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Beyond the Spell: Exploring Themes of Trauma, Racism, and Classism in J.K Rowling's

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

A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Letters and English Language in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master in Language and Culture

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Dedication

*To my **beautiful mom**: Without your love and support, I would have never reached this point in my life. Words cannot describe how grateful I am to have you as my mom. You are the light of my life, and I hope I made you proud. I love you.*

*To my **amazing dad**: You may not be with me anymore, but I know you would have cheered me on the loudest. Every word in this work carries thoughts of you and how proud you would have been to see me graduate. I miss you, and I love you. Rest in peace.*

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-Radhia "Joujou"-

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Abstract

This dissertation discusses how the themes of racism, classism, and trauma are displayed in the wizarding world of Harry Potter and their impact on characters such as Harry, Hermione, and Ron. In *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (1998) by J.K. Rowling, these themes play a crucial role in how the later events turn out. With the use of race theory, this study seeks to examine the systemic racism apparent in the wizarding world between 'pure-bloods' and 'muggle-borns' and the prejudice towards the students of Hogwarts like Hermione. Marxist theory highlights the class divisions present, as seen in the stark contrast between the privileged wizards like the Malfoys and the less fortunate like the Weasleys, revealing the inherent inequalities within the magical society. The study also addresses the mistreatment of the house-elves. Finally, trauma theory explores the psychological impact of traumatic experiences on the characters, including Hermione's racist encounters, Ron's feelings of inferiority, and Harry's near-death experiences. This study reveals that these interconnected themes significantly influence character development, interpersonal relationships, and social dynamics. This dissertation finds that J.K. Rowling employs the magical realm and the world of Harry Potter to reflect societal injustices and prejudices present in the real world, as well as the psychological hardships people face because of these discriminatory actions. Furthermore, it reveals that children's literature and crossover literature can serve as valuable platforms for exploring and challenging societal issues while fostering empathy and critical thinking among readers, whether they are children or adults.

Keywords:

Trauma, Racism, Classism, Inequality, Prejudice, Wizardry, Marxist theory, Race theory, Trauma theory, Witchcraft, Hogwarts, Crossover literature, Children's literature.

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Introduction

        Literature plays an instrumental role in helping readers to better understand the world and its complexities. They have the power to influence and mold the opinions of their readers. Reading a book on a particular subject might motivate readers to learn, which promotes awareness and critical thinking. Young adults and children's literary works that subtly address trauma and societal injustices are particularly beneficial to young readers because they enable them to identify significant problems and injustices in the real world. The *Harry Potter* series is an example of this. *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (1998), the second book in J.K. Rowling's series, continues the story of the young wizard Harry during his second year at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. This book *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* is so amazing in terms of the characters, the story, and its themes that children all over the world and of all ages love it. This book remains one of the best in the category of crossover work that blends magical fantasy with contemporary social issues such as racism, classism, and trauma. The present study emphasizes its role as crossover literature rather than limiting it to the category of children's literature. By focusing on *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* as crossover literature, this study addresses a scholarly gap that often overlooks the deeper social critiques embedded in fantasy narratives.

        The present study focuses on J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*. It goes beyond being a typical children's book by tackling complex social issues such as racism, classism and trauma within a magical fantasy setting. This novel is categorized as crossover literature, serving both young and adult readers. By blending magical fantasy with contemporary social issues, it fills a significant gap in scholarship that often overlooks the deeper social implications present in fantasy literature. The book deals with trauma by examining how Harry and his friends cope with their scars, which include, the physical manifestations of past abuse, neglect, and life-threatening experiences, including Harry's

previous encounters with Lord Voldemort and a Basilisk. This study examines the ways in which J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (1998) explores and analyzes the intricate relationships between "trauma", "racism", and "classism" within the fictional setting of Hogwarts. Through a critical analysis of the text, the research seeks to uncover how Rowling employs these social and psychological themes to resonate with young readers and possibly shape their perceptions of real-world challenges, including prejudice, discrimination, and the effects of trauma on personal growth. It is a valuable tool for understanding how literature can address and educate about complex social issues, as it uses a well-known fantasy story to critique racism, classism, and trauma.

  Harry Potter by J.K Rowling is arguably one of the most popular children book series for a whole generation of young adults. Its classification as children literature is controversial since it grew progressively darker in the latter half of the series. However, even in the second book where the events are still "light" they are still not everyday topics for young readers. In her paper "The Development of Children's Fantasy" (2012), Maria Nikolajeva discusses a recurring question about what qualifies as children's literature. This question is particularly relevant when examining works such as *Harry Potter* and those by Philip Pullman, which frequently feature darker or more complex themes. Nikolajeva cites the new phenomena of crossover fantasy and the works of Philip Pullman and J. K. Rowling in particular as instances of this tendency, noting that most of the "best" examples of children's fantasy were formerly questioned as children's literature (60-1). In his section on "Crossover Literature" in *The Routledge Companion to Children's Literature* (2010), David Rudd claims that the phrase "crossover literature" gained popularity around the start of the twenty-first century and was used to refer to books that were suitable for both adult and young readers (158). The *Harry Potter* series serves as a notable example of a crossover novel. Some of these books are immediately identifiable by their dual editions, which have different covers for adult and

children readers. According to Rudd, most crossover literature is composed of children's novels that have gained popularity among adults rather than the other way around (158).

Similarly, and according to Mark Haddon and Philip Pullman, J.K. Rowling is regarded as one of the major contributors to this British tendency (158). The distinctions separating adult and children's literature are blurred in crossover literature, which goes beyond the traditionally accepted limits within the fiction industry. Books may be specifically published for both groups, or they may cross over from adult readers to children or from kids to adult readers. Although crossover fiction is by no means a new phenomenon, the extraordinary success of J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* books in the late 1990s gave it a prominent profile and a lot of media attention. At that time, the publishing industry, media, and critics all began using the term "crossover." In other languages as well, new terms were also created to describe this literature. Even if the genre includes adult fiction that is read by younger readers (crossover between adults and children).

The lasting effects of childhood trauma and its influence on adult life have been examined by academics such as Jacqueline Rose in her book, *The Haunting of Sylvia Plath* (14). Rose argues that severe, frequently invisible scars from traumatic events, especially those involving abuse or neglect, can influence a person's relationships and perspective. This idea is embodied in *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* by Harry himself, who is orphaned and has endured years of cruelty and neglect at the hands of his aunt, uncle, and cousin. Deep emotional scars are left by the Dursleys' brutality and the ongoing repression of his magical powers, which show up as fear, anxiety, and a strong sense of isolation leading to the start of his trauma, which later on becomes even deeper and stronger with the events that happen in the chamber of secrets. Trauma theory is useful for this research as it will guide the analysis for a better understanding of Harry's character and scars as well as educate both children and young adults about trauma.

This research will explore the following questions: How has children's literature evolved to include crossover literature? In what ways does Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets depict racism and classism within the wizarding world? How does the novel represent the experience and effects of trauma on its characters? How do themes of racism, classism, and trauma reflect both the real world and the wizarding world?

The present study will rely on race, Marxist, and trauma theories. Trauma theory can offer a framework for considering the way the narrative portrays or confronts experiences of severe psychological and social pressure, dramatising those events through the literary use of repetition and fragmentation. Marxist theory is applied to analyze life in the wizarding world as a system of relationships among its characters. The exploration focuses on themes such as socioeconomic systems, class struggles, and power dynamics. As a point of theoretical framework, it will also refer to Critical Race theory to analyze the formation and consequences of race and blood status hierarchies in the series, which manifest the intersections between the fictional divides and real world racism and marginalization.

This dissertation explores themes of racism, classism, and trauma in J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (1998), a fantasy story that tackles real-world issues by showing how characters are treated because of who they are. Chapter one begins by tracing the evolution of children's literature. Next, it explores crossover literature, which blurs the boundaries between children's and adult fiction. The chapter concludes with a theoretical framework that integrates race, Marxist, and trauma theories. Chapter two starts with the biography of the author and her motives behind writing this story, then moves on to discuss the racism evident between pure-bloods and Muggle-borns, followed by classism in the wizarding world, especially between the Malfoys and the Weasleys. This chapter concludes by discussing the mistreatment of house-elves. The final chapter delves into the trauma experienced by the Golden Trio (Harry, Ron, and Hermione), then analyzes how the monster

in Chamber of Secrets serves as a powerful metaphor for fear and trauma, embodying the hidden and menacing forces that haunt the characters. The chapter ends by examining how the themes of trauma, racism, and classism in Chamber of Secrets parallel both the real world and the wizarding world.

J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (1998), the second installment in the beloved children's fantasy series, is more than simple entertainment. It goes beyond the magical world as it addresses complex themes of trauma, racism, and classism, offering a significant reflection on the psychological and societal impacts of these issues. While framed as a children's story, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* resonates with readers of all ages, sparking critical discussions about prejudice, fear, and the enduring effects of trauma. This is precisely what the present work aims to explore: how these deeper themes are woven into the narrative and how they contribute to its lasting cultural and educational value.

Chapter One: Trauma and Social Inequalities in Children Literature

The first chapter provides a brief overview of children's literature, its history, and its relationship with "crossover literature". It starts by defining the term children's literature and surveying its history while diving into a brief analysis of case studies similar to *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (1998). Then the chapter tackles 'crossover literature' and how it was first introduced into the world of literature, it defines the term "crossover literature" including an analysis of a few examples similar to the main case study. After that, the chapter concludes by introducing the three main themes: trauma, racism, and classism in the context of children's literature, while using major theories like trauma theory, race theory, and Marxist theory. The first chapter is densely packed with a range of intriguing and pivotal terms that collectively inform and shape the central theme of the work.

I.1. The Evolution of Children's Literature

Some people associate the books and stories they read as children, whether introduced by their teachers or discovered independently, with some of their most cherished childhood memories. It is important to understand the origins of these stories that are held so deeply in their hearts. Age is central to the concept of children's literature, which relies on a distinction between children and adults. According to Perry Nodelman, in his work *the Hidden Adult: Defining Children's Literature* (2008), if children were not considered different from adults in terms of their abilities and interests, there would be no need for children's books (248), even if such books were also read by adults. Peter Hunt defines children's literature in his book, *An Introduction to Children's Literature* (1994), as "a blanket term, covering both educational and purely entertaining material designed for children and 'young adults'" (42); as opposed to literature, that excludes young readers. Since most children's books are authored, published, and sometimes illustrated by adults, the discourse they produce functions as an 'intergenerational dialogue', which, according to the health program The Challenge Initiative,

is defined as "interactive participatory forums that bring together older and younger generations and are intended to create shared knowledge and meaning and a collective experience" (4). Moreover, the concept of age often serves as a central motif within the genre of children's literature, as many narratives feature characters of different ages and revolve around intergenerational relationships and conflicts. Clifton Fadiman, in his article titled "Children's literature" (2017), defines the concept as the collection of written works and related illustrations created with the intention of educating or entertaining young people. Fairy tales, lullabies, fables, folk songs, and other mostly oral transmitted materials are all included in the genre, along with well-known classics of world literature, picture books, and simple stories created especially for young readers (3).

Peter Hunt, in his book *An Introduction to Children's literature* (1994), defines literature as including "not only novels, but also certain stories, letters, biographies, and history. In addition, the literature also includes the oral traditions, legends, myths, and sages from classical times. Literature further includes the living tradition of children's games, songs and stories" (3). The passage highlights Hunt's broad perspective on literature and stresses the value of both written and oral traditions in appreciating children's literary history. Children engage with a wide range of content, including fiction, textbooks, scriptures, poetry, advertisements, picture books, and computer games. When used broadly, the term "children's literature" includes all of these genres as well as many more.

Children's literature remained in its infancy until it emerged as a distinct and autonomous literary genre in the latter half of the 18th century. However, its remarkable evolution throughout the 20th century has led to a strong case for it to be regarded with the same respect—though perhaps not the same solemnity—as any other recognized literary genre (Hunt 5). The term 'children' can be defined as young readers, regardless of their literacy skills, from the time they can joyfully flip through a picture book or listen to a story

read aloud until approximately the age of 14 or 15. Nodelman Perry, in his book *The Hidden Adult: Defining Children's Literature* (2008), defines the genre as fundamentally based on the construction of childhood as distinct from adulthood. He writes, "Children's literature is a genre that must construct a child (defined as non-adult) while simultaneously showing how the child is different from the adult" (3).Thus, the term "children" also includes "young people." This definition is somewhat ambiguous due to two key factors. First, today's children often mature more quickly because of their environments, which leads them to read not only children's books but also adult literature more frequently. Second, many adults retain their connection with childhood and enjoy reading, thus frequently engaging with children's literature. Notable examples include A.A. Milne's *Winnie-the-Pooh* (1926), Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* (1865), and Munro Leaf's *The Story of Ferdinand* (1936).

The origins of children's literature lie in the preliterate era, where oral traditions such as folk tales, fairy tales, myths, and legends were the primary means of storytelling. These narratives were passed down through generations and played a crucial role in educating and entertaining children before the invention of printing (Hunt 2-4). While these stories were not exclusively intended for children, they served as a communal repository of culture and often contained moral lessons and cautionary themes. Additionally, early childhood experiences were enhanced by simple melodies and nursery rhymes designed to entertain and soothe. In the formative years of written literature, early children's books were predominantly didactic, focusing on moral and religious instruction as nations developed their written forms. These works reflected a common view of childhood as a pivotal period for shaping individuals in preparation for adulthood, underscoring the importance of nurturing young minds in alignment with social and religious values. As Peter Hunt explains, "Early children's literature was largely didactic, intended to inculcate moral and religious values in young

readers, reflecting a widespread view of childhood as a critical stage for shaping character and preparing for adult responsibilities" (7).

The gradual recognition of childhood as a distinct and vital stage of life during the 18th century marked a significant turning point in the development of children's literature. English philosopher John Locke's concept of "the tabula rasa"—the idea that the child's mind is a blank slate shaped by experience—emphasized the importance of early education and the malleability of the young mind. Locke argued that "children are born like empty books, and everything they learn comes from their experiences in the world," highlighting the crucial role of environment and education in shaping character and knowledge (qtd. in Bashayi 26). This philosophical shift catalyzed the emergence of children's literature that extended beyond purely didactic texts. London publisher, John Newbery, is widely regarded as a pioneer of this movement; his books, such as *A Little Pretty Pocket-Book*, combined vibrant illustrations and engaging content to captivate young readers while still aiming to educate them. This represented a crucial departure from the strictly moralistic and austere works of earlier times. Furthermore, collections of folktales and fairy tales, previously transmitted solely through oral tradition, began to be published, making these enchanting stories accessible to a broader audience and enriching the literary landscape for children.

Children's literature experienced remarkable growth during the 19th century, often referred to as its "Golden Age." This era saw the emergence of timeless classics such as Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865), Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island* (1883), and Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* (1868), which continue to captivate readers today. These novels not only provided joy but also delved into themes of imagination, adventure, and personal growth. Peter Hunt characterizes the 19th century as a remarkable era of growth and innovation within children's literature. He emphasizes that seminal works such as *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Treasure Island* serve as foundational texts that

broadened the genre's imaginative possibilities. Hunt states, "The nineteenth century witnessed an explosion of children's literature that not only entertained but also delved into complex themes of identity, morality, and adventure. Classics such as Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) and Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island* (1883) exemplify this rich period of literary creativity" (45). Maria Nikolajeva, in *Children's Literature Comes of Age* (1996), also discusses how novels like *Little Women* (1868) introduced more realistic representations of children's lives and personal growth, expanding the thematic scope of children's literature. She argues that "Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* reflects a shift towards more nuanced character development and the portrayal of childhood as a complex and formative stage of life" (78). While entertainment became increasingly popular, moral and educational messages remained prevalent, with authors frequently weaving lessons about ethics, generosity, and perseverance into their narratives. Concurrently, advancements in printing technology allowed for the creation of more elaborate and visually appealing illustrations, enhancing the reading experience for children. The growing demand for children's literature was further supported by the availability of affordable book options (Hunt 52-4).

Through a heightened emphasis on variety and realism, children's literature has undergone significant transformation in the 20th and 21st centuries, mirroring evolving societal standards and contemporary challenges. While "otherness" has historically been a part of children's literature, scholars note that recent decades have seen a deliberate effort to portray race, ethnicity, gender, and social class in a more inclusive and accurate manner (Hunt 112). Lev S. Vygotsky, in his work *Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes* (1978), argues that according to social constructivism, children's cultural identities influence their interpretations of stories, making culturally relevant books essential tools for educators to help students understand societal similarities and differences

(86). The rise of young adult (YA) literature has delved into challenging topics such as identity, relationships, and social justice, tailored to the unique interests and needs of teenagers. Modern children's literature encompasses a vast array of genres, including graphic novels, fantasy series, and picture books. A 2024 study in *The Scientific Temper* inducted by Kanwal Roop, a PhD student, highlights that authors are increasingly addressing social issues like racism, trauma, and classism in children's literature, reflecting a growing recognition of the importance of discussing these themes with young readers, is supported by multiple recent academic sources (40). Moreover, the digital age has further transformed children's literature, introducing interactive digital content, e-books, and audiobooks that provide new avenues for engagement and storytelling.

Sandra L. Beckett, in her work *Crossover Fiction: Global and Historical Perspectives* (2009), defines crossover literature as works that "transcend the conventionally recognized boundaries within the fiction market, blurring the borderline between adult literature and children's literature" (16). Fantasy has not been left untouched by the crossover novel phenomenon and even as early as 2001; Estes Sally, in her article titled "Whither Youth Science Fiction and Fantasy?" (2001), describes the rise of young adults' fantasy novels and their readership among both young adults and adults alike. Estes also points out that novels deemed as "high fantasy" are defined as novels "usually written on a grand scale, in an elevated, often figurative style, and [including] otherworldly settings, impressive characters, memorable themes, and a sense of wonder" (7) and often have crossover readership. Interestingly, Estes notes that there are a number of female fantasy authors that write for both young adults and adult readers, including Diana Wynne Jones, Patricia McKillip, Robin McKinley, Shirley Rousseau Murphy, Nancy Springer, Patricia C. Wrede, and Jane Yolen (8).

Alice's Adventure in Wonderland (1865) by Lewis Carroll is a timeless and intricate work of children's literature that defies conventional categorization. Carroll's brilliance is

evident in his adept blending of logic with absurdity, which challenges readers' assumptions and subtly examines the limitations of strict reasoning. The narrative delves into profound themes of identity and maturation, with Alice's fluctuating size serving as a metaphor for the tumultuous nature of childhood and the challenges of self-discovery (Hunt 65). According to Cameron Sedlacek, in "Who is Alice?: Parody, Education, and Identity in Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*", beneath its playful exterior, the novel operates as a biting satire of Victorian society, gently critiquing the capriciousness of power and social norms. It also emphasizes the importance of play and imagination, encouraging children to be creative and to think critically about the world around them (12). Although often regarded as a children's book, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* exemplifies crossover literature, appealing to readers of all ages and offering layers of intellectual depth and meaning. To fully appreciate the social mores and critiques intricately woven into this fantastical tale, it is essential to understand the historical context of the Victorian era (14).

Another example of a children literature is *Percy Jackson & the Olympians* (2005) by Rick Riordan, which is a widely acclaimed work of modern children's literature that skillfully weaves Greek mythology into a contemporary narrative appealing to young readers. The series' relatable protagonist, Percy Jackson, grapples with challenges such as dyslexia, ADHD, and feelings of alienation, making ancient tales engaging and accessible. Riordan masterfully blends humor, action, and adventure with themes of family, friendship, and identity that resonate with the adolescent experience. Notably, the series has increasingly embraced diversity and representation, reflecting the multicultural fabric of modern life and allowing a broader range of children to see themselves in the stories. In his journal article "Reimagination of Greek Mythology in Rick Riordan's Percy Jackson and the Olympians Series" (2021), Hrithuparna T. states:

> Rick Riordan's Percy Jackson and the Olympians series skillfully
>
> blends ancient Greek mythology with contemporary issues such
>
> as identity, family, and friendship, making the stories accessible
>
> and relatable to a multicultural young audience. The series'
>
> inclusion of diverse characters and challenges faced by
>
> adolescents allows readers from various backgrounds to see
>
> themselves reflected in the narrative, fostering a sense of
>
> belonging and empowerment. (569)

Beyond its entertainment value, *Percy Jackson and the Olympians* series encourages deeper exploration of ancient cultures by providing insightful perspectives on Greek mythology and history (567). The series not only captivates but also encourages thoughtful reflection in young minds, evident in its nuanced commentary on contemporary issues such as environmental concerns and the abuse of power.

I.2. Crossover Literature

The distinction between adult and children's literature becomes blurred in crossover literature, which challenges the traditional boundaries of the fiction industry. Some books are published specifically for both audiences, while others might transition from adult to children's audiences or vice versa. In her book *The Crossover Novel* (2009), Rachel Falconer argues that "The Harry Potter books accomplished something quite unprecedented in children's literature: they blurred the boundary between children's and adult readerships, attracting a vast audience of readers of all ages and thereby redefining what children's literature could be" (3). Therefore, crossover fiction is not a new concept; the tremendous success of J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series in the late 1990s brought significant attention to it and led to widespread media coverage. During this time, the publishing industry, media, and critics began to widely use the term "crossover". Falconer also states:

Crossover fiction is not limited to children's books that appeal

to adults; it also includes adult literature that finds a readership

among younger audiences. This adult-to-child crossover has a

much longer history, reflecting complex reading practices

across age groups and cultures. In various languages and

literary traditions, different terms have emerged to describe

these phenomena. (12)

The above quote shows that in other languages as well, new terms have emerged to describe

this type of literature. While the term commonly refers to children's and young adult books

that attract adult readers, it also encompasses adult fiction that is enjoyed by younger readers

(adult-to-child crossover), which has a much longer historical precedent.

In *Crossover Fiction: Global and Historical Perspectives* (2008), Beckett Sandra

argues that "Crossover literature transcends the conventionally recognized boundaries within

the fiction market, blurring the borderline between adult literature and children's literature.

Books may cross from child to adult or adult to child audiences, or they may be explicitly

published for both audiences" (4). Crossover literature refers to a vast collection of diverse,

multigenerational works with a rich history. In various cultures and eras, the distinctions

between children's and adult literature have often been blurred or entirely absent. Fables,

Middle Eastern tales, and fairy stories have consistently captivated audiences of all ages. For

centuries, children have been drawn to adult literature, with classics like *Les Trois*

Mousquetaires (The Three Musketeers) and *Robinson Crusoe* finding their way into children's

libraries. Furthermore, Beckett explains:

Although crossover fiction can be found in nearly every genre,

novels—particularly children's and young adult fiction—have

garnered the most interest from both readers and critics.

Moreover, crossover fiction is frequently conflated with the

fantasy genre, which has been instrumental in bringing this type

of literature to the attention of the public and critics alike.

Fantasy's imaginative scope and appeal to multiple age groups

have made it a dominant mode within crossover literature. (45)

Beckett means that nearly any genre can resonate with a wide age range, novels—particularly children's and young adult fiction—have garnered the most interest. Additionally, crossover fiction is frequently confused with the fantasy genre, which has been instrumental in bringing this type of literature to the attention of both the public and critics alike.

Today, fantasy remains the most popular crossover genre in many countries. However, other forms, including comics, graphic novels, picture books, poetry, fairy tales, and short fiction, also frequently transcend age boundaries. Although many initially perceived crossover literature as merely a marketing and mass media trend, it has also received critical acclaim. According to Beckett, by the early 21st century, crossover fiction has come to be recognized as a distinct literary genre and marketing category, significantly impacting both the publishing industry and contemporary culture (37). The success of multi-generational, cross-media franchises such as *Harry Potter, The Lord of the Rings, The Twilight Saga,* and *The Hunger Games* can be attributed to these crossover books. Furthermore, crossover literature is a part of a broader cultural movement in which books, movies, television shows, video games, and other forms of media increasingly appeal to a wide range of age groups (37).

The term "crossover literature" was first introduced in an academic context by Sandra Beckett, who is widely recognized for establishing its usage within literary studies. While the

phenomenon of literature appealing across age boundaries has existed long before, Beckett provided it with an official designation and a scholarly framework. Specializing in comparative and children's literature, she focused her research on the growing trend of adult audiences engaging with children's and young adult fiction. Beckett examined various factors contributing to this trend, including the increasing complexity of young adult fiction, the popularity of fantasy genres, and shifting societal perceptions.

Beckett's work not only introduced the term "crossover literature" but also helped define its dominant direction, emphasizing the growing prevalence of child-to-adult crossover fiction. She comments that "Although the genre encompasses adult fiction read by young readers (adult-to-child crossover), which has a much longer historical precedent, the term is frequently used to specifically refer to children's and young adult books that appeal to adults (child-to-adult crossover)" (4). Through her scholarly writings, Beckett coined and popularized the term 'crossover literature' to describe this particular genre, exploring how these works evolved from targeting specific audiences to appealing to a broader market. While pinpointing the exact moment the term was first articulated is challenging, it gained traction and became a recognized aspect of literary analysis largely due to her contributions. Her work emerged within a wider academic discourse on children's literature and its changing social roles, helping to legitimize crossover literature as a distinct field of study (4).

Dystopian literature, especially in crossover fiction, engages readers by exploring complex social and psychological themes. *The Hunger Games* trilogy stands out by using its dystopian setting to examine trauma's impact on individuals and society. Through Katniss Everdeen's struggles and the collective suffering caused by the oppressive Capitol, the series offers a nuanced look at resilience, coping, and the cyclical nature of violence. The Hunger Games themselves symbolize tyranny that perpetuates fear and compliance, reflecting both personal and communal trauma. Characters like Katniss, Peeta, and Haymitch demonstrate

psychological strength and post-traumatic growth—Katniss's leadership, Peeta's recovery, and Haymitch's support despite his struggles highlight this. According to India's mental health magazine Psychologs, post-traumatic growth involves positive change after trauma, which the trilogy vividly portrays. Ultimately, the narrative powerfully comments on human endurance and the lasting effects of trauma, showing both suffering and resilience without minimizing the challenges of healing.

The Hunger Games and Harry Potter series are notable examples of crossover fiction since they deal with related subjects. Both fall under the umbrella of crossover literature. While both The Hunger Games and Harry Potter tackle dark themes and the aftermath of oppressive regimes, they diverge significantly in their portrayal of trauma. According to Nishan Ghoshal and Paul O. Wilkinson, in "The Hunger Games: A portrayal of PTSD in teenage fiction" (2018), The Hunger Games portrays trauma in a way that is both emotionally charged and universally relatable, showcasing both explicit physical and psychological scars, alongside a constant state of traumatization due to systematic oppression (191). Trauma serves as a central theme in the series, reflecting a harsh reality while depicting healing as a challenging and ongoing journey with Katniss the main character admitting "But one day, I'll have to explain about my nightmares. Why they came. Why they won't ever really go away. I'll tell them how I survive it. I'll tell them that on bad mornings, it feels impossible to take pleasure in anything because I'm afraid it could be taken away" (Collins, Mockingjay 438). This vividly illustrates the enduring nature of trauma and the difficult, ongoing process of healing. Katniss acknowledges that her nightmares—symbolizing her traumatic memories— "won't ever really go away," highlighting that trauma leaves lasting scars (Ghoshal and Wilkinson 191). She also reflects on the struggle to find joy amid fear, which emphasizes on how healing is not a simple or quick process but a continuous challenge (191). While both series illuminate the devastating impacts of violence and the importance of human

connections in times of hardship, *The Hunger Games* immerses readers in the stark reality of trauma, whereas *Harry Potter* offers a more hopeful and enchanting perspective. Additionally, no matter the type of trauma experienced, its profound impact on an individual's personal life is undeniable. It can lead to significant setbacks, leaving one caught in a whirlwind of emotions or, conversely, feeling completely numb and living a hollow existence, a mere shadow of their former self (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration).

Children of Blood and Bone (2018) by Tomi Adeyemi is a powerful and impactful fantasy novel that has resonated deeply with both young adult and adult readers, solidifying its status as a significant piece of crossover literature. *Children of Blood and Bone* and *Harry Potter* both utilize fiction to explore the theme of racism, though they adopt notably different approaches. Tomi Adeyemi's *Children of Blood and Bone* confronts institutional racism through the systemic persecution of the Maji, reflecting real-world patterns of prejudice and violence. The novel's fictional society of Orïsha is sharply divided between "Maji", "Divîners", and "Kosidán", with the "Maji" and "Divîners" subjected to exploitation, abuse, and dehumanization rooted in fear and bigotry. According to Davis Jewel, in her work titled "(De)constructing Imagination: Racial Bias And Counter-Storytelling In Young Adult Speculative Fiction" (2020), racism is a prominent and overt theme in Adeyemi's narrative, highlighting diverse representation and striking power dynamics, while both narratives feature oppression rooted in a notion of "blood purity" (127). *Children of Blood and Bone* depicts racism as both deeply felt and embedded within societal structures, whereas *Harry Potter* offers a more nuanced perspective on prejudice within a magical framework. Nevertheless, both series depict the oppressed rising up against their oppressors (128).

Moving on to the theme of classism, a book by Pierce Brown, called *Red Rising* (2014), explores the devastating effects of rigid social hierarchies and the inherent injustices

of class-based systems quite similarly to *Harry Potter* by J.K. Rowling. Pierce Brown's *Red Rising* echoes some of the themes found in *Harry Potter*, but adopts a far harsher tone, offering a brutal and violent exploration of classism. The narrative presents a rigid caste system, with the Golds at the top and the Reds at the bottom, emphasizing the clear inequities prevalent in hierarchical societies.

In general, although crossover fiction is not a new concept, there has been an unprecedented shift in adult's reading habits of young adult fiction within the past millennial decade (Falconer 41). J.K. Rowling's *Harry potter* books have been seen by many as a catalyst for the rise in popularity of young adult fiction, as described by Beckett. However, Falconer states that "…Harry Potter certainly did play a role in shifting publishing and marketing strategies, and therefore influencing readership among adults" (86). This iconic series also happened within a wider context that Falconer describes as "ripe for a […] shift in perspective on children's literature," and should thus not be the single motivating factor behind this shift in reading habits (87). Sandra L. Beckett defines crossover literature in the context of children's and young adult literature as "literature that crosses from child to adult or adult to child audiences" (4). Pierce Brown's *Red Rising* series exemplifies this phenomenon through its exploration of classism and institutional oppression. The narrative centers on Darrow's infiltration of the ruling Gold society, highlighting the sacrifices necessary for revolution and the brutal realities of systemic inequality. The series' intense depiction of power struggles and social justice resonates with readers across age groups, making it a compelling crossover work that challenges entrenched power systems (Hunt 12).

I.3. Theoretical Framework: Race, Marxism and Trauma Theories

Sensitive subjects have become increasingly prominent in contemporary children's literature, reflecting a societal shift toward open communication and an acknowledgment of how children encounter complex realities. It is essential for children to have tools to navigate

issues such as mental health, social injustice, and diverse identities, challenging the traditional notion of childhood innocence. Falconer argues that "Contemporary children's fiction is of particular consequence to adult readers because in many cases, it is discovering and addressing issues that transcend traditional age boundaries, including social and psychological complexities that challenge simplistic notions of childhood" (3). These books embrace a variety of perspectives and foster understanding by promoting empathy and broadening representation. They also provide therapeutic and educational benefits, serving as valuable resources for addressing modern social challenges. According to a 2024 article, titled *Children's Literature as a Tool for Social Justice and Activism* published in the Journal of Applied Linguistics and Teaching, the authors Turyalay Gulzar Ahmad, Awais Mumtaz Ali, and Malak Abid Khan argue that:

> Children's literature has long served as a mirror to society, reflecting cultural values, moral teachings, and societal norms. In recent decades, however, it has also emerged as a powerful tool for social justice and activism, particularly in terms of shaping young readers' understanding of complex issues such as racial equality, gender identity, environmental justice, and human rights... By empowering children to question injustices and envision a more equitable world, such literature plays an essential role in fostering a more inclusive, compassionate, and active society. (888-90)

Therefore, by integrating sensitive topics, young readers are empowered to become informed and compassionate individuals in an increasingly intricate world, while effectively managing the complexities of age-appropriate presentation and potential impact.

The phenomenon of crossover fiction—where works initially intended for younger audiences attract a significant adult readership—plays a pivotal role in the emergence of sensitive subjects within contemporary children's literature. This trend challenges traditional notions of childhood innocence and reflects a societal shift towards more open communication and an acknowledgment of the complex realities that children encounter. These narratives resonate across age groups by tackling themes such as social injustice, mental health, and diverse identities. Moreover, they cultivate empathy and validate a wide range of experiences, offering therapeutic and educational benefits that transcend age boundaries.

Sullivan Amie and Strang Harold, in their work "Bibliotherapy in the Classroom Using Literature to Promote the Development of Emotional Intelligence" (2003), found that using children's literature as a tool for modeling successful problem-solving strategies for students, as well as identifying with the characters in the story, discussing emotions and feelings, understanding the author's message, and applying the insights gained through social action, can contribute to the creation of caring classroom communities. This can help with attitude and behavior changes, social and developmental issues, and developing emotional intelligence (75- 8). The widespread appeal of these stories, especially when confronting serious issues, indicates a collective desire to engage with and comprehend challenging topics. Sensitive themes, particularly in crossover literature, empower readers of all ages to become informed and compassionate citizens in an increasingly complex world, successfully navigating the challenges of age-appropriate representation and potential impact.

Trauma refers to the psychological and emotional response to deeply distressing or overwhelming events that exceed an individual's capacity to cope, often resulting in long-lasting effects on mental health and behavior. As Judith Herman explains in her book titled *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence—from Domestic Abuse to Political Terror*

(1996) that "Psychological trauma is an affliction of the powerless. It occurs as a response to an overwhelming event that involves a threat to life or bodily integrity, and that overwhelms the individual's capacity to cope" (33). Trauma theory, as developed in literary and cultural studies, provides a critical framework for analyzing how literature represents these experiences on both personal and collective levels. Cathy Caruth, a foundational figure in trauma studies, emphasizes in her work *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* (1996), that

> trauma is not locatable in the simple violent or original event; it
>
> is rather an injury that is inflicted upon the mind in the very act
>
> of its registration, an event that is experienced too soon, too
>
> unexpectedly, to be fully known and that is therefore not
>
> available to consciousness until it is repeated, at which point its
>
> belatedness becomes its truth. (4)

In literary criticism, trauma theory enables scholars to explore how narratives give voice to silenced pain and reveal the social and historical dimensions of trauma. Felman Shoshana and Laub Dori, in their work *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History* (1992), highlight the necessity of articulating and transmitting traumatic experience, noting that "a therapeutic process—a process of constructing a narrative, of reconstructing a history and essentially, of re-externalizing the event—has to be set in motion. This re-externalization of the event can occur and take effect only when one can articulate and transmit the story, literally transfer it to another outside oneself and then take it back again, inside" (83). By applying trauma theory, readers gain insight into the complex psychological and cultural effects of trauma, and literature becomes a space for witnessing suffering and imagining possibilities for healing.

Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic, in their work *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction* (2006), define the concept as:

> The critical race theory (CRT) movement is a collection of
>
> activists and scholars interested in studying and transforming
>
> the relationship among race, racism, and power. The movement
>
> considers many of the same issues that conventional civil rights
>
> and ethnic studies discourses take up, but places them in a
>
> broader perspective that includes economics, history, context,
>
> group- and self-interest, and even feelings and the unconscious.
>
> (1)

Critical Race Theory recognizes that racism is embedded in laws, policies and institutions that uphold and reproduce racial inequalities, which is why it offers a valuable framework for analyzing the concept of blood purity in the wizarding world by exposing it as a systemic racial ideology that enforces social hierarchies and marginalization. It examines how notions of race and purity are socially constructed to maintain power disparities and justify discrimination within institutions. Moreover, Critical Race Theory helps reveal how the treatment of magical creatures, such as goblins and house-elves, reflects broader patterns of "othering" that transcend human-wizard relations, emphasizing the pervasive nature of racialized oppression.

By introducing Critical Race Theory as the theoretical lens, this study will explore how the *Harry Potter* series critiques and problematizes racial purity and supremacy, highlighting the necessity of confronting systemic inequality. With its focus on power, identity, and social justice, the theory provides a critical framework for analyzing characters and institutions within the wizarding world—such as Voldemort and his Death Eaters—who

embody and perpetuate racialized violence and oppression. This theoretical background sets the foundation for the upcoming chapters, which will apply Critical Race Theory to dissect the series' portrayal of blood purity, racial hierarchies, and resistance to oppression.

Shalih Dzakiyyah Farda, in "Cultural Hegemony in J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter Series" (2018), defines Marxist theory as "a philosophy that focuses attention on social history in relation to political economy. Marxism specifically deals with the issues of classes and power in society" (58). This theory provides a framework for critically analyzing literature through the lens of power dynamics, economic systems, and class conflict. Rooted in the ideas of Karl Marx, it explores how literature both reflects and critiques the socioeconomic conditions of its time. Dzakiyyah Farda, continues "…The domination is done by the more 'powerful' group, which in Marxist is known as *the bourgeoisie*, by imposing their beliefs to their subordinate and less powerful community, known as *the proletariat*" (58).

Marxists argue that all societies are built on the relationships between different classes, particularly the ruling class (the bourgeoisie) and the working class (the proletariat). These relationships are defined by exploitation, with the ruling class controlling the means of production and the working class providing labor in exchange for wages. When employing Marxist theory in *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets,* it provides valuable insights into the class-based power dynamics that shape the wizarding world, highlighting how social standing and economic inequality influence access to opportunities and resources, especially between the Malfoys and the Weasleys, and also the house-elves.

The first chapter serves as an introduction to the entire dissertation . It provides an overview of children's literature, discussing its history, definition, and various examples. Next, the chapter delves into crossover literature, presenting an overview, definition, and

historical context, along with an analysis of select examples. Finally, this chapter outlines the theories employed to examine the main themes of the dissertation . The upcoming chapter addresses the theme of racism, particularly the divide between "pure-bloods" and "muggle-borns," as well as the classism illustrated in the contrast between "The Malfoys" and "The Weasleys." It also examines the mistreatment of house-elves. The concluding chapter focuses on trauma, specifically the experiences of the golden trio, the impact of the monster on their trauma, and how the themes of trauma, racism, and classism in the novel reflect real-world issues.

Chapter Two: Experiencing Racism and Classism in *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*

This second chapter examines racism and classism in *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets.* The first section of the chapter explores the biography of author J.K. Rowling and the factors that inspired her to write the *Harry Potter* series. Following this, it analyzes themes of racism and classism through the lenses of "Pure Blood vs. Muggle Borns," "The Malfoys vs. The Weasleys," and "The House-Elves' Misery."

II.1. The Author and her Motivations: Why Rowling wrote Harry Potter?

J.K. Rowling, born Joanne Rowling on July 31, 1965, in Yate, England, is the celebrated author of the globally acclaimed *Harry Potter* series. Her path to literary success serves as a remarkable testament to perseverance and creativity. After earning her degree from the University of Exeter, Rowling held various positions, including a role at Amnesty International in London. The inspiration for the Harry Potter story ignited during a night train journey from Manchester to London in 1990, when the concept of a young wizard attending a magical school began to take shape. However, the journey to publication was far from smooth. During this time, Rowling faced significant personal challenges, including the loss of her mother and her divorce. Despite these hardships, she persevered with her writing, often in Edinburgh coffee shops while her young daughter slept. Living on state benefits, she dedicated herself to crafting the richly imagined world of Hogwarts. After facing a series of rejections, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* finally received approval from Bloomsbury Publishing in 1997 (Rowling). The book's initial success sparked a literary phenomenon, and the subsequent six installments solidified the *Harry Potter* series as a cultural institution.

The *Harry Potter* series was born from a unique blend of J.K. Rowling's personal experiences, literary influences, and moments of creativity (Rowling). Rowling has revealed

that she wrote the stories of harry potter for herself, drawing on vivid memories from her own childhood. Her novel developed from a profound personal desire to create a world where good triumphs over evil, friendship prevails, and love is powerful; making the characters and their experiences meaningful for both children and adults. In 1990, while traveling on a late train from Manchester to London, Rowling conceived the idea of Harry Potter. The magical elements of the story began to coalesce as she imagined a young boy discovering his identity as a wizard.

The emotional depth of the books was significantly shaped by Rowling's own experiences with poverty, despair, and the loss of her mother. For example, her struggles with depression inspired the creation of the Dementors (Rowling). J.K. Rowling credited her literary influences to authors such as J.R.R. Tolkien, known for *The Lord of the Rings* and T.H. White, who wrote *The Once and Furur king* (Jordan). Her portrayal of mentor characters, exemplified by Dumbledore, along with the epic battles between good and evil clearly reflect these inspirations. Rowling also drew upon her own experiences and real-world locations when crafting her wizarding universe. For instance, she conceived the idea of Quidditch during a holiday stay at a hotel in Manchester, and many character names stemmed from everyday conversations (Rowling). These diverse sources of inspiration allowed Rowling to construct the richly detailed world of Harry Potter, which has become one of the most renowned literary franchises in history.

All seven books of J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series are part of the magical adventure of Harry Potter and his friends at the Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. The series has been highly praised by many for its character development, plot, and treatment of sensitive topics. Some literary critics like Emily Temple and Michael Rosen have still criticized that certain plot twists are predictable or that the series is too long. The *Harry Potter* series continues to be one of the most popular and significant pieces of literature of the

last few decades in spite of such criticisms. Both popular culture and literature have been greatly impacted by the *Harry Potter* series, video games, stage productions, and films are only a few of the adaptations it has inspired. A large fan base has also emerged around the series, with fans creating their own cosplay, artwork, and fiction based on the books. *Harry Potter* is a classic masterpiece in the fantasy literature genre as its characters and themes remain to impact readers, both internationally and nationally. *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* is the second book from this well established series , it was published by (Bloomsbury) in 1998. The book, until today, is commended for its strong plots, interesting characters, great jokes, and a moral message which emerges naturally from the story and predicted it would be read into adulthood as a children's book.

Despite using a fantasy setting to examine racism and classism, Rowling's themes seem even more pertinent today. The racism and classism at Hogwarts between Pure blood VS Muggle-borns and the Malfoys VS the Weasleys is reflective of societal issues such as systemic discrimination, elitism, and social stratification. These words sowed the seeds of empathy and critical thinking into the hearts of young readers, but they have an even greater impact on adults in societal structures and inequalities (Walters 9). Rowling focused on these themes such as racism, classism and trauma in harry potter series according to her motivation and desire to examine deep moral, spiritual and ethical issues through a compelling narrative , she used fantasy to create story that reflect real human experiences and social problems (Layman 7–8). The pain that she suffered from in her life lead her to create the story of *Harry Potter* and put all her feelings there. In an interview with Adeel Amini 2008 Rowling states that "I was depressed… I'd say… 1994… I suffered a spell… clinical depression. … The Dementors… create an absence of feeling, which is my experience of depression."(Rowling). The Dementors are reflecting J.K. Rowling's own experience with emotional creep in 1994. Rowling's personal struggle with clinical depression significantly influenced her portrayal of

these creatures. By giving Harry's pain a sense of authenticity, Rowling offered young readers a symbolic framework to understand mental health, using fiction to convey real emotional suffering. In Harvard commencement speech in 2008 she noted about loss and personal struggles that "I was jobless, a lone parent, and as poor as is possible to be in modern Britain… I even contemplated suicide" (Rowling). The poverty and the emotional despair that she faced in her life made her writing more powerful and successful in the series.

II.2. "Pure-blood" VS "Muggle-borns"

Racism and various forms of social inequality serve as significant narrative themes throughout the Harry Potter series. The discrimination against Muggle-born individuals for lacking "pure" blood is poignantly illustrated in characters such as "Hermione Granger". The distinctions in social class, particularly between Purebloods and Muggles, become immediately evident when Harry first enters the wizarding world. By immersing readers in this complex environment, J.K. Rowling paints a picture of a society built on preconceived notions and biases related to race, ethnicity, and culture, among other factors. Through her books and characters, Rowling delves into the issues of racism and equality in contemporary society, for example: "Mudblood is a really foul name for someone who was Muggle-born – you know, non-magical parents. There are some wizards – like Malfoy's family – who think they're better than everyone else because they're what people call pure-blood… I mean, the rest of us know it doesn't make any difference at all" (Rowling, *Chamber of Secrets* 89), this quote perfectly captures the racism between pure-bloods and muggle-borns.

Amid the ongoing controversies surrounding J.K Rowling, there is a persistent debate about whether her works genuinely promote anti-racism or inadvertently reinforce prejudice. Critics such as Farah Mendelsohn argue in her essay "Crowning the King: Harry Potter and the Constructions of Authority" that, despite its seemingly progressive themes,

Rowling's series ultimately reinforces racial ideologies and overlooks the racial inequalities experienced by certain groups within the wizarding world. The topic of social and economic disparities in the Harry Potter world interests many academics, as it closely mirrors our own society (16-7).

According to Lana Whited in her article titled "1492, 1942, 1992: The Theme of Race in the Harry Potter Series," among the numerous political themes, such as the nature of war, human rights issues, and authority dynamics, racism and racial prejudice stand out as significant concerns in J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series (1997–2007). Across all seven books, the core plot revolves around racial issues. One could argue that by addressing racism within a fantastical context, Rowling mirrors the real world, which has its own history of oppressing various groups, including people of African descent (23). By intertwining this real-world problem with a magical narrative, she offers a unique perspective on racial politics and underscores the dangers and consequences of racial hatred and discrimination.

Racism in the wizarding world is primarily focused on the purity of a wizard's blood rather than on their skin color or religion. In *The Psychology of Harry Potter: An Unauthorized Examination of the Boy Who Lived* (2010), Neil Mulholland argues that J.K. Rowling has crafted a society that is nearly race-blind and places minimal emphasis on one's ethnic background. Consequently, the conventional approach to discussing ethnic racism does not play a significant role in the narrative (233). Instead, the story highlights terms such as "Mudblood," a derogatory label for a witch or wizard with Muggle (non-magical) parents (Rowling, *Chamber of Secrets* 89); "Half-blood," referring to someone with both magical and non-magical relatives (*the Half-blood prince* 168). Then "pure-blood," describing individuals with solely magical ancestry (*Chamber of Secrets* 89); and

"squib," which denotes those born to magical parents who are unable to perform magic (154).

The central focus of the racism debate within *Harry Potter* pertains to the tendency of certain pure-blood witches and wizards to glorify the superiority of magical blood. Notable examples of such pure-bloods include Draco and Lucius Malfoy, who harbor disdain for Muggles and Muggle-born individuals. They firmly believe that the latter should be excluded from the magical community, treating them as second-class citizens. The term "Mudblood," which was introduced in the second book, recurs frequently throughout the Harry Potter series. Notably, Draco Malfoy is the first to use this derogatory term, referring to Hermione as a "filthy little Mudblood" (*Chamber of secrets* 123). Through others' reactions, Harry becomes increasingly aware of the term's grave implications. As previously mentioned, a Mudblood is a witch or wizard born to non-magical parents, and it serves as a serious insult. Ron articulates its severity by stating,

> It's about the most insulting thing he could think of", gasping
> as he caught his breath "Mudblood's a really foul name for
> someone who was Muggle-born - you know, with non-
> magical parents. There are some wizards, like Malfoy's
> family, who believe they are superior to others simply
> because they are what people refer to as pure-blood. (126)

This highlights the deep-seated prejudice and classism within the wizarding world, where terms like "Mudblood" are used as insults to demean those of non-magical (Muggle) heritage. It reflects how families like the Malfoys uphold a harmful ideology of blood purity, reinforcing social divisions and discrimination based on ancestry rather than individual character or merit.

A prominent theme throughout the series is the distinction made between wizards based on the purity of their blood. This concept is introduced in *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, the second novel. In this book, Draco Malfoy, a pureblood, derogatorily refers to a Muggle-born with magical abilities as a "filthy little Mudblood" (*Chamber of secrets* 86). Hagrid, the school's groundskeeper, informs Harry that some wizards believe themselves to be superior to others simply because they are pureblood (88). Other than Hermione Granger, a Muggle-born witch or wizard has occasionally faced similar pejorative labels throughout the series. Rana Marion the author *of Creating Magical Worlds: Otherness and Othering in Harry Potter* (2009), argues that cultural alienation and isolation stem from the act of othering, as exemplified when Hermione is subjected to a cruel epithet that many are unfamiliar with (15). She asserts that this practice of categorizing individuals emerges "through social discourse and serves particular interests of power" (8–9).

For hundreds of years, Muggle-borns have been subjected to cultural distancing, alienation, and discriminatory terms based solely on their "heritage." There has historically been no justification for the dominant group to consider how they spoke about or treated individuals of different backgrounds, particularly when those individuals were viewed as inferior or enslaved. Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, a prominent sociologist known for his work on race and racism claims in his work titled *Racism Without Racists: Color-Blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality*, that the context explains why derogatory terms like the N-word, akin to "Mudblood" in the Harry Potter series, have been so overtly used (54). While J.K Rowling never stated directly that "Mudblood is the N-word for the Wizarding world," many critics believe that she meant it in that way, including Elaine Ostry in her work *Accepting Mudbloods: The Ambivalent Social Vision in J.K. Rowling's Fairy Tales.* Ostry states, "perhaps Rowling is aware that one of the worst insults leveled against

[Muggles] is 'mud people.'" She emphasizes that while the term is considered highly offensive, the issue it raises is of significant importance (92).

According to Barbara J. Fields, in her work *Ideology and Race in American History*, a major error in defining racism is the tendency to view it as "an outwardly visible physical fact, a thing, rather than a notion that is profoundly and fundamentally ideological" (144). In a society where individuals can alter their appearance at will or through magical means, the concept of racism takes on a different significance. In her work, *The Politics of Harry Potter*, Barratt Bethany argues that, similar to the scientists in Germany during World War II who promoted the notion of genetic differences to distinguish the Aryan race from Jewish people and other non-Aryan groups, many racist characters in the *Harry Potter* series justify their prejudices by claiming that racial distinctions are based on genetic or blood composition. In reality, there are no solid genetic disparities in either instance, which is why "scientists in Germany were bribed, threatened, or brainwashed into publicly presenting evidence that demonstrated a racial hierarchy" (70). Similarly, this form of political and social coercion is evident throughout the *Harry Potter* narrative.

Despite the constructed nature of blood status evidence, Rowling's classification of bloodlines serves as a means to assess an individual's magical abilities. This focus on a "physical fact" obscures the inherent contradictions found within blood-type stereotypes. These contradictions appear to be overlooked when such notions about race resonate with long-standing, often comforting, prejudices and myths that have emerged to define racial identities. A closer examination of characters from various bloodlines reveals that the emphasis on blood as a defining factor lacks any substantial basis; rather, it functions as a fabricated and descriptive characteristic designed to distinguish groups in a manner similar to how racial categories are determined by observable differences in appearance. Purebloods, such as Draco Malfoy and Neville Longbottom, demonstrate a range of magical

abilities; however, despite being a pureblood, Neville consistently ranks at the bottom of his class and often relies on Hermione, a Muggle-born, for assistance. Similarly, minor characters Crabbe and Goyle, who are also purebloods, struggle academically, which may be attributed to coddling or inbreeding. The notion of pureblood superiority persists, even though it is evident that being born into a pureblood family does not guarantee magical ability (Barratt 45).

In the wizarding world, blood status not only determines social hierarchy but also imposes specific roles and pressures on individuals. "Being a pureblood comes with privilege, but it also carries certain expectations" (122), Observes Tess Stockslager, writer of "What it Means to Be a Half-Blood" (2012). Due to his struggles to meet the high standards associated with pureblood wizards, Neville often becomes the target of ridicule. His family initially worries that he may be a squib; however, later events in his life dispel this concern. Regrettably, the psychological pressure he faces largely contributes to his academic challenges. While his parents are celebrated for their strength, bravery, and magical prowess, Neville—who blossoms later than his peers—is frequently dismissed as an inadequate representative of purebloods. For much of the series, even his grandmother feels a sense of shame regarding him. Despite his early potential, Neville can only emerge as a competent magician and break free from the social and psychological barriers hindering his success through dedicated mentorship.

In the wizarding world, aside from Mudbloods, there are three primary categories of humans: squibs, half-bloods, and pure-bloods. A witch or wizard with entirely magical lineage, such as Ron Weasley or Draco Malfoy, is considered to possess "pure" magical blood. They are well-versed in the customs of the magical realm because they were born and raised within it. Harry Potter serves as an example of a half-blood, possessing both magical and non-magical ancestry. Typically, a half-blood is raised with knowledge of the

wizarding world, especially if they have at least one magical parent. However, there are instances where the magical parent may conceal their true identity from the non-magical parent. Though Harry's parents were both magical, making him occasionally appear to be a pure-blood, he is officially recognized as a half-blood because his mother was born to Muggles.

A squib is a unique case; these individuals have magical parents but lack the ability to wield magic themselves. This inability to perform magic is something of a mystery within the wizarding community. Historically, having a squib in the family was seen as a source of shame, particularly during Dumbledore's upbringing alongside his brother Aberforth. Unlike the other three categories, squibs play a relatively minor role in the *Harry Potter* narrative, despite their intriguing nature. Today, squibs are not regarded with the same disdain as they once were. For instance, Voldemort's decision to allow Argus Filch to remain as Hogwarts' caretaker indicates a shift in perception towards squibs compared to Muggle-borns. Nevertheless, the existence of the Kwikspell Company and its introductory offerings in beginner's magic imply that navigating life as a squib can be quite challenging.

In Nancy Reagin's chapter "Was Voldemort a Nazi? According to 'Death Eater Ideology and National Socialism'" in the book *Harry Potter and History* (2011), striking parallels are drawn between Adolf Hitler and Voldemort, the malevolent dictator of the wizarding world. Both figures exhibit an insatiable thirst for power and ruthlessly eliminate anyone who opposes them. They established cultures of terror and control within their realms by enforcing harsh laws and employing dubious tactics. Reagin asserts that their motivations, objectives, and methods for instilling fear are nearly "cut/paste copies" of one another (33).

However, significant differences exist in how they acquired and maintained their power. Voldemort resorted to violence, threats, and intimidation, relying on a small but loyal group known as the Death Eaters. In contrast, Hitler ascended to power through legitimate democratic elections and utilized political manipulation to cement his authority. While Voldemort often operated in secrecy, allowing his followers to pursue his vision of pure-blood supremacy, Hitler was the dynamic, public figurehead of his regime.

Despite these differences, both leaders institutionalized tyranny through laws, decrees, and propaganda—Voldemort targeting Muggle-borns and Hitler focusing on Jews—reflecting J.K. Rowling's contemplation of the dark and unsettling aspects of our history. Ultimately, both tyrants sought total domination and employed violence and terror to reshape their worlds, leaving their societies with enduring scars. Returning to the parallels, both Hitler and Voldemort are fixated on notions of "right" and "wrong" races. Hitler believed that the tall, blond, blue-eyed so-called "Aryan" race was ideal. While their fundamental goals are similar, Voldemort's vision of the perfect race is quite different; for him and his Death Eaters, superiority is based on the purity of a person's wizarding blood. It is particularly ironic that neither Voldemort nor Hitler embodies their own definitions of the "ideal" race. Hitler's small stature, brown hair, and brown eyes—along with his rumored Jewish ancestry—did not align with his vision of the Aryan ideal. Similarly, Voldemort was raised in a Muggle orphanage, is half-blood due to his Muggle father, and discovers his magical identity only at the age of eleven. He certainly does not possess the pure wizard blood that he so greatly values (Reagin 134-35).

Barrett notes that Hitler's use of "mid-twentieth-century airbrushing" to create images that depicted him as blond and blue-eyed was an attempt to conceal his true identity, which she describes as "an interesting side note." Similarly, Voldemort lives in deception and assumes a false identity by misleading his Death Eaters about his true ancestry (73).

Barrett explains that "it is those who themselves feel part of potentially marginalized groups that are most keen to reify the differences that create 'out-groups' of others. The more institutionalized this hierarchy, the more secure their position at the top is" (72–3). This suggests that Voldemort's identity issues, much like Hitler's, may stem from a sense of insecurity.

It is also reasonable to suggest that Voldemort's hatred and disdain for Muggles and half-bloods reflects his own internalized hatred for his half-blood identity. This type of psychological self-loathing has been observed in stigmatized communities; when a particular race is perceived by society as inferior or malevolent, individuals from that race may unconsciously or deliberately adopt and propagate the negative views held by society, resulting in conflicting self-perceptions or self-hatred. As scholar Nancy Reagin explains, "Voldemort's obsession with blood purity and his hatred of Muggles can be read as a form of internalized self-loathing, reflecting his denial and rejection of his own half-blood status" (135). While an individual's identity encompasses more than merely their racial background, race undeniably remains a significant and influential aspect of self-perception. Indeed, when Voldemort comes to terms with his mixed heritage, he seems unable to accept this truth. By eradicating his Muggle ancestry, Voldemort effectively denies and obliterates the final traces of his mixed heritage.

In an interview, J.K. Rowling acknowledges the parallels between Voldemort and Hitler, stating that "Voldemort is, of course, a sort of Hitler" (Upton). Both figures developed deep-seated prejudices during their formative years. A contributor to The Leaky Cauldron explains that one reason Hitler hated the Jews was because he blamed them for his personal hardships, including poverty and the defeat in World War I, as well as the harsh terms of the Treaty of Versailles (Vick). While this theory—suggesting that Hitler suspected he might have had a Jewish grandparent—lacks definitive historical evidence, it was

significant enough to trouble him, leading him to "have the Nazi law defining Jewishness written to exclude Jesus Christ and himself" ("Adolf Hitler"). Similarly, Voldemort was evidently troubled by his Muggle heritage, as demonstrated by his decision to eliminate his Muggle family.

Throughout the series, the racial issues surrounding Mudbloods are gradually revealed. This begins with Draco Malfoy's offensive remarks and unfounded threats in the early novels, as well as Salazar Slytherin's basilisk that kills Mudbloods in "Chamber of Secrets," highlighting the founder's disdain for them. It finally turns into an open witch-hunt in the final book. Nonetheless, where racial issues and prejudice arise, classism and discrimination follow. This is evident between characters like the Malfoys and the Weasleys which will be discussed further later in the chapter.

II.3. "The Malfoys" VS "The Weasleys"

Human behavior has always been influenced by society. Many individuals in higher classes believe they are untouchable and can act however they wish, equating wealth with power. *The Harry Potter* series explores various social themes, including gender, class, and wealth. Class plays a key role in shaping characters' identities, decisions, and relationships with other people in the Harry Potter universe. Through portrayals such as the Malfoys and Weasleys, J.K. Rowling illustrates themes of privileges, stratification, and inequality in the Wizarding world. In an interview with The Oprah Magazine, Rowling mentions that class divisions are intentionally merged into the story. She notes that children are particularly aware of economic inequality in school environments, where possessions and financial resources often determine social status (Rowling).This is similar to how the Malfoys view the Weasleys.

Economic inequality is a key factor that shapes social divisions within the wizarding world. John Granger explains in his book titled *Harry Potter's Bookshelf* (2009) that, for instance, the differing economic backgrounds of the Malfoys and the Weasleys illustrate disparities in wealth. Although they work in the same place and their children attend the same school, they are vastly different. It is clear that Draco comes from a wealthy family, Raised by parents who admired Lord Voldemort, Draco was immersed in an environment filled with racism and classism. He flaunts his wealth to assert social superiority, highlighting this sensitivity (45). While Ron Weasley, comes from a family that struggles financially, and is often viewed as poor. Elizabeth E. Heilman and Anne E. Gregory argue in the book titled *Critical Prespectives on Harry Porrer* (2008) that: "among the wizarding families, there is a hierarchy, often based on social class and profession and related to the quality of bloodlines" (18). A clear instance of this class-based hierarchy appears when Lucius Malfoy insults Arthur Weasley, saying, "The company you keep, Weasley... and I thought your family could sink no lower" (Rowling 59). Lucius mocks Arthur for both his morals and his poverty. This comment reflects how, in Malfoy' ideology, classism and blood purity are interconnected. Arthur's moral choices, such as generosity, equality, and advocating for Muggle rights, are viewed by Lucius as signs of weakness rather than strength (Anelli 45).

Although Harry Potter comes from a wealthy family, he is initially unaware of class distinctions; however, he becomes more aware of them as the series progresses. J.K. Rowling's depiction of socioeconomic strata is truly fascinating. She draws from historical events and the context surrounding the establishment of the Ministry of Magic. Like all of history, it takes a courageous person to challenge the status quo and demonstrate that change is possible. To recognize the good, one must first remove negative influences.

Lower-income families face significant challenges due to the requirement for students to purchase their books, robes, wands, and other materials. The Weasleys, who have limited

resources, struggle with these costs, while the Malfoys enjoy political influence due to their wealth. Scholars have examined how these class dynamics are embedded in the broader political and institutional systems of the Wizarding World. William P. Macneil, in ""Kidlit" as "Law-And-Lit" : Harry Potter and the Scales of Justice"(2002), argues that "the Ministry of Magic functions as a bureaucratic institution that reinforces class divides, often privileging elite families while marginalizing others"(545). Similarly, Benjamin H. Barton, in *Harry Potter and the Half-Crazed Bureaucracy*, emphasizes "the Ministry's inefficiency and corruption, suggesting that wealth and social connections play a decisive role in influencing policy and justice" (1523). Lucius Malfoy speaks to Arthur Weasley in Flourish and Blotts: "Well, well, well... Arthur Weasley. What a surprise. Always the same, aren't you? Never any money... I suppose your numerous offspring are just as... underprivileged?" *(The Chamber of Secrets* 53). In this quote, Lucius is being sarcastic to Arthur not only because of his financial struggles but also for failing to join Lucius's elitist and aristocratic beliefs. This situation illustrates how discrimination and classism are intertwined in the wizarding world. Lucius considers Arthur a traitor to his heritage, not because he lacks magical talent or origin, but because of his moral choices and the company he keeps.

The series portrays deeply rooted class distinctions, but it also features characters and narratives that challenge these norms. Dobby's quest for independence, Hermione Granger's activism, and the Weasleys' strong sense of morality and humility all exemplify resistance to established hierarchies. Erin Vollmer, in *Harry's World: An Exploration of J.K. Rowling's Social and Political Agenda in the Harry Potter Series* " This reflects how real-world systems of privilege and exclusion are intertwined with issues of wealth, race, and blood status" (4). Class can either be a benefit or the opposite in the wizarding world. Unfair treatment of different groups in any community, based on external factors such as income or family connections rather than their inherent worth, fuels class conflict. Given the significant role

unfair treatment has played throughout history, we cannot ignore it. People do not always use money or power wisely; instead, they often use it as a means to gain further power.

The value and social differences between the Weasley and Malfoy families define their power dynamics. Although their behaviors and beliefs make them enemies, their higher social status provides the Malfoys with greater access to power in the upper circles. For instance, despite being a Death Eater, Lucius Malfoy managed to avoid harsh consequences following both the wizarding wars, illustrating the power of money and position (Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* 576). Conversely, the Weasleys' strong family bonds, integrity, and modesty compensate for their lack of wealth. Their values of generosity, loyalty, and tolerance contrast sharply with the Malfoys' arrogance and racism (Granger 45).

The way that socialization continues to reinforce such class distinctions is another significant point. The parents socialize Draco Malfoy to think that he is better than others and that his blood and social class are more important. His actions at Hogwarts, where he tries to dominate and exclude others from his upper-class clique, are a reflection of this socialization and classism. The Weasley kids, however, learn to do what is just and kind and are encouraged to combat the sort of prejudice represented by families like the Malfoys and befriend anyone regardless of where they come from. Draco Malfoy clarified to Harry about Ron: "It's pathetic. They haven't got proper manners, either. Didn't you see your mother shrieking at him?"(Rowling 57). Draco Malfoy seizes this chance to criticize the Weasleys' behavior and upbringing, hiding his cruelty as a critique of their "manners." This statement highlights Draco's superficial and aristocratic nature, which prioritizes wealth while disregarding morality and love qualities that are also evident in the Weasleys. The Malfoys and the Weasleys represent two poles of the wizard world's socioeconomic hierarchy and also have different social and moral aspirations. Both of their histories and values reinforce the

dominant themes of privilege, prejudice, and class that run through the *Harry Potter* novels (Granger 45).

II.4. The House-elves' Misery

"*Loyal magical creatures bound to their owners as servants for life.*"

-Pottermore-.

In *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, house-elves are magical beings bound to serve and submit to their wizarding masters. Typically found in affluent wizarding households, they manage various household chores, such as cleaning and cooking, and provide counsel and guidance to their owners (Rowling 25-32). Characterized by their large, bulbous eyes, pointed ears, and small stature (18-22), house-elves possess powerful magical abilities, allowing them to appear and disappear at will. However, their magical prowess is limited when it comes to resisting their masters or defying their commands. Despite their status as slaves, house-elves exhibit deep devotion to their owners. They find fulfilment and pride in their service, making loyalty a fundamental aspect of their character; this is often viewed as a reflection of their commitment and work ethic. Even when subjected to mistreatment and abuse, house-elves remain renowned for their unwavering dedication to their masters (*the Goblet of fire* 345-55).

Despite not being a house-elf for the Dursleys in the strict sense of the word, Dobby's interactions with them in *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* offer a distinctive viewpoint on this function. His well-meaning attempts to help Harry, despite their frequent misdirection and chaos, are an example of the routine duties that a house-elf usually performs. One example of the type of tasks a house-elf would easily perform as part of meal preparation is Dobby's magical levitation of Aunt Petunia's pudding (Rowling 23).

Furthermore, the state of the Malfoy family, as observed during Harry's visits, subtly draws attention to the work that house-elves perform. The spotless and well-maintained

surroundings of Malfoy Manor, though not stated directly, allude to the challenging work of a house-elf, which most likely ensures that the estate functions properly, satisfies family needs, and retains its dominant aspect (Rowling 62). These examples demonstrate the vital role house-elves play in maintaining order in the wizarding world and providing domestic care, even when viewed through the lens of Dobby's peculiar behavior and the context of a well-known wizarding family. Their magical abilities enable them to carry out the daily tasks of wizarding life, relieving their masters of menial tasks.

House-elves occupy a multifaceted role within the wizarding community, extending beyond mere household responsibilities to encompass advisory functions that draw upon their extensive knowledge of magical practices, customs, and the complex interactions that characterize the wizard society. As trusted confidants and invaluable sources of information, house-elves have the potential to significantly assist their masters.

A clear example of this can be seen in Dobby, who endeavors to alert Harry Potter to the imminent dangers at Hogwarts employing unconventional methods during *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*. Although Dobby's approach is disruptive, it serves a larger purpose: to guide and protect Harry by providing crucial, albeit obliquely communicated, insights regarding the lurking threats (30). Even after achieving his freedom, Dobby's deep desire to aid and warn others—often at great personal risk—highlights the potential for house-elves to serve as advisors and informants within the narrative.

Additionally, house-elves play a pivotal role in preserving longstanding traditions and rituals that are integral to the magical community. They are often tasked with maintaining the secrecy of the wizarding world and ensuring adherence to its myriad laws and customs. Given their unwavering loyalty and discretion, house-elves frequently undertake significant responsibilities, such as delivering messages or safeguarding sensitive information. Kreacher, featured in *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* and *Harry Potter and the Deathly*

Hallows, exemplifies this aspect of house-elves. As the house-elf of the Black family, Kreacher acts as a living repository of their ancient customs and secrets, revealing vital information, such as the location of a Horcrux and Regulus Black's efforts to defy Voldemort (Rowling, *the Order of the Phoenix* 712; *the Deathly Hallows* 422-30). His steadfast loyalty and discretion, even under duress, illustrate the depth of commitment house-elves demonstrate towards their families or masters over extended periods.

Moreover, the influence of house-elves transcends individual households, emphasizing broader societal concerns. Their involvement in significant events, such as the Battle of Hogwarts, highlights their crucial role in advocating for their own rights and liberties as well. Their actions underscore the importance of recognizing and valuing the contributions of all members of society, regardless of their origins or social standing. For instance, Dobby's participation in the Battle of Hogwarts—where he sacrifices his life in defense of Harry and his allies—embodies a profound act of heroism and selflessness that challenges the traditional narrative of enslavement (*the Deathly Hollows* 631). This ultimate act of loyalty serves to illuminate the necessity of acknowledging the inherent worth and contributions of all beings within the societal framework.

House-elves have historically endured severe mistreatment from their masters, largely due to their unwavering obedience. They have often been regarded more as property and slaves rather than as sentient beings, lacking any rights and viewed as emotionless servants who obey without question. This dynamic is exemplified in *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*. Dobby's self-punishing behaviors, such as ironing his hands and sealing his ears in the oven door (22-30), illustrate the severe penalties he anticipates for perceived missteps against the Malfoy family, his masters. This conduct reflects a system in which the well-being of house-elves is subordinated to their duty of obedience.

In *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, Hermione Granger's efforts to advocate for house-elf rights are met with resistance from the broader wizarding community, indicating the prevailing social attitudes of the time. The widespread disregard and mockery she faces (150) highlight a general acceptance of the house-elves' inferior status and a failure to acknowledge the potential for abuse they endure. Moreover, the connection between house-elves' identity and sense of purpose and their servitude is poignantly illustrated by Winky's despair following her discharge in *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* (593). This dependence, formed by generations of being treated as property valued solely for their labor, exacerbates their vulnerability within the wizarding world. Their rights and welfare have historically been overlooked due to a cycle of cultural normalization regarding their submissive roles and their deeply ingrained obedience.

Dobby provides a striking example of the horrifying abuse he faces at home, which includes daily threats of death and physical punishment (*Chamber of Secrets* 186-87). His arrival at Hogwarts accompanied by Lucius Malfoy—who kicks the house-elf in a fit of rage, even though Dobby is not the target of his wrath—serves to confirm this abuse (355). Despite this treatment, Dobby feels unable to object due to his quiet demeanor and the constraints of the contract binding him to his masters. Lucius Malfoy uses physical force as a means of control to reinforce his authority over the elf.

Charles W. Mills was a Jamaican-born philosopher known primarily for his work in critical race theory and political philosophy, especially his influential book, *The Racial Contract* (1997), which critiques traditional social contract theories by exposing how they have historically been based on white racial domination. Mills's concept of the "Racial Contract" has been employed as an analytical framework by researchers examining the *Harry Potter* series in order to understand the magical enslavement of house-elves. This interpretation posits that Mills's idea of a racial contract— an agreement that sustains

hierarchies and subordination based on race or group identity (Chica 75) serves as an analogy for the magical contract that compels house-elves into servitude.

Christina M. Chica applies Charles Mills's Racial Contract framework to the wizarding world in her 2021 study, *The Magical (Racial) Contract Is Real*, interpreting the magical racial order as a system of white supremacy and hierarchy that parallels Mills's concept of racial dominance. Chica explores how pure-blood wizards occupy privileged positions over magical beings such as house-elves and Muggle-borns, illustrating how wizarding society mirrors the realities of racial capitalism and colonialism in the real world (75-6).

The portrayal of house-elves' magical servitude in the Harry Potter universe can be viewed as a fictional representation of systemic oppression, where the dominant wizarding class exerts control over a subordinate group—the house-elves—through both formal and informal agreements that enforce inequality and suppress dissent. Mills' theory provides insight into how the definitions of who qualifies as a full person with rights, as opposed to who is relegated to a lesser, submissive status, illustrate the ways in which such contracts— whether based on race or magic—establish and sustain social hierarchies (Chica 74-80).

Two key factors contribute to the physical aggression Dobby was subjected to. The first is the need to maintain a hierarchy; the dominant group employs violence to ensure that subgroups accept their lower status, thereby reinforcing their own power. The second factor is the desire to suppress any potential challenges to authority, particularly those linked to rebellion that have historically arisen in contexts of slavery (Mills 83–5). Dobby's experience aligns with the first explanation, as he obeys his masters' every command out of fear of punishment. However, he subtly rebels against his master in defiance of the second justification in an effort to fulfill his own desires.

According to 'Racial Contract theory', it is considered a crime to disobey, harm, or kill a member of a dominant race, and such offenses are often punishable by death (Mills 85). Throughout and after his enslavement, Dobby rebels against and even retaliates against his owners, typically managing to escape serious consequences. Only after the magical contract ends does Dobby gain the freedom to choose his actions, allowing him to confront his former master. Tragically, Dobby loses his life when he defends the protagonist and chooses to oppose his past masters (*the Deathly Hollows* 383-84). When Dobby finally gains his freedom by receiving a piece of clothing, Lucius is enraged and prepares to attack Harry. However, Dobby intervenes, using magic against Lucius to protect the protagonist (*the Chamber of Secrets* 357).

The agreements inherent in racial conflict, where the penalty for a crime could be death, drive Dobby to support the "good side," even though he ultimately fails in this regard. Additionally, the contract compels house-elves to inflict physical punishment upon themselves for failing to complete tasks or for jeopardizing their master's reputation. Speaking ill of a family or disclosing information that should remain private can tarnish their status. Both Dobby and Kreacher face these punitive measures in the novels, while other house-elves merely discuss them. For example, during Dobby's first visit to Harry, he attempts to share critical information about the Chamber of Secrets but begins to harm himself as he gets close to revealing anything (14-6, 187-89). Bound by his pledge to keep his masters' secrets, Dobby feels compelled to punish himself to avoid divulging essential information about the Chamber. In *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, house elves endure systemic abuse resulting from their magical enslavement, which mandates unwavering obedience and silence. Bound by a magical contract that punishes disobedience and even compels them to self-harm in order to maintain their wizarding masters' dignity, they are forced to serve without compensation or personal autonomy. This harsh system

normalizes their exploitation, rendering them voiceless and invisible within wizarding

society. Rowling underscores the elves' suffering and the moral blindness of their owners by

drawing parallels between this brutal servitude and the realities of actual slavery and racial

discrimination, particularly through the experiences of characters like Dobby and Kreacher

(14-6).

      The second chapter reveals how J.K. Rowling's background influences the themes in

her work, particularly shedding light on the pervasive racism between "Pure-bloods" and

"Muggle-borns." It uncovers the deep-rooted classism within the wizarding world,

exemplified by the social tensions between the Malfoys and the Weasleys. Additionally, the

chapter highlights the systemic mistreatment of house-elves, demonstrating how their

oppression reflects broader issues of inequality and prejudice in the wizarding community.

Chapter Three: Trauma in *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*

The third and final chapter explores the theme of trauma as it appears in *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, and its impact on the development of the characters. It begins by examining the experiences of the golden trio—Harry, Hermione, and Ron—through the lens of trauma. Next, the chapter presents the monster in the story as a metaphor for fear and trauma. Finally, it concludes by discussing how the issues of trauma, racism, and classism in *Chamber of Secrets* reflect and parallel real-world societal challenges.

III.1. Exploring Trauma through the Experiences of the Golden Trio

"A lot of people experience trauma in their life, and most people, right after, have a pretty hard time."

Dr. Sonya Norman

In both her literature and personal life, J.K. Rowling has been open about her experiences with trauma. In her appearance on the seven-part podcast *The Witch Trials of J.K. Rowling*, hosted by political activist Megan Phelps-Roper it was shared that she endured significant emotional struggles, including despair and miscarriage (Phelps-Roper 12:15), which have shaped her understanding of pain and resilience. Rowling has revealed that the Dementors in the Harry Potter series—symbols of the debilitating impact of trauma and despair—were inspired by her battles with depression (Phelps-Roper 23:40).

Through her characters, particularly Harry Potter, who copes with the loss of his parents and the persistent threat of Voldemort, Rowling explores the theme of trauma in her writing. The series employs recurring flashbacks, nightmares, and emotional challenges to depict the psychological ramifications of trauma, notably post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). For example, according to scholars such as Elizabeth E. Heilman, in her book *Harry Potter's World: Multidisciplinary Critical Perspectives* (2003), and Maria Nikolajeva, in her

book *Power, Voice and Subjectivity in Literature for Young Readers* (2009), Harry's scar stinging in the presence of Voldemort symbolizes the resurfacing of distressing memories. Heilman notes that the scar "manifests Harry's deep-seated trauma and the persistent threat that Voldemort poses to his identity and sense of safety" (105), and Nikolajeva supports that idea stating that the scar is "a corporeal reminder of Harry's past suffering, symbolizing the inescapable link between memory, pain, and the struggle against dark forces" (67). That scar is what made Harry the way he is, it is a part of his journey to defeat the dark lord and to accept his reality and face the challenges coming his way.

Trauma can be understood as an emotional response to a distressing event, such as a crime, natural disaster, accident, neglect, or instances of physical or emotional abuse. It may also stem from witnessing violence, experiencing the death of a loved one, or enduring war, among other situations. In the immediate aftermath of such events, feelings of denial and shock are common (American Psychological Association). Over the long term, individuals may experience a range of responses, including unpredictable emotions, flashbacks, strained relationships, and even physical symptoms such as headaches or nausea. While these emotional reactions are not uncommon, some individuals may struggle to move forward with their lives (American Psychological Association). With the help of psychologists, they can learn healthy strategies to manage their emotions effectively.

As previously noted, trauma is an emotional response to distressing situations such as abuse, neglect, or witnessing someone else's injury. This response often manifests in feelings of shock, denial, and long-lasting psychological effects. These reactions can be seen in the harrowing experiences that various characters endure in *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*. For example, Harry Potter faces trauma due to the persistent threat of the Chamber of Secrets being unleashed and the subsequent attacks on students. This situation mirrors the erratic emotions and fragmented memories encountered by those who have experienced

trauma, leading to significant anxiety and uncertainty. Traumatic events can resurface in intense and distressing ways, as illustrated by Harry's encounter with the basilisk and the memories stirred by Tom Riddle's diary. Throughout the novel, Harry experiences physical danger and psychological intrusion, reflecting common trauma symptoms such as flashbacks and heightened fear (Rowling 391).

A particularly moment in *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* that illustrates Harry's trauma from the basilisk attack unfolds during the intense battle in the Chamber itself. After engaging in combat with the enormous serpent, Harry is struck by one of the basilisk's fangs, and the venom starts to inflict excruciating pain, bringing him close to death, "But as warm blood drenched Harry's arms, he felt a searing pain just above his elbow. One long, poisonous fang was sinking deeper and deeper into his arm and it splintered as the basilisk keeled over sideways and fell, twitching, to the floor...." (254). The vivid description of the basilisk's venom attack highlights both the immediate physical danger and the deep psychological effects of facing life-threatening danger during early years which is emphasized when Rowling wrote that "Fawkes the phoenix's tears heal Harry's wound, but the physical agony and near-death experience mark a traumatic encounter that leaves a lasting impression on him" (254). This moment captures both the physical and psychological trauma Harry endures—facing imminent peril, suffering a venomous bite, experiencing excruciating pain and a near-fatal encounter, and depending on magical healing for survival. The intensity of the trauma is amplified by the presence of Tom Riddle's memory and the pressure to save Ginny Weasley, making it a defining and pivotal experience in the narrative.

Although the wizarding world is magical, it is far from perfect. The wizarding community, much like the Muggle world, is rife with prejudice. Many wizards harbor biases against various groups for two primary reasons: they tend to dislike those who are different and believe that these individuals are of lesser value. J.K. Rowling illustrates that prejudice is

based on erroneous and often harmful assumptions about groups of people. In contrast, Harry, Ron, and Hermione demonstrate respect for others by recognizing them as individuals, understanding that being different does not equate to inferiority.

A clear manifestation of Hermione's trauma is the way she is singled out and mistreated due to her Muggle heritage. The attacks on Muggle-born students, including Hermione, reflect a form of systemic racism within the magical community, where "pure-blood" families disdain those with non-magical lineage with an example of Draco saying to Hermione "It's really not a good idea going around saying you're a Mudblood" (Rowling 143) confirming that Hermione should be ashamed of her identity. Another example of how much muggle borns are hated within the wizarding world is when Ginny Weasley opened the chamber of secrets and wrote on the wall "The Chamber of Secrets has been opened. Enemies of the heir, beware" (106). The enemies of the heir being muggles, and the heir of Slytherine being Voldemort with his deep hatred for 'non pure-blood' led to many petrifications of muggle born wizards including Hermione (260).

The prejudice against Muggle-born students is explicitly expressed by characters who uphold pureblood supremacy in *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*. In the novel, Lucius Malfoy states, "Well, what with all these attacks... there'll be no more Muggle-borns left at Hogwarts. I can only imagine what an awful loss that would be to the school" (263). This passage serves as a chilling illustration of the sarcastic, pure-blood racist mentality. While he may initially appear to be sad, it actually reveals Malfoy's genuine contempt for students born to Muggle parents and his endorsement of their persecution. It emphasizes the broader themes of prejudice and societal division, shedding light on the common racism within the wizarding world, where Muggle-born individuals are dehumanized and regarded as inferior. Malfoy's comments also highlight the systemic inequality that fuels the conflict in *Chamber of Secrets* and foreshadow the growing challenges faced by characters like

Hermione especially when he shouts "Enemies of the Heir, beware!... You'll be next, Mudbloods!" (106). Furthermore, his tone of casual cruelty emphasizes his role as an antagonist, embodying prejudice and elitism, which highly contrasts with the ideals of equality and acceptance championed by Harry and his friends.

The series frequently highlights the harmful impact of blood-based prejudice within the wizarding community. Another example is when Ron explains, "Mudblood's a really foul name for someone who's Muggle-born — you know, non-magic parents. There are some wizards – like Malfoy's family – who think they're better than everyone else because they're what people call pure-blood" (89). This narrative powerfully illustrates the harsh realities of racism within the wizarding world. Ron sheds light on the institutional racism and societal stigma endured by those lacking a pure magical lineage by referring to "Mudblood" as a derogatory label aimed at witches and wizards born to Muggle parents. This quote captures the emotional pain and alienation experienced by Muggle-born characters and how pure-blood families view muggle-borns.

In *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, Ron's trauma is deeply intertwined with the discrimination faced by his family, often labeled as "blood traitors," which is a term discussed further in later books and the overarching theme of classism. The Weasleys especially Ron experience social isolation within the wizarding community due to their rejection of the elitist notion that pure-blood wizards are inherently superior. This is apparent when Lucius Malfoy says, "Dear me, what's the use of being a disgrace to the name of wizard if they don't even pay you well for it?" (51), Lucius is judging the Weasleys based on their choice to be friendly and accepting to Muggles as Arthur Weasley works at the Ministry of Magic in the 'Misuse of Muggle Artefacts Office' (165). Due to his fascination with muggles, his job led to their poor statues, which eventually led to the discrimination against them whether it is with their affiliation with muggles or their poor statues.

One of most vocal characters about their hatred for the Weasleys is Draco Malfoy, due their poor status and their affiliation with Muggles. A vivid example of this idea is apparent in the scene when Draco states, "You'd never know the Weasleys were pure-bloods, the way they behave" (166). Draco's hatred for the Weasleys is evident in this line, stemming not only from their lack of wealth but also from their rejection of pure-blood elitism, particularly in their association with Muggle-born individuals like Hermione. This highlights the struggles faced by Ron and his family, who are labeled "blood traitors" by pure-blood supremacists such as the Malfoys.

Each of Harry, Ron, and Hermione, endures significant trauma shaped by the fractured and oppressive society in which they live. Harry exhibits symptoms of PTSD—such as nightmares, rage, and emotional numbness because of his harrowing experiences, including the loss of his parents, years of mistreatment by the Dursleys, and repeated confrontations with Voldemort. According to Ehlers and Clark's cognitive model of PTSD (2000), Harry's trauma is compounded by the personal significance of Voldemort as a recurring perpetrator and the social responses he receives, which maintain his hypervigilance and emotional distress.

Ron's emotional turmoil stems primarily from classism and familial expectations. He feels inferior to others whether it is his friends and his family, which is apparent throughout the series, but it explodes in *The Deathly Hollows* when Voldemort's Horcrux exploits Ron's deepest fears "Least loved, always, by the mother who craved a daughter… Least loved, now, by the girl who prefers your friend… Second best, always, eternally overshadowed…" (Rowling 424). Hermione deals with the persistent anxiety of facing discrimination due to her Muggle heritage, her petrification by the Basilisk, and by the brutal torture inflicted by Bellatrix Lestrange in the second wizarding war, leaving her with lasting psychological scars. Dr. Janina Scarlet, a licensed clinical psychologist. In her post titled 'Psychology of

Inspirational Women: Hermione Granger' (2015)**,** she analyzes Hermione's anxiety, perfectionism, and possible obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), linking these traits to trauma and psychological distress which later on developed into PTSD after being a victim of the 'Crucio' curse and enduring the immense pain (Rowling, *the Deathly Hollows* 423). Together, their experiences highlight their resilience in confronting profound psychological and emotional challenges, showcasing the multifaceted nature of trauma within the wizarding world from abuse and loss to societal prejudice and magical possession.

III.2.The Monster as a Metaphor of Fear and Trauma

Numerous scholars have explored the trauma experienced by Ginny Weasley due to Tom Riddle's possession of her diary in *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*. Mandi Sadler in 'What Ginny Weasley in Chamber of Secrets Teaches Us about Abuse' (2017), for example, analyzes Ginny's ordeal as a form of emotional and psychological abuse, emphasizing how Voldemort exploited her trust and vulnerability through the diary. This manipulation inflicted lasting trauma, with scars that endured long after the immediate threat had passed: Ginny "was manipulated and traumatized by the worst dark wizard of the age," and her journey to recovery was fraught with challenges, as the emotional scars lingered well into her adulthood (Sadler).

In *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, the anguish faced by Ginny Weasley arises from Tom Riddle's journal, a Horcrux harboring a fragment of Voldemort's soul, and his insidious manipulation of her. As a vulnerable first-year student, Ginny feels emotionally isolated and unwittingly allows Riddle to exploit her fears and her desire for acceptance. This ultimately leads her to open the Chamber of Secrets, unleashing the basilisk and endangering the entire school. During her possession, Ginny suffers both physical and psychological decline, becoming reclusive, secretive, and prone to outbursts of anger. She also deals with

profound feelings of shame and anxiety regarding the consequences of her actions, which is evident when Tom Riddle reads Ginny's journal entries to Harry:

> Dear Tom,' he recited, watching Harry's horrified face, 'I think I'm losing my memory. There are rooster feathers all over my robes and I don't know how they got there. Dear Tom, I can't remember what I did on the night of Hallowe'en, but a cat was attacked and I've got paint all down my front. Dear Tom, Percy keeps telling me I'm pale and I'm not myself. I think he suspects me ... There was another attack today and I don't know where I was. Tom, what am I going to do? I think I'm going mad ... I think I'm the one attacking everyone, Tom! (Rowling 229)

Her near-death experience in the Chamber, combined with the loneliness stemming from her inability to share the truth, showcase her suffering. Despite her eventual physical recovery, the psychological wounds remain, shaping her sensitivity and resilience in the long run, according to Shikha Choudhary and A.S Rao in their article, "Ginny Weasley's recovery from her traumatic possession by Tom Riddle's diary demonstrates remarkable resilience. Her transformation from a shy, traumatized first-year student to a powerful witch and leader in Dumbledore's Army shows how trauma survivors can reclaim their agency" (29). This passage confirms that trauma shapes the person you became, whether taking advantage of it and using it as motivation to become better like what Ginny does, or let it take control over your life.

Ginny's suffering is particularly devastating; she is controlled and possessed by Tom Riddle's journal, leading to a decline in her mental and physical well-being, along with

confusion and regret over actions she was compelled to take without her awareness.

Witnessing Harry confront the basilisk in the Chamber of Secrets fills Ginny with profound

anguish and terror. In a state of desperation, she pleads, "Please don't go after the Basilisk,"

revealing her deep concern for his safety despite her own fear and vulnerability. She wishes

that either the Ministry or Dumbledore would intervene instead. Ginny articulates her dread

of losing him, much like her previous fear of losing control, as she implores, "Please don't go

after the Basilisk. Get someone else to do it, Dumbledore or the Ministry… Please, Harry…"

(229). The emotional turmoil she endures, caught between despair and powerlessness, is

noticeable in her tearful and desperate tone. This moment highlights her fragility and the

torment of being trapped in the Chamber, unable to protect herself or those she loves.

Ginny's anxiety intensifies as she watches Harry struggle after being stung by the

basilisk's fang, emphasizing their close bond and the weight of the life-threatening situation.

Tom Riddle chillingly explains that Ginny "poured out her soul" to the journal (229), which

deceived her into unlocking the Chamber while robbing her of her memory and sanity. This

trauma is increased by the diary's previous ownership, which preyed on her loneliness and

insecurities. Ginny has endured both psychological and physical trauma, marked by regret,

anxiety, and the horror of witnessing Harry risk his life to save her and the school. Her horror

and regret is clear from the tremble and stutter in her voice saying: "Harry – oh, Harry – I

tried to tell you at b-breakfast, but I c-couldn't say it in front of Percy. It was me, Harry – but

I –s-swear I d-didn't mean to – R-Riddle made me, he t-took me over –" (237-38).

The deep bonds and sense of responsibility that many characters in *Harry Potter and

the Chamber of Secrets* feel toward Harry are vividly illustrated through their various

attempts to protect him. For example, Dobby "the house elf" repeatedly warns Harry about

the dangers at Hogwarts, even risking his own safety in the process shown in what he said,

"Dobby wants to save Harry Potter's life! Better sent home, grievously injured, than remain

here sir! Dobby only wanted Harry Potter hurt enough to be sent home!"(177). Meanwhile, Ron and Hermione remain strongly by his side, willing to face punishment and danger to help him uncover the truth and confront threats, a proof of this is what Ron says "We'll go and get our stuff, then," said Ron, "and we'll be expelled too, but it doesn't matter. We're not leaving you, Harry" (162). Ron was ready to face expulsion rather than abandon Harry, while Hermione's quick thinking and dedication help unravel the mystery threatening their friend and the school. A network of care and sacrifice surrounds Harry, emphasizing that his survival and success rely not only on his own courage but also on the unwavering support of those around him. Even Professor Snape, notorious for his antagonistic behavior, takes measures to protect Harry during the dueling club by controlling the serpent that Harry unintentionally conjures (211). Additionally, Dumbledore provides a reassuring presence and guidance, reminding Harry that help is always available "Help will always be given at Hogwarts to those who ask for it," (244) offering Harry a sense of security and reminding him he is not alone in facing adversity. Finally, magical allies like Fawkes the phoenix demonstrate their loyalty by healing Harry's severe wounds during his battle with the basilisk, symbolizing hope and protection.

At some point in the 10th century, when Hogwarts was first established, the Basilisk was relocated to the Chamber of Secrets. One of the four founders of Hogwarts, Salazar Slytherin, secretly constructed this underground chamber without the knowledge of his fellow founders, Helga Hufflepuff, Rowena Ravenclaw, or Godric Gryffindor. Slytherin believed that only pure-blood witches and wizards should be taught magic and was firmly opposed to the admission of Muggle-born students to Hogwarts, in contrast to the other founders. To uphold his beliefs, he created the Chamber as a hidden lair deep beneath the school, where a female Basilisk a monstrous serpent bred to eliminate those he deemed unworthy —

particularly Muggle-born students— was kept. Only Slytherin's legitimate heir could open the Chamber and command the Basilisk to attack.

According to Arthur Goyaz, the writer of a blog post called 'Harry Potter: The Basilisk Origin Explained', Fans often ponder whether Harry could have controlled the Basilisk, but the reality is that the creature's power is connected to something deeper. As Salazar Slytherin's prejudices are transmitted through the centuries, ultimately reaching Tom Riddle, the image of the Basilisk illustrates that Hogwarts was founded not only on love and determination but also on hatred. Beyond bloodlines, the true heir is intertwined with fear and rage—traits that are emblematic of both Slytherin and Riddle. The only thing that sets them apart is the Basilisk itself.

The Basilisk stands as a symbol of hatred and terror to the students, which is clear when Hermione asks, "Sir — what exactly do you mean by the 'horror within' the Chamber?" "That is believed to be some sort of monster, which the Heir of Slytherin alone can control," said Professor Binns in his dry, reedy voice. The class exchanged nervous looks" (115). Salazar Slytherin, one of the founders of Hogwarts, concealed it within the Chamber of Secrets. He envisioned a day when his heir would release this formidable serpent to instill fear and potentially eliminate anyone in the school lacking pure wizarding blood (116). For much of the novel, the basilisk's identity remains a mystery, leading people to refer to it simply as "the monster" which added to its horror as people fear the unknown, it was near the end of novel when Harry and Ron found out that 'the monster' is a huge serpent called a Basilisk. Thanks to Hermione and her intense research, she discoverd the secret in a book that she ripped the paper from, knowing that the monster is coming for her next (214-15). When Harry and Ron went to visit Hermione after she was petrified, they found the paper in her clenched fist reading, "Of the many fearsome beasts and monsters that roam our

land, there is none more curious or more deadly than the Basilisk, known also as the King of Serpents" (215).

According to Rowling in her novel, this monster emboding two interconnected themes: the detrimental effects of discrimination and the fear of the unknown (201). Professor Binns explains to Hermione and the other Gryffindors that the basilisk is a creature imprisoned in the Chamber of Secrets by Salazar Slytherin, with the intent to "purge the school of all who are unworthy to study magic" (116). Its attacks are fueled by hatred—a characteristic inherent to its nature. The victims, including Colin, Justin, Hermione, and Myrtle, are all Muggle-born students, while Mrs. Norris is the cat of a Squib (Filch). Through the basilisk, Rowling effectively illustrates how quickly prejudice can evolve into true hatred and even a desire to kill (116-7). For example, Draco begins the story merely expressing his distaste for Muggle-born students, but later reveals that he hopes to discover the identity of the Heir of Slytherin so he can assist in the murder of Muggle-borns; "I'd like to know who the Heir of Slytherin is, so I can help him kill Mudbloods" (181).

The creature's attacks, which petrified the 'mud-blood' characters like Hermione rather than kill them because they never looked directly to its eyes "The Basilisk kills people by looking at them. But no one's died – because no one looked it straight in the eye" (215). Peter Levine, a psychotraumatologist explains in his book *Waking the Tiger: Healing Trauma* (1997), that "the freeze response as "an armor against an unacceptable feeling, where the body becomes stuck in a state of immobility due to overwhelming threat or perceived threat" (44). The petrification in *the Chamber of Secrets* serves as a powerful narrative parallel to Levine's clinical understanding of trauma-induced freeze as a physical and psychological paralysis rooted in overwhelming threat. It symbolize how trauma can paralyze individuals, hindering their ability to confront or understand the source of their fear (45). Furthermore, the basilisk's connection to Slytherin's heir highlights the biases and cyclical nature of trauma

that has been handed down through generations. This peaks in Tom Riddle's manipulation of Ginny Weasley to reopen the Chamber and unleash the basilisk once again.

In *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, J.K. Rowling employs the basilisk as a powerful literary device to explore the intertwined themes of prejudice, fear, and hatred. The basilisk is portrayed as a creature that targets students born of Muggle parents and others deemed "unworthy." By mostly concealing the creature's name throughout the narrative and referring to it simply as "the monster," Rowling effectively conveys the dread of the unknown. This choice highlights how ignorance fosters mistrust and paranoia, which rapidly spread throughout Hogwarts. Through the basilisk, Rowling compels both characters and readers to confront these issues, emphasizing the importance of bravery and unity in overcoming darkness. In this way, the basilisk serves not only as a physical threat but also as a metaphor for the destructive consequences of fear and discrimination.

III.3. Trauma, Racism, and Classism: Parallels between the Real World and the Wizarding World

In *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, J.K. Rowling delves into the complexities of trauma, racism, and classism within the wizarding world, drawing clear parallels to real-world issues. According to a journal article titled 'Distinct Stratums and Distorted Society : A Study on The Socio-Economic Stratification represented in J.K. Rowling's The Harry Potter Series' (2020), the authors K. Poojaasri and S.Vanitha discuss the notion of pureblood superiority. As demonstrated by families like the Malfoys, highlights the themes of racism and discrimination that serve as a central focus of the narrative (303). The assaults on Muggle-born students and the fear surrounding the heir of Slytherin illustrate how such ideology fosters prejudice and fear. The stark contrast between the Malfoys and the Weasleys effectively displays classism; the Weasleys embody a loving yet financially

struggling working-class family that prioritizes loyalty and kindness over social status, while the Malfoys represent the affluent, elitist pureblood aristocracy, living in opulence and wielding significant social influence (304). This economic and social divide exemplifies the intersection of privilege and bigotry within the wizarding realm.

Furthermore, trauma serves as a significant theme, manifested in the pervasive danger and terror at Hogwarts during the basilisk attacks, as well as through characters like Ginny Weasley, who endures psychological anguish due to Tom Riddle's diary. Throughout the story, Harry struggles with his identity, especially upon realizing his similarities to Voldemort. Yet, Dumbledore's reminder that "it is our choices that show who we truly are" (Rowling 260) reinforces the book's message that morality and identity are defined by decisions rather than lineage or inherent abilities. By weaving these themes into *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, Rowling encourages readers to confront issues of discrimination, socioeconomic inequality, and the impact of trauma with compassion and courage, reflecting the intricate complexities of identity and social justice in the real world. Heilman supports this by stating, "Rowling's depiction of the pureblood ideology and the persecution of Muggle-borns in Chamber of Secrets serves as a clear allegory for racism and classism. The novel challenges readers to recognize systemic injustice and to respond with compassion and bravery, as embodied by characters who stand against oppression. This engagement with social justice issues reflects the complexities of identity and trauma in the real world" (52). The series helps readers understand how complicated issues like racism, classism, and trauma really are in real life.

According to Shalini and Samundeswari in their participation in the first conference on Teaching Innovations and Enhancing Learning (Arts, Science and Technology), they submitted their study about Literature as a Reflection of the Society. The notion that literature reflects society is a well-established truth. It captures both the virtues and vices of society,

serving a corrective role by highlighting societal flaws in order to prompt reflection and encourage remedies. Furthermore, literature displays the positive values and ideals of society for others to emulate. By mirroring human behavior, literature often portrays the thoughts, words, and actions of individuals within a society. Through various characters, it conveys messages aimed at educating, informing, and entertaining readers (Shalini and Samundeswari). Since no writer exists in isolation from the world, it is rare to find a piece of writing that overlooks societal attitudes, morals, and values. The writer's role is to translate the realities of their society into fiction, presenting it as a mirror for the public to examine themselves and, if necessary, make improvements. Consequently, literature not only reflects society but also serves as a corrective lens, enabling its members to recognize the need for constructive change. To understand how literature reflects society, one must closely examine a variety of literary works (Shalini and Samundeswari).

Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets by J.K Rowling is a great example of this. The series' exploration of blood status highlights the dangers and implications of genetic and racial politics. It serves as a reflection of supremacist ideologies that have historically and currently fueled discrimination. As Barrat states, "Many will recall Joe Biden referring to then-Senator Barack Obama as "the first mainstream African-American who is articulate and bright and clean and a nice-looking guy," during the 2008 US presidential campaign. The remark caused an uproar because logically, his comment implied that such qualities were not the norm. Biden caught flak for giving a backhanded compliment at best, and being a closeted racist at worst" (70). A similar attitude appears in Rowling's story as well. It is the belief of Professor Slughorn when he is sharing his memory with Harry about his mother, Lily Potter: "Your mother was Muggle-born, of course. Couldn't believe it when I found out. Thought she must have been pure blood, she was so good" (Rowling, *The Half-Blood Prince* 70).

Additionally, there are implicit parallels that resonate with real issues in both Muggle and magical societies. Lord Voldemort leads a group of pureblood wizards and witches dedicated to eliminating Muggle-born individuals and establishing a hierarchy based on magical lineage. This can be seen as a counterpoint to the series' portrayal of racial purity concepts that oppress or eliminate marginalized populations. Rowling also explicitly references instances of Nazi racial philosophy and practices. In *The Deathly Hollows*, for instance, the words "MAGIC IS MIGHT" are inscribed in towering letters at the base of a statue located within the Ministry of Magic This statue represents the values of the purebloods manifesting the superiority of genealogy and ancestry. However, Harry, as a half-blood wizard with limited knowledge of magical ancestry, needed an explanation, as he was unable to understand the statue's significance to other wizards in the magical world (Rowling 258) that is when Hermione explains:

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

This monument embodies the ideals of purebloods, underscoring the supremacy linked to ancestry and genealogy. However, the statue's significance to other wizards in the magical

realm was beyond Harry's understanding as a half-blood wizard with limited insight into magical lineage, necessitating further explanation.

Brycchan Carey, in his essay titled 'Hermione and the House-Elves Revisited: J.K. Rowling, Antislavery Campaigning, and the Politics of Potter' in the book *Reading Harry Potter Again: New Critical Essays* (2009), explores the parallels between certain political issues and the narrative of the *Harry Potter* series, particularly in how democratic societies respond to racism, elitism, and authoritarianism. He argues that Harry's personal struggle with Voldemort serves as a backdrop for this discussion. As the series progresses, the protagonists evolve beyond their school roles to engage in a larger struggle against systemic oppression. According to Carey: "The main characters in the series increasingly transition from the roles of students to key figures in a battle between advocates of equality and freedom and those who uphold an oppressive regime characterized by racial segregation and the use of indiscriminate terror to dominate their subjects" (159). Notably, in the series, very few witches or wizards remain detached from political and social matters. The exceptions are the Muggles and the Dursleys, who exist in relative apathy within their suburban setting. Carey states, "The French Revolution; the Second World War; the War on Terror: all these and more are being fought again and again in Rowling's books" (160).

Different individuals hold varying opinions regarding Muggle-born individuals. According to the Ministry of Magic, there exists a belief among some wizards and witches that all wizards are equal under the law. However, others may subconsciously regard Muggle-born people as distinct from themselves, despite exhibiting outward tolerance. Bethany Barrat in her work *The Politics of Harry Potter* (2012) highlights this issue by referencing the 2008 US presidential campaign, where Joe Biden described then-Senator Barack Obama as "the first mainstream African-American who is articulate and

bright and clean and a nice-looking guy." This comment suggested that such qualities were not the norm, resulting in considerable controversy. Biden faced criticism, with some perceiving him as a closeted racist, while others viewed it as a backhanded compliment at best (70). J.K. Rowling's narrative reflects a similar mindset. For instance, when Professor Slughorn reminisces about Harry's mother, Lily Potter, he remarks, "Your mother was Muggle-born, of course. Couldn't believe it when I found out. Thought she must have been pure blood, she was so good" (Rowling, *The Half Blood Prince* 70).

The distinction between magical bloodlines and social hierarchies within the wizarding realm highlights issues of discrimination rooted in social class and ethnicity. The hierarchy based on blood status in the wizarding community fosters elitism and a sense of superiority among witches and wizards of pure-blood lineage. As previously noted, the Blacks and Malfoys serve as prime examples of this mindset; they harbor contempt for those with impure or Muggle-born ancestry and openly promote their own lineage. Given the earlier discussion of the hierarchical structure within the wizarding world and the discriminatory practices stemming from blood status, it is reasonable to conclude that Rowling seeks to inform and educate her readers about another form of discrimination prevalent in society.

In the wizarding world, Lord Voldemort was fiercely determined to create an empire that would elevate pure-blood lineage as the sole standard. His ultimate goal was to unify the wizarding community under his worldview, driven by a desire for power and immortality. Comparisons to Nazism and Fascism can provide insight into the disparity between ideology and reality. In her essay "A Marxist Examination of J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter," Sarah Rangwala suggests that Voldemort's obsession with controlling death stemmed more from personal fear than from genuine ideological conviction, despite being couched in the rhetoric of social engineering and pure-blood superiority (133).

Understanding Voldemort's fear of death is essential to grasp this distinction. To preserve his immortality, he exploits his followers, resorts to violent acts, and instills a reign of fear. This characteristic is shared by both ideologies.

It is evident that Rowling explores themes of social hierarchy and prejudice, drawing parallels between real-world racial and genetic politics and the concept of blood status. Through the conflicts within the wizarding world, Rowling prompts readers to reflect on the importance of equality and the fight against tyranny, highlighting the dangers of supremacist ideologies and totalitarian governance.

Conclusion

This dissertation examines the significant themes of racism, classism, and trauma as they appear in the well-known children's book, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (1998) by J.K. Rowling. These topics are important because they reveal how psychological issues and societal injustices are portrayed in children's literature, which often influences young readers' perceptions of the world around them. By highlighting the story's depictions of racism, classism, and trauma, this study demonstrates how *Chamber of Secrets* addresses crucial social issues that affect many individuals, in addition to being an entertaining fantasy novel. This context explores how children's literature can both reflect and confront societal challenges.

The first chapter provides background information on children's literature, illustrating how the genre has evolved over time to include more sophisticated works, which appeal to both adults and children. It also introduces the theoretical frameworks used in the thesis—race, Marxist, and trauma theories—which assist in examining the emotional scars and social injustices shown in the book. Chapter two starts with discussing J.K. Rowling's biography. Then it applies race and Marxist theories to the text by diving into the evident prejudice between pureblood wizards and Muggle-borns, as well as the class divide between the wealthy Malfoys and the humble Weasleys. Next, it deals with the mistreatment of house-elves like Dobby. The final chapter focuses on trauma, exploring the protagonists' experiences of pain and fear and interpreting the monster as a symbol of both. Furthermore, it connects the novel's themes to contemporary issues, demonstrating how Rowling's writing uses fantasy to both reflect and critique social inequalities. Collectively, these chapters illustrate how *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* employs its magical setting to tackle significant and challenging subjects in a manner that resonates with readers of all ages.

The first chapter, titled "Trauma and Social Inequalities in Children's Literature," provides a comprehensive analysis of the development and evolution of children's literature over time, highlighting why it is an important genre for understanding significant societal issues. The chapter begins by defining children's literature and tracing its origins back to oral traditions, such as fables and fairy tales. It then evolves into a distinct genre characterized by works created specifically for young readers. Initially, these stories were designed to teach moral lessons and prepare children for life. However, as time has passed, children's literature has begun to explore more creative, realistic, and even challenging subjects. The chapter introduces the concept of "crossover literature"—books that appeal to both children and adults—and uses *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* as an example to demonstrate how such works can hold great significance for readers of all ages. This chapter highlights the themes of the dissertation dissertation — racism, classism, and trauma—and explains how these topics are increasingly being addressed in children's literature as society recognizes the importance of discussing these issues with young readers. This study employs Race theory, Marxist theory, and Trauma theory to analyze *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*. Race theory explores discrimination and social divisions; Marxist theory examines class struggles and economic inequality; and trauma theory highlights the psychological impact on characters. Together, these frameworks reveal how the novel reflects real-world issues of prejudice, hierarchy, and emotional conflict. Additionally, the chapter emphasizes that contemporary children's books are becoming more inclusive and diverse, often highlighting themes of social awareness and empathy. Overall, this chapter shows that children's literature is not only an enjoyable source of stories but also a powerful tool for educating young people about the complex social realities of the world, themselves, and others.

Chapter two begins by exploring J.K. Rowling's personal background and the motivations she had to write the *Harry Potter* series. This chapter deals with the themes of

racism and classism as depicted in *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*. Besides, it highlights how Rowling's own experiences with loss, poverty, and depression shaped the emotional depth and realism of her characters, as well as the setting of Hogwarts. Rowling effectively uses her personal challenges to create a narrative focused on themes of inequality and discrimination, which gives a sense of realism to the magical world while still preserving its fantastical elements. The chapter examines how racism is merged into the narrative, particularly through the "pure-blood" wizards' disdain for "Muggle-borns," or those wizards without magical parents. Characters like Draco Malfoy, who harshly refers to Hermione as a "Mudblood," heighten this prejudice, as do families like the Malfoys, who consider themselves superior. Though the wizarding world focuses on magical lineage rather than skin color or race, this chapter analyzes how these ideas reflect real-world racism. It also addresses classism, contrasting the wealthy, arrogant Malfoys with the kind but poor Weasleys, thereby illustrating how social status and wealth affect character interactions. Additionally, the chapter discusses the mistreatment of house-elves, such as Dobby, who are forced to serve wizarding households and have minimal rights. By examining these examples, Chapter two argues that *Chamber of Secrets* challenges readers to reflect on issues of privilege, discrimination, and justice, both within the novel and in their own lives.

Chapter three focuses on the theme of trauma and its profound impact on key characters, especially the Golden Trio (Harry, Hermione, and Ron). The chapter begins by examining how J.K. Rowling's personal experiences with trauma—such as depression and loss—influenced her writing, specifically in her portrayal of emotional suffering and resilience. The narrative then deals with how symptoms like nightmares, flashbacks, and intense fear result from Harry's traumatic experiences, which include the constant threat caused by Voldemort and the attacks linked to the Chamber of Secrets. It highlights the attack by the Basilisk within the Chamber as a significant traumatic event that combined physical

danger with long-lasting psychological effects. Ron's trauma is tied to feelings of classism and inferiority within his family and social circles, while Hermione's trauma is shown through the discrimination she faces as a Muggle-born, highlighting the racism present in the wizarding community. The chapter also explores how the Basilisk and Tom Riddle's diary serve as metaphors for trauma, fear, and emotional abuse, particularly concerning Ginny Weasley's psychological scars resulting from the diary's manipulation and control over her. Finally, the chapter shows how Rowling uses fiction to reflect the challenges people confront in society, drawing parallels between the racism, classism, and trauma depicted in the book and similar contemporary social issues. Overall, this chapter emphasizes the complex ways trauma influences character development and serves as a broader critique of societal issues.

According to this study, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* is a book that resonates with both children and adult readers, addressing challenging societal themes such as racism, classism, and trauma, as it is much more than just a fantasy adventure. Through an analysis of the book using race, Marxist, and trauma theories, the study highlights how J.K. Rowling uses the magical world to reflect societal injustices and prejudices present in the real world. The racism and classism that still exist in society are symbolized by the idea of pureblood superiority, prejudice against Muggle-born individuals, the class divide between families like the Malfoys and the Weasleys, and the mistreatment of house-elves. Furthermore, the main characters' trauma, depicted through their encounters with the Basilisk and the haunting presence of Tom Riddle's diary, highlights the psychological effects of these societal injustices. This study reveals that children's literature and crossover literature can serve as a valuable platform for exploring and challenging societal issues while evoking empathy and critical thinking among readers.

This study makes a significant contribution to the fields of children's literature and crossover literature by demonstrating that novels like *Harry Potter and the Chamber of*

Secrets address social and psychological topics that are often ignored in literature aimed at younger audiences. It positions children's literature as an important tool that can reflect contemporary issues, challenging the traditional view that it primarily serves as entertainment or moral instruction. Furthermore, this study adds to ongoing academic discussions about how popular literature shapes readers' perceptions of justice, power, and identity. By linking Rowling's fictional universe to both historical and contemporary examples of racism, classism, and trauma the study highlights the importance of children and crossover literature in discussions about social change, human rights, and mental health.

This thesis argues that trauma, racism, and classism in *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* are not merely plot devices but crucial elements that contribute to the novel's lasting effect and cultural significance. Since children's books play an important role in shaping how future generations perceive and respond to injustice and inequality, this work challenges readers, scholars, and educators to recognize the importance of examining children's literature through critical social lenses and to acknowledge crossover literature. Furthermore, the study suggests that both children's literature and crossover literature have the power to create a sense of unity and resistance to prejudice by making complex issues more accessible to readers of every age.

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Résumé

Cette thèse examine la manière dont les thèmes du racisme, du classisme et du traumatisme sont abordés dans le monde des sorciers de Harry Potter et leur impact sur des personnages tels que Harry, Hermione et Ron. Dans *Harry Potter et la Chambre des secrets* (1998) de J.K. Rowling, ces thèmes ont joué un rôle crucial dans la tournure des événements. En s'appuyant sur la théorie de la race, cette étude cherche à examiner le racisme systémique apparent dans le monde des sorciers entre les "sangs purs" et les "nés-moldus", ainsi que les préjugés à l'égard des élèves de Poudlard comme Hermione. La théorie marxiste met en évidence les divisions de classe présentes, comme le montre le contraste frappant entre les sorciers privilégiés comme les Malefoy et les moins chanceux comme les Weasley, révélant les inégalités inhérentes à la société magique. L'étude aborde également les mauvais traitements infligés aux elfes de maison. Enfin, la théorie du traumatisme explore l'impact psychologique des expériences traumatisantes sur les personnages, notamment les rencontres racistes d'Hermione, le sentiment d'infériorité de Ron et les expériences de mort imminente de Harry. Cette étude révèle que ces thèmes interconnectés influencent de manière significative le développement des personnages, les relations interpersonnelles et la dynamique sociale. Cette thèse constate que J.K. Rowling utilise le royaume magique et le monde de Harry Potter pour refléter les injustices sociétales et les préjugés présents dans le monde réel, ainsi que les difficultés psychologiques auxquelles les gens sont confrontés en raison de ces actions discriminatoires. En outre, elle révèle que la littérature pour enfants et la littérature transversale peuvent servir de plateformes précieuses pour explorer et remettre en question des questions sociétales tout en favorisant l'empathie et la pensée critique chez les lecteurs, qu'il s'agisse d'enfants ou d'adultes.

Mots-clés :

Traumatisme, racisme, classisme, inégalité, préjugés, sorcellerie, théorie marxiste, théorie raciale, théorie du traumatisme, Poudlard, littérature croisée, littérature jeunesse.

الملخص

تناقش هذه الأطروحة كيفية عرض موضوعات العنصرية والطبقية والصدمة في عالم السحرة في رواية هاري بوتر وتأثيرها على شخصيات مثل هاري وهيرميون ورون. في رواية "هاري بوتر وحجرة *الأسرار*" في عام 1998 للكاتبة ج. ك. رولينغ، لعبت هذه المواضيع دورًا حاسمًا في كيفية تطور الأحداث اللاحقة. باستخدام نظرية العرق، تسعى هذه الدراسة إلى دراسة العنصرية المنهجية الواضحة في عالم السحرة بين "ذوي الدم النقي" و"المولودين من العامة" والتحيز ضد طلاب هوجورتس مثل هيرميون. وتسلط النظرية الماركسية الضوء على الانقسامات الطبقية الموجودة، كما يظهر في التناقض الصارخ بين السحرة المحظوظين مثل آل مالفوي والأقل حظًا مثل آل ويزليز، مما يكشف عن عدم المساواة المتأصلة داخل المجتمع السحري. وتتناول الدراسة أيضًا سوء معاملة الأقزام في المنزل. وأخيرًا، تستكشف نظرية الصدمة التأثير النفسي للتجارب الصادمة على الشخصيات، بما في ذلك المواجهات العنصرية التي تعرضت لها هيرميون، وشعور رون بالدونية، وتجارب هاري التي أوشكت على قتله. تكشف هذه الدراسة أن هذه المواضيع المترابطة تؤثر بشكل كبير على تطور الشخصية والعلاقات الشخصية والديناميات الاجتماعية. وتخلص هذه الأطروحة إلى أن ج. ك. رولينغ توظف العالم السحري وعالم هاري بوتر لتعكس الظلم المجتمعي والتحيزات الموجودة في العالم الحقيقي، وكذلك المصاعب النفسية التي يواجهها الناس بسبب هذه التصرفات التمييزية. علاوة على ذلك، يكشف هذا الكتاب أن أدب الأطفال والأدب المتقاطع يمكن أن يكون بمثابة منصات قيّمة لاستكشاف القضايا المجتمعية وتحديها، مع تعزيز التعاطف والتفكير النقدي بين القراء، سواء كانوا أطفالًا أو بالغين.

الكلمات المفتاحية:

الصدمة، العنصرية، الطبقية، عدم المساواة، التحيز، السحر، النظرية الماركسية، نظرية العرق، نظرية الصدمة، هوجورتس، الأدب المتقاطع، أدب الأطفال.