Degree Project
Bachelor's degree
Exclusive Magic

A Postmodern Analysis of Inclusion/Exclusion of the Other in the Harry Potter-series

Author: Petra Öhrn
Supervisor: Carmen Zamorano Llena
Examiner: Billy Gray
Subject/main field of study: English Literature
Course code: EN2028
Credits: 15
Date of examination: 07-01-2019

At Dalarna University it is possible to publish the student thesis in full text in DiVA. The publishing is open access, which means the work will be freely accessible to read and download on the internet. This will significantly increase the dissemination and visibility of the student thesis.

Open access is becoming the standard route for spreading scientific and academic information on the internet. Dalarna University recommends that both researchers as well as students publish their work open access.

I give my/we give our consent for full text publishing (freely accessible on the internet, open access):

Yes ☑ No ☐
### Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postmodernism and the Other</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Other as Same/Other</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Mirroring of the Real World</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Questioning of Rules and Norms</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Works Cited</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

From *Romeo and Juliet* to *Beauty and the Beast* and *The Lord of the Rings*, fiction has taught readers not to judge a book by its cover, but rather hold judgment until they have seen what is within. Whether an ancient family enemy, a beast or a member of a different race from another land, the Other is present in the stories mentioned above, and in many more. Who the Other refers to is strongly related to what part of the world the work is produced in, as well as the time of production. According to Jackie C. Horne, the experience of a book, and its depiction of race and/or other, is dependent on the reader’s own experiences and what traditions of thought about the subject he/she employs while reading (77). Øyunn Hestetun has a similar viewpoint and uses a postcolonial view to state that it is easier for the reader to be aware of culturally specific aspects of a text if the text is separate from the reader by either time, geography or cultural influences (45). In essence, who the Other is cannot be definitely determined as it differs between literary works depending on the setting of its production as well as the preconceptions the reader.

The concept of the Other is present in several ways in the series about the orphan wizard Harry Potter. Harry Potter has been living with his aunt and uncle since his parents died when he was a toddler. When Harry turns eleven, he is accepted to go to Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry and his world turns upside down, as he had no idea he had magical abilities, or that magic even existed. Soon after realising he is a wizard, he finds out his parents were murdered by a very dark wizard called Voldemort, and that Harry himself is famous in the entire magical world for having survived the vicious attack. Each year from that point of realization, Harry is faced with tremendous dangers that are all, in some way, related to his parents’ murder. Voldemort and his followers, the Death Eaters, have a strong sense of what it means to be a witch or wizard and they attempt to rinse the wizarding world of everyone they do not deem worthy. The undoubtedly largest reason for inclusion/exclusion for them is the
purity of the magical human’s blood, i.e. their blood-status. The higher percentage of magical blood in the family, the better.

As the story develops, Harry learns that the overt threat from Voldemort and his followers is not the only threat to equality in the magical world. Besides distinct differentiation between humans, there are also several magical creatures featured in the series, none of which are given the same privileges as magical humans. It becomes clear, throughout the series, that the magical humans have placed themselves at the top of the pyramid, labelling anyone who deviates from their norm “Other”. Through centuries of traditions and regulation, their superiority has become a solid part of the culture of every species within the magical world.

Even though the series has been read by adults it is usually labelled as children’s literature. Deborah Cogan Thacker and Jean argue that it is important to appeal to a child’s imagination. They mention J.K. Rowling’s series about Harry Potter as an example of Postmodern literature for children (147). They argue that even though authors have a long tradition of “shar[ing] a joke with the adult reader over the head of the child” such attempts have become more explicit within Postmodernism (146). Other reasons for stating that the series is a postmodern work are the way the series seems to “challenge adult assumptions”, and how it uses the fantastic as a way to invite the reader to interpret and “play” with the text (147-148), as well as its tendency to question norms and traditions (140).

Even though it is often called Postmodern children’s literature, the series has been analysed from numerous other angles and with almost as many different conclusions. The subject of the Other and the theme of inclusion/exclusion is one subject that has been widely researched. In their analysis of how the Harry Potter series affects its readers’ attitudes towards stigmatized groups, Loris Vezzali et al. show that the participants of their study displayed more positive attitudes towards minority groups after reading the Harry Potter-series (115). Jennifer Sterling-Folker and Brian Folker analyse the similarities between J.K. Rowling’s fictional world and the
real world, and they conclude that there are overwhelming resemblances between the two worlds. The similarities between the real world and fiction, and the latter’s effect on its readers is, however, not entirely positive, according to some researchers. Luisa Grijalva Maza’s analysis is based on deconstruction theory and argues that the series discriminates against stigmatized groups and claims that it has “inclusive liberal values upfront, exclusive colonialist discourse in the background” (426), in other words the story attempts to be liberal but fails upon close reading. Elizabeth Heilman and Anne Gregory provide a similar point of view in their sociological analysis of the series. They conclude that there is discrimination and differentiation between characters who, at first glance, appear to be peers.

The focus when analysing the Other within the series has differed between researchers. Alyssa Hunziker presents a comparison between the Holocaust and Rowling’s series: the centaurs and their living conditions in the Forbidden Forest and their resemblance to concentration camps (55). In her sociological analysis Aurélie Lacassagne takes this approach one step further by comparing the entire conflict in the book series with those during the Second World War. She claims that the similarities to the Holocaust are vivid regarding ideology, specific characters, and events, especially in comparison to Voldemort and the Death Eaters (320). In her discussion of the Harry Potter series’ pedagogical usage Victoria Lynne Scholz makes another connection between the magical world of Harry Potter and a historical event; the rules and regulations which constrict the house elves lives have striking similarities to that of the slaves in pre-Civil War America (127). Grijalva Maza takes the idea of exclusion, applies it to the protagonist and argues that the fact that Harry is a wizard who lives in the magical community means that he, by necessity, discriminates against anyone who is a part of any other community. According to this scholar there is a clear dichotomy between the magical and the non-magical world and one is dependent on the other in order to exist as a community (428). One way of choosing which part of the community to be a part of is by establishing whether to
care about the blood-status of others. According to Hunziker, Rowling uses blood-status as a nonphysical way to discuss race in a way that is still obvious (57). Scholz presents different stages of blood-status with pure-bloods being the purest and mudbloods, a very derogative word for a witch or wizard whose parents are both muggles (non-magical humans), being the “filthiest” (127). She also claims that a part of this segregation within the magical community is based in the lexical differences and the derogative terms that some of the characters use to and about each other, mudblood being one of them (126-127). Based on the research presented in this introduction, the term “Other” is ambiguous when analysing the story about Harry Potter.

Even though the series embodies many aspects of postmodern literature, there is no previous research that uses a Postmodern perspective in its analysis. Although several researches have pointed to similarities regarding inclusion/exclusion between the Harry Potter-series and the real world, none of the previous research has applied Postmodern literary theory and the postmodern idea of the Other to the series. This thesis will, by comparing individuals within the same species with each other as well as with individuals of other species, attempt to show how Rowling uses characterization in the Harry Potter series to discuss the idea of the Other. By using a postmodern view of literature, and specifically the concept of the Other, the aim of this thesis is to analyse how character (re)presentations within the series stresses the difference between personality traits, and racial and ethical prejudice.

To create a more varied analysis, several species will be analysed. In order to incorporate different species, relevant aspects of the entire Harry Potter-series must be considered as not all species appear in each book. The first are the magical humans, as they are the ones who make the rules. The humans without magical abilities, squibs and muggles, are used as examples of arbitrary exclusion within a species. The second species to be examined are the house elves, as they have been firmly excluded from the society of magical humans but remain in their proximity. Finally, the centaurs are also considered, as they, like the house elves, have been
excluded by the humans, but they also act as the opposite to the house elves as the centaurs have chosen to be excluded. Before the analysis, a closer definition of Postmodernism and the Other is presented.

**Postmodern Literature and the Other**

Postmodernism is defined differently in different parts of the world, and according to Richard Todd, there are two main kinds of Postmodernism in England and Wales, (342); which is the geographical origin of the texts. One type attempts to be original at all costs and does not refer to or attempt to mimic the real world at all, and the other extensively refers to historical and/or modern problems within the real world (Todd 342). In addition to this ambiguous relation to the real world, Theo D’haen argues that Postmodern literature in all of Europe tends to include aspects of the fantastic or magic realism, often by creating an alternative reality (287), at the same time as it tends to mirror reality (288). One part of Postmodernism’s mirroring of the real world is noticeable in its strong connections to Postcolonialism (Todd 346, D’haen 291). One major element of Postcolonialism is the idea of the Other; and subjectivity, which is a large part of deciding who the Other is (Maria Nikolajeva 133). One way in which the subjectivity within Postmodern literature is evident is in the arbitrary connection between a word and its meaning/concept, and how the concept is dependent on the speakers mutual understanding of it, according to Callum Brown (35-36). In this thesis the relevant concept is the Other. According to Brown, any meaning assigned to a word is arbitrary, and even though a concept can only have one word assigned to it, a word can relate to more than one concept/have more than one meaning (36). This may be one reason why there is no clear definition of the Other within Postmodernism. According to Robert Eaglestone, there are two types of Other within Postmodernism, “(1) the ‘other’ that is within the system of ‘same/other,’ whose ‘otherness’ is really an inverted projection of the same, and (2) the other that is outside and underlies the system”, according to Robert Eaglestone (189). Eaglestone argues that the most important
aspect to consider when defining the postmodern Other is the way in which someone differs regarding “sociocultural ways of thinking or existing in the world” (189). The Internal Other, the Other within the system or Same/Other, might include women and individuals with religious beliefs that differ from the norm. The external Other are usually, but not always, related to previously colonized countries (Eaglestone 189). In the Harry Potter-series, the internal Other, referred to as Same/Other, is mostly represented by different cultural groups within the human species, whilst the external Other is mainly represented by non-human species, such as house-elves and centaurs.

The elements of Postmodern definitions and ideas that this thesis will focus on are the Other as both Same and Other, the mirroring of the real world, and the questioning of rules and norms. The magical humans are the largest group that represents a norm within the story. This group is, however, separated into two main subgroups; the side of the Order of the Phoenix, which attempts to keep Voldemort from regaining his powers, and is considered the good side in the story, and the side of Voldemort and the Death Eaters, which is the depraved side that strives for a purer magical community regarding the community’s blood-status. Despite these two main subgroups, the magical humans as a whole are considered the norm unless otherwise stated.

**The Other as Same/Other**

As the master race, the magical humans have set down several rules and regulations regarding inclusion/exclusion of the Other throughout the centuries. The Other within the magical community is, however, mainly represented by the Other as Same/Other. The main feature that separates magical humans from each other is their purity of blood, and how important they think this is. Those who fully commit to the idea are mainly part of the Death Eaters, following Voldemort on his quest; this is the side that is presented as bad in the story. Those who do not regard blood-status as important are presented as good, and are either fighting the Death Eaters, or remaining as neutral as possible in the war between the extremes. There are several character
pairs within the series that can be seen as opposites and representatives of the dichotomy good/bad. Just as a character might be presented as good or bad, they may also be presented as norm or Other, and in most cases the norm is good and the Other is bad, which also makes them representatives of the dichotomy Same/Other. There are, however, a few examples of individuals that represent both the Same and the Other. Five dichotomies will be discussed below.

Firstly, there is the obvious dichotomy between Harry Potter and Voldemort. They are both orphans who grew up without love and never knew they were wizards until it was time for them to go to Hogwarts. They are also both half-bloods, meaning one of their parents is of magical descent and the other from a muggle family. Both the protagonist and the antagonist have experienced exclusion in the muggle world as well as in the magical world; Voldemort, first as an orphan in the muggle world and later as a villain due to his radical ideas about blood purity among witches and wizards and Harry, who also starts as an oppressed orphan in the muggle world and as a hero with the label as “the boy who lived” in the magical world (Philosopher’s Stone 1). Hunziker argues that it is the way they act that separates the protagonist from the antagonist (59). Whilst Voldemort gathers followers and controls them mainly through fear (Scholz 125), Harry has a strong security net to lean back on in his close friends who are willing to help him reach his goals (Hunziker 59). By creating an antagonist with such strong similarities to the protagonist, Rowling highlights the importance of choice over social background or genetics, and simultaneously creates two main characters who are examples of how an individual can be both Same and Other. She brings the topic of choice to the surface on several occasions throughout the series, many times through Dumbledore, the headmaster of Hogwarts, and his explanations to Harry. For example, at the end of the fifth book, Dumbledore tells Harry about the prophecy binding his and Voldemort’s fates together:
He chose the boy he thought most likely to be a danger to him, said Dumbledore. And notice this, Harry: he chose, not the pure-blood (which, according to his creed, is the only kind of wizard worth being or knowing) but the half-blood, like himself. (The Order of the Phoenix, 743).

By choosing Harry as his enemy, Voldemort establishes his ideas about blood-status and proves that his hatred towards those with “lesser” blood-status might not only be based on a will to preserve the magical race but also in a fear of losing control. Apparently, he fears the powers of those with mixed blood more than those of pure-bloods.

A second dichotomy related to good and bad is the one between Professor McGonagall and Dolores Umbridge. In the fifth book, The Order of the Phoenix, they are both teaching at Hogwarts, Professor McGonagall has been teaching there for many years and Professor Umbridge is an employee of the Ministry of Magic who has just began her employment at Hogwarts. As they are both female and working as Professors, they are assumed to be maternal and caring. Whilst McGonagall shows affection for her students and helps them grow, Umbridge does not possess any such properties (Scholz 139). One example of this is when she makes Harry write lines during his detention with her, and she gives him an enchanted quill to write with. The quill has a shining red ink and as Harry writes, the words he writes on the parchment are also cut into the skin on the back of his hand (Order of the Phoenix 240). There are several other examples like this one throughout the series, and each one establishes that Umbridge’s allegiance and priorities lie exclusively with doing what she deems best for the Ministry of Magic, and not with what might be best for her students.

This is contrasted with the actions of McGonagall, who is presented in the very first chapter of the first book as crying over Harry’s baby basket as he was left with his aunt and uncle (Philosopher’s Stone 17). Though stern, McGonagall is fair in her treatment of the students and
does what she can to help them. The women’s similar occupations and different personalities and allegiances are examples of the way in which Rowling demonstrates that an occupation does not mean the person possesses a certain set of skills, nor should it earn trust. Once again, it is the choices of these women that separates them and is the reason why one is presented as good and the other as bad. The choices of these women are also one way in which the author complies with the Postmodern idea of the Other.

When described by exterior properties, such as their sex, occupation and the fact that they both belong to the social group magical humans, their similarities are striking, they are the Same. But when comparing their internal properties their differences become evident and, using the Order of the Phoenix as norm, Professor Umbridge’s lack of compassion for her students and imperiousness makes her a Same/Other whilst Professor McGonagall stays the Same within the social group.

A third, perhaps less obvious dichotomy, is the one presented by Hermione Granger and Neville Longbottom. Hermione is a muggle born with great magical skills and Neville is a pure-blood with faint magical abilities. This makes them opposites in two ways, in blood-status and in magical aptitudes. As a pure-blood, Neville is expected to be rather gifted, especially as his parents were very powerful. The fact that he struggles to get through school, and his shame because of it, is a general theme throughout the series. Hermione, on the other hand, does not have any expectations about greatness to live up to, and she excels in every class. Even though this is not a dichotomy that involves a choice, it is an example of how arbitrary the exclusion of the muggle born population is, as genetics do not seem to have any effect on what kind of, if any, magical abilities a child gets. As a muggle born, Hermione is seen as an Other by the Death Eaters but at the same time her abilities make her well-integrated in the magical community. Neville would be accepted by the Death Eaters, based on his blood-status, but his weak magic makes him question his position within the magical community.
One example of an internal dichotomy between Same/Other is Professor Severus Snape. Peter Appelbaum states that “[w]e see Snape first through the eyes of new students, as a nasty and suspicious teacher” (91). This perception of Snape is further strengthened by the fact that he has the Dark Mark on his forearm, the mark Voldemort placed on all his followers so that he could call them to him at any time. Snape returns to his role as a Death Eater when Voldemort regains his body and strength. At the same time, Snape is also a member of the Order of the Phoenix. His allegiance is questioned by Harry throughout most of the series, but especially when Snape, in the sixth book, kills Dumbledore and flees the scene with several Death Eaters. It is not until he is dying in the last book that Snape’s real intentions are revealed. Appelbaum states that “Each of Snape’s actions, however terrible they may have originally seemed, are transformed in meaning by the childhood scenes Harry sees in the Pensieve after Snape’s death” (90). After his death, it is clear that Snape was working for the Order of the Phoenix and that he had given his life for the cause. His struggle and work as a double-agent is a personification of Other as Same/Other: he is part of both sides yet does not really belong in either. The Death Eaters trust him, but Snape does not sympathize with them and the members of the Order of the Phoenix disagree regarding Snape’s allegiances, although he is loyal to them. Using the Order of the Phoenix and its members as norm, Snape is an Other as they are not sure if he can be trusted, at the same time he is the Same, as he actually works with them, and the exclusion is made solely on the aspect of trust or distrust between him and the other members.

Like Snape, the character Voldemort represents the dichotomy of Same/Other in his complex relationship with himself as both Tom Riddle, his real name which he used for most of his childhood, and Voldemort, the epithet that he assumed in his late adolescence. The boy Tom Riddle lived as an orphan for years before going to Hogwarts, where he turned out to be an excellent student, and a functioning part of the student body. Even though he has dark ideas and wishes while still at Hogwarts, it is not until leaving Hogwarts that Tom completely turns to the
dark arts, and eventually becomes Voldemort, the man who has been thoroughly excluded from the community of magical humans. It becomes evident, throughout the story, that Tom and Voldemort are separate, the most obvious reason being the fact that they do not share a body anymore, as Voldemort became a “mere shadow and vapour” (*Philosopher’s Stone*, 213) upon failing to kill Harry when he was a toddler. Another reason for seeing them as separate is the glimpses of Tom as a boy that Rowling integrates into the story as memories. The first one being the memory stored in the diary in *Chamber of Secrets*, which first seems to help Harry but later turns out to have been manipulating him. Later on, Dumbledore shares his own memories of Tom with Harry, as does Professor Slughorn in *the Half-Blood Prince* (459). Even though the memories show a boy with a longing and ability to perform dark arts, they also show a boy who was a part of the student body. The differences between the two persons Tom and Voldemort, is another way in which Rowling presents the importance of choice as a part of inclusion/exclusion within a society.

The different kinds of human beings in the story are mainly separated by the ability to use magic, or lack thereof. Scholz argues that the magical community struggles with problems of segregations of class, much like the real world, and that that such exclusions are often sustained by the ruling class (125), which in this case is the magical humans. The Muggles are at the bottom of the pyramid, and “mudblood” is a foul word for the lowest level of blood purity a magical human can have. A word with less negative connotations for the same person would be muggle born. The fact that muggles can give birth to children with magical abilities, as in the cases of Hermione Granger and Lily Potter (Harry’s mother), is an indication that magical humans may not be as different from muggles as the Death Eaters would like. Both Hermione and Lily are presented as extraordinarily gifted witches. Another example of common genetics between magical and non-magical humans are squibs, persons without magical abilities but with magical parents. The caretaker of Hogwarts, Mr. Filch, is a squib, as is Harry’s old
babysitter, Mrs. Figg. Unlike Mrs. Figg, who lives within the muggle community, Mr. Filch strives to be a part of the magical community by taking a job at Hogwarts and participating in a course in magic specified to teach those who do not have magical powers (Heilman and Gregory 251).

The five dichotomies presented all point to the arbitrariness of inclusion/exclusion in Rowling’s magical world. Harry and Voldemort, as well as Hermione and Neville are examples of how little purity of blood really matters when it comes to magical abilities and an individual’s position within the magical community. Professors Umbridge and McGonagall are examples of how a specific position within a society does not say anything about the person’s personality, and what subgroup they choose to belong to. Tom Riddle/Voldemort and Professor Snape are examples of internal representation of Same/Other and how important an individual’s choice is in discussions about inclusion/exclusion. All the characters mentioned are magical humans and therefore they are part of the norm, their position as the Other is completely dependent upon the position of the beholder, and therefore not always easily established. Mr. Filch and Mrs. Figg are examples of how a person might handle the exclusion from the magical human norm. They have chosen to deal with their exclusion from the magical community in quite different ways, a fact that is also true about centaurs and house-elves: two species that will be analysed below.

The Mirroring of the Real World

The Harry Potter-series can be incorporated into the second of the two groups of Postmodernism described by Todd, the “one that extensively refers to historical and/or modern problems within the real world” (342) with its many similarities to the world of the author. Additionally, according to D’haen, it is common for postmodern texts to create alternate realities (287), and even though the Harry Potter-series takes place within the real world it is also very separate from it. The entire magical community co-exists with the muggle community without the
muggles’ knowledge. There are magical pubs in London, a separate train track on King’s Cross Station which can only be accessed by walking through a stone column, and special shopping areas that only serve a magical clientele. Even though they are separate from each other, the two worlds have a lot in common, with each other as well as with the real world.

The arbitrariness of exclusion from the magical human community is one way in which the story mirrors the real world. The discrimination based on religion or a striving for a superior human race, like the idea of the Nazis wish of a pure Aryan-race, resembles the Death Eater’s quest towards a pure-blooded wizarding society. Like the Nazis, who needed information regarding every individual’s religion to make their decision regarding inclusion/exclusion, the Death Eaters need information about every magical human’s heritage and blood status to make an informed decision about inclusion/exclusion. This means that, besides the differentiation between magical humans, the exclusion of muggles can be seen as a very arbitrary decision as they also have the ability to give birth to magical humans, as is the case with Lily Potter and Hermione Granger, and the muggles do not differ physically from magical humans. Vesna Suljić discusses exclusion within the Harry Potter series and argues that “[t]he authors who are read by the greatest number of children must be examined most carefully because it is not only the plot and the adventure that the children are attracted by, but also the attitudes, values, cultural assumptions, and ideologies which make grounds to form the children of today into the adults of tomorrow” (68). By creating characters who fight the quest of the Death Eaters, Rowling presents the child readers with an option to falling for peer pressure, regarding exclusion based on either physical or non-physical attributes.

There are also some cultural aspects that set the two main groups of humans apart from each other in the story. One of them is very similar to the way humans in the real world establish groups; the terminology they use. According to Hunziker, muggles and wizards may be said to speak different languages (56). Harry, who has one foot in each cultural group, at one point
reflects upon said difference as he is “ready to bet that the Dursleys hadn’t understood a single word of this” (*Goblet of Fire* 44) when they first meet and speak to Mr. Weasley. The fact that Harry understands what Mr. Weasley is trying to say, and the fact that he is eager to return to the magical world (*Chamber of Secrets* 8) is yet another way in which he is different from the Dursleys. Heilman and Gregory argue that the fact that Harry is, in the eyes of his family, undisputedly a member of a different social group, justifies their treatment of him (250). This difference in language is similar to that of the real world as, for example, marginalized people in England and the United States do not speak standard English (Heilman & Gregory 244). “squib”, “mudblood” and “muggle” are all derogative terms for humans that do not meet the norm of the magical community, and who are therefore seen as Others. Scholz claims that these terms are mainly used by people considered to be antagonists and have been a part of the magical world for so long that they are a state of mind rather than just adjectives used to describe someone (126). Like the word “ghetto” the words have certain negative connotations attached to them, rendering them inappropriate, and difficult, to use as plain adjectives, according to Scholz (126). The term mudblood is mainly used by Death Eaters, whilst squib and muggle are also used by protagonists as simple descriptors of a person’s lack of magical abilities.

There are several ways in which the Harry Potter-series resembles the real world. The similarities between the Death Eaters and the Nazis are one example of a strive for a superior human race. Another way in which the excluded groups are kept excluded is through the terminology that the normative group uses. Some words that describe anyone who does not fully meet the requirements of the normative group have strong negative connotations, while others are mere descriptors and more likely to be used by individuals with a more accepting attitude. The fact that muggles and wizards speak very differently is another way in which the muggles are similar to other excluded species in the series.
The Questioning of Rules and Norms

One way in which Rowling discusses discrimination of different racial and ethnic groups in the series is in the status of the magical creatures, according to Hunziker (54). One connection to the real world can be found within the exclusion of the house-elves. Unlike the different groups of humans, who are Same/Other, the house elves are just Others as they are presented as a completely different species with little or nothing in common with the magical humans. Firstly, they are not allowed to use wands in accordance with the Code of Wand Use, set down by the Ministry of Magic, which states that “no non-human creature is permitted to carry or use a wand” (*Goblet of Fire* 132). In addition to their exclusion from the right to wear a wand, the house elves have very specific rules by which they live their lives. Scholz presents their duties as follows: they are bound to serve one family their entire lives, they are not permitted to speak ill of their masters at any time, and the only way they can ever be free is if their master provides them with clothes (130). The house elves are usually tasked with taking care of the household and their living conditions are similar to those of the slaves in pre-Civil War America, according to Scholz (127). Two house elves that reoccur in the story are Dobby and Kreacher. Although they are of the same species, they have very different personalities and views on inclusion/exclusion and are in that way examples of how the real world might look.

Dobby is first presented in the second book, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, when he appears in Harry’s room to attempt to convince him not to go back to Hogwarts. Harry asks Dobby to sit down, causing Dobby to cry as he has “never been asked to sit down by a wizard – like an *equal* – “ (*Chamber of Secrets* 16). Shortly after his first emotional outburst, Dobby bangs his head against the wall when he almost speaks ill of his family. “’Dobby had to punish himself, sir’, said the elf, who had gone slightly cross-eyed. ‘Dobby almost spoke ill of his family, sir…”’ (*Chamber of Secrets* 16). Dobby’s inclination to hurt himself for almost breaking the rules is one example of how indoctrinated the house elves are in the oppressed life
they live. This is the first appearance of the species in the series, and it is quite informative. It shows that the house elves are viewed as lesser beings by the magical humans whom they serve as Dobby is not used to being treated with the same respect as a magical human, and that the loyalty between elf and family is so strong that the servant is willing to resort to physical punishment even if his/her masters are absent. Throughout the book, Dobby attempts to make sure that Harry either does not go to Hogwarts or that he is kicked out, as Dobby insists that Hogwarts is not safe. In the end though, the two are quite close and Harry helps Dobby gain his freedom by tricking his master, Lucius Malfoy, into giving Dobby a sock (Chamber of Secrets 248). How rare it is for a house elf to be free is presented in The Goblet of Fire, when Harry speaks to another house-elf about Dobby and his problems with finding employment, “Winky lowered her voice by a half octave and whispered, 'He is wanting paying for his work, sir.' 'Paying?' said Harry blankly. ‘Well – why shouldn’t he be paid?’” (Goblet of Fire 89). The idea of an elf getting paid for his/her service is presented as ridiculous and embarrassing, the elf can barely speak of it and is astounded by Harry’s question (89):

‘No, no, no. I says to Dobby, I says, go find yourself a nice family and settle down, Dobby. He is getting up to all sorts of high jinks, sir, what is unbecoming to a house-elf. You goes racketing around like this, Dobby, I says, and the next thing I hear you’s up in front of the Department for the Regulation and Control of Magical Creatures, like some common goblin”’ (Goblet of Fire 90).

Even though the house elves are so indoctrinated in the idea of being unpaid servants that they question why they would want something else, Rowling also strongly questions their exclusion through Harry’s reaction to Winky’s statements. According to Horne, “the Harry Potter books are deeply invested in teaching their protagonists (and through them, their readers) how to
confront, eradicate, and ameliorate racism…” (76). Firstly, Harry states that Dobby deserves to be paid, and later he proclaims that Dobby has a right to have fun. Whilst Winky is a part of the community that does not want to disrupt the status quo, Harry takes Dobby’s side and seems to find the living conditions that Winky advocates to be absurd. In this short section of the story, Rowling manages to present both the established norm, and how an outsider, which Harry to some extent still is as he still has much to learn about the magical world, might consider the status quo preposterous. Scholz argues that Dobby differs from the rest of his kind in that he enjoys being free and getting paid for his work (130). In the final book of the series, he uses his free will in an act of ultimate sacrifice as he gives his life to save Harry and his friends (Deathly Hallows 385).

Another house-elf that Harry has reason to spend time with and get to know, is Kreacher, the Black family’s house-elf. When the last member of the black family, Harry’s godfather Sirius black, dies, Harry inherits the elf, which further enhances their position as belongings rather than living individuals with rights. Kreacher, like most of his kind, completely accepts his position and has even assumed the ideology of the Death Eaters, which most of the Black family were. When the Order of the Phoenix moves their headquarters to the Black house, he becomes a sub-oppressor and continuously mutters comments towards the members regarding the error of their ways (Scholz 127). Even though he does not agree with the order’s ideas, Kreacher seems content with his lot and continues to do his duty and serve his master, first Sirius and then Harry.

The two house-elves are presented as two sides of a coin. Dobby strives for freedom and revels when he achieves it, leaving him immensely grateful towards Harry Potter and the kindness he has shown. The other, Kreacher, enjoys his life as it is and helps keep the cycle of oppression by becoming a sub-oppressor and view anyone less than pure-blood as unworthy, according to Scholz (128). By pinning these two against each other, and Kreacher’s compliance
above all, Rowling manages to present the house-elves as caricatures, and she shows how enslavement affects both the enslaved and the enslaver (Hunziker 55). Most of the magical humans who have grown up within the magical community are blind to the oppression of the house elves. Grijalva Maza claims that “[i]ndividual and collective action that is informed by the magical narrative tends to affirm identity by perpetuating the exclusion of the Other, but in a subtle manner, hiding discrimination in the background” (427). The stand of the indoctrinated magical humans makes Harry and Hermione a kind of Other. As they both grew up outside of the magical community, they are part of a very small group of witches/wizards who can see alternatives to the oppression of the house-elves, rather than the need to uphold the status quo. Chappell argues that “Harry and his friends embrace … postmodern childhood and question injustices established by and through the adult wizarding world” (281), suggesting that Harry’s generation might be willing to reduce the exclusion of different magical creatures. According to Horne, one step in Harry’s personal journey towards a less racist attitude is in his recognition of the fact that house elves have feelings (83).

If the entire species of house-elves is considered one side of a coin, the other side would likely be the centaurs, who are also firmly excluded from the magical humans’ community. “I would remind you that you live here only because the Ministry of Magic permits you certain areas of land“ (Order of the Phoenix 665). This passage is spoken by a furious Dolores Umbridge, employee at the Ministry of Magic and teacher at Hogwarts, and it sums up how the magical community views centaurs. Like Native Americans, the centaurs have been given specific pieces of land that they may inhabit and live on as they please. Scholz explains that they have their own rules and usually stay separate from the magical humans (127). In the same way as the humans exclude and look down upon the centaurs, the centaurs also exclude and look down upon the humans. One centaur claims that “[w]e are an ancient people who will not stand wizard invasions and insults! We do not recognise your laws, we do not acknowledge
your superiority” (Order of the Phoenix 667). The centaurs’ sense of superiority becomes clear in another statement of a centaur, directed at another professor at Hogwarts, “[she] is a human, said Firenze simply. And is therefore blinkered and fettered by the limitations of your kind” (The Order of the Phoenix 531). The centaurs are, unlike the house-elves, enjoying their separation from the humans and go to great lengths to avoid any contact with them (Order of the Phoenix 667).

Like Kreacher, the centaurs are happy with the lot they have been assigned. The difference is that whilst the house-elves are happy being enslaved by and dependant on the humans, the centaurs are proud to be set apart from the humans and have no desire to help the species that claims their superiority. One centaur that has been caught helping a human is disowned by his community. The centaur, Firenze, then takes employment at Hogwarts, causing shock amongst both humans and centaurs. By creating exclusion even amongst the house elves and the centaurs, species that are excluded from the magical human community, Rowling shows that oppression is not unilateral but rather takes many forms and likely occurs in every community. The magical humans exclude every creature that is not a human with magical abilities, the house-elves exclude Dobby because of his longing for freedom, and the centaurs exclude any member that might aid a human, as well as the entire community of magical humans. Suljić argues that:

[b]y bringing these different cultures together J.K. Rowling promotes positive aspects of multicultural societies, fostering tolerance, understanding and co-operation. The cross-cultural aspect of Harry Potter is achieved by crossing the boundaries between the “real” and “unreal” world…” (72)
The amount of species that Harry respects and manages to gain respect from might be said to blur the lines between Same/Other, and even though the Other is present in the series, it has different meanings depending on what point of view is used.

The exclusion of other species from the community of magical humans has several similarities to the real world and can be said to question the treatment of Others, in some ways. Exclusion is part of every species mentioned in this thesis, both in the form of exclusion of other groups and in the exclusion of members of the species. By allowing the protagonist to question the view and exclusion of Others, Rowling suggests that it is possible to question standing rules and norms of exclusion.

**Conclusion**

The aim of this thesis is to see how character (re)presentations within the Harry Potter-series emphasize the difference between an individual’s personality and stereotypical traits connected to each species. This thesis has compared individuals within the same species with each other and how exclusion might be visible and present in each species.

There are several different groups of humans in Rowling’s magical world. The magical humans are the norm to which everyone else is measured. They exclude anyone who does not fit into their idea of norm, that norm may, however, differ immensely between individuals. The Death Eaters have been compared to the Nazis, they dream of a pure-blooded master race, and wish to eradicate anyone with lesser blood-status. There are also those who fight these extremists and claim that every human has the right to live and prosper, this would be the Order of the Phoenix with Harry and his friends at the front. The squibs, muggle born, and muggles all encounter exclusion from the magical community, but in different degrees and in different ways. The squibs seem to be allowed to be a part of the community, as Mr. Filch proves, but they also seem to be allowed to live as muggles, as Mrs. Figg. The ones that suffer the most hatred are probably the muggle born, who have the lowest purity of blood possible, as the
muggles are excluded from the magical community to the degree that they do not even know that it exists and are unaware of any negative feelings that might be harboured against them. Genetically and physically there are no clear differences between the human groups, making them all the same. They do; however, all have rules and norms that require them to exclude other humans. Though Rowling uses non-physical reasons for exclusion, she creates similarities to the real world that are hard to deny. One such parallel is the one between the Death Eaters strive for a pure-blooded wizarding community and the Nazis quest for a pure aryan race. Even though the connection may not be obvious to young readers, the fact that Harry and his friends fight such influences conveys an attitude of equal rights which children might be able to comprehend.

Another example of when attitude and choice are important is in the treatment of the house-elves. They are excluded from the magical human community, but at the same time they are an important part of it. Even though they are permitted, and expected, to live within close proximity to the magical humans, there is no sense of similarity between the two species and the House elves are only presented as the Other. There does, however, also exist oppression within this species. Most of them appear to be content with their position as servants, but some join the oppression of witches/wizards with lesser blood-status and some strive for freedom, which renders them immediately labelled as different and Same/Other.

The second non-human species that was analysed were the centaurs. Despite their human-like torso, they have little in common with the human race and are only considered Other. The centaurs are quite happy with being excluded from the magical community, to the extent where they do not seem to view it as being excluded, they have created their own community from which all magical humans are excluded. They even have norms that keeps them from helping or interacting with humans, and any member that breaks these rules will be excluded from the
community instantly, making them the third species in this analysis that practices exclusion of individuals as Same/Other.

By integrating exclusion and the concept of Same/Other within every species and subgroup in the story, Rowling has managed to highlight the arbitrariness of exclusion and of the Other and thereby question its authenticity. Characters within species are put against each other creating the possibility for readers to choose which character to sympathize with. The characters that are presented most extensively are also the ones that aid the protagonist, which places them on the good side of the story. The non-human characters analysed in this thesis that fit this description are Dobby and Firenze, and they are both excluded from their specific community for breaking the status quo, Dobby by enjoying his freedom and Firenze by helping Harry and taking employment at Hogwarts. In other words, their choices caused them to be excluded from one community but also allowed them to be included in another. By creating positive characters that are excluded, Rowling opens the possibility to question oppression and exclusion and see the individual and circumstances that are behind the exclusion.

By applying the Postmodern concept of Same/Other to the series, the thesis has attempted to show that Rowling has managed to create a world where exclusion completely depends on what community an individual belongs to, thereby creating a world where the Other always changes depending on allegiances and racial definition. This is especially clear within the community of the magical humans, where the Death Eaters go to extreme lengths to prove that someone is unworthy of inclusion. By presenting individuals within each species that are happy with the status quo along side those who are not, the author shows that exclusion is a choice and that every living creature has more to offer than what preconceptions and centuries of traditions might suggest.
Works Cited


