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Prejudice and Violence in the Potterverse

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Introduction

Fantasy is an intriguing genre; Rowling’s Harry Potter Series is a culmination of many genres ranging from detective fiction to quest romance and portal fantasy. As James puts it, “Fantasy literature has proven tremendously difficult to pin down. Many major theorists in the field – Tzvetan Todorov, Rosemary Jackson, Kathryn Hume, W. R. Irwin and Colin Manlove – all agree that fantasy is about the construction of the impossible . . . .” (James and Mendlesohn 1)

Brian Stableford defines Fantasy as follows:

Fantasy is the faculty by which simulacra of sensible objects can be reproduced in the mind: the process of imagination. What we generally mean when we speak of “a fantasy” in psychological terms is, however, derived from an exclusive rather than an inclusive definition of the term. The difference between mental images of objects and the objects themselves is dramatically emphasized by the fact that mental images can be formulated for which no actual equivalents exist; it is these images that first spring to mind in association with the idea of fantasy, because they represent fantasy at its purest. (Stableford xxxvii)

In the Harry Potter universe contrived by famed Fantasy author J. K. Rowling uses the simulacra of objects like wands, brooms, etc.; and sets the action to take place in a magically charged portal. The magical folk live in isolation, away from the muggle population. The wizards, who are swept off to the periphery, feel threatened by muggles, due to their majority.
Many wizards marry magical people for keeping their bloodline pure (magical on both sides). Many pure-blooded wizarding families, with magical blood and prejudice against muggle-borns, hate people who come from muggle families with no magical relations.

The Magical population mistreats muggles:

Wizards see muggles as enemies, owing to poor connections between the two groups, and probably due to the International Statute of Secrecy, which dictates magical folks to conceal their homes and live on the fringes. It is, of course, a mistake on the part of the magical parents to instill in the children a sort of unkind and malevolent attitude towards muggle-borns, half-bloods, etc. The whole concept of blood purity itself is racist in nature and therefore, not palatable. It evokes ire and distrust in victims and a sense of superiority coupled with monstrosity in the perpetrator. The Malfoy and Black family treat their household help (the house elves) terribly; they are spoken to discourteously by almost everybody, treated as second-rate citizens and violence is meted out to them at every possible occasion. They also look down on their muggle counterparts and insult them occasionally.

Lucius Malfoy and the other Death Eaters torture the hosting Muggle family (that owns the plot) after the Quidditch World Cup out of spite and meanness; as the muggles cannot fight back, being unable to perform magic. The Death Eaters taunt them and hurt them, but the crowd does not do anything to help them, as they are only keen to run away in fear. Only the Ministry officials try to take control the situation, put the violence in check and reinstate peace. This is a matter of shame to the entire wizarding population because one of their celebrations of peaceful gathering to enjoy sport is disrupted despite prior planning and attempts to maintain peace and calm.

The Muggles are Apprehensive about Witchcraft/ Wizardry:

The muggles are a completely different story, because most of them are unaware of the existence of the wizards. And those who know about muggles remain tight-lipped, be it commoners like the Dursley family or a powerful person, like the Prime Minister. The Dursleys have this fear of being connected to wizards, who are like criminals in their eyes. The Prime Minister is weary of being tagged a madman by his opponents in case he opens up about wizards. The Muggle Prime Minister is present in the opening chapter (entitled ‘The Other Prime Minister’) of Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince, which is ironic as magic is technically the ‘other’ in contrast to Muggles, who form the majority. The Prime Minister is annoyed at Fudge because he visits him only with bad news.( Half-Blood Prince 2-3) The Dursleys hate everything magical and “unDursleyish” (Philosopher’s Stone 7), whereas the Prime Minister is apprehensive of them, as he knows that wizards are capable of much destruction and harm (Half-Blood Prince 2-3). Unlike the above outlooks, the Grangers are excited about magic, the fact that Hermione is uniquely gifted with it. They trust and respect the wizards. Hence, readers can observe that there are a very few muggles who tolerate and respect it.
The Harry Potter Series as a Quest Fantasy:

The Harry Potter Series is a Quest romance where Harry has to accomplish certain tasks every year and finally shoulders the responsibility of ridding the Magical world of the evil Voldemort. The following incentive gives readers a better understanding of why the form is employed by Rowling:

In being taken to the wizarding school of Hogwarts, a place impenetrable to Muggles, Harry is effectively transported to another world, with its own customs and history. In the series’ early books portal fantasy is the dominant mode, and the chapters set outside Hogwarts (generally dealing in Dahl-esque fashion with Harry’s repressive foster-family) serve primarily as the school’s unattractive foil. As the series progresses, Rowling emphasizes the ways in which magical and Muggle communities interpenetrate, and the extent to which events in one have important effects on the other. (James and Mendlesohn 233)

Harry gains a comprehension of his personality by having a place at a School which houses people like him, gifted and ready to explore their latent talents. It makes him stronger as he is a different person when he goes home. He learns to stand up for others and himself through this process.

Harry is a Victim of Violence Prior to Becoming the Champion for Emancipation:

Harry undergoes lots of domestic violence at the hands of his aunt and uncle (who happen to be muggles), because he is different, a wizard, an abnormality in their world. They treat him ill, and do not feed him properly, as well. He lives in a cupboard, is underfed and wears hand-me-downs: “Perhaps it had something to do with living in a dark cupboard, but Harry had always been small and skinny for his age. He looked even smaller and skinnier than he really was because all he had to wear were old clothes of Dudley's . . .” (Philosopher’s Stone 20)

Their meanness and vengeful attitude to his questions and doubts impairs his self-confidence initially. His aunt shuts him up when he tries to ask questions, whereas his uncle threatens him for petty issues. The first ever question Harry remembers asking his aunt was about how he got his scar and she replies as follows: “In the car crash when your parents died,” she had said. “And don't ask questions.” Even in this reply, the former part is a lie, because the Potters were murdered by the antagonist Voldemort; and the latter part is offensive and saddening. Harry is treated like a servant and no attention is given to his suffering. The problem is that kids do not learn if they do not question. Harry teaches himself the wisdom that ostracized people learn: to stay out of trouble. But he is great at observing and makes dependable decisions and choices.

Dudley, Harry’s cousin, is his foil in the initial chapters: they are contrasted heavily, both in bulk and brains. Dudley bullies Harry throughout his childhood and makes sure he is miserable. He hurts Harry physically and makes sure he does not have friends. “Dudley's favorite
punching bag was Harry, but he couldn't often catch him. Harry didn't look it, but he was very fast.” (Philosopher’s Stone 20) He becomes adept at escaping when Dudley tries to hunt down or uncle Vernon is out to get him. Harry, therefore, learns to be independent, decisive and kind; as he is deprived of all these things before he steps out of Privet Drive.

The Dursleys make sure they hurt him because they want to thwart the magic in Harry, they think of keeping him at Privet Drive by exerting force. They always prevent him from expressing himself, and he is hardly allowed to have an opinion. They make sure to put him down regularly, below is an instance where they blame him and do not spare acts which are out of his control (like his hair growing back rapidly):

“Comb your hair!” he barked, by way of a morning greeting.

About once a week, Uncle Vernon looked over the top of his newspaper and shouted that Harry needed a haircut. Harry must have had more haircuts than the rest of the boys in his class put together, but it made no difference, his hair simply grew that way -all over the place. (Philosopher’s Stone 20-21)

They keep him detained at Mrs. Figg’s home, because they see him as an unnecessary addition on holidays or fun trips. Though Aunt Petunia is related to him by blood, she never shows an inkling of love for him. She only offers him lodging (in the broom/ umbrella cupboard) and rationed leftovers. Harry is abused by his muggle kin, who imprison him and nearly starve him. In his second year, he is yanked away from his aunt’s home by the Weasley twins and Ron using an illegal car.

The only time Harry acknowledges that he feels kinship with Petunia is when she understands the weight of Voldemort coming back to power again:

And all of a sudden, for the very first time in his life, Harry fully appreciated that Aunt Petunia was his mother’s sister . . . . All he knew was that he was not the only person in the room who had an inkling of what Lord Voldemort being back might mean. Aunt Petunia had never in her life looked at him like that before. Her large, pale eyes (so unlike her sister’s) were not narrowed in dislike or anger: They were wide and fearful. The furious pretense that Aunt Petunia had maintained all Harry’s life — that there was no magic and no world other than the world she inhabited with Uncle Vernon — seemed to have fallen away. (OP 38)

Young Dudley gives him a hard time because his parents do not teach him either to respect or to care for another person, especially one who is unwanted in their home. Thankfully, Dudley grows up to become a better person than his parents, because he understands that Harry is trying to help. Harry saves him from the dementors, and tries to secure them a safe spot when Voldemort gains power. Dudley tries to make up before Harry leaves home for good. He asks Harry to join them. (Deathly Hallows 21)
Harry is ostracized and bullied as a youngster, so he never does that to anyone. Though he is young, he responds in a surprisingly mature way. He even takes Snape’s side when he sees that his father James shames him in public in the penseive. The penseive is Rowling’s own addition to the magical plethora; this contraption allows the user to extract a certain memory from their mind and view it at their leisure. Dumbledore and Severus use them to examine their past recollections or mistakes mostly.

**Adulting and Conditioning**

Harry, as the eponymous hero, is the central character, the growth of whose character is the focus in the narrative. The series is a Bildungsroman that traces his development, as he finds his place in the society and builds a life on his own, exploiting his strengths. This view talks about parenting and identity-building in the plot:

J. K. Rowling, through her imaginary world, supplements our empirical psychological knowledge about parenting. She also gets under the skin of our defences, drawing the reader into identification with Harry and his struggles to find safety and care. This is achieved through engagement with an enjoyable narrative and the device of metaphor. At one level, the stories might be seen as Harry’s journey to find himself and to test his strength in adversity, a bit like the knights of old and other adventure story heroes. (Seden 297)

Harry has no one looking out for him at the start of his story, though he makes good friends as he matures. Hermione is a target of the rebuttals of Malfoy and other prejudiced people who look down on the likes of her. Harry and Ron support her throughout, along with Hagrid and the other grown-ups who are anti-racist. But, it all boils down to company that one keeps. Harry, Hermione and Ron turn out the way they are owing to the kind of people they look up to – Dumbledore, Hagrid, McGonagall, Lupin, Tonks, Kingsley, Sirius, etc. In the names listed, at least three of the inspiring role-models belong to the periphery or are outsiders. Hagrid is a half-giant, Lupin is a werewolf who tames himself and stays safe on full moon nights, Sirius is a fugitive – though he is punished for crimes committed by another, Tonks is quirky and is happy as her weird self. Therefore, the protagonist trio gives more importance to mettle and ethics than connections and blood-purity.

As opposed to the leading trio, Draco Malfoy looks up to his father, whom he emulates devotedly. The circle of adults he is close to is not averse to racial prejudice and obsession with blood-purity. He is taught by his parents, imprisoned aunt, peer group, etc., to treat elves and other-than-pure-bloods as lowly breeds. He is arrogant to the Hippogriff Buckbeak and tries to get her executed instead of accepting his mistake. He is obnoxiously pampered and tries to make the best out his privileged status.

Malfoy soon wants to be a Death Eater by the time Voldemort comes back to power for the second time, but he understands the gravity of the situation only much later. He somehow gets
into a horrendous mess, due to his father’s misgivings and wrong-doings for which Voldemort plans to punish the only son. Once in the lap of violence and murder though, Draco understands that it is not the place for him. Therefore, he tries to stay out of the mayhem and insanity, but he is in the vice-grip of Voldemort, because his family is threatened, his father’s wand is detained by Voldemort and their manor home becomes the headquarters of the Death Eaters.

But his remourse carries him a long way into the future, in the sense that he refuses to identify his classmates who are on the run, rescuing them in the process. So, once he grows to think for himself, he does discern right from wrong and makes the right choice. Though he lays in wait for Harry and co. to show up at the Room of Requirement, it is his pal who sets the fiendfire going. It luckily transpires into a blessing in disguise.

**Friends and Enemies for life:**

Malfoy is the first classmate that Harry meets, but Harry does not like him, as he resembles Dudley in his bullying and standoffish attitude. Though he extends a hand of friendship on the Hogwarts express, it is soon followed by a threat aiming at Harry and Ronald Weasley’s families, unraveling his personality and upbringing. But Harry and Ron become best friends due to this attitude of Malfoy’s. Crabbe and Goyle are Malfoy’s sidekicks; who keep supporting him in all his activities.

Towards the end of the first installment, Harry is the only one who experiences physical violence, though he is underage – a mere eleven at this point of time – when he confronts Lord Voldemort who is a mature and skilled wizard. Fate aids Harry in escaping, though his encounter is facilitated with his friends’ intelligence and spontaneity. Harry understands that Lord Voldemort is a master-manipulator with zero sense of propriety or guilt as he does not bat an eyelid before hurting or killing an innocent, albeit an amateur. So, their personalities are built as antithetical in nature, with Harry being the genuine and kind person as opposed to Voldemort whose only aim is to achieve ends without second thought to the means.

Voldemort is unapologetic about kidnapping, blackmailing, spilling blood, torturing, and killing other people. His aim is to get rid of the muggle-born population as he sees them as a threat to the power game initiated by his ancestor Salazar Slytherin, though he himself is not a pure-blood. Salazar Slytherin is one of the four founding fathers of Hogwarts School, who deserts his friends because they want to teach muggle-born kids who are gifted with magic. Slytherin wants to teach only the pure-bloods as he does not want to share the gift of magic with everyone. Voldemort is a half-blood, inheriting Slytherin’s legacy from his mother Merope’s side though he takes after his father’s good looks. But killing people and performing sinful magic deteriorate his chiseled looks and increase his depravity.

In Harry’s second year at Hogwarts the Chamber of Secrets opens and all the muggle-borns are threatened, because the monster within the eponymous Chamber is fatal for them, as they are considered the enemies of the heir of Slytherin. Draco Malfoy knows this piece of
information; therefore, he tries to bully them with intimidating remarks. Draco’s father (Lucius) plants a diary that had belonged to young Voldemort (who went by Tom Riddle at Hogwarts) in Ginny Weasley’s books; this diary is the key to the Chamber of Secrets. Lucius easily gets into a fistfight with Arthur by insulting his family, status and poverty: this is another important occurrence, as violence is easily elicited from an innocent and otherwise calm person like Arthur, especially when Lucius targets the Grangers (the muggles parents of Hermione) and makes racist comments.

Later during the school year, students watch the snake’s reaction to Harry during the commencement of the dueling club and assume that he is the heir of Slytherin because he is a Parselmouth. There are many occurrences of petrification in this book, where humans, animals and ghosts alike are rendered speechless and immobile. Only Hermione guesses what lay waiting in the Chamber, she gives them the cue by holding on to the paper having the details of the Basilisk. Readers see that Voldemort has killed Myrtle while at school and leaves an implement to further his plan once he graduates in with the diary, which is a relic that acts sympathetic, but gnaws on the victim’s mind and fears, to manipulate them for doing his bidding. It operates exactly like Voldemort.

Dobby gives readers the first glimpse at the elf race, very unlike the majestic ones readers meet in *The Hobbit* and other high fantasy tales, but a lowly creature with rag clothing, masochistic attitude and a penchant to wail at the hint of betrayal of its master/family. He keeps insisting that Harry should not come to Hogwarts, but does not divulge the reason. But once Harry saves Hogwarts from the impending threat, Dobby hints that Lucius is behind the ethnic cleansing plan, by gesturing that the diary was in Lucius’s possession previously. Using a little trick Harry frees Dobby from the Malfoys, earning himself a trustworthy friend and companion.

It is Dobby that helps Harry in many instances afterward, eventually becoming a martyr to save him and his friends. Harry is deeply hurt and moved at this display of gratefulness and loyalty, but he never treats Dobby any lesser than a human, as Griphook observes in the *Deathly Hallows*. Dobby confesses to Harry that the house-elves have had an awful time during Voldemort’s reign; this could be due to the fact that they are dependent on orders given at home and also because they do not carry wands to protect themselves.

In the *Prisoner of Azkaban*, Harry is badmouthed by Aunt Marge, Uncle Vernon’s sister, who hates him. She keeps insulting Harry’s mother, which earns his ire. He magically enlarges her without using his wand and exits the home. Though Harry needs to be expelled for using magic (though without a wand), he is excused because he is a target of fugitive. The Dursleys do not hit him once they come to know that he is a wizard, this is because of the fear that they have for the magical population and magic as such.

When Sirius explains to Harry as to how he escaped prison, he describes the kind of treatment he receives there. Imprisoned magical folk do not interact with each other as they are placed in
separate cells, the prison guards are not even human, and they belong to the dementor race. The dementors are soulless beings that hover around the prison, they are capable of sucking out a human’s soul, and they thrive on despair and sadness. They also keep their surroundings cold, as they are embodiments of grief. The only antidote to the dementors, that can expel them, is a charm called the ‘Patronus’, this requires its conjurer to reminisce a happy memory. This mechanism is not as simple as it sounds, because it is difficult to remember happy moments in their presence as they drain out happiness, which is equivalent to food for them. Sirius is seen as the fugitive who is wrongly accused of crime, and is imprisoned because he is at the wrong place at the wrong time.

While confessing to Harry that he ran from home at sixteen, Sirius explains how the Black household treated him terribly for being an odd entity. They did not ever understand why he was not into the class and racist ideals they embraced. He is the only Gryffindor in a house full of Slytherins, therefore he is lonely, and flees from home only to settle at James Potter’s home. This attests the struggle of children who condone the conditioning prevalent at home and stand up for their ideals, though they are put down or threatened. Sirius’s mother and his entire family (including the house-elf, Kreacher) prefer his brother (Regulus) to him. Therefore, he is an isolated person, disowned at his own home, and is made to feel discarded. This explains why he puts spells on his muggle posters in his bedroom, which is decorated with Gryffindor colours and memorabilia. Therefore, prejudices harm parent-children relationships too, rendering them uncomfortable and lonely at their own homes. Sirius turns out to be a stubborn though kind-hearted person, but he does enjoy bullying people, which might be due to the standoffishness that he groomed in himself as defence-mechanism.

In the Goblet of Fire the International Quidditch Tournament is conducted in Britain where the Ministry of Magic takes the responsibility of arrangements and security, but fails miserably. Though the International Quidditch Tournament is an arena for meeting grounds for people from many countries and cultures, it ends with the violent activities of Death Eaters who torture a muggle family. Also for the Triwizard Tournament there is a lot of malpractice and insecurity.

There are orchestrations planned and executed in order to coordinate violent attacks on muggles during the Quidditch match and on Harry in the Triwizard Tournament respectively. Cedric Diggory is killed off because he is not required at the graveyard where Voldemort summons his followers. Bertha Jorkins is trapped, kidnapped and killed by Peter Pettigrew after being used for information on the Triwizard Tournament. A wide range of creatures and races are seen by readers in this book, ranging from Merpeople to Veelas. Fleur is a part-Veela, getting her inheritance from her grandmother. She is treated ill because of her legacy and being extremely beautiful. Even Hermione and Ginny dislike her attitude, Molly loathes her ways, but once she proves to love Bill unconditionally, they treat her decent.
In the *Order of the Phoenix* the dementors are used by Umbridge to threaten Harry and his cousin Dudley, so that she would expel him from Hogwarts for repelling them, as no one sees them apart from the young boys. Mrs. Figg saves the day by being a witness to the Course trying Harry. Umbridge goes to greater lengths as the book progresses; she punishes many wrong-doers, who do not accept her rules, in a fatal fashion. She tries theory as the method of teaching in a subject that demands practice, starts many rules that come as decrees because she has ministry assistance. She hates all races other than humans, and has a particular distaste for half-breeds. Voldemort shows himself to the world in this book and Harry’s friends follow him to the Ministry where they fight the Death Eaters. The Death Eaters try killing the kids who are between fourteen to fifteen years, and do not refrain. Harry and co. though abstain from using very violent curses and disarm only. Kreacher directs Harry to the Ministry as he is instructed by Bellatrix and Narcissa to do, so he takes their commands as he considers them more amiable than Sirius who is outright rude to him. The members of the Order of the Phoenix come and save the day, though Sirius is killed by Bellatrix in a duel. Harry is devastated as he loses his Godfather and is tormented by the pain of being possessed by Voldemort.

The penultimate book of the series the *Half Blood Prince* sees violence as a daily occurrence. Voldemort’s power is on the rise, and Hogwarts is one of the only places that remain safe, due to the presence of Albus Dumbledore, whom Voldemort fears. Dumbledore teaches Harry to understand Voldemort’s way of thinking by collecting memories of people’s interaction with young Tom Riddle. He traces the story of Voldemort back to his mother Merope after falling in love with Tom Riddle Sr., keeping him under enchantment, and to dying after birthing him in the orphanage when Riddle Sr. deserts her. Voldemort kills Tom Riddle Sr. and his parents when he is a teen as he realises Tom left his mother as she is a witch. Voldemort therefore, validates his murder with vengeance as a ruse. When Dumbledore meets young Tom/ Voldemort, he proves to be a talented but sadistic kid, who wants to punish his enemies, and feels superior. Once he realises he is a wizard, Voldemort gets anxious to trace his lineage, the Puritanism is an important feature to him from the start. It disgusts him that his father was in fact the muggle and his mother, a witch, because she succumbed to death in a pitiable condition, orphaning him in the process.

In the *Deathly Hallows*, violence, killings and torture are commonplace, with no exceptions for children, invalids and elders. Many a time, Harry and his friends are threatened. Nobody is safe because a set of magical people decide that they need to wipe out a chunk of humans who oppose their racial ideals, which benefit no one and oppress many.

**Fanaticism, Intolerance and Violence in the Harry Potter Series:**

Voldemort leaves a precious diary with Lucius Malfoy for safekeeping. On learning that the diary may help cleanse the school of “mudbloods”, an offensive term for muggle-borns, Lucius implants it at Hogwarts to get rid of muggles. Though this mission is interrupted by Harry
and his squad of good Samaritans, Lucius tries to hang around acting innocent. It is only with Dobby’s help that Harry comprehends that Lucius initiated this whole plan.

A house-elf is a house-help or servant that comes along with the twin magical legacy of belonging to a rich household and having eminent legacy. While trying to guess which household own Dobby Fred says “Well, whoever owns him will be an old wizarding family, and they’ll be rich” (Chamber of Secrets 27)

Elves are magically gifted in grooming, cooking and house-keeping skills, and other special abilities, making them amazing companions and helpers. They usually cook the meals, clean up, and maintain the household. They are, sometimes, privy to secrets which no one else would know, just in case they enjoy a great rapport with their masters/ mistresses. But in the magical homes they serve, most elves are ill-treated, not given respect and are abused. They are also brainwashed to look down on themselves, and love the family they serve. Therefore, they are not dependable decision-makers; they are taught to obey their masters/ mistresses, so they mimic their opinions, as they do not form their own (Exceptions like Dobby need to be considered a unique case here). They are powerful, but need to be permitted by their masters to harness their magic. (Chamber of Secrets 27)

Readers get to meet three house-elves that are from Magical families, in the course of the entire Harry Potter septology: Dobby, who serves the Malfoy family; Kreacher, who belongs to Grimmauld Place – serving the Black family; and Winky, who owes allegiance to the Crouch household. Though Dobby is in on the Malfoy home secrets, he craves freedom, due to his love for liberty and seeing hell when Voldemort was in his height of power. (Chamber of Secrets 133-134)

Winky is very supportive of Crouch Sr., who trusts her with taking care of Crouch Jr., who turns a traitor and supports Voldemort. This comes to an end when someone summons the Death Mark. This is revealed to be Barty Crouch Jr. at the end of the book. Winky who is the caretaker of this fugitive, is instantly suspended for being careless. This mishap occurs since Crouch Jr. slowly breaks away from the Imperius curse placed on him, and steals a wand at the top box in the tournament. Barty Crouch Sr. actually commits treason by freeing his son, but he simply punishes his house-elf for not following orders to perfection. This is an instance of hypocrisy and foolishness too, because he has no other trustworthy friends or family apart from Winky.

Kreacher, working for the Blacks is aware of their dirty secrets and has many of his own which are revealed only in the finale. The house-elves can be studied individually to arrive at certain patterns in the elf-behaviour as such. Some of Hermione’s precious/ key observations are considered to be apt owing to her being one of the most well-informed characters in the novels, second only to Dumbledore. Though she initially makes the error of trying to forcibly liberate them, she comes to understand it is a time-taking process. But she does stand up for them, inspiring Ron (who rebukes her from the start in this matter) to take their side.
Dobby serves the Malfoys, but not willingly, this is because of the clash in their beliefs. Dobby rejects evil and fears Voldemort, whose sole purpose is to gain power and threaten all creatures, except for humans, pure-blooded wizards at that. Dobby craves freedom and wants to be paid for a job, so he wishes to get clothes from her master, which releases him from their service. He goes to Harry in Harry’s second year and cautions him that harm awaits him at Hogwarts and he should stay back at home instead. Though Harry does not heed his advice, Dobby tries to save him. Dobby finally earns freedom with the help of Harry which begets him the elf’s undying gratitude and friendship. Dobby comes to Harry’s rescue time and again

Once Voldemort is revealed to the wizarding world, fear is rekindled in the entire wizarding population. True to this, the Muggle-born are brought to courts of law, so as to be killed by Voldemort’s minions in the finale. The Muggle-born Registration Committee and such powers are have similar modus operandi as the concentration camps which were used for racial cleansing, and had a parallel agenda, giving utmost importance to blood-purity and status. Trials are conducted, but are of no use, as they operate with a pre-planned schema, culminating in mass murder.

The press does not work as an independent entity, because Voldemort manages to control it. The Daily Prophet proves to be useless in informing citizens of the true events during this uneventful period. It only functions to threaten and pass the evil word of the villain. The Quibbler run by Xenophilius has to shift sides because Voldemort captures Luna, his only daughter. There is no hope of gaining the correct idea of how things are unfolding as there is no institution that disseminates the truth.

The Potterwatch program which wires news regarding Voldemort’s enemies, reports deaths of many innocent muggles, Muggle-borns, and wizards, who are hunted down by Voldemort. Harry, Hermione and Ron try fighting Voldemort and his cronies along with associations like the Order of the Phoenix and Dumbledore’s Army. But life comes to a standstill for the entire wizarding people due to the senseless violence that happens in the name of racial cleansing and there is irreparable damage to life and property in general.

Politics, War and their Far-reaching Consequences:

In the last book of the series Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows the government falls, people are rendered homeless, killings become common, and humanity is scare. Voldemort’s supporters enjoy unlimited powers. Umbridge is given the leash to punish people as she sees right, which is horrible as she feels threatened by half-breeds, half-bloods and dissenters.

The muggle-borns are treated as traitors who stole magic and wands, and are tried at the Ministry for theft and punished. This is a means to regulate them and exert power because there is not much a wizard could accomplish without his wand. People like Harry and Ron are tagged ‘undesirable’ and have a prize upon their head. Though they are innocents who are working for the better of the magical community they are branded evil.
During the finale, the Battle of Hogwarts, the magical population splits into two halves: the ones wanting blood-purity and the ones against blood-purity. The Puritans are on the side of Voldemort who wants to purge Hogwarts of all its muggle-born population, though they know he is awful. They indulge in violence and murders along with him. They also destroy a lot of property and kill indiscriminately. Therefore, vandalising, violent activity and ill-treatment of people whom they consider inferior, comes as second nature when one opines that the other person is inferior or not-so-good-as-himself. The non-human creatures like Centaurs, elves, and even the Hogwarts gargoyles, join the fight at Hogwarts against Voldemort, they fight alongside students and adults to protect the historic School and the saneness of the magical population. The giants and dementors take Voldemort’s side – due to his promising bounty and accommodation of more evil.

But, the battle boils down to the combat between Harry and Voldemort, Harry strategically eliminates the Horcruxes (objects in which Voldemort keeps pieces of his souls sliced magically), and challenges him after offering himself as collateral to stop the rampage on his friends and supporters. He does not hesitate to die for them, which makes him a braver person. But, Harry wins already, by virtue of his choices and finally aims to disarm whereas Voldemort exercises the killing curse. This results in the death of Voldemort aka Tom Riddle, who literally brings about his own destruction.

Voldemort ruins his relationship with his followers by forcing them into doing his bidding, harming their families and being an absolute dictator. People like Draco and Narcissa turn against him and help Harry, cementing the hope for a better future. Draco is excited to favour Voldemort, and understands his blunder only when he is too deep into it. He is much like Regulus, Sirius’s brother, who saves Kreacher and dies in the hopes of saving his family. These are only young adults because they understand suffering at a young age, and do selfless acts to save loved ones. Even Harry and co. go homeless for about a year, and hide planning to weaken Voldemort.

**Conclusion:**

Bethany Barratt emphasizes the importance of people, especially the youngsters, understanding politics, because our lives are shaped by the contemporary polity. It is important to know our rights and duties as responsible citizens. The fascinating aspect of the Harry Potter phenomena is that the young people, including the protagonist trio, take keen interest in the polity. This could be attributed to the bitter truth of their world, where lives are tied to racial status, and genocide is facilitated by dark powers, the anti-social elements that takeover governance.

Hermione and Harry understand the politics and prejudice prevalent in the society (in the magical world) due to their exposure to various harrowing events; and seeing and interacting with powerful people from close quarters. Harry witnesses the murder of a fellow student, and is
traumatized, and hurt by Voldemort. Hermione is at the receiving end of racial discrimination and verbal abuse at school; she is physically abused by Bellatrix who tortures her for being a muggle-born.

Barratt, while commenting on the state of polity in the Potterverse, says:

The wizarding world is every bit as complicated as the Muggle world, and every bit as dangerous. Power still matters, and there is, just as in our world, a continual conflict between those who most value power and those who most value justice. While the ethnic and racial conflicts that plague so many Muggle polities do not seem to exist, they are replaced by distinctions equally arbitrary and equally capable of driving people to utmost enmity. The existence of nonhuman magical creatures complicates these categories, and the ideas of civil and human rights still further. (Barratt 1)

A huge penalty is paid by the wizarding community as many innocents are martyred in the process of saving Hogwarts and reason. The Potterverse is only a mirror that reflects our own. The narrow fragmentation in the name of religion, ethnicity, race, colour, etc., need to be shattered in order to attain harmony and prosperity. The morale of masses needs to be boosted by giving preference to humanity over differences; this is a prerequisite for peace to prevail.

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