, the One-Drop Rule was used by White society as a classification system for Black people. In the *Harry Potter* world, a similar system is used by wizards to determine if people are of wizarding ancestry and therefore are rightfully entitled to carry a wand.

This system also compares very well to the Blood Quantum laws. Blood Quantum determines whether a person belongs to a Native American tribe or not. The same is true for "wizard blood". If a Muggle-born witch or wizard can prove magical ancestry, they are allowed to keep their wand and therefore stay part of the wizarding world. Furthermore, just like the One-Drop rule, blood status in the series is used to determine someone's social standing in the wizarding world. Especially the Malfoys are a prime example of "[priding] themselves on being pure-blood and [considering] anyone of Muggle descent, like Hermione, second-class" (HP4 87).

Moreover, many wizards and witches, like the Malfoys or Professor Slughorn, believe that purity of blood also relates to magical skills. This, however, is disproven by witches such as Lily Potter and Hermione Granger, who are both Muggle-born but extremely skilled at magic, and also by the less-skilled pure-blood Neville Longbottom.

Interestingly, in wizarding society intermarriage between wizards/witches and Muggles is generally accepted. As Ron explains, "if we hadn't married Muggles, we'd've died out" (HP2 122). Sirius further notes that "[the] pure-blood families are all interrelated […] [if] you're only going to let your sons and daughters marry pure-bloods your choice is very limited; there are hardly any [pure-bloods] left" (HP5 104). Nonetheless, many witches and wizards renounce marrying Muggles and rather accept "a vein of instability and violence […] due to their habit of marrying their own cousins" (HP6 178). Bellatrix Black, for example, has "never set eyes on [her] sister since she married the Mudblood" (HP7 8) and Bellatrix's aunt and Sirius' mother, Mrs Black, actually burnt anyone off the family tree tapestry who married Muggles (HP5 104).

In essence, the notion of blood purity is a main theme in the *Harry Potter* series and is used to legitimize wizarding supremacy. The concept of "pure-bloods", "half-bloods" and "Mudbloods" plays an immense role in the wizarding community and provoked the First and Second Wizarding Wars. It is further applied to exclude certain wizards and witches from wizarding society and maintain the social hierarchy.

5.6 Good or Evil?

> *"There is no good and evil, there is only power, and*
> *those too weak to seek it" (HP1 313)*

Besides the distinction between non-magical and magical humans, there is also a differentiation between good and evil characters. Lord Voldemort, Draco and Lucius Malfoy, and others are depicted as inevitably evil. Harry and his friends, the Weasley family, and most of the teachers at Hogwarts are the good characters. Mostly, there seems to be a clear boundary between good and evil. However, racist behavior in the *Harry Potter* universe, as well as in the real world, is not always straightforwardly connected to the notions of good and evil. In the wizarding world, most "evil" characters are strongly prejudiced and act discriminatively towards characters that are deemed inferior. This can be observed when examining Voldemort, Professor Umbridge, or the Malfoys. However, there are also many "good" characters that express racist tendencies throughout the story, even though the "good" characters only target magical creatures that are deemed inferior in the social hierarchy of the wizarding world. One such example are Fred and George Weasley, who are considered "good" because they are friends of Harry and support the fight against Voldemort. However, their stance against Voldemort does not

necessarily mean that their racist behavior is completely obliterated. Especially the twins' statement that the house-elves "are happy" working in the Hogwarts kitchens and that "they think they've got the best job in the world" (HP4 201) demonstrates their belief in a "natural inferiority" regarding house-elves. They do not support Hermione in her movement to liberate the elves but are actually afraid that Hermione's efforts will upset them and "put them off their cooking" (HP4 310). This instance shows that they are not worried about the elves' feelings but rather that it would be an inconvenience for them if they would stop cooking. This idea, however, is extremely common within the wizarding world, and even their mother has wished for a "house-elf to do the ironing" (HP2 30).

Moreover, also Hagrid regularly displays racist tendencies. Even though he is a half-giant and has faced racism himself, he, too, believes in the house-elves innate aspirations to serving wizards and witches. Additionally, he insults Harry's family when he announces that "it's [Harry's] bad luck [he] grew up in a family o' the biggest Muggles [I] ever laid eyes on" (HP1 57). One would think that a character that has encountered racism himself would be able to empathize with other oppressed groups. However, this shows that some people are not even aware of their discrimination as it is something that is socially construed and learnt from an early age.

Rowling's message seems to be the following: opposing one system of oppression and discrimination does not automatically eradicate all racist behavior in a person. It is suggested that with these blurred lines she wants to create a grey area, educating her readers that there are not only good or bad people but that it is possible to belong to both groups.

5.7 Is *Harry Potter* Anti-Racist?

"Differences of habit and language are nothing at all if our aims are identical and our hearts are open" (HP4 608)

In previous chapters it has been shown that various types of racism occur in the novels. The question that has not been answered yet is if Rowling also uses anti-racist approaches in order to question and challenge the racism that occurs in the wizarding world.

As Bonnett explains, "a minimal definition of anti-racism is that it refers to those forms of thought and/or practice that seek to confront, eradicate and/or ameliorate racism. Anti-racism implies the ability to identify a phenomenon – racism – and to do something about it" (3). With this in mind, is it then possible to say that Rowling attempted to include anti-racist practices in her series?

There are two different approaches to anti-racism, according to Bonnett. On the one hand, the universalist approach emphasizes the equality of all cultures and recognition of equal rights for all people. Moreover, universalism strives for "overcoming prejudice in order to see and enable the equality, the sameness, of people, rather than on conquering prejudice in the name of difference" (Bonnett 20). On the other hand, proponents of relativism believe that "cultural and/or physical differences between races should be recognised and respected" and "that different does not mean unequal" (Bonnett 13). He then defines six forms of anti-racist practice (88):

1. "Everyday anti-racism, i.e. opposition to racial equality that forms part of everyday popular culture"

2. "Multicultural anti-racism, i.e. the affirmation of multicultural diversity as a way of engaging racism"

3. "Psychological anti-racism, i.e. the identification and challenging of racism within structures of individual and collective consciousness"

4. "Radical anti-racism, i.e. the identification and challenging of structures of socio-economic power and privilege that foster and reproduce racism"

5. "Anti-Nazi and anti-fascist anti-racism"

6. "The representative organization, i.e. the policy and practice of seeking to create organizations representative of the 'wider community' and, therefore, actively favoring the entry and promotion of previously excluded races"

Horne suggests that especially radical anti-racism, which she terms "social justice antiracism" (79), and multicultural anti-racism are exemplified in the series. She points out that a universalist, multicultural approach is taken, for example, through Harry's interactions with house-elves because it "focuses […] on personal, rather than political, change" (84). While Dobby is characterized as funny, which makes it easy for Harry to like him and treat him kindly, Kreacher is quite the opposite. And after Kreacher's betrayal at the end of the fifth book, Dumbledore tells Harry that Sirius never "saw Kreacher as a being with feelings as acute as a human's" (HP5 766) but instead "regarded him as a servant unworthy of much interest and notice" (HP5 767). Even tough Dumbledore reminds Harry that "indifference and neglect often do much more damage than outright dislike" (HP5 767), Harry's treatment of Kreacher does not change until the seventh book, when he learns about Voldemort using Kreacher and leaving him to die in the cave. As soon as Harry embraces the similarities he shares with the elf – their grief – his behavior towards Kreacher slightly changes. This is the multicultural anti-racism lesson that Horne beliefs the reader will have learned by the end of the series: "to treat others with kindness, respect, and sympathy" (84).

Additionally, Horne writes that "Hermione's awakening [to racism in the wizarding world] begins with a recognition of institutional racism" (84). Hermione's campaign for elf rights and her organization in order to promote those rights are an obvious example for social justice anti-racism. She does not primarily raise awareness on a personal level but rather tries to achieve institutional change (Horne 85). Horne, however, argues that the mockery of Hermione's fight for house-elves could also be understood as Rowling's "critique of the social justice approach to antiracism work" (86).

Examining the role of the goblins, and in particular Griphook, Horne claims that Rowling tries to "rethink her earlier satirical dismissal of the social justice approach to antiracism" (Horne 88). With the depiction and, more precisely, Griphook's narration of the goblins in the seventh book Rowling seems to acknowledge the institutional and cultural racism in the wizarding world. As a multiculturalist approach to the oppression of the goblins would be difficult since it would not acknowledge racism as a social problem, Rowling approaches the subject from a social justice point of view (Horne 88). The demonstration of the role the goblins play in the magical world reveals the "institutional structures and policies that create advantages for dominant group members and disadvantages for people (or creatures) from subordinated groups" (Horne 88). Classifying the goblins within the social structure of the wizarding world, however, is not straightforward. They are clearly not enslaved, as we learn from the goblin Gornuk when he states that he recognizes "no wizarding master" (HP7 241). This statement also emphasizes that goblins cannot be easily exploited; they are extremely intelligent and can do magic without wands (HP7 397). Neither are they evil, or at least the books do not depict them as evil. Also, in contrast to the centaurs, goblins do not live separately from

wizards and witches but interact regularly with them. Nevertheless, they are definitely oppressed by wizardkind. When the "Code of Wand Use" – "no non-human creature is permitted to carry or use a wand" (HP4 113) – is mentioned, it becomes evident that wizards and witches prevent goblins from using wands. This is reinforced when Griphook tells Harry that "the right to carry a wand […] has long been contested between wizards and goblins" and that "wizards refuse to share the secrets of wandlore with other magical beings" (HP7 397). Additionally, during one of Harry's History of Magic exams he writes that "goblins had tried to attend and been ousted" (HP5 670), which furthers the argument of discrimination. Having learnt about the history of goblins and the stereotypes about them, Harry has to make his own decisions on how to treat Griphook. Even though it seems as though the stereotypes many wizards and witches hold against goblins prevail, Harry asks Griphook for his help and in return saves his life. This "personal act of kindness" is, as Horne argues, a clear multicultural anti-racism approach (92). Nonetheless, through Ron, Rowling effectively shows that underlying institutional oppression is oftentimes overlooked and individuals or whole racial groups are antagonized instead (Horne 93). Ron, having grown up in the wizarding world, cannot easily let go of stereotypes and "embodies the naturalized beliefs of the wizarding culture, beliefs that dismiss any claims of institutional oppression" (Horne 94). Even after hearing about the injustice and oppression goblins have been facing, Ron still distrusts Griphook, argues with him and does not accept his sentiment that Gryffindor's sword was stolen by wizards. Horne concludes that Rowling fails to integrate social justice anti-racism in the series but successfully uses a multicultural approach (96).

Another interesting point to make is that other schools in Europe are only briefly mentioned in the fourth book, when the students from Durmstrang and Beauxbatons participate in the Triwizard Tournament. Other parts of the world, such as the United States or countries in Asia and Africa are not mentioned at all in the books. However, with the publication of "Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them" and the extension of the *Harry Potter* universe, it becomes apparent that the United States also play an important role in the wizarding world and its history. For some reason, though, Rowling decided not to mention the United States in her seven-book series. It could be assumed that she left it out in order to have more options when writing new stories about the wizarding world. Taking on a more imperialist stance, however, one could also conclude that Britain is shown as the "imperial centre of the wizarding world" (Rana 46). The superiority of Britain is repeatedly shown during the course of the fourth book. First, the Irish Quidditch Team beats the Bulgarian team in the finals of the Quidditch World Cup. Then, during the Triwizard Tournament, the champions for Hogwarts, Cedric Diggory and Harry, win all of the tasks. Moreover, Hagrid tells Harry that "the less you lot 'ave to do with these foreigners, the happier yeh'll be" (HP4 474), and when Hermione accompanies Viktor Krum to the Yule ball, Ron calls her out for "fraternising with the enemy" (HP4 356). Rana further criticizes that even though some characters mention that it is important to "getting to know foreign wizards and making friends with them" (HP4 357), conversely, the actual storyline weakens their claims (49). This imperialist worldview is in clear contrast with the point of equality Rowling tries to make.

Furthermore, there are only a few minor characters at Hogwarts representing different cultures. Rowling never explicitly mentions multiculturalism but only hints

towards different ethnicities through names or small character depictions, such as Lee Jordan's dreadlocks. For example, Padma and Parvati Patil seem to have an Indian background, whereas Cho Chang's name indicates Chinese heritage. This seems to be Rowling's attempt at striving towards a 'race-free' society, or at least a society where skin-color and geographical heritage do not matter. If we look at the previous discussion of discrimination in the novels, however, it becomes clear that Rowling only replaces "skin color" with "wizarding heritage", which then becomes the basis on which people are differentiated.

What this chapter has shown, then, is that Rowling tries to include some anti-racism approaches in the series. For example, the multiculturalist approach Harry adopts seems to be successful for him personally. Regardless, it is obvious that other attempts at incorporating anti-racism pedagogy have failed. Especially Hermione's struggle with promoting rights for house-elves implies that wizarding society is not willing to change their ways if it challenges their convenience. Moreover, besides Harry and Hermione, the characters do not seem to learn and change their attitudes towards, and treatment of, others. Especially Ron continues to base his behavior towards others on prejudice and stereotypes. Also, Rowling's inconsistency with regards to anti-racism becomes apparent. Going back to what has been discussed about racism in children's literature (see ch. 4.2), the question is raised whether the racism and anti-racism depicted in the series mirror Rowling's own beliefs. This is something, however, that can only be answered by Rowling herself.

6 Conclusion

Questions about the difference between people and the racial fundamentals of these differences have provoked numerous discussions across a variety of disciplines and spheres. The present paper first provided a brief discussion of the racial issues in history and then analyzed the racist ideologies that appear in the *Harry Potter* series.

Contrary to what many people believe, racism is not the consequence of dividing humanity into races. The belief in inferiority and superiority had been used to dominate peoples throughout history, and with colonization and the slave trade spreading globally, differences between peoples were used as a basis for discrimination.

In the United States, slavery became a very prevalent oppression system that continued up until the mid-19th century. During the 20th century, the Civil Rights movement started to fight for the abolition of racial segregation. Even though overt forms of racism, such as slavery and segregation, have vanished, systemic racism continues to be part of American institutions. Up until today, many Blacks and people of color still face racism because it is deeply embedded in US American institutions and society. Blacks and people of color are faced with discrimination in the education system and in their professional lives. Moreover, they are at a higher risk of being persecuted and imprisoned than Whites. In recent years, police brutality against Blacks has risen to a dramatic high. This has led to the uprising of anti-racist movements such as *Black Lives Matter.* On the other hand, racist right-wing organizations, such as the Ku Klux Klan and other supremacist groups, are gaining foothold again.

In Britain, racism was shaped by immigration rather than slavery. Especially immigrants from Ireland, as well as Jews and Catholics, were victims of discrimination and hostility. These problems led to numerous debates about immigration during the 20th century. Contemporary forms of racism in Britain are similar to those in the United States. Specifically, institutional racism is evident in education, health care, and the criminal justice system. In recent years, anti-immigrant sentiments, Islamophobia and Antisemitism have been noticeable in Britain's culture.

In the 20th century research in genetics refuted the idea that different races of humankind exist and that not just physical features but also mental capacities are inherited. This led to a more social understanding of racism. Nowadays, races are seen as social constructs that benefit the dominant group. This view is also shared by Critical Race Theory scholars, who assume that since racism fits the purpose of the dominating part of society, its abolition is not in the interest of that society.

Additionally, racism and race are also issues that arise in the field of children's literature. Considering that cultural meanings are also conveyed through texts, children learn about social norms in books; thus addressing racism and diversity is crucial. If children's books are to enable their readers to accept that diversity is part of our society, they need to integrate characters of various ethnic and cultural backgrounds, as well as all types of gender and ability. In the United States and the United Kingdom, there has been quite some progress in this area, with organizations promoting diverse literature and diverse authors.

One instance of children's literature in which racism is an integral part of the story is the *Harry Potter* series. The seven books about a young wizard have become one of the most popular series worldwide. The analysis of the fictional world

of *Harry Potter* shows that issues of racism are deeply ingrained in wizarding society.

In the *Harry Potter* series, various characters are prejudiced and engage in discrimination against others. The Dursleys, for example, hold immensely prejudiced views of all wizards and witches, which leads them to discriminate against Harry. However, personal racism also occurs within the wizarding community. "Blood-purity" is one of the key concepts in the series. This becomes instantly apparent when the terms "pure-blood", "half-blood" and "Mudblood" are introduced. These terms refer to the heritage of wizards and witches. Similarly to how "Blood Quantum" laws and the "One-Drop-Rule" were applied in the United States, the notion of "blood purity" is used to retain the social hierarchy. Especially the ones that strive for a "pure-blood" society continuously torment and abuse others, particularly Muggle-born witches and wizards. They are trying to achieve their goals through acts of terror and intimidation within the wizarding world in order to overthrow the government and impose their ideology upon the whole country. For this depiction, Rowling draws upon the Nazi ideology and uses references to the Ku Klux Klan.

At the bottom of the social hierarchy in the wizarding world are magical creatures, such as house-elves, giants, or goblins. House-elves are seen as naturally inferior, and this imposed inferiority led to their enslavement. Their oppression in the novels mirrors the treatment of African slaves in US households during times of slavery.

The analysis of all these instances of racism and discrimination in the novels then led to the question whether *Harry Potter* can be seen as anti-racist. While Rowling evidently tries to incorporate anti-racist approaches, most instances are

unsuccessful. This is either because the characters do not continue their aspirations, or they are not encouraged by adults. Specifically, Hermione's work to ensure rights for house-elves seems to be futile since no one in the wizarding world supports her. Thus, it can be concluded that even tough anti-racism approaches are apparent, especially institutional racism and the power structures behind it are not sufficiently challenged. In order to effectively become anti-racist, attitudes and behaviors have to be reflected and changed accordingly.

This work is intended to shed some light on the critical notions of racism and race in the *Harry Potter* series. However, only the seven books of the original *Harry Potter* canon were analyzed. The universe of *Harry Potter* has since expanded with the two movies *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* (2016) and *Fantastic Beasts: The Crimes of Grindelwald* (2018) and other canonical writings by Rowling. It would be quite interesting to take a look at how the concepts of racism are incorporated in those newer works, especially since the first *Fantastic Beasts* movie takes place in the United States and gives insight into a different wizarding community.

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8 Appendix

8.1 Abstract

The "Harry Potter" series by J.K. Rowling has been one of the best sold series in fiction worldwide. Since the publication of the first novel in 1997, Rowling has created a universe that is simultaneously full of magical as well as real-world problems which readers can relate to. One of the themes that consistently appears throughout the series is racism. In the fictional universe of Harry Potter, the characters are confronted with numerous concepts of racism, such as purity of blood, slavery and institutional racism. Some people may think racism has vanished; however, this thesis will present some racist ideologies and practices which are still present in our contemporary society. This thesis aims at discussing various racist concepts that have been used throughout history, and up to this day, in order to dominate certain groups of people. It is analyzed if these concepts also occur in the *Harry Potter* universe. Instances of discrimination and racism are located in the text, and the series is examined regarding its racist ideology. It will be shown that racist beliefs are, likewise, a part of the real world and the world of Harry Potter.

8.2 Zusammenfassung

Die Buchreihe „Harry Potter" geschrieben von J.K. Rowling ist eine der bestverkauften Romanreihen weltweit. Mit Veröffentlichung des ersten Buches 1997 hat Rowling eine Welt erschaffen, die gleichzeitig voll von magischen wie auch realen Problemen ist und mit denen sich die Leserschaft identifizieren kann. Ein Thema, das sich durch die gesamte Reihe zieht, ist Rassismus. In der fiktiven Welt von Harry Potter stoßen die Charaktere mehrmals auf Diskriminierung und Rassismus. Rassistische Ideologien und Praktiken sind in der heutigen Gesellschaft

immer noch präsent. Deshalb werden in dieser Arbeit verschiedene rassistische Konzepte der Vergangenheit und Gegenwart besprochen, die vor allem in Nordamerika und Großbritannien zur Unterdrückung bestimmter Gruppen verwendet wurden. Es wird dann untersucht, ob diese Konzepte auch im Harry Potter-Universum vorkommen. Rassistische Momente im Text werden somit ermittelt und sollen aufzeigen, dass solch eine Ideologie nicht nur Teil der realen Welt, sondern auch der Welt von Harry Potter ist.