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Challenging Racial Supremacy: Decoding the Racial Prejudice in the *Harry Potter* Series

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Abstract:

The paper attempts to understand the racial prejudice in the *Harry Potter* series. J.K. Rowling has depicted a fantasy world where magic and magical abilities are the ultimate source of power and hierarchy. The undesirable and despicable quest to be superior based on lineage and magical abilities reflect racism and racial attacks in the real world. Rowling intended to comment on racism and the harm it does to a society by equating the despicable attitudes in the ultimate villain and his followers. The article delineates the above and moves on to comment on Rowling's use of language. Her language reveals the inherent complex nature of racism and the article concludes that though the fantasy world is anti-racist, her use of language reveals the complexity and might even be considered racist in a way.

Keywords: Racism, Harry Potter, Rowling, pure blood, bigots, racial identifiers.

J. K. Rowling is best known as the author of the *Harry Potter* fantasy series and is a British fiction writer and film producer. Her other works include novels and a play but her international acclaim rests with the *Harry Potter* series. The *Harry Potter* series is available in adult and children's versions with its own respective book cover art. J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series was originally intended and marketed for children, but its popularity among adults led to its inclusion in a separate bestseller list by *New York Times*. "Potter-mania" has conquered the world since the first book, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, in the *Harry Potter* series. Journalists have coined the terms "Potter-mania" and "Potterism" to designate the sensational reaction caused by J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series. *Harry Potter's* success could be attributed to the main character's ability to remain humble and poignant even when his world comes crashing down and he has nothing to hold on to, except his moral compass. *Harry Potter* is a well-crafted tale slowly revealing ethical rights and wrongs allowing readers the opportunity to learn that one is responsible for the decisions one makes in their own life. It is a well-crafted modern day tale, but not coeval to the birth of a new theme because similar story lines can be found in other literary works such as: *Chronicles of Narnia* and *Lord of the Rings*. This does not denigrate the literary value of *Harry Potter*. The *Harry Potter* series is a bildungsroman in seven instalments. The book traces the adventures of the young wizards Harry Potter, Ron Weasley and Hermione Granger, who remain best friends through thick and thin. The central plot revolves around the universal theme of the fight between evil and good. Harry Potter represents the good side in the struggle against the evil wizard Lord Voldemort, who killed Harry's parents in his quest

to conquer the wizarding world, after which he seeks to rule the world where muggles or non-magical beings and other magical creatures are slaves to pureblood wizards.

In J.K Rowling's *Harry Potter* series, the readers see a fantastic, yet, deeply flawed world. While wizards would like to think themselves as cleverer than muggles (non-magical folk), they, unfortunately have not risen above one of humanity's inevitable pitfalls, racism.

This paper is an attempt at understanding the racial prejudices in the *Harry Potter* series. Racism, prejudice, and discrimination are heavy themes that run through the seven books that make up the *Harry Potter* series. Throughout the series the racial discriminating mentality is upheld by Voldemort and his supporters, the bad people, while it is denounced by each 'good' character. It is worth noting that wizards are not the only ones who have an obsession with blood and lineage. Some muggles are portrayed to be racist as any follower of Voldemort. The anti-racist good characters defeat the racist evil characters which suggest that Rowling wanted to create a work of anti-racism. The paper intends to prove that the 'world' Rowling portrays through her work is anti-racist but her use of racial identifiers reveals her racial prejudice.

The word 'race' emotionally threatens and therefore it has simply become "the word that shall not be named." The term is understood in different ways by different people that it is difficult to find a common meaning for the same word. Rowling portrays a race-blind society at Hogwarts but the hatred of the pure-bloods for the "Mudbloods" and the mistreatment towards magical creatures resonates the issue of race.

In *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, Rowling outlines the necessary details needed to understand the magical world of Harry Potter. The theme of racial prejudice is not formally introduced until *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*. Vernon Dursley's prejudice against witches and wizards and the rift caused between Harry's mother Lily and her sister foreshadows what is to come. In *Chamber of Secrets*, she lays the groundwork for a saga exploring issues of race. Young witches and wizards of mixed wizard and muggle ancestry, such as Hermione Granger, both of whose parents are muggles, and Harry himself, whose mother, Lily, was muggle-born, suffer the scorn of some Hogwarts classmates who are students belonging to Slytherin House. Ron Weasley's acceptance that many wizards are half-bloods represents the witches and wizards who do not believe in blood supremacy. Slytherin's founder, Salazar Slytherin, left Hogwarts sometime after its founding because the school's other three founders, Godric Gryffindor, Rowena Ravenclaw, and Helga Hufflepuff, rejected his proposal to admit only the children of pureblood wizarding families. "Said Slytherin, 'We'll teach those whose ancestry is purest'" (Rowling, *Order of the Phoenix* 185). It is significant that Hogwarts was built invisible to muggles in the Middle Ages because of their unpredictable behavior towards the very term 'magic'

Then, in *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, Rowling turns her attention to James and Lily Potter's Hogwarts generation and to other forms of prejudice. She moves to the larger wizarding world in *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, adding more questions

about cultural, national, and ethnic bias, raised most notably by the Quidditch World Cup and the Triwizard Tournament; in *Goblet of Fire*, she also suggests that prejudice has much darker manifestations than the mere taunting of "Mudbloods" as the harassment and abuse of muggles during the Quidditch World Cup disturbingly illustrate. A salient theme explored by Rowling in the *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* is racial purity.

This theme of discrimination is amplified in both *Goblet of Fire* and *Order of the Phoenix* in the context of Hermione's campaign on behalf of the house-elves. An insightful analysis of Rowling's treatment of the theme of enslavement and that of the theme's long presence in children's literature is in Brycchan Carey's essay "Hermione and the House-Elves: The Literary and Historical Contexts of J. K. Rowling's Antislavery Campaign" in Giselle Liza Anatol's *Reading Harry Potter: Critical Essays*. As Roni Natov observes in her essay "Harry Potter and the Extraordinariness of the Ordinary" that Hermione has the keenest sense of justice of all the Hogwarts students. Natov writes, "Even though Harry has freed Dobby . . . [.] Hermione alone understands the oppression of the house-elves, as they serve their masters, bowing and scraping, without pay". Eliza Dresang also discusses the house-elves' servitude extensively in her analysis of Hermione's characterization in "*Hermione Granger and the Heritage of Gender*" positing that Rowling's presentation of the house-elves' enslavement in both *Goblet of Fire* and *Order of the Phoenix* is complex and her attitude about the house-elves' predicament appears ambiguous. Hermione's fervour for the elves' rights is in contrast with Dumbledore's unassuming complacency about the house-elves' servitude. Dobby is an elf who is self aware and realises the perks of freedom but Winky becomes hysterical whenever she is reminded of freedom which clearly shows the behavior of slaves where they normalise their own slavery. Rowling introduces a house-elf who reflects this attitude and the most insidious form of slavery, where the victim has taken up victimization and inculcated the values of the master as his or her own even when these values uphold slavery. Kreacher, the Black family elf, who is enslaved to Sirius's mother and wanders around the decrepit mansion repeating her accusations: "Stains of dishonour, filthy half-breeds, blood-traitors, children of filth . . ." (Rowling, *Order of the Phoenix* 103). In most situations of colonialism, a form of exploitation with which the British have had ample experience, the enslaved differ in race from those who enslave them and this difference is essential to the enslavers' ability to see the indentured as "other." Thus, the theme of the house-elves' status is inextricably linked to the larger questions about race that Rowling encourages the reader to explore.

In Harry's fourth year, he encounters the adversary's force: the Death Eaters. Early in his fifth year, Harry sees how the theme of "Toujours pur", "The Noble and Most Ancient House of Black 'Toujours pur'" (Rowling, *Order of the Phoenix* 103) has played out in one pure-blooded wizarding family, and he becomes acquainted with the group that forms the crux of the resistance: the Order of the Phoenix. This group's emblem is also foreshadowed in *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, when Harry's demonstration of loyalty to his headmaster brings Dumbledore's phoenix, Fawkes, to aid the boy in fighting the basilisk. In his sixth year, he gains much more insight into the source of Voldemort's quest for power and racial purity: his own perceived inadequacy. In *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, the

racial tension is heightened as the ministry of magic itself rallies behind pure-bloods as a superior motto, "MAGIC IS MIGHT" (Rowling, *Deathly Hallows* 198).

Considering the attention Rowling devotes to this theme in books two through five, it should have come as no surprise that she entitled the sixth instalment in her series, *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*. In Book Six, Rowling indulges in delineating the background of racism in Lord Voldemort. She traces the journey of Lord Voldemort from Tom Marvolo Riddle and the reader wonders whether loathing of others is rooted in loathing of oneself. Riddle is the illegitimate son of a muggle nobleman Tom Riddle and a pure-blooded witch Merope Gaunt who had bewitched the former into loving her. When Merope ceases to use magic on her husband he disowns her and Riddle without any remorse. Riddle's maternal grandfather, Marvolo Gaunt, is the sort of man who greets a Ministry of Magic official with the question, "Are you pure-blood?" (Rowling, *Half-Blood Prince* 203) and spares no word while articulating his supremacist stance: "My daughter — pure-blooded descendant of Salazar Slytherin — hankering after a filthy, dirt-veined Muggle? . . . You disgusting little Squib, you filthy little blood traitor!" (Rowling, *Half Blood Prince* 210).

Snape, a half-blood wizard, is head of the house Slytherin, known for its racial purism, and Lord Voldemort belonged to the same house while he was a student at Hogwarts. The Sorting Hat reminds that when Hogwarts' house identities were established at the time of the school's founding, Slytherin preferred students from pure-blooded families, Gryffindor chose the courageous, Ravenclaw recruited the brightest students, and Hufflepuff took anyone at all. The hat sings, "Said Hufflepuff, 'I'll teach the lot, and treat them just the same'" (Rowling, *Order of the Phoenix* 205). The students in the Slytherin house are generally construed as pure-blood expounders throughout the series and under the regime of the death-eaters, they take their hatred to a new level of persecution. It is curious that Rowling tries to narrow down the pure-blood mania to students and alumni of Slytherin house till the last war, during which some of the students of the house stay with Harry to fight by side.

Rowling constructs a universe in which the notion of adequacy is determined by a person's and that person's ancestors' inherent ability to do magic. It might be racism, but one can draw parallel between this system and caste system or racism. Rowling, through the character of Albus Dumbledore, repeatedly opposes this system. After Harry defeats Voldemort and the basilisk in the *Chamber of Secrets*, his headmaster reminds him: "It is our choices, Harry, that show what we really are, far more than our abilities" (Rowling, *Chamber of Secrets* 333). And when Dumbledore suggests in *The Goblet of Fire* that Minister of Magic, Cornelius Fudge, send envoys to the giants, and Fudge objects based on the common prejudice against giants, Dumbledore retorts: "You place too much importance, and you always have done, on the so-called purity of blood! You fail to recognize that it matters not what someone is born, but what they [sic] grow to be!" (Rowling, *Goblet of Fire* 708). Thus the conundrum of what one does or which ability he or she has determines his worth is a central structure in the wizarding world,

The peripheral racial conflict in the *Harry Potter* series arises from the situations that

juxtapose the Muggles, or non-magic people, and the wizarding community. From the beginning, majority of the muggles have been portrayed in an unfavourable light for e.g. the Dursleys, Harry Potter's disagreeable guardians. McGonagall's prejudice against the Dursley's because of their 'otherness', is evident from her statement: "you couldn't find two people who are less like us" (Rowling, *Philosopher's Stone* 15). There are some wizards who do not necessarily hate or despise muggles, but rather are fascinated by the muggle's lack of intelligence; that is, their lack of wizarding intelligence. Indeed, some wizards prefer to study muggles, "how they are not so different..." (Rowling, *Order of the Phoenix* 17) similar to how gorillas are studied by primatologists, and examine their inferior intelligence and ability to cope within their environment. Mr. Weasley likes to study the muggles and displays a condescending attitude. His wonder at the way muggles live without magic does not exhibit extreme form of prejudice but is in a way stereotyping. Indeed, Mr. Weasley's job at the Ministry of Magic is in The Misuse of Muggle Artifacts Office, protecting muggles from artifacts that have been bewitched by wizards to cause harm or mischief, also known as 'Muggle-baiting'. An extreme form muggle-baiting carried out by the death eaters is narrated in Book IV, *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*. This incident forebodes the worse forms of racism and racial harassment that is to follow in the later books. Death Eaters, followers of Lord Voldemort, publicly use magic to harass a family of muggles, suspending them in the air and throwing them around like rag dolls. The other group of wizards and their attitude towards the death eater's actions can be condensed in Ron Weasley comment, "that's sick", (Rowling, *Goblet of Fire* 108). This incident encapsulates the two sides of racism and hierarchy which are at combat throughout the series.

Cynics would say it is human nature to place those who harbour prejudices into positions of power; in fact, from this point of view, it is not unfair to say that prejudice is a requirement of power. In other words, the structure of power demands that someone or some group be considered less superior than another. Therefore, the Death Eaters, wield power when they endanger the muggles. The danger of this combination, power and violence, is reminiscent of past dictatorial regimes, such as that of Adolf Hitler. Another instance of Hitler déjà vu arises with the goblins with hooked noses resembling stereotypes of Jewish people with their obsession over money, mysteriously shifting relationships with the power structure and the increasing emphasis on blood purity in the later books of the *Harry Potter* series.

Elaine Ostry, in her critical article "Accepting Mudbloods: The Ambivalent Social Vision in J.K. Rowling's Fairy Tales", maintains that Rowling teaches a lesson that people should be judged "by their merits, actions, and morals rather than their race" (qtd. in Vollmer 2). Although Rowling may demonstrate this ideal in her characterization of Harry and his friends, it is nonetheless an idealistic perception; thus, Rowling also includes familiar controversial issues such as racism and violence. *Harry Potter* does not simply proffer portal to a fantasy world but the world is very much realistic in its account of human relations, emotions and experiences. Harry is the quintessential epitome of modern ideals, who judges a person solely based on his or her actions, merits and choices, and is juxtaposed with the villain and his sect who conjectures that pure-blood wizards are born with the right to rule

and therefore superior to anyone else without doubt. The position of privilege and upper-class mentality is used without reluctance by the Malfoy family. The outspoken Malfoy who would go to any extent to degrade Hermione, a muggle born, a fellow student of his class, whom he loathes because of her apparent brilliance and her muggle parents calls out ,“No one asked your opinion, you filthy little Mudblood!” without any hesitation (Rowling, *Chamber of Secrets* 86).

From this perspective, there is a clear caste system or race system at work in the wizarding world of Harry Potter. The purebloods, families who descend from long lines of witches and wizards occupy the zenith below to which there are the half-bloods who have one wizard or witch parent like Hagrid or Fleur Delacour. The lowest dominion is inhabited by muggle-born witch or wizard and the Squib. Hermione Granger is the most well-known example of a witch who is of muggle origin, and she is one of the best at witchery in her year. On the other hand, squibs have no magical ability even when born to a wizard family, like Argus Filch, caretaker at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. In addition to muggle-born wizards and squibs, there are “blood traitors,” pure-blood wizards, such as the Weasleys, who support muggle-born witches and wizards like Hermione.

The “blood battles” in the stories and its hypocrisy is revealed when one considers the fact that Lord Voldemort himself is a half-blood. However, while still living under the name Tom Riddle, Voldemort brutally murdered his living muggle relatives, shielding the fact that he is a half-blood. One can argue that Voldemort’s followers are not aware of his questionable background. On the other hand, they may choose only to see the fact that he is a descendant of the great Salazar Slytherin, co-founder of Hogwarts and supporter of a pure-blood society. It is also possible that by sacrificing his muggle lineage, he believes that he has cleansed himself of the impure blood and thereby became a pure blood. To assume his new role, Tom Riddle sheds his name and takes on the pseudonym Lord Voldemort.

Voldemort and his Death Eater’s are in pursuit of “racial purity.” This certainly seems likely when, in Book V, *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, Sirius Black, Harry’s godfather and a pure-blood wizard, explains to Harry the reason why most of the Black family supported Voldemort. Sirius says that they thought Voldemort had the right idea in getting rid of muggle-borns and having purebloods in charge. While Voldemort’s policies may clearly parallel Hitler’s in terms of racism, violence, and power, the termination of the Muggle race, by a Holocaust, is not Voldemort’s ultimate goal. Voldemort realizes, like many other wizards, that there are not enough purebloods in existence to purify the wizarding race and that to exercise his powers he needs people. As Hermione points out that, the Death Eaters can’t all be pure-blood because there aren’t enough pure-blood wizards left. (qtd. in Vollmer 3) Sirius echoes this point in Book V, saying that the pure-blood families are all interrelated. Dumbledore points out in Book VI that Voldemort would not be satiated with the extermination of muggle-borns, and that he is interested in his power to frighten, to punish, to control (qtd. in Vollmer 3). Voldemort is similar to Hitler, but as the ultimate villain, he is a combination of historically relevant political and social evils.

Good characters decries stereotyping and prejudice of which Dumbledore is the best example. Dumbledore hires Hagrid, the half-giant, to teach at Hogwarts, and when Rita Skeeter besmirch his half-blood status, Dumbledore, along with Harry, Ron, and Hermione, boosts his morale, proscribing blood status. Muggles are also shown to be prone to racism like Marge Dursley who believes breeding and targeted killing ensure purity.

Racism in the real British society is more complicated. Some engage in violent acts calling out derogatory names and engage in physical acts intended to hurt non-whites. Good people, by being indifferent to such attitudes or by staying away from movements that empower the victims is being part of subtle racism without even realizing it. Harry's and Ron's indifference to house-elf rights and the Society for the Promotion of Elfish Welfare (S.P.E.W.) is a good example. Although Harry frees Dobby and neither Harry nor Ron engages in explicitly racist behavior, their lack of support for S.P.E.W can be interpreted as an implicit endorsement of elf inferiority, especially given their propensity for actively confronting perceived injustice.

In *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, Sirius Black, whose rejection of his family's obsession with pure blood caused him to run away at age sixteen and his family to disown him and burn his name off the family tapestry, was unable to see the elves as anything other than servants. But he is blind to his own prejudices as he makes a daring remark, "If you want to know what a man's like, take a good look at how he treats his inferiors, not his equals"(Rowling, *Goblet of Fire* 446).The Weasleys, despite Sirius's observation that they are the "prototypical blood traitors" (Rowling, *Order of the Phoenix* 113) for the pure bloods in fact, of all the positive characters, Ron seems to be the least interested in house-elf rights and the least sensitive to their plight. Ron does not mind comparing their homework load to the house elves work schedule: "How dare you!" he says. "We've been working like House-elves here" (Rowling, *Goblet of Fire* 223). Hermione criticizes this insensitivity. Although it may be tempting to dismiss the comment as a meaningless joke, humor can often provide important insight into people's belief systems. Hermione rightfully raises her eyebrow at the comment.

The racial outlook on the literal level is that of open-mindedness. The author has intended to comment on race by focusing on blood status and house-elf rights. Rowling tries to disengage race system by portraying wizards of diverse origins but ends up picking them out using racial identifiers to highlight the presence of diversity. At first glance, the *Harry Potter* universe seems to have little racial tension than what the racial metaphors intended to provide. There are a handful of characters of color, including Gryffindors Lee Jordan, Dean Thomas, Angelina Johnson, and Parvati Patil, as well as Harry's first romantic interest Cho Chang. Angelina Johnson is described as "a tall black girl with long, braided hair" (Rowling, *Order of the Phoenix* 224), Dean Thomas as "a Black boy even taller than Ron" (Rowling, *Philosopher's Stone* 122), Kingsley Shacklebolt is described as "the tall black wizard"(Rowling, *Order of the Phoenix* 49) and is the only character of color to be introduced who is in a respectable societal and official position. Rowling seems to deliberately give racial status about as much attention as she does hair color. The white

characters are limned devoid of racial markers whereas the non-white characters are racially discerned. Only the attributes different from being white are identified “A pink-faced girl with blonde pigtails stumbled out of line” (Rowling, *Philosopher’s Stone* 89). Whiteness is a privilege and it can be left without identification and never has to speak its name and never has to acknowledge its role. But, like Lord Voldemort’s name, the omission of the “Race That Shall Not Be Named” signifies more than merely the absence of necessity but the concept of normality. Naming “whiteness” is not a necessity because whiteness is considered normal.

The racial identifiers seem to exist as a technique to present racially diverse characters and race in the normal context has no meaning in the magical universe. This racial utopia has its own allegorical racism directed against Muggles, half-bloods and other magical creatures. In the real world, there is little agreement about how a racial utopia would function as race itself is a complex concept. The racial utopia of the *Harry Potter* series seems to reflect neo-conservative ideology. Rowling racially identifies certain characters but the racial profile is ignored for the remainder of the series and so are their struggles because of the same. This behavior is characteristic of contemporary neo-conservative racial ideology.

According to this ideology, race is assumed socially constructed and destiny decided by one’s own actions and choices. “It is our choices, Harry, that show what we truly are, far more than our abilities,” says Dumbledore (Rowling, *Chamber of Secrets* 333), who later reminds Fudge, the Minister of Magic, that what people grow to be is much more important than what they were when they were born (Rowling, *Goblet of Fire* 708). For neo-conservatives race does not account for the worth of a person as paradoxically humans are all same yet each individual is unique. The color-blind ideal appears reasonable, yet, critics reject it for several reasons. This ideal ignores institutional and interpersonal racism and at worst maintains the racial hierarchy.

One of the characteristics of white privilege is that the colored stays invisible. The series is mostly narrated by an omnipresent white narrator, who notices race, but fails to explore its impact and therefore the reality experienced by the non-white characters remain ambiguous. Critics of color-blindness expostulate that in order to be anti-racist, it is first necessary to see race.

Neoconservatives notice race but they refuse to admit the same. Rowling chooses to notice race and then leaves out the racial profiling for the rest of the series. She describes Dean Thomas as “A black boy even taller than Ron” (Rowling, *Philosopher’s Stone* 122). It is generally assumed that one chooses to comment on something that’s considered important and through this comment, Rowling wishes for us to notice three important details: he is black, he is a male, and he is tall. The word black is problematic and is often discerned as a racial category. The fact that Rowling validating and acknowledging race and then ignoring the same supports the suggestion that Rowling does in fact exhibit neoconservative ideology.

By describing Dean in this very short phrase as being “even taller than Ron,” Rowling

probably unconsciously communicates that “blackness” can be understood only by somehow relating it to whiteness. In the past, “white” norms were considered to be the paradigm against which every other behavior was measured. “For example, Black soldiers were judged intellectually inferior when during World War I, they scored lower than white soldiers on a standardized test of intelligence that contained many culturally-loaded questions that Blacks educated in the Jim Crow South were much less likely to answer correctly.” (Lyubansky). Rowling by describing Dean’s height as relative to Ron’s could be propagating the very same idea of white-centric standard.

The skeptic will dismiss such a reading of “an innocent description,” but Rowling’s portrayal of race is problematic considering the demographics of contemporary England. In the series, characters of color barely seem to exist and none occupy positions of authority. Cho Chang, Harry’s first romantic interest at Hogwarts is the only character of color who has a heart and soul with considerable implications in the progression of Harry’s emotional journey. Even the progressive Hogwarts appear to lack diversity. Kingsley Shacklebolt might be considered an exception as he becomes temporary Minister of Magic after the final war. It is curious that even the first five installments of the *Harry Potter* movie series, the cast seriously lack people of color and their speaking time in the movies, very much controversial. Rowling has worked for Amnesty International and clearly intended to create a multicultural society in which cultural differences, while generally unnoticed, are celebrated when the occasion permits for e.g., Seamus Finnigan’s shamrock-covered tent and other decorations at the Quidditch World Cup. Mrs. Finnigan’s question “Why shouldn’t we show our colours?” (Rowling, *Goblet of Fire* 76) is a question to the color-blind society. Rowling intended to comment on race by focusing on blood status and house-elf rights and by providing racial metaphors. Her treatment of these topics provides ample opportunity to examine both contemporary and historical race relations.

A parallel may be drawn between the purist attitude of some wizards treating half-bloods and muggles as second-class citizens and the oppression of people of color in the British society in its history and contemporary situation. Racist attitude is best personified by the scream emanating from the portrait of Sirius’s mother: “Filth! Scum! By-products of dirt and vileness! Half-breeds, mutants, freaks, begone from this place! How dare you befoul the house of my fathers. . . . Yooou!” she howled, her eyes popping at the sight of the man [Sirius]. Blood traitor, abomination, shame of my flesh” (Rowling, *Order of the Phoenix* 78).

Harry and Ron possess moral compasses which point in the right direction but, their attitudes to certain types of oppression seem to be narrow-minded. This holds true of Rowling, who fashioned a fictional world of anti-racism but lacked the racial sensitivity to bring in diversity in the allegorical world of characters which mirrors the real English society. Mendlesohn interprets Rowling’s fictional world as a liberal social system “where differences are accepted but we all know who is inferior to whom and treat them nicely because they are inferior” (Rana 46).

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