

Political History and Literature in J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter Series

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Politics and ideology in children's literature

In the concluding chapter, "Political Criticism," of his book, Terry Eagleton (1996, pp. 169-170) writes: "There is, in fact, no need to drag politics into literary theory: [...] it has been there from the beginning. I mean by the political no more than the way we organize our social life together, and the power-relations which this involves [...] the history of modern literary theory is part of the political and ideological history of our epoch. [...] literary theory has been indissociably bound up with political beliefs and ideological values."

The connection between literature and ideology is rooted in the fact that in many ways literary creations often reflect a social reality. Literature which deals with factors that shape humankind and the human experience typically evolves from within historical, social, and political circumstances, and these are always subject to change. It follows that all writings, readings, and interpretations of literature are affected by the reader and the writer's specific place in society, as well as the various aspects of their gender identity, social standing, ethnic and political adherence. In similar fashion, the world of children's literature resembles other genres and exists within the political space of dialogue and debate. Its uniqueness comes to the fore in the tension between freedom and control, such as, in the right of speech versus the adult's ability to forcefully mold the child's opinions.

In the past, children's literature above all reflected and incorporated the norms and ideologies of the prevailing hegemony. Furthermore, it served as a commonplace instrument to educate the young, and by means of stories it would inculcate the values authorities considered necessary to build the child's character

and turn him or her into an effective and obedient citizen. The child was seen as an object to be cultivated and improved from the "all-knowing" perspective of the adult world. This conservative standpoint of viewing children's literature, that is, merely as an educational vehicle, denies the existence of politics in children's lives, both in reality and in literature itself. As society has undergone social and psychological development, the orientation of education has changed, particularly regarding the status of the child in the modern era. In addition, educational philosophy has taken on new directions and this has resulted in meaningful evolvments in the genre of children's literature. Today, childhood is not viewed as simply a period of preparation for life in the future, but as an important period in its own right, meant to allow the child to realize his or her full potential. The 1980s UN Convention on the Rights of the Child was signed by 120 nations, and reflects the changes that have taken place in the way we perceive children in general. This is manifested in the UN declaration, which includes not only an agreement respecting the rights of children, but also a recognition of their choices. Furthermore, it acknowledges the children's right to the protection of their wellbeing and safety, as well as their right to speak and to be heard, and take part in decision-making processes (Gidron, 2013).

This new conception that puts the child's world in the center is represented in the type of fantasy story which "talks" to children with the help of symbols. Symbols can promote political and social awareness, and children readers may thus take an active part in constructing their points of view, and realize their right to take a stand and act accordingly. In fantasy literature, the writer invents new and imaginary worlds, conjures up a magical setting which is not limited by rational thought, reality, scientific feasibility and the limits of what is possible, and, therefore, he or she can write about reality in a more subversive manner. For this reason, it is a

politically powerful genre. Many fantasy stories serve as allegories with an underlying political critique. Books such as *The Lord of the Rings* (Tolkien, 1954-55) and *The Hunger Games* (Collins, 2008) are based on the paradigm of the “total war,” which echoes one of modern Europe’s most formidable historical events. The battle between the forces of the West and the troops of Sauron, the main antagonist in *The Lord of the Rings*, and the struggle between the Capitol (the hedonistic and advanced metropolis in *The Hunger Games*) and the outlying Districts, are symbols of total war between good and evil. In the latter novel, there is the additional criticism of thought control and the destructive influence of reality television.

In this article, I will attempt to reveal the ideological basis of J. K. Rowling’s Harry Potter series. I will claim that in the underlying patterns of action throughout the series there is a symbolic allegory of the struggle between the children of light and the agents of darkness, or between liberal, democratic regimes and totalitarian dictatorships. On the surface, we find Harry Potter’s life story, his family and his friends, yet, at a deeper level, hidden within the dramatic events, there is a subtext of protest targeting an ideological, racist perception.

The writing of Harry Potter and a review of the research

The Harry Potter series has been wildly successful among children, youth, and adults. A worldwide bestseller, it has been translated into more than sixty languages and earned numerous prizes. The books have sold in the millions, and the screen adaptations of the books have been among the most successful films in the history of cinema, based on the number of tickets sold.¹

The success of Harry Potter books may lie, among other things, in the fact that they are ambivalent texts which, on one hand, belong

officially to the genre of children’s literature, but at the same time they also cater to another readership and thus may qualify as adult literature (Shavit, 1996, pp. 185-197).

Rowling artfully manipulates these two popular worlds of literature and creates a text which succeeds in addressing both readerships from many different perspectives. Harry Potter books have been studied as detective stories in which researchers have sought to fully grasp the image of Lord Voldemort, the dark character who murdered Harry Potter’s parents under mysterious circumstances. The series may also be analyzed as an educational tale which describes the coming of age of its hero as he grows from boyhood into fatherhood. This process includes familiar phases, such as struggles with authority, coping with challenges, erotic awakenings, the consolidation of a sexual identity, the discovery of the “me,” and the development of independence. Another angle of the series is as a fantasy tale that offers a magical realm of wizards, a plethora of witches and amazing creatures out of folktales, fairytales, and myths. These include giants, dragons, ghosts and spirits, trolls, elves, and others. Harry Potter works as an adventure story which relates the joint quest of Harry and his friends, Ron Weasley and Hermione Granger, to conquer the dark lord and his army of supporters, and to restore order. Additionally, the series may be seen as a feminist tale. Hermione is smarter and more intuitive than Harry, and has better magical skills. Harry does not succeed in achieving his goals without her, and she even saves his life several times, thanks to her quick intelligence and bravery. In addition, Minerva McGonagall, Dolores Umbridge, Bellatrix Lestrange, and Madame Olympe Maxime are also described as strong and capable women who more than once outwit and outthink the men. As a social tale, the series criticizes the gap between poor (Weasley) and rich (Malfoy), and denounces the way society tramples the rights of its weaker members. An example is the house elves, described as the

¹ Movie Franchises Index (www.the-numbers.com).

“black” servants of the magical world (Anatol, 2003).

Rowling explains that the idea to write the Harry Potter books was the result of a string of crises in her own life: her mother's death, her divorce from a violent husband, Jorge Arantes, the loss of her teaching job, and the utter poverty she was thrust into that forced her to appeal to the social services for help in raising her daughter, Jessica. These events were the catalyst that led to the creation of Harry Potter, and a rough outline was worked out, according to Rowling's own testimony, during a single train ride that she remembers vividly because of her mental desolation (Smith, 2002, pp. 118-132).

Her first book, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, was published in 1997, and thereafter Rowling published a new book almost every year for the next decade. The successful writer was invited to the Harvard University graduation ceremony of the year 2008, where she spoke about her work as a writer and bilingual researcher and secretary for Amnesty International in London. She said:

In my tiny office I read scribbled letters smuggled out of totalitarian regimes by men and women willing to endanger their lives for the sake of letting the world know what was happening in their countries. I saw photos of people who had disappeared without a trace, sent to Amnesty by despairing relatives and friends. I read testimonies of torture victims, and saw photos of their injuries. I opened handwritten eye-witness reports of kangaroo courts and executions, kidnappings and rape. A good number of my colleagues were former political prisoners, people who had been thrown out of their homes or exiled because they had the courage to speak up against the regime [...] Every day I saw more testimony of human evil carried out by mankind in order to retain power or achieve it. (Rowling, 2000)

In an interview with journalist Lizo Mzimba, Rowling was asked: “You say that you do not set out to write a subtext but that it emerges naturally from the plot. Nevertheless, are these the right messages in your eyes?” Her response was: “In the world of magic there is a topic which may be construed as racist. This topic is central to the entire plot, and throughout there are the evil ones to support a kind of genocide, to destroy those they see as not ‘of pure blood.’ This is obviously an intentional part of the story, but other messages rose organically. I never intended to educate by means of my books.” (Mzimba, 2003)

Joanne K. Rowling denies that her books are excessively educational, but at the same time admits that Amnesty affected her writing and perhaps even motivated her to overtly integrate the topic of racism into her books. In other interviews on the topic of factors that affected her writing, she was not as forceful. On one hand, she drew the analogy between Lord Voldemort, the major antagonist of her books, and historical tyrants, yet, on the other hand, she denied that the former was based on any historical character (Rowling, 2004).

In spite of Rowling's claims, I propose that racism is not merely an educational message that “was a natural outcome of the plot” (Mzimba, 2003), as she suggests, but rather the foundation upon which the entire Harry Potter story is built. To be more precise, I maintain that Rowling was influenced by Nazi ideology and drew her ideas from it when building her plot. She goes on to create a covert and sophisticated analogy between the Nazi ideology of Hitler's dictatorship in Germany (1933-1945) and the netherworld ideology of the horrible tyrant, Lord Voldemort, in the magical realm. This parallel finds expression in the similarities between Hitler and Voldemort, their ideological beliefs as well as the actions they took to implement them.

Adolf Hitler, Lord Voldemort

The personalities of both Hitler and Voldemort are an enigma, and both jealously guarded their family background. This secrecy and distance are inherent character traits, part of their behavior and substantially contribute to the myth of the “heroic” leadership halo that both created for themselves.

The non-fiction character, Adolf Hitler, Chancellor of Nazi Germany during the 1930s and 1940s, was born in April, 1889, in Austria when it still was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. His father was Alois Schicklgruber (1837-1903), known as Hitler after 1876, and his mother was Klara Pölzl (1860-1907). Adolf Hitler's paternal grandmother, Maria Anna Schicklgruber (1795-1847) worked as a cook and cleaner for the Frankenberger family in the town of Grätz, Austria, and in 1836 she became pregnant and had a child. The father's identity is unknown, although some historical studies theorize that this man may have been a Jew (Kershaw, 2003, pp. 27-34).

In 1938, after Hitler's regime stabilized and carried out the bloodless annexation of Austria, an order was given to the Land Registration Offices to carry out a survey of Döllersheim, Alois Schicklgruber's place of birth, and to verify whether this area might be suitable as a firing range for the Wehrmacht. A year later, the entire Döllersheim population was forcefully evacuated, and the village and surrounding area were shelled and severely damaged by German artillery. Hitler's father's birthplace and his grandmother's grave were completely demolished, and the area, which had been fertile and thriving, became a deserted wasteland, filled with the debris of war. Destroying the village and designating it as a firing range could not have happened without Hitler's knowledge and permission (Rosenbaum, 1999, pp. 49-50). The whole incident begs the question of why Hitler allowed this destruction, in spite of his family roots there. Is it possible that he ordered the destruction of

Döllersheim out of hatred for his father, and out of a wish to erase his ancestry, that is, the shame of his alleged Jewish blood? Research has found no clear answers to these questions, barring hypothesis and speculation. In any case, it should be noted that even if Hitler's Jewish roots have not been proven, there are some traces of Jewish ancestry somewhere in his complex family tree. It is certainly possible that he had his own doubts, as did the researchers who delved into his ancestry in later years (Kershaw, 2003, pp. 29-30).

The fictional Lord Voldemort, one of the most powerful wizards in the magical world, was born Tom Marvolo Riddle in London, in 1927. He was the last direct descendant of the Salazar Slytherin dynasty—one of the founders of the Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. He was named after his father, Tom Riddle, while his middle name, Marvolo, was in honor of his maternal grandfather. His father was a Muggle, a non-wizard, and his mother a pure-blood. He was raised in an orphanage since his father had abandoned his pregnant wife and she had died during childbirth. She had been immersed in a depression, but could have saved herself from death with her magical powers. She chose not to do so. Voldemort knew that he was a half-blood and suffered greatly in view of this knowledge. He blamed his father for the fact that he was forced to grow up surrounded by Muggles in an orphanage, and not in the world of wizardry where he felt he rightfully belonged. At some point in his life, he changed his name, set out on a journey of vengeance, and murdered his father and Muggle grandparents, wishing to erase any vestige of his inferior Muggle ancestry.

Therefore, Voldemort and Hitler, both of whom held their ancestors and identity in contempt, concealed their past, and even violently tried to wipe it out. Hitler uprooted people from their place of birth, appropriated their homes, and apparently destroyed their village in order to eradicate any trace of a connection between him and a possible Jewish kinship. Voldemort murdered his father and

his father's parents and subsequently denied his Muggle ancestry.

In December of 1907, Hitler's mother died, and he left for Vienna, moving from house to house until he ran out of money, became homeless, and lived in a shelter. Voldemort too, after his mother's death, had no home, and was forced to live in an orphanage, completely penniless and alone in the world. He had neither friends nor family. These years, in which both men lived on the margins of society, undoubtedly affected them and possibly even shaped certain aspects of their personality on their way to leadership roles.

Already in the orphanage, Tom Marvolo Riddle proved to be a bully who would frighten other children and forcefully take their possessions. As he grew up, he surrounded himself with boys and girls who eventually became the Death Eaters. These Death Eaters, who bore the Dark Mark on their left arm, would be his power base. All were full-blooded wizards and witches, and their common denominator was their pure blood and hatred of half-bloods and Muggles. Similarly, Hitler was a domineering child. He had a leader personality, and was often up to mischief. As early as elementary school, he established his status among the other children, and became the "leader of a small gang." This group loved to play cowboys and Indians, cops and robbers, and war games in the clearings and fields around their homes (Kershaw, 2003, p. 35).

Both Hitler and Voldemort started out as good pupils whose teachers liked them and were impressed with their abilities in spite of their mischievous nature. In fact, their elders expected great things from both, but they were to be disappointed. Voldemort, who had finished his studies *summa cum laude*, surprised everyone when he took a job with Borgin and Burkes, traders in Dark Magic. By the time Voldemort approached Professor Dumbledore for a teaching job at Hogwarts, he was rejected, because the headmaster feared that his motives were not pure. More than just thwarted, Voldemort would seek profound revenge. In a similar manner, Hitler turned down a

job as a civil servant, much to his father's dismay, and twice failed to be accepted to the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts, in September 1907 and October 1908. With the ruin of his hopes to be a painter, he was left an angry, frustrated man, at odds with the world around him (Kershaw, 2003, p. 42). Voldemort and Hitler were thus both denied admission to the places they desired to be a part of, and which they admired. For Voldemort this was Hogwarts, his only true home, and for Hitler it was the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts. These disappointments, in addition to the challenges of their early life, led them to ultimately pursue a career in politics. This course of action may have served as some kind of compensation for the painful failures they experienced during the first half of their lives.

The Nazi doctrine and the premises of the Dark Kingdom

German Nazi racial theory leading up to WWII focused on the power struggle among the various races. According to Hitler's infamous philosophy, humankind was originally divided into three main categories. The first was the master race of pure Aryans, who were founders of the world's culture throughout history and endowed with physical and spiritual perfection. The second class was the groups who were subjugated by the supreme race. These were lesser races and their fate was to serve the Aryan master race. Among these were the Japanese, the Slavs, the Romani people, and others. The third category consisted of the destroyers of culture and above all these were the Jews, perceived as the most inferior of all groups, both physically and spiritually. In Hitler's view, this group sought to corrupt the pure blood of the Aryan race.

We must pay attention to the destruction wrought daily to our people by the Jewish bastards. We must take into account that this poisoning of our blood can only disappear from the body of our people after hundreds of years, and perhaps never. We must take

into account that this racial disintegration affects the final Aryan values of our German nation and too often even completely destroys them, so that our strength as a nation that bears cultural values will fade more and more [...] such contamination of our blood, which hundreds of thousands of our people are completely unaware of, is today purposely applied by the Jews [...] if Germany were to free itself of this siege, it means that the entire world will be freed of this most dangerous of threats to the peoples of the world (Zimmermann and Heilbroner, 1995, pp. 295-296).

Hitler believed that world history was an endless ethnic-biological interracial struggle for power, where racial characteristics were inborn and unchangeable. His claims were based on a distorted interpretation of Darwin's theory of evolution chosen in order to fit his premise. In his view, the German people bore the onus of upholding racial purity (purity of blood) in order to prevent its degeneration at the hands of inferior races.

The idea of a new order based on Hitler's beliefs necessitated the elimination of the existing structure of government and replacing it with a new social, economic and political order, based on the Nazi doctrine. This new order required that Germany first establish dominion over Europe and then engage in the realization of the ideal of pure blood and Aryan rule by conquering territory, mobilizing the local population to serve Germany, and annihilating the inferior peoples.

Voldemort's ideology was also based on principles of racial purity and a division of the world into three races. First, was the superior wizard race which consisted of the founders of culture, destined to rule over all other races with a mighty hand. Their uniqueness lay in their magical powers, and only the full-blooded descendants of wizards and witches could claim this status and call themselves pure-bloods. The second category, the subservient

"bearers of culture," consisted of witches and wizards who were of mixed blood, that is, were not of pure-blooded ancestry. They were known as half-bloods. This race was not without worth, since they were endowed with some of the master race's characteristics, such as, their magical abilities, but they could not pass these on to their descendants. The third race was the most inferior; it destroyed culture, and its members were known as the Muggles. This race was composed of simple people who did not possess magical abilities. When, on rare occasions, Muggle parents gave birth to a child with magical powers, this child was known as a Mudblood, indicating that his or her ancestry had been soiled.

Both Nazi and Dark Kingdom ideologies suggest that they are in compliance with the Darwinian idea of natural selection, as illustrated by the following quotes: "Sirius seized it and smashed [the spider] with a heavy book entitled *Nature's Nobility: A Wizarding Genealogy*" (Rowling, 2003, p. 116); "[...] any work of fiction or non-fiction that depicts interbreeding between wizards and Muggles should be banned from the bookshelves of Hogwarts. I do not wish my son to be influenced into sully the purity of his bloodline by reading stories that promote wizard-Muggle marriage." (Rowling, 2008, p. 40) In the book, *The Tales of Beedle the Bard*, the wizard dynasty is presented as a natural aristocracy, inherently racially superior to all others. Banning books from the library which encouraged intermarriage is immediately associated with Germany's book burnings in 1933, as well as the Nuremberg racial law of 1935 which prohibited intermarriage between Germans and Jews. Similarly, in the wizard world, those who adhered to the racial theory believed that there was an ongoing existential struggle between the races, and that in due time the wizard race would prevail and rule over the others. Voldemort and his supporters believed that the only race worthy of existence, and the only one whose survival must be assured, were the pure-bloods. It was

their objective to prevent the degeneration of the wizard race by eradicating the Muggles whose subversion threatened the pure-bloods.

“Many of our oldest family trees become a little diseased over time,” he said as Bellatrix gazed at him, breathless and imploring. “You must prune yours, must you not, to keep it healthy? Cut away those parts that threaten the health of the rest.” “Yes, my Lord,” whispered Bellatrix, and her eyes swam with tears of gratitude again. “At the first chance!” “You shall have it,” said Voldemort. “And in your family, so in the world [...] we shall cut away the canker that infects us until only those of the true blood remain.” (Rowling 2007, p. 15)

In Voldemort's Dark Kingdom, the magic powers of the pure-bloods were a superior value, and in order to safeguard them, any measures were appropriate. The Nazi doctrine saw being an Aryan in the same light and also legitimized any use of force to defend its purity. The normalization of violent actions to guard the purity of blood is evident from Sirius Black's words about his parents: “No, no, but believe me, they thought Voldemort had the right idea, they were all for the purification of the wizarding race, getting rid of Muggle-borns and having pure-bloods in charge. They weren't alone either, there were quite a few people [...]” (Rowling, 2003, p. 112). Indeed, in *The Tales of Beedle the Bard*, the narrator innocently continues to speak about the believers in Voldemort's teachings: “[...] any wizard who shows fondness for the society of Muggles is of low intelligence, with magic so feeble and pitiful that he can only feel himself superior if surrounded by Muggle pigmen.” (Rowling, 2008, p. 10)

The anti-Muggle principle in the Dark Kingdom's ideology is parallel to anti-Semitic ideology in Nazism. In both cases, there is a hatred directed against those who are not members of the master race, and the inferior ones are described in negative terms, a threat to the perfection of the master race. Hitler regarded the Jews as a

parasitic race, satanic and evil, and he believed that they sought to sully and destroy the German People. Voldemort viewed Muggles in a similar light; they were dumb and dirty beasts whose only aim was to overpower the wizard race, and to bring about the downfall of the wizard dynasty.

The vision of a new order, according to Voldemort, is encapsulated in Hermione's exclamation to Griphook the Goblin: “And I'm hunted quite as much as any goblin or elf, Griphook! I'm a Mudblood!” (Rowling, 2007, p. 445) Hermione's words succinctly reflect the violence directed against anyone who did not belong to the “pure-blooded.” The persecution of goblins, elves, Mudbloods and other races considered inferior is quite evident from the way they were excluded from society by those who shared Voldemort's opinions. This hatred is pronounced, for instance, in Mrs. Black's invectives: “Mudbloods, filth, stains of dishonor on the house of my father's [...]”; “Mudbloods and filth dishonoring my house [...]” (Rowling, 2007, pp. 150, 177). The danger inherent in the Muggle race is also apparent in the leaflet distributed by Voldemort's regime: “Its pink cover was emblazoned with a golden title: MUDBLOODS and the Dangers They Pose to a Peaceful Pure-Blood Society. Beneath the title was a picture of a red rose with a simpering face, in the middle of its petals, being strangled by a green weed with fangs and a scowl.” (Rowling, 2007, p. 215)

The red rose, which represents the pure race, is being strangled to death by the weed which symbolizes the Muggles. The notion of a master race of wizards and witches, i.e., the pure-bloods, finds expression in the magical fountain of brotherhood standing in the center of the hall at the Ministry of Magic. In the fountain are statues of a goblin, a house-elf and a centaur who, filled with jealousy and admiration, gaze at the witch and wizard holding wands spouting forth rivers of water. After Voldemort gained control of the Ministry of Magic, the fountain was replaced by a rather fearsome statue

which illustrates the ideal of racial hierarchy.

It was rather frightening, this was a sculpture of a witch and a wizard sitting on ornately carved thrones, looking down at the Ministry workers toppling out of fireplaces below them. Engraved in foot-high letters at the base of the statue were the words MAGIC IS MIGHT [...] “It’s horrible, isn’t it?” she said to Harry, who was staring up at the statue. “Have you seen what they’re sitting on?” Harry looked more closely and realized that what he had thought were decoratively carved thrones were actually mounds of carved humans: hundreds and hundreds of naked bodies, men, women, and children, all with rather stupid, ugly faces, twisted and pressed together to support the weight of the handsomely robed wizards. “Muggles,” whispered Hermione. “In their rightful place.” (Rowling, 2007, pp. 208-209)

This terrifying statue depicts the Muggles as subhuman, their bodies and flesh used to fashion thrones for the magic-empowered master race. This, too, evokes associations of the rumors rampant during WWII alleging that the Nazis made soap from the human fat of Jewish bodies, the cakes marked RJF for “rein jüdisches Fett,” which meant “pure Jewish fat” (Kuznetsov, 1968, p. 160; Wert, 1968, p. 668).

The concept of Lebensraum—living space—is another principle shared by Nazism and the Dark Kingdom. After WWI, and the signing of the Versailles Treaty in 1919, Germany lost vast areas of territory, its army was reduced, and punitive damages were imposed. Germany found itself floundering in a severe economic crisis, a fact which contributed to the rise of extreme elements in society, including the Nazi Party. Categorizing the “culture-bearing” races as subhuman served the Nazi’s political objectives. It legitimized their aspiration to conquer territory in the east as well as their belligerence toward Poland and The Ukraine in order to secure living space while enslaving and exploiting the local population.

In Rowling’s world, Muggle persecution of wizardkind during the Middle Ages led to the signing of an international treaty in 1689 in order to preserve the magical secrets of the wizards. As a result, they were forced to hide their magical abilities and lost their freedom of action.

The persecution of witches and wizards was gathering pace all over Europe in the early fifteenth century. Many in the magical community felt, and with good reason, that offering to cast a spell on the Muggle-next-door’s sickly pig was tantamount to volunteering to fetch the firewood for one’s own funeral pyre. “Let the Muggles manage without us!” was the cry [...] It is true, of course, that genuine witches and wizards were reasonably adept at escaping the stake, block and noose, [...] however, a number of deaths did occur: Sir Nicholas de Mimsy-Porpington (a wizard at the royal court in his lifetime, and in his death-time, ghost of Gryffindor Tower) was stripped of his wand before being locked in a dungeon, and was unable to magic himself out of his execution; and wizarding families were particularly prone to losing younger members, whose inability to control their own magic made them noticeable, and vulnerable, to Muggle witch-hunters (Rowling, 2008, pp. 13-14).

Moreover, we are told that at the time, “the wizards drew further and further apart from their non-magical brethren, culminating with the institution of the International Statute of Wizarding Secrecy in 1689, when wizardkind voluntarily went underground.” (Rowling, 2008, p. 13)

Hitler’s idea of living space and Voldemort’s ideal of freedom of operation strengthened their political standing and also were meant to reverse the humiliation suffered in previous struggles. Voldemort aspired to revoke the Statute of Wizarding Secrecy because he saw it as shameful and humiliating to pure-blooded wizardkind, while Hitler acted toward annulling the Versailles Treaty, which, for him

and a significant part of the German people, was a mark of disgrace. Both wanted to reclaim resources that had been taken from them as a result of signed documents, and both wanted to expand their living space and dominate the lesser races. Hitler wished to return lost territory to Germany, conquer the nations of Europe, and enslave the Slavs to benefit Germany. Voldemort aspired to bring wizardkind out of hiding, achieve absolute freedom of operation and dominate the Muggles. "For years he talked of the Dark Lord, who was going to bring the wizards out of hiding to rule the Muggles and the Muggle-borns." (Rowling, 2007, p. 168)

The principle of leadership is also something the two ideologies have in common. Voldemort and Hitler similarly believed that the leader was above the law, enjoyed unlimited authority, and did not need to justify his actions to any person or institution. Both ideologies indicated that their leader be regarded with great respect. He was not to be referred to by name, but rather a title was used that underscored his leadership: Hitler was called the Führer, while Voldemort was known as the Dark Lord. Moreover, Voldemort's name aroused such fear in the wizard world that merely saying it was considered dangerous. Therefore, he was usually referred to as "You-Know-Who" or "He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named." In the series' seventh book it became taboo to say his name, and anyone who did, risked being revealed with the help of magic.

In 1926, the raised arm salute accompanied by the cry of "Heil Hitler!" was an integral part of the worship of the Führer. The aim of this custom and other symbols was to assist in the embodiment of the German People's revival and present Hitler as a pseudo-religious, messianic figure, a kind of demi-god (Galblum, 2005, pp. 54-55). In the wizard world, bowing to Lord Voldemort could be construed in the same light, as it expressed both fear and respect for the omnipotent leader and the personality cult of worship that

surrounded him. "Then one of the Death Eaters fell to his knees, crawled toward Voldemort and kissed the hem of his black robes. 'Master...Master,' he murmured. The Death Eaters behind him did the same; each of them approaching Voldemort on his knees and kissing his robes, before backing away and standing up." (Rowling, 2000, p. 645)

The method of operation in both the Nazi regime and the Dark Kingdom

The Nazi Party's rise to power resulted in the marginalization of rival parties, until the July 1933 legislation ousted the others and left the Nazi Party in complete control. "The National Socialist German Worker's Party constitutes the only party in Germany. Any person who takes it upon himself to maintain or establish an organizational framework for any other political party will be punished with forced labor or prison sentence of up to three years, unless other protocols allow more severe punishment." (Shirer, 1967, p. 166)

In the Dark Kingdom, Lord Voldemort's organization and the number of supporters grew until they gained absolute control of the Ministry of Magic. From the moment of the takeover, Voldemort took action toward establishing a new order, and his organization became the only one that was allowed to operate. Dolores Jane Umbridge, High Inquisitor and emissary of the Dark Magician, used her authority to pass Educational Decree Number Twenty-Four, which essentially consolidated the principle of a one-party rule. "All Student Organizations, Societies, Teams, Groups, and Clubs are henceforth disbanded. An Organization, Society, Team, Group, or Club is hereby defined as a regular meeting of three or more students. Permission to re-form may be sought from the High Inquisitor (Professor Umbridge). No Student Organization, Society, Team, Group, or Club may exist without the knowledge and approval of the High Inquisitor." (Rowling, 2007, p. 351)

The Nazi regime employed both physical and psychological terror tactics in order to control the population and prevent any opposition. This allowed it to mobilize citizens toward achieving the party's ideologies. At any given moment, the authorities could invade the citizen's privacy—their control was based on intimidation, coercion and violence. This terror was directed mostly at those sectors of the population deemed enemies of the Nazi ideology, such as, Jews, Gypsies, homosexuals, the insane, the disabled, and citizens who opposed National Socialism. In the Dark Kingdom, too, use was made of terror and intimidation as a means of controlling the population and recruiting the multitudes to implement its ideology. In *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, Voldemort stepped up his actions in order to ensure his rise to absolute power. He recruited soldiers by violent means under a cloak of secrecy. “‘Well, firstly, he wants to build up his army again,’ said Sirius. ‘In the old days he had huge numbers at his command; witches and wizards he’d bullied or bewitched into following him, his faithful Death Eaters, a great variety of Dark creatures.’” (Rowling, 2003, pp. 91-2)

The Dark Kingdom's army consisted of five groups: Death Eaters, dementors, giants, Inferi (singular: Inferius), and werewolves. The Death Eaters were the most important and the closest to Voldemort, because they worked tirelessly to realize his vision, and being pure-bloods, formed the foundation for the new order.

“Dementors are among the foulest creatures that walk this earth. They infest the darkest, filthiest places, they glory in decay and despair, they drain peace, hope, and happiness out of the air around them. Even Muggles feel their presence, though they can't see them. Get too near a dementor and every good feeling, every happy memory will be sucked out of you. If it can, the dementor will feed on you long enough to reduce you to something like itself [...] soul-less and evil. You'll be left with nothing but the worst experiences of your life.” (Rowling, 1999, p. 153)

The dementors were persuaded by Voldemort to join him by offering them an endless supply of victims. The giants are described as bloodthirsty and cruel creatures whose actions had brought them to the brink of extinction through internecine warfare (Rowling, 2003, p. 428). The Inferi were actually human bodies without life, bewitched by Voldemort and turned into a huge and frightening army of corpses which served his cause. The werewolves were humans who were bitten by wolves, and as a result turned into wolves at full moon and acted according to their beastly instincts. Voldemort used the werewolves to overrun the Wizarding World. He also freed his loyal supporters from their imprisonment in the Wizarding World, and those who refused to join him were hunted and murdered, down to the last one. “‘[...] well, you don't just hand in your resignation to Voldemort. It's a lifetime of service or death.’” (Rowling, 2000, p. 112) “‘And they've found Igor Karkaroff's body in a shack up north. The Dark Mark had been set over it—well, frankly, I'm surprised he stayed alive for even a year after deserting the Death Eaters.’” (Rowling, 2006, p. 106)

Voldemort and his followers created an atmosphere of fear, tension, and confusion around themselves. These unsettling feelings were used to control the multitudes and prevent uprisings, as Lupin said: “Yes, Voldemort is playing a very clever game. Declaring himself might have provoked open rebellion: Remaining masked has created confusion, uncertainty, and fear.” (Rowling, 2007, p. 181)

The terror which magnified Voldemort's return to power is also reflected in the announcement issued by the Ministry of Magic. It proclaimed a state of emergency and called on the nation to prepare for war: “‘We urge the magical population to remain vigilant. The Ministry is currently publishing guides to elementary home and personal defense that will be delivered free to all Wizarding homes

within the coming month.” (Rowling, 2003, pp. 845-846) In his quest to realize the ideal of pure blood, Voldemort did not hesitate in harming Muggles and gave his supporters much freedom to do so.

“Since they have moved into the open, they have been wreaking havoc. The Brockdale Bridge—he did it, Prime Minister, he threatened a mass Muggle killing unless I stood aside for him and—” [...] “That was no hurricane,” said Fudge miserably. “Excuse me!” barked the Prime Minister, now positively stamping up and down. “Trees uprooted, roofs ripped off, lampposts bent, horrible injuries—” “It was the Death Eaters,” said Fudge. “He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named’s followers. [...] and we suspect giant involvement.” (Rowling, 2006, pp. 12-13)

The next situation also describes a violent act, and arouses connotations of Gestapo round-ups designed to find Jews and ship them off to concentration camps, death camps, or forced labor:

“Meanwhile, the Ministry has started moving against Muggle-borns.” Lupin pointed at the Daily Prophet. “Look at page two.” Hermione turned the pages with much the same expression of distaste she had worn when handling *Secrets of the Darkest Art*. ““Muggle-born Register,” she read aloud, ““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.” “People won’t let this happen,” said Ron. “It is happening, Ron,” said Lupin. “Muggle-borns are being

rounded up as we speak.” “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?” “I know,” said Lupin. “Nevertheless, unless you can prove that you have at least one close Wizarding relative, you are now deemed to have obtained your magical power illegally and must suffer the punishment.” Ron glanced at Hermione, then said, “What if pure-bloods and half-bloods swear a Muggle-born’s part of their family? I’ll tell everyone Hermione’s my cousin—” Hermione covered Ron’s hand with hers and squeezed it. “Thank you, Ron, but I couldn’t let you—” “You won’t have a choice,” said Ron fiercely, gripping her hand back. “I’ll teach you my family tree so you can answer questions on it.” Hermione gave a shaky laugh. “Ron, as we’re on the run with Harry Potter, the most wanted person in the country, I don’t think it matters. If I was going back to school it would be different. What’s Voldemort planning for Hogwarts?” she asked Lupin. “Attendance is now compulsory for every young witch and wizard,” he replied. “That was announced yesterday. It’s a change, because it was never obligatory before. Of course, nearly every witch and wizard in Britain has been educated at Hogwarts, but their parents had the right to teach them at home or send them abroad if they preferred. This way, Voldemort will have the whole Wizarding population under his eye from a young age. And it’s also another way of weeding out Muggle-borns, because students must be given Blood Status—meaning that they have proven to the ministry that they are of wizard descent—before they are allowed to attend.” (Rowling, 2007, pp. 181-182)

It appears, therefore, that the Muggle-Born Registration Commission, under the management of Dolores Umbridge, was established in order to persecute and incarcerate the Muggles. Moreover, Voldemort initiated the Snatchers gang whose purpose was to catch Muggles, blood traitors, and people who had ties to the Order of the Phoenix which had fought against Voldemort.

Furthermore, anyone known as a Muggle sympathizer was put under surveillance by the Snatchers.

Mr. Weasley told Harry that Muggle killing was a common event, even a sport: “These accidents aren’t accidents — the crashes and explosions and derailments and whatever else has happened since we last watched the news. People are disappearing and dying and he’s behind it— Voldemort. I’ve told you this over and over again, he kills Muggles for fun. Even the fogs —they’re caused by dementors, and if you can’t remember what they are, ask your son!” (Rowling, 2007, p. 35)

“It is with great regret that we inform our listeners of the murders of Ted Tonks and Dirk Cresswell’ [...] Meanwhile, in Gaddley, a Muggle family of five has been found dead in their home. Muggle authorities are attributing their deaths to a gas leak, but members of the Order of the Phoenix inform me that it was the Killing Curse—more evidence, as if it were needed, of the fact that Muggle slaughter is becoming little more than a recreational sport under the new regime.” (Rowling, 2007, p. 377)

The murders and massacres of Muggle supporters by Voldemort echo the Nazi mass murder of Jews in the framework of The Final Solution during the Shoah. Even the mention of “gas leakage” raises associations of the gas chambers used as a device of mass murder. Moreover, the Muggles’ forced efforts to attribute the Muggle family’s cause of death to gas leakage is not unlike the efforts of the Jews —especially the Jewish committees —to ignore the horrifying realities of the genocide, and at the same time, deny their expected fate. Even when rumors of the murder of Jews became widespread, the latter refused to believe that such a large-scale catastrophe could even happen. Murder as “an amusing leisure time pursuit” (Rowling, 2007, p. 35) corresponds with the mass-killings of Jews, as more than once these were the result of the sadistic traits

of concentration camp commanders. For instance, Amon Göth (1908-1946), the third commander of the Plaszow concentration camp in Poland, was a notorious sadist.

A conversation between Griphook the Goblin and Harry Potter and Hermione offers a further parallel when Griphook says to Harry: “But it is, it is precisely 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?” (Rowling, 2007, p. 418)

Griphook blamed the wand holders (wizards) for not coming to the aid of the lesser races and saving them, and instead, they preferred to ignore them rather than openly struggle against Voldemort and his supporters. Griphook’s words are reminiscent of the way many nations reacted during WWII, choosing to ignore the murder of the Jews, and reacting with indifference to the Nazi terror regime.

Another parallel between the Nazi regime and the Dark Kingdom is how their road to absolute power was facilitated by their takeover of the media and institutes of learning. After the burning of the Reichstag in 1933, Germany’s president in office, Paul Von Hindenburg, signed a decree limiting personal freedom, imposing severe restrictions on the freedom of expression —especially that of the press, the right to unionize, and the right to privacy. Gradually, the Nazi Party gained control over the media, using it as their mouthpiece in promulgating the one and only truth, namely, the Nazi ideology. Social-Democratic newspapers and the liberal press were closed down, while their prominent journalists were rounded up and sometimes killed (Shirer, 1967, pp. 159-161). Voldemort, too, gained control of the media with the aim of strengthening his position. The Death Eaters, his emissaries and servants, took over *The Daily Prophet*, and Voldemort used it in his smear campaign against Harry Potter and Albus Dumbledore.

The newspaper published false information claiming that Muggles were stealing magic from pure-bloods. Very likely, Voldemort's people were also behind the kidnapping of Luna, the daughter of the eccentric Xenophilius Lovegood. Luna was abducted in order to force her father, also editor of *The Quibbler*, to report the news according to the Ministry of Magic's dictates. However, an underground pirate radio program, Potterwatch, was established to update Voldemort's opponents with news that was not made public through state-controlled channels. The radio station had to move constantly and change its signal from broadcast to broadcast. Furthermore, it was necessary for the reporters to remain anonymous and they used various pseudonyms; all this in order to prevent their discovery by You-Know-Who.

In 1933, Hitler established the Ministry of Culture of the Reich and took control of the schools, universities, youth movements, and sports organizations in Germany, using them to implement principles of Nazi ideology. School curricula were subject to a process of Nazification, non-Aryan teachers and lecturers were fired, and the Hitlerjugend (Hitler Youth) movement was established. These steps were intended to ensure that the next generation would continue to work toward realizing the ideals of the new order.

There is a clear accordance here with the Dark Kingdom: Voldemort's intentions were to take over the Ministry of Magic and Hogwarts so that he could educate the new generation according to his racial beliefs. After the takeover, Educational Decrees were amended, the curriculum changed, and teachers who did not fit into the new era were dismissed. Moreover, a youth movement called the Inquisitorial Squad, which spied on Hogwart students, was established.

"Alecto, Amycus' sister, teaches Muggle Studies, which is compulsory for everyone. We've all got to listen to her explain how Muggles are like animals, stupid and dirty, and how they drove

wizards into hiding by being vicious toward them, and how the natural order is being reestablished." (Rowling, 2007, p. 487)

The Muggle Studies lesson at Hogwarts evokes associations reminiscent of Nazi Germany's curricula of the 1930s. German schoolchildren studied Aryan features in contrast to those of Jews within the framework of "racial" theory studies. In much the same manner that the Nazis referred to Jews, Muggles were also called derogatory and humiliating names such as beastly, dirty, polluting, or stupid.

The defeats of Hitler and Voldemort were not merely the result of their political and military leadership decisions, but also due to their personalities which failed to perceive the limitations of their power. Voldemort's pride made him blind, not only to Harry Potter's abilities, but also because he simply could not imagine losing the battle against the young wizard. Voldemort believed that after a string of victories, he would be able to defeat his opponents without difficulty. The Death Eaters, dementors, giants, and Inferi followed him because of his demonic character. Voldemort preferred death over defeat, and so he fought to the death. Hitler's arrogance and his initial victories also made him believe he was unbeatable. Politicians, army officers, simple soldiers and civilians, all blindly followed him, believing the same. Even when Hitler started losing his grip on reality, his charisma and authority helped him carry on. Without a doubt, the ruins of Hitler's lifework as leader of Nazi Germany also spelled his own destruction, and so, like Lord Voldemort, he too, held fast to the "victory or death" equation, but in Hitler's case, he chose to die at his own hand.

Summary

This article discussed the way Nazi ideology is reflected in J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter series. Racism, after all, is a central theme throughout all the books. It is not just an educational message

which emerges “organically” from the plot, as Rowling said in one of her interviews, but it is the basic premise and result of her craftsmanship in writing the books. While building the plot, Rowling drew her ideas from her own views of Nazi ideology. She created a sophisticated, overt analogy between the dictator Adolf Hitler’s Nazism in Germany between 1933 and 1945, and the Dark Kingdom under the terrible despot, Lord Voldemort, in the magic world. The parallel particularly finds expression in the similarity between the biographies of the two men, their Weltanschauung, and the actions they took to achieve their goals.

I am convinced that this analogy, if used as the key to understanding the series, enables us to read Harry Potter as an allegory at whose center is the archetypal struggle between good and evil. The banality inherent in human evil and humanity’s attraction to it force humankind to face the possibility of another catastrophe. Accordingly, Rowling warns humankind of its inherent destructive instincts. The author shows her clear grasp of the mythical and cyclical aspects of history which state that fundamental human situations tend to repeat themselves over time, and while the names, places, and details may differ, the essence remains unchanged.

Harry Potter occupies a place of honor in world literature, and we may assume that the series will continue to maintain its popularity. Its value lies in, among other things, its inherent yet implicit allegorical dimension that is indelibly bound to the author’s personal belief in the value of human life, the individual’s right to freedom and freedom of speech, the equality of all individuals, and her ideologically, historically timeless and universal view of the world.

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Joanne Rowling, (1966) pen names J(ust) K(idding) Rowling and Robert Galbraith, is a British author, former billionaire and prominent TERF sympathiser. She went from hailed author of the beloved Harry Potter series to a fallen hero who now spends her time defending hate speech as sacred and untouchable. Harry Potter, a series of seven (or so) fantasy novels by British author J.K. Rowling, relates the adventures of a teenage boy and of his two best friends who attend a school of "witchcraft and J.K. Rowling is the creator of the 'Harry Potter' fantasy series, one of the most popular book and film franchises in history. J.K. Rowling, is a British author and screenwriter best known for her seven-book Harry Potter children's book series. The series has sold more than 500 million copies and was adapted into a blockbuster film franchise. Early Life. Rowling was born Joanne Rowling on July 31, 1965, in Yate, England. She adopted her pen name, J.K., incorporating her grandmother's name, Kathleen, for the latter initial (Rowling does not have a middle name). Joanne Rowling was born on 31st July 1965 at Yate General Hospital near Bristol, and grew up in Gloucestershire in England and in Chepstow, Gwent, in south-east Wales. Her father, Peter, was an aircraft engineer at the Rolls Royce factory in Bristol and her mother, Anne, was a science technician in the Chemistry department at Wyedean Comprehensive, where Jo herself went to school. Having completed the full manuscript, she sent the first three chapters to a number of literary agents, one of whom wrote back asking to see the rest of it. She says it was "the best letter I had ever received in my life." The book was first published by Bloomsbury Children's Books in June 1997, under the name J.K. Rowling. The "K" stands for Kathleen, her paternal grandmother's name. Joanne Rowling CH, OBE, HonFRSE, FRCPE, FRSL (/ˈrɒliŋ/ ROH-ling; born 31 July 1965), better known by her pen name J. K. Rowling, is a British author and philanthropist. She is best known for writing the Harry Potter fantasy series, which has won multiple awards and sold more than 500 million copies, becoming the best-selling book series in history. The books are the basis of a popular film series, over which Rowling had overall approval on the scripts and was a producer on the final films. She also