

# **Fighting Tyranny in Fantastic Literature for Children and Young Adults**

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vorgelegt  
von  
Karin Kokorski  
aus  
Osnabrück

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# 1. Introduction

## Basic Premise

Recent years have seen an increasing interest in fantastic literature for children and young adults, a fact that has instigated new debates regarding the genre in public and scholarly discourse. While young people might read books such as the *Harry Potter* series for entertainment purposes only, scholars have discovered other reasons to investigate the genre in greater detail. In his article “Cultural Studies, New Historicism and Children’s Literature”, Tony Watkins argues that “the narratives we give [our children] to make sense of cultural experience, constitute a kind of mapping, maps of meaning that enable our children to make sense of the world. They contribute to children’s sense of identity, an identity that is simultaneously personal and social” (Watkins 1992, 183). In her book *Disturbing the Universe. Power and Repression in Adolescent Literature*, Roberta Seelinger Trites goes a step further in stating that literature for children and especially for young adults serve as “a tool of socialization” (Trites 54) that instils “personal social responsibility” and “individual social involvement” (ibid. 81) into its readership. Following this line of argument, the books might change the reader’s perception of and engagement with his or her social environment. My analyses suggest that justifications of war, especially the interpretive directions the books favour, support Watkins’ interpretation of literature as cultural maps, as well as Trites’ portrayal of literature as formative device. I aim to highlight the cultural significance of fantasy fiction for children and young adults and its function as a cultural force of today’s youth.

## Genre Definitions and Scholarly Dispositions

Before I turn to the definitions of children’s and young adult literature, I firstly take a closer look at the fantasy genre. The books under discussion lay out different categories of fantasy literature. While numerous scholars have categorized this genre, I mostly refer to Farah Mendlesohn’s *Rhetoric of Fantasy* (2008) and Gates et al.’s *Fantasy Literature for Children and Young Adults* (2003). None of the categories below are set in stone; rather they paint a general picture, allowing me to classify the books under discussion more easily. The mode of fantasy literature, however, does not necessarily mean a different agenda or reasoning when it comes to the fight against tyranny. Therefore, I only briefly take a closer look at the genre.

Some of the works under scrutiny belong to the category of immersive or secondary world fantasies, meaning they are “set entirely within an imagined world, without any overt reference to the world of the reader” (Mendlesohn and James 253).<sup>1</sup> While these settings are independent of the primary world the reader inhabits (ibid. 254), other stories are set in the primary world, but overlap with this world. These books therefore belong to “low fantasy”, “in which the fantastic appears in the ordinary world [...], as opposed to the epic other worlds of high fantasy” (ibid.).<sup>2</sup>

Additionally, I look into what Mendlesohn and James call “portal fantasy” (ibid.), or what Gates et al call “journey fantasy” (Gates et al. 58).<sup>3</sup> In this type of fantasy, the protagonists travel (most likely through a portal) to another world “while the primary world [is] simply ignored” (ibid. 113). There is often no straight line dividing these categories; especially since in some cases, the fantastic also intrudes into the primary world; these stories additionally belong to what Mendlesohn and James call “intrusion fantasy”, “a story in which the fantastic intrudes into the mundane world” (Mendlesohn and James 253). Those stories that directly relate to the reader’s world might more easily and overtly apply to said world, for example when it comes to drawing connections to historical circumstances.

What all the books in my analysis have in common is that they belong to the category of heroic fantasy literature for children and young adults, which Veglahn explains as follows: “[t]he term heroic fantasy refers here to stories in which a young human protagonist struggles against evil forces, either in an imagined world or in a situation where the supernatural intrudes upon the ‘real’ world” (Veglahn 108). Furthermore, all of these books focus on the quest motif, and therefore belong to what Mendlesohn and James define as “quest fantasy”: “a story (frequently in multiple volumes) involving one or more people travelling through a landscape, learning about the world, and fulfilling some quest or destiny” (Mendlesohn and James 253f.). This does not only comprise the protagonist’s quest for identity, knowledge, peace, or a special object, but also resonates with reader, as “fantasy literature represents our personal need and the universal quest for deeper realities and eternal truth” (Gates et al 2). The books under scrutiny follow Lois Kuznet’s definition of “substantial and original fantasy world” (Kuznet 19). Kuznet continues that “[t]his world has to be both sustained enough (often through two or three volumes) and clearly and significantly delineated

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<sup>1</sup> The *Inheritance Cycle* and the *House of Night* series are two examples of this category.

<sup>2</sup> Examples for this category are *Harry Potter*, *The Dark Is Rising Sequence*, and to a certain degree *His Dark Materials*.

<sup>3</sup> *His Dark Materials*, and *The Chronicles of Narnia* are two examples of this category.

enough (often by incorporating elements of classic mythologies), to serve as a fitting background for a story in which the forces of good and evil clash and in which evil is, at least temporarily, defeated” (ibid. 19f.).

My analyses suggest that all books under discussion, no matter the connection between the primary and secondary world, shed light on the reader’s world. Although fantasy literature is often stigmatized as evasive and escapist (Gates et al 3), I agree with Peter Hunt and Millicent Lenz who argue that “we do not escape ourselves or our situation [when reading fantasy]: fantasy has an inevitable role as a commentary on, or counterpart to, reality and realism” (Hunt and Lenz 8).

Although, according to Gates et al., “[t]he single most important criterion for a successful fantasy is *the capacity to incite wonder*” (Gates et al. 14, emphasis in original), it is far more important for my analysis that fantasy addresses personal growth, moral codes, temptation and questionable adult authority; however, fantasy fiction does not tackle these issues in an explicit manner, but instead conveys its messages through metaphors. In Lori M. Campbell’s eyes, literary fantasy “is *by definition symbolic*” (L. M. Campbell 6; emphasis in original). According to Farah Mendlesohn, this is almost unavoidable as “even the most creative writers find it difficult in [fantasy literature] to avoid impressing upon readers an authoritative interpretation of their world” (Mendlesohn 2008, xx), which in turn influences the reader’s social and cultural perceptions of his/her own world. In her article “The Power of Magical Thinking” in *The Wall Street Journal*, Shirley S. Wang claims that “child-development experts are recognizing the importance of imagination and the role it plays in understanding reality” (Wang 2009). According to Paul Harris, professor at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, this is a necessary step as “[t]he imagination is absolutely vital for contemplating reality, not just those things we take to be mere fantasy” (qtd. ibid.). Additionally, a psychological study published in the *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* in 2014 insists that “reading the *Harry Potter* series significantly improved young peoples’ perception of stigmatized groups like immigrants, homosexuals or refugees” (McKay).

In fantasy literature, the plot goes beyond; beyond everyday life and beyond what realist literature has to offer. It discusses basic human longings and issues in a metaphorical light. Fantasy becomes a vehicle to reflect reality and to discuss value formation and morality. According to Lloyd Alexander “[f]antasy, by its power to move us so deeply, to dramatize, even melodramatize, morality, can be one of the most effective means of establishing a capacity for adult values” (qtd. in Yolen 89). Lloyd

Alexander's quotation not only describes fantasy's capacity to emotionally move the reader, but also points to fantasy's ability to establish "adult values" (emphasis KK). Lloyd Alexander is himself an author of fantasy fiction. His award-winning series *The Chronicles of Prydain* (1964-68) belongs to the category of fantastic literature for children; in his quotation above he admits that he, as an adult, can imprint his values into the books for a young audience. This leads me to another defining aspect of the primary works in this thesis: all books belong to the children's and young adults' literature categories and are marketed as such. These categories are defined by their "intended readership [...] [...] children's literature is not children's literature because it is written by children, nor because it is *about* children, but only because of how it is ostensibly written *for*" (Grenby qtd. in Klaus 2014, 14; emphasis in original).

This creates and enforces an asymmetry of power from the beginning. In her often-cited book *The Case of Peter Pan or the Impossibility of Children's Fiction* Jacqueline Rose argues that "[c]hildren's fiction sets up a world in which the adult comes first (author, maker, giver) and the child comes after (reader, product, receiver), but where neither of them enter the space in between" (Rose 1f.). The adult therefore constructs his/her own representation of a child and childhood, which does not necessarily correspond to reality. Therefore, children and childhood in these books appear to be "invariably a product of the views held within the adult population about children and young people themselves and about their place in society" (Sarland 30). In this sense, this genre expresses "what it is that adults, through literature, want or demand of the child" (Rose 137). Following this argumentation, children's literature as a genre written, published, and distributed by adults can neither escape adult control nor the (conscious or unconscious) ideology and didacticism of the adult author, publisher, and distributor.

However, this does not mean that children's literature is in any way inferior to other forms of literature, or trivial. As Sarland points out, "[t]he very use of the expression 'children's literature' [...] brings with it a whole set of value judgements" (Sarland 30); one such value judgement is the perception of children's literature as "culturally low-profile" (Hunt 2005, 1). These judgements "have been variously espoused, attacked, defended and counterattacked over the years" (Sarland 30). Far from being trivial, Peter Hunt emphasizes the lingering and underestimated importance of children's literature, the

direct and indirect influence that children's books have, and have had, socially, culturally, and historically. They are overtly important educationally and

commercially –with consequences across the culture, from language to politics: most adults, and almost certainly the vast majority of those in position of power and influence, read children’s books as children, and it is inconceivable that the ideologies permeating those books had no influence on their development. (Hunt 2005, 1)

Children’s literature is not only what Zohar Shavit calls “a literary product of society” (qtd. in Klaus 2014, 10), but it is a manifestation of social structures, (political) history, and ideology. Due to all these underlying structures and messages, children’s literature becomes extremely susceptible to ideological manipulation.

However, this is not only true for children’s literature, but also for young adult fiction. Both genres are intimately linked, which their overlapping definitions reveal. Like children’s literature, young adult fiction is defined via its intended readership and its didactic inclinations. Both genres are equally tools of education and socialization. As the label already indicates, however, young adult literature addresses an older readership, and therefore focuses on (slightly) different topics.

Although the “term *young adult* is ambiguous at best” (Firestone 210; emphasis in original), I follow Mendlesohn’s and James’s definition of this genres as “fiction written for, published for, or marketed to adolescents, roughly between the ages of 12 and 18” (Mendlesohn and James 255). Although pinning down the intended readership by chronological age is a helpful first step, it is not the only necessary step.

Setting chronological age aside, the term ‘young adult’ refers to the “transitional period of one’s life that children enter at varying ages and from which adults emerge” (Ramsdell qtd. in Firestone 210). In her categorization of young adult fiction, Amanda Firestone continues in explaining that the topics explored in young adult fiction evolve around “[t]he transitions, or rites of passage, concern the bodily changes brought on by puberty, the growth of independence from parents, the awareness of the self in a social structure with peers, and the development of a specific moral code” (ibid.). While “[c]hildren’s literature often affirms the child’s sense of Self and her or his personal power” (Trites 3), young adult literature focuses on the construction of the subject through social forces and state institutions.<sup>4</sup> More than children’s literature, young adult fiction concentrates on power relations. In these novels, “protagonists must learn about the social forces that have made them what they are. They learn to negotiate the levels of power that exist in the myriad social institutions within which they must function,

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<sup>4</sup> A good example for this is the trajectory of the *Harry Potter* series: it moves its focus from the self and the perception and development of personal power to the creation of subjectivity and the navigation of social structures and state forces.



including family; school; the church; government; social constructions of sexuality, gender, race, class; and cultural mores surrounding death” (ibid.). Consequently, the young adult reader is confronted with social norms and structures, as well as morality, values, and gender roles. While the young protagonist must learn to navigate through societal forces and state institutions in the liminal space of adolescence, the books provide the reader with helpful instructions and vicarious experiences.

As the author (consciously or not) instils his/her morals and values into the books, which, among other things, foreground identity formation, young adult fiction and children’s literature aim at socializing the young reader through the perpetuation of contemporary ideology. While Roberta Seelinger Trites contemplates that young adult fiction reveals a “power and repression dynamic that socializes adolescents into their cultural positions” (ibid. 54), Peter Hunt views children’s literature in a liberal-humanist light: “very often, children’s literature is seen as the last repository of the *dulcis et utile* philosophy: the books may be pleasant, yes, but essentially they have to be *useful*” (Hunt 1999, 10; emphasis in original). Both approaches are equally true and have their indisputable merit. Thus, literature for children and young adults serves as entertainment, to engage the imagination, and to convey knowledge. While fulfilling these purposes, the books simultaneously function as tools of identity formation and socialization.

### Cultural significance and literary placement

The focus of fighting tyranny and the justifications of the consecutive wars in fantasy literature for children and young adults play a noteworthy role in the intertwining of literature and its educational potential.<sup>5</sup> This genre is filled with numerous images of violence, in particular different scenarios of war and its justifications. In the books war constitutes the final battle between good and evil, and thus manifests the protagonists’ ultimate moral decisions between these two forces. According to Seymour Feshbach, war is “probably the most aggressive of all human activities; it is certainly the most destructive” (Feshbach 276). The greatest form of human conflict not only shows the dichotomy between good and evil best, but it is also very exciting for the reader to read. The immemorial battle between good and evil catches the reader’s attention and enriches literature for children and young adults, as the fantasy genre dramatizes the dichotomy between light and darkness.

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<sup>5</sup> In her book *Disturbing the Universe*, Roberta Seelinger Trites even argues that the books are more than educational, and foregrounds their manipulative potential. Depending on the perspective, the books can be read as either educational or manipulative.

History has taught humanity that there are many reasons for war, in accordance with or disguised by, for example, economic, political, or religious motivations. In his book *Politics. A Very Short Introduction*, Kenneth Minogue fittingly proclaims that “[t]he history of Europe has largely been a story of war. [...] European history has been plausibly summed up as preparing for war, waging war, or recovering from war” (Minogue 52). According to this statement, the focus on war in literature for children and young adults is not surprising. Wars to save the respective world(s) form the central conflict of many bestselling novels of the genre and are an important interface between the fantastic and its representations and interpretations of reality. As most of the books are situated in a fantastic realm, however, they consequently ignore the prominence of war in Western history. In the books, war appears to be out of the ordinary, a tool to defend oneself, one’s friends, one’s values, and a necessary evil to achieve peace, the perpetuation of life and love, and, for the reader, poetic justice.

According to former Prime Minister William Ewart Gladstone, “war need[s] to be justified by reference to a common interest of mankind” (qtd. in Dillon 5); this is true for reality and fantasy alike. Due to the constant reality of war in the reader’s world, this topic is especially palpable. Regarding war and its justifications, readers can perceive certain ideologies that are being favoured and perpetuated in thinly veiled metaphors and messages incorporated into fantasy fiction books for children and young adults.

As Roy Scranton states: “war has been and remains one of the most written-about aspects of human existence” (Scranton 351), and according to Kate McLoughlin “[w]ar reverberates through literature” (McLoughlin 1). There is indeed an enormous number of works written about war: for example, books about war in general<sup>6</sup>, about war during various cultural eras, such as the Middle Ages, the Victorian Era, or the twentieth century<sup>7</sup>, about war on different territories<sup>8</sup>, and books that take a closer look at representations of war in literature<sup>9</sup>. Children’s literature and war is also a topic that

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<sup>6</sup> For example: Machiavelli, Niccoló. *The Arte of Warre*. 1560. Trans. Peter Whitehorne. Amsterdam: Da Capo, 1969. Print., Kalyvas, Stathis N. *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*. Cambridge: CUP, 2006. Print., von Clausewitz, Carl. *On War*. 1832. Oxford: OUP, 2008. Print., Zizek, Slavoj. *Violence. Six Sideways Reflections*. London: Profile Books, 2008. Print.

<sup>7</sup> For example: Fussell, Paul. *The Great War and Modern Memory*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000. Print., Keen, Maurice. *Medieval Warfare: A History*. Oxford: OUP, 1999. Print., Lallumia, Matthew Paul. *Realism and Politics in Victorian Art of the Crimean War*. Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1984. Print.

<sup>8</sup> For example: Dawes, James. *The Language of War: Literature and Culture in the U.S. from the Civil War through World War II*. Boston: Harvard University Press, 2002. Print., Harries, Meirion, and Susie Harries. *The Last Days of Innocence: America at War, 1917-1918*. New York: Vantage, 1997. Print., Howard, Michael. *War in European History*. Oxford: OUP, 2006. Print.

<sup>9</sup> For example: Giddens, Eugene. “Honourable Men: Militancy and Masculinity in *Julius Caesar*.” *Renaissance Forum*. 5.2 (2001). 1-34. Web., Hanley, Lynne. *Writing War: Fiction, Gender, and Memory*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1991. Print, Holsinger, M. Paul, and Mary Anne Schofield.

scholars have paid much attention to.<sup>10</sup> In concentrating on justifications for war in fantastic literature for children and young adults this analysis establishes an additional perspective to the field.

### Corpus

My focus solely lies on fantasy fiction published as children's and young adults' literature since World War II. This restriction within the timeframe goes hand in hand with literary scholar Nancy Veglahn's statement that "[a]t some point soon after the middle of the twentieth century, dramatic changes took place in heroic fantasy literature for children. Obviously the world wars, technological and economic changes, and new ideologies and institutions affected this literature" (Veglahn 110). Not only have the latest books for this target group become the centre of scholarly attention, but scholars have likewise been rediscovering and re-evaluating older works.

The following books constitute my corpus: C. S. Lewis's *The Chronicles of Narnia*<sup>11</sup> (1950-56), Susan Cooper's *The Dark Is Rising Sequence* (1965-77), Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials* (1995-2000), J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series (1997-2007), Christopher Paolini's *Inheritance Cycle* (2002-11), Amanda Hemingway's *Sangreal Trilogy* (2005-07), and P. C. Cast and Kristin Cast's *House of Night* novels (2007-2014). Although not all the books feature wars, all display justifications for war and the imperative to fight tyranny.

Although there have been ground-breaking works on, for example, the *Harry Potter* series<sup>12</sup>, the ways in which war is represented and justified only feature briefly in secondary sources, if they are mentioned at all. Furthermore, books such as *The Dark Is Rising Sequence*, the *Sangreal Trilogy* and the *Inheritance Cycle* are still under-researched in scholarly discourse.

All the books under scrutiny belong to a series; this allows the plot to develop justifications for war in greater depths, giving me the opportunity to scrutinize these

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*Visions of War: World War II in Popular Literature and Culture*. Bowling Green: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1992. Print., McLoughlin, Kate (ed.). *War Writing*. Cambridge: CUP, 2009. Print.

<sup>10</sup> For example: Agnew, Kate, and Geoff Fox. *Children at War. From the First World War to the Gulf*. New York: Continuum, 2001. Print., Goodenough, Elizabeth, and Andrea Immel (eds.). *Under Fire. Childhood in the Shadow of War*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2008. Print., Miller, Kristin. "Ghosts, Gemlins and 'the War on Terror' in Children's Blitz Fiction." *Children's Literature Association Quarterly*. 34.3. (2009). 272-284. *Project Muse*. Web.

<sup>11</sup> Except *Voyage of the Dawn Treader*. Thematically, this book does not fit into my thesis, as war justifications do not play any role in this story.

<sup>12</sup> For example: Anatol, Giselle Liza (ed.). *Reading Harry Potter Again. New Critical Essays*. Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2009. Print., Whited, Lana A. (ed.). *The Ivory Tower and Harry Potter: Perspectives on a Literary Phenomenon*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2003. Print.

justifications, their ideologies, and the consecutive messages they convey in detail. This is especially true for the *Harry Potter* series, *His Dark Materials*, and *The Chronicles of Narnia*. Here the first book(s) set(s) the stage, with scenarios of war appearing in either the next book, or at the very end of the series. The reader will not be able to find war in the *House of Night* series or the *Sangreal Trilogy*, as the characters avert world-changing wars. Nevertheless, these two series focus on war justifications and fighting tyranny. With the exception of the *Inheritance Cycle* and *The Dark Is Rising Sequence*, war itself only features briefly in the series under discussion. Though there are significant differences among the diverse series<sup>13</sup>, my analyses concentrate on the similarities regarding the overall topic of fighting tyranny.

Furthermore, my choice of books is based on their large readership, literary standing, and significant popularity. All selected books have had great commercial success and the majority of them have been adapted to film, meaning their plots and messages have reached an even greater audience. Exceptions to this are the *House of Night* novels<sup>14</sup> and the *Sangreal Trilogy*<sup>15</sup>. As all the books have experienced commercial success across national borders, they appear to strike a chord with readers from all over the world, and are therefore not necessarily a reflection of the nation they were produced in, but of Western society as such.

### Methods and Aims

Approaches to literature for children and young adults today are highly interdisciplinary, as this category “has not become the ‘property’ of any group or discipline: it does not ‘belong’ to the Department of Literature or the Library School, or the local parents’ organization” (Hunt 2005, 1).<sup>16</sup> My approach to the books under scrutiny further adds to the heterogeneity of the field, a diversity that “makes the study of children’s literature so complex and fascinating” (ibid. 12).

Located within an intersection of diverse critical theories, my thesis engages literary texts in order to reflect on their capacity to negotiate, challenge, subvert, and perpetuate values and power structures. Motif analysis forms the centre of my analysis. I deploy a varied approach to literary analysis, relying upon literary and cultural theories

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<sup>13</sup> E.g. when it comes to gender representations, images of salvation, or impact of adult authority.

<sup>14</sup> Although the rights have been sold to a major production company, a TV series has not been produced yet.

<sup>15</sup> I included the *Sangreal Trilogy* because it overtly draws connections to prominent books for children and young adults on a metafictional level, and thus actively engages and negotiates works such as the *Harry Potter* series.

<sup>16</sup> Although Peter Hunt refers to children’s literature only, I argue that this is also true for young adult fiction.

(especially theories of ideology) to understand the realizations of the different motifs. As my work is situated within literary discourse, I do not adopt the more educative approaches of reader response or audience survey; neither do I juxtapose the construction of the child to the “real” child. As there has been much attention paid to children’s voices in response to literature, I concentrate on literary representation rather than on the child. In my analysis the motifs themselves take centre stage, rather than whether the (young) reader is aware of the structures and allusions displayed in the texts. Instead, I look into what the text can potentially say to the reader, not what the reader actually makes of it; this means that I connect the texts to pretexts as well as cultural phenomena and backgrounds. Consequently, I outline the underlying ideologies transported in the texts and focus on potential didactic messages and the perpetuation of cultural and societal structures through these books.

I use a text-intrinsic approach and therefore engage in the close reading of the books themselves, a technique that “is alert to the details of narrative structure and attends to complexities of meaning” (Culler 51). From a liberal humanist perspective, this technique emphasises that literature is “of timeless significance” (Barry 17), and “contains its own meaning within itself” (ibid.). Following this interpretation, “[t]he purpose of literature is essentially the enhancement of life and the propagation of human values” (ibid. 18). This approach rests on the assumption that literature educates the reader by contributing to his/her personal and moral development.

Furthermore, this thesis uses a book-by-book approach, which serves to maintain the context of the respective plots and therefore untangle the ideological themes and backgrounds as clearly as possible. I do not summarize the books, but instead provide information regarding their content whenever necessary for the argument. The thesis is divided into two sections, and each section and each chapter has its own introduction and conclusion that explains and summarizes important key concepts.

I aim to unravel the intricacies between fantastic texts for children and young adults and their interpretive implications. Therefore, my project examines the aforementioned literary texts along the following lines of investigation:

- How do the books portray power relations and as a consequence, what specific interpretive schemes do the texts inscribe into the imperative of fighting tyranny and the justification of war? My analysis rests on the assumption that the literary texts function as formative devices, which act according to the conclusions Roni Natov draws concerning the *Harry Potter* novels: the “stories center on what children need to find internally – the strength to do the right thing, to establish a

moral code” (Natov 137). The texts guide the reader not only to find “a moral code,” but to find the moral code the stories deem as appropriate, a code that perpetuates core values of Western society. The plots stipulate explicit positions and dichotomies to the reader in order to further specific interpretations of the world.

- How can an interdisciplinary approach centred on issues such as power, race, and religion further the readers’ interpretations of children’s and young adults’ fantasy fiction? Although the authors situate the wars in the realm of the fantastic, the implications referred to above still bear great significance for the reader’s interpretation of reality. Consequently, literary and cultural theories can be applied to fantastic texts. Only in a reciprocal interplay between interdisciplinary literary theories and the respective plots do these literary works reveal their capacity as demanding bodies of texts with manipulative potential.

By using both research questions I aim to accomplish a deeper understanding of the books under scrutiny; according to McGillis, “understanding something of literary theory will give us some understanding of how the literature we give our children works” (McGillis qtd in Hunt 2005, 1).

The first section, consisting of chapter two and its subchapters, investigates the representations of the evil antagonists as war combatants; I have subdivided the evil opponents along gender lines. I focus on female and male adversaries, such as the witches in *The Chronicles of Narnia*, Lord Voldemort in the *Harry Potter* series, and the Grandir in the *Sangreal Trilogy*. Fantastic literature for children and young adults tends to reduce this central dichotomy of the fight to its basic level: evil antagonists appear to symbolise evil in its purest form, whereas being on the side of good is portrayed as desirable aim in life. Although the protagonists also play an important role to the perception of good and evil, my main focus lies and remains on the stories’ villains.

Comparable to Joseph Campbell’s and Anne Klaus’ approach, I analyse the antagonists in the texts and look for similar patterns, common denominators and underlying structures within the narratives, which then lets me draw conclusions about the culture and traditions that the motifs are embedded in. An example of this is the application of archetypal theory. According to Anne Klaus, “[b]ased on Jung’s theories, ‘archetypal literary criticism’ assumes universality in literature by pointing to recurring motifs and structures that appear so deeply embedded in the human mind and its cultures that they seem to strike a responsive chord in every reader” (Klaus 2014, 2). The books utilize older texts such as fairy tales, Greek mythology or the *Bible*, and

replicate the motifs within, thus establishing a strong intertextual connection to the host texts and their culture. Joseph Campbell's ideas expressed in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* and their modified applications to tropes such as archetypes in children's literature like the female temptress, find a prominent place in my analyses. In this section, the reader can perceive a repetition of these motifs, as well as their development. Intense motif analysis facilitates a closer look at the antagonists and their interpretive implications,<sup>17</sup> and allows me to draw parallels "between ideological structures in the works and those in society at large [that give rise to them]" (Sarland 38). An example for this is the representation of gender in the novels.

Section two comprises chapter three and its subchapters. Following the example of Roberta Seelinger Trites in her book *Disturbing the Universe*, I select different realizations of power structures portrayed in the books and juxtapose them to questions of legitimacy, (Western) morality and values. In all the texts, I look for ideological constructions and their deconstructions. According to Sarland, "all texts incorporate value positions" (Sarland 35), and these value positions are especially apparent in the motif analysis in section two. The analysis incorporates political power and violence, cultural conceptions of power and constructed hierarchies, as well as (religious) ideologies. It is important to note that not every book has the same realizations of the motifs I analyse. I finally subsume these topics under the aspects of just war theory.

In section two I start my analysis by taking a closer look at state authority in the texts. Firstly, I scrutinize individual rulers, for example, King Miraz in *Narnia*, and institutions, namely the Ministry of Magic in the *Harry Potter* books. Additionally, representations of issues such as race and religion in the books form further corner stones of section two, because they equally guide the reader to view and interpret these issues in a specific light. The *Harry Potter* series, the *House of Night* novels, *The Chronicles of Narnia*, and the *Sangreal Trilogy* negotiate questions of race as trigger points for war. Parallels to historical circumstances such as Nazi Germany and its propaganda apparatus serve to highlight specific ideological frameworks. Philip Pullman also takes the construction of difference into consideration in *His Dark Materials*, but concentrates on a representation of what Hartmut Heuermann calls the "unholy alliance" between religion and ideology as a reason for war (Heuermann 10). As Pullman's allusions to history are extremely overt, it is also necessary to take a closer look at the interpretive

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<sup>17</sup> Scholars who did ground-breaking work in the application of archetypal theory to literature are for example Vladimir Propp's *Morphology of the Folk Tale* (1928), in which he analyses Russian fairy tales, and of course Joseph Campbell's famous comparative study about the hero and his quest in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949). Anne Klaus extensively uses this approach in her analysis in *Child Saviours in English Fantasy Fiction for Children and Young Adults* (2014).

implications such comparisons offer. Through issues of (political) authority, religion, and the construction of difference, the reader learns much about the culture and values of the respective world, even if some details, such as specific political mechanisms, remain fuzzy. Furthermore, this analysis invites the reader to find parallels between the fabricated world and the real world, and thus transfer what s/he has learned from the texts his/her own world.

Power structures are intimately linked to ideological convictions and hence “carry with them coded meaning [...] that operates to exercise ideological control of the text” (Drout 231). I agree with Peter Hunt who argues that “ideology is not a separate concept ‘carried by’ texts, but that all texts are inevitable infused by ideologies” (Hunt 2005, 30), especially when it comes to the justifications of war, as these build on cultural and social values that are themselves expressions of ideological thinking.

The texts are social products that equally represent and construct reality. The books not only carry underlying meaning, but also shape and perpetuate this meaning, especially when the plots privilege, for example, some social and cultural values over others, emphasizing the protagonist’s interpretation of the world while de-emphasizing the antagonist’s perceptions. This potentially programs the reader to believe that there is only one truth out there, since “‘ideology’ is what the other side is motivated by while ‘our’ side is again merely applying common sense” (Sarland 31).<sup>18</sup> In fact, ideology is everywhere. As Michael Freeden states: “We produce, disseminate, and consume ideologies all our lives, whether we are aware of it or not” (Freeden 1). Freeden highlights the omnipresence of ideology in our world by saying that “[i]deologies [...] map the political and social worlds for us. We simply cannot do without them because we cannot act without making sense of the worlds we inhabit” (ibid. 2). Thus, we shape and are shaped by the ideology around us.

In this thesis, I apply Charles Sarland’s understanding of ideology, who takes ideology “to refer to all espousal, assumption, consideration and discussion of social and cultural values, whether overt or covert” (Sarland 31), and refer to Michael Freeden’s definition of ideology:<sup>19</sup>

We conclude that meaning is culturally privileged and that, when ideologies construct their arguments, they draw on an exceptionally broad range of conventions and symbols, such as value-systems, religious beliefs, common

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<sup>18</sup> Of course, this is a dangerous oversimplification and neglects the fact that this itself is an ideological statement. After all, as Michael Freeden states, “[s]implification, and occasionally more dangerously oversimplification, is what ideologies do best” (Freeden 65).

<sup>19</sup> In chapter three Terry Eagleton’s definitions of ideology also heavily influence my analysis of the books.



practice and scientific and artistic fashion. In that very important sense, ideologies are always located in a particular context. Even when they employ the language of universalism and of abstraction, it refers to understandings that emanate from particular societies at a specific historical time. (Freeden 60)

Furthermore, “ideologies are endowed with crucial political functions. They order the social world, direct it towards certain activities, and legitimate or deligitimate its practices. Ideologies exercise power, at the very least by creating a framework within which decisions can be taken and make sense” (ibid. 11). This last point in particular informs my readings of the books and the ideology within. My analysis highlights and deconstructs underlying ideological assumptions in order to emphasis the role the books play as tools of education and socialization.

By drawing on the works of political, cultural, and religious theorists, I wish to evaluate political, cultural, and religious concepts in the books, and finally combine these findings with just war theory. Engaging in such a reading ensures that I can draw direct connections between the reality constructed in the books on the one hand, and politics, the construction of difference, religion, and just war theory in the reader’s world on the other. The content analysis leads to broader cultural messages, which comprise assumptions about gender, power, ethnicity, religion, and morality. This methodology emphasizes the relevance as well as the complexity of the books and their educative potential, and facilitates the analysis of the books as tools for the defence and perpetuation of Western values and culture. To accomplish this aim, I take the findings from the previous chapters and view them in the light of the *jus ad bellum* aspect of just war theory in chapter 3.4; this chapter presupposes the knowledge from all previous chapters and only shortly subsumes them within the analysis to view justifications of war more effectively. Chapter 3.4 thus serves as a first conclusion to my prior findings.

According to Helen Frowe, “[t]he primary task of just war theory is to determine and explain the rules of war, with respect to both the initial resort to war and the way in which a war is fought” (Frowe 1). Just war theory is not completely transferable to the conflicts in the books. The fictional wars are often portrayed as civil wars and not as wars between nations. Nevertheless, in this context just war theory provides a solid framework for a meaningful discussion about the legitimacy to go to war. Frowe contents that “[w]ar is, by its very nature, an exercise in destroying lives and property, usually on a very great scale” (ibid.). Therefore, the plots make sure that the reasons heroes engage in war are elaborately laid out for the reader. The analysis of the justifications of war helps me to examine the dynamics of power, the ideological make-

up of the society, and how these aspects find their way into the construction of the subject. Michael Walzer's<sup>20</sup>, Alex J. Bellamy's<sup>21</sup>, and Helen Frowe's<sup>22</sup> depictions and understanding of just war theory, especially of *jus ad bellum*, are particularly helpful in this respect. The fantasy books under scrutiny suggest that the destruction of evil, be it either evil in the form of wrongful authority, the construction of difference, or the use and abuse of religion, requires war in pursuit of (ultimate) peace and the ultimate good.

I view the texts as products of 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century Western civilization so I also build my argumentation on the premise that “we are constructed by the socializing forces pressuring us in all aspects of our lives: relationships with parents and families, gender and cultural patterns and expectations” (Paul 124); after all “literature is a product of the particular historical and social formations that prevail at the time of its production” (Sarland 41). This entails the juxtaposition of non-literary texts with the books and an immersion into issues such as state power, the perpetuation of patriarchal power structures, and ideological constructions. David Perkins describes the aim of New Historicism, feminist historiography, and cultural criticism as follows, corresponding to my methodology: “to resituate literary texts by relating them to discourse and representations that were not literary, and to explore the ideological aspects of texts in order to intervene in the social struggles of the present” (Perkins qtd. in Watkins 1999, 54). My analysis likewise resituates the texts under scrutiny in order to expose ideological structures within the texts and to shed light on the conflicts presented there. This technique facilitates the unravelling of ideological statements within the texts and points to the reasons why they came to be there in the first place. Concerning these points, I agree with Anne Klaus who also uses a historical cultural approach and suggests that “[c]hildren’s literature [...] can be used as a lens through which to regard culture” (Klaus 2014, 13).

Even cloaked in the mantle of fantasy fiction, books such as the *Harry Potter* series and *His Dark Materials* operate as vehicles to address present-day concerns, thus helping the reader understand the present and shape the future. The young readers might

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<sup>20</sup> Michael Walzer is professor emeritus of social science at the Institute of Advanced Study, Princeton, NJ, philosopher, and just war theorist. He has extensively published on for example ethical issues surrounding just and unjust war, social criticism, economic justice, and nationalism

<sup>21</sup> Alex J. Bellamy has widely published on this topic and is Senior Lecturer of Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Queensland.

<sup>22</sup> Helen Frowe is a Professor for Practical Philosophy and Director of the Stockholm Centre for the Ethics of War and Peace at Stockholm University.

therefore enter into a dialectal relationship with culture: they are not only products of their culture but have the possibility to also become its producers.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> This goes hand in hand with Tony Waktins' statement that "[a]ll cultural systems, including language, literature and the products of mass communication, play a part in the construction and reconstruction of the subject. It is in this way, according to the Althusserian wing of cultural studies, that ideology is constantly reproduced by people" (Watkins 1999, 61).

## 2. Combatants

In this chapter, I am looking into the main characters, with an almost exclusive focus on the villains. In children's and young adults' fantasy fiction, villains recurrently find their places within a stereotypical black and white pattern; they are portrayed as being cruel, brutal, and unscrupulous. Though the adversaries do not always start a war per se, they nevertheless bring about unbearable situations in which the saviours feel obliged to act for the greater good and thus save their microcosmic or macrocosmic worlds.<sup>24</sup>

On first glance, there seems to be a huge dichotomy regarding the distribution of power among combatants. The evil characters, all adults or adult-like, have the advantage of being exceptionally gifted in terms of magical and intellectual abilities, as well as life experience and the handling of their skills. Furthermore, most villains create a legal framework that contributes to and enriches their method of conquering the microcosmic or macrocosmic world; to name just a few examples, the White Witch from Lewis's *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, the Church in Pullman's *His Dark Materials*, and Dolores Umbridge from the *Harry Potter* series use this tactic. These characters have acquired the monopoly on power, run the state, and create laws. Their behaviour and their visions of the past, present, and future threaten the (peaceful) societies they live in.

The root of all evil is the villains' megalomaniac thirst for power. The adversaries are often portrayed as figures of disidentification, as they are prone to violence and want to achieve (world) domination. To do so, they stop at nothing to fulfil their longing for (instant) gratification. They start and engage in war to model the world according to their ideas. This entails being at the top of the social scale, the one and only ruler. Due to their moral code of conduct, the saviours feel forced to participate in wars, in order to stop the villain and make the world a better place. "The cruel and life-denying agenda of the villainous characters violates [the] universally acknowledged code of morals and thus leads to what [one] might call just, or justified, wars" (Kokorski 2012c, 142).

In the following chapters, I investigate the antagonists in greater detail, starting with the individual villains, using a text-intrinsic focus. The books under scrutiny include a multitude of adversaries and villainous characters. The range of evil characters varies from characters corrupted by their megalomaniac desire for power, to wicked

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<sup>24</sup> For example, Neferet is stopped from causing a war, as is the Lady of the Green Kirtle, and the Grandir.

witches and whole organisations that want to eliminate people's free will. I have divided the adversaries into gendered categories, in order to be faithful to the binary literary traditions they derive from. Among other things, this analysis encompasses the villains' outward appearance and interaction with the protagonist. Their weapons are also of great importance, as they are deeply connected to the aggressors' actions. All villains have an entourage that follows and supports them. Most of the time, the fabric of these characters plays an interesting part in the overall picture of the adversaries, as the reader can form indirect assumptions about the adversaries when examining their motivation, and the interaction between the villains and their followers.

I start with the female characters and then analyse their male counterparts. Male adversaries "usually confront and challenge the child heroes openly" in contrast to the female adversaries (Klaus 2014, 137). Most antagonists and their strategies fit into these two easily defined gender categories. The analyses of the individual villains serve to uncover and display hegemonic femininity and hegemonic masculinity. To do this, I foreground similarities and discrepancies among the characters. Furthermore, I compare, for example, the evil temptress to mythological and biblical figures, in order to explain and emphasize the characters' interpretive implications and cultural significance.

## 2.1 Female Adversaries

As said above, there are different types of adversaries in the books under scrutiny. In this chapter, I conduct character analyses and draw parallels with the female antagonists' predecessors from works such as the *Bible*. I start with C. S. Lewis's *Narnia* series, namely with the White Witch in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, Jadis in *The Magician's Nephew*, and the Lady of the Green Kirtle in *The Silver Chair*. The next female adversaries are the characters in Susan Cooper's *The Dark Is Rising Sequence*: Polly Withers, Maggie Barnes, and the White Rider; an evil water-spirit and its manifestations in Amanda Hemingway's *Sangreal Trilogy*, and Neferet in P. C. Cast and Kristin Cast's *House of Night* novels follow afterwards. These villains are purely evil and display no redemptive qualities. The next character, Marisa Coulter in Pullman's *His Dark Materials*, is also a dangerous adversary, but an ambivalent one. The last villains under scrutiny are Bellatrix Lestrange and Dolores Umbridge in J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series who also differ from the other adversaries, as they are not typical temptresses. The order of the characters in this section is roughly according to the dates of publication, which coincides approximately with the degree to which they can be considered evil temptresses. I analyse all adversaries concerning their outward appearance, their character traits, their function as evil temptresses, and their role as adversaries in war.

### Female Adversaries in C. S. Lewis's *The Chronicles of Narnia*

As *The Magician's Nephew* is the beginning of the *Narnia* story line, the contemporary reader is likely to start with this book; the recommended order of reading is according to the temporal order of activities in Narnia. Nevertheless, I begin my analysis with the White Witch, and continue with her as Jadis, as the characters were created in this order.<sup>25</sup> The Lady of the Green Kirtle brings my investigation of female adversary in the *Narnia* books to a close.

The topic of the White Witch as a villain has been frequently covered in secondary literature. The works most useful for my analysis are Jean E. Graham's "Women, Sex, and Power: Circe and Lilith in Narnia" (2004), Susan Hancock's "Fantasy, Psychology and Feminism: Jungian Readings of Classic British Fantasy

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<sup>25</sup> In *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, published in 1950, and *The Magician's Nephew*, published in 1955, the female aggressor is supposed to be the same character. The latter book functions as a background story to explain the creation of Narnia and the invasion of evil in this newly formed world.

Fiction” (2005), and Colin N. Manlove’s *C. S. Lewis: His Literary Achievement* (1987). Even though Lewis’ books have been published in the 1950s, literary scholars are still interested in this character. Concerning Jadis and the Lady of the Green Kirtle, however, readers are not able to find a high popularity of these two characters in literary discourse. Graham’s previously mentioned article has been helpful in regard of analysing Jadis, as was Hugh Crago’s “Such Was Charn, That Great City” (1994). In secondary literature, the Lady of the Green Kirtle is a character who has not been as thoroughly examined. Although Jennifer L. Miller, for example, writes an elaborate study on women in Narnia, she does not mention the Lady of the Green Kirtle in her analysis of *The Silver Chair*. Almost the same is true for Hugh Crago, who only mentions this female adversary in passing.

### The White Witch<sup>26</sup>

In *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, the Pevensie children encounter the White Witch who regards herself as “Queen of Narnia and Empress of the Lone Islands” (*Wardrobe* 148), but who is in fact an usurper to the throne (*ibid.* 49). Under her reign, she has transformed Narnia from the fertile, lively country the reader saw in *The Magician’s Nephew*, into a dead land of never-ending winter.

Like everything around her, the Witch is white and cold; her colour and her association with winter instantly expose a correlation with Andersen’s Snow Queen; the proximity to this character establishes the White Witch as a fairy-tale-like adversary.<sup>27</sup> The similarities between the two figures are extremely striking and hint at a conscious decision of Lewis’s to employ an easily recognizable villain that children might have already come across.

The White Witch is correspondingly described as “a great lady, taller than any Edmund had ever seen. [...] Her face was white – not merely pale, but white like snow or paper or icing-sugar, except for her very red mouth. It was a beautiful face in other respects, but proud and cold and stern” (*Wardrobe* 38). Her beauty is cold and distanced, nevertheless she also has raging fire in her eyes (*ibid.* 41), which conveys her threatening and overpowering personality. Although the White Witch is described as beautiful, her dominant characteristics are negative ones. Her red lips seem to be more

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<sup>26</sup> I have also shortly discussed the White Witch as an insatiable villain in “‘I want more!’ The Insatiable Villain in Children’s Literature and Young Adult Fiction”.

<sup>27</sup> In her article “No Sex in Narnia? How Hans Christian Andersen’s ‘Snow Queen’ Problematizes C. S. Lewis’s *The Chronicles of Narnia*,” Jennifer L. Miller also draws a parallel between the White Witch and the Snow Queen. The same is true for Anne Klaus in her article “Sweet-tongued Foes – Female Antagonists in Fantasy Fiction for Children and Young Adults”.

reminiscent of blood than hinting at sensuality.<sup>28</sup> As they form a stark contrast to her white appearance, her lips further emphasise her fierceness. Her unnatural whiteness, which is reflected in her look and in her name, evidently alludes to snow, her cold heart, and overall, her dehumanized appearance and character. As this description appears directly before the moment of temptation, in which her personality changes drastically, her evil and twisted nature becomes even more visible.

Her insignia of power are a golden crown she wears and a “long straight golden wand” she carries (ibid. 38). The crown emphasizes her royal position in Narnia. When she meets Edmund for the first time, the White Witch insists on being addressed properly as Queen (ibid. 40). The acknowledgement by herself and her subjects of her position contributes to her self-importance and pride, which the reader can also perceive in Jadis in *The Magician’s Nephew*. In the Witch’s vision of Narnia, she is on the very pinnacle of the social hierarchy scale.

Obviously, the White Witch uses her wand to channel her powers. To freeze Narnia, she has used a spell (ibid. 131), but her magic is never defined any further. The question of where the wand comes from and how she has access to its magic is not answered. It is a powerful instrument which, for example, can turn creatures into stone. Even Aslan respects the power of the wand: before they talk about Edmund’s future, Aslan asks the Witch to leave her wand behind (*Wardrobe* 148). Only after Edmund breaks her phallic symbol of power during the battle, are they able to defeat the Witch (ibid 186). Another weapon of hers is a dagger with which she kills Aslan. The dagger also fits her personality: “It looked to the children, when the gleam of the torchlight fell on it, as if the knife were made of stone, not of steel, and it was of a strange and evil shape” (ibid. 163).

Lucy has been to Narnia before all siblings cross the threshold and can supply the following characterization about the Witch:

She is a perfectly terrible person, [...] She calls herself the Queen of Narnia though she has no right to be queen at all, and all the Fauns and Dryads and Naiads and Dwarfs and Animals – at least all the good ones – simply hate her. And she can turn people into stone and do all kinds of horrible things. And she has made a magic so that it is always winter in Narnia – always winter, but it never gets to Christmas. (*Wardrobe* 49)

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<sup>28</sup> Susan Hancock alludes to the Witch’s violent nature when she calls the lips “a symbol of bloodshed” (Hancock 54). However, the White Witch’s red lips might also hint at the dangerous nature of her sexuality.



These descriptions subsume the White Witch's villainous character traits and malevolent reign. With her selfishness and the consecutive artificial winter, the Witch has destroyed natural order, demoralized and scared the inhabitants of Narnia, and forced them either into hiding or obedience. With her activities she aims at annihilating freedom, hope, and joy in Narnia. Her life-denying actions keep Narnia in a perpetual state of winter, without the joy this season usually brings.<sup>29</sup> The "unchanging monotony of winter" is not only her symbol (Manlove 131), which corresponds to her inner and outer appearance, but this unchanging environment also represents her aim. The frozenness of the world epitomizes the frozenness of time and hence the ambition of the Witch: she wants this world to be subjected to her will for ever. Freezing the seasons might also allude to her fear of change and death. After all, with perpetuating winter, she creates the illusion that time stands still.

Her character can be traced back to her monstrous ancestors: she is half Jinn and half giant (*Wardrobe* 88). Her evilness is located in her blood which means that her heritage becomes the justification of her character.<sup>30</sup> She is not only not human but comprises two dangerous elements. As Mrs Beaver states conclusively: "That's why she's bad all through" (*ibid.*).

Rather than queen, her official function in Narnia is to be the "Emperor's hangman" (*Wardrobe* 150). As such, she states that "every traitor belongs to me as my lawful prey and that for every treachery I have a right to a kill" (*ibid.*). Here, the White Witch becomes the "female equivalent to Satan" (Graham 35): she is a fallen figure who punishes all wrongdoers.<sup>31</sup> She is also the opposite of Aslan; while she is a creature of selfishness, he is the epitome of selflessness. In agreeing to a pact with the White Witch, Aslan makes a pact with the devil when he willingly substitutes for Edmund. Predictably, the Witch does not honour their agreement but once again reveals her self-serving and treacherous strategy: "Now I will kill you instead of [Edmund] as our pact was [...]. But when you are dead what will prevent me from killing him as well? [...] Understand that you have given me Narnia for ever, you have lost your own life and you have not saved his. In that knowledge, despair and die" (*Wardrobe* 163). Here, the White Witch herself becomes a traitor.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> As C. S. Manlove states: "She simply spreads herself over all Narnia in the form of a dead white frost, allowing nothing else independent life" (130f.).

<sup>30</sup> Here, Lewis thus uses the same deterministic biological justifications I analyse in chapter 3.2 The Creation of Difference.

<sup>31</sup> One of the worst crimes a subject can commit in Narnia is treason, which reveals that Narnia is a world built on trust and faith.

<sup>32</sup> Gracia Fay Ellwood fittingly describes her as a character "who is gratuitously cruel and a betrayer" (qtd. in Miller 2009, 121).

Her inner deformity also becomes apparent in the company she keeps, and in the home she lives. These two aspects additionally serve as tools of characterisation. According to C. N. Manlove, the White Witch “lives only with the unnatural and the deformed” (Manlove 131). Her entourage is consequently composed of the most gruesome monsters: the nameless dwarf, the wolf Maugrim, and “[o]gres with monstrous teeth, and wolves, and bull-headed men; spirits of evil trees and poisonous plants; and other creatures whom I won’t describe because if I did the grown-up would probably not let you read this book – Cruels and Hags and Incubuses, Wraiths, Horrors, Efreets, Sprites, Orknies, Wooses, and Ettins” (*Wardrobe* 159). They reveal themselves as typical bullies who only act if their opponent is weaker than themselves and unable to defend him/herself (ibid. 162). They serve as mirror images of their leader. In contrast to the Witch herself, however, these creatures are as evil on the outside as on the inside and draw the reader’s antipathy right from the start. Furthermore, the line between the Witch’s supporters and opponents is clear cut. This conveys the impression that evil can be easily defined and recognized, and therefore compartmentalized.

The castle in which the Witch lives is a place of desolation and death, and even “Edmund began to be afraid of the House” when he approached it (ibid. 100). The castle is as colourless as the White Witch herself. The Witch’s house with its “dark and evil places” (ibid. 179) forms a stark contrast to Cair Paraval, the home of the human kings and queens, which “looked like a great star sitting on the sea shore” (ibid. 138). In her castle, she keeps her prisoners and the creatures that she has turned into stone; she has picked up her enemies one by one to make them suffer an artificial death. As Graham states, “[h]er castle is hell, from which Aslan frees and restores to life all the captives turned to stone, in ‘a scene suggestive of the harrowing of hell’” (Graham 39). This collection of statues provides the reader with a lot of information about her strategy: she likes to operate in the dark and with a limited number of opponents; she does not survive open rebellion in the end. Her methods are characterized by deceit. In the open, honest battle, after the loss of her supernatural advantage, her fate is quickly sealed.

One strategy to achieve her aim of total domination is her ability to manipulate her victim. As evil temptress, she seduces Edmund and turns him against his siblings. Like the Snow Queen, the White Witch is successful in luring a young boy into her sledge. After Edmund has told her that he is human, the Witch pretends to care for his welfare and enacts the epitome of the good mother figure: “‘My poor child,’ she said in quite a different voice, ‘how cold you look! Come and sit with me here on the sledge and I will put my mantle round you and we will talk’” (*Wardrobe* 42). She not only

offers him shelter, but also food, which underlines the contrast to her character traits analysed so far: to achieve her goal, she pretends to be a kind and nurturing figure. She is not a true nurturing figure, however, as feeding Edmund Turkish Delight is a mere parody of this image; Turkish Delight is neither healthy nor nurturing. The White Witch “epitomizes the fairy-tale witch figure, with ‘witch’ being the first in Jung’s list of ‘evil symbols’ of the mother archetype” (Hancock 54).

According to C. S. Lewis, the White Witch “is of course Circe” (qtd. in Graham 32). The meeting between Edmund and the White Witch is just the first analogy to this temptress. The wand she uses is not only the White Witch’s instrument of power, but also serves another function: the weapon operates as an allusion to the famous temptress.<sup>33</sup> In contrast to the mythical predecessors such as Circe, there is no sexual component in the scene of the first meeting; here, as in other texts, “fantasy substitutes [...] food for sex” (Hunt 2003, 6) and carnal desire with false motherly love. The “motif of faked hospitality” also occurs in numerous fairy tales like “Hansel and Gretel” and “Snow White” (Klaus 2010, 140). Both examples show evil witches who tempt innocent children with food, as in “Snow White”, or food and shelter, as in “Hansel and Gretel;” these moments occur after the children have lost their homes and are susceptible to this evil strategy.

“Like Circe, her temptation is through the mouth: it is candy that captivates Edmund” (Graham 39). Edmund becomes addicted to the enchanted Turkish Delight the Witch offers, as “anyone who had once tasted it would want more and more of it, and would even, if they were allowed, go on eating it till they killed themselves” (*Wardrobe* 45). This is a clear allusion to gluttony as one of the seven sins. It is, however, not only the thing with which she manipulates Edmund. The Witch’s sweet-tongued strategy (Klaus 2010, 137), as well as the deceitful promises she makes, fill Edmund with false hopes and megalomaniac desires: “I have no children of my own. I want a nice boy whom I could bring up as a Prince and who would be King of Narnia when I am gone. While he was Prince he would wear a gold crown and eat Turkish Delight all day long; and you are much the cleverest and handsomest young man I’ve ever met” (*Wardrobe* 45f.). At this point, the narrator uncovers the Witch’s flattery as lies as he reveals that “[Edmund] did not look either clever or handsome, whatever the Queen might say” (ibid.). She soon conquers Edmund with her hypocritical behaviour and his own longing for Turkish Delight, and power. He consequently betrays his three siblings and soon

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<sup>33</sup> As Graham states: “[t]he phallic wand was an important part of Circe’s portrayal in early modern Europe, when her usurpation of masculine power was emphasized in woodcuts showing her with a wand, while a male victim kneels before her” (33).

suffers from the consequences of his betrayal, which he deeply regrets (Kokorski 2012a, 28).

The combination of power and beauty as a dangerous mixture has been long apparent in traditional sources such as the *Bible* or the *Odyssey*. “The temptress figure is one negative female stereotype that has pervaded western consciousness” (Grossman 135) and found its place in the traditional motif of the *femme fatale*, or *La Belle Dame sans Merci*. Both terms are “often used interchangeably [...] to describe a dangerous seductress who destroys the man who loves her” (Fass Leavy 169). Barbara Fass Leavy traces this literary tradition from folklore, biblical literature, and the classical period to modern literature. In a Christian, anti-feminist reading of *Genesis*, Eve’s act of disobedience constitutes the belief in women as the root of all evil. According to this, Judith, Salome, the Whore of Babylon, Circe and the Sirens, and even Andersen’s Snow Queen, demonstrate the danger women pose for their male targets. Through seduction and deceit, these women aim to achieve their goals, which are often intricately interwoven with the death of their victims. Furthermore, the combination of power and beauty enables the temptress to feed on the weakness and vulnerability of the hero or heroine, who becomes a target to these dangerous female figures.

All in all, C. S. Lewis portrays the character of the White Witch as a duplicitous woman concerning her action and appearance: “her beautiful physical appearance hides her foul, malicious nature and life-denying actions” (Kokorski 2012c, 143). When the appearance of the children and Aslan weakens the power of her spell and her claim to the throne, she is consumed by fear, frustration, and anger: The fear of losing her throne motivates her to commit evil deeds, such as enslaving Edmund, punishing more and more creatures by turning them into stone, and murdering Aslan.

The White Witch is a distinctive agent of evil as she does not possess any redemptive qualities. Jennifer L. Miller describes the behaviour of the Witch as “cruel for the sake of being cruel” (Miller 2009, 121). As the White Witch is evil through and through, and as Aslan is the epitome of goodness, it is easy for the (young) reader to think in black and white categories. These categories, however, do not apply to humans. The children, who are supposed to be on the side of good, are not the purely good, but are allowed to make mistakes and learn from them (Schütze 112). Their characters are flawed, but in contrast to the White Witch, redeemable.

## Jadis

The protagonists Digory and Polly encounter Jadis in a world which is not their own. At the beginning of their journey, both use rings to travel to the “Wood between the Worlds” (*Magician’s Nephew* 37). This is an in-between world, from which countless pools lead to other worlds (ibid. 39). They arbitrarily choose a pool, jump in, and travel into another world: Charn. As soon as they arrive, they notice that this world is devoid of life and instead filled with “a dead, cold, empty silence” (ibid. 43). Their first impression is accurate: Digory and Polly do not see a living being, but only a vacant city in ruins; this is their first encounter with Jadis’s power and mercilessness. In this haunting atmosphere, they enter the palace of the city and find the “Hall of Images” (ibid. 55), a room full of richly dressed figures, which are the former kings and queens of this world, frozen to “waxworks” (ibid. 47).

The further the two children enter the room, the more the monarchs change. The rulers in this hall exhibit the degeneration of monarchs from “kind, [...] wise” and happy rulers to cruel and unhappy people who are capable of “dreadful things” (ibid. 48). The first figures form a stark contrast to the last people of their dynasty, who have obviously ruled their people in a brutal and merciless way.<sup>34</sup> The “Hall of Images” displays not only a decrease in kindness and increase in cruelties, but also a description of the fall from grace of this race (Crago 42).

The description of the rulers’ deterioration further functions as an implicit warning for both children and the reader because it sets the stage for the last ruler: “[A] woman even more richly dressed than the others, very tall [...], with a look of such fierceness and pride that it took your breath away. Yet she was beautiful too” (*Nephew* 48). First of all, this observation shows how this person, Jadis, is the culmination of the moral degeneration of these people. Secondly, this quotation emphasises her fierceness, pride, and vanity. That she is “more richly dressed than the others” demonstrates that she makes a point in separating herself from all others, elevating her status above theirs. This shows her perceived superiority to other people, which foreshadows that she will not tolerate anyone else beside her. Thirdly, the narrator describes her as a larger than life person, which fits her physical and magical power, as well as her ambitions, which I examine below. Fourthly, this passage also betrays the fascination, which radiates from her person. She is the epitome of power and beauty. Later in life, Digory even confesses that “he had never in all his life known a woman so beautiful” (ibid.).

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<sup>34</sup> Later Jadis corroborates this statement as she shows the children the location of the dungeons, “the principal torture chamber,” and mentions how her great-grandfather had killed seven hundred nobles, because “[t]hey had had rebellious thoughts” (*Nephew* 57).

The fact that the figures are frozen in time echoes the White Witch's punishments; like the creatures in Narnia, which were turned into stone, life can return to these monarchs. Accidentally, Digory wakens the last figure from her enchanted sleep. In the first moments of their encounter, Digory feels intimidated and threatened by her dominant presence, as "[t]here was something about [her eyes] that overpowered him" (ibid. 54).

During their first meeting, Jadis already reveals her narcissistic side, which is reflected in two different aspects: first of all in her rank, which is of the utmost importance to her, and second of all in her narcissistic self-image. The reader becomes aware of the latter when she imagines a very romantic, fairy-tale-like reason for Digory's and Polly's presence in her world: she thinks that Digory's uncle has somehow seen her as a sleeping beauty and fallen instantly in love with her. For this reason, she thinks he has sent Digory to this world, even if it "shook [his] world to its foundations" in order to release her from Charn and bring her to him (ibid. 62). She will not accept any other explanation. Moreover, she wants the magician who rescued her from the dying world of Charn to worship her and pay tribute to her beauty and status: only if Uncle Andrew "honours [her] duly, he shall keep his life and his throne" (ibid.). Obviously, she is used to using people for her personal gain. When the children contradict her fantasy, she has a violent outburst (ibid 63f.).

The children and the reader witness her self-importance, mirrored in the importance of her status on several occasions. One of these occasions is the devaluation of other people's lives mentioned above. Furthermore, she displays a clear hierarchical thinking in the interaction with other people. First of all, she only talks to those people who are important or can be used in some way for her own ends. When she meets the two children, she talks exclusively to Digory (ibid. 61), "not giving Polly even a glance" (ibid. 53). Her focus on Digory shifts to another male interlocutor as soon as she meets Uncle Andrew: "Now [...] she took no notice of either of [the children]. And that was like her too. [...] Now that she had Uncle Andrew, she took no notice of Digory" (ibid.71). The intrusive narrator even excuses her behaviour, simultaneously creating a distance between the story and the reader: "I expect most witches are like that. They are not interested in things or people unless they can use them; they are terribly practical" (ibid.). Her behaviour is not just "practical", but reveals her self-centred thinking.

Even though she talks to people she perceives as below her status, she constantly makes clear which place they occupy in her hierarchical thinking. She also must keep the (conversational) floor, and silences and insults other interlocutors. For example, she calls Polly and Digory “[m]inions” (ibid. 63), the people of London “[s]cum” (ibid. 89), and Uncle Andrew “dog” (ibid. 69), and she does not tolerate if someone talks to her as an equal (ibid.). She also demands new “clothes, jewels and slaves fit for [her] rank” (ibid. 70). She does neither know nor care that there is no slavery in Britain, but wants to impose her lifestyle on this world.

As soon as she is properly attired, she wants to start her “conquest” (ibid.), and has no doubt of being successful: “Do you think that I, with my beauty and my Magic, will not have your whole world at my feet before a year has passed?” (ibid. 63). She regards herself as a great “Empress” and uses the royal “we” to emphasise her status (ibid. 87). This self-definition reveals her purpose in Digory’s and Polly’s world: She sees it as her prerogative to conquer it, like she has done before: “No stone of your city will be left. I will make it as Charn, as Felinda, as Sorlois, as Bramandin” (ibid. 89). Following the example of Charn, it is very likely that she will not just conquer the world she is in, but will bring death and absolute destruction to it. The book deeply criticizes her behaviour as a destructive, colonising power.<sup>35</sup>

As seen above, the use of language forms a huge part of Jadis’s characterisation and supports “her quest for power” (Webb 10). The spell language of Charn is the tool with which she channels her magical powers, and it characterizes Jadis even further: “it sounded horrid” (*Nephew* 57), when she uses it to break down the door of the palace. Jadis’s relationship with other people is defined by physical violence right from the start: Digory feels her beautiful hand on his shoulder which is as strong as “steel pincers” (ibid. 53).

The absence of language also defines her. As soon as her spell language fails, she is prone to physical violent outbursts, as demonstrated in her encounter with Aunt Letty (ibid. 76f.). Although her original plan to hurt Digory’s aunt does not succeed, she always remains in absolute control of the situation, and does “not lose her nerve even for a second” (ibid. 77). In this situation, she reveals her super human strength and ability. In London, she appears to be “[h]ardly human” to Digory, which is mainly due to the

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<sup>35</sup> Aslan, who creates Narnia, also colonises it. The plot, however, emphasizes his work as a positive example of how to colonise a country: he provides the native animals with language and culture. If there is such a thing as positive colonisation, however, is a topic for a different paper.

“giantish blood in the royal family of Charn” (ibid. 67).<sup>36</sup> Her size and her strength prove that she does not belong into Digory’s world. Nevertheless, Digory is impressed by her “beauty, fierceness, and her wildness”, as she “looked ten times more alive than most of the people one meets in London” (ibid.).

When her magic fails her, she transforms into a wild, animalistic, vengeful goddess: “Her teeth were bared, her eyes shone like fire, and her long hair streamed out behind her like a comet’s tail” (ibid. 82). In this situation, Jadis appears “a figure of dynamic energy and frightening power, far less domesticated than in her later incarnations as the White Witch and the Green Lady of Underland” (Crago 42f.). This creates an even greater distance between her and the civilisation in London, where people attach great importance to composed behaviour of the individual citizen (*Nephew* 89).

This wild behaviour is a stark contrast to her experience in the Woods between Worlds. This magical place serves as the manifestation of sameness and peacefulness; there she seems to be drained off life: she is “so pale that hardly any of her beauty was left”, even her breathing is laborious, and the children are no longer scared of her (ibid. 63f.). In the Wood between the Worlds, there is no place for evilness, it offers no target for Jadis’s depravity as it is an incorruptible world. As agent of unnatural and violent change, Jadis is powerless in the Woods between the Worlds.

In Narnia, however, she reveals her true colour again: Aslan describes her as “a force of evil”, which has entered “a new, clean world” (ibid. 126). As in Charn, she cannot tolerate any other claim for domination than her own. When Aslan begins to sing and thus brings about the birth of Narnia, the Witch feels violently opposed to what the children experience as a nurturing moment of beauty and joy (ibid. 93f.). As the narrator explains, the difference in perception “depends on what sort of person you are” (ibid. 116); Jadis is thus clearly marked as evil. She feels so strongly about her distaste for the lion’s music and his superior magic that “[s]he would have smashed that whole world, or all worlds to pieces, if it would only stop the singing” (ibid. 95). She even throws an iron bar at the lion’s head to stop him from continuing his magic (ibid. 99); again, she uses violence to impose her will on others. When Aslan is immune to her attack, she takes flight (ibid. 100).

She then reappears in the greatest moment of seduction in *The Magician’s Nephew*. Here, Jadis reveals one of her most striking characteristics: her behaviour as a

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<sup>36</sup> In the case of Jadis, the plot locates evilness in the blood as it did with the White Witch.



temptress, which is another quality she shares with her later self the White Witch.<sup>37</sup> As such a figure, she mirrors other famous literary temptresses such as Eve and Circe. “C. S. Lewis presents the reader with an equivalent to the Biblical scene in the Garden of Eden” (Kokorski 2012a, 27). In this scene, Jadis simultaneously represents the serpent and Eve (Crago 43). Before the moment of seduction, however, there is the moment of disobedience. She disobeys the inscription on the gate: she has climbed the wall to the garden and has taken the apple for herself (*Nephew* 149). After this act of rebellion, she wants to convince Digory to take advantage of the forbidden fruit, which functions as an instrument of power. She tries to convince him to use the apple “for private purposes, not, as it is supposed to, for the greater good. She acts very cunningly using different angles to persuade him to give up the mission he tries to accomplish, [namely] to get the apple and bring it to Aslan” (Kokorski 2012a, 27). Firstly, like the serpent in *Genesis*, she talks about “knowledge that would have made you happy all your life” (*Nephew* 148). Secondly, she appeals to the one thing she can identify with – the insatiable need for power: “Eat it, Boy, eat it; and you and I will both live forever and be king and queen of this whole world — or of your world, if we decide to go back there” (ibid. 150).<sup>38</sup> The attentive reader might guess that this is only an empty promise, as she would never share power.

When this strategy does not work, she tries to emotionally manipulate him with the vision of his healed mother: once she will eat the apple “she will be quite well again. All will be well again. Your home will be happy again. You will be like other boys” (ibid.). Here she strikes a nerve and is successful in her appeal. Therefore, she continues with her attempt to compromise him: ““But [Digory’s mother] need never know,’ said the Witch, speaking more sweetly than you would have thought anyone with so fierce a face could speak. ‘[...] No one in your world need know anything about this whole story”” (ibid. 151).

In contrast to classical realizations of the literary figure of the *femme fatale*, but in accordance to the conventions of children’s literature, Jadis’s power of seduction is not based on her sexuality, although Digory is impressed by her beauty at first. Rather, it is grounded on emotions and hence his emotional yearning, which the protagonist is not able to control. With her sweet-tongued strategy, she clearly embodies the voice of disobedience and selfishness. This further emphasises Jadis as a fallen woman. In this

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<sup>37</sup> I have also shortly discussed the topic of Jadis / the White Witch as evil temptress in “‘I want more!’ The Insatiable Villain in Children’s Literature and Young Adults’ Fiction”.

<sup>38</sup> The White Witch makes an almost identical promise to Edmund (*Wardrobe* 46); the Lady of the Green Kirtle mirrors this vow too (*Chair* 125).

scene, one of the central conflicts in the *Narnia* series appears: selflessness versus selfishness.

Her plan to corrupt Digory fails as she does not consider his positive character traits, namely the loyalty to his friends and his sense of justice. These facilitate an unmasking of her temptation. Digory's conscience prevents him from experiencing a fall for human kind in this newly established world and from turning into a mirror image of the witch (Kokorski 2012a, 27). He is, however, not completely immune to her disparaging talk about Aslan when she casts doubts on Aslan's true intentions (*Nephew* 150f.).

“When Digory encounters Jadis in the Garden, she has already eaten one of the apples, and thus undergone a bittersweet transformation” (Kokorski 2012a, 27): “The juice [...] had made a horrid stain round her mouth. [...] the Witch looked stronger and prouder than ever, and even, in a way, triumphant; but her face was deadly white, white as salt” (*Nephew* 149). With the consumption of the apple she has become more powerful, but her beauty is taken away from her; as the White Witch, Jadis is still beautiful, but her beauty is no longer breath-taking. She has thus dehumanized herself, and her liveliness is also reduced. In London, she was bursting with life and “wildness” (ibid. 67); here, her face is transformed to a mask out of waxwork, like in the Hall of Images, and she becomes the domesticated White Witch (Crago 42). Furthermore, this description establishes a parallel to Lilith, a female temptress and demonic figure of Jewish folklore. As Jean E. Graham states, this image of Jadis, the dark red stain on her mouth “recalls the tradition of Lilith as vampire” (Graham 38). Not only the allusions to blood and vampirism hint at Lilith, but also Jadis's image as a temptress and the destruction she leaves in her wake (ibid. 35). She also displays disobedience and strong female power. Her character is deeply flawed, which is in stark contrast to her physical appearance. The narrator thus emphasises the motif that looks can be deceiving.

From the first encounter, Jadis's evilness is clear-cut: she is a ruthless adversary who has waged war before and is prepared to do so again. Jadis's evil qualities are multi-faceted, comprising her attitude towards other people, her violent behaviour, her similarity to famous temptresses such as Eve and Circe, the consequent danger of her beauty, and her megalomaniac ambition to rule the world(s). Jadis combines physical

strength with magical abilities and the power of female seduction; she is a corrupting and life destroying force, which mercilessly acts according to her desire.<sup>39</sup>

### The Lady of the Green Kirtle

The Lady of the Green Kirtle is the first female adversary who leads the protagonists beyond the borders of Narnia the country, into the world of Narnia.<sup>40</sup> Like Jadis, but unlike the White Witch, she is poses a threat from the outside, not from within. Unlike both, she is not yet waging a war, but starts with battles of wits first. The question of where the Green Lady really comes from is not answered in the novel. The owls that help Jill and Eustace on their journey, however, suspect that this woman “may be some of the same crew” as the White Witch (*The Silver Chair* 53). Hugh Crago agrees, and states that the Lady of the Green Kirtle is just another manifestation of Jadis and, hence, the White Witch (Crago 43). This, however, is too simply put. The Green Lady does not show any physical similarities to the White Witch: she is neither larger than any human being, nor unnaturally white. The only loose connections to her predecessor are that she is female and “of divine race, and knows neither age nor death” (*Chair* 125).

At first glance, the Lady of the Green Kirtle is “the most beautiful thing that was ever made” (*Chair* 51), which mirrors Digory’s already mentioned thoughts concerning Jadis (*Nephew* 48). The Lady’s outward appearance, however, is not described further than her being very appealing and always wearing something green (*Chair* 51, 72). The words “most beautiful” (*Chair* 51), and “lovelier” (*ibid.* 72) leave a blank space in the physical description for the reader’s imagination to fill. This description roughly corresponds to that of Jadis / the White Witch, whose appearance is not described in greater detail either; only fragments such as the red lips and shining eyes are accentuated in *The Magician’s Nephew* and *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. These descriptions, or lack thereof, additionally lead to the conclusion that beauty is addressed as an abstract concept, which the child reader should learn to incorporate into his or her understanding of a complex world.

The young characters in the story, Jill, Eustace, and Rilian, are quickly led astray by the Lady’s lovely outward appearance and her musical voice. Very early in the story, the owls and Jill suspect that the Lady of the Green Kirtle is a façade of the poisonous

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<sup>39</sup> For all these reasons, I completely agree with Jean E. Graham who summarizes Jadis as follows: “Jadis is clearly motivated by a lust for power: first over her own world of Charn, and then over Narnia. She possesses the seductive force of Circe and Lilith” (38).

<sup>40</sup> This is not the first time the boundaries of Narnia are left behind. In *The Horse and His Boy*, plot-wise book three of the series, the reader already becomes aware of the fact that Narnia is only one country among many.

worm that killed the Queen of Narnia, King Caspian's wife, who was Prince Rilian's mother (*Chair* 52). This, however, is forgotten as soon as Jill meets the Lady and is manipulated by her charming, even alluring looks, and her voice, which is "as sweet as the sweetest bird's song, trilling her R's delightfully" (ibid. 72). With her way of speaking, the Lady separates herself from all others and thus marks herself as outlandish. She is still foreign to the land, while the White Witch already made this world fit her appearance, which might still be the Lady's plan. Her looks, her voice, her "trilling [...] R's", and the "richest, most musical laugh" (ibid. 73) make her appear less threatening; this simplifies the task of manipulating the children into trusting her during their first encounter.

For the attentive reader, the double nature of the Green Lady becomes apparent quickly, as was the case with Jadis / the White Witch. The older characters, like Drinian or Puddleglum, are cautious and suspicious when they see the woman. Although Drinian also regards her as "the most beautiful lady he had ever seen" (*Chair* 51), his further description of her comprises a more negative association: "she was tall and great, shining, and wrapped in a thin garment as green as poison" (ibid. 51f.). He readily categorizes her as being "evil" (ibid. 51). During his first encounter with the Lady, Puddleglum speaks "very stiffly and on his guard" (ibid. 72), as he does not trust strangers as the children do;<sup>41</sup> he thinks that she is "[u]p to no good" (ibid. 74).

Unlike the White Witch, the Lady of the Green Kirtle has no weapons that can be used in open combat. Her only weapons are her outward appearance, her ability to manipulate and deceive others, and her spell magic. Her magic is strengthened by the green powder that she throws into the fire and "a musical instrument rather like a mandolin" supports this magic (*Chair* 138). The magic obscures the victims' senses and makes it easier for her to mould them according to her needs. Furthermore, she possesses the silver chair that keeps Rilian under her spell. The reader might consider as a weapon her ability to transform into the great green serpent that killed Rilian's mother. This is another form of deception, which mainly characterizes her strategy.

The colour green is often associated with nature and nature's nurturing and fertile power. In this context, however, the opposite is true: the Lady of the Green Kirtle represents poison, the power of manipulation, and destruction. The ability to metamorphose into a serpent destroys her human façade and establishes a direct connection to the Biblical agent of seduction in *Genesis* (*Genesis* 3:1).

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<sup>41</sup> With all three characters (the White Witch, Jadis, and the Lady) the plot makes a misogynist point, because it emphasises that beautiful, female strangers are not to be trusted.

Her entourage and army consist of Earthmen. Although among the Earthmen, there are “no two alike” (*Chair* 121), “in one respect they were all alike: every face in the whole hundred was as sad as a face could be” (ibid. 114f.). With a spell, the Lady of the Green Kirtle forces them to be her slaves, creatures of Underland, and strips them of their identities: “We didn’t know who we were or where we belonged. We couldn’t do anything, or think anything, except what she put into our heads” (ibid. 160). This forced obedience establishes a parallel to her predecessors: like the White Witch and Jadis, the actions of the Lady of the Green Kirtle are purely self-serving, and her subjects must suffer the consequences.

Like Jadis / the White Witch, the Lady of the Green Kirtle is an evil temptress. In contrast to her predecessors in Narnia, she has two facets and a more efficient disguise: the fairy-tale-like pretence of being the nurturing mother, and the classical counterpart of using her female sexuality to seduce her victim. Just as the witch in “Hansel and Gretel,” she tempts the children Eustace and Jill with food and shelter, located in the Giant City of Harfang. They are so obsessed with the thought of a warm meal and warm bed that they become frustrated with the hardship of the journey and Aslan’s signs: “[...] whatever the Lady had intended by telling them about Harfang, the actual effect on the children was a bad one. They could think about nothing but beds and baths and hot meals and how lovely it would be to get indoors. They never talked about Aslan, or even about the lost prince, now” (*Chair* 76).

In contrast to the fairy tale witch in “Hansel and Gretel,” it is not the Witch’s own home that provides food and shelter. The giants in Harfang are a tool in her evil plan. The Green Lady manipulates the children and leads the three companions away from Aslan’s mission in order to remove them as potential obstacles. This is highly reminiscent of “Little Red Riding Hood,” in which the young girl also strolls from the predetermined path and almost dies due to this lack of obedience. In Harfang, the giants want to cook and eat Jill, Eustace, and Puddleglum (ibid. 107). Due to the hardship of the quest, it becomes easier for the Witch to manipulate the children; the path Aslan has laid out for them becomes a tiresome burden under the influence of the Witch.

While Jill and Eustace are merely fascinated by the Witch, the “Emerald Witch’s hold over Rilian is sexual” (Graham 40), mirrored in the roles they fulfil in Underworld: “she is his lady, he is her knight” (ibid.). The Emerald Witch uses her “qualities of female sexuality and power” (ibid. 32) to seduce Prince Rilian, which characterize her as a *femme fatale*. As Rilian is apparently no longer a child, but an adolescent whose sexuality is awakening, he proves to be vulnerable to the Lady’s sexual seduction.

Considering Rilian's way of talking about the Emerald Witch, the emphasis on medieval chivalric service and the corresponding image of female perfection becomes obvious: "I can hear no words against my Lady's honour. [...] You do not know her. She is a nosegay of all virtues, as truth, mercy, constancy, gentleness, courage, and the rest" (*Chair* 123). He loses himself in her as he has no separate identity from hers: the definition of his self is closely linked to his relationship to the Lady of the Green Kirtle: "Her kindness to me alone, who can in no way reward her, would make an admirable history" (*ibid.*), "I am the more thankful to her for all her infinite bounty to such a poor mortal wretch as I" (*ibid.* 125). He forgets his true identity as he does not know that he is Prince Rilian; the Lady of the Green Kirtle aims to keep him ignorant of his rightful position in order to fulfil her ultimate goal and rule Narnia (Graham 40).

In his enchanted state, Rilian serves her with unquestioned obedience and love, and justifies it with a rhetorical question: "[i]s not that a lady worthy of a man's whole worship?" (*Chair* 128). For him, she is his saviour, who delivers him from "the grievous enchantment [he] lie[s] under" (*ibid.*). He has forgotten his sense of honour regarding the vengeance of his mother's death. All his positive feelings are projected on the Emerald Witch. She holds Rilian captive for 10 years (*ibid.* 137) and waits for the right moment to invade Narnia and rule it through her puppet Rilian: "In ruling that land, I shall do all by the counsel of my Lady, who will then be my Queen too. Her word shall be my law, even as my word will be law to the people we have conquered" (*ibid.* 127).

In Underworld, she shows her true face to the children when she surprises them after they have freed Rilian: "She turned very white; but Jill thought it was the sort of whiteness that comes over some people's faces not when they are frightened but when they are angry. For a moment the Witch fixed her eyes on the Prince, and there was murder in them" (*ibid.* 137). This description reveals her resemblance to Jadis and White Witch, who were also unnaturally white and at times had blazing eyes. In this situation, the Emerald Witch does not confront her opponents directly, but tries to convince the children through cunning and deceit.

The Lady of the Green Kirtle not only binds her victims to herself through her sexuality or magic alone. She uses her rhetoric abilities, coupled with her magic to make the children doubt and forget elementary things they know. First of all, she asks the children and Puddleglum to deny everything they know about their land of origin; and they obediently repeat what the Witch told them (*ibid.* 140). Secondly, they must deny the sun, something that does not exist in Underworld. The Witch argues with the children and Puddleglum that there is nothing like the sun, and explains to them that

they are trying to turn something familiar, like a lamp, into something unfamiliar and bigger than real life (ibid. 142). She wants to draw them closer to her own world of darkness and lies. Again, they obediently repeat that “[t]here is no sun”, and “[t]here never was a sun” (ibid.). The last and final test of the Witch makes “the enchantment almost complete” (ibid. 144). They have to deny Aslan’s existence in order to become her creatures. Her argumentation mirrors the intellectual hypothesis of atheism:

You have seen lamps, and so you imagined a bigger and better lamp and called it the *sun*. You’ve seen cats, and now you want a bigger and better cat, and it’s to be called a *lion*. Well, ‘tis a pretty make-believe, though, to say truth, it would suit you all better if you were younger. And look how you can put nothing into your make-believe without copying it from the real world, this world of mine, which is the only world. But even you children are too old for such play. As for you, my lord Prince, that art a man full grown, fie upon you! Are you not ashamed of such toys? Come, all of you. Put away these childish tricks. I have work for you all in the real world. There is no Narnia, no Overworld, no sky, no sun, no Aslan. And now, to bed all. (*Chair* 143f.; emphasis in original)

This test of loyalty reveals several things. Firstly, it unveils the role the Witch attributes to herself: the mother. In this scene, she scolds them because of their seemingly immature behaviour of making up stories and thus establishes herself as the older and wiser person of authority, able to rationalize the world. Additionally, she reveals a faked maternal solicitude, which is founded in her perception as a superior being. Moreover, she sends them all to bed, thus emphasising the social hierarchy and the chain of command. In her reasoning, she not only addresses their emotional capacity, but also their capability of rational thinking. Not only is her bite as a serpent venomous, as exemplified in the destiny of Rilian’s mother, her ability to manipulate others is equally poisonous. As displayed above, she repeatedly encourages the children to stray from Aslan’s path, and almost succeeds in reshaping their world picture according to her desire.

Secondly, this passage presents the reader with a tradition of religious criticism. With his theory of projection, Feuerbach concludes that “das göttliche Wesen ist nichts anderes als das menschliche Wesen” (Feuerbach 1961, 75), which means that “God is the imaginative projection of the promise of man” (Reisz 185): “*Homo homini Deus est*” (Feuerbach 2013, n.p.). Furthermore, as Steven Lovell states, this scene provides the reader with an example of the “[...] Freudian critique of religious belief. According to that critique, religious beliefs are illusions” (Lovell 43). The Emerald Witch reasons

that the children wanted to create something that exceeds reality, being “bigger and better” than the concepts which already exist, and labels their belief in Aslan as a mere result of wish-fulfilment (ibid. 45) and deceitful projection. Lovell points out that “Sigmund Freud argues that the belief in God results from the wish for a father figure to protect us” (ibid. 43), and thus establishes a direct exchange point between the cat and lion simile and the father and God simile (ibid.). At this point, the children and Puddleglum cannot prove their conviction, but their belief still delivers them from the Witch’s clutches. Having a young readership in mind, Lewis obviously thought that children are not too young to be confronted with criticism of religion in a metaphoric way.

Thirdly, the ground for this argumentation is the sense of insecurity and insufficiency on the children’s side. Only the characters with a strong sense of self and an equally strong belief in Aslan pass the test and withstand the moment of temptation and the Lady’s duplicity. Each one of them is an imperfect creature and therefore vulnerable to her cunning method. As not even the children chosen by Aslan are perfect, the child-reader is also permitted to display weaknesses; this passage reassures the young reader that s/he can withstand temptation if his or her belief is strong enough.

All in all, the strategy of denial takes place almost three times and is highly reminiscent of Peter’s denial of Jesus in *Matthew* 26:69-75, but with a twist. When it comes to the third time of denial, Puddleglum frustrates the Lady’s plan with a sacrifice on his part: he literally goes through fire and thus purifies the children’s thoughts again (*Chair* 144). They do not deny knowing and serving Aslan, and thus do not fail the test of loyalty as Peter did with Jesus. After the children have freed themselves from the enchantment, the Witch resorts to physical violence and turns herself into the serpent.

Jean E. Graham comments on the distribution of gender roles in these *Narnia* books as follows: “Good and evil become polarized along gender lines: the deity remains masculine, while the two witches replace male characters in assuming responsibility for the fall of mankind and the crucifixion of mankind’s Savior” (Graham 32). This is especially true for the White Witch, and almost becomes true in case of the Lady of the Green Kirtle. Lewis’s female adversaries are modelled after similar patterns, including their intertextual images of female temptresses. This leads to the conclusion that Lewis deliberately employed these figures to clarify and emphasize the characters’ disposition. These female villains represent (medieval) images of demonic femininity and malignancy, which can also be found in the *Bible* and *Odyssey*.



Jadis / the White Witch and the Lady of the Green Kirtle are highly exemplary villains. All three female adversaries share the uncompromising will to control the world: Jadis fights an open war and even destroys everyone in Charn with the deplorable word; the White Witch also wages a war to keep in control of Narnia; the Green Lady wants to conquer Narnia with a *Blitzkrieg*. As an old dwarf states after the adventure in Narnia is over: “those Northern Witches always mean the same thing, but in every age they have a different plan for getting it” (*Chair* 179). Again, evil is a separate entity and has to be destroyed over and over again, in order for there to be freedom and peace on earth. In relation to this, all three novels evolve around the definitions of legitimate or illegitimate claims to power, and define the characteristics of good and bad rulers of a country.

On first glance, Jadis / the White Witch and the Lady of the Green Kirtle seem to be immortal, as they are all able to survive for a very long time. Nevertheless, Aslan in *Wardrobe*, and the Prince Rilian in *Chair* kill their adversaries and bring peace to their country for the time mentioned in the respective book. The mortality of evil, however, turns out to be false. Although, for example, the White Witch’s death seems to be permanent, she almost reappears in the fourth novel, *Prince Caspian*. In this book, an evil Hag states: “who ever heard of a witch that really died? You can always get them back” (*Caspian* 146). Evil seems to be a force which is not easily eradicated and can always return to the earthly realm. So there must always be people who fight evil in the world. This conclusion hints at a dualistic world picture and the potential, educative, role of the books.

#### Female Adversaries in Susan Cooper’s *The Dark Is Rising Sequence*

Susan Cooper’s *The Dark Is Rising Sequence* offers three different female adversaries who are part of a greater pattern of evil: Polly Withers, Maggie Barnes, and Mrs Rowlands, also known as the White Rider. The variety ranges from a young, seemingly innocent woman, to older, motherly figures.

Although this series has been frequently analysed in various books and articles, critics almost exclusively emphasise the tradition and realization of the Arthurian myth or Arthurian romance in Cooper’s works.<sup>42</sup> Cooper’s description of the English and Welsh landscape and the issue of (national) identity have also captivated scholars such as Rebecca Knuth and her book *Children’s Literature and British Identity. Imagining a People and a Nation* (2012) and Charles Butler’s *Four British Fantasists: Place and*

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<sup>42</sup> As for example in Lois R.Kuznets’ “‘High Fantasy’ in America: A Study of Lloyd Alexander, Ursula LeGuin, and Susan Cooper” (1985) or Mary Frances Zambreno’s “Why Do Some Stories Keep Returning?: Modern Arthurian Fiction and the Narrative Structure of Romance” (2010).

*Culture in the Children's Fantasies of Penelope Lively, Alan Garner, Diana Wynne Jones and Susan Cooper* (2006). In his book *Englische Kinder- und Jugendliteratur* (2008), Thomas Kullmann analysed the second book of the series in regard to its quest motif. Although Cooper published her books during the 1960s and 1970s, critics still consider her books worth investigating. So far, however, the characters under scrutiny have been neglected in secondary discourse.

### Polly Withers

Polly Withers is solely present in the first book of the sequence, *Over Sea, Under Stone*. She first appears with who seems to be her brother at the Drew's house: On the surface, she and Norman Withers seem to be very harmless and likable "with [their] beaming smiles bright in sun-tanned faces" (*Over Sea* 29), and their fashionable clothes. The latter, however, emphasise the artificiality of their bearers, and thus provide the reader with an allusion to their camouflage, as "[t]hey looked like beings suddenly materialised from another very tidy planet" (ibid. 29f.). Polly is repeatedly described as being pretty (ibid. 30, 33, 69), even as "very attractive and healthy" (ibid. 74). Not only is her physical appearance appealing, she is also helpful (ibid. 30), charming, and tries to bond with the Drew children in order to gain their trust, for instance when she "made a charming, conspiratorial little grimace at" the three Drews (ibid. 75). To emphasise her friendliness, she seems to be constantly (brightly) smiling at them (ibid. 74, 75, 76), thus making herself appear harmless and welcoming. When she, her brother, and Mr Hastings have captured Barney, she is the one asking Mr Hastings for food for the young boy, thus fulfilling the role of the female nurturer and maintaining the image of deceptive hospitality already mentioned in connection with fairy tale witches earlier.

From the start, the reader can perceive contradictory behaviour in Polly: she tries to bond with the Drews, while simultaneously distancing herself from them when "smiling down" at Simon (ibid. 32), and labelling them as "you children" (ibid. 33). Though Polly is called a "girl" (ibid. 29), the intuitive Jane in particular perceives a difference in age and experience between Polly and herself: "She was a very pretty girl, Jane thought, watching her. Much older than any of them, of course. [...] Jane suddenly felt extremely young" (ibid. 30). Polly's behaviour betrays her perceived superiority to the Drew children as she tries to use them to find the map they are all looking for (ibid. 33).

Apparently, Polly's outward appearance and her charming behaviour are designed to appeal to the young Drew boys and other people, like Bill, who serves her

because “he thinks she’s wonderful” (ibid. 75). C. N. Manlove argues that the White Witch’s company consists of unlikable and evil creatures (Manlove 131); the same is true for Polly Withers, who introduces Bill as “our right-hand man. Without him the *Lady Mary* couldn’t do a thing” (*Over Sea* 75), although he is an unsympathetic and violent boy. Her sweet-tongued flatteries, as well as her appearance are tempting aspects she shares with her literary predecessors and successors in this chapter. Similar to the plotlines in the other books under scrutiny, there is a moment when the female villain loses her mask of sympathy and sweetness and reveals her true face. Her dissatisfaction, for example, becomes obvious in the quality of her voice: “Through the sweet smile Miss Withers’ voice was cold and tight as a steel wire” (ibid.). In this scene, Polly may remind the reader of the Narnian witches, who are also able to switch their friendly behaviour on and off, revealing their manipulative strategies and the multitude of roles they try to play: in this case a friend to the Drews and instructor to Bill.

The loss of her mask substantiates itself in the loss of her brightness, which was always manifested in her smile, voice, or clothes. Now, “[h]er outline was dark and menacing against the sunset sky, and they could not see her face. [...] The sight of [Polly and Bill] both poised there filled Jane with panic, and she suddenly felt frightened at the silence and emptiness of the headland” (ibid. 80). Miss Withers’ voice has turned from bright and charming to being “flat expressionless” and scares Jane to the core (ibid. 81).

Her change even culminates in a metamorphosis: “Miss Withers came down towards them, and they drew back from the sight of her face, twisted by rage into something frightening and unfamiliar, no longer attractive, no longer even young. She snarled at them” (ibid. 81). This quotation emphasises her rather animalistic behaviour and suggests that the shape of a girl is not her true shape. Especially when she is wearing the costume of a black cat later, she appears to be “sleek and inhuman in the black cat’s skin” (ibid. 141), which further reveals Polly’s dehumanization. Furthermore, this costume connects her to the fairy tale witch. According to Lydia Gaborit and her co-authors, part of the myth of the witch was that she “had the ability to turn into animals” (Gaborit et al 1170) and that she had a domestic familiar such as a cat (ibid. 1171); this familiar is enshrined in the tradition of the fairy tale witch and frequently found and still finds its way into illustration of fairy tales such as the famous picture about “Hansel and Gretel” by Hermann Vogel (Tatar xix).

Polly Withers clearly belongs to the Dark, however, her position regarding the hierarchy of evil is not transparent. She is obviously not a Lord of the Dark, but a

subordinate and obedient servant to Mr Hastings, who later turns out to be the Black Rider, one of the great Lords of the Dark. To him, she talks in “a peculiarly hushed, reverent voice” and calls him “sir” (*Over Sea* 141). Other than that, the reader is left in the dark concerning her background and true identity.

### Maggie Barnes

Maggie Barnes appears in the second book of the series, *The Dark Is Rising*. Not unlike Polly Withers, Maggie seems to be only a minor figure allied to the Dark. Like Polly she is an agent of the Dark who assists this power in its war against the Light. In contrast with Polly, however, who is only associated with the myth of the witch, Maggie Barnes has a more obvious connection to this archetype of female and most of all feminine power; she is even called the “witch girl” (*Dark* 69).

Her first appearance shows her as “the farm’s round-faced, red-cheeked dairymaid, who always reminded Will of an apple” (ibid. 8). In contrast to the witches in Narnia and Polly Withers, she is not regarded as being attractive or sexually tempting; her outward appearance does not correspond to the dominant beauty ideal, as she has a “dumpling form” (ibid. 64)<sup>43</sup>. Taking all this into consideration, she occurs to be a completely normal and harmless local girl; there is “[n]othing sinister about Maggie” (ibid.).

When Will experiments with his newly awakened powers and loses control over them, he is relieved when the stranger who approaches him and the Walker is “*only* Maggie Barnes” (ibid.; emphasis KK). In this situation, she also appears nice and harmless when she “beamed at Will” (ibid.) and uses her “round Buckinghamshire voice” (ibid.) to talk “amiably” to him (ibid. 65). The illusion of normativity is soon shattered, when Maggie freezes the Walker in time.<sup>44</sup> Here, Maggie uses her powers in front of Will for the first time, whose intuition warns him of what is to come: “A dreadful sense of misgiving began to creep over [Will], like a chill of a cold breeze” (ibid.).

Like the other characters discussed above, Maggie undergoes a metamorphosis, revealing her true face to Will. However, this change is not as dramatic as in the case of the Lady of the Green Kirtle, or as treacherous as in the case of Polly Withers. It

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<sup>43</sup> *The Dark Is Rising* was first published in 1973. The prevailing female beauty ideal at that time was dominated by women like Lesley Lawson known as Twiggy (1960s) or Farrah Fawcett (1970s). That Maggie is “round-faced” (*Dark* 8) and “apple-cheeked” (ibid. 64) might be a hint at the time she was born in, when her beauty might have been appreciated as the ideal of that period and her seductive powers were thus at their highest.

<sup>44</sup> This means that he is unable to move his body, but is otherwise fully conscious of his surroundings.

becomes apparent in her tone of voice and change of manner: A command “flicked out viciously, and then she was all soft sweetness again, as if her gentle voice had never changed” (ibid. 65f.), and her smile turned cold (ibid. 66). Due to her powers and her metamorphosis, including her mocking behaviour, Will identifies her mind as “the mind of the Dark” (ibid. 66), although he does not know any specifics. That she does not transform into something else but stays the allegedly harmless dairymaid, emphasizes her power of deception, and makes the effect all the worse: “Maggie broke into a low gurgle of sneering laughter that sounded the more evil for the rosy openness of the face from which it came” (ibid. 67). Like the other temptresses, her motivation seems to be her desire for power, as she stares “greedily at the two circles” on Will’s belt (ibid.).

As analysed above, Narnian witches hold a certain attraction to their victims, as does Polly Withers. Maggie Barnes, on the other hand, does not use her sexual power over Will to achieve her goal. Apparently, Will is too young to fall into the trap of her (sexual) attraction. In the scene discussed above, there are only hints to the *femme fatale* figure and her (figurative) castrating effect: Maggie freezes Will in time and unbuttons Will’s coat to steal his belt with the signs, thus taking his power and potentially causing his pants to fall down (ibid. 66). This episode of sexual allusion and embarrassment is accompanied by Will’s impotence to resist her powers. Only his adult master can save the pubescent boy and restore his power. When Merriman arrives and establishes his dominance over “the girl of the Dark” (ibid. 88), Maggie is “grovelling wretchedly in the snow” and “wailed aloud” (ibid. 68), and “[t]hen she scuffled away across the snowy field like a small hunched animal” (ibid.). As with the previous adversaries, Maggie Barnes is dehumanized at this moment. Merriman uses her “real name” (ibid.) and thus her true identity and nature as a weapon against her.<sup>45</sup> He overpowers her, causes her to flee in submission and apparently puts her in her ‘rightful’ place. It is interesting that the book does not openly employ Maggie Barnes as an evil temptress who seduces Will.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> The difference between one’s given name and one’s true name has become a literary tradition also apparent in Ursula Le Guin’s *Earthsea* series, and more recently, in Christopher Paolini’s *Inheritance Cycle*. In children’s and young adult literature, this trope can be connected to the search of the inner self, a ritual of initiation. Siegmund Hurwitz explains that this tradition derives from “einer archaischen, magischen Vorstellung: Denn der Name eines Gottes, eines Dämons, aber auch eines Menschen oder sein Bild ist ebenso Teil seines Wesens, wie sein Körper oder seine Seele” (70); which means that the name of a God, a demon, as well as a person or his/her image is also part of his nature, as is his/her body or soul.

<sup>46</sup> The producers and screenwriters of the film adaptation took greater liberties concerning this literary tradition. In *The Seeker: The Dark is Rising* (2007), Maggie is a charming and very handsome young woman Will Stanton is attracted to, and displays greater similarities to the evil temptress than in the literary version. The plot of the movie highly differs from the book: for example, Maggie Barnes tries her best to make Will trust her, using her alluring and sexual qualities to get the signs from young Will.

Susan Cooper does, however, use this literary tradition regarding Maggie Barnes in her interaction with the Walker, who is highly susceptible to (sexual) temptation as he feels betrayed by the Light and also desires their powers (ibid. 114). At a feast in 1875, Maggie attracts the attention of the man then known as Hawkin with her noticeable red dress, her smile, and coquettish behaviour (ibid. 113). She dances with him and, like the serpent in the Garden of Eden, whispers tempting and treacherous words into his ear, causing his figurative fall. As Merriman comments: “He will have a sweet picture of the Dark to attract him, as men so often do, and beside it he will set all the demands of the Light, which are heavy and always will be” (ibid. 114).

As this scene demonstrates, Maggie Barnes fits into the role of the evil temptress. Regarding Will, however, Maggie only functions as a plot device. Due to her actions, Will learns about the old ways, his education about magic becomes more elaborate, he learns to restrain his power, and in a true moment of seduction, he witnesses human fallibility.

#### The White Rider

Regarding Blodwen Rowlands, her appearance in the fifth book of the series is the most interesting. In *The Grey King*, she is mentioned as a minor character, but in *Silver on the Tree*, her role as one of the great Lords of the Dark, the White Rider, is described in more detail. Being one of the great Lords of the Dark, the White Rider is an extremely powerful agent of the evil. She is also one of two motherly figures that oppose the Light.<sup>47</sup>

As Blodwen Rowlands, the character appears purely in the background, as John Rowlands’ wife. In *The Grey King*, John Rowlands lovingly attributes his wife with having “a warm heart and a good ear” (*King* 98), and states that she cared for Bran Davies, an important figure allied to the Light, when he was a baby, after his mother left Owen Davies (ibid. 99). This picture of a compassionate woman is further developed in *Silver on the Tree*: In one of their first meetings with her, the Drew children are driven into Mrs Rowlands’ “comforting, outstretched arm”, and soothed by her “smiling face”, when dozens of vicious and dangerous polecats attack the children (*Silver* 106). As the choice of words illustrates, Mrs Rowlands appears harmless and easily succeeds in gaining the children’s trust; she is even able to form an affectionate bond between herself and Bran Davies (ibid. 235).

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<sup>47</sup> The first one is Mrs Palk, who, in *Over Sea, Under Stone*, tricks the Drew children and Merriman. At first, she appears to be a loving, caring housekeeper; only later in the story, her alliance to the Dark is revealed. As she is an ordinary human, she is not completely evil, but corrupted by the Dark. She only appears briefly in the book and is therefore not part of this analysis.

Comparable to, for example, the Lady of the Green Kirtle and Mrs Coulter discussed in this chapter, the quality of her voice is repeatedly stressed: she has “warm, relaxed, amused” voice (ibid. 106), which is also “musical” (ibid. 235); and she has a “face [which is] like the voice, gentle and warm and beautiful all at once” (ibid. 73). These attributes further enhance her likeability, and, in retrospect, strengthen her image of a dangerous opponent who is able to adjust perfectly to the situation and even fool her husband John and an Old One such as Will. Whereas the other female adversaries are rather eye-catching and use their sexuality to at least get their victim’s attention, Blodwen Rowlands remains in the background and fulfils a motherly role.

As the White Rider, however, her appearance is far from inconspicuous. Will and Bran first encounter the White Rider in the Lost Land, where he<sup>48</sup> appears with another great Lord of the Dark, the Black Rider: “A strange pair they made, two ritualistic figures like images from a chessboard: a rider in black hood and cloak on a coal-black horse, a rider in white hood and cloak on a horse white as snow” (ibid. 146). The White Rider is drained of colour; Will muses about the meaning of the Riders’ colours and concludes that “[m]aybe because the Dark can only reach people at extremes—blinded by their own shining ideas [in case of the White Rider], or locked up in the darkness of their own heads [in case of the Black Rider]” (ibid.).<sup>49</sup>

The White Rider is always very careful to hide his face. Will is only able to see “bright eyes set in a dim white face shadowed by the hood” (ibid. 185) and a “womanish mouth” (ibid. 186). The Rider’s voice is “soft and sibilant and puzzlingly familiar” (ibid. 185), thus the characters and readers are provided with breadcrumbs to figure out the identity of the White Rider. While Blodwen Rowlands appears to act lovingly and caringly, the White Rider is full of contempt and mocks Will and Bran (ibid. 185f.).

His powerfulness is in extreme contrast to her faked powerlessness as Blodwen Rowlands. The scene in the train and the consecutive scene of the challenge reveal Mrs Rowlands’ power as an evil temptress. As a mother figure and long-married wife to John Rowlands, her *modus opparandi* differs from that of Polly’s or Maggie Barnes. She does not appeal to John using her physical attraction, but tries to manipulate him through their alleged emotional bond. When Will, Bran, and Merriman are about to reveal her as an

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<sup>48</sup> Before the double identity of the White Rider is revealed, the White Rider is always referred to as “he”. This could have two reasons: first, the author wants to keep the reader as ignorant as possible of “his” other identity which would reflect the main characters’ state of knowledge. Second, the Rider can change his / her sex. After the revelation of Blodwen Rowlands’ true identity, Susan Cooper does not use any personal pronouns to refer to the White Rider as a single person, but incorporates him / her in, for example, “the Dark Lords” (*Silver* 262). Therefore, I will refer to the White Rider using the pronoun he.

<sup>49</sup> I concentrate on the Black Rider in the next chapter.

agent of the Dark, she “gave a sudden whimper of fear; she scrambled to her feet, dropping her knitting on the floor, and lurched over to sit by his side. Rowlands put a comforting arm around her, the support of long affection”, and she “shrank back, pressing against her husband’s side” (ibid. 236). She plays on the female stereotype of the damsel in distress and fakes innocence and helplessness to keep her cover, avoid confrontation, and possibly to manipulate John Rowlands into fighting her three opponents. Her self-serving motives also become apparent in this scene: her motherly role in Bran’s life makes “sure he never does or says or thinks anything without [her] knowing all about it” (ibid. 237). This marks her as a very patient and calculating figure.

Like the other evil temptresses, Mrs Rowlands displays a moment of metamorphosis: her otherwise warm and gentle manner and voice, change: “Mrs. Rowlands’ laughter was cold, and her voice was all at once oddly different, soft and sibilant but with a new force behind it” (ibid. 237f.), and “[s]he seemed to Jane taller, gleaming in the misty brightness with a light of her own” (ibid. 238). Blodwen Rowlands is dehumanized in her appearance as the agent of the Dark.

Even after her identity is revealed and the other characters are able to perceive the changes that have overcome Blodwen Rowlands, she tries to manipulate her husband by saying she has been possessed by the Dark and by promising him love and a happy ending if he, as judge, decides the challenge the Dark poses to the Light in favour of the Dark: “They could see only her face, dimly lighted in the churning darkness beside the boat, and her hands, out-stretched. She was gazing imploringly at John Rowlands, and her voice was the soft warm voice they had known in the beginning, and it was full of fear” (ibid. 254). When John does not comply with her wishes, she takes off her mask again and changes into the White Rider: “Jane was watching Blodwen Rowlands’ face; she saw it begin gradually to harden. The longing dropped away like a mask, leaving indifference and a cold rage” (ibid. 256). Mocking her husband who is devastated by the true nature of his wife is the last action she takes before she leaves him for the Rising. Here the reader is able to perceive one of the earlier mentioned attributes of the *femme fatale*, a woman who is “a dangerous seductress who destroys the man who loves her” (Fass Leavy 169), and gives no love in return (*Silver* 237).

In conclusion, one can say that the female adversaries in Susan Cooper’s *The Dark Is Rising Sequence* are either of the Dark or associated with the Dark. They appear in various manifestations: either young, innocent, and charming, as apparent in the characters of Polly Withers and Maggie Barnes, or motherly and absolutely trustworthy, like Blodwen Rowlands. They are never threatening in their assumed positions and use



the strategies that best fit their outward appearances. Only when they lose their masks do they become dehumanized and pose a dangerous threat to the young heroes.

As demonstrated, these characters roughly fit into the pattern of the female seductress and fairy tale witches; however, their rather short appearances leave a lot of room for speculation concerning their identities and motivations. The characters in Cooper's books only play minor roles in a story in which the Arthurian legend and the fight between good and evil take precedence, albeit in a more abstract manner. Hence, I partly agree with Raymond L. Plante who critically states that "Cooper's emphasis on fate breaks down the effectiveness of character and theme, keeping the work from being everything it could" (Plante 40).

### Female Adversaries in Amanda Hemingway's *The Sangreal Trilogy*

Three evil adversaries populate Amanda Hemingway's *Sangreal Trilogy*: Agnis, who is a character in the second book and tries to conquer and rule the kingdom of Wilderslee in a parallel world; Nenufar, a water-spirit that appears in all three books; and Nefanu, who appears in the third book and is the goddess of a world covered in water. Except for Nefanu, these characters pose obstacles to the protagonist's quest and occupy minor roles in the overall conflict between good and evil. All three correspond with the previously established image of the female adversary, and show resemblances to the *femme fatale* figure.

So far, scholars have taken little interest in this series. Only Anne Klaus's article "Sweet-Tongued Foes: Female Antagonists in Fantasy Fiction for Children and Young Adults" (2010) has enriched my interpretation of this trilogy.

#### Agnis Embernet

Like Mrs Rowlands, Agnis Embernet plays a double role as female temptress in Hemingway's *The Traitor's Sword*. First of all, the reader does not get to know her as Agnis, but as Thyрма Prendergoose, the motherly figure who is princess Nellwyn's nurse in a kingdom called Wilderslee, in a parallel world from which Nathan has to retrieve an object of power: the Traitor's Sword. The reader and the characters only later become aware of her true identity as Agnis.

When Nathan first sets eyes on Mrs Prendergoose, he notes her initially positive, and above all motherly, qualities: "her plump face was worn with time and worry. It was the sort of face that Nathan would have called *comely*, an old-fashioned word which in his mind meant homely, pleasant, almost but not quite pretty" (*Sword* 51; emphasis in

original). That her name is Mrs Prendergoose and not Miss enhances her motherly image further. She has already been the princess's nurse for years when Nathan arrives. As such, she is responsible for the child's welfare, and she also fulfils the role as the nurturer of the household, as she cooks for the sick king, the princess, and Frimbolus, all of whom are the remaining members of the court, though her food is far from being healthy (ibid. 113).

One of Nathan's journeys through space and time leads him to the past of Wilderslee, when the kingdom was still thriving and alive with people, and the king not yet sick. From the princess's stories, Nathan already knew that Agnis has been the king's love interest. Nathan instantly notices her attractiveness: "The king's dancing partner was a woman with the figure of an egg-timer in a dress which glittered and clung, showing off her tiny waist and the full curves above and below. [...] Her face was attractive in an earthy sort of way, with broad cheekbones and a sultry mouth" (ibid. 221). Here, the narrator emphasises the sensual markers of Agnis's appearance. She has obviously gained the king's attention and henceforth increases her influence over him, using her beauty and her persuasiveness to accomplish her goal.

Agnis tricks the king into showing her the legendary sword, "alternately pester[s] and cajol[s]" him until he acts against his better judgement (ibid. 227). Although both know that the Traitor's Sword has a life of its own and injures or even kills those who try to wield it, Agnis almost succeeds in coaxing him into using it in this moment of intimacy: "[The right person to wield the sword] might be you,' Agnis said, and her voice was very sweet, and her gaze slid sideways to meet his. [...] 'You're a hero to me.' Her sultry mouth curved into a wide pussycat smile. Only cats don't smile, Nathan reflected, but that's how they'd look if they did" (*Sword* 228f.). Agnis employs her femininity and her seductive powers to achieve her goal; even Nathan concludes that "she [is] evil. No one would have pushed matters this far out of mere curiosity . . ." (ibid. 229).

In the following confrontation between her brother and the king, she tricks the king into drawing the sword by appealing to his chivalrous nature, while portraying herself as a helpless and innocent damsel in distress. When drawn, the sword kills her brother, destroys her beauty in cutting her long, loose hair forever, and injures the king. Her plan to get the king injured through the sword, marry him, "nurs[e] [him] out of this world" to rule alongside with her brother<sup>50</sup> fails, and Princess Nellwyn escapes from receiving "the ultimate wicked stepmother" (ibid. 231). In crippling the king, Agnis clearly displays the previously mentioned destructive aspect of *femme fatale*, which the narrator combines with a fairy-tale-like plot that culminates in the image of Agnis as a

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<sup>50</sup> Hemingway only hints at a potentially incestuous relationship between Agnis and her brother.

witch (ibid. 292). Another factor which becomes apparent is her insatiable lust for power, as she wants to reign a multitude of kingdoms simultaneously (ibid. 291).

Mrs Prendergoose / Agnis undergoes two metamorphoses to reveal her true nature, which therefore relate her to the aforementioned adversaries. Firstly, she undergoes a transformation from being Mrs Prendergoose to Agnis: “The face of Mrs Prendergoose began to change, muscles tightening, cheeks lifting, eyes and mouth slipping back into place – tiny changes that reassembled her features into those of Agnis Embernet. An older Agnis, the sullen pout become vicious, the earthiness toughened into grit” (ibid. 291). These tiny changes to reveal her true face resemble those of, for example, the changes to Polly Withers’ facial features. Agnis uncovers her true nature as a monstrous female in her unification with the Urdemon that she has awakened and used to drive away the citizens of Wilderslee: “The darkness condensed into a ribbon of vapour which streamed into her mouth. Her neck arched to an impossible extent, bending her into a bow – her muscles billowed to improbable size – limbs writhed – her whole body seemed to flow together into one amorphous lump” (ibid. 293). Like the Lady of the Green Kirtle, Agnis leaves behind her physical body and thus her manifestation of the *femme fatale*, as well as her motherly image, to become a monster that aims at death and destruction because she cannot otherwise control her victims. And, like the Lady of the Green Kirtle, Agnis is brutally slain.

The revelation of Agnis’s greed for power mirrors Nenufar’s insatiable hunger described below. Furthermore, Nathan identifies Agnis as Nenufar’s human, more rational, double in a separate world (ibid. 233). Although the reader experiences her as much weaker than her werereature’s *doppelgänger*, she compensates this by using both her sexual allure as Agnis on the one hand and her motherly qualities as Mrs Prendergoose on the other. Through her ability to change her outward appearance the reader can deduce that she constructed her identities to specifically serve the purpose of seduction and fake hospitality.

### Nenufar

Nenufar is a water-spirit “from the sea, probably from the depths of the ocean” (*Grail* 253). She is able to “assume a human form” (ibid. 127) by “borrow[ing]” images from real people (ibid. 128); alternatively, she is “wearing a face she had found somewhere, the face of a nymph” (ibid. 360). Both acts of disguise require “considerable power” (ibid. 127), and are never complete, as “her eyes [are] her own” (ibid. 360), “eyes with no

whites, dark as midnight, deep as the ocean” (ibid. 169) displaying “the ancient darkness of the abyss” (ibid. 361), no matter what kind of mimicry she is performing.

In order to execute his plan to get an object of power, namely the Grimthorn Grail, the villain Michael has called upon the water-spirit’s help and controls her with his spells (ibid. 357f.). In a world, which is in almost every aspect like the reader’s world, “naiads, nymphs, nixes, kelpies – loreleis, selkies, sirens –” (ibid. 127) have become pure elements of legends and fairy tales. This is the reason Michael forces the water-spirit into the form of his glamorous wife Rianna, using a brutally acquired token such as “a severed hand, or an eye, or some other organ from which the image can be built up” (ibid. 128). The alliance between Michael and “[t]he thing that was Rianna Sardou” (ibid. 276) does not initially attract suspicion as both partners operate under the disguise of normativity.

However, the moments of deception are not entirely successful. Though the water-spirit performs her human role accurately, there remain tiny moments of doubt concerning her real nature, as “no human feet could have approached so noiselessly on such a quiet day– bare feet, where surely a normal person would have worn sandals, bare feet which had left faint damp prints on the rug behind her . . .” (ibid. 276). These doubts are confirmed as soon as the metamorphosis takes place; in the moments of attempted murder, Nenufar abandons her mask of humanity: “It wavered, its substance changing, dissolving into a form of roiling water which reached out to seize [Annie]” (ibid.). Obviously, her mimicry of human life is not perfect, as there are constant hints to her true nature, and she is not able to fake or feel real human emotions aside from hate and greed.

Although the hierarchy of power between the partners appears to be clear cut, the water-spirit seems to be using Michael more than he uses her. Nenufar did not only choose an attractive image when meeting Michael for the first time, and probably promised him the fulfilment of his wishes, she has also sexually seduced him. Evidence of that is that he calls her “[my] lovely Nenufar” (ibid. 358), declaring his attraction and fascination. Furthermore, he reveals physical symptoms of his longing: “He shivered with remembered sensuality. ‘When you’ve touched a spirit, anything else –’ he looked at Annie ‘– is just a woman’” (ibid. 360). The water-spirit thus becomes one of the legendary seductresses, using her sexuality to manipulate and achieve dominance. She behaves similarly to the loreleis and sirens, who bring about the ruin of their victims (Hurwitz 68), a *femme fatale*.

When Michael states that “[s]he [is] all coldness and hunger” (*Grail* 360), he refers to two aspects of Nenufar’s nature. Her most prominent characteristics are her hunger for power, the absence of emotions, her murderous behaviour, and disregard for

human life as “[m]urder is pretty much her solution to everything. She’s very primitive” (ibid. 358). Here, the reader can draw a rough comparison of Nenufar’s behaviour to Sigmund Freud’s notion of the id, which acts according to the pleasure-principle and seeks instant gratification (Eagleton 2008, 131): as soon as there is an obstacle in her way to power, she simply removes it. Hence, this kind of behaviour can be described as “lawless, asocial and amoral” (Dobie 53). According to Ann Dobie, the id finds repeated representations in literature: “In many ways, it resembles the devil figure that appears in some theological and literary texts, because it offers strong temptation to take what we want without heeding normal restraints, taboos, or consequences” (ibid.). The comparison to a devil figure is in so far sound, as the attentive reader can find a far echo to the Lilith figure in Nenufar, a demon which is eventually found in the water (Hurwitz 93).

After Michael is defeated, Nenufar returns in *The Traitor’s Sword*. There, however, she is more cunning than before. “Nenufar the water-phantom, the shapeshifter, the forgotten goddess, [...] from the caverns far beneath the ocean, hungry for the Grail and its power” (*Sword* 127) pretends to be Lilliat, the Spirit of Flowers, and becomes Hazel’s “spirit-mentor” for a short time (ibid. 133).

The attentive reader might recall that her previous name, Nenufar, is “French for water lily” (*Grail* 373), which has a certain resemblance to the new name. Furthermore, when Hazel evokes the supposedly unknown spirit, it too borrows another person’s face: “[m]ist coiled behind the glass, slowly resolving itself into a face – a face that wavered at first, as if unable to decide how it should look, then settled into a slim, pale oval, with silver-blue eyes and silver-blond hair that fanned out in an intangible breeze. A face curiously resembling one on a magazine cover that stared up from the floor,” which does not, however, mirror Nenufar’s appearance in the slightest (*Sword* 43). On the contrary, Lilliat seemed to be more playful, more innocent, more feminine as “scattered petals seemed to flutter through her fanning hair, and pale blooms opened in a garland about her neck” (ibid.), and, above all, more cunning and persuasive.

In the second book, Nenufar fully adapts to the needs of her victim: she does not seem threatening or dangerous at all, but speaks in a “low and soft” voice (ibid. 42), has “a laugh as silvery as her hair” (ibid. 43), and “smile[s] her faint, sweet smile” (ibid. 134). Additionally, she convinces Hazel to trust her with the promise of wish fulfilment, even trying to tempt her with world domination (ibid. 43, 171).<sup>51</sup> Anne Klaus correctly classifies what Lilliat calls “[a] favour for a favour” (*Sword* 45) as “the classical Faustian Bargain” (Klaus 2010, 139). Naturally, Hazel has a price to pay, and she is aware of the

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<sup>51</sup> There is an undisputable resemblance to the White Witch and Jadis in this scene of temptation.

tradition that “[w]ish-fulfilment always had its price, and the price was always more than you wanted to pay” (*Sword* 68). This is in contrast with Lilliat’s tempting reassurance that “[t]he price will be small, no more than you can afford” (ibid. 45). Although this bargain awakens Hazel’s distrust, she lets herself be manipulated by Lilliat. The id quality of Nenufar’s character in the first book, which sought instant gratification, is replaced by a calculating and “manipulative evil spirit” (ibid. 269), which bides its time.

When Hazel refuses to pay the price after Lilliat’s spell has been set into motion, she gets a glimpse of Lilliat’s true face: “Her hair grew and darkened, overflowing the mirror, streaming through the air like a flood of black water. Her eyes widened, opening onto deeps of midnight” (ibid. 171). “[T]he darkness behind the veil of flowers”, which Hazel perceives is emblematic of the duplicitous nature of the spirit (ibid. 177) finds further manifestation in the image of the cracked mirror which Hemingway employs: “Lilliat’s face hovered beneath the surface of the mirror, split in two by the crack, one side silver-eyed and silver-haired, the other all shadow. When she spoke, only half her mouth moved – the half in the light. [...] Her voice came from within; any motion of her features was merely cosmetic” (ibid. 178). With these lines, the plot emphasises the importance of Lilliat’s mimicry of human gestures and emotions to gain her victim’s trust and goodwill and not to alienate Hazel from her. Nevertheless, Lilliat does not understand human emotions, as she equates love with desire and desire with hate (ibid. 179); hence, for her, love equals hate, which is a simplistic and perverted view on the multitude of human emotions.

Like before, Nenufar / Lilliat displays an insatiable hunger for power, as “[n]othing is ever enough” (ibid. 171), a greed which is coupled with “menace” (ibid. 180). After she has successfully used Hazel to get a token from Nathan, she leaves her cover as Lilliat behind and reveals herself as “Nenufar the nayad, goddess of the deep. Nenufar whose heart was colder than a fish and whose greed was stronger than the tide – [...] – Nenufar who would kill without pause, without thought, because human life was less to her than the life of the smallest jelly swimming in the great sea” (ibid. 198). Here, the quotation provides the reader with a small summary of her character; she is cold, greedy for power, and quick at killing creatures which are allegedly inferior to her. Furthermore, she is labelled as nayad, or naiad, and goddess. Both classifications reveal her powerful and seductive nature.

In the novel, Nenufar is repeatedly described as being a naiad, a “loreley” (ibid. 258), “siren” (ibid.), or “*silver witch*” (ibid. 219; emphasis in original). The plot uses all of these labels to evoke the image of a lovely, beautiful, seductive, but nevertheless

dangerous “predator” (ibid. 260). The plot draws on existing images, which a knowledgeable reader may recognize, and simultaneously educates the unknowing reader by weaving the myths and legends into the fabric of the story. This method further enhances the appeal of the character while drawing in stereotypical descriptions.

Like a loreley or a siren, Nenufar bewitches Nathan to lure him into her boat: “The bee-song became the sound of someone humming, quite close at hand, [...] a woman stood in the bows, a woman as beautiful as the launch, with long pale hair fanning out in a breeze as faint as a sigh. [...] she turned to look at him, and beckoned” (ibid. 216f.). Although the first attempt at capture fails, the power of her spell is undiminished and is enhanced by her bewitchment of the token, Nathan’s rugger-shirt. Again, Nathan finds himself near the river, mesmerized by her spell: “He moved like a zombie in a pale, empty world. [...] His mental processes had shut down; there was nothing in his head but the mist, and the waiting” (ibid. 261f.).

Nenufar does not only take away his free will, she also tries to enchant him further to accomplish the imprisonment. The jump on board almost culminates in a physical, surrogate sexual encounter: “She stretched out her hand – he stretched out his – they almost touched” (ibid. 263). His desire for female closeness is not yet so strong that he gives in to sexual temptation, although he recognizes the beauty of the woman and almost touches her; he rather jumps on board on his own. Instead of luring him into the same sexual trap as Michael in the previous book, she displays motherly care: she gives him his (enchanted) rugger-shirt because “[y]ou must be cold” (ibid.), and brings the suddenly sleepy Nathan to “a cabin with a wide bed, deep soft pillows, a quilt like a drift of snow” (ibid. 264) and thus provides him with warmth and security, a very tempting shelter; “[h]e tumbled thankfully into the embrace of pillow and quilt” (ibid.). There the werewoman leaves him until she can use him for her plans. With the Grandir’s help, however, Nathan is able to leave the boat.

Nenufar returns in the third book only briefly. Her description establishes a connection to her sister image Nefanu, which I analyse below. To accomplish her goal, Nenufar again tricks Hazel and Nathan. Nathan takes her into Widewater where she unifies with her “Doppelganger” Nefanu (*Crown* 65).

#### Nefanu

Nefanu bears significant resemblance to Nenufar, as the name already indicates. Nenufar, however, fades into the background until she unites with her double. In contrast to Nenufar, Nefanu is already the goddess of her realm, a world drowned in

water, where human civilizations are already extinct; she “had devoured [the world] in her insatiable hunger” (*Crown* 307), a hunger for power she shares with the other adversaries.

Nefanu is “the Queen of the Deep, ruler of maelstrom and tempest, an elemental with no soul and no heart, made of rage, and power, and greed” (ibid. 59). She is the more powerful version of Nenufar, and has already accomplished her goal of being the only goddess in her world, worshipped, and feared. The merfolk have built a cult around her, using “shaman-priestesses” to preach her will (ibid. 117) and who indoctrinate the merfolk with Nefanu’s assumed omnipotence (ibid. 172). The animosity Nefanu displays towards the creatures of this world does not stop there, as she does not even care for her own people, from whom she demands complete obedience. The “goddess [even] expects her people to die” (ibid. 172f.), either as a sacrifice (ibid. 310), or to fulfil her wish and start a war in order to rid the ocean of “lungbreathers” such as the selkie (ibid. 170).<sup>52</sup>

Like Nenufar, her hate is “unrelenting and her hunger [is] insatiable” (ibid. 89). Hence, the “werespirit” (ibid. 113) wants to use one of the three objects of power that Nathan must retrieve from this world, the Iron Crown, to gain as much power as possible (ibid.). Unlike Nenufar, however, Nefanu does not need to apply techniques of trickery and seduction, “[s]he had never needed to sweeten [her voice] for her worshippers, nor played the loreley to bespell the unwary. She ruled; she did not have to seduce” (ibid. 314).

When Nathan confronts her, he sees “a figure ten feet tall and spun from water vapour, translucent as a wraith, with night-dark eyes and hair that roiled like clouds in a hurricane. In the livid light its phantom form had the unnatural luminosity of chemical pollution. Power streamed of it like radioactive waves” (ibid. 312). This quotation does not only demonstrate her high level of power, but also her poisonous nature, which is the reason why this world is almost destroyed. Her understanding of herself as a goddess also reflects her twisted character: “I am a goddess; I am supposed to kill. Why would I have the power, if not to use it?” (ibid. 316). For her, might makes right.

Through trickery Nenufar is able to accompany Nathan into Widewater in order to unite with her sister-spirit, which results in a fearsome entity: “the Goddess stood there again, the same but somehow *grown*, grown from within, two deities in a single being. Her strength, her aura, her very self was doubled – she was in truth Nenufar Nefanu, Goddess, demoness, witch” (ibid. 320f.; emphasis in original). The transformation into something bigger and more powerful does not, however, culminate in a spiritual

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<sup>52</sup> I further analyze this justification of war in chapter 3.2 The Construction of Difference.



unification, but leaves the demon confused about her true identity and surroundings (ibid. 321). Only nature itself can destroy such a dehumanized, unnatural monster in spirit and appearance, such “a psychotic goddess” (ibid. 331), because “nature [is] stronger than magic” (ibid. 323).<sup>53</sup>

All in all, the three characters, Agnis, Nenufar, and Nefanu, embody multiple aspects of femininity and of female adversaries. Agnis is the sexual seductress who tries to entice the king, while Mrs Prendergoose is the mother figure for the princess. Nenufar acts as a *femme fatale* in reference to Michael and also represents the fairy tale witch and echoes the mother figure when Nathan is concerned. Only Nefanu differs from these two concepts: She represents the insatiable goddess who wants to be worshipped and aims to shape her world according to her desires. Due to the amount of power she has acquired, she does not need to perform any roles.

In employing the reappearance of a certain kind of stock character like an evil witch, or a mentor figure, the books allude to the possibility of multiple worlds and “[f]amiliar people behind unfamiliar faces, pattern duplicating pattern, world reflecting world. [Nathan] could wander infinity living a multitude of lives, endlessly new, endlessly different, always the same” (*Sword* 233f.). On another level, this quotation also talks about Joseph Campbell’s monomyth, which states that stories always have the same patterns at their cores as “it will always be the one, shape-shifting yet marvellously constant story that we find” in literature and myth (J. Campbell 1). Amanda Hemingway does not only use her adversaries because they fit nicely into her story, but consciously employs those stereotypes which I have already discussed above to position herself within the fantasy canon.

#### The Female Adversary in P. C. Cast and Kristin Cast’s *House of Night* series

Neferet

P. C. Cast and Kristin Cast establish Neferet’s position as Zoey’s archenemy or “nemesis” (*Untamed* 4) in the second book of the series. Due to this strong and exclusive position, Neferet is the only female adversary within the *House of Night* series under scrutiny in this chapter. The character of Neferet appears in all the *House of Night* novels and undergoes tremendous changes; the further the series progresses, the more insight into the character is granted to the reader.

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<sup>53</sup> Nature manifests itself in the Leviathan which is called by “the Horn of Doom” which Princess Denaero blows (ibid. 321).

The *House of Night* series is part of the latest publication in the young adult vampire genre, and until now, scholars have not paid much attention to the books, with the exception of the occasional article.<sup>54</sup> Those articles centre on the books as part of young adult and vampire literature, or focus on the main character. Hence, Neferet as female adversary is underrepresented in secondary literature so far.

At the beginning of the series, Neferet appears in an almost exclusively positive light. Like all high-standing members of the vampyre<sup>55</sup> community, Neferet does not possess a last name. She is “tall, with long waves of dark auburn hair and brilliant, almond-shaped eyes an unusual shade of moss green. She moved with a grace and confidence that was clearly not human, and her skin was so spectacular that it looked like someone had turned a light on inside her” (*Betrayed* 9). At the beginning of the series, she seems to be welcoming, “amazing,” and “awe-inspiring,” (*Marked* 47); all in all she appears to be “stunningly perfect” (*Betrayed* 9). Neferet possess a “smooth musical voice” (ibid. 8), and a “dazzling” smile (ibid. 9). Her beauty and abilities are explained and strengthened by the *über*-human qualities and racial markers of her species: “she was what all vampyres are, *more* than human—stronger, smarter, more talented” (*Marked* 47; emphasis in original).<sup>56</sup>

Neferet is the High Priestess of the House of Night in Tulsa. As such, she must fulfil the duties of a headmistress and is responsible for the service to the goddess Nyx.<sup>57</sup> High Priestesses are selected due to the type and strength of their supernatural power, or “Goddess gifts” (*Marked* 53); consequently, the reader can infer that Neferet is exceptionally powerful. In a conversation with Zoey, she reveals two of her gifts: a special affinity for cats, and “unusual powers of healing” (ibid.). According to the main character, “Neferet was everything a High Priestess should be. Her beauty was a flame of its own, and her voice was a magic that held everyone’s attention” (ibid. 146). The High Priestess appears to be a blue-print of how a person of authority is supposed to be like, how she should look and act: she is confident, graceful, “gorgeous” (*Betrayed* 25),

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<sup>54</sup> As for example Hannah Priest’s article “‘Hell! Was I Becoming a Vampyre Slut?’: Sex, Sexuality and Morality in Young Adult Vampire Fiction” published by Deborah Mutch (ed.) in *The Modern Vampire and Human Identity*, in 2013, or Evangelia Kindinger’s “Reading Supernatural Fiction as Regional Fiction: Of ‘Vamps,’ ‘Supes’ and Places that ‘Suck’” published in the online journal *Kultur & Geschlecht* in 2011.

<sup>55</sup> “Vampyre” is the spelling the series uses and which I will consequently use in this analysis.

<sup>56</sup> Right from the beginning of the series, this generalization establishes an imbalance in regard to humans and vampyres. This imbalance justifies prejudices and leads to the devaluation of human life. The resulting problems of the idealization and even glorification of vampyres and the vilification of humans are part of chapter 3.2 The Construction of Difference.

<sup>57</sup> In *The House of Night* series, Nyx is the benevolent goddess of the night, the mother of all vampyres. In the novels she is also another incarnation of the Virgin Mary or Mother Earth. In Greek mythology, Nyx is the primordial goddess of the night.

eloquent, powerful and strict if the occasion calls for it (ibid. 12f.). Zoey idolizes Neferet to the extreme: “I’ll just admit it. I wanted to be her” (ibid. 25).

To possibly accentuate Neferet’s vulnerability and create sympathy for her in the beginning, the authors construct a tragic past around the character: she was sexually abused by her father after her mother’s death (*Marked* 211).<sup>58</sup> This traumatic experience supposedly bestows her with an increased ability to empathize with victims of violence and neglect, as well as revealing a crack in the façade of the otherwise perfect High Priestess (ibid.).

Furthermore, Neferet also acts as and is experienced in being a surrogate mother figure to Zoey and other fledglings. Zoey is touched by Neferet’s apparent thoughtfulness and motherly care (*Marked* 214, *Betrayed* 14). Being neglected by her own mother, Zoey finds a new home in the House of Night, and a strong female figure to look up to: “I looked up at her, so glad she was there with me, and I wished – for about the zillionth time – that she was my mom” (*Betrayed* 15). As headmistress and personal mentor with special healing powers, Neferet is a figure of authority who commands and receives respect, and students like Zoey endeavour to obtain her approval (ibid. 12); in the first book, Neferet is the one who helps to solve conflicts rather than causing them.<sup>59</sup>

Initially, the reader perceives the action through Zoey’s eyes who glorifies Neferet as the ideal leader of the vampyre microcosm in Tulsa throughout the first novel and until the end of the second novel. This is mostly due to the point that Zoey constantly draws a connection between beauty, power, and goodness to form a picture of perfection concerning Neferet.

This picture of perfection, however, becomes cloudy early on. The protagonist’s conveyance of her vague and inexplicable feelings imply to the reader that Neferet is not who she appears to be (*Marked* 48). Furthermore, with sudden and subtle moments of change in the character of Neferet, the stage is set for a retrospective perception of evil. Her laugh, for example, was “a little dangerous” or even gives the protagonist “a skin-crawly feeling” (ibid. 62); at another time Zoey observes a scene between Neferet and Aphrodite, in which “Neferet’s voice was ice, terrifying, cold, and hard” (*Betrayed* 40). Even when her anger seems to be justified, Zoey shrinks away in surprise and fear,

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<sup>58</sup> Here, an inconsistency appears: in *Marked*, Neferet’s abuse lasted from the age of 10 to 15. In *Hidden, Revealed* and the novella, *Neferet’s Curse*, the abuse occurred once at the age of 15. Although this traumatic experience becomes one of many possible justifications for her behaviour and increases in importance in the later books, the inconsistency is never questioned. It is possible that the authors did not pay attention to the character’s previously established background story.

<sup>59</sup> In *Marked*, Aphrodite is Zoey’s main adversary. As she becomes part of Zoey’s inner circle in the third book, and as she is not the character who is interested in causing a world-changing war, Aphrodite is not part of this chapter.

knowing how formidable an opponent Neferet could be: “She hadn’t raised her voice, but it was suddenly filled with the power of a High Priestess and I shivered in fear, even though her wrath was not directed at me” (ibid. 13). These episodes demonstrate that Neferet’s voice is not only pleasant, but like the other characters in this chapter, Neferet uses it as a tool to manipulate, even intimidate her audience; a strategy which is further exploited throughout the rest of the series.

Her façade cracks in the first book, and is abandoned in the latter books. In order to acknowledge the plot’s trajectory reflecting Neferet’s moral decline, the depth of her fall must be measured against her high standing position: the higher her standing, the further her fall; and hers is exceedingly far. Her figurative downfall begins on the pedestal of a glorified mother-figure and community leader, and ends in the depths of darkness and personification as a Lilith figure.

In the second book, Zoey’s image of Neferet’s as a surrogate mother dissolves, as she observes Neferet’s self-serving nature and emotionally distances herself from her fallen idol: “I nodded [...], careful not to show my disgust when she hugged me in front of everyone [...]. [...], she was exactly like a mom, specifically *my* mom, [...]. The woman who [...] cared more about herself and appearances than she cared about me” (ibid. 258; emphasis in original). As soon as Neferet becomes aware of Zoey’s opposition, the importance of her self-image as benevolent and good High Priestess increases, and she uses her adult authority and high standing in the community in order to more effectively undermine Zoey’s credibility (e.g. *Burned* 71). The sentence “*If you speak against me I will make sure no human or fledgling or vampyre will believe you*” (*Betrayed* 306; emphasis in original) is exemplary for her threatening gestures and calculating personality. In *Chosen*, this sentence becomes more than just an empty threat, as Neferet uses her puppet-master qualities and acting abilities to isolate Zoey from her friends and make her an easy target (*Chosen* 303f.).

From the second book onwards, the dichotomy between Neferet’s “gorgeous public face” (*Betrayed* 100), and her covert evil nature increasingly grows. The dichotomy between and perception of outer beauty and inner, evil, nature is powered by her secrecy, as Zoey’s grandmother explains: “She is perceived as being a powerful priestess of Nyx—a mighty force for good. She’s hidden behind that facade for quite a while, and it has allowed her the freedom to commit acts that [...] are atrocious” (*Untamed* 269). As Neferet is not always able to hide her true feelings, Zoey becomes increasingly aware of little moments of metamorphoses such as the other characters in this chapter display. Zoey perceives her to be “filled of hatred” (*Burned* 54): Neferet “did look

at me then, and the hatred in her gaze made my breath catch in my throat [...]. Then, as if she'd thrown a switch, her face was filled with sweetness and light again, and she beamed at the new kid" (*Untamed* 20). To the conscientious observer, such instances (*Untamed* 20, *Hunted* 229) not only reveal Neferet's inner ugliness and hatred, they also display her hypocrisy, duplicity, and the severity of her as threat.

Neferet, who already seems to be "[t]he most powerful High Priestess of our time" (*Chosen* 306), aims at making herself irreplaceable, and thus increases her status, importance, and the authority she wields. There is a huge dichotomy between what she privately acknowledges and what she publically displays. Publically, she construes herself as "Nyx's mouthpiece" and hence she defines "what is important" (*Untamed* 17); setting priorities and establishing censorship. Later on, she claims to be the "the literal incarnation of Nyx" (*Hunted* 56) which should give her the freedom and the power to rule the vampyre community as she sees fit, as long as the true goddess does not interfere or her claim is disproved. Taking this trajectory into consideration, it is only a small step for her to construct herself as a goddess in her own rights.

It is Neferet's long-time goal to officially establish this title for herself. In the second book, Neferet already, albeit privately, uses the label "goddess" to define herself (*Betrayed* 158). In her mind, she has different reasons to do so. One reason to call herself a goddess is that she is the cause for the development of the red fledglings.<sup>60</sup> As she has figuratively birthed them, she calls them her "children" (*Betrayed* 158). She only privately admits to the motherhood of the red vampyres, whom she uses to seed "dissent and discontent and hatred" (*Destined* 129). Like Lilith's depiction in the *Talmud*, Neferet gives birth to monsters (Christow 12).<sup>61</sup> Neferet "had birthed a new kind of army" whose task is to "protect and serve her when she and her Consort ruled the new age of vampyres" (*Revealed* 284). As Neferet is aware of the unnatural and violent nature of her creatures, she denies knowing of their existence and even blames Zoey for the creation of what she publically calls "monstrosities" (*Untamed* 319).

Neferet unifies the two most prevalent myths surrounding Lilith: Lilith as the mother goddess and as a demon (Castiello 235). Neferet's demonic nature can first of all

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<sup>60</sup> In the vampyre world, some humans are marked with a blue crescent in puberty, thus become vampyre fledglings, and henceforth belong to the vampyre community. The crescent becomes filled out as soon as fledglings complete the change and become vampyres. Some fledglings, however, biologically reject the change and die. Due to a never explained power of Neferet's, a few fledglings are resurrected and now have a red crescent on their forehead; in their abilities as well as in their behaviour, they clearly differ from the normal fledglings. Until the ninth novel, all those who became red fledglings have died to become that way; in *Destined*, however, a human is marked with a red crescent for the first time.

<sup>61</sup> The *Talmud* narrates the story of how Lilith gives birth to creatures fathered by Adam: ghosts, demons and Lilins (Christow 12).

be traced to her being a vampyre, which is another traditional depiction of Lilith (Graham 38). Further parallels to Lilith are Neferet's affinity to cats, which mirrors Lilith and even Circe's "association with animals" and her connection with night (ibid. 33f.). The mother goddess motif becomes apparent in her special abilities of healing; it is, however, perverted regarding her creation of the red fledglings.

When Zoey observes Neferet's secret interaction with one of the red fledglings for the first time, it becomes apparent that Neferet encourages the fledgling Eliot to drink her blood. She thus uses her sexuality and the sexual pleasure, which derives from drinking another person's blood (*Betrayed*. 159), to bind the fledgling further to her side. The same is true for the sticky threads of Darkness she uses as a weapon: she also calls them her children, caresses them, is caressed by them (*Burned* 13), and feeds them (*Redeemed* 23). Furthermore, they are feeding off her as payment for their murderous services (*Hidden* 274). This example is the peak of the perversion of her motherhood. The seduction through 'food' as well as a surrogate sexual interaction is highly reminiscent of the *femme fatale* motif.

The motif of the *femme fatale* is further powered by the promises she makes. Those are reminiscent of, for example, the promises the White Witch gives Edmund (*Wardrobe* 45f.); on such occasions the female adversaries try to tempt their victims and ensure their loyalty. Not unlike her predecessors, Neferet seeks to strike a Faustian bargain with the vampyre fledgling Stark: "'Do as I command, and I will give you your heart's desire.' Neferet whispered the words for Stark's ears alone, but I read them on her ruby lips. The effect they had on him was instantaneous. Stark's eyes blazed red" (*Untamed* 323).<sup>62</sup> She whispers the pact into her victim's ears, which reveals a very intimate moment, emphasised through the sensual colour of her lips; another parallel to the White Witch.

In the depiction above, Neferet resembles the embodiment of the *femme fatale* and fits John Phillips description of the prototypical *femme fatale* with her "unfettered female sexuality, assertiveness, and independence" (Phillips qtd. in Russell 215). Concerning intercourse with male vampyres, Neferet role as *femme fatale* becomes even more obvious. In *Awakened*, Neferet uses her sexuality to manipulate and dominate male vampyre warriors who are in her service (*Awakened* 3f.). Both behavioural patterns hint at the Judeo-Christian tradition of Lilith as a *femme fatale* who does not allow male

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<sup>62</sup> Stark is only one example of a character she aims at manipulating through temptation; Jack is another one whom she kills as he is an "incorruptible innocent" (*Awakened* 61).

dominance over herself (Russell 215)<sup>63</sup>; “Lilith’s sexuality is about power” (Graham 35) and so is Neferet’s.

Neferet’s alluring beauty and instrumental use of her beauty and sexuality form the image of the female temptress and are important pieces to complete the picture of this antagonist. Sentences such as “to me her face was strong and stern, and amazingly beautiful. [...] I almost forgot that she was actually dangerous” (*Chosen* 215), are numerous in the series (e.g. *Chosen* 214, 304, *Untamed* 15, 327, *Awakened* 255). They emphasize the previously established connection between beauty and goodness, as well as the contradiction Zoey and others consequently perceive between Neferet’s inner and outer appearance. Neferet appears to be the pinnacle of the sexualisation of evil seductresses in this chapter; the contradiction between the grandeur of her outer beauty and the lack of inner beauty is exceedingly great and constantly emphasised.

She looked like an avenging goddess, and even I was struck speechless at her raw beauty. Her smooth white shoulders were bared by an exquisite black silk dress that molded to her graceful body. Her thick auburn hair was free, tumbling in waves down around her slim waist. Her green eyes flashed—her lips were the deep red of fresh blood. (*Untamed* 319)

This quotation serves numerous purposes. Firstly, it emphasises the narrator’s focus on Neferet’s beauty as one of her powers of manipulation. Secondly, it literally refers to the red lips as “a symbol of bloodshed”, which Susan Hancock has mentioned in her analysis of the White Witch (Hancock 54). The red lips hint at her violent and “bloodthirsty” nature (*Hunted* 236), which has nothing to do with the vampyre’s need to drink blood in order to survive. Like the other adversaries in this chapter, this “tainted High Priestess” (*Hunted* 226) hides her violent nature behind a beautiful façade; she does not stop at murder to achieve her goals.<sup>64</sup> Thirdly, it strengthens her connection with the Lilith myth, who also “is described as a beautiful woman with long loose hair” (Graham 34; also in Hurwitz 82). Finally, it not only strengthens Neferet’s self-perception as a goddess, but confirms it through the eyes of the narrator.

Another reason to construct herself as a goddess is that she is immortal and calls herself first “*Queen Tsi Sgili*” (*Untamed* 324; emphasis in original) and later “*Goddess Tsi Sgili*” (*Revealed* 284; emphasis in original). The Tsi Sgili is a Cherokee witch. In

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<sup>63</sup> This is also true for Neferet and could be due to her father’s violation of her innocence; she does not allow a man to touch her without granting permission, because “a goddess chooses when and where and how she is touched” (*Awakened* 3); if someone crosses this line, he is severely punished (*ibid.*).

<sup>64</sup> In *Untamed*, Neferet murders two vampyre professors and stages these murders as racist hate crimes in order to propagate and start a war between humans and vampyres. I analyse this justification of war in chapter 3.2 The Construction of Difference.

Cherokee legend, she is referred to as “Owl Witch” who also eats children (Jones 2011, n.p.). Both descriptions are highly reminiscent of the Lilith myth (Christow 21). Tsi Sgili are furthermore “shape-shifters” and “vampires”, and a Tsi Sgili is “considered a malevolent supernatural force beyond social control” (Jones 2011, n.p.). In the books, she is labelled as “*demon! Delighter in pain! Feeder from death!*” (*Revealed* 250; emphasis in original). In Cherokee legends, these women are mortals (Jones 2011, n.p.); in the *House of Night* series, however, Neferet allies with Darkness and “[s]he’s turning into something, and it’s like no vampyre we’ve ever known before” (*Hunted* 396); she later becomes the immortal “*Goddess Tsi Sgili*”.

Through her intimate relation to Darkness and her development into an immortal, she gains powers which exceed her goddess-given gifts. She already is “practically psychic” (*Untamed* 114), which is enhanced through her development into a Tsi Sgili. Through this gift, she is able to differentiate between those fledglings and vampyres who would follow her and those who would not and punishes “the doubters – the naysayers [...] causing their minds to be muddled through the confusion of twinges of seemingly sourceless pain and doubt and fear” (*Awakened* 259), enjoying the effect of her ability “to rape [...] mind(s)” (*Revealed* 251). Especially this choice of words marks Neferet as dangerous predator who crosses even the most sacred boundaries to violate a person.<sup>65</sup>

Moreover, she can now manipulate shadows (*Hunted* 286) and threads of Darkness in order to kill someone (*ibid.* 328). As early as book five, she “radiate[s] darkness and evil” (*ibid.* 286). Nyx “has gifted her with power. The white bull has gifted her with power. And what power she hasn’t been gifted with, she steals through pain and death and deception”<sup>66</sup> (*Hidden* 197f.). Her perverted nature becomes apparent as soon as she or others inflict violence: “Neferet looked bloated with power, reveling in the violence and destruction that was happening before her. [...] Neferet fed from the death and destruction around her” (*Awakened* 236), “[absorbs] life force” (*Revealed* 282), and feeds on the souls of the dead (*Redeemed* 54).

She violently enforces obedience (*Destined* 128); as a goddess, she does not allow her “minions” free choice and free will (*ibid.* 10). It is her ultimate goal to create chaos as “[c]haos burns—people, vampyres, society. The victor who emerges from those ashes controls the world. I [Neferet] will be that victor” (*Hidden* 276). According to the last book, “Neferet is a sociopath, bent on enslaving Tulsa, [...] even the world. [...] She wishes to rule as the one and only Goddess in the world” (*Redeemed* 126). Like the other

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<sup>65</sup> Rape almost exclusively associated with a crime committed by male perpetrators. In Neferet’s case, this only emphasises her dominance, aggressive and ruthless nature further.

<sup>66</sup> The white bull is the personification of evil or Darkness.



characters in this chapter, she is addicted to and corrupted by power and disregards all other values the main character, for instance, cherishes: “Beauty doesn’t last. Friends and family decay. Power is the only thing that goes on forever” (*Awakened* 60). Power provides her with the ultimate control she desperately seeks (*Hidden* 276).

Striving for power, achieving it, and her consecutive status also have consequences for her relationship with the human species. Filled with contempt and superiority, Neferet regards humans as “*so weak and boring and so terribly plain*” (*Hidden* 68; emphasis in original), “disgust [...] filled her voice when she said *humans*” (*Betrayed* 253; emphasis in original); to her, they “are usually such easy prey” (*Destined* 224). These quotations reveal the value she attaches to human life. Her ideological conviction is that humans are a weaker race to be ruled and used as food or “plaything” (*Hidden* 161). Due to her inhumane behaviour and racist opinions, Neferet again resembles Lilith, who poses “a clear danger to humanity” (Graham 34).<sup>67</sup> Nevertheless, as a goddess, Neferet wants to be worshipped by humans and vampyres alike (*Hidden* 276). In the last book, she calls herself “Goddess of Darkness – Goddess of Tulsa – Goddess of Chaos” (*Redeemed* 29) and defines herself as “powerful, possessive, immortal, and omniscient” (ibid. 37), which reveals her hybris and megalomania.

As a goddess, she furthermore determines what is right and what is wrong; again might makes right. In her megalomaniac frame of mind, she does not feel bound to the same rules as others (*Hidden* 182), but exercises her powers without the fear of any repercussions. To illustrate this, she justifies the act of killing Zoey’s mother as follows: “The *truth* is that I am immortal. [...] I have attained more power than all of you in all of your centuries have managed to acquire. The *truth* is that in another hundred years, [...] I will still be young, powerful, beautiful, and a goddess. If I choose to sacrifice a human, no matter for what purpose, it is sacred and not sin!” (*Hidden* 163; emphasis in original). She legitimizes her “killing spree” (*Redeemed* 98) as “glorious” (ibid. 47) and above the law, and even claims her aim to be for “a greater good” (ibid. 182), or refers to “her divine destiny” (*Revealed* 284) which she richly deserves (*Revealed* 306).

While she privately reveals a dominant nature, publically, she stages herself as a victim and thus manipulates Tulsa’s human community to feel sympathy and form an alliance with her (*Hidden* 66). Manipulation serves her as a form of control which she exercises frequently: “She learned how to make her people see in her what each of them most trusted, respected, and ultimately, worshipped” (*Revealed* 246). To achieve this effect, she also twists the truth according to her desire (*Untamed* 251f., *Awakened* 228,

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<sup>67</sup> I analyse this vampyre ideology in regard to humans in chapter 3.2 The Construction of Difference.

*Hidden* 63ff.) in order to maintain her image of innocence and goodness, and to sew dissent, anger and fear (*Hidden* 65), until she fights openly in *Redeemed*.

For those characters that can see through her façade, such as Zoey and those who are “familiar with” such evil (*Awakened* 58), Neferet’s inner development is reflected in her outer development. In the first books, the reader can perceive moments of metamorphosis, when Neferet’s inner nature finds its way to the outside. In the latter books, her features do not only change from beautiful to twisted and ugly, but her outer appearance and movements change from human to inhuman; her movements for example are “more reptile than human” (*Awakened* 61) and she moves “[q]uick as a striking snake” (*Hidden* 288); her smile becomes “feral” (*Awakened* 108) and “reptilian” (*Hidden* 218, *Redeemed* 288).<sup>68</sup> Her development is not restricted to individual parts but also shows her alienation from human values such as love and kindness:

She was still beautiful, but anything soft, mortal, *human* about her had been lost. It was as if she were an exquisite statue that had been given the breath of life, but had been animated without a conscience, without a soul. She had always been cold, but until now Neferet had maintained the ability to mimic kindness and love. No longer. [...] she was becoming a conduit for evil. (*Hidden* 218; emphasis in original)

At the end of book ten, her human form completely disappears when she is thrown off a balcony, becomes a broken shell, dissolves into spiders (ibid. 299) and remains a “specter” (*Revealed* 13) until she feeds and regains her power. This dehumanization and the subsequent demonization culminate in her literal and figurative fall and the death of her humanity, symbolized by the death of her past, human, self, Emily Wealer: “It was Emily who Aurox gored and hurled onto the lonely pavement at the base of the Mayo Hotel. It was Emily who took Neferet with her in death. But it was the spirit of Queen Tsi Sgili that survived” (*Revealed* 16). As an immortal, she cannot be destroyed by others, but she herself has to be the cause of her own destruction (*Destined* 152). This concludes in the entrapment and entombment, of Neferet in *Redeemed* (295).

Neferet’s cause for being such a willing companion to Darkness is said to lie in her human past, which has left her “a broken girl who became a broken fledgling” and thus created a “damaged Priestess” (*Revealed* 84). Due to these prerequisites, she is said to be extremely receptive for evil influences and consequently becomes “a tool of evil”

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<sup>68</sup> The continual analogy of a snake to Neferet is another corresponding factor to Lilith, who, in certain sources, is described as a serpent (Graham 34).

(*ibid.*). Furthermore, her alliance with evil fuels her awakening madness (*ibid.*) and her obsession with Zoey and the destruction of the latter (*Awakened* 146, *Hidden* 223f.).

In fabricating a past for Neferet, which leaves her damaged and susceptible to evil, the plot constructs her choices to a certain extent as inevitable because of her self-serving nature. Due to the changes in the narrative perspective, which reveal and emphasise Neferet's cruel acts, the plot seldom leaves room for the reader to feel pity for Neferet, but rather fuels the feeling of injustice and the desire to right the wrongs which Neferet has caused and punish her for her "misuse of power" (*Awakened* 79), and the atrocious acts she commits. As Zoey is repeatedly compared to Neferet in the last book, however, the plot emphasises the element of free choice over natural prerequisites.

In *Awakened*, Neferet mounts the white bull and is spirited away (264f.). This is a strong analogy for the abduction of Europa by Zeus in the form of a white bull. As Neferet is not an innocent maiden, the parallel remains on the surface and concentrates on a possible sexual seduction of the female figure, as the bull's breath caresses "her most sensitive places, awakening her most secret desires" and the bull's touch causes "her to gasp in exquisite pain as her body trembled with excitement" (*ibid.* 263). Another form of union between her and Darkness is alluded to later when "she appear[s] to have become part of the Dark children [the threads of Darkness] she had so long fed" (*Hidden* 288). Focusing on these two examples and keeping Neferet's demonic nature as Tsi Sgili in mind, a parallel to Lilith is inevitable: Lilith "is also a demon, the consort of a demon, and the mother of demons" (Graham 39f.). In her depiction, Neferet resembles Lilith as "the female assertive demon, symbol of rebellion against submission to males, and the mother goddess, creator and nurturer of life" (Castiello 235), even if the latter aspect is faked by Neferet. "Both tropes resort to the repertoire of meaning attaining to sexual powers related to femininity, now depicted as lustful and vengeful, now as creator and caring of life" (*ibid.*).

Throughout the series, Neferet becomes an isolated evil with deeply flawed morals and a twisted perception of reality (*Revealed* 285). Her behaviour emphasises what Stephens calls "the perverted, insatiable, and destructive sexuality of the sorceress-witch" (Stephens 2003, 199), and thus creates specific ideas about good and bad femininity. Being an individual agent of evil, Neferet can be eradicated, but her trajectory also symbolizes the individual's fallibility to temptation. Even positive characters such as Stevie Rae or Zoey must constantly resist the pull of temptation and power. The *House of Night* books mainly focus on the issue of free choice, its drawbacks and consequences; and thus demonstrate the perpetual fight of good and evil within the individual.

## The Female Adversary in Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials*

Marissa Coulter

In Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials*, Marissa Coulter is a character who appears throughout the trilogy and "throughout much of the book the principal villain appears to be [her]" (Hatlen 79). She is of great importance concerning the battle between the opponents: the Church, the Authority, and Metatron on the one side, and, among others, Lord Asriel's forces and Lyra on the other.

Unlike Neferet or the female adversaries in *The Dark Is Rising Sequence*, Mrs Coulter has already been part of scholarly scrutiny. For my analysis, Millicent Lenz and Carol Scott's compilation of essays in *His Dark Materials Illuminated. Critical Essays on Philip Pullman's Trilogy* (2005) was most helpful, as was Amelia A. Rutledge's "Reconfiguring Nurture in Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials*" (2008).

Like the female figures mentioned above, Mrs Coulter is highly attractive, even stunningly beautiful. Due to her "angelic" looks, and because "the beautiful lady" is "so gracious and sweet and kind," children trust her easily (*Northern Lights* 44). In her first scene, her outward appearance is not described in detail, which mirrors the concept of abstract beauty seen in *The Silver Chair*. Later on, the reader learns that "[s]he was beautiful and young. Her sleek black hair framed her cheeks [...]" (*Lights* 66). According to Will, she is "lovely in the moonlight, her brilliant dark eyes wide with enchantment, her slender shape light and graceful" (*The Subtle Knife* 213). Her voice additionally complements her appearance: "[it] was intoxicating: soothing, sweet, musical, and young, too" (ibid. 207). Her physical attractiveness and the beauty of her voice are two features which draw the children (and adults) to her, and which encourage the reader to initially look upon her favourably.

Right from the start, the make-up of the character achieves its goal: Lyra is fascinated, even "intoxicated" by Mrs Coulter's appearance and grandeur (*Lights* 75). Mrs Coulter opens a new world for Lyra, which contradicts Lyra's condescending and misogynist view on female scholars as "animals dressed up and acting a play" (ibid. 67). Especially as a child, Lyra has the impression that she is taken seriously and is drawn in by what Mrs Coulter has to offer: "What Mrs Coulter was saying seemed to be accompanied by a scent of grownupness, something disturbing but enticing at the same time: it was the smell of glamour" (ibid. 75). For her, the charismatic Mrs Coulter represents "a new sex altogether, one with dangerous powers and qualities such as elegance, charm and grace" (ibid. 82). The choice of words is noteworthy, as it not only reveals a general view on women as lacking all these attributes, but also

emphasises Mrs Coulter's uniqueness and on a different level the individual's susceptibility to manipulation and thus strengthens the image of the potential *femme fatale*.

Marisa Coulter combines beauty and intellect, a combination that enables her to climb to higher positions in a male-dominated society. Her career reveals that she has "always been ambitious for power. [...] she had to set up her own order [within the mechanisms of the Church], her own channels of influence, and work through that" (*Lights* 374). Her ascent of the different strata of the Church also demonstrates her "intellectual brilliance" (Lenz 11). Mrs Coulter's high position within the different organizations of the Church is unique and thus accentuates her individuality.

Professionally, she is the head of the Oblation Board, an organization which is unofficially connected to the Magisterium and hence the Church. She has not only established the Oblation Board, which abducts and experiments on children, but "she *is* the Oblation Board. It's entirely her own project" (*Lights* 90; emphasis in original). As a research interest, the Oblation Board looks into the matter of Dust.<sup>69</sup> In order for Dust not to settle on the adolescent child, Mrs Coulter developed a method to cut the bond between a person and his or her dæmon<sup>70</sup>: the process of "*intercision*" (ibid. 214; emphasis in original). She claims that severing this intimate connection prevents the occurrence of "troublesome thoughts and feelings" (ibid. 285), and hence the subjection to "original sin" (ibid. 375). Following her line of argument, her work appears to be a noble endeavour as these "experiments will lead to a greater good" (Leet 180): they are designed to cleanse the world of sin and evil. According to Lyra, the real result of the intercision is "[t]he worst thing in the world" (*Lights* 215): "A human being with no dæmon was like someone without a face, or with their ribs laid open and their heart torn out: something unnatural and uncanny that belonged to the world of night-ghasts, not the waking world of sense" (ibid.). Mrs Coulter is creating a kind of "*zombi*," something that "has no will of its own; it will work day and night without ever running away or complaining. It looks like a corpse..." (ibid. 375). Using the process of intercision, Mrs Coulter figuratively gives birth to monsters and thus commits an unforgivable crime.

Like the female figures mentioned above, her outward appearance and her charming attitude are only a façade. She is dangerously beautiful, which is underlined by her extraordinary intelligence. Her true nature is represented by her dæmon, the

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<sup>69</sup> According to the Church, Dust is "the physical evidence for original sin" (*Lights* 371). I will look further into this matter in chapter 3.3 The Use and Abuse of Religion.

<sup>70</sup> A daemon is an animal which substantiates part of his/her bearer's inner nature and make it visible to the environment. Daemons are able to talk and until puberty they are able to change form (e.g. from bird to panther).

golden monkey with its “little black horny hands” and its “long lustrous fur” (*Knife* 325); it is impossible to regard them as separate creatures as “the sweet-faced woman and the evil monkey were one being” (ibid. 213).

Like Mrs Coulter, the monkey is an extraordinary and cruel creature. The golden monkey, whose name the reader remains ignorant of and whose voice is never heard in a direct speech act, is the part of her character which corporealizes the emotions and violence that Mrs Coulter hides behind her façade. While she, for example, is calmly occupied with the very domestic task of tending to her flowers in her home, the golden monkey brutally wrestles with Pantalaimon until “the monkey had overmastered him: with one fierce black paw around his throat and his back paws gripping the polecat’s lower limbs, he took one of Pantalaimon’s ears in his other paw and pulled as if he intended to tear it off” (*Lights* 87). In the third volume of the trilogy, the monkey further reveals the hidden sadistic nature of Mrs Coulter:

[...] the dæmon pull[ed] one of the black wings [of a bat] out and out and out till it snapped and broke and hung from a white string of sinew, while the dying bat screamed and its fellows flapped around in anguished puzzlement. Crack – crack – snap – as the golden monkey pulled the little thing apart limb by limb, and the woman lay moodily on her sleeping-bag by the fire and slowly ate a bar of chocolatl. (*Spyglass* 55)

Again, there is a stark contrast between the monkey’s behaviour and Mrs Coulter’s. This scene further reveals that Mrs Coulter’s is prone to physical violence and it emphasises her disregard for life in general; so far, only creatures which are useful to her are worth preserving. Occasionally, the reader perceives her violent nature without the filter of the golden monkey: when it becomes known to the reader that Mrs Coulter is said to take pleasure in watching the procedure of intercision (*Lights* 275), or when she tortures a witch to get information (*Knife* 39). After she has achieved her aims, she even kills the people who are no longer useful to her, like Lord Boreal and Lena Feldt (*Knife* 326ff.). Until the last book of the trilogy, her interactions reveal “an instrumental view of others” (Rutledge 122).

As seen above, it is only on the surface that she and the golden monkey establish an affectionate and even intimate relationship to the children she abducts from the streets (*Lights*. 44f.): “The golden monkey stroked all their dæmons, and they all touched the fox-fur [of Mrs Coulter’s cloak] for luck” (*Lights* 45). Touching another person’s dæmon is regarded as being highly intimate (ibid. 276f.). In her first scene, the attentive reader might recognize an uncanny resemblance between her and different

fairy tale figures; like the Pied Piper of Hamelin, she tricks the children into following her and doing her bidding. Like the fairy tale witch, she provides food and shelter for her victims (ibid. 44). Her introductory scene is also the revelation of her duplicitous nature and leaves the reader ignorant of her name. Instead of fulfilling the role of the nurturing figure she portrays, she leads the children away from their families in order to experiment on them in a research station in Bolvangar. That the children come to her willingly and are unable to resist her is one of the greatest values she contributes to the organization she works for (ibid. 96). According to the witch Lena Feldt, “Mrs Coulter had more force in her soul than anyone she had ever seen. [...] no one could resist that authority” (*Knife* 327).

According to Maud Hines, “Mrs. Coulter is revealed to be a kind of wicked witch in Bolvangar, a place where the unnatural repeatedly supplants the natural” (Hines 41).<sup>71</sup> In *Northern Lights*, Mrs Coulter herself is constructed as an unnatural character. According to Lyra, she does not fit into the worlds of female scholars; Mrs Coulter has achieved an unnaturally high position in a male dominated society, due to her looks, cleverness, and charm. She always displays perfect composure; when this fails, however, she undergoes a moment of metamorphoses which reveals her true self, her unnaturalness: “Mrs Coulter seemed to be charged with some kind of anbaric force. She even smelled different: a hot smell, like heated metal, came off her body” (*Lights* 92f.). With this gesture of intimidation, Mrs Coulter substantiates her dominance; the person her anger is directed at has “no force to resist” and acknowledges her superiority (ibid. 93).

After this scene, Marisa Coulter returns to be her normal self: “The hot metallic smell was vanishing. Perhaps Lyra had only imagined it” (ibid.). This is also a moment of dehumanization as well as transformation. Anne Klaus accurately concludes that “[i]t is tiny moments in which the evil opponents lose their composure – those short moments of metamorphosis – that give them away as what they really are” (Klaus 2010, 141). Anne Klaus continues in defining these revelations of the opponents’ true nature as a general attribute of evil: “There is a close connection between the idea of transformation, shape-shifting and evil. Thus, for example, the serpent with its hybrid form and its ability to cast of its skin has been established as the ubiquitous metaphor for deceit and temptation, personified in snake-women like the paralyzing Greek Medusa” (ibid.). Deceit and temptation are the true weapons of the majority of the

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<sup>71</sup> The image of the witch directly connects Marisa Coulter with the White Witch, Jadis, the Lady of the Green Kirtle, Polly Withers, Maggie Barnes, Agnis, Nenufar and Neferet.

female adversaries mentioned so far, which place them within the tradition of evil, monstrous women.

One aspect which separates her from the female adversaries in *Narnia*, but unites her with Neferet, is the conscious use of her sexuality. She employs her physical features and her charm, for example, to beguile Lord Boreal in order to get the information she wants (*Knife* 324ff.). This scene also marks her as a “seeker of knowledge” (Russell 215); knowledge brings power and only through knowledge can she control her environment and satisfy her lust for power. Like the prototypical *La Belle Dame sans Merci*, Mrs Coulter kills the man she seduces as he is no longer useful to her. Even Will feels her alluring pull and almost falls victim to her strategies. He feels attracted to her as a mother figure (*Spyglass* 162) as well as, due to his awakening puberty, to her as a woman (*Knife* 213). As Metatron, who is another victim of her seductive power, concludes after his examination of her:

Corruption and envy and lust for power. Cruelty and coldness. A vicious probing curiosity. Pure, poisonous, toxic malice. You have never from your earliest years shown a shred of compassion or sympathy or kindness without calculating how it would return to your advantage. You have tortured and killed without regret or hesitation; you have betrayed and intrigued and gloried in your treachery. You are a cess-pit of moral filth. (*Spyglass* 419)

This summary of her character might be accurate till the end of the second book and reveals Mrs Coulter’s coldness, viciousness, her infinite ambition, and self-serving attitude. As Mary Harris Russell points out, Mrs Coulter pursues “a completely independent path toward power and ego satisfaction” (Russell 215). While the murder of Lord Boreal is probably motivated by her lust for power, and proves the previous characterisation correct, the seduction of Metatron is motivated by her wish to protect her daughter. Irrespective the reason, she uses her body and charisma to achieve her goals.

According to Marry Harris Russell, Marisa Coulter “embodies qualities of both Eve and Lilith” (ibid. 215). While her quest for knowledge marks the parallel to Eve, her “dangerous sexuality” (Graham 33) is a quality she shares with Lilith. She shares this strategy of sexual seduction with Neferet and classical temptresses like Judith, Salome, and Circe. While the fairy-tale-like witch belongs to the realm of children’s literature, both female adversaries, Mrs Coulter and Neferet, rather qualify as characters found in young adult fiction.



Other characteristics Mrs Coulter has in common with Lilith are her independence, her assertiveness (Russell 215), and her attempt to achieve a masculine level of power: “As Adam’s first wife, [Lilith] refused his sexual overtures, asserting that she was his equal and thus should not have to lie beneath him” (Graham 34). Regarding her position in Lyra’s world she is “as powerful in her way as Lord Asriel in his” (*Lights* 128). Her act of disobedience towards the Church and its aims establish a further parallel with Lilith. In her research on the Narnian witches, Jean E. Graham points out one of Lilith’s tasks that also corresponds to Mrs Coulter’s actions: “[Lilith] has been given authority to punish and kill children for the sins of their fathers and is associated with the flaming sword that guards Eden” (Graham 34). Mrs Coulter severs the bond between a child and his or her dæmon with a “great pale silver blade [...] was rising slowly, catching the brilliant light” (*Lights* 279) in order to free them from original sin (ibid. 375).

Although Mrs Coulter displays many parallels with the other temptresses, especially Lilith, and can even be regarded as a “prototypical femme fatale” (Philips qtd. in Russell 215), she also displays qualities the others lack; for example, the ability to love someone, in this case Lyra and Lord Asriel. Although equal to Lord Asriel concerning her level of power, intelligence and ambition, and emotionally highly attached to him, she does not join his objective, but remains behind (*Lights* 396). Furthermore, in Lyra’s eyes, their relationship “seemed more like cruelty than love” (ibid. 395), and their passion seems to be destructive rather than wholesome (ibid. 395f.). In the end, however, Lord Ariel and Mrs Coulter “[r]ecognize each other as lovers” (Rutledge 130), and are able to defeat Metatron through their mutual effort.<sup>72</sup>

Furthermore, she holds another very special position among the female adversaries in this thesis: she is also a true mother, not a perverted version of a mother figure such as Neferet or Lilith<sup>73</sup>, even despite her actions in Bolvangar. As a mother Mrs Coulter obtains a role which primarily defines and impels her in the end of the trilogy. It is this feature which causes her shift of allegiance. Absent during Lyra’s childhood, Marisa Coulter approaches her daughter as soon as she has use of her as another tool of deceit. Even when she takes Lyra with her to London, she does not reveal their blood relationship. First, Mrs Coulter only claims possession of her: “My

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<sup>72</sup> Mrs Coulter and Lord Asriel here become emblematic of missed opportunities. Lyra and Will demonstrate “what Asriel and Coulter *might* have been” (Rutledge 130; emphasis in original): a life that foregrounds love rather than the striving for power.

<sup>73</sup> The Zohar depicts Lilith in several roles: as a demon who kills the victims of her seduction, and, more important to this point of the analysis, as demon whose breasts are empty of milk, who is not able to bear human children and who kills children (Christow 18f.).

child, my own child, conceived in sin and born in shame, but my child nonetheless” (*Knife* 38). At this stage, Mrs Coulter is torn between her ambition and her awakening feelings for her daughter: though still a ruthless agent of the Church, Mrs Coulter rescues Lyra repeatedly. Nevertheless, Lyra feels that “whereas Lord Asriel was now ‘father’, Mrs Coulter was never ‘mother’” (*Lights* 232).

Only when Lyra’s true purpose becomes apparent, does she reset her priorities. She wants to prevent Lyra from committing another fall for humankind (*Knife* 329). That is why she flees with her daughter and imprisons her in a cave, with herself as doting mother and gatekeeper. This situation reveals that Mrs Coulter is able to perform the role of the loving, nurturing mother figure, though she keeps her daughter unconscious on purpose to keep her under control, which annihilates her well-meant efforts to a certain extent. Mrs Coulter’s “hopelessly confused protectiveness – or possessiveness” (Rutledge 123) does not, however, lead to a reciprocal exchange of emotions; her feelings for her daughter remain largely unshared. When Lyra is taken from her, Mrs Coulter loses her composure and breaks down: “Mrs Coulter’s face was a mask of tragic passion, and her dæmon clung piteously to her as she knelt and held out her arms crying: / ‘Lyra! Lyra my love! My heart’s treasure, my little child, my only one! Oh Lyra, Lyra, don’t go, don’t leave me! My darling daughter – you’re tearing my heart –’” (*Spyglass* 169). After the episode in the cave, Mrs Coulter has changed completely. Even Lord Asriel comments on this:

To have tamed and softened you – that’s no everyday feat. [Lyra has] drawn your poison, Marisa. She’s taken your teeth out. Your fire’s been quenched in a drizzle of sentimental piety. [...] The pitiless agent of the church, the fanatical persecutor of children, the inventor of hideous machines to slice them apart and look in their terrified little being for any evidence of *sin* – and along comes a foul-mouthed ignorant little brat with dirty fingernails, and you cluck and settle your feathers over her like a hen. (*Spyglass* 211; emphasis in original)

The proclaimed change in Mrs Coulter’s behaviour is very startling and leaves critics puzzled about her true motivation; while Amelie A. Rutledge talks about an “unstable nature of Coulter’s maternal commitment” (Rutledge 123), I agree with Mary Harris Russell who concludes that “she is apparently speaking the truth about her conversion to motherhood” (Russell 216). To protect her daughter, she aims to infiltrate the Church to save her, because “[s]he knew every lever of power; she could manipulate them all” (*Spyglass* 229). In a brutal fight, Mrs Coulter tries to keep the President of the

Consistorial Court of Justice from destroying Lyra, to the extent that she is almost killed herself (ibid. 365ff.).

As a mother, she “has a role to play in bringing Lyra to her most important moment” (Russell 215). In that, she is instrumental in enabling Lyra to fulfil her task (ibid. 217). She ultimately sacrifices herself and falls into a state of oblivion, a state which she is mortally afraid of (*Spyglass* 400). For Millicent Lenz, her willingness to take action marks her as “ultimately more admirable than those who ‘have a heart overflowing with love’ yet *do nothing*” (Lenz 11; emphasis in original)

Like most of Philip Pullman’s characters, Marisa Coulter is an “ambiguous figure” (Hatlen 91). Like Lord Asriel, she “show[s] a great deal of complexity and can definitely not be ascribed the quality of good or evil” (Nikolajeva 1999, 69). Compared to the previous authors, Philip Pullman created a more realistic figure in Mrs Coulter, as she is not painted in black and white but in shades of grey, which means that her character is able to develop in multiple directions.

All in all, Mrs Coulter’s character is a tool to expose human’s susceptibility to temptation and manipulation. This not only includes children and adults, men in particular, but also supposedly insusceptible organizations like the Church, thus demonstrating the fallibility of a sacrosanct institution and humans in general.

As seen in this analysis, the author’s world view might not be a dualistic one, as evil is not as easily isolated as seen for example in the *Narnia* series. Evil exists everywhere, in children and adults alike. Hence, every single person must work against his or her evil impulses and is responsible for building a better world, or as Pullman terms it, “[t]he republic of heaven,” on his or her own (*Spyglass* 548).

#### Female Adversaries in J. K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter* series

J. K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter* series offers two very interesting and distinct female adversaries that the hero must fight and defeat: Dolores Umbridge and Bellatrix Lestrange. Both women differ significantly from the characters examined above, as they do not follow the established image of the female temptress and its consecutive description and strategies. Nevertheless, both characters contribute considerably to the antagonists’ war efforts. Like Mrs Coulter and the White Witch, Dolores Umbridge and Bellatrix Lestrange are part of the secondary discourse and at least briefly discussed in books such as Bethany Barratt’s *The Politics of Harry Potter* (2012), Shira Wolosky’s *The Riddles of Harry Potter. Secret Passages and Interpretive Quests* (2010), and in

several articles in Giselle Liza Anatol's collection of essays *Reading Harry Potter Again. New Critical Essays* (2009).

### Bellatrix Lestrange

Similar to Polly Withers, Maggie Barnes, and Nenufar, Bellatrix Lestrange only occupies a minor role in the series as Voldemort's "best lieutenant" (*Hallows* 590). Nevertheless, her role is very interesting as she differs greatly from all other characters under scrutiny: most of all in her methods and in the construction of her femininity.

From the first moment Bellatrix appears in the series, the reader becomes aware of her deep conviction of Voldemort's cause and her unwavering trust in Voldemort's power (*Goblet* 517). Bellatrix and three other followers of Voldemort's are found guilty of torturing Frank Longbottom and his wife to insanity in order to acquire knowledge about Voldemort's location after his fall from power. She identifies herself and her companions as most faithful and most deserving servants: "He will rise again and will come for us, he will reward us beyond any of his other supporters! We alone were faithful! We alone tried to find him!" (*ibid.*). Although she is not named in *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, her "heavy lidded eyes" (*ibid.*) become her marker of identification in the latter books.

In *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, Bellatrix's character is further developed. The reader becomes aware of her pure-blood origin as Bellatrix Black who married Rodolphus Lestrange, another pure-blood, to undoubtedly perpetuate the pure-blood ideology<sup>74</sup>, among other reasons (*Order* 105). Like other members of her family, and undeniably proven in *Goblet*, she is one of Voldemort's followers, the Death Eaters, whose crimes "during the days of Voldemort's reign of terror were legendary" and infused the population with fear (*Order* 485). Although the status of being a witch is a given in the novels, due to her behaviour and actions, Bellatrix fulfils the stereotype of the traditional evil witch in fairy tales.

While characters such as Jadis, Neferet, and Marissa Coulter are constructed as desirable, Bellatrix's looks are neither alluring nor seductive (anymore): "She had long, dark hair that looked unkempt and straggly [...], though he had seen it sleek, thick and shining. She glared [...] through heavily lidded eyes, an arrogant, disdainful smile playing around her thin mouth. [...] she retained vestiges of great good looks, but something – perhaps Azkaban – had taken most of her beauty" (*Order* 481). This

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<sup>74</sup> I further analyse the topic of blood-related ideology and its consequences in chapter 3.2 The Construction of Difference.

quotation reveals several things: it paints a very negative picture of her in accentuating her character traits and connecting them with her physiognomy; it also points out that she has higher priorities than her outward appearance, and that she does not employ her looks to achieve her aims; moreover this quote tells the reader about the price she had to pay for her unwavering loyalty to Voldemort. Another quotation further emphasises her imprisonment and the consecutive change her outward appearance has undergone: “Azkaban had hollowed Bellatrix LeStrange’s face, making it gaunt and skull-like, but it was alive with a feverish, fanatical glow” (ibid. 691). Although Azkaban has changed Bellatrix’s appearance, it has not diminished her beliefs and the uncompromising actions she takes to follow the path to Lord Voldemort’s megalomaniac goals.

Corresponding to her role as agent of evil, Bellatrix has a “malevolent aura” (*Hallows* 422), and “treat[s] people like they’re scum” (ibid.). Thus, she acts straightforwardly and does not blind or manipulate her victims like the majority of the female temptresses above, which appears to be a rather unfeminine strategy. As a “female warrior” (Gallardo C and Smith 2009, 95)<sup>75</sup> Bellatrix is as “unyielding” as her wand (*Hallows* 399), and as a formidable adversary she possesses the magical skill to duel with several opponents at once (ibid. 589). Gallardo C. and Smith fittingly state that “[s]he delights in duelling other witches and wizards” (2009, 95) as this display of power confirms her (magical) superiority, her longing for power and control, and perpetuates her reputation of cruelty and mercilessness.

Ximena Gallardo C and C. Jason Smith conclude that Bellatrix “focuses all her energy and talent on fulfilling Voldemort’s ambition” (ibid.). This also includes her willingness to make sacrifices and her lack of understanding other people’s priorities: “‘You should be proud!’ said Bellatrix ruthlessly. ‘If I had sons, I would be glad to give them up to the service of the Dark Lord!’” (*Prince* 39). This statement characterises Bellatrix as “a counter-mother, an inverse mother” (Wolosky 2010, 174).

Throughout the books, the plot further underlines this image: an unspoken guideline of the pure-blood ideology in the novels is that it is the duty of a pure-blood couple to continue the pure-blood lineage and thus ensure future pure-blood supremacy (*Order* 105). Rowling, however, does not construct the Lestranges as a nuclear family. In *The Order of the Phoenix*, Bellatrix further nurtures the image of the perverted mother when she talks to Harry in a “horrible, mock baby voice,” using a particularly

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<sup>75</sup> Due to the description of Bellatrix’s appearance, which is in stark contrast to the image of the female temptress, I agree with Gallardo C and Smith who translate that her name with “female warrior” (2009, 95), and hence disagree with Wolosky who translates it with “tricks of beauty (from the French *belle*) and/or those of war (from the Latin *bellum*)” (Wolosky 2010, 12; emphasis in original).

way of speaking a mother would lovingly use with her new born child: “*The little baby woke up fwightened and fort what it dweamed was twoo*” (ibid. 689; emphasis in original).

Furthermore, Bellatrix repeatedly tortures minors such as Neville Longbottom, whom she has deprived of parents. The joy she experiences in the moments of torture marks her sadistic nature (ibid. 705). She frequently uses the Cruciatus curse to do this, which can only be employed when the wizard or witch truly wants to hurt his or her victim (ibid. 715). As Dumbledore states Bellatrix “likes to play with her food before she eats it” (*Hallows* 549). The characteristics of the curse and her behaviour further emphasises the devaluation of the lives of her victims and thus her “monstrousness as ‘anti-mother’” (Wolosky 2010, 175); an image which corresponds to the other female adversaries in this chapter. It is therefore appropriate that the highly idealized mother of the novels, Mrs Weasley, kills the “anti-mother” with a spell that injures Bellatrix “squarely in the chest, directly over her heart” (*Hallows* 590).

Bellatrix’s role in the novels is constantly defined by her dualistic relationship with Lord Voldemort. On the one hand, fear and terror characterize her feelings (*Order* 716). When Bellatrix is not able to retrieve the prophecy in *Order*, she “sob[s] [...], flinging herself down at Voldemort’s feet” (717). It is characteristic for the relationship between the Dark Lord and his servants that his followers “stay with him out of fear, not loyalty [...]. By failing to forgive, and by punishing those who have returned to him, he guarantees that his power over his followers is entirely dependent upon his ability to punish” (Barratt 46). Bellatrix is exemplary for the pyramid of domination which the Death Eaters follow: they revel in dominating their victims, but at the same time, they are dominated themselves.

On the other hand, Bellatrix’s submission to Voldemort is unique, as she is not only loyal to him out of fear but also idolizes him and serves him willingly. This becomes apparent when she looks at him in “worshipful fascination” (*Hallows* 563), when she “gaze[s] at him, breathless and imploring” (ibid. 16), and when she leans closer to him “for mere words could not demonstrate her longing for closeness” (ibid.). In her demonstration of “a craving for nearness, recognition and emotion” (Wolosky 2010, 131), Bellatrix appears to be “a kind of sexualized pet in relation to Voldemort” (Lavioe 86). Marion Rana also points out Bellatrix’s “underlying sexual desire for him” (Rana 85), and her consecutive enslavement of herself to him (ibid. 86). Although the reader knows that her husband is still alive and fulfilling his duties as a Death Eater, her marriage to him simply fades into the background (*Hallows* 68).

All in all, Bellatrix adds her own flavour of evil to the previously mentioned adversaries. This is mostly due to the fabric of her character; she exhibits signs of madness and I agree with Bethany Barratt's claim that "Rowling has painted her as highly unstable" (Barratt 129). Although Bellatrix's character does not fully correspond to the temptresses mentioned above, there are two points which overlap: firstly, her depiction as a counter image to the idealized mother. And secondly her craving for domination and control. Shira Wolosky even interprets Bellatrix's idolization for Voldemort as "the worship of pure power alone" (Wolosky 2010, 174); a quote which is highly applicable to characters such as the Narnian witches, Susan Cooper's female adversaries, and most of all Neferet.

### Dolores Umbridge

Dolores Umbridge first appears as a member of the Ministry of Magic<sup>76</sup> in *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* during Harry's trial for using magic as an under-aged wizard. In this scene, Harry further becomes aware of the inner workings of the Ministry and its methods. Dolores Jane Umbridge takes part in Harry's trial in her official position as "Senior Undersecretary to the Minister" (*Order* 127). Right from the start, the reader is influenced through Harry's unfavourably description of her:

He thought she looked just like a large, pale toad. She was rather squat with a broad, flabby face, as little neck as Uncle Vernon and a very wide, slack mouth. Her eyes were large, round and slightly bulging. Even the little black velvet bow perched on top of her short curly hair put him in mind of a large fly she was about to catch on a long sticky tongue. (*Order* 134)

The comparison to a toad and to Uncle Vernon sets the stage for a negative character who is dehumanized and "waits to trap unsuspecting victims" (Wolosky 2010, 42). Rowling complements the appearance of this character with "very pointy teeth" (*Order* 191), and "a silvery laugh that made the hairs on the back of Harry's neck stand up" (*ibid.* 134) which gives her an air of malevolence. "A horrible pink Alice band that matched the fluffy pink cardigan she wore over her robes" (*ibid.* 183) and her "high-pitched, breathy, and little-girlish" voice (*ibid.* 191) should supposedly accentuate her femininity, but construct an artificial and failing disguise of innocence.

When Fudge installs her as Defence against the Dark Arts teacher in Hogwarts in order to employ a direct liaison between the Ministry of Magic and the school, the

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<sup>76</sup> I further analyse the Ministry of Magic in chapters 3.1 Wrongful Authority and 3.2 The Construction of Difference.

decorations in her office mark further fake embodiments of her feminine side and the failed attempt to create a homely atmosphere: “There were several vases full of dried flowers, each one residing on its own doily and on one of the walls was a collection of ornamental plates, each decorated with a large technicolour kitten wearing a different bow around its neck” (ibid. 239). Apparently, her office should give the students and the reader the impression of a home or shelter and thus gain the students’ trust, not unlike the witch’s house in “Hansel and Gretel,” but it completely fails to transport a homey atmosphere as, for example, the kittens are “so foul that Harry stared at them, transfixed” (ibid.). Professor Umbridge is not only “ridiculously feminine” (Rana 83), but, as Shira Wolosky states, “a grating image of hypocrisy” (Wolosky 2010, 43), as her actions completely contradict the image she aims to create around herself.

As Professor for the Defence against the Dark Arts, she installs herself as “unquestioned and unquestionable” person of authority (Bealer 180). She, for example, silences Hermione’s questions and belittles her opinion with a reference to Hermione’s lack of qualification as “a Ministry-trained educational expert,” and that “[w]izards much older and cleverer than you” have devised new ways of teaching which rely on the passivity of the students (*Order* 218). This scene reveals adult condescendence, and portrays Umbridge as “the self-satisfied adult who freely abuses the power differential between grown-ups and children in order to serve her own needs” (Damour 2). Furthermore, this situation uncovers that the Ministry, and Umbridge in particular, do not aim at educating the students to become autonomous citizens who are able to defend themselves physically and mentally. Rather, in “basing her right to criticize in Ministry authority” (Barratt 127), Umbridge strengthens the Ministry’s monopoly on power, which both increases the degree of the citizens’ reliance on the Ministry to protect them and, stifles protests. Consequently, the school becomes what Louis Althusser terms “the educational ISA [Ideological State Apparatus]” (Althusser 208)<sup>77</sup>; Hogwarts is thus converted into the Ministry’s tool to realize and perpetuate state ideology on a microcosmic level.

Furthermore, being a teacher at Hogwarts, Umbridge obtains the right to discipline her students. The way of punishing her students reveals her cruel and sadistic nature; she mentally and physically abuses Harry when he has to write “*I must not tell lies*” on a parchment of paper, employing a pen which uses his own blood as ink (*Order* 240; emphasis in original). I agree with Shira Wolosky who states that “[t]he destructive

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<sup>77</sup> The Ideological State Apparatus (ISA) consists of a plurality of public and private institutions, among others: the educational ISA, the communications ISA, and the cultural ISA (Althusser 208).



power to which writing can be put is dramatized, hideously, in the pen Umbridge gives Harry for his detention punishment, [...] against his own sense of truth, not only on paper but on his own flesh in his own blood” (Wolosky 2010, 22). This continual abuse of power leaves a second scar on Harry, “which still showed white on the back of [his right fist]” about two years later (*Hallows* 110).

Umbridge is not only dehumanized in her appearance, but also inhumane in her actions: She aims to use the Cruciatus curse on Harry, which is one of the Unforgivable and illegal curses in the plot, which causes the recipient unbearable pain; she further confesses that she ordered Dementors after Harry to get him expelled from school, and legitimizes everything with the justification that “sometimes circumstances justify the use...,” of such techniques (*Order* 657f.). Her immoral and criminal actions in order to maintain her power under the cover of (political) necessity mark her as corrupt political agent, and a Machiavellian villain.

To strengthen the method of surveillance and control, Fudge appoints Umbridge as “FIRST EVER HIGH INQUISITOR” (*Order* 274; emphasis in original). Umbridge lacks the ability to gain power through her own magical strength or through communal consent as Harry Potter or Dumbledore for example do, but “cloaks herself in grandiose titles and trades on borrowed legitimacy from Fudge” (Barratt 23). As High Inquisitor, Umbridge has for example “the power to inspect, place upon probation and sack any teacher she [...] feel[s] is not performing to the standards required by the Ministry of Magic” (*Order* 525). She holds the authority over the staff and instead of wielding it justly, she “distorts her reports assessing the teachers’ performances to injure, dominate and discredit instructors she dislikes” (Wolosky 2010, 21); she treats the racial Other extremely condescendingly to the point of being downright insulting, which highlights her perceived superiority as well as her fear of the Other (*Order* 385ff.).

Furthermore, she holds jurisdiction about the passing of Decrees at Hogwarts, and uses it to restrict the freedom of assembly (*ibid.* 313), and to censor information given by the teachers (*ibid.* 486) and information given by the press (*ibid.* 512), and thus tries “to bring every aspect of life at Hogwarts under her personal control” (*ibid.* 487) and satisfy her craving for power. All happens in accordance with (presumably newly founded) laws. Taking this into consideration, and adding Harry’s unfair trial and Umbridge’s sadistic methods, which are sanctioned by the Minister for Magic, it

becomes obvious that the Ministry of Magic is a breeding ground for mistakes and corruption.<sup>78</sup>

Fudge even installs Umbridge as Headmistress of Hogwarts, and she uses this position to then establish an even stricter surveillance and control system, as for example “[a]ll channels of communication in and out of this school are being monitored” except her own (*Order* 748), and her “Inquisitorial Squad is opening and reading all owl post entering and leaving this castle” (*ibid.*). Students like Draco Malfoy form this squad, who are known to punish the students arbitrarily to demonstrate their power. In using repressive forces, bending the laws to her desire, and emphasising the school’s position as an ideological state apparatus, Umbridge enjoys her power as Hogwart’s “sole dictator” (Wolosky 2010, 43), and “brings Ministry corruption to Hogwarts, exposing education also as a deeply vulnerable institution” (*ibid.* 42).

In *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, Dolores Umbridge becomes Head of the Muggle-born Registration Commission, a branch of the Ministry that operates in a way highly reminiscent of Nazi Germany and punishes Muggle-born wizards and witches.<sup>79</sup> Umbridge immorally enjoys her powerful position in the machinery of institutionalised violence, and is able to fully realize her racist attitudes. Although she is no Death Eater, her methods, cruelty, and sadistic behaviour correspond to Voldemort’s followers. As Sirius states, however, Umbridge represents a separate kind of evil: “the world isn’t split into good people and Death Eaters, [...] I know that she’s a nasty piece of work though” (*Order* 271).

Comparable to the other adversaries in this chapter, Umbridge represents “authority and tyranny [that] must be questioned, resisted” (Lavoie 83). Her characteristics, however, are so exaggerated that she almost becomes a parody of her literary predecessors, be it the mother figure or headmistress. Otherwise, the character of Dolores Umbridge avoids categorization – she is a female adversary in her own right, defying traditional roles; Stephen King even classifies her as “the greatest make-believe villain to come along since Hannibal Lecter” (King 2003, 5). Scholars portray her as “one of the books’ most revolting characters” (Wolosky 2010, 42), “loathsome” (Rana 57), “evil and cruel” (*ibid.* 83), and “odious” (Stephens 2009, 19). According to Shira Wolosky, Umbridge is “almost an allegorical figure of corruption and repression” (Wolosky 2010, 42). Dolores Umbridge, however, is more than that as she represents the mask of (political) hypocrisy and misuse of power: she appears to be a law-abiding

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<sup>78</sup> I further discuss this in Chapter 3.1 Wrongful Authority.

<sup>79</sup> I thoroughly analyse Umbridge’s role as the head of the Muggle-born Registration Office in chapter 3.2 The Construction of Difference.

politician who behaves with moral integrity, but behind her façade, she uses her position to abuse the power she has been given. Through her, laws are passed that rob citizens of their inalienable human rights. With her, the Death Eaters access the support of the government to realize a new, pure-blood wizarding society on legal grounds. She represents everything that is wrong with the system, and creates a supreme state of emergency the protagonists have to fight against.

### Conclusion

The analyses above bear evidence of the multi-layered meaning of the female adversaries. All are egoistic, most are beautiful and seductive, some even display a Machiavellian nature; none is shy of using emotional and physical violence to achieve her goals.

Johnson identifies the following characteristics to be “traditionally associated with femininity” (Lem and Hassel 122): “cooperation, mutuality, sharing, compassion, caring, vulnerability, a readiness to negotiate and compromise, emotional expressiveness, and intuitive and other non-linear ways of thinking” (Johnson qtd. in *ibid.*). Except for Bellatrix, all female villains are wearing masks of deception, which fake these traditional markers of femininity in order to entice their victims before their true nature finally becomes apparent. The following statement by Jean E. Graham does not only apply for the Narnian witches, but is almost universally true for the characters above: “The witches know they are beautiful, and use their beauty not to bring pleasure to men, but to put others under their control” (Graham 40). Beauty, appearance, and even sexuality become instrumental in the adversaries’ quest for (ultimate) power and control. It is striking that only Mrs Coulter is able to redeem herself; some characters such as Neferet face the potential of redemption, while others are personifications of evil. This might, however, go back to the fact that Mrs Coulter is the only biological mother, presenting a dual role. Mothers are either absent or incapable of taking part in the adventures.<sup>80</sup> They are never portrayed as being completely evil;<sup>81</sup> it rather seems to be a taboo topic to depict biological mothers as solely evil; even Mrs Malfoy experiences redemption through her motherly feelings in the end.

Being set in the realms of fantasy fiction, the battles invite as much to a metaphorical reading as these archetypal female figures do: one way to do this is to read

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<sup>80</sup> As for example in the case of the Pevensies, Harry, Will, and Zoey. Mrs Weasley is an exception to this rule, however, she is only marginally associated with the hero of the story.

<sup>81</sup> This is true for women that further the plot; characters such as Mrs Black or Merope Gaunt who are depicted in an unfavourable light rather facilitate the characterizations of others.

the female adversaries according to Jung's concept of the anima archetype. This concept can be divided into two main types: the mother figure and the dark aspect of the female (Hurwitz 159).

Regarding literature for children and young adults, the books attach great significance to the mother figure, both in its positive and negative manifestations. The representations of motherly qualities aim at catering to the physical and emotional needs of the children: such requirements as the need for food, shelter, warmth, comfort, and love. The young heroes are especially susceptible for that, as they are either orphans, or have an orphan-like status. Consequently, characters such as the White Witch, the Lady of the Green Kirtle, Nenufar, Neferet, and Mrs Coulter use the children's conscious and unconscious desire for a mother figure and fake the respective qualities to gain the children's trust and tempt them from their paths. The blinding of false motherly love, plus the acquisition of food and shelter often bind the protagonists to the adversaries' side. The maternal care, however, is only smoke and mirrors, and reveals the twisted nature of the female figure; consequently, the female antagonists symbolize the perverted mother. These characters as representations of the "bad mother" (J. Campbell 92) symbolize "the absent, unattainable mother against whom aggressive fantasies are directed" (ibid.). The female adversaries might thus function as displacement for the protagonists' animosity against their real mother, whose flaws, such as absence, they want to punish. Another interpretation is that it is the protagonists' task to break away from their good or bad mothers in order to become independent individuals. The fight against the female adversaries epitomizes the painfulness of this emancipation.

Joseph Campbell's theory of the monomyth depicts a stage in the hero's journey, in which he faces the dark side of femininity; it is called "Woman as the Temptress" (ibid. 101) and pictures the stage "[w]here this Oedipus-Hamlet revulsion remains to beset the soul, there the world, the body, and woman above all become the symbols no longer of victory but of defeat" (ibid. 102). In various examples, Joseph Campbell talks about women as "queen[s] of sin" (ibid.) and equates femininity with lust and hence with temptation (ibid. 104). He explains the tradition of mythical representations of femininity, which frequently display women in a negative light. Although there are positive portrayals of femininity such as the Virgin Mary, all the female adversaries in this chapter are modeled after negative images such as Circe, Lilith, and Eve. In her essay "Powers of Horror", Kristeva declares that the *Bible*, especially *Leviticus*, places the feminine body under the category of abomination (Kristeva 93), which emphasises

the misogynistic interpretation of these female characters and the consequential abjection they experience.

According to Graham, “Lewis turns Satan into Circe and Lilith, the temptation story of Genesis into a message about the dangers of female power and sexuality” (Graham 41), an example which the other authors obviously, consciously or not, follow; variations of the Lilith myth prominently pervade the books under scrutiny. As John Stephens states in his article “Witch-Figures in Recent Children’s Fiction: The Subaltern and the Subversive”, “[t]exts pivoting around witch-figures are always intertextual, existing in a dialogic relationship with history, historiographic discourses, scholarly research and popular culture, religious belief, and classic literary works” (Stephens 2003, 195). Stephens continues and reasons that, unconsciously or not, these texts “have figured and regulated the shape and boundaries of cultural formations: the nature of belief; [...] the role of the feminine in patriarchal societies” (ibid.) and its misogynist constructions. Maria Tatar has famously seized on the idea that children’s literature draws upon a long tradition of temptation personified by female figures, in which the protagonist is either punished for giving in to temptation or rewarded for overcoming this vice (Tatar 28).

From a psychoanalytical perspective, and similarly to the mother figure, the temptress as a negative anima functions as an embodiment of psychological processes: as soon as individuals face the problems an anima poses, they have to reconcile their consciousness with the female anima in order to change the negative aspects of their nature and thus develop a further awareness of the self (Hurwitz 172). This Jungian procedure mirrors the conflict in the books: the children have to actively resist the temptation of the *femme fatale* to overcome human susceptibility to temptation and manipulation, and thus be the role model the reader expects them to be.

Although the phrase “darkness does not always equate to evil, just as light does not always bring good” (*Marked* 41) is true for the *House of Night* series, the message is also applicable for the evil temptresses as such: protagonists and readers should not only judge a character by his or her outward appearance, as this could be treacherous. The physiognomy of a character is often consciously employed as a literary device that either follows or breaks with traditions. According to Anthony Synnott, the “equations of beauty and goodness, and goodness as beauty” are concepts which “[date] back to Plato, and perhaps to Homer” (Synnott 608). This theory concludes that the physiognomy of the person under scrutiny reflects his or her character: “The beauty mystique in its simplest form, is the belief that the beautiful is good, and the ugly is evil;

and conversely that the morally good is physically beautiful [...] and the evil is ugly. Thus the physical and metaphysical, body and soul, appearance and reality, inner and outer, are one” (ibid. 611).<sup>82</sup>

In fairy tales, protagonists like Cinderella, Snow White and Rapunzel fit perfectly into this scheme. Regarding the evil antagonists, however, this tradition is either upheld or broken: whereas the witch in “Hansel and Gretel” is not a beautiful creature, the queen in “Snow White” is. Regarding older or beautiful women, fairy tales often recommend caution, as do the works in this thesis. It is important to look beyond a façade of a person to perceive his or her true nature. All the books state that inner values are far more important than physical beauty. Being beautiful and alluring repeatedly occurs in regard to the stereotype of the evil temptress: these attributes increase the danger which emanates from the female adversary because they are able to hide their inner villainous nature.

As Anne Klaus concludes: “By portraying the allure of the evil temptresses as superficial, the authors are in accordance with the notion already written in the *Bible* in Peter 3 which has made its way into the common saying ‘True beauty comes from within’” (Klaus 2010, 138f.). Furthermore, the authors employ the protagonists’ relations to the female adversaries as a tool to expose human’s susceptibility to temptation and manipulation. Simultaneously, this relationship poses the question whom the protagonists as well as the reader can trust.

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<sup>82</sup> As an example, Synnott mentions the equation of evil and ugliness in Homer’s *The Iliad*, and Plato’s equation of beauty and goodness in his *Greater Hippias* (Synnott 611). Shakespeare used the same concept of ugliness and evil in the construction of Richard III. Fairy tales also often operate with these equations. These examples indicate that “the beauty mystique [...] is [...] an intrinsic part of Western culture” (ibid.).

## 2.2 Male Adversaries

In this chapter, I focus on the male antagonists. In the previous chapter, the order of books under scrutiny is roughly according to the dates of publication, which almost go hand in hand with the development of the realization of the female temptress motif. The present chapter displays a complementary trajectory starting with rather traditional figures of masculinity in C. S. Lewis' *Narnia* series, respectively Rabadash and the Tisroc in *The Horse and His Boy*, King Miraz in *Prince Caspian*, and Shift and Rishda Tarkaan in *The Last Battle*. Susan Cooper's agents and embodiments of 'The Dark' in *The Dark Is Rising Sequence*, namely Norman Withers, the Black Rider and the Grey King are subsequent to these descriptions, followed by Galbatorix from Christopher Paolini's *Inheritance Cycle*. Hemingway's super villain the Grandir and Michael Addison in *The Sangreal Trilogy*, the former displaying a completely rational attitude, and the latter displaying attitudes of an *homme fatal*, as well as Lord Voldemort from J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series, are characters that not only use physical force to accomplish their goals, but also sweet-tongued strategies. The Authority and Metatron in *His Dark Materials* are the last villains whom the plots depict as thoroughly corrupt and evil. Finally, I focus on Kalona, and the white bull from Casts' *The House of Night* novels; the former is a rather ambiguous figure who, in the end, works for the benefit of the protagonist.

### Male Adversaries in C.S. Lewis' *The Chronicles of Narnia*

In contrast to the female antagonists in the *Narnia* series, the male villains reveal diversity instead of homogeneity. Although scholars often cover the White Witch and Jadis in their analyses of *The Chronicles of Narnia*, the male adversaries of the respective child heroes do not appear as frequently in secondary literature. Three useful sources for investigating this topic are Thomas Kullmann's essay "Krieg und Gewalt in C. S. Lewis' *Narnia*-Büchern" (1997) in which he discusses several of the adversaries in *The Chronicles of Narnia*. Elizabeth Baird Hardy's book *Milton, Spenser, and The Chronicles of Narnia. Literary Sources for the C. S. Lewis Novels* (2007), and C. N. Manlove's *C. S. Lewis: His Literary Achievement* (1987) additionally enrich my interpretation.

## Rabadash

In *The Horse and His Boy*, the protagonists have to face two very cunning adversaries. Firstly, there is Rabadash, the oldest son of the Tisroc. He wants to get possession of Susan and make her his wife; to fulfil his desire he is even prepared to wage war and tries to turn his conquering endeavours into a successful *Blitzkrieg*. Secondly, there is the Tisroc himself, who is the ruler of Calormen. He willingly lets his son go into battle and hopes to harvest the fruits of Rabadash's colonizing efforts.

Before I analyse Rabadash and his father in greater depth, I take a look at their social background in order to account for some of the justifications both have for their actions. According to Thomas Kullmann, Calormen and its inhabitants might remind the reader of the cultural descriptions of the *Arabian Nights* (Kullmann 1997, 30), as it displays "a quasi-Arabic society" (Manlove 162). This is grounded, for example, in clothes and weapons (Kullmann 1997, 30.), as well as skin colour and the way and importance of story-telling. According to Manlove, the Calormen portrayal in *Horse* is "a realistic landscape in a 'believable' society" (Manlove 163).

Calormene society consists of strict social hierarchies. At the bottom, slavery thrives. In general, the life of a member of the lower classes is measured in crescents<sup>83</sup>. This becomes obvious right at the beginning of the novel, when Shasta's 'father' and a stranger haggle over the price for Shasta's life (*The Horse and His Boy* 15)<sup>84</sup>. In Tashbaan, the capital of Calormen and seat of the Tisroc, Shasta further becomes aware of the society's strict stratifications. While he and his companions try to make their way through the city, their progress is very slow because they constantly have to step aside for people of higher social rank or even stop altogether, because "in Tashbaan there is only one traffic regulation, which is that everyone who is less important has to get out of the way for everyone who is more important" (ibid. 51); a rule which is brutally enforced (ibid.).

Furthermore, it is a male-dominated society, where daughters are married off to (usually) older men (ibid. 36) and thus become a commodity with which the girl's family members gain political influence and raise their social status (ibid.). Although the Tisroc talks about his nineteen sons, he never mentions a daughter (ibid.); either he has no daughters, which very unlikely, or they are not worth mentioning, especially in regard to the royal line of succession, which is determined by a male lineage. The most important aspect of Calormen and its society is that the plot constructs social, political, and religious

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<sup>83</sup> Crescents is the local currency.

<sup>84</sup> Shasta is the male protagonist of this book. During this moment of trade, he learns that the man he has always thought to be his father has only found and raised him (*Horse* 14f.).



elements of this culture as stark contrasts to the free country of Narnia (Kullmann 1997, 30.). Manlove talks about a “divided race” (Manlove 168), characterised by “[t]he notion of vertical division between one order and another, whether through class, sex, or species, [which] is in Narnia answered by one of equality” (ibid. 169).

The Tisroc is not only the sovereign, but he and his children are supposed to be the descendants of the god Tash (*Horse* 170), which ensures the transference of absolute political and religious power to the hands of the ruler. Whenever characters mention the Tisroc, or talk to him directly, they add the phrase “may he live forever” (e.g. ibid. 16), which contributes to the mythic appearance and understanding of the sovereign.

Although the conflict between the Calormenes and Narnians exists on several levels, it manifests itself best in Rabadash’s courtship of Susan and his consecutive claim of possession. According to Manlove, “the Calormenes think always not of the free marriage of individuals, but of the absorption (and cancellation of identity) of one by the other – of wife by the husband, of all other countries through conquest by Calormen; the ‘marriage-plots’ and the Rabadash war-plots are thus different faces of the same coin” (Manlove 166).

Rabadash’s self-perception stems from his privileged social position: He is the male heir to the throne. Indirect and direct characterizations of Rabadash reveal that he is used to wield power over his subjects. Susan provides the reader with a first description of the prince and points out Rabadash’s duplicitous nature: “[W]hat marvellous feats he did in that great tournament and hastilude which our brother the High King made for him, and how meekly and courteously he consorted with us [...]. But here, in his own city, he has shown another face” (*Horse* 57). Rabadash appears to be well aware of the expectations concerning his behaviour and the political importance of his ambassadorial mission; he thus displays his public face while on foreign ground. In his own realms, however, he reveals his true face and marks himself as “a most proud, bloody, luxurious, cruel, and self-pleasing tyrant” (ibid.).

His direct interactions demonstrate his depiction as a child-like character who can be regarded as a caricature rather than an actual character. Instead of arguing eloquently, which is said to be a Calormene trait (ibid. 35)<sup>85</sup>, he throws a tantrum: “‘But I *want* her,’ cried the Prince. ‘I must have her. I shall die if I do not get her – false, proud, black-hearted daughter of a dog that she is! I cannot sleep and my food has no savour and my eyes are darkened because of her beauty. I must have the barbarian queen’” (ibid 89;

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<sup>85</sup> Manlove notes that Calormene speech is inherently duplicitous: “In Calormen [...] there is a split between extreme politeness of manners and discourse, and savagery of intent” (168).

emphasis in original). This passage reveals that he is not used to the denial of his will, and that his pride is deeply hurt. Furthermore, the insults he hurls at Susan demonstrate the racial and cultural prejudices he has towards Narnians, as well as his ingrained understanding of women as property.

His perceived superiority also becomes apparent in the treatment of his social inferiors; he for example kicks his father's adviser repeatedly, regardless of the latter's position as a "venerable and enlightened Vizier" (ibid. 89f.). Neither does he care for the lives of his 200 soldiers whom he takes with him to conquer Anvard and invade Narnia (Hardy 57). Although Rabadash declares that "every drop of the Narnian blood [is] more precious than a gallon of [his soldiers' blood]" (*Horse* 126) in order to avoid a war with High King Peter (ibid. 93), his orders concerning Archeland are different: "Kill me every barbarian male within [Anvard's] walls, down to the child that was born yesterday, and everything else is yours to divide as you please [...]. The man that I see hanging back [...] shall be burned alive" (ibid.). These physical assaults and the act of war and the crimes he wants to commit, further demonstrate his dangerous and cruel nature, as well as his misuse of power. Not only does he treat his enemies cruelly, but also his own troops. His behaviour proves that "[h]e is interested in his own prestige alone" (Hardy 57), which underlines his selfishness, a trait he shares with the other male and female adversaries studied in this thesis.

Rabadash is hungry for power outside of his father's realms, because only there is it within his reach; his father himself does not share his power. In her essay "'It's People's Stuff' – Violence in Archaic Worlds" Stefanie Krüger fittingly states that "greed not only corrupts people, but destroys them" (Krüger 141). Rabadash has lost the ability to think reasonably, and acts with brutal force according to a poorly thought-out plan to satisfy his personal desire, rather than taking his role as a future sovereign and the desires of his subjects into consideration. In contrast to the female adversaries, he does not try to convince his adversaries of the righteousness of his cause with a sweet-tongued strategy, but uses brutal force to achieve his aims. Even when he is captured, "Rabadash's arrogance knows no bounds" (Sennett 243), and neither do his pride and anger. His childish attitude prevents him from hearing the voice of reason and love, personified by Aslan. He refuses to take the chance of redemption, but curses and threatens his capturers.

His inner distortion becomes visible when he is literally dehumanized and changed into a donkey. In Rabadash's case, this is the worst punishment possible. Not only is he ridiculed, he also loses his voice and his identity as male heir to the throne, and thus all his power. In contrast to Rabadash, who enjoys punishing and scaring people, and

even reserves a special facial expression to scare his subjects (*Horse* 170), Aslan grants forgiveness through religious atonement. Only in the temple of Tash will Rabadash be healed and regain his human form. This will last as long as he remains within a certain radius from Tashbaan. A side effect of his inability to now conquer foreign lands himself is that his subjects officially call him “Rabadash the Peacemaker” (ibid. 173); he rather makes peace than see someone else perform gloriously in battle.

His encounter with Aslan has not influenced him to become a better person, as it did with Edmund, for example. Rabadash’s political performances are still determined by his greed for power and the maintenance of said power (ibid. 172f.). As an adversary, the reader can only take him seriously because he wields military force. Otherwise, he is an absolutely ridiculed figure, which the plot emphasises through a depiction of Rabadash’s status among his subjects who call him “Rabadash the Ridiculous” behind his back (ibid.).

#### The Tisroc

The Tisroc himself only appears briefly in *The Horse and His Boy*. His first direct description is that of a man of decadence and wastefulness: “The least of the jewels with which he was covered was worth more than all the clothes and weapons of the Narnian lords put together: but he was so fat and such a mass of frills and pleats and bobbles and buttons and tassels and talismans that Aravis couldn’t help thinking the Narnian fashions (at any rate for men) looked nicer” (ibid. 88). The richness of the Tisroc is in stark contrast to the poverty of most of his subjects (ibid. 50), and, as the reader knows by now, it is a richness accomplished through tyranny and slavery. Furthermore, the narrator introduces the Tisroc to point to Narnian superiority in both outward appearance and morality. The Tisroc accumulates his riches to display his predominance, while the Narnian kings and queens do not assign importance to material abundance, but to freedom, humanity, and respect for animals as fellow creatures (Kullmann 1997, 30).

Furthermore, the Tisroc’s inner deformity is mirrored in his entourage. Firstly, he regards the physically disfigured deaf and dumb slaves as most useful as they are not able to betray any of his plans (*Horse* 88). Secondly, his closest adviser, the Grand Vizier, seems to be mentally corrupted. Not only does he literally “crawl” in front of the Tisroc (ibid. 98), always keeping his front to his sovereign<sup>86</sup>, he also figuratively crawls in front

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<sup>86</sup> This also reveals a culturally specific way of displaying power. His other slaves never show the Tisroc their backs either, thus marking the Tisroc as most powerful person.

of his monarch, as he does not dare to voice his opinion freely.<sup>87</sup> Stefanie Krüger summarizes the Tisroc's cruel and inhumane treatment of his servants as follows: "The idea of regarding and treating human beings as things and even deliberately mutilating them stands in stark contrast to the desire of individuality, innocence, and a protected and peaceful home" of the Narnian kings and queens (Krüger 142), whom the plot repeatedly employs as exemplar monarchs.

The Tisroc's inner deformity also becomes apparent in the opinions he voices and the decisions he makes. He is a political strategist who regards his subjects as "vile persons" (*Horse* 90), and easily accepts the risk of losing his oldest son, as long as his colonizing desires are satisfied. The Tisroc is a selfish monarch "who does not care for anyone's needs but his own, and who treats his first-born son as a tool to be useful to him in life and death" (Hardy 57) in order to enhance the "glory and strength of [his] throne" (*Horse* 98). Like slaves and women in this country, the Tisroc's sons are interchangeable and become a commodity with which he can ensure his power; even "[i]f [Rabadash] fails – I have eighteen other sons" (*ibid.*), "and [Rabadash's] next brother shall have [his] place in Calormen" (*ibid.* 96).

Additionally, Rabadash is a threat to his father, as patricide seems to be a common means to gain power (*ibid.* 98). Stefanie Krüger fittingly states that due to the denial of family bonds, "[s]ons and fathers become replaceable. This regressive process leads to a loss of identity as the Tisroc amputates himself from his closest and most natural relations and consequently weakens the connection to the people who surround him and to his own country" (Krüger 141).

*The Horse and His Boy* provides the reader with multifaceted interpretations of the central conflicts. Firstly, this book displays a religious conflict with the superstitious Calormene country regarding Narnians as "demons in the shape of beasts that talk like men, and monsters that are half man and half beast" (*Horse* 94), who are thus in need of a 'civilised' society and the 'right' religion. C. S. Lewis himself describes the content of the book as "the calling and conversion of the heathen" (Lewis qtd. in Bell 13), which specifically refers to Shasta's mental and physical journey, as he happily converts to the Narnian way of life. Furthermore, with Aslan the plot stresses the ability to change one's character for the better; in a conversation with Prince Rabadash King Lune points to the importance of nurture rather than nature, which has influence on the spiritual make-up of a person: "[Y]our youth and the ill nurture, [are] devoid of all gentillesse and courtesy,

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<sup>87</sup> The advisers to the Narnian kings and queens form a multi-voiced staff, including for example Mr Tumnus, Sallowpad the Raven, and dwarves, all of whom feel comfortable and free to speak their minds (*Horse* 58ff.).

which you have doubtless had in the land of slaves and tyrants” (*Horse* 168). The character of the Tisroc is clearly constructed as a blueprint of a destructive and inadequate ruler according to the (Western) system of moral standards. Consequently, the story becomes a tool to highlight the superiority of Christian (protestant) religion, Western culture and society, and a desired conversion to these cultural values and practices.

#### King Miraz<sup>88</sup>

Like the White Witch, King Miraz is a tyrant king of Narnia, who has usurped his position. Miraz is mostly characterised through his behaviour towards his nephew and rightful heir to the throne Caspian; the two form a contrasting picture of kingship and morality.

To Caspian, Miraz is more than just a king. As his uncle, Miraz also fulfils the role of a father figure. He is responsible for his nephew’s intellectual and physical education: He employs tutors and teaches him “to ride and use a sword” (*Caspian* 42). While the female adversaries such as the White Witch or the Lady of the Green Kirtle exploit the emotional needs of the children, Miraz’s strategy of domination is connected to the control of rational and physical factors and guidance.

The conflict between the rightful king and the usurper culminates in a medieval hand-to-hand combat between two representatives of the respective armies, namely Miraz and Peter, in order to decide the outcome of the war. This fight, as well as the battle between Rabadash and the Telmarines, is completely different from the war against the female adversaries who had supernatural powers such as the White Witch, whose “metaphorical evil [is] categorically different from the fairly bumbling wickedness of Miraz” (Manlove 138). On the plot level, the opponents are ordinary humans and therefore more equally equipped to face each other than, for example, the White Witch and the Pevensie children. On a metaphorical level, the children are fighting human corruption and greed for power. These negative characteristics need to be fought on two different levels: within each individual, and on a political level, as these aspects are personified by characters the reader might encounter in real life, namely corrupt politicians or corrupt figures of authority. In contrast to the battles with the female adversaries, which stress a personal and intimate level of conflict, *The Horse and His Boy*, *Prince Caspian*, and later *The Last Battle*, underline political dimensions of the fight.

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<sup>88</sup> I further analyse King Miraz and his qualities as sovereign in 3.1 Wrongful Authority.

The death of King Miraz, however, does not bring salvation to Narnia as the disease of his corruption has spread. His advisers trick Miraz into fighting Peter in a single combat to take revenge on the king; the reasons for this are their arrogance and greed: Miraz has hurt their pride and they themselves want to rule the country without the paramount power of a king (*Caspian* 154). During the battle they deceitfully murder him to start the war between the two armies (ibid. 166). This is an excellent example of how greed for power breeds corruption.

### Shift<sup>89</sup>

There are several aspects that the plot of *The Last Battle* focuses on: moral deterioration and corruption, and death and the afterlife. The story starts in a remote part of Narnia, “[i]n the last days of Narnia” (*Battle* 7). Not only does the first sentence of the book herald the ending of this world, it also symbolizes the unbalanced state of Narnia, as the periphery becomes the new centre: a movement the reader can perceive regarding Shift’s development. Narnia has lost its (figurative) centre and with it its moral values, happiness, and very identity. The antagonists of *Battle* Shift, an anthropomorphised ape, and Rishda Tarkaan, a Calormene captain, “are the embodiment of corrupt political, religious, and military leadership” (Kokorski 2015, 344). Their actions in Narnia bring about the end of this world.

Shift’s depravation is visualised in his outward appearance: “He [is] so old that no one could remember when he had first come to live in those parts, and he [is] the cleverest, ugliest, most wrinkled Ape you can imagine” (*Battle* 7). Although Shift labels the donkey Puzzle his only friend, their relationship is characterized by a master-servant hierarchy based on mental capability (ibid.). As Shift is rhetorically gifted, he succeeds in influencing and convincing Puzzle to do his bidding. Later on, this manipulation and exploitation, which have started on a microcosmic level, continue on a macrocosmic level when Shift’s scheme expands to all of Narnia.

To control the Narnian population, Shift creates a picture of Aslan that matches the Old Testamentary depiction of a vengeful god, rather than the benevolent Christ-like figure of Aslan from the previous novels. Here he reveals “his predilection for twisting or ‘shifting’ the truth” (Hardy 59) to suit his purposes. That the Narnians believe “so grotesque a travesty” (Manlove 182) mirrors Narnia’s own deterioration; according to Manlove, “this Ape [...] is an image in some degree of what Narnia has sunk to: the extent to which the Narnians will believe in his deception is a measure of their own

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<sup>89</sup> Like King Miraz, Shift’s actions and qualities as leader are part of chapter 3.1 Wrongful Authority.

degradation” (ibid.). Even Shift’s Freudian slips of the tongue such as “I want – I mean, Aslan wants” (*Battle* 32), or “I will – I mean, Aslan will” (ibid. 37) and his statement that “[t]rue freedom means doing what I tell you” (ibid. 34) go unnoticed or unchallenged, which only underlines Manlove’s argument that Narnians are gullible.

To incorporate the Calormene soldiers into his web of lies, Shift merges the two opposite religions: the worship of Tash, an agent of corruption, evil, and death, and the worship of Aslan, the Redeemer, in order to create Tashlan. Evidently, the intelligent Talking Beasts of Narnia “are confused and spiritually blinded” (Manlove 183), and believe Shift’s lies.

As a consequence of being misused as workhorses and depicted as dumb animals, they retrogress into mere animals; this corresponds to Terry Eagleton’s perception that such strategies and effects are more than symbolic: “people who are characterized as inferior must actually learn to be so. [...] they must be actively *taught* this definition” (xivf. 1991, emphasis in original). Shift thus actively destroys and reforms the identity of his Narnian subjects (Manlove 184).

Later, the plot depicts Shift as being overburdened with his fabricated situation (*Battle* 106). His weakening position allows characters such as Ginger the cat<sup>90</sup> and Rishda Tarkaan to take over. Both characters are evidence that corrupt regimes breed corruption, as was already the case in *Prince Caspian*. The arrival of Tash is another manifestation of this; as Manlove states, “invoked by [...] corrupt means, corruption comes” (Manlove 180). Shift’s actions cause a war between the saviours and Calormene troops, another situation he is overburdened with.

### Rishda Tarkaan

The second villain that opposes the protagonists in *The Last Battle* is the Calormene captain Rishda Tarkaan, although he only appears briefly in the story. From the first encounter with Calormene men in this book, the reader gets the impression that Calormene is a brutal and merciless nation (*Battle* 25). The plot supports this characterization as Calormene soldiers are constructed as the opposite of the fair King Tirian: “the dark men [...] [smell] of garlic and onions, their white eyes flashing dreadfully in their brown faces” (ibid. 29f.); the narrator does not only mark them as Other due to the colour of their skin, but also as repellent because of their cultural / culinary practices, and savage characteristics.

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<sup>90</sup> As Ginger only plays a minor role, I do not focus on him.

Rishda Tarkaan's rank and hence his individuality among the soldiers becomes apparent as he is wearing "a helmet instead of a turban and seemed to be in command" (ibid. 30). His actions mark him as a thief and liar: he figuratively deprives Tirian of royal status, as he steals his golden crown when Tirian surrenders (ibid.), and he establishes himself inaccurately as a war hero and disgraces Tirian when he claims that "[b]y our skill and courage and by the permission of the great god Tash we have taken alive these two desperate murderers" (ibid.).

He has formed an alliance with Shift, which promises to be extremely profitable for both. This bond and his easy denial of the deities in the book identify him as greedy, corrupt, and unbelieving – cardinal sins in Narnia. According to Hardy, Rishda Tarkaan "is not a highly developed character, though his denial of both Aslan and his own god, Tash, mark him as an apostate" (Hardy 58). As he is only interested in profit and power, his allegiances shift easily: "He [...] turns his back on his original co-conspirator, Shift the Ape, for the more subtle and treacherous Ginger" (ibid. *sic*). The company he keeps indirectly characterizes him as well.

Although the plot portrays him as a very despicable individual, and therefore as exemplary adversary, his appearance also demands respect from his soldiers. In *The Last Battle*, Lewis creates the Calormene tradition that "officers call their senior officers 'My Father'" (*Battle* 105), and consequently establishes Rishda Tarkaan as a father figure. Though instead of teaching 'his sons' morally valuable lessons, he spreads corruption and violence and hence fails as a father figure. In the end, Tash takes him away with the words: "Thou hast called me into Narnia, Rishda Tarkaan. Here I am" (ibid. 124). Poetic justice is achieved as the personification of moral deprivation and corruption destroys the ones who have worshipped it; in other words, the revolution devours its children.

With the exception of Rabadash, who is the epitome of a spoiled child and rebellious youth, the male adversaries who populate the *Narnia* series are all father figures.<sup>91</sup> The Tisroc, Miraz, Rishda Tarkaan, and even Shift fall under this category. The Tisroc and Miraz are actual fathers, Rishda Tarkaan is constructed as father, and Shift portrays himself as a surrogate father figure: the wise old man in an advisory function. According to Susan Hancock, the archetype of the wise old man acts "as 'superior master and teacher', [and] functions as a spirit guide, [...] sometimes seen as father" (Hancock 45). In this context, Shift serves as a perversion of this literary trope.

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<sup>91</sup> In *The Magician's Nephew*, Uncle Andrew can be viewed as the male adversary. He, too, is a father figure. He tricks Digory and Polly into doing his bidding. But as he is not involved in a war, he is not part of this analysis.



The child protagonists must defeat these adversaries in order to establish their own authority and bring about a necessary and natural change of generations.

### Male Adversaries in Susan Cooper's *The Dark Is Rising Sequence*

In *The Dark Is Rising Sequence* three male adversaries appear: Norman Withers in *Over Sea, Under Stone*, The Black Rider and his incarnations in *Over Sea, Under Stone*, *The Dark Is Rising*, and *Silver on the Tree*, and the Grey King in *The Grey King*. The Black Rider and the Grey King belong to the great Lords of the Dark, whereas Norman Withers' position in the chain of command is significantly lower. My analysis of the characters corresponds to the order of publication, which mirrors an increasing dehumanization of the antagonists: Withers appears to be the most human character, while the Grey King is the least human. I end the analysis of male adversaries in Cooper's series with a short characterization of the Dark itself.

Although character analysis in *The Dark Is Rising Sequence* is a neglected topic, authors such as Peter Goodrich and his article "Magical Medievalism and the Fairy Tale in Susan Cooper's *The Dark Is Rising Sequence*" (1988), Raymond L. Plante's "Object and Character in *The Dark Is Rising*" (1986), Michael D.C. Drout's "Reading the Signs of Light: Anglo-Saxonism, Education and Obedience in Susan Cooper's *The Dark is Rising*" (1997), and Jane Suzanne Carroll's *Landscape in Children's Literature* (2011) make thought-provoking observations concerning the books.

#### Norman Withers

Like Polly Withers, Norman Withers only appears in the first book of the series, *Over Sea, Under Stone*. From the beginning, the plot marks them both as outsiders, as they stand in stark contrast to the Drew family: Polly and Norman represent artificiality as well as order, while the Drew family erupts into sympathetic chaos when confronted with the Withers' overtly formal behaviour (*Over Sea* 29f.). Norman Withers' appearance and manner suggests an upper-class background: "he wore dazzling white flannel trousers, and a blazer, with a dark-blue scarf tucked in the neck of his white shirt, and they had not expected to see anything like him in Trewissick at all" (ibid. 30). His "immaculate" clothes, his "old fashioned" speech pattern and the yacht the Withers presumably possess (ibid. 31), increase the impression of upper-class grandeur on the one hand, and, as Jane suspects early on, pretentiousness on the other hand (ibid.). All about him is constructed to blind the Drews: his "very white teeth" which are mentioned several times (ibid. 30, 136, 138), his extremely white clothes, his polite behaviour, his

disguise as an antique-dealer, the bond he and his sister try to form with the children's parents in establishing common ground as "neighbours" in London (ibid. 31), as well as the display of a charming, "boyish", behaviour (ibid.). As the attentive reader realizes, these elements and Jane's intuitive distrust when it comes to the Withers (ibid. 36) mark them as dangerous predators.

The reader's knowledge of Norman Withers is restricted. One of the rare things the reader is able to perceive is that Norman is an agent of the Dark, but does not rank high in the hierarchy of the Dark. His position, however, is above Polly's; his gender and superior age are the first indicators concerning the hierarchy.<sup>92</sup> Furthermore, during the first encounter with the Drews, he takes the conversational floor and answers for Polly, thus establishing his authority in front of the Drews (ibid. 32). The kidnapping of Barney reveals Withers' willingness to make use of his physical superiority to achieve his aims (ibid. 136), and demonstrates his arrogance (ibid. 138).

This dominant behaviour is in stark contrast to his subservient interactions with Mr Hastings. Here, Withers moves silently (ibid. 142), talks "obsequiously" (ibid. 144), bows his head and, like Polly, calls Hastings "sir" (ibid.). His behaviour may remind the reader of a butler or servant who caters to his master's needs; later Hastings reveals himself to be indeed Norman's superior (ibid.).

There are two instances when his human façade cracks due to discrepancies in his character make-up: firstly, when leaving the Grey House, he "pulled down the edges of his immaculate blazer with a precise, feminine gesture" (ibid. 32), which Jane later recognizes as a failed attempt to imitate human behaviour (ibid. 45). This passage casts a cloud over Withers' dominant, masculine behaviour that he has displayed in front of the Drews, and enhances the impression of his unnatural character, which the plot repeatedly draws attention to (e.g. 29f., 138). Secondly, Withers experiences a moment of metamorphosis and dehumanization when he is compared to a weasel (ibid. 154). This comparison is very evocative and fitting in regard to his true character. As Erin Steuter and Deborah Wills explain "the weasel [...] has an unsavoury reputation: it combines perceived qualities of treachery, sneakiness, and cowardice. With its long sinuous body, it can worm its way into narrow spaces; [...] it can back its way out of very tight places. [...] a 'weasel' is an untrustworthy, deceitful person" (Steuter and Wills 78). Steuter's and Wills' portrayal of the weasel fits with Withers' depiction and is mirrored in his behaviour towards the Drews and his master, and the fact that he does

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<sup>92</sup> Here, the contemporary reader needs to take into consideration that this book was published in 1965, which suggests a different, more hierarchical view on gender then today.

not have to face any repercussions, for example, for kidnapping Barney or being associated with the Dark.

Polly and Norman Withers both personify temptation: While Polly Withers is an attenuated form of the female temptress and symbolizes sexual seduction, Norman Withers represents material temptation, exemplified by his upper-class appearance, the yacht, and his costume as an Arab sheikh. Both characters aim to throw the Drew children off course regarding their true nature, and try to lead the children astray in their quest. Only when this does not work do they resort to drastic measures and physical violence.

Regarding *Greenwitch*, Plante claims that encounters between the protagonists and agent of the Dark solely serve the advancement of the plot (Plante 40). I think this is only partly true concerning *Greenwitch* and *Over Sea*. Although Plante's conclusion gains weight as a result of the rather sketchy portrayal of the characters, *Greenwitch* also reveals that talents can be used for good (Barney) or evil (the nameless Painter) and that being part of the Dark also has its consequences; especially when it comes to obedience, which both the Dark and the Light expect from their servants. Furthermore, in *Over Sea*, the agents of the Dark also fulfil a symbolic function, serve as implicit characterization of the Dark, and teach the young protagonists to distrust (dubious) adult authority.

### The Black Rider

The Black Rider appears in *Over Sea*, *Under Stone*, *The Dark Is Rising*, and very shortly in *Silver on the Tree*. As one of the Dark Lords, he has the ability to travel through time, and change his appearance and consequently his identity (*Over Sea* 191), making him a dangerous and unpredictable foe. In *Over Sea*, he is introduced as Mr Hastings, while in *Dark* he is the Black Rider; in the last book, the plot reveals that Hastings and the Black Rider are one and the same (*Silver on the Tree* 248). This suggests that evil comes in many forms and has many faces, but possesses basic components.<sup>93</sup>

From the first moment, the descriptions of Hastings reveal an extremely dominant and even sinister male character. The physical features frequently connected

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<sup>93</sup> As the publication of the series encompasses twelve years, the tactic of changing the antagonist's appearance provides Cooper with sufficient artistic freedom to have a fixed set of characters that she does not have to stick to in minute detail; especially since the characters in Cooper's series frequently remain in the background in order to foreground topics such as Welsh mythology or the quest motif. The number of child heroes and the frequency of their appearance also suggest a focus that is not placed on the characters.

to him are his “grave, heavy-browed face” (*Over Sea* 43), “dark hair” (ibid. 84), his “deep voice” (ibid. 43), and his “towering” figure (ibid. 44). His physical aspects are repeated several times when the children must face Hastings, serving as points of recognition for both characters and readers (e.g. *Over Sea* 102, 143); his physique only emphasises his masculinity, the underlying perception of intimidation and threat, and his predatory and feral nature (ibid. 102).

When Jane meets him for the first time, he chooses his words very carefully to make her believe that he is the vicar of Trewissick (ibid. 41f). He never actually says that he holds this position, but his omission of valuable facts and the duplicitous information he gives Jane lead her to conclude that he is the vicar. He, for example, does not admit that the building he lives in is only the old vicarage, but says that he has “replaced [the former vicar] here” (ibid.). Only at the end of the book does Merriman explain that Hastings has deliberately planned to mislead Jane (ibid. 190), revealing the antagonist’s high level of intelligence.

As “the vicar,” Hasting makes use of the Church’s reputation of inherent goodness to establish himself as figure of authority and trust, and thus almost traps Jane into confiding in him. Barney, on the other hand, expresses a very strong opinion about Hastings: “I don’t care what you say, he isn’t the vicar. I don’t know what he is, but it isn’t that. He can’t possibly be. There’s something perfectly beastly about him” (ibid. 155). On numerous occasions, the children are terrified by his mere presence, for example when “Jane screamed, terrified, and hid her face in Simon’s shoulder” (ibid. 102); Hastings’ appearance in the dark is “horrible” (ibid. 103), and “Barney felt a slight chill of uneasiness at the flat permanent scowl of the brows and the grim lines running down to the mouth” (ibid. 143). As figures of empathy, the children invite the reader to share their view in the uncompromising picture of “the enemy” (ibid. 140).

The question “what [Hastings] is” (ibid. 155) is not easily answered as neither the children, nor the reader receive an adequate explanation. Barney instinctively compares Hastings to Merriman: “It was a strong, far-away face, something like his great-uncle’s, but with a frightening coldness behind it that was not like Great-Uncle Merry at all” (ibid. 143). This connection is drawn early on and continues throughout the series, making the Black Rider the evil *doppelgänger* of Merriman. The reader learns that Hastings, or the Black Rider as he is later known, is Merriman’s direct opponent, as both seem to be equal in rank and power. While Merriman as a Merlin-figure clearly embodies the archetype of the wise old man, Hastings is the perversion of this pattern: he seems to be the oppressive school master who abuses his powers and

instils fear into his pupils. The role of the school master is a role he admits he is exercising (ibid. 144). Another factor which fits into his role as master at school, is the fact that he aims to open Barney's eyes to the allegedly manipulative and untrustworthy actions of his great-uncle (ibid. 144ff.).

With a voice that is "silky and very gentle" (ibid. 144), Hastings portrays Merriman as a self-serving, glory-seeking scholar, and twists the truths to fit his / the Dark's purpose (ibid. 145f.). Like an evil temptress, Hastings tries to sow doubt, tests Barney's loyalties and tempts him with the promise of fame and glory (ibid. 146). At the same time, however, he simplifies the world, and further establishes his own superiority in belittling Barney's understanding of the quest (ibid.). When Hastings is not able to persuade Barney with arguments, he unleashes his power on him to make him an instrument to fulfil his will: "Since the moment in the shadowy room when those blazing dark eyes had glared into [Barney's] face, he had been conscious of nothing except that he was to do what he was told. [...] There could be no argument now. No fighting. He knew only that the tall dark figure walking at his side, wearing a wide-brimmed black hat, was his master" (ibid. 150f.). Barney seems to be hypnotized and experiences something the Dark apparently strives to achieve regarding humanity as a whole, namely to enslave humans in transforming them into puppets that obediently follow their masters' will. According to Mary Frances Zambreno, "the Dark, or evil, oppresses (corrupts, uses, and ultimately destroys) individuals, while the Light requires its adherents to choose freely" (Zambreno 127). Barney loses the ability to think freely, question authority, and follow the path of the Light. Unlike Barney, however, Mrs Palk and Bill represent characters that seem to be prone to the dark side, and hence are willingly to serve and are thus more easily influenced and corrupted by the Dark (*Over Sea* 189).

Simon even voices his anxieties about the corruptibility of the human race and the consecutive danger the Dark poses to humanity (ibid.). Here, and in later books, the reader might infer his or her own role in figuratively keeping the Dark at bay by defying, for example, temptation, (material) greed, and hatred. Hastings himself talks about a never-ending battle between the Dark and the Light: "'You will find, Barnabas Drew,' [Hasting's deep voice] said softly, 'that the dark will always come, and always win'" (ibid. 147). The last part does not become true, as there are brave (human) individuals who oppose the Dark, a role the books also ascribe to the reader. Furthermore, the books convey the idea that an eradication of evil is not possible, as it is

also part of human nature. The books thus reduce the interpretive distance to the reader and invite him or her to contribute to the worlds' improvement.

Just like Norman Withers and the female temptresses in the previous chapter, Hastings experiences moments of metamorphosis and dehumanization, marking him as agent of the Dark: he is constantly accompanied by darkness (e.g. *ibid.* 102), and he is able to employ his ability to control the darkness within himself to make his opponent feel the physical threat he poses: "Mr. Hastings was at the darker end of the room, near the door, and his face was hidden in shadow. But he seemed to loom taller and more threatening than he had ever done before, and when he spoke there was a different throb in the deep voice that paralysed Barney with fright" (*ibid.* 147). His powers, not closer defined, exceed human comprehensibility, but are tied to his intelligence; according to Barney, "[t]hat man can do anything, he seems to have things planned before he even knows they're going to happen" (*ibid.* 156). Furthermore, Jane compares his appearance to "some giant insect" (*ibid.* 176), using this bestial simile to enforce the notion of Hastings as (super)natural threat as well as expressing disgust when confronted with unmasked evil to solidify a clear distinction between good and evil. According to Steuter and Wills, labelling the enemy as an animal such as an insect or rat leads to "[justify] any tactics necessary for victory [...]. It is, at least for most people, easier to kill animals than fellow humans" (Steuter and Wills 45).<sup>94</sup> Again, the interpretive implications of the text lead the reader to see good and evil, and the ongoing fight between these forces in a very specific light.

Hastings is not only an agent of the Dark, but according to Barney, he is the embodiment of evil; he is "everything Gumerry said about the other side, you can sort of feel it, looking at him" (*Over Sea* 155). He is the representation of darkness, and although his descriptions and actions appear to be literal, they can also be read metaphorically. During one of the first scenes with Hastings, "[h]e stood between Jane and the light" (*ibid.* 44), which is a clear hint that he is a powerful obstacle to overcome in the fight between the two powers. Another scene which depicts him as representative of darkness is when he almost catches Simon: "[t]he gaps of light through the branches darkened for an instant" when he passes Simon's hiding place (*ibid.* 84). Most of the time he turns his back to the light or he positions himself in the dark, thus obscuring his features and marking his position as turned away from goodness and clearly on side of evil (e.g. *ibid.* 44, 143, 147).

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<sup>94</sup> Although Steuter and Wills talk about tactics employed in WW II, this animalization of the enemy also serves as justification to rule other races in the fantasy books under scrutiny, as I demonstrate in chapter 3.2 The Construction of Difference.

In *The Dark Is Rising*, the same pattern appears as in *Over Sea*: the agent of the Dark poses a threat to the Light and the human world, but is defeated in the end with the help of the child hero and the completion of the respective quest. This time, the opponent is introduced as the Black Rider; a term which foregrounds his function rather than his identity. The main purpose of the figure is to personify the Dark and create antipathy for this side due to the action of its agents and his or her immoral dispositions.

His first arrival is accompanied with Will's instinctive reaction of uneasiness, and even panic at the sight of the character (*Dark* 23). The Black Rider is a "tall [man], and wore a dark cloak that fell straight like a robe; his hair, which grew low over his neck, shone with a curious reddish tinge" (ibid.), he has "[b]right blue eyes" (ibid. 24), even "cold blue eyes" (ibid. 134), and "a curious accent" (ibid. 24). As the man travels with "a tall black horse [...] midnight in colour, with no white marking anywhere" (ibid. 23) the term 'Black Rider' fits his appearance and position.

The horse is not merely an animal, but serves several functions: Firstly, the Rider establishes his physical dominance (and masculinity) through sitting on the horse and thus towering over everyone else. In addition to this physical superiority, the Black Rider, just like Hastings, is able to transform himself into a literally bigger threat: "He hunched his shoulders strangely, and the horse tossed its head; both seemed to be gaining strength, to be growing taller. [...] and he grew and grew, looming against the white world, [...]. Horse and rider towered over [Will] like a dark cloud, blotting out both snow and sun" (ibid. 30). This demonstration of power also marks the Black Rider as not entirely human, as someone who has the ability to bring darkness to the world.

Secondly, the black horse is a physical manifestation of his affiliation and true nature. The Rider does not only serve the Dark, he also unites other, animalistic, characteristics in his behaviour: he "[tears] wolfishly at his bread" (ibid. 24), and mounts his horse "quick as a jumping cat" (ibid. 25). These moments of dehumanisation appear very early in the text and suggest to the reader that the Black Rider is a dangerous, savage, foe. The third function the horse is to represent the Rider's rank within the hierarchy of the Dark. Riding a horse, he appears to be at least something like an officer, in contrast to mere foot soldiers such as Norman and Polly Withers.

A rider on a black horse working towards the world's destruction is highly reminiscent of the one of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse; especially since one of the first acts of the Rider is a biblical one, namely the intention of breaking bread with Will. This also serves as a reminder that the black horseman represents famine. Another connection to the Four Horsemen is the fact that in the last book, the Black Rider is

united with a rider on a white horse, the manifestation of conquest and evil, who both ride towards the possible ending of the world. Here, however, the comparison ends; there are only two riders, and neither of them wears the insignia described in the *Book of Revelation*, that is to say a bow and a crown for the White Rider, and a pair of scales for the Black Rider.

Although he does not seem to be a clear imitation of one of the Four Horsemen, he nevertheless brings darkness to the world. When he first appears, “[t]he brightness went out of the snow and the sky, and the morning darkened a little, as an extra layer of the distant cloudbank swallowed the sun” (*Dark* 23f.). This is either because he is a representative of the Dark and carries it with him, or that he projects the darkness within himself to the outer world, or even both. Not only is he a representative of the Dark, but also functions as its mouthpiece, which becomes apparent in the repetitive use of the pronoun “we” when he talks about the Dark (e.g. *Over Sea* 143, *Dark* 25, 135f.).

The previously mentioned accent plays a very important role in the characterization of the Dark: it serves as the creation of otherness. The book thus establishes a natural binary between good and evil, as the language barrier is something the agents of the Dark cannot overcome in the Old Speech (*Dark* 103). In *Over Sea, Under Stone* this othering already takes place with the upper-class behaviour and Witherses’ appearance and Norman Withers’ way of talking. In *The Dark Is Rising*, however, otherness is literally much more pronounced, as language acts as a racial marker which separates the Light from the Dark. As “*The Dark Is Rising* is about the battle between good and evil” (Plante 38), both sides are incompatible which creates a dualistic world picture regarding the two armies the reader is encouraged to follow.

Just like the figure of Mr Hastings, the Black Rider aims to blend in with ordinary humans to extract information and pose a more dangerous threat to the figures of the Light and their associates. The Black Rider’s outward appearance is obviously not as threatening as Hastings’, but ordinary and inconspicuous, which simplifies the direct interaction with Will’s family and the earning of the trust of, for example, Will’s sister Mary and his father. On Christmas Day, the Black Rider intrudes into the Stantons’ Christmas rituals, and enters the Stantons’ home in the human form of Mr Mitothin. Before the visitor even enters the characters’ field of vision, the text elaborately stretches the wrongness of the disturbance (*Dark* 132), until “the tall figure [...] loomed in the doorway” (ibid.). To cross the Stantons’ threshold and enter their mundane world, the Black Rider needs to be invited (ibid. 134), which also emphasises his otherness and the fact that the incarnation of evil does not belong in the everyday



world. Furthermore, this scene emphasises the “sanctuary topos”, which characterizes the function of the home as a secure space (Carroll 40) and the consecutive violation of the mundane sphere through the Dark. Apparently, one must be willing to let evil in; only through a conscious or unconscious authorization can evil enter the microcosmic world of the characters, which emphasises the element of choice and, consequently, free will.

Mitothin is a very powerful and telling name: In his book *Teutonic Mythology*, Victor Rydberg explains that Mitothin is another name for Loki in Norse mythology (Rydberg 193). He plays a significant role at Ragnarök, which alludes to the story’s ending in which the Black Rider also plays an important role in the last battle between the Light and the Dark. Two other aspects, which also correspond to the character description of the Black Rider as the personification of evil, are that “Mitothin is a thoroughly evil being” (ibid. 194) and, as Lewis Spence contends, Mitothin “[takes] the opportunity of introducing evil practices among the people” (Spence 109).

In Will’s own home and place of safety, the Black Rider challenges Will and aims to establish his (adult) superiority over the inexperienced Old One. Mitothin’s illusion of social compatibility soon vanishes when Will confronts him outside of time: “the smile dropped from his face as if he had spat it away, and his eyes narrowed” (*Dark* 134). A smile is a representation of positive emotions such as warmth, happiness, and joy; not only does the smile obviously disgust the figure of the Dark, his demeanour also displays the arrogance characteristic for the Dark, strongly leading the reader to favour the Light over the Dark (ibid. 135). As master of the Dark, the Black Rider can break Will’s spell and thus exposes Will’s inferiority and impotence. Nevertheless, Will proves to be Mitothin’s equal in the subsequent battle of wits and is able to discover some limits to the Dark’s powers, namely that its agents are only able to read surface thoughts and cannot completely penetrate the sanctuary of the mind (ibid. 136). Here, the child hero compensates for physical inferiority with intelligence, signalling to the reader that there are ways to overcome a supposedly superior opponent.

The Black Rider also shares characteristics with his female counterparts: he brings about moments of temptation for Will. There is an imbalance of power when the Rider and Will meet for the first time, which becomes most apparent in the Rider’s possession of knowledge: he knows Will’s identity as the last of the Old Ones, Will’s birthday, and that Will has not yet been introduced to the fight between Light and Darkness. He tries to trick the unsuspecting and hungry Will into breaking bread with him (ibid. 24), to “gain a hold over [him] while [he is] not yet grown into [his] full

power” (ibid. 47). Here, food functions as nurturing element connecting one party to the other, and would probably bind Will to the Rider through a truce symbolised by the brotherly meal. He also invites Will to ride with him, which is a more comfortable way of travelling through the thick snow. This, however, would probably physically bind him to the Dark, and make them comrades in arms, tipping the scale in favour of the Dark.

The third temptation Will has to resist is the appeal to his empathy and goodness in the hall out of time.<sup>95</sup> The Dark cannot enter the sanctuary without someone opening the doors for it. Consequently, the agents of the Dark pretend to be something / someone else and appeal to Will’s emotions such as sympathy, love, and fear (*Dark* 45ff.). Will has to pass this test in displaying self-control and resisting his urge to act out of instinct and love, but follow Merriman’s guidance. The lesson for him to learn is that “[y]ou will be frightened, often, but never fear them. The powers of the Dark can do many things, but they cannot destroy. They cannot kill those of the Light. Not unless they gain a final dominion over the whole earth. [...] do not let them put you into fear or despair” (ibid. 48).

The last test he needs to pass in this scene is that of patience. Due to his youthful and inexperienced nature, however, he fails to listen to Merriman’s voice of adult authority and breaks the circle (ibid. 49f.); as a consequence, the Dark is able to weaken the Light considerably. This scene, especially Will’s failure to comply to Merriman’s wishes exposes that the series’ “strong focus on teaching and learning, is isomorphic to the ideology of adult/child power relations represented in the novels, an ideology that puts great weight on the value of obedience to authority” (Drout 232). Although the other books under scrutiny also emphasize the importance of learning and adult guidance, *The Dark Is Rising Sequence* stands out in its inclination to favour adult authority over the agency of the young heroes.

The last temptation the Black Rider confronts Will with results from his abduction of Will’s sister Mary who easily falls prey to Mitothin’s charm (*Dark* 135f.): Mitothin demands the signs in exchange for Mary’s life. Here, Will becomes aware of the ruthless and deadly nature of the Dark. He refuses the bargain, because he has to place the greater good over his personal feelings, and is “agonised by the risk he was taking” (ibid. 213). This time, Will’s trust in the proper adult authority is rewarded, as Merriman is able to save Mary.

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<sup>95</sup> This scene is reminiscent of Grimms’ fairy tale “The Wolf and the Seven Young Goats”, in which the wolf tries to gain entrance through tricking the young goats.

One of the last acts of the Black Rider in *The Dark is Rising* is his punishment of Hawkin. As the latter was not able to obtain the signs from Will, he has outlived his usefulness for the Dark and is disposed of (ibid. 228). This nonchalant attitude towards life and death expresses the consequence of joining the Dark and stands in stark contrast to the actions of the Light, embodied by the reconciliation between Merriman and Hawkin. Again, the Dark appears as absolute, uncompromising evil which must be kept at bay for the good of humanity.

In the last book of the series, *Silver on the Tree*, the Black Rider plays an important part in the battle between the Light and the Dark. Bran and Will first encounter the Black Rider in the Lost Land; there he is part of a troop of riders, an anonymous evil in a nightmarish scenario: “They saw no faces inside the hoods. Nothing but shadows” (*Silver* 144). His strongest power in the Lost Land is to instil terror into Bran and Will, which he fabricates “by his riding” (ibid. 145). His position among the powers of the Dark becomes clear, as Gwion describes the Rider as one of “the greatest Lords of the Dark” (ibid. 149).<sup>96</sup>

Mitothin’s proud and arrogant demeanour is as apparent as it has been before in *The Dark Is Rising*, as is his confidence in the Dark’s victory (*Silver* 148). This time, however, Will is able to perceive “a crack, a tiny crack, in the Dark’s certainty of triumph. And in that crack was the only hope the Light had left, now, to check the rising of the Dark” (ibid.).<sup>97</sup> This opportunity for the Light to intervene is symbolically illustrated by the “dreadful scar across all [Mitothin’s] further cheek” (ibid.). He received this mark of war during the vanquishing of the Dark at the end of *The Dark Is Rising*; it is a symbol of setback and depicts both the vulnerability of the Dark and the fact that the Light can only hold the Dark at bay and not extinguish it for good.

The dehumanization of the Black Rider is evident both in the hissing sounds (ibid. 149) of the otherwise eloquent villain (ibid. 252f.), and in the absence of language which has given place to the screams and shrieks of the agents of the Dark; the retrogression obviously points to the moral and spiritual decay the Dark represents.

The only temptation-like scenario the Black Rider fabricates in *Silver on the Tree* is his attempt to convince Will and Bran to leave the Lost Land. He does so through threats, mockery and malice (ibid. 193f.). He does not employ his eloquence or

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<sup>96</sup> Gwion says that “the greatest Lords of the Dark” have come to the Lost Land (*Silver* 149); the plot fails to explain why a figure such as the Grey King is not among the elite troop in the Lost Land, although he seems to be one of the highest Lords of the Dark due to his immense power.

<sup>97</sup> Through this description, the enemy appears exceedingly strong. This favours the interpretation of the Light as the underdog in this never-ending struggle and encourages the reader to sympathize with the Light.

seductive arguments, but depicts a possible retreat of the child heroes in very positive and tempting lights.

His task in the final battle of the book is twofold. First of all, he officially challenges the Light regarding the presence of Bran in the contemporary period (ibid. 248f.), thus marking himself as one of the boldest agents of the Dark, and equal to Merriman. Secondly, he is singled out of the “endless army of unseen forms” (ibid. 250) to stop the children from completing their last quest, which culminates in an extremely phallic scene which expresses the intimate level of the fight between good and evil: “The Black Rider’s eyes blazed blue as sapphires and he lunged forward in triumph, straining to break through the strength of the Circle and reach the shining bloom with his own sword” (ibid. 263). The narrator repeatedly draws attention to Mitothin’s eyes which Carroll compares to the gleaming eyes of *Beowulf*’s Grendel and Glám, stressing the monstrousness of the Black Rider (Carroll 40).

Nevertheless, the Black Rider almost blends in perfectly with the human race when needed. This is a huge contrast to one of the greatest Lords of the Dark, the Grey King.

### The Grey King

The adversary in *The Grey King* differs greatly from the other adversaries in this chapter, at least concerning his appearance. Normally, the Dark is associated with “some grim remote place” (*The Grey King* 62); only for strategic reasons, the Grey King chose the “beautiful” and “happy” valley close to the Cader Idris (ibid.). According to stories mentioned in the book, the Grey King, or the Brenin Llwyd, “is supposed to live up [on the mountains’] high land” (ibid. 10). Apparently, this figure has found its way into the collective consciousness of the Welsh population of the book, and has consequently been mythologized and became part of the landscape itself. An example for this is that characters local to this region call the clouds which are gathered around the mountain tops “[t]he breath of the Grey King” (ibid.). Jane Suzanne Carroll infers that he has undergone a “symbiosis with the landscape” (Carroll 82) and hence represents a variation of the “*genius loci*” motif (ibid. 81; emphasis in original); in this context, “the Benin Llwyd is the spirit of the Welsh mountains” (ibid.).

This symbiosis has two obvious consequences: firstly, the Grey King’s connection to nature functions as foundation of his power (ibid.): his power is “over the rock and the mountains and all the high places of Gwynedd” (*King* 62), though restricted to the outside, not within the mountains (ibid.). The power of the Grey King

seems to encompass nature, as “the valley was throbbing with power and malevolence” (ibid. 135) at times. This also becomes apparent through the objects he employs to channel his power: for example the wind, which has “the Grey King in it” (ibid. 59), the foxes which are his servants (ibid. 104),<sup>98</sup> the fire on the mountain which is “at his command” (ibid. 59) and symbolises the destructive and consuming power of the Dark, as well as his ability to let “the mountain [...] shrug” (ibid. 121).<sup>99</sup> In *The Grey King*, nature becomes an alien and ominous entity as the following scene demonstrates. Right at the beginning, the reader and Will are confronted with a hostile enemy represented through nature:

Before [Will], the hedge grew wild and high, great arms *groping out uncontrolled* in all directions as the hazel and hawthorn did their best to grow into full-fledged trees. Behind him, as he moved along his *relentless* swaying way, he left instead a neat fence: scores of *beheaded* branches bristling waist-high like *spears*, with every fifth branch bent *mercilessly* down at right angles and woven in along the rest as if it were part of a hurdle. (*King* 17; emphasis KK)

This choice of words highlights that the threat Will has to face has its origin in the nature surrounding him. He experiences a profound helplessness and defencelessness when confronted with nature as an enemy and vicariously confronts the reader with this situation. As Carroll states: “The landscape’s agency is realised with [the Brenin Llwyd, Herne, and the Greenwitch], and their actions force both readers and other characters to reassess the significance of the natural world” (Carroll 50).

Places such as the cultivated home of the Stantons’ in *The Dark is Rising*, Greythorne Manor in the same book, and the Grey House in *Over Sea, Under Stone* form a stark contrast to this, as they display the preference of the conquered, domestic sphere.<sup>100</sup> Domesticity in the books provides the characters with the choice of letting evil into their lives or not; nature does not grant the characters this option but exploits their vulnerability.

The second consequence of the Grey King’s symbiosis with nature is the effect on his appearance. Changes in the weather even announce his arrival: the air becomes colder and mist transforms the scenery (*King* 104), foregrounding the mystic

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<sup>98</sup> The foxes of the Grey King repeatedly attack sheep. Although the reader can see this as a biblical allusion, this interpretation lacks further proof.

<sup>99</sup> Jane Suzanne Carroll also employs the examples of the fire and the shrugging of the mountain in her analysis of the Grey King (Carroll 82).

<sup>100</sup> As said above, the function of one’s home as shelter and sacred space finds its place, according to Carroll, within the sanctuary topos (Carroll 18).

characteristic of what is to come. During the direct confrontation with Will, the Brenin Llwyd emerges as a god-like figure:

The figure was so huge that at first [Will] could not realise it was there. It stretched wider than the field, and high into the sky. It had shape, but not recognisable earthly shape; Will could see its outline from the corner of his eye, but when he looked directly at any part of it, there was nothing there. Yet there the figure loomed before him, immense and terrible, and he knew that this was a being of greater power than anything he had ever encountered in his life before. Of all the Great Lords of the Dark, none was singly more powerful and dangerous than the Grey King. (*King* 106)

Here, the Grey King appears as a sublime power (Carroll 32), which the reader vicariously experiences through Will's perception of his enemy. Will cannot directly face his adversary, which leads to the conclusion that the Grey King is a non-physical entity; again, his symbiosis with nature is stressed, as he is the personification of natural forces, rather than belonging to the realm of humans. Furthermore, this scene emphasises the traditional motif of a battle between David and Goliath, demonizing the giant in form of the Grey King even more through his sublimity. The following lines support this interpretation, as the reader is highly encouraged to sympathize with Will: "So now Will, alone, last and least of the Old Ones, faced him with no defence but the inborn magic of the Light and his own wits" (*King* 106).

Furthermore, this scene stresses traditional masculine aspects of the adversary: he appears to be (emotionally) distanced, invulnerable, in control, physically and spiritually strong, and forceful (*ibid.* 106f.). While most female adversaries seem to be representatives of the domestic sphere, emblematised by food and home, the male adversary in this case seems to be a representative of the wild sphere.

The Grey King's voice is both similar and different to the voices of the other characters: it is "both sweet and terrible", and it is "blowing through [Will's] mind like the wind" (*ibid.* 106), enhancing the supernatural characteristics of the figure. Furthermore, the ability of his voice to blow through Will's mind serves as an example that the Grey King, and with him the Dark, is able to infiltrate the mind of their victims. Like his creatures the shape-shifting milgwn, another strong connection to nature,<sup>101</sup> the Grey King uses trickery and deceit to achieve his aims: He lures Bran on the mountain by projecting the image of Bran's dog Cafall on one of his milgwn. Due to this ruse, Bran and Will are trapped within the fire on the mountain (*King* 58).

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<sup>101</sup> The Black Rider, in contrast, surrounds himself with human henchmen.

Even more dangerous is the infiltration of the mind of an angry and violent victim such as Caradog Prichard. Here, the main purpose of the Grey King becomes clear. Carroll emphasises the Grey King's role as *genius locus* (Carroll 81) and "spectre of death" (ibid. 82);<sup>102</sup> his interactions with Prichard lead to the conclusion that the latter's *raison d'être* is to reveal human susceptibility to evil.<sup>103</sup>

Prichard is "an unwitting servant, knowing nothing of his own links with the Grey King; he was a man only, with the instincts of a man – the worst instincts, with the best sadly submerged" (*King* 147f.); consequently, "[i]t is so easy to give him suitable ideas" (ibid. 108) and, finally, to construct him as the human mirror of the Brenin Llwyd. Prichard's mere humanness and his demeanour which reflects that he has a (high) potential of being evil, suffice for the purpose of the Dark; here, the reader is given to understand that it is always possible to be manipulated by the Dark. One does not have to make a conscious decision to belong to the evil side, as other works in this chapter demonstrate. The text implicitly instructs the reader to improve his or her own character in order to not become a target for the Dark.

The Grey King refrains from directly confronting the agent of the Light and uses Prichard as a shield; with this strategic manoeuvre, the Brenin Llwyd protects himself from direct strikes and leaves his vessel destroyed (ibid. 155f.). Once the Dark has found its way into Prichard's mind, his inhibition level to employ physical violence is dramatically lowered and his anti-social and violent behaviour exponentially increases: he is willing to shoot another dog to assert his (physical) dominance, which is a substitute gratification he needs to satisfy due to a significant defeat in his past. In a fight with Owen Davies, he had failed to assert his sexual dominance over Guinevere, and his physical dominance over Owen (ibid. 163). Killing the dog in this scenario would serve as a metaphorical murder of Davies. However, Prichard and the Grey King are rendered impotent due to human(e) and magical intervention.

More than any other book of the sequence, *The Grey King* revolves around two major topics: on the supernatural level it focuses on human susceptibility to evil and with that, emphasises the struggle between Light and Dark with regards to the human soul. On the mundane level, the books contrast notions of masculinity and (physical) dominance with (metaphorical) impotence. The latter point is especially owing to an almost exclusively male character constellation. Potential corruption occurs in those

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<sup>102</sup> Carroll justifies her interpretation as follows: "[h]is breath is a chilling mist and he is associated with the colour grey, an association which echoes many literary depictions of death" (Carroll 82).

<sup>103</sup> This also becomes apparent in Bran; not even he is immune to manipulations of the Dark (*King* 138f.), which leads to an increase of his fury and violent desires (ibid. 139f.).

fighting for their place and recognition within the community. With the defeat of the Dark, both levels, magical and human, intertwine and leave the reader with a restored bond between father and son, a model image of masculinity in reference to John Rowlands, and the cathartic recognition of the ultimate impotence of both major villains.

### The Dark

So far, I have only analysed personifications of the Dark. The Dark itself appears to be an abstract entity that exists outside of time, but also grows in the minds of the people. According to Will, “at the centre of the Dark there is a great black pit bottomless as the Universe” (*King* 115). As the text does not provide the reader with a lot of information about this adversary, its agents, powers, and aims mostly remain unknown. Nevertheless, the reader is able to perceive the agents of the Dark as a patriarchal society apparently organized in a strictly hierarchical structure. Often, the individual agents of the Dark and the Dark itself are interchangeable expressions for the concept of evil. This metaphoric relationship hints at two things: firstly, how significantly the agents identify with their purpose, resulting in characters turning into unrelenting soldiers, and secondly at the dualistic world picture, evoked by the binary opposition between good and evil. In *Silver on the Tree*, Simon describes the war according to a black and white pattern: “I mean basically it’s very simple, it’s a matter of –well, there’s a good side and a bad”. Drout describes this fight as an “eternal opposition” between the Light and the Dark set “in Cooper’s Manichaeian universe” (Drout 232). The notion of a never-ending struggle, which peaks throughout history, is supported by the text itself (*Over Sea* 60).

Like other villains under scrutiny, the Dark seeks “dominion over the whole earth” (*Dark* 48). The text does not discuss how this dominion is realized, what kind of ideology the supporters follow, and how the world is supposed to look after the dominion has been established. These blanks form the greatest difference to the other adversaries in this chapter, and leave the most room for interpretation on the reader’s side. There are, however, a few hints concerning the Dark’s strategies: “They cannot harm [agents of the Light], [...] and they cannot destroy men. But they can encourage men’s own instincts to do them harm” (*Dark* 195). It lies in the power of the Dark to drive men insane and to encourage certain emotions and ideas which have the ability to shift the balance between good and evil, such as jealousy (*King* 163), anger (*ibid.*), and racism (*Silver* 54); as mentioned above, the Dark works by “instill[ing] fear and terror”



(Plante 41). These emotions and ideas can become channels through which the Dark is able to use and control humanity (*Silver* 54). This gives the impression that the Dark not only fosters but also feeds on evil practices, and that “the enemies, the wicked men, who have [...] greed in their cold hearts” (*Over Sea* 60) are especially susceptible to evil.

*The Dark Is Rising Sequence* closely associates the Dark with nature. This becomes obvious through two aspects: Firstly, the Dark’s connection to predatory animals such as foxes in *The Grey King*, and minks in *Silver on the Tree* who are “[k]illing for the love of it” (*Silver* 23), or the *afanc* in *Silver on the Tree*, which is a monster that belongs to the “mythic, secondary world” (Carroll 34). Secondly, the Dark can manipulate the weather and thus temporarily transform the land into inhospitable areas. For example, in *The Dark Is Rising*, snow and a flood pose dangerous scenarios to the English countryside, while the Grey King starts a fire on the mountain.<sup>104</sup> Furthermore, nature functions as a plot device. In his entry on “Wind” in *A Dictionary of Literary Symbols*, Michael Ferber describes this kind of manifestation of emotions and interpretive suggestions as follows: “The literature of sensibility and romanticism often assumes a sympathetic connection between nature and subjective feelings, so that all weather may be symbolic” (Ferber 237). The use of weather in literature is a well-established literary device; in *The Dark Is Rising Sequence* weather also fulfils the purpose of establishing dichotomies between good and evil, and nature and civilisation. This becomes obvious in the interplay between light and darkness in, for example, *Over Sea*, *Under Stone*, as well as the Grey King’s domination and use of nature in *The Grey King*.

On another level, *The Dark Is Rising Sequence* employs nature as metaphor for the readers’ and child characters’ inner constitution; as Merriman states: “[T]here is something of [both good and evil] in every man” (*Over Stone* 60). Consequently, one has to constantly fight against evil in the form of, for example, corruption, racism and violence to overcome the darkness within oneself and others, and find one’s inner light. The last battle, especially the phallic scene surrounding the intimacy of the fight about the precious blossom from the tree, foregrounds such an interpretation. Cooper herself argues that “fantasy is a metaphor through which we discover ourselves” (Cooper qtd. in Goodrich 168).

All in all, the characters in *The Dark Is Rising Sequence* are not as well developed as in the other books under scrutiny. Although Susan Cooper leaves

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<sup>104</sup> These examples reveal that the Dark is able to destroy humans indirectly.

breadcrumbs for potential interpretations, she does not pick up her own leads.<sup>105</sup> The same is true for her interpretation of evil: It is much more unspecific than, for example, the evil that C. S. Lewis and Philip Pullman portray.

#### The Male Adversary in Christopher Paolini's *Inheritance Cycle*

##### Galbatorix<sup>106</sup>

In many ways the *Inheritance Cycle* is an exception to the other books under scrutiny. For example, at no point in the tetralogy does there appear an evil temptress, and the realities of war form a much bigger component of the plot than in the other books, as does the aftermath of war. In his construction of the main antagonist, however, Paolini draws on well-established stereotypes and black-and-white patterns. This series is underrepresented in scholarly discourse; but in her book *Child Saviours in English Fantasy Fiction for Children and Young Adults* (2014), Anne Klaus gives valuable insights into the characters.

Although Galbatorix is the antagonist of the series, he does not appear in person until the very last book of the tetralogy. During the first three volumes, he is indirectly characterised so that he maintains a shadow-like position. The reader gains little insights into his persona or motifs, and only knows about his character through the lens of others.

Galbatorix has reigned Alagaësia since his rebellion against the Dragon Riders more than 100 years ago (*Eragon* 30). Like the other tyrant sovereigns and usurpers described above and below, the text portrays him as self-serving (*ibid.* 197), brutal, murderous, and even mad (*ibid.* 32f.). Equally similar, he displays an uncontrollable and violent temper. Murtagh and Thorn, for example, are frequent victims of Galbatorix's violent outbursts: After Eragon and Roran killed the Ra'zac, Galbatorix "was so angry, he slew five of his servants and then turned his wrath upon Thorn and [Murtagh]" (*Brisingsr* 318). Eragon's cousin Roran summarizes Galbatorix as follows:

I know now the true nature of the Empire and of Galbatorix; they are *evil*. Galbatorix is an unnatural blight on the world. He destroyed the Riders and the greatest peace and prosperity we ever had. [...] He seeks to poison all of Alagaësia, to suffocate us with his cloak of misery. Our children and their descendants shall live in the shadow of his darkness until the end of time,

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<sup>105</sup> Such as the Black Rider as possible Horseman of the Apocalypse.

<sup>106</sup> I further analyse King Galbatorix and his qualities as sovereign in 3.1 Wrongful Authority.

reduced to slaves, worms, *vermin* for him to torture at his pleasure. (*Eldest* 250; emphasis in original)

Anne Klaus appropriately describes this passage as containing “apocalyptic and eschatological images of devastation [...] and plight” characteristic for the fight between Light and Darkness (Klaus 2014, 273). Roran’s speech simultaneously reminds the villagers and the reader of the imperative to fight wrongful rulers and their evil schemes.

Describing Galbatorix as “unnatural” (*Eldest* 250) also serves to dehumanize and even demonize the enemy, which morally justifies the war the Varden and Eragon are waging against him. His dehumanization also becomes obvious in the company he keeps: some of his servants “are foul demons birthed in some ancient pit” (*Eldest* 250). Another evidence is his “perverted union” with his dragon Shruikan (*Eldest* 440): “*Shruikan did not choose Galbatorix as his partner; he was twisted by certain black magics into serving Galbatorix’s madness. Galbatorix has constructed a depraved imitation of the relationship that you, Eragon, and you, Saphira, possess and that he lost when the Urgals murdered his original dragon*” (*Eldest* 440; emphasis in original). This enforced and perverted relationship between Galbatorix and his dragon further discredits his character and emphasizes his moral corruption and “insatiable” greed for power (*Brisingr* 419); he utilizes his position as a Dragon Rider and the strength this grants him to dominate and control his Empire. Although Galbatorix has already been depicted as truly evil throughout the series, the final encounter between him and Eragon reveals the former to be extraordinarily malicious and amoral: he has kidnapped children and uses them as leverage to stop Eragon’s attacks, although “if you [Eragon] displease me excessively, I shall kill them anyway” (*Inheritance* 658).

His inability to form a normal and healthy partnership, his crimes against the population, his amorality, and the fact that he does not experience guilt mark him as a sociopath. This is a condition he shares with the majority of the antagonists in the books, and which allows the reader to transfer the aspect of complete evilness to his or her own world in the attempt to understand evil.

Moreover, Galbatorix’s “unnatural blight” and his greed manifest themselves in his extreme longevity (e.g. *Eldest* 325), his desire for immortality (*Brisingr* 733) and his self-perception to be “as powerful as a god” (ibid.). As Anne Klaus states, “Galbatorix [...] is characterized by his megalomania [and consequently] reveals his hubris” (Klaus 2014, 255). Accepting his or her own mortality as part of life is a lesson the protagonists and reader have to learn. In the end, those antagonists who aspire immortality or regard

themselves as god-like, such as Voldemort or the Grandir, have to be defeated in order to restore the natural balance in the world the villains have destroyed.

The analysis of Galbatorix's character reveals him to be an extraordinarily powerful foe; especially since the plot makes clear he can easily beat Eragon and end the war if he leaves his castle in order to directly participate in the conflict (e.g. *Eldest* 100, *Brisingr* 565). His powerfulness and the uncompromising image of evil naturally enhance the David versus Goliath trope of the story and the catharsis readers and characters experience at Galbatorix's death.

Using "snake whispering" or being "snake-tongued" (*Eldest* 609) not only dehumanizes Galbatorix, but through this image the plot establishes a thinly veiled allusion to Satan who has tricked Eve and caused the fall of man. As a Dragon Rider turned evil, Galbatorix is indeed a fallen figure who is able to manipulate people into following him. Even Murtagh confesses as much: "And what a vision [he has], Eragon. You should hear him describe it, then you might not think so badly of him. Is it evil that he wants to unite Alagaësia under a single banner, eliminate the need for war, and restore the Riders?" (*Eldest* 647). By tempting Murtagh with "secrets, that can destroy your enemies and fulfill all your desires" (*ibid.*), and by distorting reality and claiming that his reasons to destroy the Riders are grounded in the corruption of the old regime (*ibid.* 649) Galbatorix is able to convince Murtagh of the righteousness of his plan.

In his actions, Galbatorix is able to combine masculine and feminine attributes. Not only does his physical strength mark his masculinity (*Inheritance* 712), but also his outward appearance: he has "a close-cropped beard and moustache" and his "shoulders were broad, and his waist trim" (*ibid.* 655). He further displays determination, dominance, strength, forcefulness, as well as the female persuasion of the temptress: "Galbatorix has done nothing but burn and slaughter and amass power for himself. He lies. He murders. He manipulates" (*Eldest* 649). It appears to be extremely poetical that Galbatorix's destruction evokes the Biblical diction "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." Through a spell, Galbatorix experiences "all the feelings, both good and bad, that he had aroused in others since the day he had been born" (*Inheritance* 714f.).

Similar to other villains in this chapter, the plot constructs Galbatorix as a father figure at times: he takes on the role of a mentor for Murtagh, though against the latter's will (*Eldest* 647), acts out his adult authority in front of Eragon when he condescendingly says that "[y]ou need to be taught a lesson in humility, boy" (*Inheritance* 712), wants to bind both young Riders to his person (*ibid.*) and constructs the castle as their new home (*ibid.* 660). The emphasis on Galbatorix as emblem of

moral deprivation and violation of the natural order, however, is stronger than his role as an assumed father figure. Oromis explains Galbatorix's evil as follows: "as Galbatorix has demonstrated, power without moral direction is the most dangerous force in the world" (*Eldest* 273). His characterization is dominated by an extremely stereotypical image of evil and marks him as an evil which needs to be completely eradicated.

#### Male Adversaries in Amanda Hemingway's *The Sangreal Trilogy*

*The Sangreal Trilogy* is interesting for this analysis, despite that no war appears between the protagonist and his antagonist, as Nathan eliminates his adversary before the take-over begins. Nevertheless, the justifications of war and the depictions of the villains in the series are corresponding to the other books under scrutiny. Although *The Sangreal Trilogy* incorporates a "slugfest of villains" (*The Traitor's Sword* 98), there are only two male adversaries who I discuss in greater depths: the Grandir and Michael Addison.<sup>107</sup> These characters represent two different images of villainess and maleness, and consequently two different strategies to achieve their goals. While the Grandir populates all three books and slowly develops from a character Nathan trusts, to an adversary he has to overcome in order to save his world, Michael only appears in the first volume of the series.

#### The Grandir

In the course of the novels, the Grandir fulfils many roles: he is a "guardian angel – a manipulator, a menace" (*Greenstone Grail* 87). Due to rather inconsistent descriptions because of the narrative technique Hemingway employs,<sup>108</sup> his role in the narrative is not clear at the beginning of the trilogy. The further the plot progresses, however, the more does his role as the villain of this fantasy narrative surface. Finally, characterizations of the Grandir repeatedly culminate in the words "power-crazed supervillain" (*Poisoned Crown* 353, 367, 409, 417).

A summarizing paragraph in the second book describes the Grandir as a ruler who is "thousands of years old, whose face was never seen and whose true name was never spoken – a ruler who had once had a whole cosmos for his empire" (*Sword* 2). He

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<sup>107</sup> Father Crowley is another male adversary in *The Traitor's Sword*. He only appears briefly and is apparently constructed as the evil counterpart to the archetype of the wise old man; Nathan even equates him with Dumbledore (*Sword* 186). Only at the end of the book does the reader realize Father Crowley's real intention, namely "world domination" (138), and thus is able to regard him as an untrustworthy adult figure, even if his appearance as wise old man suggests the contrary.

<sup>108</sup> The focalizers are mainly Nathan, his mother, or Hazel. The Grandir himself is never focalized.

constantly hides his face by wearing a mask. This is on the one hand necessary due to an epidemic called sundearth, which means that he is wearing the cover to protect his face. On the other hand, however, this mask is a symbol of his hidden intentions, emotions, and identity. As the most powerful person in his universe, he hides his name, and with this his true identity, as names have power over the person (*Crown* 41). The mask and the secrecy surrounding his name are also emblematic of his egotism and inability to emotionally commit to a person, which are universal attributes of the villains under scrutiny. Moreover, the Grandir first withholds his identity as Nathan's biological father from Nathan, though he nevertheless acts like a father figure regarding Nathan's guidance and, during the first two books, safety.

Not only his physical height marks him as a larger than life person to Nathan, "an aura of power and great stillness" surrounds him (*Grail* 42). At the beginning, the Grandir appears to be a tragic figure: he is ruling over a dying universe of an extremely high developed race. His mental abilities far outreach human understanding and even equal a physical force:

behind the mask [Nathan] sensed a mind at work, an inscrutable intelligence, vast and complex, and focused on a single path of thought, a plan, a goal – whatever that goal might be. Nathan had never before imagined such a mind – a mind so powerful that he could *feel* it thinking, he could sense the surge and flicker of suppressed emotion, the dreadful urgency beneath the calm of absolute control. (*Grail* 45; emphasis in original)

Especially in the third book, the focus increasingly shifts to the Grandir; calculation and pragmatism mark his style of ruling the realm and determine his plans for the future. His long-term planning surrounding bringing the Lodestone<sup>109</sup> into the human world thousands of years ago to facilitate the take-over of the world in Nathan's time, illustrates his ability to calculate long-term goals (*Crown* 387f.). Another example of this is his repeated attempts to father a son who can bring about the merging of the two worlds (*ibid.* 192). This foresight and patience is in contrast to the other villains' striving for instant gratification.

He appears to be omniscient as "he always was [right]. He had the Sight, or some high-tech, high-magic equivalent: he could see across the worlds, through windows in space and time" (*ibid.* 401). The Grandir even admits Nathan into his mind, though Nathan is not able to penetrate the surface level, which leaves the Grandir an

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<sup>109</sup> The Lodestone bestowed the gift of magical talents on the citizens of Atlantis. Bartlemy later calls the stone a "Trojan Horse" which might facilitate the downfall of the world the characters know (*Crown* 34f.).

enigma: “It had been the ultimate intimacy, an act of total self-revelation – but with a mind like the Grandir’s there must still have been depths unplumbed, thoughts unexplored, veils past which he could not see” (ibid.).

The Grandir appears to be a double edged sword, as he is both father and supervillain for Nathan. At first, Nathan experiences him as a guiding father figure. Bartlemy rightly describes the incredible power as well as the Grandir’s intention when saying that “[w]hoever fathered Nathan has power of a kind we cannot imagine – the power to break the rules – and such an individual would never leave his son unprotected. Somehow, he will be watching over Nathan” (*Grail* 63f.). Though attributes such as “nurturing, caring, [...] and emotional” belong to the feminine sphere (Junko 189), the Grandir displays such attributes regarding Nathan and thus wins his trust and loyalty. This becomes especially apparent in the second book, when the Grandir rescues Nathan from Nenufar. At that time, his appearance is described rather ambiguously: vulnerable and arrogant, beautiful and cold (*Sword* 265). It is an utterly private, emotional and awe-inspiring moment, as Nathan interacts with the unmask Grandir: “The Grandir – ruler of Eos, lord of a dying universe, watcher over more than a dozen worlds. A man whose schemes were too deep to penetrate, whose purposes too lofty for comprehension. Looking down at Nathan with something like concern in his face” (ibid. 265f.). From the supreme ruler, Nathan experiences guidance and something “that might have been concern” (ibid. 280). Throughout the series, however, the female characteristics the Grandir displays are deconstructed and leave him as cold and empty-hearted supervillain. This for example already happens through the employment of hedges in the previous quotations which describe Grandir’s emotions; they stand in stark contrast to Nathan’s idealisation of the Grandir, an opinion he often has to defend in the face of criticism (e.g. *Grail* 305).

The aforementioned “power to break the rules” contributes to the god-complex from which the Grandir suffers. Already in the first book, the plot depicts him breaking the rules he himself had ratified (*Grail* 153f.). Here, Hemingway leaves breadcrumbs for the reader regarding the true nature of the still ambiguous figure. In the last book, he kills the creatures he has unlawfully kept in his position to do his bidding. According to his opinion, “they were his creatures, to use or destroy” (*Crown* 104). Pondering about the “massacre” he has witnessed (ibid.), Nathan concludes that the Grandir “still cared about them. [...] he had compassion for them. That must be the important thing. Compassion ...” (ibid.).

Following this train of thought, Hazel's criticism leads the reader to question the ruler's method and to distrust the hero's impression, as "[c]ompassion's cheap. It's what you *do* that counts, not what you feel. I think the Grandir's a supervillain, the sort you always get running a whole universe. A cold-hearted, ruthless megalomaniac, just like in all the movies" (ibid.; emphasis in original). Hazel's comment incorporates a valuable lesson for the reader to learn. To increase this didactic message, the discussion shifts its focus to the real world: "'Life isn't like the movies. Even in this world, rulers have to make decisions that get people killed, if the survival of their country is at stake.' / 'Like George Bush and the Americans invading Iraq?' Hazel said with heavy sarcasm" (*Crown* 104).

The discussion between the two characters has two relevant didactic functions: first, it demonstrates the importance of a character's autonomy. Even if the hero (of a book) has an opinion, it does not have to be necessarily right; the reader has to make up her/his own mind and interpret the world as s/he sees it. Second, fantasy is revealed to be a metaphor: at its core, the conflict in the books is transferable to the real world. To recognize this allusion to Bush and later Hitler and Saddam Hussein (ibid. 105), the reader needs to be aware of historical and contemporary events. Consequently, Hemingway's series builds a bridge to promote political and historical awareness which might help the reader to develop a better understanding of political events and judge those events according to the moral code cultivated in the books.

While Hazel comprehends that Nathan is only a tool for the Grandir to employ, and states that "[y]ou were born for him to use" (*Crown* 368), Nathan is blinded by his desire to have a father in his life; he humanizes and idealizes the Grandir (ibid.). The knowledge of the biological connection serves to further functionalize the father-son relationship. Nathan is eager to please his father (*Crown* 385), although the latter admits that Nathan was not a child born out of love, but necessity: "I needed a son who could open the portal – a son born of two worlds" (ibid.). Furthermore, in a flowery statement, the Grandir confesses that he "engineer[ed] an opportunity" (ibid. 387) which brought about the possibility of Nathan's conception. This statement simply paraphrases that he murdered Annie's love Daniel so that Annie could cross the portal and unwittingly open herself to the Grandir's purpose. For Nathan, all negative characteristics simply vanish with the Grandir's declaration of love, although it includes a statement of Nathan's utilisation: "'I did not expect to love you,' the Grandir said. It was what Nathan had been wanting to hear, what he had searched for through all his dreams. For a second, his



happiness was so intense, it felt like a spear inside him, twisting in his heart. He could not speak” (ibid.).

While Nathan regards the Grandir as loving *übermensch* and father figure, Annie experienced him as a sexual predator throughout the series, marking her as trauma victim: “he took me, body and soul. He seeded my womb and sealed up my memory, [...] – until I found the courage to unclosethe old scar in my mind – I never knew the betrayal and rape that was hidden there” (Crown 18). Furthermore, allusions to and quotations from Edgar Allan Poe’s poem “The Raven” in reference to the relationship between Annie and the Grandir (e.g. Crown 66) cleverly facilitate a haunting atmosphere for both the knowing and unknowing reader.

To Nathan, the Grandir first appears extremely rational and result-oriented, which becomes apparent in the conversation between him and Nathan, when he instructs Nathan to keep focused on his task and not to meddle with political matters in the different worlds he visits: “Only do what you must. Perform the task ordained for you; no more” (Crown 63). There is no compassion, no inclination to help or save other people. Later, Nathan realizes that the Grandir is not any different from other villains: “A power-crazed supervillain ... / There is nothing like a cliché for getting it right” (ibid. 409). In a painful moment of epiphany and disbelief, Nathan realizes that behind the Grandir’s mask of rationality hides simple greed (ibid.). People and animals are just utensils to help him to fabricate the world he wants; he has changed the Great Spell so that he might sacrifice his own son “[l]ike – *cannon fodder*” instead of himself to achieve the aim of world domination (ibid. 422; emphasis in original). Furthermore, he does not care that the fusion of the universes will cause the death of billions of people (ibid. 408); he only aims at protecting his sister and himself (ibid. 418). Anne Klaus fittingly states that the Grandir displays an “arrogant indifference to other living creatures” (Klaus 2014, 255), especially since he is also motivated by an extremely racist attitude. In his mind, humans in Nathan’s world, such as Nathan’s peers, are worthless; they “are nothing – less than nothing” (Crown 62).

Only the male heir of the Grandir’s family wields power, his masculine authority actively changes the destiny of his universe. The Grandir’s attributes described above create an image of the perfect embodiment of masculinity: physical impressiveness, strength, intelligence expressed in rational thinking and long-term calculations, and sexual desirability<sup>110</sup>. All in all, the Grandir displays an outdated masculine ideal that

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<sup>110</sup> Though the sexual desirability of the Grandir is expressed in the books (Crown 191f., 377f.), it only plays a minor role in his characterisation and has no importance at all concerning his leadership.

cannot survive in the modern world, which should be reigned by acts of compassion, which is something he is unable to perform.

That the “concept of conventional masculinity is defined by the notion of a ‘separate sphere’” (Junko 189) is obvious in the *Sangreal Trilogy*; female and male attributes are clearly separated at times. It first becomes apparent in the artefacts Nathan has to retrieve for the Grandir to facilitate the great spell, which will “open the barrier between worlds” (*Grail* 304): “The cup is the feminine principle, the sword is the masculine, and the crown is the circle that binds” (ibid.). The ruling couple echoes this principle of the masculine and feminine sphere: While the Grandir is the ruthless and rational ruler, his sister-bride Halmé is reduced to her beauty and her incompetence in all other fields, especially highlighted at the end of book three. In the end, the Grandir is rendered impotent as Nathan learns the Grandir’s name and thus breaks his spell (*Crown* 430). Consequently, Nathan’s mother is able to kill the Grandir with the very symbol of masculinity, the sword. Through her act of vengeance, Annie not only underlines the inadequacy of the archaic patriarchal system, she also spares her son from becoming the one who must stop the villain, and thus saves him from becoming a murderer (cp. Klaus 2014, 207).

The Grandir is the only character in this study who needs to be defeated by his own child, and / or the child’s substitute. Although the other father figures in this chapter fulfil the same function, the Grandir represents the hero’s (symbolic) demarcation from his or her parental figures most obviously. As Anne Klaus states, this “action obviously functions as a metaphor for ‘inner’ processes. [...] The heroes gain individuation by leaving home and gaining wisdom in the world independently of their parents” (Klaus 2014, 233). This is only one instance in which the works under scrutiny operate on a meta-level (Klaus 2014, 239) and establish fantasy as metaphor that the reader might apply to him- or herself.

In forming the general statement about human nature, namely that the Grandir knows “human nature and how it works” (*Grail* 304), the plot equates the lives of all characters. In stating that human nature is generally the same, the books weave the fictional and the reader’s world closer together. The reason for the contamination was self-made: a great spell caused the sundering and consequently the near eradication of a whole race; a race which inhabited “the city of Arkatron on Eos – a city at the end of

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Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that the villains below also display this attribute (except the Authority), whereas the villains mentioned above do not (except Galbatorix). This may lead to the conclusion that sexual prowess has developed into a marker of masculinity even in fantastic literature for children and young adults.

time, last stronghold of a high-tech, high-magic civilization in a universe that was dying” (*Sword 2*). This is a thinly veiled allusion to the opinion that human kind itself is, according to the famous “Doomsday Clock”, only minutes away from its own destruction (Morris 609). The highly civilized population of Arkatron might be a future model of humanity. As Nathan states, however, “[y]our people chose extinction [...]. Mine – might not” (*Crown 420*). Not only is the importance of free will at the centre of the discussion, this statement also introduces an ecocritical message to the reader. Here, fantasy again functions as metaphor for real world problems.

### Michael Addison

As the character of Michael Addison is not the one who aims to cause a world-changing war, I only analyse him briefly, as he nevertheless plays a role in the conflict between good and evil. In contrast to the previously mentioned male villains in this chapter, he utilises his looks, and women’s sexual desires and attraction to him to accomplish his aims.

While his wife Rianna is not so popular in the village, he does his best to adapt to Eade; he easily gains the villagers’ sympathy (*Greenstone Grail 29*). In seeking Annie’s help with his computer (*ibid.* 35) and appearing in need to be rescued by Annie while trying to save a neighbour from her abusive husband (*ibid.* 210), he constructs himself as a vulnerable, “heroic” (*ibid.* 259), sensitive man, and a victim of circumstances. Michael does not perceive these situations as threats to his masculinity, but as opportunities to manipulate Annie’s feelings. On the outside, he evokes the image of, what David Buchbinder calls, the New Age Man: “This variety of man is supposedly gentler and less aggressive than Old Age Man. [...] He attempts to get in touch with his feelings, and is willing to make himself vulnerable, emotionally, to others” (qtd. in John Stephens 2002, 44). This portrayal bespeaks of contemporary tendencies of masculinity. He becomes the love interest of Nathan’s mother, who is one of the main characters in the books and a figure of sympathy. This reveals that this kind of masculinity is clearly favoured over the “Old Age Man” (*ibid.*) and uncovers Annie’s vulnerability concerning emotional and sexual seduction. Only when Annie finds the corpse of Michael’s wife is she able to dispose of his spell (*Grail 357*). As this scene demonstrates, he loses his mask as easily as any *femme fatale*, displaying his true nature that was hidden behind layers of attractiveness. This also reveals one of the most important messages when it comes to outer attractiveness versus inner deformity, an aspect which has also become

apparent in the previous chapter: real beauty comes from within (Klaus 2010, 139), which is true for men and women alike.

Michael's aim is the accumulation of power; he wants to obtain the Grail and Nathan in order to enhance his magical strength (*Grail* 358f.). He even regards it in his right to do so, because it is in his power to do so: "I always knew I was special. I could control the minds of others, make my own destiny among the feckless, the aimless, the failures" (ibid. 359). He justifies his actions and desires with references to heroic figures: "Everyone wants the Grail. I've sought it all my life, dreamed of it, lusted for it. Didn't Lancelot, Percival, Galahad? Knights and heroes, all of them. I rather fancy myself as a knight and hero" (ibid. 360). For him, the premise might makes right and his arrogant self-perception serve as legitimization of his antisocial and murderous behaviour, which sets him in line with the other villains in this chapter. His megalomaniac obsessions culminate in his dehumanization (ibid.) and his final desocialisation (ibid. 366).

Although he might solely appear as a *homme fatal*, he is simultaneously a seducer and a seduced: he has blinded Annie in order to get closer to Nathan (ibid. 357), and is himself the victim of one of the *femmes fatales* of the novels (ibid. 360). Nenufar, the water-spirit who has seduced him, simultaneously acts as a means to gain power and as display of female sexual power. The rise and fall of Michael Addison not only demonstrates poetic justice, but also paints a picture of a new villain in this analysis: the seductive ladies' man, who is able to blind his environment and use his charm and sexuality to achieve his goals.<sup>111</sup> Furthermore, this adversary bears witness to men's ability to seduce women and thus become emotional and sexual predators.<sup>112</sup> While characteristics of the *femme fatale* define almost all of the female adversaries, the image of the *homme fatal* is less frequent in children's and young adults' literature. However, the tendencies apparent in this chapter might bespeak of a new trend in this genre.

### The Male Adversary in J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* Series

#### Lord Voldemort

Although I have analysed Dolores Umbridge and Bellatrix Lestrange in greater depths, Lord Voldemort is the main antagonist in the series. As such, he has been thoroughly analysed in secondary literature, for example by Roni Natov in her article "Harry Potter

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<sup>111</sup> The younger portrait of Lord Voldemort also goes in this direction.

<sup>112</sup> Dracula is one of the examples of this type of villain.

and the Extraordinariness of the Ordinary” (2001), and Mary Pharr in her book chapter “In Medias Res. Harry Potter as Hero-in-Progress” (2002).<sup>113</sup>

As Julia Park points out, Voldemort is representative of the “stereotypes of dark villains” (Park 187). In the first three books, he occupies a liminal position as he does not have a solid body, and only solidifies in the fourth book. From the fifth book onwards, the fight against Voldemort as physical opponent occupies a greater part of the plot. Due to the lack of a proper body, the plot foregrounds Voldemort’s dehumanization from the beginning of the series. In the first book, Harry meets Voldemort who is just a shadow of his former self, a bodiless figure who needs a surrogate body in order to survive (*Stone* 315). When Harry confronts Tom Riddle in the Chamber of Secrets, Harry characterizes his enemy as follows: “And I’ve seen the real you, I saw you last year. You’re a wreck. You’re barely alive. That’s where all your power got you. You’re in hiding. You’re ugly, you’re foul!” (*Chamber* 340). This quotation not only portrays Voldemort as weak and inferior, his physiognomy also emphasises his moral depravation.

At the beginning of the series, Voldemort’s “dehumanisation is additionally emphasized by his vampire-like demeanour: in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone*, he needs his surrogate body to drink unicorn blood in order to strengthen himself. In *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, he empowers himself with Ginny Weasley’s spirit and life force” (Kokorski 2012a, 30): he feeds “on a diet of her deepest fears, her darkest secrets” (*Chamber* 40). “[W]hile his strength grows she becomes increasingly weaker” (Kokorski 2012a, 30) until he is “[p]owerful enough to start feeding Miss Weasley a few of *my* own secrets, to start pouring a little of *my* soul back into *her*” (*Chamber* 40; emphasis in original). Furthermore, in *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, Voldemort has to acquire Harry’s blood in order to perform a spell that grants him a solid body (*Goblet* 557).

Once Voldemort is reborn, his outward appearance constantly alludes to classical representations of evil. Thus, he is often attributed with snake-like features: “[H]is face shone through the gloom, hairless, snake-like, with slits for nostrils and gleaming red eyes whose pupils were vertical. He was so pale that he seemed to emit a pearly glow” (*Hallows* 10). Additionally, he speaks Parseltongue, which is the language of snakes in the wizarding world. Though this language can be attributed to both good and evil wizards, it is “a rare ability, and one supposedly connected with the Dark

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<sup>113</sup> I also analyse Voldemort in “‘I want more!’ The Insatiable Villain in Children’s Literature and Young Adults’ Fiction” and “‘It’s magical!’ – Supernatural Elements in Children’s Literature and Young Adults’ Fiction”.

Arts” (*Prince* 259). M. Katherine Grimes explains the significance of the dehumanization with the statement that Voldemort “is associated with a snake, one of the most feared and loathed creatures, certainly ensures that readers recognize how evil he is” (Grimes 94). Moreover, this highlights the tradition of the satanic villains he belongs to, as do his characteristics as an evil tempter.

Throughout the series, the plot develops this image of Voldemort as evil tempter further. As he himself states in the second book: “I have always been able to charm the people I needed” (*Chamber* 333). In the first book, Voldemort tempts Professor Quirrell with the prospect of power; Quirrell agrees with Voldemort that “[t]here is no good and evil, there is only power, and those too weak to seek it” (*Stone* 313). In the last book, Voldemort’s Horcrux tries to tempt Ron as it claims that “[a]ll you desire is possible” (*Hallows* 306; emphasis in original). Harry and his friends are not convinced by Voldemort’s efforts of temptation and explanation of justification for domination, and refuse to collaborate with evil.

Lord Voldemort proves that not only female villains can be sweet-tongued, thus contradicting the traditional pattern of the aggressive male and the tempting female villain. He also serves as an example that most adversaries are extremely intelligent and talented, and often act in disguise. These character traits of the antagonist occur in numerous other novels, such as Hemingway’s *The Poisoned Crown*, Pullman’s *His Dark Materials*, Paolini’s *Inheritance Cycle*, and P.C. Cast and Kristin Cast’s *House of Night* novels.

Before Voldemort turned into the epitome of evil, Tom Marvolo Riddle appears to be a rather charming, good-looking boy. Shortly after his father left his mother because of her being a witch, his mother died, and Tom was left in the care of an orphanage (*Chamber* 337). There, he was feared by the other children because “he was already using magic against other people, to frighten, to punish, to control”, following his obviously well-developed “instincts for cruelty, secrecy and domination” (*Prince* 259). He is greedy for power and wants to preserve it through violence. When he started Hogwarts, he was undoubtedly able to deceive and manipulate people: “He showed no sign of outward arrogance or aggression at all. As an unusually talented and very good-looking orphan, he naturally drew attention and sympathy from the staff almost from the moment of his arrival. He seemed polite, quiet and thirsty for knowledge. Nearly all were most favourably impressed by him” (*ibid.* 337). The book reveals that at Hogwarts, Voldemort was able to successfully hide his

evil nature: “Nearly everybody expected spectacular things from Tom Riddle, prefect, Head Boy, winner of the Special Award for Services to the School” (ibid. 403).

In Dumbledore’s Pensieve, Harry is able to perceive Voldemort’s gradual dehumanization after he graduated from Hogwarts:

His features [...] were not as snakelike, the eyes were not yet scarlet, the face not yet masklike, and yet he was no longer handsome Tom Riddle. It was as though his features had been burned and blurred; they were waxy and oddly distorted, and the whites of the eyes now had a permanently bloody look, though the pupils were not yet the slits that Harry knew they would become. He was wearing a long black cloak and his face was as pale as the snow glistening on his shoulders. (*Prince* 413)

The paleness of his face may remind the reader of the abnormal whiteness of the White Witch in Narnia; this unnaturalness indicates the extreme evilness and inhumanity of the antagonists.

Furthermore, with Tom Riddle’s transformation into Lord Voldemort, the books point out something important: it is easier for the characters to identify evil when it wears a dehumanized shape. Moreover, the characters should not be blinded by a handsome outward appearance, but recognize the signs of evil. This is a moral lesson, which a young and naïve reader also has to learn.

The plot in *Stone* reveals that Voldemort is so fearsome that people are even afraid to speak out his name and are still afraid to do so many years after his fall (*Stone* 64).<sup>114</sup> This reputation and the fear of people even to say his name strengthens the power Voldemort has had over people, and apparently still has after he has disappeared. As Dumbledore states: “Always use the proper name for things. Fear of a name increases fear for the thing itself” (ibid. 320). Here, Dumbledore urges Harry to look at the situation from an objective point of view and face his fears directly.

The pseudonym ‘Lord Voldemort’, or rather the anagram “I AM LORD VOLDEMORT” (*Chamber* 337), reveals his attempt to recreate himself as an *überhuman* persona and highlights his hybris: “I fashioned myself a new name, a name I knew wizards everywhere would one day fear to speak, when I had become the greatest sorcerer in the world!” (ibid.).

In the sixth book, Rowling introduces the concept of the Horcrux as a tool to serve Voldemort’s aspiration for immortality. A Horcrux is an object that is manipulated into storing a part of a person’s soul. As Professor Slughorn explains:

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<sup>114</sup> This anxiety reveals the motif of the superstitious fear of names.

“even if one’s body is attacked or destroyed, one cannot die, for part of the soul remains earthbound and undamaged” (ibid. 464f.). To be able to rip one’s soul into pieces, the wizard has to commit an “act of evil – the supreme act of evil. By committing murder. Killing rips the soul apart” (ibid. 465). So far, in the history of the magic society, no one has ever split his soul into seven pieces like Voldemort (ibid. 465f.). Like his body, Voldemort’s soul has undergone major destructive incisions. His fear of death (*Order* 718) leads him to create Horcruxes which should grant him immortality, which is supposed to cure him of his fear of death. Furthermore, due to his conviction of his own position as most powerful wizard of all times and his perceived right to reform the wizarding society (ibid. 417), the creating the Horcruxes is a valid act to help him to accomplish his aim of changing wizarding society.

The prize he is willing to pay, however, is very high. His soul has become so dysfunctional that Voldemort does not even feel it when one of the Horcruxes is destroyed by Harry (*Hallows* 443). Taking the creation of Horcruxes into consideration, Voldemort has “pushed the boundaries of magic further, perhaps, than they have ever been pushed” (*Prince* 415). As a consequence, he overcame the limits of body and soul and thus lost his humanity. The plot stresses that Voldemort’s magical abilities transcends those of ‘normal’ wizards by far: in the first book, for example, Mr Ollivander states that “He Who Must Not Be Named did great things – terrible, yes, but great” (*Stone* 96), and in books seven he is able to fly without using any magical creatures or tools (*Hallows* 56).

By stating that Voldemort has moved “beyond ‘usual evil’” (*Prince* 469), the book emphasizes that Voldemort is an immensely powerful adversary and thus almost impossible to defeat. Furthermore, this statement “challenges the reader with the notion that there is ‘usual evil’ in the world which needs to be confronted and overcome” (Kokorski, 2012b, 209). This can happen by individual and / or communal effort, as the last book reveals.

Gaining insight into Voldemort’s past in book six, the reader is able to perceive Voldemort’s intentions (*Prince* 252). His magical abilities in a non-magical environment contribute to his own “sense of self-importance” (ibid. 337); when Dumbledore visits him in the orphanage to welcome him into the wizarding society, “Riddle was perfectly ready to believe that he was [...] ‘special’” (ibid. 258). As heir to Slytherin, who was one of the founders of Hogwarts and one of the greatest wizards of all times, Voldemort feels confirmed in “his belief in his own superiority” (ibid. 471).



For him, his heritage serves as evidence that he is chosen to transform wizarding society and thus to “finish Salazar Slytherin’s noble work” (*Chamber* 335).

However, Voldemort’s attempt to change the wizarding community and hence the world is more radical. First of all, he wants to unify Hogwarts under “[t]he emblem, shield, and colours of my noble ancestor, Salazar Slytherin” (*Hallows* 586). In other words, he aims to achieve social unity, incorporating Slytherin’s ideological paradigms; no one should be different, everyone should have the same characteristics and aspire to the same goals. However, he will be the individual standing out from the crowd, commanding the masses in order “to purify the magical society on a microcosmic level” at Hogwarts, which is the same as Salazar Slytherin’s agenda (Kokorski 2012a, 29). He also wants to change the wizarding society on a macrocosmic level and rule others through violence in order to “carve for himself a startling place in magical history” (*Prince* 471). He regards it as his duty to ‘cultivate’ the wizarding world by liberating it from those who are not of pure blood: “You must prune [your family tree], must you not, to keep it healthy? Cut away those parts that threaten the health of the rest. [...] we shall cut away the canker that infects us until only those of the true blood remain ...” (*Hallows* 17). He is even willing to spare those who surrender to his will at the Battle of Hogwarts as “[e]very drop of magical blood spilled is a loss and a waste” (ibid. 529).<sup>115</sup>

Due to magical / blood privilege he defines himself and his supporters as part of the *Herrenrasse*, which is supposed to be at the top of the social scale. Furthermore, Rowling herself states that Voldemort is “someone who is incredibly power hungry. Racist, really” (qtd. Ostry 96). To achieve his aims of wizard purification and (world) domination, he establishes an atmosphere of threat, terror and destruction which only a few dare to oppose: “‘people are terrified,’ Mr Weasley replied, ‘terrified that they will be next to disappear, their children the next day be attacked! There are nasty rumours going round’” (*Hallows* 80). Torture and murder are powerful weapons which Voldemort and his Death Eaters use on a regular basis; this additionally fuels the fear of the people and thus strengthens his powerful status. Even before the plot of the first book begins, Voldemort did everything to keep in power and murdered those who posed a threat to him: “No one ever lived after he decided ter kill ‘em, no one except you, an’ he’d killed some o’ the best witches an’ wizards of the age” (*Stone* 65).

Like other villains in this chapter, Voldemort shows an unpredictable and violent rage. If something does not go according to his plan, “his anger [is] terrible to behold”

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<sup>115</sup> I discuss his aim to purify the wizarding society in greater detail in chapter 3.2 The Construction of Difference.

and he employs physical violence (*Prince* 474). After Harry has stolen one of Voldemort's Horcruxes, Voldemort's wand "slashed through the air and green light erupted through the room, the kneeling goblin rolled over, dead, the watching wizards scattered before him, terrified: [...] and again and again his wand fell, and those who were left were slain, all of them" (*ibid.* 443). In his rage, Voldemort does not differentiate between opponent and loyal servant; his sense of self-preservation only extends to himself. I agree with Bethany Barratt statement that "while Voldemort cares for none but himself, he certainly expects complete loyalty from his followers" (Barratt 24). This loyalty is achieved through fear; the only exception to this is Bellatrix Lestrange, who both fears and adores Voldemort. In her adoration for the Dark Lord Beatrice Lestrange gives voice to a *Führer* cult which on the one hand alludes to the parallels to Nazi Germany, and on the other hand serves as tool to sexualize Voldemort.

Although he is willing "to (literally) walk over dead bodies to achieve his aim" (Kokorski 2012a, 30), he has no shortcomings of servants, as "there have always been those willing to let me into their hearts and minds" (*Stone* 315). Considering this quote, Voldemort can be seen as a representative of corruption and agent of evil, which all the books campaign against.

After he has 'killed' Harry Potter at the Battle of Hogwarts, the reader is able to identify the place in the wizarding society which Voldemort has reserved for himself: Voldemort wants people to kneel before him in order to acknowledge his superiority (*Hallows* 584). He perceives himself as the new king, the master of everyone else, who literally towers above his underlings. For him, might makes right; his self-perception as the most powerful wizard consequently grants him the justification to oppress weaker creatures. It is indisputable that Voldemort's aim is absolute domination (*Hallows* 584).

Lord Voldemort has two major obsessions: first of all the purification of the magical race, and second of all the destruction of his most dangerous opponent Harry Potter, who was the first and only person to defeat him, although Harry was only a child then. From the first book onwards, nothing is more important than his megalomaniac mission to kill Harry and gaining ultimate power in the world as a result. Even in the seventh book, he is highly obsessed with Harry and marks him as his personal target: "I must be the one to kill Harry Potter, and I shall be" (*Hallows* 13). Over and over again, Voldemort fails to kill Harry, although he tries to six times. Every time, Harry is rescued by people who love and support him; no matter if they are dead, like his parents and other victims of Voldemort in *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, or still alive, like Dumbledore in *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*. In book seven, Lord

Voldemort finally gets another chance to kill Harry, when Harry willingly sacrifices himself to save all others. Voldemort enjoys his alleged triumph by displaying his magical power to humiliate Harry. Voldemort uses one of the unforgivable curses to 'play' with Harry's supposedly dead body. Harry clearly sees through this tactic and recognizes that his body "must be subjected to humiliation to prove Voldemort's victory" (*Hallows* 582). Voldemort "not only aims to kill Harry's body, but also wants to destroy his reputation" (Kokorski 2012a, 30) and consequently the hope Harry embodies. He states that Harry "was killed as he ran away, trying to save himself while you lay down your lives for him" (*Hallows* 583), although the plot reveals that this is a blatant lie. "Voldemort attempts to kill both Harry and the myth which surrounds him, everything else would not suffice his thirst for revenge and the desire for total dominance" which he can achieve more effectively when the saviour is dead and his reputation sullied (Kokorski 2012a, 30).

In conclusion, Voldemort is a highly egotistic character, driven by megalomaniac desires: According to his self-perception he is "the greatest wizard of them all, [...] the most powerful, [...] the killer of Dumbledore and of how many other worthless, nameless men: [...] most important and precious" (*ibid.* 443). "Like Tolkien's Sauron and Lucas's Emperor, Voldemort cannot conceive of strength derived from the refusal to dominate by power" (Pharr 2002, 64) which goes hand in hand with the fact that "Riddle doesn't understand other sources of strength" (Barratt 11), and underestimates what he does not understand, like love (*Stone* 321).<sup>116</sup> His lack of feeling sympathy or empathy and his inability to understand love are the reasons why Harry Potter is able to defeat him in the end. From the beginning, the books send out one of their most important messages: that, in the end, love conquers all. Furthermore, the construction of Voldemort leads to the conclusion that he is not only an individual wizard, but a general agent of darkness "who represents the generating power of evil, the force of discord and enmity" (Natov 322).

Voldemort combines both male and female attributes: in accordance with the stereotype of the female temptress he is seductive. Like Galbatorix, he displays traditional markers of masculinity and is sexualised, which also is in reference to the female temptress, as well as to a new portrayal of masculinity. His dehumanized appearance and behaviour, his sense of superiority and self-importance, his sociopathic

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<sup>116</sup> Hermione also emphasizes this arrogance in underestimating certain things while foregrounding wizard privilege: "Of course, Voldemort would have considered the ways of house-elves far beneath his notice, just like all the pure-bloods who treat them like animals ... it would never have occurred to him that they might have magic that he didn't" (*Hallows* 162).

behaviour, his evil deeds, and his inability to love mark him as diabolic. Thus, the war which Harry must fight appears to be justified to eradicate this force of evil from the wizarding world. However, the war not only concerns the wizarding community and the world as such, it can also be regarded as an inner, metaphorical, fight between good and evil; this becomes even more apparent as Harry has to destroy a part of Voldemort in himself as he is the seventh Horcrux. Having destroyed the evil part of the self through a sacrificial act, the protagonist has matured and completed what Ursula LeGuin describes as the journey “to self-knowledge and the ‘light’—a journey that is best expressed symbolically and involves a fundamental moral struggle between Darkness and the Light” (qtd. in Gates et al. 138).<sup>117</sup>

### Male Adversaries in Philip Pullman’s *His Dark Materials*

Although the focus concerning adversaries in *His Dark Materials* lies on the organization of the Church, the series also displays two individual male opponents worth noting: the Authority and Metatron, who both appear in person in the last book of the trilogy. The Authority’s status as alleged god figure and Metatron’s task as Regent of the kingdom of heaven bestow both characters the exertion of considerable influence on the doctrines and actions of the Church.

As noted in the chapter on female adversaries, *His Dark Materials* have been scrutinized by numerous authors. For this analysis, especially Cathy McSporran’s article “The Kingdom of God, the Republic of Heaven: Depictions of God in CS Lewis’s *Chronicles of Narnia*, and Philip Pullman’s *His Dark Materials*” (2003), Chantal Oliver’s “Mocking God and Celebrating Satan: Parodies and Profanities in Philip Pullman’s *His Dark Materials*” (2012), Mary Harris Russell’s “‘Eve, Again! Mother Eve!’: Pullman’s Eve Variations” (2005), and Bernard Schweizer’s “‘And He’s A-Going to Destroy Him’: Religious Subversion in Pullman’s *His Dark Materials*” (2005) provide in-depth insights into the characters and their ideological implications.

#### The Authority

Even though the plot reveals that the Authority merely operates as a figurehead at the end of the trilogy, the methods, doctrines and “truths” he has previously established play important roles for the portrait and perception of the Church and the progression of the plot. On a further level, his actions and doctrines bear significance concerning the didactic messages of the books, which become most obvious in the parallels to the reader’s world.

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<sup>117</sup> This is a traditional fight between good and evil which is also depicted in mythology.

In the last book of the trilogy, the reader witnesses the unravelling of the Authority's mystery and power. Instead of a benevolent god, the Authority is depicted as usurper and greatest deceiver in all the worlds:

The Authority, God, the Creator, the Lord, Yahweh, El, Adonai, the King, the Father, the Almighty – those were all names he gave himself. He was never the creator. He was an angel like ourselves – the first angel, true, the most powerful, but he was formed of Dust as we are, [...]. The first angels condensed out of Dust, and the Authority was the first of all. He told those who came after him that he had created them, but it was a lie. (*The Amber Spyglass* 33f.)

This statement not only uncovers the Authority as manipulator and fraud, but also withdraws the Church's justifiability as a religious institution. As first angel of all, "[t]he Authority has been suppressing [all who came after him] since he came into being" (*Spyglass* 221). I agree with McSporran who suggests that the reader does not see "benevolence in the God of *His Dark Materials*, [but] Pullman's cruel and despotic 'Authority'" (n.p.). The plot constructs the Authority as stereotypical self-serving, power-seeking and absolutely megalomaniac villain who uncompromisingly banishes and even brutally destroys oppositional thinking in order to maintain his power (*Spyglass* 34); this is a strategy which befits the name "Authority" and is copied by the Church. Not only does the Authority "wield absolute power over [his] subjects" (McSporran n.p.), as a god-figure, he becomes what Eagleton calls the "most efficient oppressor" (Eagleton 1991, xiii): The Authority is able to "[persuade] his underlings to love, desire and identify with his power" (ibid.), even to the point of complete self-destruction.<sup>118</sup>

The Authority dwells in the Chariot, his "kingdom" (*Spyglass* 23), a residence which is not fixed but able to move unpredictably and arbitrarily (ibid. 34); "[w]hen the Authority was young, [the Chariot] wasn't surrounded by clouds, but as time passed, he gathered them around him more and more thickly" (ibid.). The Clouded Mountain, as his residence is also called, is emblematic for the obscurity and gradual mental and moral degeneration of the Authority and represents his own prison in the end; the Authority becomes a prisoner of his own mind and of his successor.

Early on, the Authority created the world of the dead, which is in fact "a prison camp" (ibid. 35), "reminiscent of the eternal tedium of the Classical underworld" (McSporran). In representing the afterlife in this way, the plot emphasises Lyra's role as saviour and the unreliability of the Authority's and religious doctrines, especially since

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<sup>118</sup> I discuss this point further in chapter 3.3 The Use and Abuse of Religion.

an afterlife in heaven is a major point which makes people receptive to the Church's influence.

The end of the Authority is as surprising as it is telling. Instead of a formidable, masculine adversary who regards himself as God and as such as omnipresent, omnipotent, and omniscient, the Authority is a captive who displays a "terrifying decrepitude, [...] a face sunken in wrinkles, [...] trembling hands and a mumbling mouth and rheumy eyes" (*Spyglass* 416), and an inability to articulate himself other than with "cries and mumbles" (ibid. 417). The plot develops this deterioration even further: when Lyra and Will meet this angel, they perceive him as extremely old, "terrified [...] crying like a baby and cowering away into the lowest corner [of his cage]" (ibid. 431). In an act of pity and ignorance, Will tries to free him from the cage, but "[d]emented and powerless, the aged being could only weep and mumble in fear and pain and misery, and he shrank away from what seemed like yet another threat" (ibid.).<sup>119</sup>

According to Bernard Schweizer, "his tottering condition in the end further dramatizes His transformation from an object of worship to an image of loathing" (Schweizer 166). I disagree with Schweizer on this point; rather than "an image of loathing" the infantilisation, voicelessness and victimization create sympathy, which is demonstrated by Lyra's exclamation "the poor thing" (*Spyglass* 431), an emotion the reader is encouraged to share with the characters. McSporrán's view on the Authority sums up the scene eloquently: the "Authority is senile and redundant, a pathetic figure unrecognised by the young people around him, and whose death is long overdue. When it comes it is final, and apparently unlamented" (McSporrán). As the Authority experiences his own ending with "the most profound and exhausted relief" (*Spyglass* 432), the plot emphasises the natural circle of life and the consecutive abomination of attempted immortality<sup>120</sup>, and consequently acts in a bibliotherapeutical way.

In her essay "Mocking God and Celebrating Satan: Parodies and Profanities in Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials*" (2012) Oliver applies Bakhtin's theory of the carnivalesque to the degradation of God. Accordingly, the depiction of God in his absurd state "can be read as the positive 'corrective of laughter'" which stands in contrast "to the oppressive seriousness of religious dogmatism and the tyranny of an

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<sup>119</sup> While the Authority fears Will, he feels grateful towards Lyra. This display of gender-oriented behaviour hints at a stereotypical depiction of threatening masculinity in contrast to nurturing and caring femininity.

<sup>120</sup> It appears that the Authority did not initiate to prolong his life this long; I agree with Leet who states that this was due to "Metatron and those who needed him to serve as a figurehead for their own 'religious' policies" (Leet 186).

authoritarian monotheism” (Oliver 300). Oliver continues: “The demise of this old patriarchal model, in fact, represents a ‘regenerating and laughing death’ [...] which opens up new possibilities and paves the way for a more open and inclusive, but less certain order” (ibid.). This is a point of extreme importance. The representation of the destruction of the ultimate patriarch in such a positive light leads to fact that the reader can only agree with the destruction of the outdated kingdom of heaven and the creation of the republic of heaven, a new system, heralded by the female protagonist in the end.<sup>121</sup>

### Metatron

Metatron is the Authority’s Regent, chosen “four thousand years ago” (*Spyglass* 63), and the Authority “has delegated much of his power [...] to Metatron” (ibid. 35). He has replaced the Authority in ruling the kingdom (ibid. 393). His first appearance is characterized by his aggressive display of physical dominance and brutality: he is a physically “imposing” figure with a “vast, brutal, and merciless intellect” (ibid. 31f.), a figure of “malevolence” who instils fear and terror in his opponents (ibid.). The weapon he wields in this scene is a spear, reminiscent of the archangel Michael who is often depicted with a spear.<sup>122</sup> This archaic weapon further serves as a phallic symbol of dominance which also alludes to his sexualisation and his role as a sexual predator in *The Amber Spyglass*. In contrast to the Authority, Metatron has once been human, only “six generations away from Adam” (ibid. 393). He finds satisfaction in the physical display of power such as in “hand-to-hand” combat (ibid. 398), or in his long-repressed desire for women and his dominance over them (ibid. 419f.).

According to the angel Baruch, “Metatron is proud [...] and his ambition is limitless” (ibid. 63). He aims to become absolute ruler over all the worlds. To achieve his megalomaniac aim, he turns the Clouded Mountain “into an engine of war”, and pursues a zero tolerance policy as “the churches in every world are corrupt and weak, he thinks, they compromise too readily” (ibid.). A “permanent inquisition in every world” (ibid.) should serve to keep his subjects dependent and powerless, and take away their

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<sup>121</sup> Just as the female saviour heralds a new beginning, the plot also favours a female deity over the patriarchal system: “Toward the end of the trilogy, the angel Xaphania makes her appearance as an entirely benevolent, graceful, and wise deity worthy of religious reverence” (Schweizer 168). Furthermore, Pullman unravels what Stephens and McCallum call the “authority paradigm” in the relations between God and the individual and the “gender paradigm” of the Fall (qtd. in Russell 213).

<sup>122</sup> Most famously in Raphael’s *Victory of St. Michael* and Giordano’s *St. Michael*. In *Revelation* 12:7-9 Michael leads an army of angels against Satan and his forces during the war in heaven. Furthermore, *Daniel* 12:1 describes Michael as “the great prince” while Pullman calls Metatron “[t]he prince of the angels” (*Spyglass* 418). These parallels call into question what the reader thinks to know about the Church and thus further serve to diminish the trustworthiness of the religion depicted in Pullman’s work.

free will. According to Lord Asriel, this new world order “will be far, far worse” than the old one (ibid. 393).

As said previously, their associates also characterize the antagonists. This is reciprocally true for the Authority and Metatron; that both are so closely associated with each other sheds a negative light on the two of them. As Schweizer concludes: “[The Authority’s] moral integrity is called into question by his association with Metatron, the sexually repressed, brutal, and power-hungry Regent installed by God” (Schweizer 165).

Although the plot emphasises his “profound intellect” repeatedly (e.g. *Spyglass* 425), two female characters prove to be his undoing as he is “blinded by his twin obsessions: to destroy Lyra and to possess her mother” (ibid.). In his first encounter with Mrs Coulter, the plot greatly emphasises his masculinity and the power which arises from it: he is “exactly like a man in early middle age, tall, powerful, and commanding” (ibid. 418). Her uncertainty of whether he is naked or not serves as sexualisation of Metatron. His examination of Mrs Coulter bears sexual connotations, which border on rape imagery and mark him as sexual predator: “Every scrap of shelter and deceit was *stripped away*, and she stood *naked*, body and ghost and dæmon together, under the *ferocity* of Metatron’s gaze [...] his next words *pierced her flesh like darts of scented ice*” (ibid. 418f.; emphasis KK).

Although Metatron can see through her and calls her “a cess-pit of moral filth” (ibid. 419) he is sexually tempted and craves to possess her (ibid. 425), which unmask his hypocrisy. After a dramatic and elaborately described fight with Lord Asriel and Mrs Coulter, Metatron becomes the ultimate Lucifer figure: the angel who wants to be god (*Isaiah* 14:12-15; *Spyglass* 393), but literally and forever falls (*Spyglass* 427ff.).

Among other things, *His Dark Materials* critically question “God’s right to absolute rule” (McSporran). The way in which the books depict the Church, the Authority and Metatron leads to the conclusion that the reader is “certainly forced to perceive Asriel’s rebellion as justified, since the reign of Authority is so entirely oppressive and cruel” (McSporran). The Authority and his successor are the opposite of what the Church teaches; according to Schweizer, “the heroes of the story act on the belief that God is not a champion of mankind but rather its enemy, since He is opposed on principle to what is beautiful, enlightened, and pleasurable in life” (Schweizer 164).

According to Bernard Schweizer, “Philip Pullman [...] chips away at the very basis of Christian doctrine. In his fictive world, religion is mass deception; God is a grizzled, tottering liar; his prince-regent a kind of devil; and the servants of the Church as



corrupt as they are tyrannical” (ibid. 160). However, this is only partly true. Rather, the books campaign for a change in the old regime, not for the destruction of it.<sup>123</sup>

In contrast to the *Narnia* series, the reader is actively encouraged to question existing (power) structures and long-held beliefs concerning the institution of the church in his/her own world. In constructing the opposite of what the (Christian) church preaches, the books unmask unthinkable possibilities and give thought-provoking ideas to unanswerable and even sacrosanct questions. The plot urges the reader to question customary beliefs especially concerning the establishment of “the most arbitrary of boundaries” constructed in God’s name (Russell 220), and it “encourage[s] an imaginative questioning and active engagement with the texts, rather than passive consumption” (Oliver 301). As educational device, *His Dark Materials* ask the reader to look beyond long established truths and decipher and criticise the make-up of his/her society in order to build a better, more enlightened future.

#### Male Adversaries in C. P. Cast and Kristin Cast’s *House of Night* Series

As Neferet is the main adversary in this series, I only focus briefly on Kalona and the white bull, especially since Kalona later redeems himself and helps the protagonist to defeat Neferet, while the white bull appears only infrequently.

#### Kalona

Kalona appears in the fourth book and becomes a recurring character till the end of the series. Like Metatron, Kalona in the *House of Night* series is another example of the Lucifer trope, as he is literally described as “fallen angel” (*Hunted* 228), who is “cold, [and] amoral” (*Hunted* 305). His first introduction even brings the description of his character in direct comparison to Lucifer, as, likewise, “Lucifer himself was the brightest and most beautiful of the angels, but he fell” (*Untamed* 214f.).<sup>124</sup>

On several levels, Kalona is the epitome not only of masculinity, but also of traditional, destructive male dominance. He first appears off stage in Grandma Redbird’s recital of Cherokee legends, which describes him as “one particular angel, beautiful beyond compare. He had wings the color of night, and he could change form into a creature that looked like an enormous raven. At first our people welcomed him as a visiting god” (*Untamed* 214f.).<sup>125</sup> Within the Cherokee society, Kalona abuses his status,

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<sup>123</sup> I take a closer look at this point in chapter 3.3 The Use and Abuse of Religion.

<sup>124</sup> Although the plot talks about many angels who wandered the earth (*Untamed* 214) this is never picked up on. In fact, Kalona and his brother Erebus are the only ‘angels’ the reader perceives in the books.

<sup>125</sup> The shapeshifter trope never occurs again regarding Kalona.

as “[h]e used his divine power to rule our men while he defiled our women” (ibid. 215). He becomes an insatiable sexual predator, a misogynist, a rapist (ibid.),<sup>126</sup> who wants to possess women (ibid. 219f.). He consequently poses a threat to the matriarchal society described in the *House of Night*.

His imprisonment is ultimately caused by his untamed sexual desire (*Untamed* 217f). His release from his prison is heralded by death (ibid. 325), and he is reborn through blood and violence (ibid.). His appearance in the present world is connected to panic and chaos, and evokes a rather apocalyptic scenario where his children prey on humans (ibid. 332f.). Regarding his first appearance, Kalona seems to be absolutely evil, as Darius’s first impression of the fallen angel testifies: “It is an untamed thing seething with hatred [...] I felt as if evil had been reborn” (*Untamed* 336).

Especially due to his outward appearance, most of the vampires fulfil the immortal’s desire to worship him (ibid. 328). His outward appearance is more than androgynous – Zoey’s perceives his beauty with almost feminine connotations:

He was the most beautiful thing I had ever seen. His skin was smooth and completely unmarred, and was gilded with what looked like the kiss of the sun’s loving rays. His hair was as black as his wings, and fell loose and thick around his shoulders, making him look like an ancient warrior. His face—how can I ever fully describe his beautiful face? It was like a sculpture come to life, and it made even the most handsome mortal, [...]. His eyes were the color of amber, so perfect, they were almost golden. I found myself wanting to get lost in them. (*Untamed* 327)

The image of “physical perfection” is repeated several times (e.g. *Tempted* 93, *Hunted* 227). Furthermore, the over-sexualisation of his appearance, the seductiveness of his manner, and his sexual energy mark him as a counterpart to the previously discussed evil temptress. With his overpowering sexuality, this character tests the loyalty, faith (e.g. *Hunted* 5f.) and virtue of the protagonist. These tests are described in the almost sexual encounters between Zoey and Kalona (*Tempted* 96f.). Kalona penetrates Zoey’s social environment, as well as her most private sphere: Kalona is able to whisper into the mind of his victim (*Untamed* 232), as well as enter her dreams (*Hunted* 3f.). Considering Neferet, who in many aspects is Zoey’s mirror image, Kalona successfully employed these tactics to corrupt the High Priestess (*Revealed* 86f.), while Zoey’s belief in Nyx saves her from Neferet’s fate.

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<sup>126</sup> The children the raped women bear are so-called Raven Mockers who are half bird and half human (*Untamed* 215), and thus visualize his violation of morality and natural order.

The oxymoronic description Zoey gives the reader of their sensual encounters is emblematic of Kalona himself, for example, when “the kiss burned with cold heat through [her] body” (*Hunted* 307). His outer appearance acts in contrast to his inner self. From the outside, he appears to be too beautiful to be evil.<sup>127</sup> Furthermore, the oxymoronic phrases display that at his core, Kalona is torn apart, a theme which increases over the series.

All of Kalona’s characteristics create the image of the ultimate *homme fatal*. Even more so, as he can alter his physical appearance in order to cater to the (female) audience’s desire (*Hunted* 242). This not only works inside the books, but simultaneously and automatically includes the reader’s desire and preferences.

Not only his “seductive exterior” which is repeatedly emphasised (e.g. *Tempted* 96), but also his seductive behaviour mark him as *homme fatal* and contribute to the parallels between Kalona and the figure of the evil temptress. During his first period at the House of Night, he puts a spell on the vampyre students (e.g. *Hunted* 285). His beauty and his sweet-tongued strategies lead the students off the path of the Goddess Nyx (e.g. *ibid.* 360), who functions not only as a deity, but as good incarnate. In contrast to the female temptresses in the previous chapter, who are satisfied with leading the protagonist off the right path, Kalona aims at possessing Zoey – body and mind – denying and eradicating decades of female emancipation with his behaviour and claims.

The plot counteracts the female aspects of his nature with the overcompensation of masculine attributes. For example, Zoey describes his body as extremely masculine (*Hunted* 238f.), and his voice is the voice of a patriarch who commands immediate obedience (*Hunted* 227), and thus serves as an expression of male privilege, even in a matriarchal society. The weapon he uses, besides his outward appearance and mind tricks, is a spear (e.g. *Burned* 294). As with Metatron, this weapon is a phallic symbol that emphasizes his physical power and sexual dominance. A fourth attribute which stresses his masculinity is his past as Nyx’s warrior (*Tempted* 229f.); here his physical prowess and his abilities to fight a war are thus connected to stereotypical imagery of a warrior. Kalona enjoys causing physical pain, as seen in his confrontation with Darius (*Hunted* 238f.) or his murder of Heath Luck (*Tempted* 313f.); he revels in his physical superiority and the dominance this entails.

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<sup>127</sup> Here the books work rather uncritically with the physiognomy of evil characters as Zoey is convinced that someone this beautiful cannot be bad (e.g. *Hunted* 227), which the plot later proves to be true.

His goal is to bring about a “[n]ew vision of the future” (*Hunted* 235), a future which brings “the ancient ways back” (*Tempted* 96)<sup>128</sup> and enables him “to rule the world” (*Tempted* 96). This also means that he aims at taking away free will as demonstrated in the House of Night school (*Hunted* 305f.). He wants to separate the world into believers and non-believers as expressed in the biblical metaphor of “separating the wheat from the chaff” (*Tempted* 96), which further nurtures his “god-complex” (*Burned* 293). He himself feels entitled to judge upon (human) lives, which is only one example that bespeaks of his arrogance.

In book six the reader is able to perceive the motivation for his actions: revenge for his rejection by Nyx (*Tempted* 229). His rejected love for Nyx has scarred him from the inside (e.g. *Burned* 302). These invisible wounds stand in stark contrast to his perfect body, and they are the reason Kalona seeks revenge and delights in causing pain: While “[h]is terror had been caused by Nyx’s rejection” (*Awakened* 113), for him causing “[t]error could be satisfying” (ibid. 112). His pride prompts him to “once again [close] his heart to Nyx” (ibid. 113) after his failed attempt to kill Stark and leave Zoey in the Otherworld.<sup>129</sup>

After he was banished from Paradise, Kalona has “long trafficked with Darkness” (ibid. 112), and consequently stopped fighting for honour, loyalty, and love, which once was his duty (ibid. 241). This continues to the point where Kalona does not think that his actions will have any consequences (ibid. 192). He does not take into account that a change of character is as much a consequence of his actions as his being lost outside of the Otherworld and his constant longing for it (ibid.).

The turning point of his story arrives in book seven. Here, he tells his story for the first time; in becoming the focalizer of the narrative, he reveals his vulnerability and despair due to the rejection by Zoey and Nyx. This humanizes him and inevitably creates sympathy and pity (e.g. *Burned* 3). Furthermore, he is wounded by Zoey’s spiritual power, imprisoned by Darkness, and has to travel to the Otherworld, where he loses his immortality. From these low points, he is finally able to start his way to redemption with the help of the protagonist.

Kalona’s final (physical) fall is a fall into redemption. His death is stigmatized as *Heldentod*, and the character becomes a foil for human weaknesses and human

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<sup>128</sup> What “the ancient ways” means is never classified. Presumably, it alludes to a regression to a patriarchal society, and a pre-enlightened mind-set which favours the blind worship of deities as well as forms of punishing people the reader can only find in the Old Testament.

<sup>129</sup> Although he “closed his heart to Nyx” (*Awakened* 113), Kalona later builds alliances with positive characters, and even becomes part of Zoey’s group in *Destined*. This is evidence that his heart opens up again for the Light and hence for Nyx.

strengths. These two points serve to illustrate a (very Christian) message of love and forgiveness as prerequisites for salvation.

According to John Stephens' definitions of masculinity (Stephens 2002, 44), Kalona is both Old Age Man in his aggressiveness, and New Age Man. Through his emotions and his vulnerability, however, Kalona experiences a happy ending. The plot therefore favours the New Age Man as portrayal of masculinity, not the Old Age Man which Kalona displays in the beginning of his appearance in the *House of Night* series.

### The White Bull

Although the white bull has several functions within the novels, I only focus briefly on him, as he is one of the minor characters. Not unlike the description of Kalona, the main emphasis lies on his masculinity and his evilness. The white bull is part of a greater mythology:

It's more than a simple belief that there is good and that it should fight the evil in the world. It's a personification of Light and Darkness at their most elemental level, as forces that are so absorbed with themselves that one cannot exist without the other though they constantly try to consume one another. [...] One of the earliest representations of Light and Darkness was of Light being a massive black bull and Darkness being an enormous white bull. (*Burned* 83f.)

The two bulls are locked in eternal struggle, forming a ying and a yang and thus holding the balance between good and evil. The white bull is evil personified, "Darkness Incarnate" (*Awakened* 264), and thus the highest authority, to which even Neferet answers. He is in so far anthropomorphised as he reveals human qualities: He is able to speak, and appears to be highly intelligent. He replaces Kalona as the main male villain; as soon as the white bull appears, Kalona's character is described in a more positive light. The animal's very first appearance tells the story of pain and destruction:

Fully formed, the bull was a nightmare come alive. Its breath gagged Stevie Rae. Its eyes trapped her. [...] [His white coat's] brilliance was slimy, its glistening surface cold and dead. One of the beast's enormous cloven hoofs lifted and then fell, tearing the earth with such malice that Stevie Rae felt an echo of the pain of the wound within her soul. [...] She gasped in horror. The grass around the beast was broken and blackened. Where he had pawed the earth—Stevie Rae's earth—the ground was torn and bleeding. (*Burned* 112)

Not only is this first encounter emblematic of the bull's life-denying character, his interaction with Stevie Rae is framed in rape imagery:

Tendrils of sticky black threads wrapped around her legs. Wherever they touched her, they sliced her skin. Her jeans were ripped and hung on her body only in shreds. Blood seeped from her torn flesh. As he watched, another tendril snaked out of the soupy darkness surrounding them and lashed, whiplike, around her waist, instantly drawing a weeping line of blood. She moaned in pain, and her head lolled. (*Burned* 119f.)

His masculine power is undeniable and defined along sexual parameters; the mere image of a bull bespeaks of virility and dominance, which is also expressed in this rape imagery. His meetings with Neferet are highly sexualised, and allude to intercourse between the two characters: “His nose did not quite touch her delicate skin, but he inhaled her scent and then his cold breath released, surrounding Neferet, caressing her most sensitive places, awakening her most secret desires” (*Awakened* 263). Furthermore, being a “god” (*Destined* 225) in the form of a white bull, who is “mount[ed]” by the woman (*Awakened* 264) who gives “herself to Darkness, utterly and completely” (ibid. 273) is highly allusive of Zeus and the abduction of Europa which transforms the white bull into one of the greatest patriarchs in Western society.

The way how the characters perceive him serves as an indirect characterization of the person him- or herself. While Stevie Rae is terrified by his appearance, “Neferet was stuck speechless at his perfection. His coat was a luminous white. Like a magnificent pearl it glowed—coaxing, alluring, compelling” (*Awakened* 262). Like all the villains described here, the white bull aims at destroying his counterpart, and uses and abuses people to achieve this aim. As the books state: “the incarnation of Darkness could never truly be an ally. The white bull had only one objective: to destroy and consume the black bull. He would use anything or anyone to gain his objective, just as he would destroy anything or anyone who got in his way” (*Destined* 263). This is a traditional depiction of the fight between light and darkness, and as such highly reminiscent of the eternal struggle between the two forces depicted in *The Dark is Rising Sequence*.

Although the white bull appears to be the most terrifying and formidable opponent, the plot does not mention him after Neferet’s defeat. The reason for this might be that it is impossible for the protagonist to defeat this enemy, for the white bull is emblematic of evil and chaos that have to be kept at bay. He is symbolic of the monstrous, the bestial, the abstract, and thus raw and untameable evil, which revels in chaos and death, and does not allow compromise or redemption, and cannot be defeated by individuals.

## Conclusion

While the books highlight destructive femininity through the female adversaries, this subchapter reveals the display of masculinity and its development, as well as different, gender-based strategies to achieve the antagonists' respective aims. While the female opponents are characterized as *femme fatale* in one way or another, male adversaries are equally defined by gender paradigms.

The villains in this chapter represent, what R.W. Connell calls, "hegemonic masculinity" (Stephens 2002, x), a phrase which often refers to "versions of traditional, macho masculinity characterized by toughness, courage, and muscularity, but also by aggressivity, violence, misogyny, homophobia, and other qualities marked as negative" (ibid.). Hegemonic masculinity in these novels often addresses "the problem of legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees [...] the dominant position of men and the subordination of women" (ibid.). While the depiction of female adversaries refers to old, even ancient representations of the *femme fatale* and its perpetuation, male adversaries are equally realizations of outdated gender configurations, and emphasise the dissatisfaction with patriarchal society and its (often) outdated demands on men and women, and boys and girls.

Masculinity studies are still not as well developed as feminist criticism (ibid.), and most often the hero forms the centre of attention rather than the villain, which leads to a lack of attention concerning the gender stereotypes the male villains embody. This is a field worth investigating, as "children's literature is already deeply imbricated with constructions of masculinity" (ibid. 38), especially, concerning the villains who display "hegemonic masculinity's obsession with power and control" (ibid. xiii). As John Stephens declares in the preface to *Ways of Being Male. Representing Masculinities in Children's Literature*, for boys, there exists "a perceived demand to conform to the hegemonic masculinity of [the respective] society" (Stephens 2002 ix).

Traditional male features which novels for children and young adults propagate are for example dominance, assertiveness, "control, strength, [...] toughness, [...] logic, forcefulness, [...] rationality, autonomy, self-sufficiency" (Johnson qtd. in Lem and Hassel 122). Furthermore, aggressiveness is also "traditionally [associated] with the idea of masculinity" (Buchbinder qtd. in Stephens 2002, 44). Almost all opponents cover most of these features, for example, Miraz, Rishda Tarkaan, the adversaries in *The Dark is Rising Sequence*, Galbatorix, the Grandir, Voldemort, Metatron, Kalona and the white bull; though the majority of male opponents neglects logic and rationality in favour of instant gratification. Physical and mental superiority of the villain not only

enhance the David versus Goliath trope, but also serve to highlight a strong and therefore worthy opponent in the struggle between good and evil, which feeds the reader's craving for powerfulness.

Those evil characters which do not redeem themselves, such as Miraz, the Tisroc, Shift, Rishda Tarkaan, Galbatorix, Voldemort, and Metatron are emblematic of self-destruction and corruption. Others, namely Rabadash and the Authority, are infantilized and thus experience a loss of masculinity. Especially in the *Narnia* series, the physical features of the male adversaries are rather repelling than enticing, which is in contrast to the female adversaries, as the latter's physiognomy helps them to gain access to the protagonists' emotions and enables manipulation. This distinction, however, increasingly disappears: characters such as Hastings, Galbatorix, and Lord Voldemort sweeten their voices to lure their victims into their traps, while Metatron's and Kalona's (brute) sexuality forms an extremely important feature of their characters.<sup>130</sup> Not only do gender stereotypes increasingly blur, but so too do the antagonists' strategy in war. While the female adversaries use duplicitous strategies, classical male opponents used to operate directly. This depiction, however, is also changing due to new ideas of masculinity, as perceived in Metatron, Kalona, and, to a certain degree, in Lord Voldemort. In these examples, it becomes evident that "manly behaviour adapts to changing conditions of gender" (Giddens n.p.).

The number of actual (or surrogate) parent figures is higher than in the previous subchapter: while characters such as the Tisroc, Miraz, the Grandir and Kalona are actual fathers, Shift, for example takes on a surrogate father role as spiritual leader, the Authority as God fakes the ultimate father figure, and Voldemort "functions as a compensatory, monstrous father-figure" (Anatol 2003, 4). These figures represent what Joseph Campbell calls "the ogre aspect of the father" (J. Campbell 105). This "aspect of the father is a reflex of the victim's own ego" (ibid. 107) and acts as "self-generated double monster – the dragon thought to be God (superego) and the dragon thought to be Sin (repressed id)" (ibid. 110). In this psychoanalytic interpretation the father represents the material and political world the boy child has to face.<sup>131</sup> Through an initiation process, the child must be "purged of all inappropriate infantile cathexes" and becomes the father himself (ibid. 115f.). In the fantasy stories, as well as in fairy tales, the protagonist has to figuratively slay the metaphorical dragon: he has to overpower or

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<sup>130</sup> Which is to some degree also true for Michael Addison.

<sup>131</sup> According to Joseph Campbell, the father represents "the future husband" for the girl (115), which is an extremely outdated and misogynistic interpretation; rather, for both sexes, the father represents the material and political world the child has to face.



even slay the father and in order to assume the role of an adult himself – in the end, he is able to face and cope with an adult world.

In contrast to the female adversaries, however, being an actual father is not a redemptive quality. While Mrs Coulter redeems herself by saving her daughter, none of the fathers, such as the Tisroc or the Grandir do the same.<sup>132</sup> On the contrary, both villains are willing to sacrifice their sons in order to achieve their goals. Again, male aggressiveness stands in stark contrast to the female stereotype of the nurturing mother.

That the saviours must fight the father figures also alludes to a generational conflict, which has to be resolved. This is especially true for those antagonists whose life has been prolonged for too long, as is the case with Galbatorix and the Authority. In order to mature and become an independent adult, the saviours have to undergo the symbolic and actual process of “demarcation from adult figures” (Klaus, 2014, 233). The heroes and the villains represent different concepts of identities. According to Gerard Jones, “[o]ne of the functions of stories and games is to help children rehearse for what they’ll be in later life” (G. Jones 2002, 11); they are thus able to explore different behavioural pattern, which enables them to demarcate themselves from what “they know they’ll *never* be” (ibid. 11; emphasis in original).

Furthermore, this fight is as much a fight between good and evil, morality and immorality, as well as between different representations of masculinity. As Stephens states: “‘bad’ Old Age masculinity” [...] embodies “innate violence and destructiveness, fueled by self-regardingness, possessiveness, and thoughtlessness” (Stephens 2002, 50); this description reflects the male antagonists under scrutiny. In general, the characters represent binary oppositions: the (male) protagonists symbolize virtues such as modesty (Klaus 2014, 253), empathy (ibid. 255), righteousness, and tolerance while the (male) antagonists are megalomaniac (ibid. 253), indifferent (ibid. 255), immoral, and intolerant,<sup>133</sup> and sexually exploit women. This battle clearly favours specific representations of masculinity over others which consequently means that these stories “seeks to normatize gendered male behaviors that are the product of recent historical, cultural, and social factors” (Stephens 2002, 44).

The subversiveness of fantasy literature for children and young adults gives voice to the craving for power children experience in their liminal positions and leaves the young reader hopeful. According to Gerard Jones “children always develop some

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<sup>132</sup> Kalona is the only male adversary who redeems himself. However, this has a different trigger than saving his children.

<sup>133</sup> This analysis is especially true for the fights between same-sex characters, whereas the focus lies on (sexual) temptation in the fight between opposite-sex characters.

fantasy of projecting destructive power across space and knocking down a big opponent with an effortless gesture” (G. Jones 2002, 48).

## 2.3 Conclusion

Von Clausewitz famously states that “[w]ar is [...] an act of force to compel our enemy to do our will” (von Clausewitz 13). This is especially true for the evil antagonists in the fantasy novels under scrutiny, as they impose their will forcefully on others. Although the characters analysed above are individual villains, at the same time, they display universality. The antagonists “recurrently find their places within the stereotypical black and white pattern” (Kokorski 2012a, 23), which forms a distinct contrast to the protagonists who offer shades of grey. In general, the villains are constructed to embody pure evil and temptation, which the texts highlight, for example, in the characters’ extremely violent, cruel, and destructive behaviour, their selfishness, their striving for power and domination, as well as their megalomania, and their depiction as *homme* and *femme fatale*.<sup>134</sup>

The antagonists either choose to be evil or are inherently so; Lewis’s witches and Cooper’s agents of the Dark, for example, appear to be evil by nature, whereas characters such as Lord Voldemort or Galbatorix choose evil. Often, the plot depicts the antagonists as evil mirror images or evil twins of the heroes, as in the case of Harry Potter and Zoey Redbird. Here, the character constellation also emphasises the power of choice and free will. Naturally, condemning the antagonists’ characters and actions is easiest if no shades of grey exist. The adversaries “and their fights against the heroes demonstrate the central dichotomy between good and evil; [here] evil achieves a sense of absoluteness” (Kokorski 2012a, 26).

My analysis above corresponds to Nancy Veglahn’s interpretation of evil antagonists in heroic fantasy fiction: “The monsters in these heroic fantasies take many physical shapes and operate through a variety of personal styles, [...]. They may be conventional in outward appearance, but nonhuman or subhuman in mind or feeling. They threaten the protagonist with frustration at best and enslavement or destruction at worst” (Veglahn 110). In calling them ‘monsters’ Veglahn not only highlights their representation “as perversions of human personality” (ibid. 108), but also foregrounds the recurrent technique of dehumanization that the male and female antagonists experience, as well as their unnatural (striving for) immortality. The lack of redemptive character traits such as guilt and remorse, leads to the assumption that adversaries do

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<sup>134</sup> It is also astonishing that evil male and female characters alike are often associated with the image of the snake, for example the Lady of the Green Kirtle, Voldemort, and the Black Rider. This leads to the conclusion that the snake as representative of evil has become part of Western cultural memory.

not fit into and simply do not function well in society. They seem to be socially deprived as they do not care about living within the social framework that the plots describe as desirable. “In their need to dominate others, they demonstrate a social Darwinian drive” and thrive in the maxim might makes right (Kokorski 2012a, 26).

According to Jadis “that what would be wrong for you or for any of the common people is not wrong in a great Queen such as I. The weight of the world is on our shoulders. We must be freed from all rules. Ours is a high and lonely destiny” (*Nephew* 61). This sanctification of a higher social status and a higher goal corresponds to the other villains’ self-perception as well, and establishes a moral double-standard; while they use for example a coup d’état to gain power, they fear that others will do the same. This is why they secure their often illegitimate status through brutally subjugating their subjects,<sup>135</sup> as Miraz or the White Witch do. Their behaviour is emblematic for the principle that power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely.

Among other things, their cruel actions and evil nature cause social isolation: “The male monsters are portrayed [...] as profoundly alone, separated by their own natures from all others, driven by malevolent wills toward destinies that have no room for intimacy” (Veglahn 112). Although Veglahn only refers to male monsters, this is also true for the female antagonists; after all, the emotions they display that would allow intimacy are fake. Moral integrity, sympathy, empathy, a sense of justice, pity or love are emotions the evil antagonists’ character make-up does not allow, which leaves them in a solitary state.

“When the male monsters lead hosts of evil creatures against the forces of good, these others are shown as servants rather than comrades or family members” (Veglahn 112). This is true for both male and female adversaries. The hierarchy among the evil forces is fluid and based on violence and fear; this appears to be the easiest and most natural way to determine the strongest person in the group – the *Leitwolf* of the pack. The rest of the group acts as enablers and follow the  $\alpha$ -male because of greed and fear; the villains simply ‘do not play well with others’. Although Veglahn depicts only the female antagonists as “governed by emotion rather than logic or fairness” (ibid. 113), this is also true for male antagonists, such as Galbatorix or Voldemort who lose their temper frequently and punish ally and opponent alike. Therefore, male antagonists can no longer be characterized by “cold rationality” as Veglahn proclaims (ibid. 114). While the heroes successfully unite people to fight willingly and thus establish a whole different and lasting power base, “[t]hose who rule by fear alone are left with no

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<sup>135</sup> I elaborate on this point in chapter 3.1 Wrongful Authority.

resources when they lose their ability to invoke fear” (Barratt 23). In this respect, adversaries function as tools to display the heroes’ development and their moral superiority.

By using violence, the evil antagonists aim at improving and maintaining their status, authority, and power. Violent behaviour leaves them in control of the situations, brings (instant) satisfaction, and thus fulfils its purpose. They create an atmosphere of fear and destruction; they do not care if they abuse their power to achieve their aims as the aims are more important than any consequences. This unscrupulousness, which is based on the maxim that the end justifies the means, marks them as Machiavellian villains. The adversaries try to form the world forcefully according to their ideas – no matter if it corresponds to reality or not. Often, their actions and drives cannot be explained rationally. Rather, the villains aim to satisfy their striving for power and domination, and in some cases even their sadistic desires (Kokorski 2010, 199). In contrast to the saviours, the antagonists “are corrupt[ed] and blinded by their greed” (ibid.). “All in all, the villains [under scrutiny] are extremely strong and ruthless adversaries who need powerful heroes to defeat them and consequently save the world(s) and reinforce [the reader’s] sense of justice” (Kokorski 2012a, 26). As the books serve as tools for socialization, the plots privilege communal values over egotism, which leads to the conclusion that the antagonists are doomed to fail.

Heroes and villains in the books under scrutiny operate under different circumstances: both parties wage war and use violence to achieve their aims. The reader’s perception of the respective methods, however, differs greatly: while the antagonists’ use of violence is bad, the protagonists’ use is good. The main reason for this can be found in the justifications of war, as my analyses below reveal. I agree with Gerard Jones explanation of this discrepancy: “Every society has condemned violence that threatened order. Many have cherished ideals of a lost age or a coming salvation marked by absolute peace. But even those accepted violence as inevitable in this world and celebrated it unquestioningly when it served the group” (G. Jones, 2002, 130).

Concerning the difference between male and female antagonists, Nancy Veglahn states the following: “This struggle for dominance is clear in fantasy literature. The urge to dominate, to bend the other to one’s will, is the one trait that the male and female monsters in these books share. Only the methods of achieving dominance differ” (Veglahn 116). Although Veglahn’s extreme genderfication is at times outdated, it is still valid in some instances. In the *Narnia* series it appears that the male adversaries’ reign encompasses several ways of life, such as the political infrastructure, as seen in

King Miraz and the Tisroc, social system, for example regarding social classes, education, and military service as seen in *Caspian, Horse and Battle*, and even religion, as seen in *Horse and Battle*. The female rulers' influence encompasses the land, but the infrastructure appears to be not as well developed and therefore the influence is not that far reaching.

Furthermore, the violation of gender roles is much more pronounced in the female adversaries. The female antagonists represent sexual and emotional predators rather than mothers. As a consequence, their characters and especially their sexuality are depicted as monstrous, other and abjection; the threat of female sexuality apparently has to be (socially) regulated by destroying it within the stories as well as by teaching the reader to distinguish between a 'right' and 'wrong' sexuality. There is only one biological mother among them, and motherhood proves to be her redemptive quality. The contrary is true for the male adversaries. A high percentage is rather obviously depicted as a surrogate or biological father figure.<sup>136</sup> This might be an indication that children's literature locates the home and children's emotional dependency in the 'feminine sphere', and aims to shield children from facing and coping with evil biological mothers in the books.

John Stephens correctly characterizes the depiction of positive and negative masculinities as "attempted social intervention by privileging variants of a 'sensitive male' schema (or postfeminist masculinity) and pejorating the hegemonic masculinity associate with patriarchy and against which preferred masculinities are depicted" (2002, xi). In accordance with Stephens' findings, my analysis also shows that the books under scrutiny "invite readers to inhabit [...] structures and treat them as models for understanding behavior in the actual world and as exemplifying desirable or undesirable behaviors" (ibid. xii). The same is true for the depiction of femininity. It is only an "illusion that the favoured schema emerges naturally from within a higher ethical perspective" (ibid.); here, literature remains an artificial construct which serves as an "instrument of socialization and acculturation" (Tatar xxvii). The emphasis on the antagonists foregrounds that "[g]ender relations are a major component of social structure as a whole, and gender politics are among the main determinants of your collectives fates" (Connell qtd. in Stephens 2002, x).

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<sup>136</sup> There is an almost balanced number of primary female and male opponents. Nevertheless, there are more male villains, especially taking into account minor, but still notable, adversaries whom I have not analysed in greater depth (*DiR*: Painter; *HDM*: agents of the Church; *HP*: Professor Quirrell, Wormtail, Barty Crouch Jr, Draco and Lucius Malfoy, Fenrir Greyback; *Eragon*: Murtagh).

The similarities displayed by the texts under scrutiny in their construction of the evil antagonists not only encourage a psychoanalytical interpretation of the individual figures, as fantasy “readily invites symbolic readings”. (Grenby qtd. in Klaus 2014, 279), but it also foregrounds an intertextual reading of the stories. Leonard Orr contends that “[n]o literary text is written in a vacuum” (Orr qtd. in Cairney 480). Julia Kristeva takes up Michail Bakhtin’s theory of dialogism and reformulates it in order to articulate her concept of intertextuality: “any text is a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another” (Kristeva qtd. in Wilkie-Stibbs 169).

As reader in a Western society, the child reader grows up under a literary heritage which includes the books mentioned above and countless others. J. R. R. Tolkien talks about a “cauldron of stories”, which writers consciously or unconsciously employ as source of inspiration to create new narratives (Tolkien qtd. in Cairney 478). J. T. Jones correctly states that “[a]ll types of intertextuality rely on the recognition of the relationship between what David Cowart calls the ‘host’ and the ‘guest’ texts. In all cases, the writer depends on the reader to remember and recognize the host text” (J. T. Jones 2002, 81).<sup>137</sup>

Jones’ quotation alludes to two different things. Firstly, that the reader “will have stored in his/her memory the necessary” work of literature (ibid.). For young readers, however, this is rather problematic as there exists what Wilkie-Stibbs calls an “asymmetric” relationship between the adult writer and child reader (Wilkie-Stibbs 169) – the author is significantly better versed in host texts. Secondly, as “the theory of intertextuality is dynamic and dialogic, located in theories of writing, reader-response theory, the social production of meaning, and intersubjectivity” (Wilkie-Stibbs 170) the child reader him- or herself actively contributes to the meaning-making process of the books.

The texts push the reader into an active role in order to entangle (what Barthes calls) “the web, the weave, the garment (text) woven from the threads of the ‘already written’ and the ‘already read’” (Barthes qtd. in Latham 214). Surely, reading such a heavily intertextual and metafictional text is not without its downside: Some readers might feel frustrated and annoyed as they do not understand all the allusions the texts

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<sup>137</sup> Wilkie-Stibbs differentiates between three categories of intertextuality: “(1) texts of quotations which quote or allude to other literary or non-literary works; (2) texts of imitations which seek to parody, pastiche, paraphrase, ‘translate’ or supplant the original, which seek to liberate their readers from an over-invested admiration [...]; and (3) genre texts where identifiable shared clusters of codes and literary conventions are grouped together in recognisable patterns which allow readers to expect and locate them” (170). Anne Klaus uses Pfister and Broich’s differentiation between marked and unmarked intertextuality: “If a recipient recognizes the links to a pretext due to explicit signals [...] they speak of ‘marked’ intertextuality, other incidences are labelled ‘unmarked’ intertextuality” (Klaus 2014, 7).

make. Those, however, who do not recognize the host works, but are still eager to read the books can, according to Don Latham “gloss over these quotations [...] without losing the thread of the narrative” (Latham 225).

The reasons for writing such a text are manifold. In doing so, the authors acknowledge and celebrate their literary predecessors and place their texts in the same literary tradition (Still and Worton 13). Furthermore, recognising the allusions creates a tremendously richer reading-experience and might encourage the reader to “seek out similar texts” (Wilkie-Stibbs 170). Thirdly, by privileging certain gender-based traits in their characters, the authors comment on and perpetuate gender stereotypes.



### 3. Justifications of War

Acts of war are often connected to a wide range of violent engagements and territorial acquisitions. These actions often cause a high number of casualties, and human history is saturated with the blood of these violent conflicts. Thus, it is not surprising that war and its justifications repeatedly find their way into fantastic literature for children and young adults.

History shows us that the reasons for war are many. Von Clausewitz states that “war is not merely an act of policy but a true political instrument, a continuation of political intercourse, carried on with other means” (von Clausewitz 28). Politicians all over the world have provided and are still providing people with different examples for this topic. During the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, former Prime Minister William Ewart Gladstone expressed the idea that “war needed to be justified by reference to a common interest of mankind over and above the maintenance of the security of the state, or the maintenance of a stable balance of power” (qtd. in Dillon 5). War supporters justify war as a pre-emptive strike, as counter strike, as part of an alliance treaty with another nation,<sup>138</sup> to save the population of a country or the whole world from a tyrant. In today’s modern society, war is widely accepted as an “instrument of state policy” (Dillon 3).

My analysis in the following chapters rests on three main pillars: state authority, ideological thoughts and functions in social life explained by the construction of difference, and last but not least religion as component of social life. All three aspects are part of the ideological state apparatus,<sup>139</sup> which is “located in religious, legal, and cultural structures, in the mass media and the family, and especially in the educational system” (Freeden 25). As the books under scrutiny are tools of socialization, they are educational as well, and the reader should feel encouraged to pay special attention to the conclusions the books draw on these issues. Furthermore, these topics are deeply connected to the justifications of war and rooted in the history of Western society. Although these themes are defamiliarized through the inclusion of the fantasy genre, they still have real-life applicability. No author lives in a vacuum; especially the *Harry Potter* series and *His Dark Materials* consciously employ war justifications which

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<sup>138</sup> World War I may serve as an illustration for the declaration of war due to alliance treaties: One reason why World War I developed into an international conflict of such an immense size is the political allegiances of the European states. World War I was the first war which brought a global dimension to warfare.

<sup>139</sup> Although political authority also belongs to the repressive state apparatus.

allude to historical incidents, though defamiliarized, of the reader's world. Having this prerequisite of defamiliarization in mind, I reinforce my arguments about the ideological structures of the justifications of war with sociological and political theories, including for example Machiavelli and Hobbes, as well as just war theory. The underlying ideological structures form the foundation of my analyses.

To define the term 'ideology', Terry Eagleton quotes John B. Thompson: "To study ideology [...] is to study the ways in which meaning (or significance) serves to sustain relations of domination" (Eagleton 1991, 5). This quotation is very relevant to the works of fantasy fiction for children and young adults. The *Harry Potter* series, the *House of Night* novels, and *His Dark Materials* are only a few of the books which support this quote with numerous examples. In all these works, the meaning Thompson refers to that "serves to sustain relations of domination", and the definition of certain social constructions which pertain to this meaning, are either used to maintain the status quo or to radically change society.

What becomes obvious in my analysis is that there are two types of viewpoints: the right one and the wrong one. The villains and their worldviews are constructions that express negative ideological viewpoints on specific topics, which the reader is encouraged to reject. These are juxtaposed with the saviours' opinions that emphasise the underlying ideological messages of the books, which promote the 'right' worldview, and the 'right consciousness'.<sup>140</sup>

In his book *Ideology. An Introduction*, Terry Eagleton provides the reader with a range of different definitions of the term ideology.<sup>141</sup> I use some of these narrow and interconnected definitions of the term that subsume significant macrocosmic power structures and mind frames in the societies presented in the books under scrutiny. For example, ideology is described "the process of production of meanings, signs and values in social life" (Eagleton 1991, 1), "a body of ideas characteristic of a particular social group" (ibid.), "ideas which help to legitimate a dominant political power" (ibid.), and "action-oriented sets of belief" (ibid. 2). All these definitions find their representations in the books.

In the following, I examine the ideological frameworks that serve as legitimization of (dominant) power structures; these power structures are grounded in the

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<sup>140</sup> This is an allusion to the Marxist notion of a 'false consciousness' which is dismissed as being "out of fashion" (Eagleton 1991, 10). The prerequisite is that the reader can employ a system of right and wrong consciousness regarding his or her own world view.

<sup>141</sup> Terry Eagleton is a literary scholar and critic. In *Ideology. An Introduction* Eagleton provides a multitude of definitions concerning ideology and traces its meaning through different schools of thoughts, e.g. regarding Marx, Gramsci, Althusser, Freud, and Foucault.

representation and legitimization of specific “ideas, beliefs and values in social life” (Eagleton 1991, 28). The concept of ideology is extremely important for the justification of war, as it is closely connected to questions of power: ideologies are used to establish and confirm belief systems and the seizure for power by social groups or classes (ibid. 5). Additionally, in all cases, the antagonists’ greed for power ultimately functions as an underlying reason for war.

The following subchapters reveal how the aggressors consciously employ the ideological doctrines presented in the books to legitimize, stabilize, maintain, and even strengthen their regimes. It becomes evident in these chapters that the strategy which the aggressors use to fulfil this aim corresponds with what Eagleton describes as six strategies to legitimate power:

A dominant power may legitimate itself by *promoting* beliefs and values congenial to it; *naturalizing* and *universalizing* such beliefs so as to render them self-evident and apparently inevitable; *denigrating* ideas which might challenge it; *excluding* rival forms of thought, perhaps by some unspoken but systematic logic; and *obscuring* social reality in ways convenient to itself. (ibid. 5f.; emphasis in original)

Although some ideological analysts claim that, today, “there is no coherent dominant ideology” (ibid. 41), this is not valid for the books under scrutiny: the plot clearly emphasise powerful ideological structures when talking about (political) power. The central aspect of this part is that “[t]he term ideology [...] seem[s] to make reference not only to belief systems, but to questions of power” (ibid. 5). Eagleton’s definitions and insights are valuable for my analysis, as the ideologies displayed in the books are likewise constructed and are hence also applicable to the reader’s world.

In fantastic literature for children and young adults, the villains set in motion acts that lead to war and conceal their desire for complete domination behind ideological justifications. These justifications comprise a variety of arguments, including matters of state, race, and religion; economic interests, however, almost never play a significant role regarding the reasons for war.<sup>142</sup> Furthermore, these conflicts often demonstrate repressive power structures, which the young heroes experience. The protagonists in these books are mostly minors who have to submit to legal authorities such as parents or the state. Due to this status, they belong to the most vulnerable and powerless subjects in society.

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<sup>142</sup> Shift (*The Last Battle*) is the only one who privileges material gain over power.

In the following subchapters, I demonstrate how the villains and heroes employ different ideological structures as justifications for war. All the examples in these chapters reveal that there are coherent, dominant ideological systems at work. The fantastic books for children and young adults show clear cut distinctions between what is good and benefits the community, and what is bad and harms society and its members. Accordingly, the books display didactic messages that might educate their readership. I begin with the category of the wrongful authority. My focus first and foremost is on the political leaders of the state or community, as well as organisations functioning as government. Both forms of authority indoctrinate their subjects with ideological notions. Taking a closer look at political ideology facilitates an overall view of the social world the citizens live in. According to Freeden, the benefit of such a study is that it “focuses on the world of ideas and symbols through which political actors find their way and comprehend their social surroundings. It informs their practices and institutions and it establishes the parameters of their moral prescriptions and expectations” (Freeden 123). As my analysis shows, this holds true for the non-fictional and fantastic world alike.

The next subchapter, which concerns itself with justifications of war, focuses on the construction of difference. Fantasy fiction for children and young adults in particular creates scenarios in which the equality or inequality of different races is in the centre of attention. The regimes establish different judgement criteria when considering the worthiness of life along the categorization of race. In the context of this subchapter, I also talk about different allusions to the hierarchical structures which still pertain to the reader’s society, and thus point to the applicability of the books to the reader’s world.

The following subchapter describes the alliance between religion and ideology within the texts. The examples in this subchapter demonstrate the misuse of religious doctrines by (human) agents and the consequential manipulative power that religious beliefs might entail. For such doctrines to work, be it on a religious, social, or some other level, there has to be “something in it” that appeals to an audience (Eagleton 1991, 12), such as the idea of racial superiority or religious zeal. For those who long to believe in these aspects, they have a ring of truth to them. Taking a closer look at the *Harry Potter* books concerning the aspect of racial superiority, the reader can understand why some wizards feel superior to Muggles<sup>143</sup>: Wizards have magic, and Muggles do not. Equally important, in *His Dark Materials*, there are religious followers who are eager to die for God’s cause, to become a martyr (*Knife* 132). These two instances reveal that

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<sup>143</sup> Muggles are humans with no magical powers or heritage (cp. *Chamber of Secrets*10).

some people readily follow religious doctrines, or doctrines of segregation, as it speaks to their inner wishes and needs.

In chapter 3.4 I take a closer look at just war theory. The Roman doctrine of *jus ad bellum* is the centre piece of this analysis. *Jus ad bellum* comprises criteria which justify the engagement in war, and consequently mark this intervention as a just cause. While the previous chapters analyse the trigger points which justify war in the books, this subchapter subsumes the findings of the previous chapters under just war theory. Just war theory helps me to discuss the justifications of war in a meaningful and profound way, because “the Just War tradition offers a framework that diverse communities use to debate the legitimacy of wars” (Bellamy 229). Most importantly, the justifications for war portrayed in the books transcend the individual work and can be found in other works of fictions and in the reader’s reality. It becomes clear that the protagonists’ engagement in war is inevitable because it falls under the rule of necessity to protect what the reader might perceive as natural rights and values.

The protagonists find themselves in a state of supreme emergency: the war being fought by the individual hero or heroine poses an ultimate and imminent threat where critical values are at stake; defeat would mean disaster for the (human) race, especially regarding freedom, equality and “everything good” (*Spyglass* 511). In these scenarios it becomes clear that following one’s moral convictions is much more important than following the law, especially if the law is written and executed by the villains.

“All animals are equal but some animals are more equal than others.” (Orwell 97). This sentence sums up the inequalities created by class, race, and religious affinity in the books mentioned, as well as the power structures social leaders in the books aim to establish and/or maintain. The notion of first and second class (human) beings irrevocably becomes the centre of attention in most of the books and even finds its correlation in the reader’s past and present world. My analysis reveals that the books are extremely critical of those ideologies of which the antagonists are emblematic.

The ideological structures presented in the following chapters have a great influence on the social life of the protagonists and their respective societies, and are thus worthy of further examination. Furthermore, the social life and values portrayed in the books are active shapers of human identity. These aspects also contribute to the importance of the books: they create awareness for these structures, uncover specific ideological doctrines, and work against them. The wars in the books are not only wars on a literal and on a metaphorical level; most of all, they are wars of ideologies.

### 3.1 Wrongful Authority

Fantastic literature for children and young adults not only presents a (more or less) fixed set of characters to the reader, but it also offers a glimpse at diverse political modes, such as democratic or monarchical societal models. These political concepts serve as backdrop to the antagonists' ascension to power, as well as enabler for the villains to use and abuse the respective political system to achieve their aims. Often the antagonists become head of state, which allows them to mistreat and even terrorize their subjects, and form a threat against what the protagonists fight for: a peaceful and stable society. It is the protagonists' tasks to save their countries or even worlds. Analysing the different forms of state authority is not only relevant because the antagonists are political actors and form institutions through which political and administrative supremacy and control are exercised. It is also relevant because "the sovereign, whether it be 'this Man, or ... this Assembly of Men,' is conceived of as a centralized, unitary authority, and is seen as the single most important power operating in a society" (Hindess 39). Therefore, fighting against adults in power, and even the state, is one of the most challenging tasks for the child and teenage heroes, as the young saviours "oppose a double threat: not only do they have to fight against adult power, but also against legal authority" (Kokorski 2012c, 141). This analysis has its own merit as "good and bad government profoundly affect the quality of human lives" (Miller 2003, 2), not only in the fantasy works discussed in this thesis, but also in real life.<sup>144</sup>

To maintain a peaceful, prosperous, and secure society the "most important activity of government" according to Locke is "– at least with regard to the internal affairs of the community – [...] the making and enforcing of rules" (Hindess 57).<sup>145</sup> In the books under scrutiny, the attentive reader is able to perceive two forms of authority responsible for this; on the one hand, the reader finds individual monarchs who rule in rather archaic settings. On the other hand, the reader finds institutions in the books which are reminiscent of the contemporary political environment of the (Western) reader.

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<sup>144</sup> Most recent years have seen an immense increase in Young Adult dystopian fiction which scrutinizes political systems; among the most popular book series are *The Hunger Games* trilogy by Suzanne Collins, the *Divergent* trilogy by Veronica Roth, *The Bar Code* trilogy by Suzanne Weyn, and the *Matched* trilogy by Allyson Braithwaite Condie.

<sup>145</sup> According to Thomas Hobbes, the reason institutions of a single individual or multiple individuals have been established is to facilitate "the preservation of peace and security" (Hindess 37) and to keep at bay the fear of living in the state of nature, which is a dog-eat-dog society (ibid.).

The authorities in the books are despotic in nature. The more interesting it is to see Kenneth Minogue's comment about such political power, as it reveals how much the books resonate the culture they come from:

Many in recent centuries have dreamed of using the irresistible power only found in despotism for removing the evident imperfections of our world. [...] Since politics is in part a theatre of illusion, new names and concepts are easy to invent, and in the twentieth century totalitarian versions of the dream of despotism constructed a vast political laboratory in which different versions of the project of creating a perfect society were put to the test. That they failed is currently recognized by all; it is less widely recognized that such immense convulsions must correspond to profound tendencies in our civilization. (Minogue 4)

Minogue talks about three important issues in the quotation above which are useful for my analysis: firstly, that such a concept of state is infused with "irresistible power"; secondly, that such concepts are constantly reborn and recycled; and thirdly that such concepts are doomed to fail. All three aspects are part of my interpretation below. I analyse the use and abuse of power and authority, as well as the methods and structures within the institutions, as far as the books reveal. I scrutinize how the institutions are organized and how they are consequently doomed to fail, especially since they do not cater to Western ideals of democracy and equality.

In their essay "On Greed" Long Wang and Keith Murnighan point to Machiavelli's thoughts that "human nature is driven by an innate and insatiable lust for power" (Wang and Murnighan 16). This is complementary to Thomas Hobbes's view; Hobbes's theory about the creation of societies and the endeavour to live together in peace informs my analysis of the villains, as the antagonists reflect the Hobbesian state of nature.<sup>146</sup> The villains become personifications of Hobbes's theory, which describes humanity at its worst, with all its self-destructive potential, and shows what human beings are capable of. To escape the state of nature, Hobbes's theory explains that: "Human beings [...] must form a civil association by authorizing some superior power to rule them by law – an outcome Hobbes thought would most commonly come about

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<sup>146</sup> Predating society, Hobbes's state of nature contains constant war: "There Is Always Warre Of Every One Against Every One Hereby it is manifest, that during the time men live without a common Power to keep them all in awe, they are in that condition which is called Warre; and such a warre, as is of every man, against every man". (Hobbes n.p.)

through conquest. Human beings were impelled to take this course of action by their vulnerability” (Minogue 54).<sup>147</sup>

In theory, institutions of one or multiple individuals therefore have a clear purpose regarding the preservation of a peaceful society, which plays an important role in this analysis. In their introduction to *Evil, Law & the State. Issues in State Power and Power*, Gozaydin and Madeira go one step further and provocatively state that “the State as an institution seems uniquely formulated to obtain as much power as possible, so that it may crush all those who may challenge its sovereignty” (Gozaydin and Madeira 1). The individual ruler as well as the state in the books under scrutiny do exactly this, they attempt “to crush” the individuals who challenge their legitimacy.

Legitimacy becomes the anchor point of this chapter. According to historian and *Harry Potter* scholar Bethany Barratt, sovereignty and legitimacy are based, among others, on the following markers: “sheer power, [...] [and] the will of the people” (Barratt 5). These markers are substantial regarding the institutions under scrutiny; especially since state power is used as “instrument of domination” (Hindess 2), and “the will of the people” is supposed to serve as a binding contract between the people and the ruling organization (ibid. 40f.).

The analysis below scrutinizes state authority in the respective books, as well as its acts of subjugation and violence against its own subjects/citizens.<sup>148</sup> The books frequently portray oppressive violence as a political tool, and the use and abuse of this tool by the political power.<sup>149</sup> Tyrannical rulers, be it in forms of a single sovereign or of a government, prescribe to the idea that might makes right. The wars in the books therefore centre on questions of power, legitimacy, and morality, as well as a clash between different sets of ideology. The books reveal what is perceived as the wrong way to govern a people; though they do not end with a satisfying answer to the question of what the definitive way is to govern a people. Nevertheless, the books lead the reader to believe that a specific system, namely the Western system, is inherently right and reveals that Western political (liberal) history and ideology are deeply imprinted into our culture.

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<sup>147</sup> The books discussed below all show how conquest is the main reason why the kings and queens under scrutiny come to rule.

<sup>148</sup> Analogous to Rousseau, I employ the term “*citizens*, as participating in the sovereign power, and *subjects*, as subjected to the laws of the” sovereign (Rousseau 16; emphasis in original). Thus, the reader will find subjects in monarchy, and citizens in democracy.

<sup>149</sup> Often, the use of violence against its subject/citizens is not prohibited in the books by law verbatim, but it becomes clear that the rulers violate human rights as such.



My examination below is informed by ideas about sovereignty and the state proposed by political philosophers such as Niccolò Machiavelli, Thomas Hobbes, and John Locke. Among other works, an important reference guide to shed light on these theories is Barry Hindess's *Discourses of Power. From Hobbes to Foucault* (2001).

### Individual Rulers

According to Foucault, political theory is “obsessed with the person of the sovereign” (Foucault in Hindess 21). Kenneth Minogue further explains that “[a] king is in some sense just one human being among others. Civil order in a monarchy requires that we *dramatize* what it is to be a king, and this is the point of crowns, thrones, sceptres, guards of honour, regalia, and other symbols” (Minogue 79; emphasis in original). Both statements are especially true for the works of children’s literature and young adult fiction under scrutiny. In the cases stated here, the individual sovereign is held responsible for the deplorable circumstances in which the protagonists find themselves. Although all antagonists strive to rule their world(s), the main focus of this chapter lies on those villains who usurp the royal throne and thus disturb what might be perceived as the natural order of the respective world. The following characters serve as examples to illustrate my points: the White Witch, Jadis, King Miraz, and Shift from the *Narnia* series, as well as Galbatorix from the *Inheritance Cycle*. I analyse their ascension to power, how they govern their people, and the abuse of power that takes place in the books and ultimately marks them as bad rulers.

In Narnia and Alagaësia, the reader finds a medieval setting where the idea of absolute monarchy is still not only prominent, but also almost exclusively the solution to questions of government. In all these books, the villains have usurped state power and have built themselves empires in which they put their private interest over the public interest; they mark themselves as ruthless monarchs who reign over their citizens with an iron fist. As Rousseau fittingly claims, “[s]uch a man had he enslaved half the world, is never anything but an individual; his interest, separated from that of the rest, is never anything but a private interest” (Rousseau 13).

The books reveal that even absolute monarchs cannot rule arbitrarily; on the contrary: the plots signal that they are servants to their people, and as such they are responsible for their actions and need to be brought to justice if they are not fulfilling their duties. The state is not depicted as a one-way street where the subject’s obligation is to obey and the ruler’s right is to command. Following Locke’s thoughts,

rulers [...] would have a right to command only where their exercise of power and the commands which they issued deserved obedience. If rulers themselves threatened civil peace and order, their subjects would have every right to judge the degree and immediacy of the threat and, if it seemed sufficiently serious, to resist it as best they could. (Dunn 42)

Due to their unjustified rise to power and their performances as rulers, their empires are highly vulnerable and awaiting a new and better sovereign. Thus, the books strongly emphasize the contrast between rightful and wrongful rulers, as well as the moral obligation of the ruler, and the right to rebellion.

#### Ascension to the Throne

Except for Shift, all the characters ascend to the throne off-stage, prior to the plot; this often plays out as a coup d'état and signifies the disturbance of the natural order. The White Witch is already Queen when the Pevensie children arrive in Narnia in *Wardrobe*; as mentioned previously, the White Witch is the “Queen of Narnia and Empress of the Lone Islands” (*Wardrobe* 148). Right from the start, it becomes evident that the White Witch is a monarch who has usurped her position in order to satisfy her “lust for power” (Hilder 24). As the reader later learns, her claim to the throne is based on a lie. Her vulnerable status is why she feels so easily threatened. Only “*When Adam’s flesh and Adam’s bone / Sits at Cair Paravel in throne*” will there be peace in Narnia (*Wardrobe* 88, emphasis in original). The Witch pretends to be human, to allegedly fulfil the prophecy and justify her reign with the blessing of divine power. Mr Beaver, however, contradicts her claim as: “she’s no Daughter of Eve. She comes of your father Adam’s [...] first wife, her they called Lilith. And she was one of the Jinn. That’s what she comes from on one side. And on the other she comes of the giants. No, no, there isn’t a drop of real Human blood in the Witch” (ibid.).

Similarly, Jadis is already Queen of Charn in *Nephew*. She has obtained this position because she has killed her sister, the rightful Queen of Charn while waging war (*Nephew* 59). Jadis desperately wanted to satisfy her longing for power and has used ancient and forbidden knowledge to win the war: she has spoken the “Deplorable Word,” “a word which, if spoken with the proper ceremonies, would destroy all living things except the one who spoke it” (*Nephew* 60). Albeit aware of the consequences of the Deplorable Word, she readily sacrificed her people and her whole world to gain the throne. To her, all previous monarchs were “weak and soft-hearted” (ibid.) because they did not seek the knowledge which would destroy the

world, but tried to secure a future for their subjects and the rulers to come. Jadis's appearance in Narnia, as well as her ascension to the throne, equals the loss of innocence of Narnia.<sup>150</sup> By the time the White Witch is in complete control, there is no longer a pastoral idyll of the magical world the reader is introduced to in *Nephew*. Due to the transformation caused by the White Witch, the land has changed from fertile to dead.

Not unlike Jadis / the White Witch, Miraz in *Prince Caspian* has usurped his position: he committed fratricide in order to become king.<sup>151</sup> He cleverly eases his way to the throne through strategic acquisition of power: after the king's death, he calls himself "Lord Protector" (*Caspian* 56); after the death of the queen, he removes supporters of the old regime to install himself on the throne, and surrounds himself by flatterers (*ibid.*). In committing fratricide, Miraz has performed a sacrilegious act and apparently upset the natural order. Hence, his position as king is unstable and vulnerable, which is why he aims to eliminate Caspian who poses an immense threat to Miraz's claim to the throne.<sup>152</sup>

Shift cunningly seizes the opportunity to become the ruler of Narnia. He lives on the margins of society and is under the impression that he has been wronged with his low social position. When he dresses up Puzzle with a lion-skin he finds, he creates a fake Aslan, which he uses as a "[tool] of deception" (Hardy 60). Furthermore, he masks his true intention with the claim that "[w]e would set everything right in Narnia" (*Battle* 15). He uses the notion of the greater good to hide his oral greed for oranges and bananas (*ibid.*), which mirrors his greed for power and control. He prophesies a cunning scenario to claim power in Narnia: "Everyone would do whatever you told them. [...] You'd have me to advise you, you know. I'd think of sensible orders for you to give. And everyone would have to obey us, even the King himself" (*ibid.*). Manlove describes Shift in an unvarnished way as "a nasty Ape with a dirty scheme"; this combination only enhances "the pettiness and absurdity" of the events in Narnia (Manlove 181).

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<sup>150</sup> The scene in the replica of the Garden Eden proves this point.

<sup>151</sup> Miraz's strategy of eliminating potential threats might remind some readers of one of the greatest villains in literary history: Richard III. In Shakespeare's play *Richard III*, Richard also kills his siblings and their children to secure his royal power. This close connection might not be a coincidence; among other things Lewis was an expert on was Renaissance literature; the following two books he wrote are examples of his expertise: *The Discarded Image: an Introduction to Medieval and Renaissance Literature* (1964), and *English Literature and the Sixteenth Century* (1954) (Manlove 235).

<sup>152</sup> To wipe out the family line of the true king is a tactic to secure power, which for example Machiavelli addresses in *The Prince* (Machiavelli 9).

The actual ascension to the throne happens off-stage. The next time the reader encounters Shift is in the chapter with the very indicative title: “The Ape in Its Glory.” Here, Shift has transformed himself into a hideous copy of a human king, which heightens the contrast to the real King of Narnia:

he looked ten times uglier than when he lived by Caldron Pool, for he was now dressed up. He was wearing a scarlet jacket which did not fit him very well, having been made for a dwarf. He had jewelled slippers on his hind paws which would not stay on properly because, as you know, the hind paws of an Ape are really like hands. He wore what seemed to be a paper crown on his head. There was a great pile of nuts beside him and he kept cracking nuts with his jaws and spitting out the shells. And he also kept on pulling up the scarlet jacket to scratch himself. (*Battle* 30)

Shift’s appearance is a caricature and might remind the reader of a court jester, but not of a true king. Neither his outfit, nor his demeanour fit a king and thus reveal him as imposter to the reader. He claims to be “Lord Shift, mouthpiece of Aslan” (*ibid.*), and thus wields authority as Narnia’s spiritual leader and dethrones the actual King of Narnia.

Analogous to the White Witch, Jadis, and Miraz, Galbatorix is already King when the plot starts. In the beginning of the first book, Brom tells the story of the talented and strong Dragon Rider Galbatorix, and how he tragically loses his dragon, descends into madness, and kills the Dragon Riders, rulers of the realm, with the help of his allies. With each kill, Galbatorix becomes stronger and saturates his desire for power, until no Dragon Rider appears to be left; “[t]hen as power rushed through his veins,<sup>153</sup> Galbatorix anointed himself king over all Alagaësia. And from that day, he has ruled us” (*Eragon* 34). With his ascension to the throne, Galbatorix has disrupted and destroyed the peaceful and idyllic era of the Dragon Riders: “While they kept peace, the land flourished. It was a golden time. The elves were our allies, the dwarves our friends. Wealth flowed into our cities, and men prospered” (*Eragon* 31).

While all characters above disrupt the balance in their worlds, the Narnian villains additionally violate the divine right of kings, the divine ordination which grants the person “theoretically limitless power” (Barratt 12). Inviolable legitimation through

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<sup>153</sup> The topos of acquiring the power of the person one has killed is highly reminiscent of the popular movie *Highlander* (1986) and the spin-off TV series (1992-8); but this topos is not pursued in the rest of the *Inheritance Cycle*.

God is the basis for all rulers in Narnia.<sup>154</sup> In claiming to be human the White Witch fabricates her claim to the throne; she thus not only tries to get her subjects' support, but also acknowledges and affirms this ancient concept. Jadis on the other hand directly antagonises the god-figure. As soon as Miraz's own son is born to secure his line of succession, Miraz plots to eliminate Prince Caspian, his brother's son and "the true King of Narnia, Caspian the Tenth" (ibid. 56). In calling Caspian "the true King," the plot draws a connection to the divine right of kings, which serves as legitimation to determine the destined monarch according to the will of a higher power and to the royal line of succession. As Trufflehunter states: "And we beasts remember, even if Dwarfs forget, that Narnia was never right except when a son of Adam was King" (*Caspian* 64), while Doctor Cornelius talks about "the long-lost days of freedom" (ibid. 51). Returning to the old ways of living is a yearning, which is closely connected to the dichotomy between the purity of nature and the corruption of civilisation.<sup>155</sup>

What all the books have in common is the understanding of monarchy: the ruler has absolute power over his subjects. All usurpers to the throne claim all the power, but refuse to take on any of the responsibility. With the usurpation, the villains destroy what is perceived as natural balance of the state, marking the end of an apparent stable political era in the books. The off-stage ascension to the thrones fulfils several functions. The most important one is that it allows the story to establish a nostalgic yearning for the past. This not only clearly hints to a convention of the genre,<sup>156</sup> but it might also allude to a sentiment the books might reflect as their *Zeitgeist*.<sup>157</sup> Secondly, this ascension does not allow the reader to perceive the weaknesses of past regimes; the idealisation of the past forms a stark contrast to the current regime and emphasises the imperative to take action. Thirdly, the off-stage ascension to the throne allows the story progress quickly and to constantly put the focus on the evil characters in their political function, which serves as a further dehumanization of the villains. The solution to the problem is that the saviours in the books have to reinstate the natural order again.

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<sup>154</sup> Characters that understand themselves as gods or god-like creatures such as Neferet, Nefuna, Kalona, the Authority, Metatron, and the Grandir, also see themselves as inviolable and their actions thus as justified.

<sup>155</sup> *Prince Caspian* was published in 1951; the restoration of an idealized past sounds attractive not long after the Second World War, in which weapons of mass destruction like the H-bomb changed warfare for ever.

<sup>156</sup> Set in archaic worlds, the books themselves are an expression of this nostalgia.

<sup>157</sup> Especially in the case of Lewis's books, who has lived through two world wars, and wrote the *Narnia* series after World War II.

## Governing the People and the Abuse of Power

The following part focuses on how the usurpers govern their people in the books. This, however, cannot be discussed without talking about the rulers' abuse of power.

Jadis is a good example of the megalomaniac monarch. From the beginning, the reader receives conflicting characterization. When focalized through Digory's eyes, she is the epitome of queendom, which is emphasised several times: "And you could see at once, not only from her corn and robes, but from the flash of her eyes and the curve of her lip, that she was a great queen" (*Nephew* 53), "[s]he's wonderfully brave. And strong. She's what I call a Queen" (*ibid.* 55). Here, Digory reveals his naivety, as he does not realize that Jadis might be evil, but is blinded by her grandeur, fearlessness, and beauty. Shortly after her awakening, both children learn who this queen really is: Jadis, "the Queen of Queens and the Terror of Charn" (*ibid.* 82). As she has for instance "poured out the blood of [her] armies like water" (*ibid.* 60), Jadis serves as a good example of how a monarch might abuse of his/her power. It is due to her actions that Charn has been completely destroyed, and become "a world of death" after her usage of the deplorable word (*Crago* 42). She explains her right to (ab)use her power as follows: "I was the Queen. They were all my people. What else were they there for but to do my will?" (*Nephew* 61).

This shows that Jadis does not take responsibility for her actions as she does not think that she has done anything wrong. On the contrary, she shifts the blame since she views the destruction of her world as "my sister's fault [...] She drove me to it" (*ibid.* 59). All this gives evidence of her pride, her power, and her megalomaniac thinking. According to her, hers is the only life worth saving in Charn (*ibid.* 60f.). Jadis is not distressed about the death of everyone in her world, she rather takes pride in her accomplishment and her person as she calls herself "Jadis, the last Queen, but the Queen of the World" (*ibid.* 60). Here, she is applying a double standard to human life, as she explains to Digory: "You must learn, child, that what would be wrong for you or for any of the common people is not wrong in a great Queen such as I. The weight of the world is on our shoulders. We must be freed from all rules. Ours is a high and lonely destiny" (*Nephew* 61).<sup>158</sup>

Jadis embodies an example of the Hobbesian idea of a monarch; Hindess explains this concept as follows: "While the subjects incur obligations towards the

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<sup>158</sup> Jadis's justification is not new. Rather, it mirrors Machiavelli's concept of rulers, Skinner's interpretation reveals: "A wise prince 'will seek to avoid those vices' if he can; but if he finds he cannot, then he certainly will not trouble himself unduly about such ordinary moral susceptibilities" (Machiavelli qtd. in Skinner 53).

sovereign by virtue of their Covenant, the sovereign incurs no corresponding obligations towards its subjects. In particular, the sovereign is then in no way bound by the desires or moral concerns of its subjects” (Hindess 48). This concept is nowhere as clearly depicted as in Jadis; throughout the *Chronicles of Narnia*, the plot reveals that such a ruler should be clearly rejected. This also proves the analysis of the White Witch.

The White Witch also reigns under the mantle of absolute monarchy. While she impersonates the law, digressions are severely punished, which marks her reign as brutal and fearsome. The creatures that support her do her bidding not only because they enjoy employing violence on others, but also because they are afraid of the consequences of disobedience. The imprisonment of Mr Tumnus is the most striking example of how she is keeping track of her subjects in her police state. Not only does a Gestapo-like invasion of Mr Tumnus’s house by the “Secret Police” happen (*Wardrobe* 66), Mr Beaver also points to complete surveillance when he takes the Pevensie children with him, because the beaver “glanced all round as if it were afraid someone was watching” (ibid. 72f). The White Witch strictly punishes disobedient subjects (ibid. 84), or subjects which infuriate her, by turning them into stone. This is demonstrated in the scene between the White Witch and the squirrel family, whom the Witch comes across while the family is having a Christmas dinner (ibid. 123f.). In an act of fury, the White Witch turns the creatures she regards as “vermin” into lifeless statues (ibid. 125). That she does not allow her subjects to have a Christmas dinner shows that they are victim of physical and emotional starvation, which also reveals that her whole world is a world of depravation. Furthermore, this episode signifies the growing weakness of her spells and the rising spirit of the Christian community. The Witch has no more mercy on her associates than on her enemies, which is further evidence of her egotism.

Like other villains mentioned below, the White Witch abuses her power as a witch and Queen of Narnia to satisfy her own desires; she does not consider her subjects’ needs. I absolutely agree with Manlove who states that “[t]he Witch is a tyrant. Her evil is one of selfishness” (Manlove 130). In contrast to Aslan, the White Witch strives for ultimate control and only cares for herself; she is thus the counter image of a good ruler. By freezing Narnia’s seasons in winter, she takes away nature’s possibility to recreate itself. Thus, she is represented as a “destructive taker of life” (Hancock 54). Comparable to the male adversaries named below, her reign creates an atmosphere of fear and destruction, which emphasises the White Witch’s unscrupulousness.

“Although ‘she has no right to be queen at all’ [*Wardrobe* 49], she sees the world in a Social Darwinian light: as no one is stronger than her, no one can challenge her claim to the throne, ergo, she feels that she has the right to obtain this position” (Kokorski 2012c, 143). According to a prophecy, only the sons of Adam and daughters of Eve can put a legitimate claim to the throne. As she desperately wants to keep her life and the status quo,<sup>159</sup> the Witch seeks to kill the four Pevensie children who are supposed to become Kings and Queens of Narnia (*Wardrobe* 89), and even wages war against them and the creatures of Narnia to accomplish her aims.<sup>160</sup> The White Witch shows no virtues, no honour and no sense of justice, and only acts to satisfy her desires. All this culminates in the conclusion that a selfish ruler cannot be a good ruler.

Regarding the deplorable state of affairs in Narnia in *Prince Caspian*, the text reveals a nostalgic and idealized picture of the past, when true and wise rulers reined over the country, such as the four kings and queens in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*. The plot portrays Miraz and the Telmarines as invaders of Narnia who have conquered and brutally colonised it (*Caspian* 50). They have not lived up to the expectations of great kings who unite rather than divide the nation. Like the White Witch before him, Miraz has transformed Narnia into an “unhappy country” (ibid. 54): “The taxes were high and the laws were stern and Miraz was a cruel man” (ibid.). This description serves two purposes. First of all, it reveals Miraz’s anxieties about possible uprisings; according to this, only in brutally ruling his subjects can he suppress any (political) disturbances in his kingdom.<sup>161</sup> Second of all, this passage portrays Miraz as a counter example to a good ruler; it consequently justifies a rebellion against the king, and encourages the reader to apply a black and white scheme to the book.

Caspian is aware of this ominous heritage as “he was, after all, a Telmarine, one of the race who cut down trees wherever they could and were at war with all wild things” (ibid. 60). The Talking Beasts especially long for the peaceful past of the old Kings and Queens as a new era began with the Telmarine invasion: “[t]he Telmarines have established the rule of man in Narnia. They have built towns, roads, bridges. They have disinherited the Talking Beasts of Narnia. They will have nothing to do with raw nature” (Manlove 142). The Telmarine conquest of Narnia is a violent caesura into

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<sup>159</sup> This is metaphorically expressed through the never-ending winter.

<sup>160</sup> Complete domination and the eradication of everything good appear to be her aims. If her only goal was the destruction of the world, the plot could have constructed a war for complete dominance earlier, in which the Witch had probably killed every single inhabitant of the world, until Narnia became a mirror image of Charn.

<sup>161</sup> The reader may know this strategy from different dictators in history such as Stalin or Franco, who used it to maintain their power and position.



Narnian life, and as such ripples of this wave are still conceivable long after it has happened. Locke's conclusions about violent conquests fittingly subsume the situation between the Narnian and the Telmarines under scrutiny:

Many States of [Locke's] day [...] were formed by violent conquest. Their political authority, therefore, in no sense rested on the joining together of powers of their subjects to execute the law of nature. For Locke such States possessed no legitimate political authority. They were structures of force, not of right: not civil societies at all. The relation of a conqueror to the conquered, even after centuries, was a relation not of political authority but of concealed war. (Dunn 55)

The underground movement formed by the Talking Beasts is indicative of this prolonged and concealed war that Dunn refers to in his analysis of Locke.

In accordance with the famous dictum "history is written by the victors" Miraz tries to distort Narnian history to justify his rule and keep his subjects from clinging to "the long-lost days of freedom" (*Caspian* 51). Historical misrepresentations and the silencing of historical truths become instruments of control and erase the hope for a better future. In forbidding his subjects to talk about the factual past (*ibid.* 50) and teaching an alternative version of history at school, history becomes a burden to the students and keeps them from intellectual progression: "The sort of 'History' that was taught in Narnia under Miraz's rule was duller than the truest history you ever read and less true than the most exciting adventure story" (*ibid.* 170). By fabricating an alternative history, Miraz is privileging the Telmarian past and culture above the native history, culture and values. Here, Miraz employs the constructed past to manipulate his subjects and oppress part of his subjects along the lines of what Lois Althusser calls the communications and educational Ideological State Apparatus (Althusser 208).<sup>162</sup>

Caspian's escape and his appearance among the Narnian population trigger a long-awaited revolution to "drive Miraz out of Narnia" (*Caspian* 71). Narnians recognize Caspian as their lawful king and leader who has come to change their fate. The war serves to rid Narnia of Miraz's tyranny, and is apparently even blessed by the heavens:

"The time is ripe," said Glenstorm. "I watch the skies, Badger, for it is mine to watch, as it is yours to remember, [...] on earth a son of Adam has once more arisen to rule and name the creatures. The hour has struck. Our council at the

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<sup>162</sup> According to Althusser, the educational ISA comprises "the system of the different public and private 'Schools'", while the communications ISA consists of "press, radio, television, etc." (Althusser 208).

Dancing Lawn must be a council of war.” [...] it now seemed to them quite possible that they might win a war and quite certain that they must wage one. (*Caspian* 71f.)

Most Narnians loyally stand behind their new king, full of hope and conviction, which is a counter image to the villains in the series. Especially in the military, King Miraz exercises complete domination over his subjects through fear: “And though Miraz’s men may have been afraid of going into the wood, they were even more afraid of Miraz, and with him in command they carried battle deeply into it and sometimes almost to the How itself” (ibid. 83).

Like the White Witch, Miraz is surrounded by like-minded creatures – equally cunning and cruel. It is from the hand of his own man that Miraz receives the mortal wound (ibid. 166): “The Lords Glozelle and Sopespian had their own plans ready” and realize them in the confusion of the duel when stabbing the king (ibid.).<sup>163</sup> Not only does Miraz fail the character test as a ruler, he also fails to surround himself with people that he respects and who respect him and are loyal to him, which opens a vicious cycle of suspicion and betrayal. According to one of Machiavelli’s cardinal rules, a sovereign has at least to pretend to be good, to be loved by the people and avoid treachery: “And above all things, a prince must guard himself against being despised and hated” (Machiavelli 56).<sup>164</sup>

According to Lewis himself, *Prince Caspian* displays the “restoration of the true religion after a corruption” (Lewis qtd. in Bell 13). The effects of corruption and greed for power are major topics in the novel, as are the expectations and responsibilities of a sovereign. This book clearly focuses on the macrocosmic level of state politics and fulfils the “general and very real movement from confusion and uncertainty to order and clarity” (Manlove 140) within the kingdom. To right the balance, Caspian and his army have to dethrone the wrongful king to end the tyranny of the Telmarines, and to establish harmony between people and nature. Caspian undertakes actions the usurper Miraz is selfish enough to neglect and brutal enough to suppress. As there has been a deep-seated conflict between Narnians and Telmarines, which cannot be resolved, the nation is redefined at the end of the book.<sup>165</sup> To build a new and peaceful future, Aslan

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<sup>163</sup> King Miraz had delivered an insult to the lords that morning which appeared to have been the last straw for the nobles (*Caspian* 157).

<sup>164</sup> The plot around Miraz confirms this basic rule; subjects/citizens and readers alike of course expect more than mere pretence from the people in power.

<sup>165</sup> Most of all, it is a conflict based on racial prejudices on side of the Telmarines.

allows those who want to stay in Narnia to stay, while those who cannot come to terms with this new society are at liberty to leave (*Caspian* 182f.).<sup>166</sup>

Shift, the ape in *The Last Battle*, is a further representation of the treacherous leader; he serves as a caricature and represents a perversion of a good sovereign. The first deed the reader experiences under Shift's rule is an act of tyranny: the sacrilegious murdering of the talking trees (*Battle* 20f.). Furthermore, to enhance his power, worthiness and domination, and to correspond to the image of a lord who has a higher position in the Great Chain of Being than an ape, Shift even redefines himself: "I'm not [an Ape]. I'm a Man. If I look like an Ape, that's because I'm so very old: hundreds and hundreds of years old. And it's because I'm so old that I'm so wise. And it's because I'm so wise that I'm the only one Aslan is ever going to speak to. He can't be bothered talking to a lot of stupid animals" (ibid. 33). He elevates his own status and at the same time he lowers the status of his subjects in order to indoctrinate them with a class system supporting his reign. Protests are violently stifled before they can spread (ibid. 35). In his position of absolute power, Shift represents an anti-king, as he becomes an "instrument of disorder", a representation of Satan (Hardy 60).

His actions are as grotesque as his costume. Instead of taking on the responsibility of a spiritual leader, he uses his faked connection to Aslan to sell his subjects into slavery, and thus subjects them to absolute exploitation. He introduces a capitalist society in which the inhabitants of Narnia are paid for their work.

"It's all arranged. And all for your own good. We'll be able, with the money you earn, to make Narnia a country worth living in. There'll be oranges and bananas pouring in – and roads and big cities and schools and offices and whips and muzzles and saddles and cages and kennels and prisons – Oh, everything."

"But we don't want all those things," said an old Bear. "We want to be free. And we want to hear Aslan speak himself."

"Now don't you start arguing," said the Ape, "for it's a thing I won't stand. I'm a Man: you're only a fat, stupid old Bear. What do you know about freedom?" (*Battle* 34)

This 'improved' society, however, robs Narnian creatures of their freedom and their very identity. Even in the most flattering light, Shift's promises are only lip-service and therefore doomed to fail. Although the payment is supposed to "be paid into Aslan's treasury and he will use it all for everybody's good" (ibid. 33), it becomes clear that

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<sup>166</sup> The plot here denies the reader a peaceful solution where all parties can stay in Narnia. As real-life application the reader might deduce that a global and multicultural society does not appear to be possible.

only Shift and Rishda Tarkaan will profit from this arrangement (ibid.). Shift's corruption ignores the interest of the community, and the exploitation of his subjects leads to the economic and moral ruin of the country, and the destruction of the whole world.

Shift's desire for instant gratification of his personal pleasure made apparent in his insatiable oral greed destroys the natural balance in Narnia;<sup>167</sup> he turns Narnia into a sweatshop that robs its inhabitants of their innocence, power, and dignity, and functions as alienation from their deity. In his analysis of *The Hunger Games*, Bill Clemente's observation fittingly echoes the situation in Narnia: "This disaster capitalism results in a system of control that victimizes an increasingly destitute population" (Clemente 25).

Galbatorix's way to govern his subjects is very similar to that of the Narnian villains, but very different at the same time. Although the overall picture of Galbatorix is a truly negative one,<sup>168</sup> there are instances in *Eldest* where the reader can perceive the loyalty and conviction of his subjects. This is proof of a successful application of a sweet-tongued and manipulative strategy. One example of this is Murtagh's shift in allegiance at the end of book two; Murtagh believes in the positive effects of Galbatorix's reign, namely the rejuvenation of the regime and "that [Galbatorix] wants to unite Alagaësia under a single banner, eliminate the need for war, and restore the Riders" (*Eldest* 649).<sup>169</sup>

Some of his soldiers are equally persuaded to serve a good cause and regard Galbatorix as "generous", "rightful sovereign, [...] all-knowing, all-powerful" king who "who sacrifices himself day and night for the good of his people" (*Eldest* 610f.). The righteousness and justness of the cause and of Galbatorix's army are, however, deconstructed in several ways. First of all, the fact that the Varden's herald has been decapitated by Galbatorix's army highlights not only the lack of morality but also the brutality of this army. Second of all, the description of the army as a threatening "dark mass" (ibid. 611), whose task it is "to cleanse Alagaësia of every miscreant, traitor, and subversive" (ibid. 610) further reveals Galbatorix's malevolence. And lastly, the violent annexation of the neighbouring kingdom Surda, the supporter of the Varden also belies Galbatorix's claim for peace; Galbatorix's soldiers have come to "gently chastise the

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<sup>167</sup> Freud's pleasure principle might define Shift as id in the paradigm of id (Shift), ego (the King of Narnia and the children), and superego (Aslan); this is only one way to apply Freud's triad. On the other hand, the way Shift takes away the nuts and oranges from his subject and lets them starve physically (the squirrels are do not have any nuts for the winter) and emotionally also suggest a reference to historical parallels such as King Louis XVI, Marie Antoinette, and the French Revolution.

<sup>168</sup> Compare chapter 2.2 Male Adversaries.

<sup>169</sup> I have already discussed this point in chapter 2.2 Male Adversaries.

unlawful territory known as Surda and return it to the benevolent rule of King Galbatorix” (ibid. 610f.). The last sentence is infused with contradictory rhetoric, which additionally emphasizes what Machiavelli calls the “princely duplicity” (Skinner 48). The rhetoric glosses over the violence that takes place and suggests that these actions are for the people’s own good.

In his discussion of Machiavelli’s *The Prince*, Skinner subsumes: “it is indispensable to appear to have [the qualities usually considered good] [...]. It is desirable to be considered liberal; it is sensible to seem merciful and not cruel; it is essential in general to appear meritorious [...].” (ibid.). All in all, Skinner continues, “[t]he solution is thus to become a great simulator and dissimulator, learning the skill of ‘cunningly confusing men’ and making them believe in your pretence” (ibid.). Numerous villains such as Galbatorix, the White Witch, Neferet, and the Grandir successfully employ these skills as political tools, as “a skilful deceiver always finds plenty of people who will let themselves be deceived” (Machiavelli qtd. in Skinner 49)

Galbatorix invades his subjects’ interiority as he is “a master of breaking into people’s minds” (*Eragon* 245), which grants him “perverse pleasure” (*Inheritance* 712),<sup>170</sup> while at the same time, he wears the mask of a formidable politician: “[h]is words were entrancing, like a snake whispering gilded lies [...]. A more convincing and frightening man I’ve never heard” (*Eragon* 289). This biblical allusion shows that Galbatorix is planting his ideological convictions very cunningly.

The manipulation of the population can also be seen in Galbatorix’s active attempts to rewrite history, which parallels King Miraz’s efforts in this field. He has distorted and censored history: “So much has been lost. No court ballads survive, and, if you speak truly, nor does most of your history or art, except for fanciful tales Galbatorix has allowed to thrive” (*Eldest* 201). The silencing of historical facts by “*that false king*” (*Eragon* 443; emphasis in original) has created a nostalgia which leaves parts of the population with the longing for the “golden time” of the past (ibid. 31).

Positive depictions of Galbatorix are very rare and often deconstructed, while negative depictions are far more common and plausible for the reader due to the protagonist’s ideological positioning in the plot. Similarly to the White Witch, Jadis, and Miraz, Galbatorix fails in convincing the majority of his subjects, as he does “not possess the mercy or foresight to gain the people’s loyalty, and he rule[s] only through

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<sup>170</sup> Entering the mind of a person without the person’s permission is highly reminiscent of rape; this too is a violation of one of the most intimate spaces of a person. The last quotation alludes to this.

brute force guided by his own passions” (*Eragon* 391).<sup>171</sup> In contrast to the other kings and queens discussed in this chapter, Galbatorix is a skilled strategist, who micromanages the cities in his kingdom through his nobles (*ibid.* 251f.), while he himself has other matters on his mind, such as the birth of a new generation of Riders. According to Machiavelli, a prince “should [...] never take his mind from this exercise of war, and in peacetime he must train himself more than in times of war” (Machiavelli 51). More than the others, Galbatorix is a Machiavellian prince and a master of war, he knows which strategies to employ in order to diminish his opponents most conveniently (*Eldest* 375f.).

Due to Galbatorix’s actions and politics, “there [is] a deep-seated hatred for the Empire” among the subjects (*Eragon* 29), which is mixed with the notion of neglect which this statement reveals: “as if Galbatorix would care if we burned to the ground” (*ibid.* 28). The king’s villainous deeds are highly stressed through repetition (e.g. *Eldest* 100, 109, 250) and the highlighting of individual ordeals, such as the enslavement of Murtagh and his dragon whom Galbatorix brutally “abuse[s], and force[s] to destroy other beings’ lives” (*Brisingr* 319). Another example is Eragon’s love interest Arya, whom the king holds prisoner till Eragon saves her; the elves regard her imprisonment and torture as “a crime beyond apology, mitigation, or reparation” (*Eldest* 230). The dragon Glaedr directly talks about the destruction of the natural / cosmic balance between the races, which Galbatorix’s actions have caused:

*By killing dragons, Galbatorix harmed his own race as well as the elves. The two of you have not seen this, [...] but the elves are on the wane; their power is not what it once was. And humans have lost much of their culture and been consumed by chaos and corruption. Only by righting the imbalance between our three races shall order return to the world. (Eldest 439; emphasis in original)*

Glaedr describes a downward spiral, which might have disastrous consequences for the whole world, and thus creates a moral imperative to take action against Galbatorix.

Eragon’s village suffers from “iron taxes” (*Eldest* 250) and Eragon himself “ha[d] witnessed too many wrongs committed in Galbatorix’s name, from murder to slavery [...]. As a Rider, it was his duty to assist those without strength to resist Galbatorix’s oppression” (*Eragon* 337). The “tyrant king” (*Brisingr* 144) or “black tyrant” (*ibid.* 279) rules his country with an insatiable “hunger for power” (*ibid.* 419), and has done so for far too long; as Hrothgar, the dwarf king says “no race should have

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<sup>171</sup> This is of course contradictory to the earlier statements which shed a positive light on Galbatorix (*Eldest* 610f.); an explanation for this might be that the author wanted to create a more multifaceted and cunning image of the villain.

a leader who does not age or leave the throne” (*Eragon* 443). “Much of his power resides in the appearance of invulnerability” (*Eldest* 282), and the fact that he brutally and mercilessly reigns the country.

To summarize, the analysis of the individual rulers reveals several things. First, the kings and queens under scrutiny are usurpers to the thrones and therefore have no rightful claim to rule their subjects. They often govern the people on the basis of might makes right, which excludes any moral responsibility. Furthermore, there is no division of power, the king or queen is simultaneously the law, the judge, jury, and often the hangman. In a despotic form of government, “[t]here is no parliament, no opposition, no free press, no independent judiciary, no private property protected by law from the rapacity of power, in a word, no public voice except that of the despot” (Minogue 3). The subjects are voiceless, unfree, and without rights. The books reveal how one despotic monarch decides the fate of the many, and how absolute monarchy separates people from one another, and establishes an official and ‘natural’ system of superiority. This is especially emphasised when the monarch in question turns out to be a tyrant.

Second, all the rulers facilitate a reign of absolute power, which consequently puts their subjects at mercy of the sovereign and culminates in a reign of terror. Following this thread of thoughts, Kenneth Minogue’s definition of despotism rings true for the sovereigns under scrutiny: “a system of order created by conquest, resting on fear, and issuing in caprice” (ibid. 1).

The plots do not shed light on any official laws of the state, whereas absolute obedience and pleasing the sovereign becomes most important. Disobedience and dissatisfaction are instantly and brutally punished. The way the monarchs govern leads to the conclusion that the national interest becomes the personal interest. Connected to the national interest is the prosperity of the state, as well as the freedom of the subjects. As the reader can perceive in for example *The Last Battle* and *The Inheritance Cycle*, it is the sovereign who obtains luxurious goods, while ordinary subjects starve. People are discontent and often suffer from high taxation. Furthermore, the subjects are severely restricted in what they can do, know and access; they are not allowed to defend themselves against the state (physically or verbally), and they are often fed altered versions of the past, which gives the ruler further measures of control.

While only some sovereigns manage the art of princely duplicity, all evil kings and queens in this chapter rule their country / their world in accordance with one of Machiavelli’s most important maxims: “it is much safer to be feared than to be loved”

(Machiavelli 58). Skinner skilfully summarizes the incentive behind this guideline as follows: “If your subjects have no ‘dread of punishment’, they will take every chance to deceive you for their own profit. But if you make yourself feared, they will hesitate to offend or injure you, as a result of which you will find it much easier to maintain your state” (Skinner 51). All characters, however, go one step too far and therefore deviate from Machiavelli’s rule: they not only make themselves feared but hated by their subjects. They become tyrants. Due to the abuses of power stated above, the plots call for a change of authority, not of the regime itself; the system appears to be well-founded and strong while the (human) representatives are weak and prone to abuse their power.

Due to their moral fallibility, one characteristic under which I can subsume all adversaries in this chapter is what Gayne Anacker calls “unworthy nobles” in his analysis about the Narnian antagonists (Anacker 137). Rabadash, the Tisroc, Miraz, Shift and Rishda Tarkaan, for example, maintain “control through lies, deception, and corruption” (ibid. 137f.). This is also true for Jadis/the White Witch, and Galbatorix. These three, however, also use extreme violence to keep their position and dominance over their subjects. All are cruel, unjust and self-centred. Obviously, they are not worthy of the position they hold, as the plot constructs them as counter examples of good sovereigns who are willing to dutifully take on the responsibilities of leading a nation. In Narnia, those who are worthy receive Aslan’s/ God’s blessing to justify their rule. According to Wendy C. Hamblet the question of leadership and the effect of negative authority are integral to *The Chronicles of Narnia*: “Humans need moral inspiration from on high, but human leaders can lead them far astray from justice and goodness and into the dark night of worldly battle. [...] Leaders lead us along terrible paths. Lewis warns what fate will ensue when this happens: [in *The Last Battle*] all worlds draw to an end as they decay” (Hamblet 152). Hamblet’s statement naturally transcends the *Narnia* series; it is true for fictitious and real leaders alike.

To enforce the righteousness of positive role models, all adversaries “ultimately [pay] for [their] evil ways” (Anacker 138). In his article “Mortals call their History Fable: Narnia and the Use of the Fairy Tale,” Frank P. Riga draws a direct connection between the books’ message and the reader’s world, and thus enforces the moral value of the books: “The world of the Chronicles is a moral world, one in which the structures of natural, moral law obtain. [...] Narnian law directly refers to the moral law of everyday reality” (Riga 27). *The Chronicles of Narnia* picture a straightforward world with clear depictions of good and evil, and a romanticised world of medieval chivalry. It



is, however, also a world of temptations and tests of faith: only the worthy are allowed to find their place in Paradise.

In the process of the analysis, I have pointed out several similarities with political concepts put forward by Machiavelli and Hobbes; although the characters in the books are constructed as being absolutely evil, some Machiavellian attributes for a real prince still apply. Not only are the villains often skilful deceivers, they also base their authority on the fear of the people; though they admittedly go further than Machiavelli has suggested. Due to their villainous and therefore quite straightforward character traits, the antagonists are only partly able to “colour over [their true] nature effectively, and to be a great pretender and dissembler” as Machiavelli suggests (Machiavelli 61), “to those seeing and hearing him, he should appear to be all mercy, all faithfulness, all integrity, all humanity, and all religion” (ibid. 62). The antagonists fail to do these things and they are thus unable to secure the goodwill of their subjects.

Due to the insecurity of the reign, the villains feel the constant necessity to act as Machiavelli’s prince would do: “treacherously, ruthlessly or inhumanely” in order to maintain their power (Machiavelli qtd. in Skinner 43). Instead of occupying the moral high ground, the ruler should keep to a “moral flexibility” according to Machiavelli (ibid. 44) – a characteristic the antagonists have not mastered, either. While Machiavelli suggest that a sovereign should “[harmonize] one’s behaviour with the times” (ibid. 43) and should be prepared to act immorally if necessity dictates this, the kings and queens constantly act nefariously and display an inability to adapt, and therefore remain inflexible waxworks in the face of changing circumstances.<sup>172</sup> As an illustration of their evilness, they forcefully reshape the circumstances to fit their personalities and satisfy their greed for power. They rather count on gestures of dominance to secure the throne, including the elimination of all counter forces. In contrast to what the books teach, Machiavelli privileges deceitful rulers over morally superior sovereigns: “the princes who have accomplished great deeds are those who have thought little about keeping faith and who have known how cunningly to manipulate men’s minds; and in the end they have surpassed those who laid their foundations upon sincerity.” (Machiavelli 60). In the books, the good kings are well remembered, as the feelings of nostalgia reveal.

As stated in my introduction above, Hobbes claimed that humanity is in a constant state of war. To ensure peace, Hobbes proclaimed the importance of a powerful sovereign as he thought “that it was essential to create an absolute monarch – an

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<sup>172</sup> This inflexibility to adapt their reign to changing circumstances literally becomes apparent in *The Magician’s Nephew*, where the kings and queens in Charn are waxworks.

undivided source of authority whose writ would be subject to no earthly limitations” (Miller 2003, 37). This unrestricted authority, however, is still bound to the sovereign’s role as “only an agent, a lieutenant or representative, of the people’s will, an actor impersonating his subjects, who were accordingly the real authors of every performance in their name” (Wokler 75). Like Machiavelli’s theories, Hobbes’s concept only partly finds its way into the texts under scrutiny: The villains live in a dog-eat-dog world and are at war with the rest of the world. To secure their idea of an ideal society, they become authoritarian rulers who accumulate as much power as possible and rob their subjects off their (political) rights; this even enlarges the extreme asymmetry of power between the characters. Rousseau’s criticism about Hobbes’s doctrine rings true for the books under scrutiny: “a convention which stipulates absolute authority on the one side and unlimited obedience on the other is vain and contradictory” (Rousseau 10), and it furthermore “derives slavery from liberty” (Wokler 76).

The sovereigns become megalomaniacs and regard themselves as (mortal) gods who have the right to enslave their subjects. This hybris is obviously and literally true for Galbatorix, to name only one example:<sup>173</sup> “I have become as powerful as a god, and there are none who can stop me” (*Brisingr* 733). Anne Klaus has analysed this hybris in her book *Child Saviours*, and concludes that “the antagonists are self-centered and reveal egocentric, hybristic ambitious, not least the lust for ‘autotheosis’, the wish to be God” (Klaus 2014, 255). The kind of state Hobbes promotes helps them realize their ambitions; they even wage war to maintain their power and position.

The books clearly exhibit traces of Machiavelli’s and Hobbes’s political concepts in the depiction of individual rulers. The texts negotiate the realizations of these ideas and ultimately repudiate ideas put forward by Machiavelli completely, and by Hobbes in most parts. The reader is able to perceive this rejection in *The Inheritance Cycle* in particular. The *Narnia* series mainly stresses the divine right of kings and the rulers’ final obligation to God. *The Inheritance Cycle*, as well as for example the *Harry Potter* books, on the other hand focus on the consent of the subjects as the basis for the right to govern. Here, the power of the political authority is “fundamentally dependent on the consent of those over whom it is exercised” (Hindess 11).

This understanding of political authority is deeply connected to rights and obligations from both sides: the one who governs and those who are governed. John Locke further elaborates this in his *Second Treatise on Government*, where he “presents an influential account of political power in which the holder of that power is regarded as

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<sup>173</sup> Other examples are Neferet, the Authority and Metatron, and Jadis.

having very definite obligations towards its subjects” (ibid. 48). Accordingly, for Locke, great political power “can only be trusted when those who hold it see themselves as responsible to (and can be held responsible to) those over whom they exercise it” (Dunn 55). In the books under scrutiny, a factor which clearly characterizes the villains is that they do not take any responsibility for their (political) actions.

As soon as the child saviours take control and successfully fight the opponents, they can improve the lives of the subjects. Not only do they abolish a tyrant and free the subjects, in Narnia, the change is always connected to spiritual improvement due to a deeper connection to Aslan. It is interesting that the political change presents the perpetuation of the political system: the system has worked in the past, hence, “[t]he king is flawed, yes, but the system itself is sound” (*Eragon* 391).

Antagonists such as Miraz, Shift, and Galbatorix pose a threat from the inside, not the outside, and disrupt the idealized system. After the heroes and heroines have brought about the destruction of this threat, the system lives on in further kings and queens. In the case of Narnia, this means that the kings and queens have to come from the right lineage and have God’s blessing – a reflection of the British monarchy. Paolini’s books deviate from this, which might be due to their American background. Nasuada is an elected queen: a council of powerful rulers have voted on the new ruler. Among them is King Orrin who represents a royal line of succession; Paolini describes him as rather incompetent and thus far from being the ‘right one for the job’. Moral integrity and a natural affinity to rule people trumps heritage – a deviation of the self-made man / woman.

Though the books end shortly after the heroic battle, a more positive and peaceful time is guaranteed due to the good character of the new ruler. How ideal politics under an ideal ruler looks like is often not part of the story.<sup>174</sup> In the *Sangreal Trilogy*, however, a discussion about the Grandir acts as a platform to explicate the concept of an ideal ruler. In promoting a laissez-faire state of guidance in contrast to a totalitarian ruler, Nathan and Hazel reveal a rather British attitude, opposing a strong figure as the head of the state. Discussing the Grandir’s God-like status, Hazel states:

“[the Grandir] has so much power . . . No one should have that much power. No one. It’s like being God . . .”

“Do you believe in God?” Nathan asked carelessly.

“I’m not sure. If He exists, why does He let people make such a mess of things?”

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<sup>174</sup> By design, the books do not take *Realpolitik* into consideration.

“Free will,” Nathan said. He had studied philosophy – from close up.  
“Gods shouldn’t rule. They should simply . . . advise.”

“The Grandir rules,” Hazel said. “He acts like he’s God. We’re less to  
him than fleas.” (*Crown* 354)

This dialogue is in accordance with Pullman’s and Casts’ attitudes towards an interfering deity. The distribution of power and above all the power of free will are central motifs repeated in literature for children and young adults. The denial of free will in these books expresses the god-like self-perception the adversaries have, and demonstrate that absolute power corrupts absolutely.

These archaic worlds idealise a time before the World Wars and before the Industrial Revolution. As Peter Goodrich concludes: “Although [Lewis and Tolkien] accepted the paternalistic, male-dominated aspects of feudalism, they strongly opposed the concentration of power in a mechanized, capital-dominated society and yearned for a return to non-technological and religious values” (Goodrich 168f.). In employing the past and the fantastic, *The Chronicles of Narnia* in particular foregrounds a dualistic world view and suggestions of how to behave, whom to trust, and what to believe. Furthermore, all texts conclude that might does not necessarily make right, especially if it goes against contemporary ideologies of freedom, liberalism, political responsibility, and the right to rebellion. These values are equally important when it comes to a different form of political authority, namely a (more or less democratic) government.

### Institutions

“The people are the sovereign body of the state; it is their general will which is the law. However, the people are a cumbersome instrument with which to enact the law and run a state effectively. Hence a government is needed. The government is the servant of the people; it is there simply to enact the general will.” (Matravers in Rousseau xiiif)

This quotation states the premise for my analysis. In his introduction to Rousseau’s *The Social Contract*, Derek Matravers presents several important aspects concerning Rousseau’s theories about government. One of the most influential ones is that the government is a tool run by the state and as such dependent on the people, whose will the government is obliged to enact. This will is not the will of a specific fraction of society, but the general will of the whole population. Liberty and equality are two central themes in *The Social Contract* that play an important role in the conception of the state, as well as in my analysis. In addition to this, John Locke’s concept of a

legitimate government also informs this analysis. Relevant themes of Locke's *Two Treatises* for this examination are "an account of what makes governments legitimate in the first place (the theory of consent) and of how subjects and rulers ought to interpret their relations with each other (the theory of trust)" (Dunn 34). Consent also entails that "the people [...] should have the option of accepting or rejecting it" (Rousseau 10). Central to these concepts are liberalist ideas about the make-up of Western society:

the supposition that human beings are *rational*, an insistence on *liberty* of thought and, within some limits, of actions; a belief in human and social *progress*; the assumption that the *individual* is the prime social unit and a unique choice maker; the postulation of *sociability* and human benevolence as normal; an appeal to the *general interest* rather than to particular loyalties; and *reservations about power* unless it is constrained and made accountable [...]. (Freeden 81; emphasis in original)

The Ministry of Magic in the *Harry Potter* series is a construct born out of these political theories, which are imprinted into Western cultural consciousness.<sup>175</sup> Though the Ministry of Magic starts out as bureaucratic entity supposed to be the servant of the people and enact the general will, the more power Voldemort and his followers accumulate, the more it turns into a political instrument reflecting the opinion of only a specific fraction of the population, until it is utilized to control and repress the population, while privileging and benefitting those in power.

I first and foremost foreground the structure of this institution, and its role as governing body. Although I analyse the respective institution regarding its villainous ways, I cannot treat them as I treat the individuals presented above, "because of its institutional nature, it does not entirely make sense to attribute to a State as actor the sorts of human motivations to which an individual may subscribe commonly thought to exemplify 'evil,' such as hate, greed, madness, or revenge" (Gozyaydin and Madeira 1). Therefore, I not only analyse the institution under scrutiny, but also focus on individual agents in power. Characters such as the Minister of Magic in the *Harry Potter* series stand out of the otherwise anonymous members and deserve special attention as they shape the fate as well as the characters' and reader's perception of the institution. These agents almost become emblematic of the respective institution. Although many scholars have analysed the *Harry Potter* series, Bethany Barratt's ideas have been most inspiring regarding the Ministry of Magic.

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<sup>175</sup> Although the Church in Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials* might be equally relevant here, due to its inherent connection to a deity, I have incorporated this political body in chapter 3.3 The Use and Abuse of Religion.

In foregrounding governments, the books raise the following questions: what are the institutions there for? What makes them bad governments? And how do these counter-examples provide the reader with an idea about better governments?

#### The Ministry of Magic in J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* Series

The plot already introduces the Ministry of Magic in the first book. Here, the book marginalizes the Ministry as it only functions as an institution that utilizes secrecy and constant segregation of Muggles and wizards; according to Hagrid “their main job is to keep it from the Muggles that there’s still witches an’ wizards up an’ down the country” (*Stone* 75). During the series, the Ministry gains both in substance and obscurity; although more and more offices appear,<sup>176</sup> rather than sharpening the picture, these lead to an intricate net of institutions which consists of “100% bureaucracy” which only blurs the picture: “There is no discernible executive or legislative branch [...]. There is a modified judicial function but it appears to be completely dominated by the bureaucracy, and certainly does not serve as an independent check on governmental excess” (Barton qtd. in Barratt 20). The Ministry of Magic might remind the reader of “real” ministries, for example within the British government. However, in its obscurity it clearly differs and therefore caricatures the British government; Folker and Folker go even further as they state that it is “a mere shadow image of the Muggle state it is meant to reflect” (qtd. in Barratt 33).

In the Ministry of Magic, fundamental markers of democracy are missing: “[d]emocratic rule is generally understood to comprise not just universal suffrage, but free and fair elections, real competition between parties and individuals, relative openness of entry to political races [...].” (ibid. 20). The reader never gets to know how the Minister for Magic becomes Minister for Magic, how he appoints his ministers, or if elections take place at all; furthermore, as Barratt points out, “there is no clear and regular means of political participation” (ibid. 21). Miller states that one of the basic assumptions concerning democracy is that “each person should enjoy equal political rights” (Miller 2003, 38). This prerequisite is violated when it comes, for example, to Harry Potter, who appears to have fewer rights when in court, or Lucius Malfoy who has greater leverage due to his heritage and monetary standing and is able to influence the government multiple times.<sup>177</sup>

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<sup>176</sup> For example, the Department of International Magical Cooperation, the Department of Magical Games and Sports, and Department of Magical Law Enforcement, which contains the Misuse of Muggle Artefact Office, the Auror Office, and Wizengamot.

<sup>177</sup> I discuss both examples in greater detail below.

There are numerous ways in which the decisions of the Ministry appear to be influenced. One of them, as in real-life politics, is the popular opinion, others are corruption and personal greed for power. The character of Harry Potter is a good example to illustrate how the respective Minister for Magic, one of the highest authorities in the Ministry, interprets the law differently, and bases his decisions either on mere personal or public opinion. Although Harry Potter gets “an official warning for using magic in front of Muggles” in *Chamber* (31), in *Prisoner* the reader sees Fudge, the Minister for Magic, finding superficial excuses for Harry blowing up his aunt, and does not punish Harry for his actions. Fudge states rather patronizingly ““Oh, my dear boy, we’re not going to punish you for a little thing like that. [...] It was an accident! We don’t send people to Azkaban just for blowing up their aunts.’ But this didn’t tally at all with Harry’s past dealings with the Ministry of Magic” (*Prisoner* 38f.). The difference in both cases is that, in book three, Harry appears as a figure who deserves the sympathy of the population as the person who has allegedly betrayed his parents to Voldemort has escaped Azkaban; hence, as Fudge explains in reference to public opinion, “[c]ircumstances change, Harry ... we have to take into account ... in the present climate ...” (ibid. 39).

In book four, the reader can perceive that the Minister refuses to accept Voldemort’s return (*Goblet* 611f.), and that the *Daily Prophet* renders Harry unreliable in the public eye, which the newspaper heading “HARRY POTTER ‘DISTURBED AND DANGEROUS’” demonstrates (ibid. 531; emphasis in original). In book five it appears that Fudge even starts his own campaign to discredit Dumbledore and Harry in order to secure his own position (*Order* 90f.). The lack of public support is used to further destabilize Harry’s position and discredit him (ibid. 657). This becomes evident in the highly prejudiced trial Harry experiences in *Order* (126-38): a whole inquisitorial court is called to judge upon Harry’s act of self-defense against Dementors.<sup>178</sup> Not only has the location of Harry’s trial in *Order* been moved last minute (ibid. 123), Fudge has also called upon the whole Wizengamot, the juridical organ of the wizarding world, “to hold a full criminal trial to deal with a simple matter of underage magic” (ibid. 137); in a location, no less, in which the show-trials for Barty Crouch Jr. and Bellatrix LeStrange were held (ibid. 126), which considerably adds to the dramatic situation. As Barratt remarks, “Barty Crouch Jr’s is being conducted in a wartime setting [...] Crouch Sr.

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<sup>178</sup> According to Rowling, “[t]he use of Dementors was always a mark of the underlying corruption of the Ministry, as Dumbledore constantly maintained” (qtd. in Wolosky 2010, 40).

makes this trial a show trial at best, which some would argue is worse than no trial at all, since it makes a mockery of the legitimate legal process it imitates” (Barratt 40f.).

This locality acts as an eerie mirror of the past situation: speed of judgement seems to be of essence as Fudge states patronizingly: “We haven’t got time to listen to more tarradiddles, I’m afraid, Dumbledore. I want this dealt with quickly” (*Order* 131). With “tarradiddles” Fudge is referring to a witness Dumbledore has produced; Fudge thus disregards Harry’s “right to present witnesses for his [...] case” (*Order* 131), a fact Harry was not even aware of. Only through Dumbledore’s intervention and influence does this persecution regain a small amount of objectivity, lose its show trial character, and end in a fair sentence after all. In presumption of Harry’s guilt, Fudge bluntly tries to influence the other members of the Wizengamot, which only points to the severity of legal violations Fudge committed; as Dumbledore points out when addressing Fudge during the trial: “In your admirable haste to ensure that the law is upheld, you appear, inadvertently I am sure, to have overlooked a few laws yourself” (*Order* 137).<sup>179</sup>

On a similar note, in *Chamber*, Hagrid is transported to Azkaban without any evidence or trial, which underlines the desire to make a fast arrest and have at least a scapegoat to pacify the population. Barratt convincingly argues that “[p]unishment occupies a central role in the maintenance of order and authority in the wizarding world” (Barratt 44).<sup>180</sup>

These examples of trials or the absence of a fair trial question the legal system’s credibility and functionality. These situations not only reveal how the Ministry acts according to public opinion or uses public opinion to interpret their guidelines in different ways, but also point to the fact that the Ministry acts arbitrarily in its execution of the law and the treatment of its citizens. Personal feelings and paranoia guide Fudge’s conduct (*Order* 89f.) and highly manipulate the other members of the Wizengamot, which as a consequence means that the judicial element of the state does not appear to be independent from the Minister and is open for biases and manipulation. Politics in the Ministry of Magic are highly determined by the character traits of the person in charge, namely the Minister for Magic.

All this does not breed trust in the organization supposed to rule the wizarding world. Fudge’s actions are only possible because “there appears to be almost no formal oversight or restraint on the Ministry of Magic” (Barratt 33). The only element which seems to exercise some control is the press, the *Daily Prophet* to be exact, which highly

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<sup>179</sup> Obviously, there are laws and regulations, but they are not expressively stated in the book.

<sup>180</sup> This is not only true for the Ministry of Magic, but also for Hogwarts, where Harry is punished time and time again, and it is especially true for Voldemort’s way of ruling his Death Eaters.



monitors and judges the Ministry's actions, as the headline "FURTHER MISTAKES AT THE MINISTRY OF MAGIC" (*Goblet* 179; emphasis in original) attests. This leads to the conclusion that Fudge appears in need of a positive popular evaluation to stabilize his own position. Furthermore, the dependence on popular opinion highlights Fudge's own weakness and displays a fundamental shortcoming of the system.

Discrimination and corruption appear to be further elements that need to be factored in the Ministry's decision-making processes. There are several obvious examples for this theory. Concerning discrimination, the reader only needs to look at the Ministry's treatment of Hagrid the half-giant. Not only is he sentenced to Azkaban without any evidence or trial in *Chamber*, in *Prisoner* the reader becomes aware that a citizen's testimony is only believable if his/her heritage fulfils certain criteria. Hagrid's account of what has happened between Draco Malfoy and Buckbeak is not credited with as much weight as Lucius Malfoy's (*Prisoner* 241). Lucius Malfoy is a wealthy, pure-blood adult, and as such his voice apparently carries more weight than Harry's or Hagrid's, emphasising the liminal space that adolescence and the racial Other occupy in the wizarding society.

On other occasions, the plot alludes to Lucius Malfoy giving Fudge a monetary incentive after Harry's trial, as "Harry distinctly heard the gentle clinking of what sounded like a full pocket of gold" from under Malfoys robe, just before Malfoy and Fudge walk away to talk in private (*Order* 141). Through Harry as a focalizer, the books emphasize that everyone should be equal under the law. Nevertheless, the plot also reveals how openly people of means are privileged in a society favouring wealth and status. Equality becomes illusory and the political institution only serves those in control to maintain their position and accumulate even more power.

The second form of corruption appears in the form of a favour for a favour: Willy Widdershins, for example, spies on Harry in a bar and reports to Umbridge. McGonagall's reaction to this betrays the connection to the Ministry's illegal methods: "Oh, so that's why he wasn't prosecuted for setting up all those regurgitating toilets! What an interesting insight into our justice system!' 'Blatant corruption!' roared the portrait of the corpulent, red-nosed wizard [...]. 'The Ministry did not cut deals with petty criminals in my day, no sir, they did not!'" (*Order* 541). The reaction of the portraits illustrates the downward trajectory the Ministry has taken and invites the reader to be equally outraged. As Barratt points out, "the legal system [...] allows for personal connections or material influence to sway the decision process" (Barratt 35). Furthermore, these examples illustrate how easily the state apparatus, which should be

based on liberty and equality of its subjects, becomes corrupted and abused by those in power.

Barton argues the Ministry of Magic is “run by self-interested bureaucrats bent on increasing and protecting their power, often to the detriment of the public of large” (Barton 1525). This becomes evident in the trials mentioned above, as well as in Dolores Umbridge’s actions against Harry Potter (*Order* 658). In all these cases, members of the Ministry, especially the Minister for Magic, are solely interested in maintaining their powerful status instead of justly governing the state and fulfilling their duty of keeping the citizens safe and informing them about potential threats, such as Lord Voldemort’s return.

In the first few books, the wizarding government at least “seems [...] to be able to do the minimum necessary for maintenance of law and order” as Barratt contends (Barratt 33). After Voldemort’s return, however, the Ministry of Magic undergoes a dramatic change.<sup>181</sup> Innocent people such as Stan Shunpike are imprisoned illegitimately and serve as scapegoats to display the Ministry’s alleged progress in their attempt to catch Voldemort and his Death Eaters (*Prince* 324f.). The new Minister for Magic, Rufus Scrimgeour, even tries to win Harry as a propaganda tool, the “Ministry’s new poster boy” in order to soothe the public (*Prince* 605). These actions are not only meant to be face-saving, but also reveal the pressure the Ministry is under, the Minister for Magic’s panic, and the incapability to deal with this situation. That the government cannot guarantee the safety of its population but rather lies to its citizens about the severity of the problem, points to the fallibility of this particular system, especially since the agents of the Ministry are more interested in saving themselves than in saving the population. They benefit from the fact that they do not have to answer to a higher authority or directly to the people. The last point is even more relevant under Voldemort’s regime.

Although the media appears to be a small controlling force at first, media control under Voldemort’s regime is absolute; for example, the most popular newspaper, *The Daily Prophet* becomes an instrument of the state, and is used for propagandistic purposes.<sup>182</sup> In *Hallows*, the reader is able to perceive a change in the relation between the Ministry and the press, as a shift of roles has taken place; the press now appears to be an instrument of the state instead of an instrument to check the state’s actions. This development illustrates “the importance of the control of information (and the role of

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<sup>181</sup> I talk further about the Ministry of Magic after Voldemort’s return in my analysis in chapter 3.2 The Construction of Difference.

<sup>182</sup> More on this in chapter 3.2 The Construction of Difference.

the media more specifically) in both reflecting and manipulating public opinion” (Barratt 5).

It is also important to note that almost everything the members of the Ministry do happens legally. Umbridge, for example, does not engage in ‘criminal’ actions, but partakes in writing the laws that allow morally unacceptable actions, such as the discrimination of particular groups of the population, and the dealing out of death sentences based on this. Umbridge is “the evil bureaucrat par excellence” (Barton 1528) and commits bureaucratic criminality, a concept based on Hanna Arendt’s analysis of the German state apparatus and its connection to the Final Solution.<sup>183</sup> The following sentence expressed by historian Eric D. Weitz’s about Nazi Germany is likewise applicable to the situation in the *Harry Potter* books: “the conditions that made possible the executions were the result of German policies that had deliberately destroyed the ‘thin crust’ of civilization and encouraged the sadistic inclinations of particular individuals to flourish” (Weitz 135). With characters such as Umbridge, Greyback<sup>184</sup> and his prominent role in the last book, or the snatchers<sup>185</sup> in *Hallows*, the reader witnesses the moral decline of the wizarding world and the destruction of the “‘thin crust’ of civilization”. However, the rise of bravery and moral courage in regard to, for example, Harry Potter and “wizards and witches risking their own safety to protect Muggle friends and neighbours” (*Hallows* 357) display positive and desirable attitudes.

In portraying a government that consists of members who place their priority on protecting their own interests, the books display an extremely ineffective and morally dubious government that develops into an enemy of its citizens. Mock trials, corruption, and egomaniac and power-hungry members of the Ministry lead politics and law ad absurdum. Barratt convincingly claims that “[t]he politics of the wizarding world calls into question the right to rule both literally and figuratively, inviting the reader to examine the most basic rationale for establishing government” (Barratt 9). Through the unchecked actions of the Minister of Magic, the books alert the reader to the fallibility of this system.

Creating political awareness and conveying the image of a wrongful government, however, is not everything the books do. They also reveal the

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<sup>183</sup> I have also discussed the topic of bureaucratic criminality shortly in “Villains but no criminals?! Selected Heroes and Villains in Fantasy Fiction for Children and Young Adults”.

<sup>184</sup> Fenrir Greyback is a werewolf and loyal servant to Voldemort. He revels in his power to infect other people; book seven also alludes to sexual abuse when he threatens Hermione (*Hallows* 375).

<sup>185</sup> Under Voldemort’s regime, snatchers catch so-called Mudbloods and blood traitors for money (*Hallows* 311); in the reader’s world, they appear to find their historical equivalent in slave hunters or Jew hunters.

consequences of a corrupt and destructive government and thus highlight the importance of (political) vigilance and participation, and the moral imperative to act against a corrupted government. Although Barton comes to the conclusion that Rowling creates “a devastating critique of Anglo-American government” (Barton 1535), the last book goes one step further in its manifold allusions to Nazi Germany and the interpretive implications connected to this.<sup>186</sup> The severity of political corruption and failure is a shocking comment on 21<sup>st</sup>-century Europe, because it reveals the spectacular fallibility of the system. Furthermore, in portraying a democratic as well as a totalitarian state, the books take clear sides and claim that “only democracy embodies the justice and tolerance that [Rowling] has said are at the heart of her work” (Barratt 25).

Although the reader can perceive basic governmental responsibilities such as the perseverance of essential rights at first,<sup>187</sup> the failure of the wizarding government “leads to one of Rowling’s central political messages: that an unjust law should not be followed [...], and that any regime that embraces such laws is not a legitimate one” (Barratt 57). In other words, the plot encourages readers not to follow positive law, when it violates natural law and moral law, concepts which are “derived from the conscience of mankind” (Bellamy 2012, 20). According to natural law “individuals have certain inalienable rights” (ibid. 202), which establishes a focus on the idea of universal (human) rights. Alex Bellamy classifies natural law as a “moral sub-tradition” (ibid. 7) which can be traced through theological and secular sources; these sources are a fundamental part of (Western) society and form (Western) cultural memory:

The theological account holds that humans are bestowed with certain natural predispositions, intuitions and interests by God. These give humans certain rights and responsibilities. The secular account produces many of the same principles from a very different source. It holds that as rational beings with the capability for reason, individuals have certain inherent rights. This makes some types of action right or wrong in themselves. (ibid. 120f.)

According to 17<sup>th</sup>-century political philosopher John Locke, the main purpose of the state as political power is to “secure to all human beings their lives, their liberties and their material possessions” (Dunn 47). As my analysis uncovers, the Ministry of Magic

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<sup>186</sup> See my analysis in chapter 3.2 The Construction of Difference.

<sup>187</sup> E.g. as defined by Locke, “rights to life, liberty, and property” (Miller 2003, 70), but also for example “rights to freedom of movement, freedom of worship, and freedom to marry [...] access to material benefits, such as the right to work, the right to an adequate standard of living, and the right to education” (ibid.)

actively and willingly fails its citizens.<sup>188</sup> Firstly, it fails to protect life and liberty as the life of each citizen is measured differently in the eyes of the law. Secondly, it fails its citizens because politicians put their personal interests first. While interference is supposed to be “for the good of the community as a whole” (Hindess 72), in the books the state’s interference in the lives of the citizens only benefits those in power. Instead of security and safety, the institution in charge offers fear and terror that no one in the books can escape, as a state influences its citizens in numerous ways and on different levels.

As state power in these books is organized and institutionalized villainy, it seems to be more challenging for the protagonists to fight this evil, because “[p]olitical authority [...] combines authority proper with forced compliance” (Miller 2003, 21); furthermore, a government maintains the “legitimate control over the means of violence” (Weber qtd. in Barratt 28). Consequently, the asymmetry of power is an equally extreme contrast to the individual villains mentioned above; the latter mostly base their power either on physical or intellectual force or their possession of royal markers such as a throne or royal lineage. Institutions in power allow an even more thorough investigation of their legitimization. As the books propose, institutions which rule without the consent of their subjects have no legitimate claim to power.

Although the *Harry Potter* books do not necessarily lay their emphasis on the state, its politics, and structure, they nevertheless show that people, fictional and real alike, “are creatures of the state”, as David Miller states in his introduction to political philosophy (Miller 2003, 19). More obviously than the intertextual stress of the previous chapters, the institutions anchor the stories in the reader’s reality. Magic aside, the books demonstrate the power and limitations of the institution under scrutiny, but not necessarily its potential to positively influence characters and readers. The institution that rules the state acts as enabler to spread lies and terror, and hence functions as a threat to the characters.

The portrayal of the state as evil leaves the reader with a fuzzy concept of how a state should be. The *Harry Potter* books portray a government that interferes in its subjects’ lives to the extreme. Consequently, and on the surface, a more libertarian government appears to be recommended; libertarians “favor minimal government intervention in the lives of citizens – an ideal government would provide basic physical safety, public goods that could not be provided in any other way, and have little other

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<sup>188</sup> The same is true for the Magisterium in *His Dark Materials*.

involvement in its citizens lives” (Barratt 20). This corresponds to Thoreau’s claims that “[t]hat government is best which governs least” (Thoreau 265).<sup>189</sup>

The older the characters get, the more do they experience the influence the Ministry of Magic on the individual’s life. The characters’ observations about the Ministry leads to the conclusion that the government has a greater role than just a passive enabler; it has a greater influence on its citizens life, as personal freedom “cannot be enjoyed without positive action on the part of government, providing the resources that keep options open, and the conditions under which people can make free and informed decisions” (Miller 2003, 72f.). This goes hand in hand with Rousseau’s theory that “we can be both ruled and free only if we rule ourselves. We do this by thinking of ourselves as part of a common whole” (Matravers xiii).<sup>190</sup> Political involvement, especially in times of need, has to be taken seriously and be part of the maturation process.

To escape the corrupt and destructive institution the books clearly suggest to disobey the government and use political violence<sup>191</sup>. As Miller states: “The argument for civil disobedience is that if a particular law is sufficiently unjust or oppressive, or if the state refuses to listen to the concerns of a minority when making the decisions, this can justify breaking the law if legal forms of protest prove to be ineffective” (Miller 2003, 36).<sup>192</sup> This chapter demonstrates that political violence is justified in the *Harry Potter* books as no other form of resistance can adequately put an end to the reign of terror. In her analysis of *The Young Rebels*, Muhle concludes that “[p]olitical violence may be prohibited by law, but because the rebels regard the law as illegitimate, they have a right to use force in order to establish their own rules” (ibid.). This is equally true for the books under scrutiny. Again, the *Harry Potter* books invite the reader to view the acts of the institutions as illegal and immoral and transform the protagonists’ acts against the institutions into justified acts of political violence. This appears to be the only instrument to discover the power of the individual, as well as voice the protest against the wrongful regime.

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<sup>189</sup> This is also promoted in Hemingway’s *Sangreal Trilogy* as the discussion about God-like rulers vs. free will proves (*Crown* 354).

<sup>190</sup> However, I am not taking into consideration that Rousseau thought that a government should not be anchored in a democracy, as he saw democracies as corrupt (Wokler 82).

<sup>191</sup> According to Honderich, political violence is “a considerable or destroying use of force against persons or things, a use of force prohibited by law and directed to a change in the policies, personnel or system of government, and hence to changes in society” (Honderich qtd. in Muhle 2010, 7).

<sup>192</sup> Miller defines civil disobedience as “illegal but non-violent forms of political protest whose purpose is to put pressure on government to change its policies” (2003, 35f). However, the characters go one step further than civil disobedience, as their actions are violent and culminate in war.

Miller describes one of the goals of political philosophy as that “we can trace the effects of different forms of government, and we can learn what qualities go to make up the best form of government” (Miller 2003, 3). In part, this is also true for the institutions described in the books, especially for the Church in *His Dark Materials*.<sup>193</sup> The *Harry Potter* books are not concerned with the “best form of government”, but with a better realization of the institutions through the positioning of more virtuous characters as leaders. The new Ministry of Magic under Kingsley Shacklebolt who “had been named temporary Minister for Magic” (*Hallows* 596) remains extremely vague at the end of *Hallows*; though the reader knows that a short-term improvements have happened in *Harry Potter*: “the Imperiused up and down the country had come back to themselves, [...] Death Eaters were fleeing or else being captured, [...] the innocent of Azkaban were being released” (*Hallows* 596). My analysis reveals that the books do not only talk about the political systems, but about the fallibility of said systems, and put an immense emphasis on the characters of those who run the government – which is a different, even contrasting take on political philosophy today, which primarily thinks “much more about the institutions of good government, and less about the personal qualities of the people who make them work” (Miller 2003, 5).

### Conclusion

It becomes apparent that the books under scrutiny do not follow one consistent school of thought regarding political philosophy. Rather, scholars and readers can perceive different lines of thoughts, such as traces of Machiavelli and Hobbes when it comes to the individual ruler, and Locke and Rousseau, when it comes to government. The conscious or unconscious application of said political philosophers points to the conclusion that these lines of thoughts are deeply ingrained in Western politics and culture, and thus underlie discussions of political authority. No matter if it is an individual ruler or a government, all books agree on the premise that people need political authority– be it an individual, virtuous ruler, or a more democratic system made up of many people.

The protagonists fight against adult adversaries as well as (political) institutions, all of which appear to rule illegitimately and create an atmosphere of fundamental inequality, fear and destruction. They are totalitarian and tyrannical leaders and governments, who employ acts of repression and violence against their own citizens and subjects. Freedman’s definition of totalitarianism eerily fits the actions of the antagonists:

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<sup>193</sup> Compare my analysis in chapter 3.3 The Use and Abuse of Religion.

The totalitarian ideology “collapsed the space between the public and private spheres, insisting that the state was entitled to regulate all areas of social and individual life” (Freeden 91) and thus marking every kind of disobedience as political transgression. The villains’ character make-up, their actions, and their immorality convince the protagonists and readers alike that people would be better off without them; the books thus encourage political violence against the wrongful rulers, especially since these rulers “who base their claim to rule on possession of power must of necessity rely heavily on tactics of coercion” (Barratt 11). Naturally, the tactics on how to coerce someone differ; while individuals mostly base coercion on physical violence and/or punishment, institutions are more systematic. However, both act within the boundaries of the law to eradicate the enemy.

One of the most important maxims taught by all of the books under scrutiny is that “might does not make right”, as Jean-Jacque Rousseau states (Rousseau 8). The villains and their policy represent what Michael Walzer describes as “evil objectified in the world, [...] in a form so potent and apparent that there could never [be] anything to do but fight against it” (Walzer 253). With their actions, the villains have lost their rights to be sovereign, and it becomes permissible to remove them from their position, even if it means killing them.

The books focus on the use and abuse of power, and by doing so they also emphasize that the way the villains handle political power is not how politics should work. That people need a government to live in peace is a line of thought entertained by political philosophers such as Hobbes, Pufendorf, and Locke (Wokler 49f.). In his introduction to political philosophy, David Miller convincingly argues that “[w]e need political authority, [...] because it gives us the security that allows us to trust other people, and in a climate of trust people are able to cooperate to produce” an atmosphere of trust, prosperity and safety (Miller 2003, 23).<sup>194</sup> Helen Frowe agrees with this, but like the books, she argues that sovereignty is important only due to the conditions it has to fulfil:

sovereignty matters because and only if, it enables a government to protect its citizens’ human rights. The purpose of sovereignty – of political and territorial authority – is to enable one to provide one’s citizens with the basic living conditions to which all people are entitled. Since these entitlements (or rights)

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<sup>194</sup> As said above, Hobbes “described the ‘natural condition of mankind’ without political rule as one of ferocious competition for the necessities of life, leaving people in constant fear in case they should be robbed or attacked, and constantly inclined, therefore, to strike at others first” (Miller 2003, 22).



are of fundamental moral importance, and because sovereignty enables their fulfilment, sovereignty is itself very important. (Frowe 90)

The books under scrutiny reveal how political power becomes dangerous in the wrong hands, especially when these conditions are violated by the sovereign. Kenneth Minogue accordingly warns that “even in the best regulated of worlds, it has to be recognized that political power is necessary but dangerous stuff. No precautions can guarantee complete safety” (Minogue 40). The solution of the books is to put trustworthy and virtuous characters in positions of power.

The books put forward significant doctrines that concern political legitimacy that are also Lockean in nature, namely that the right to govern is based on consent, and that it is justifiable to resist unjust power (Dunn 6).<sup>195</sup> The scenarios in the books clearly reveal that “sovereignty is taken to be instrumentally valuable, rather than intrinsically valuable. [...] sovereignty is not valuable in itself. [...] Sovereignty’s value is conditional upon whether it helps citizens to achieve basic human goods” (Frowe 91). As is the case in the books, the rulers fail to be valuable to their citizens; therefore, the sovereigns lose their right to govern their subjects and to demand obedience.

Furthermore, the books may remind the reader that living in a Western society means that the citizens have certain rights and obligations; they have “the right to have rights” (Bellamy 2008, 15), but these “rights involve duties – not least the duty to exercise the political rights to participate” (ibid. 17). One of the most important aspects of this is the duty to rebel against an unjust and unjustified authority as the books demonstrate. Following this train of thought, the books encourage the reader to be aware and beware of their political and social responsibilities and obligations.

Taking a closer look at the individual monarchs, one can perceive that they display some features of the Machiavellian prince in respect to their moral flexibility, deceitfulness, cruelty, and the maxim to make him-/herself feared to stay in power (Machiavelli 58).<sup>196</sup> The monarchs above do not manage to acquire their subjects’ loyalty, and thus fail secure their positions. Rather, they are evidence of Rousseau’s statement that “[i]t is easier to conquer than to rule” (Rousseau 74). The sovereign’s under scrutiny perpetually remain conquerors of their subjects.

Shift serves as a good example of the despots the rulers become. In a truly despotic fashion he exclaims: “What do you know about freedom? You think freedom

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<sup>195</sup> I do not focus on the religious component of Locke’s understanding that “political rights follow from political duties and both derive from God’s will” (Dunn 37).

<sup>196</sup> As Machiavelli states, “a prince must not worry about the infamy of being considered cruel when it is a matter of keeping his subjects united and loyal” (Machiavelli 57).

means doing what you like. Well, you're wrong. That isn't true freedom. True freedom means doing what I tell you." (*Battle* 34). By including the statement that "[t]rue freedom means doing what I tell you", Shift not only accomplishes the ultimate oppression and exploitation of the Narnian population, but he also justifies his own actions as they consequently become the expressions of the people's will and freedom. More importantly, he denies Narnians their basic rights and identity.

Following Edmund Burke's argumentation about the fall of the sovereign the reader can clearly perceive Shift's position of power as unjustified:

The moment a sovereign removes the idea of security and protection from his subjects, and declares that he is everything and they nothing, when he declares that no contract he makes with them can or ought to bind him, he then declares war upon them: he is no longer sovereign; they are no longer subjects. No man, therefore, has a right to arbitrary power. (Burke 459)

In the readers' world these are in fact inalienable rights that have been acknowledged not only in the American Declaration of Independence of 1776 with the right to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness", but also after World War II in the "Universal Declaration of Human Rights"; both documents have become beacons of (Western) values.

In Burke's statement above as well as in the books under scrutiny, it is the sovereign who becomes a tyrant, and in conclusion provides the subjects with the right to revolution. In his *Two Treatises of Government*, Locke emphasizes "the people's right of revolution against even a legitimate monarch where that monarch had grossly abused his powers" (Dunn 12). The goal of the revolution is the preservation of a peaceful society. In *Narnia*, this includes the reinstalment of the golden and peaceful days, "[w]hen Adam's flesh and Adam's bone / Sits at Cair Paravel in throne" (*Wardrobe* 88), whereas in *Harry Potter*, it is the return to a liberal society. In *The Inheritance Cycle*, too, the right to revolution is emphasised when it comes to fighting Galbatorix: "The Empire *will* be brought down, Galbatorix *will* be dethroned, and the rightful government *will* be raised" (*Eldest* 22; emphasis in original).

The *Harry Potter* novels as well as the *Narnia* books display that consent is the fundament on which political authority rests. As *Narnia* shows, even kings and queens need consent; here it is the consent from God, which makes sure that good and virtuous rulers sit on the throne in Narnia. In *Harry Potter*, the perception is different. The role of the Ministry of Magic develops from the periphery to the centre; the more extreme the regime becomes, the more it meddles in matters of private life and loses the consent

of its citizens. The Ministry of Magic develops from a legitimate political institution that serves and protects its citizens from e.g. the detection by Muggles, to a fascist organisation. It becomes illegitimate because of the self-serving and harmful way of dominating and tyrannising its people; only those in power benefit from the political situation and ideology. This trajectory not only reminds the reader that the citizens have obligations and duties, but even more so that the state has obligations and duties towards its citizens, which legitimates its right to political authority and the right to be obeyed. More precisely, the books reveal that “the state is fundamental as the condition of all else” (Minogue 49). Only when everything in the state is in place, everything else can prosper, as for example the conclusion in *Wardrobe* reveals (191f.).

Not only does modern thinking proclaim that those in power have rights and obligations, they also base their power on legitimacy and morality.<sup>197</sup> Legitimacy due to consent and trust is fundamental. Tied to this are multiple factors, such as performance and moral justification. One of the most important topics discussed in the struggle displayed in the books is the absence of morality from those in power; morality is supposed to be an essential feature in politics. As Derek Matravers explains in his introduction to *The Social Contract*, Rousseau put forward that there is not only a connection between politics and morality, but “[t]here is an intimate link between our individual characters and the society in which we live” (Matravers xii), as “[p]eople are in the long run what their government makes of them” (Wokler 34). Similarly, Bellamy emphasizes the central feature of morality in our self-perception as citizens, which entangles the web of our social existence: “Citizenship informs and gives effect to central features of our social morality. It underlies our whole sense of self-worth, affecting in the process the ways we treat others and are treated by them” (Bellamy 2008, 122).

No matter if individuals or institutions, morality is always supposed to be the centre of human agency. Especially in children’s and young adults’ fiction, morality within the institution of the state appears to be extremely important, and the absence of it serves to invoke the right of rebellion. The books stress that sovereign / governmental power does not have to be blindly accepted, and that rebellion against illegitimate and immoral governments and persons in power is highly acceptable,<sup>198</sup> even a moral imperative and a justification of war. The books utilize war to defend free will and morality, and to establish legitimate ruling powers. The books do not try to create a

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<sup>197</sup> Locke’s political thoughts include the “political significance of morality” (Hindess 58).

<sup>198</sup> In his book *The Power Elite*, 20<sup>th</sup> century sociologist C. Wright Mills put forward the argument that illegitimate power is always immoral (Hindess 66).

utopia with a new, improved and perfect form of government<sup>199</sup>; rather, in fabricating counter-examples which violate Western values, they attempt to perpetuate the current political system in Western society. Thus, the plots invoke the conclusion that the system the reader experiences in the real world is not an arbitrary option; instead it is naturalized and masked as necessity needed to live a free and prosperous life.

There are two “potentially conflicting conceptions of the human individual [...]”: as autonomous rational agent on the one hand and as malleable creature of social conditions on the other” (Hindess 73). On the plot level, the books display both categories. While the protagonists of the books are clearly autonomous individuals and propagate this fact, the reader can perceive the latter concept in, for example, some Hogwarts students who do not believe Harry’s and Dumbledore’s theory about Voldemort’s return (*Order* 196f.). Transcending the plot level, however, the books operate on the principle of the malleable subject, which reveals them to be instruments of socialization.

Regarding the malleability of the subject, these are important points to take into consideration. Power, especially power wielded by the institution analysed above, is an “insidious force affecting thoughts and desires of its victims” (Hindess 73). Dumbledore highlights that Voldemort possesses such power and instigates moral courage in the face of a powerful and manipulative adversary: “Lord Voldemort’s gift for spreading discord and enmity is very great [...]. Remember, if the time should come when you have to make a choice between what is right, and what is easy” (*Goblet* 628); a message equally valid for all the books in this thesis.

What is not explicitly said in the books is that acting in a morally good or morally evil way is, as Locke’s philosophy claims, “a matter of conformity or non-conformity” (Hindess 58), and consequently, ‘good’ and ‘evil’ are “product[s] of conditioning” (ibid. 75). As instruments of socialization, the books are part of this conditioning and perpetuate Western values, political philosophy, and morality, and thus have the potential to shape the reader’s thoughts, desires,<sup>200</sup> and behavioural patterns.<sup>201</sup> As a consequence, morality becomes “a pervasive and insidious control” (Hindess 18). The dominant political ideology serves to construct and manipulate

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<sup>199</sup> Except Lewis; in Narnia, kings and queens are divinely ordained to rule and thus do not need the consent of their subjects.

<sup>200</sup> In his book *Discourses of Power*, Hindess points out that “Locke’s treatment of morality [...] describes a dispersed form of social regulation that not only acts directly on the behaviour of its subjects but also moulds their thoughts and desires” (Hindess 17f.).

<sup>201</sup> The authors themselves cannot escape Western ideology, as they are likewise “creatures of their lifeworld”, as Habermas states (Hindess 94).

identities and thus helps the states to establish and maintain a power base which facilitates population management, as becomes obvious in *Harry Potter*, the *Inheritance Cycle* and *His Dark Materials*.

Naturally, the manipulation of the subject does not appear spontaneously, but is part of an ongoing process. According to Locke's maxims, every citizen possesses the ability to think rationally. However, "a rational faculty of reason [...] requires a suitable process of learning and maturation" (Hindess 74). This process of learning and maturation is affected by customs, conventions, and education of the society the individual lives in (ibid. 75f.). Likewise, "habits of thought" are also part of this training because they are "products of social conditioning" (ibid. 78), as is the individual according to theories put forward by Lukes, Marcuse, and Habermas (ibid. 95); "[b]ehaviour may be regulated by the habits instilled through education, training and the appropriate disposition of reward and sanction, as well as by command and legal prohibition" (ibid. 78f.). Although the Ministry of Magic is a superb example of this last point regarding "command and legal prohibition", the reader him/herself undergoes this training while reading the books, as these books promote (Western) values and thus become training tools. The books under scrutiny define and propagate specific images of good and evil, and thus also help to promote and "define the internal standards by which we each try to regulate our own judgement and behaviour" (ibid. 78).<sup>202</sup>

According to Hindess, "Locke's account of the importance of habit in the regulation of thought and behaviour suggests that civil society should be seen not only as underlying a public morality, but also as an important source of our more private beliefs and desires" (ibid. 82). Firstly, this also refers to my previously mentioned quotation that people "are creatures of the state" (Miller 2003, 19). Secondly, 20<sup>th</sup> century political and social theorist Lukes likewise analyses power as being directed at "socially structured and culturally patterned behaviour", which consequently causes a the victim to be manipulated without realising it (Hindess 69). Power is thus not only restricted to political institutions, but rather encompasses "a realm of social interaction and [...] contending social forces" (ibid. 83). Thirdly, Locke's account is also true in the light of the books' function as tools of socialization and regulation of social behaviour.

In their capacity to defamiliarize the reader's reality, books of fantasy fiction can go one step further and establish specific 'what-if' scenarios that might guide the reader in his/her decision-making process. Furthermore, in creating absolute evil, the books

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<sup>202</sup> Although Hindess discusses this point in reference to Locke's idea about rewards and sanctions, this is also applicable to literature for children and young adults.

convey a stronger moral imperative to act and follow the inscribed behavioural patterns and ideological convictions favoured by the plots. Due to the strong moral imperative, the protagonists do not appear to have a choice in this matter – they must save the world, and consequently also the values the books deem as important.

This, on the other hand, also reflects on the reader. Due to the reader's education<sup>203</sup> and the tools of socialization, such as these books, his/her habits of thought appear to be predetermined, and as Hindess points out, "the 'free' choices made by individual members of those societies serve to perpetuate a set of power relations" (ibid. 87). The reader might think that this solely applies for the totalitarian states portrayed in the books and not for the democratic states they live in. In displaying the institutions in such a negative light and drawing from historical events, the books also give the impression that, by contrast, politics in the reader's world could be worse. The lasting political solutions the books suggest are to keep the system and improve it with good and virtuous leaders, a conclusion that has nothing to do with *Realpolitik*. Instead of being purely critical, the books rather perpetuate the current Western political form and ideology, although they are far from making politicians out of the young readers.

Furthermore, the stories reveal and sensitise the reader in respect to "hallmarks of authoritarianism", namely "antidemocratic actions; political and economic rule by an elite; monopolistic control of mass media, military forces, and weapons; and a policy of systematic violence and terror against those depicted as enemies" (Pavlik 32). And last but not least, the plots give voice to the statement that absolute power corrupts absolutely.

In perpetuating Western political systems and values, the stories develop into a prolonged argument for Western civil society, despite the flaws in the system. On the surface, literature for children and young adults show that "the form our government takes is not predetermined: we have a choice" (Miller 2003, 3). Looking at the books under scrutiny in this thesis, however, this line almost exclusively appears to be lip-service, because in the end, most of the series under scrutiny reinstate the form of political authority that was there before the hostile takeover. *His Dark Materials*, and to some degree *The Inheritance Cycle*, are the only series in which a change of government form takes place: from the kingdom of heaven to the republic of heaven, from an absolute monarch to a kind of constitutional monarchy. Though the republic of heaven does not exist yet, the protagonist sets course to realize it. In all other books discussed in this thesis that scrutinize the form of government and/or the ruler, the well-

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<sup>203</sup> Among others, Foucault claims that the purpose of education is to form the citizen (Hindess 130, 133).

established system remains the same: *Narnia* for example remains a kingdom, while the outline and nature of government in the *Harry Potter* series is the same as in the beginning. This makes these books not revolutionary, but fundamentally conservative.

The flaws that all wrongful authorities display, such as megalomania, immorality, and physical violence to repress the subjects and citizens, become important landmarks to judge past, present and future societies. Processing and learning from the past are lessons the books convey in an indirect and estranged way. Although the books pose an argument for liberal political systems, they also reveal how convincing and seductive totalitarian forms of power can be: “Europeans have sometimes been beguiled by a despotism that comes concealed in the seductive form of an ideal – as it did in the cases of Hitler and Stalin” (Minogue 2). This statement has been true in the past and still rings more than true for the nationalist tendencies of today’s politics.

The books not only focus on questions of good and evil, but also on questions of the legitimacy of government, morality, and freedom. This creates the backdrop for the character to prosper and to impart their ideology on the reader; the books become a tool that helps the reader to internalize the beliefs and values they propagate, namely the laws and customs of Western society, as well as the hope in human nature. Rousseau “believed all his life, no less than did Anne Frank at the darkest moment of modern history, that human nature was still fundamentally good at heart” (Wokler 150). The protagonists are the embodiment of this statement; they bring back hope to their societies. Although the books emphasize the ordinariness of the protagonists and thus build a bridge to the reader, the saviours appear to be extraordinary in their ability to see through the behaviour of the villains, and their willingness to sacrifice their happiness or lives for the greater good.

In the fight against wrongful authority the protagonists not only embody hope and justice. Through the juxtaposition of wrongful authority and the heroes’ actions, the plots create ideals that might guide the reader in his/her everyday life. However, nothing can ever be an ideal, and it is important to take a closer look at what is actually communicated. “The essential thing about justice and other ideals is that they function in many different ways, and it is important always to ask in any particular case which function is being performed” (Minogue 80) and in what way the reader might be educated.

All in all, the character constellation of adult authority and young protagonist displays the process of questioning adult authority and rebelling against it to escape the liminal space adolescents occupy in Western society. These books thus might serve to

empower the reader. Even the most oppressive oppressor leaves room for resistance, which the protagonists use to fight the individual or the regime. However, the struggle can also be read as a metaphorical one taking place within the protagonist and ending in the young character's coming of age. To reduce the struggle of the characters as internal, however, would be a mistake, as it does not cater to the complexity of the texts.

The reader can conclude that most of the stories serve as backdrop to discuss the importance of free will. The wars in these books are clearly wars of two systems; one of the systems focuses on the view that people are born subjects, a view popular in the Middle Ages<sup>204</sup> (Hindess 13);<sup>205</sup> this presupposes the unquestioned obedience of subjects, which the villains enforce by violent means, as dissent is met with excessive displays of power. The other, modern view is that people are born free and become citizens; as a consequence, the citizen and the sovereign/government have both duties and obligations to fulfil in their relationship with each other (ibid.). While the view of people as subjects displays an inherent inequality between monarch and subject, a more democratic system is built on equality. Furthermore, for the citizen, political participation becomes an obligation and a duty; only through this mechanism of state control can each individual voice his/her opinion, and thus influence the state. The books demonstrate that the political arena becomes the battleground for human freedom.<sup>206</sup>

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<sup>204</sup> Although Aristotle already expressed the opinion that some people are born free while others are born slaves, I here refer to the relationship between a population and its ruler, not between an individual and his / her master. "Aristotle, before them all, had likewise said that men are not naturally equal, but that some are born for slavery and others for dominion. Aristotle was right but he mistook the effect for the cause. Every man born in slavery is born for slavery; nothing is more certain." (Rousseau 7)

<sup>205</sup> *Narnia*, as a series dominated by religious imagery, belongs to this category, as it emphasized that people are born subject to God.

<sup>206</sup> Michel Foucault also put forward this idea (Gutting 21).



## 3.2 The Construction of Difference

Especially through the foregrounding of race, the construction of difference becomes a central topic in fantasy literature for children and young adults. Race and racism are both long-established and complex concepts. As Eric Weitz states, “[r]ace is the hardest and most exclusive form of identity” (Weitz 21). Definitions of the concept of race include not only the genotype and phenotype as biological markers of a person, but also geographical, political, cultural or even religious factors of identity formation. The connection between race, group formation and identity forms the centre of this analysis. In this chapter I explore how the books construct and deconstruct race and racism (mostly) within the parameters of inter-human/e relations.

The books which I analyse in this chapter are J. K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter* series, P. C. Cast and Kristin Cast’s *House of Night* novels, Amanda Hemingway’s *Sangreal Trilogy*, and C. S. Lewis’s *Prince Caspian*. The main focus, however, lies on the *Harry Potter* books. The *Harry Potter* books are the only ones which display and reveal the propaganda apparatus of the state and how it works to persuade and indoctrinate its citizens. In contrast to this, the villains in the *House of Night* novels and the *Sangreal Trilogy* do not exploit a public and overt way of indoctrination, but work in a more subtle way in spreading their convictions. Nevertheless, they all root their ideological convictions in biological determinism.

Neferet, for example, discriminates significantly against humans and aims to fight a war to dominate, even eradicate this race; she does so with the help of her followers who support her claims and act on her convictions. In the *Sangreal Trilogy*, Nathan has to face his father who also wants to claim dominance over humans due to his power and therefore perceived natural superiority; the Grandir is about to set up an apparatus to control the human population. In *Prince Caspian*, racial differences also play a significant role for the justification of war. Narnians are repeatedly characterized as Other, which the enemy forces try to defeat or even extinguish. While the *Harry Potter* series is the clearest example of fascist politics and their consequences, the other books only reveal tendencies of what might happen in a deeply racist society.

First of all, I take a closer look at the historical trajectory of race and racism. This step not only defines and contextualizes these concepts, but also reveals first parallels between the perception of race within the human population of both the fictional and the real world. In both the reader’s world and the characters’ world,

concepts of race and racialization are intimately linked to ideological world views. Thus, the comparison between historical events and events in the *Harry Potter* books proves that the fictitious worlds not only reflect the fight between good and evil but are also mirror images of ideological structures the reader finds in his/her own world. In siding with Western ideology in regard to social values and politics, the series is only one example that proves to be an instrument of socialization aiming to turn the young readers into good citizens within the Western context.

In her article “Harry and the Other: Answering Race Questions in J. K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter*”, Jackie C. Horne, describes the wide range of interpretation and scrutiny the series has undergone: from being “a trenchant critique of ‘materialist ideologies of difference,’” which try to teach the reader a lesson in tolerance (Horne 76) to being works of fantasy fiction which pertain to and perpetuate prejudice (ibid. 77).<sup>207</sup> Shira Wolosky is another author who has published on *Harry Potter*. Her scope of interpretation includes questions of class, race, and genre, and also historical parallels to Nazi Germany, all which contribute to the message that the books reflect the reader’s world rather than serving as escapism. Bethany Barratt’s *The Politics of Harry Potter* (2012) gives an equally valuable insight into historical parallels and underlying political structures. Among other works, these articles and book-length studies serve as support and breeding grounds for my interpretations.

To unravel the intricacies between fantastic texts for children and young adults and their interpretive implications I also employ parallels to historical events in the reader’s world, especially Nazi Germany. In order to compare and contrast the series to structures and beliefs displayed in Nazi Germany, Jeffrey Herf’s *The Jewish Enemy* (2006), Eric D. Weitz’s *A Century of Genocide* (2006), and Ian Kershaw’s “How effective was Nazi Propaganda” (1983) serve as starting points.<sup>208</sup> These three scholars demonstrate in-depth depictions of historical events, racial prejudices, and ideological realizations in Germany before and during World War II. Moreover, I employ Louis

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<sup>207</sup> Horne situates herself in-between these critiques in her analysis of social justice antiracism and radical antiracism.

<sup>208</sup> Jeffrey Herf is a political scientist, and Professor of History at the University of Maryland. His research interests mainly focus on Germany and the Third Reich. Eric D. Weitz is the Dean of Humanities and Arts and Distinguished Professor of History at the City College of New York. He focuses on (early) modern Germany, as well as on international human rights and crimes against humanity. Ian Kershaw is a British historian, and former professor at the University of Sheffield. His main research focus is Hitler and Nazi Germany. All three authors are renowned scholars; while Herf and Weitz have won awards for the contributions to their fields, Kershaw was knighted for his services to history.

Althusser's theory about the Ideological State Apparatus (ISA) and the Repressive State Apparatus (RSA)<sup>209</sup> to further enrich my reading of the books.

### Race and Racism: Definitions and Historical Discourse

In the reader's world, race and racism are prominent and much discussed issues. Categorizations of human bodies in relation to, for example, a person's phenotype, geographical, political, cultural or even religious factors, can be traced through centuries, or even millennia, depending on the parameters (Geulen 16ff.).

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, one of the definitions of 'race' is that it is "[a] tribe, nation, or people, regarded as of common stock" (*OED* 6.1b). This definition not only refers to biological parameters, it concentrates first and foremost on cultural and geographical matters, thus incorporating the concept of the nation. Both categories, biological and cultural/geographical, are deeply connected with each other, as "[r]ace and nation represent ways of classifying difference. The two categories have never been hermetically sealed off from one another; rather, the lines between them are fluid and permeable" (Weitz 21).

Concentrating on race as biological marker, another definition of the term in the *OED* states the following: "According to various more or less formal systems of classification: any of the major groupings of mankind, having in common distinct physical features or having a similar ethnic background" belong to a common race (*OED* 6.1d). Incorporating a slight modification, this focus plays a major role concerning the fantasy books under scrutiny; the 'distinct physical features' and the 'similar ethnic background' are not only applicable for human beings, but also for fictitious creatures in the respective fantasy worlds such as goblins or giants, who find themselves subjected to racial stratifications in society.

Weitz convincingly argues that "[u]nlike ethnicity, race always entails a hierarchical construction of difference. Racial movements and states understand their creation and defense of a racial order as the great historical task of making the political and social world conform to the reality of nature, with its fixed system of domination and subordination" (Weitz 21f.). This system of domination and subordination also becomes apparent in the books in this chapter. In the *Harry Potter* series, for instance, some characters employ their biological lineage as a means of expressing superiority to establish and maintain their power and discriminate against other creatures which

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<sup>209</sup> According to Lois Althusser, the Repressive State Apparatus "contains: the Government, the Administration, the Army, the Police, the Courts, the Prisons, etc. [...]. Repressive suggests that the State Apparatus in question 'functions by violence' – at least ultimately" (207).

they perceive as naturally inferior beings. Omi and Winant appropriately argue that “*race is a concept which signifies and symbolizes social conflicts and interests by referring to different types of human bodies*” (Omi and Winant 123; emphasis in original).<sup>210</sup>

Besides the focus on different races, this subchapter discusses the concept of racism. The *OED* defines ‘racism’ as follows:

The belief that all members of each race possess characteristics, abilities, or qualities specific to that race, especially so as to distinguish it as inferior or superior to another race or races. Hence: prejudice and antagonism towards people of other races, esp. those felt to be a threat to one’s cultural or racial integrity or economic well-being; the expression of such prejudice in words or actions. Also occas. in extended use, with reference to people of other nationalities.

Central to this definition is the emphasis on the ideological quality of racism, as it qualified as a “belief” in the generalization and stereotypicalization of a certain people, and the focus on the inferior-superior-race paradigm of the concept.

The books under scrutiny, especially the *Harry Potter* series, mention ‘blood’ in closest reciprocity to race, a long established connection in the reader’s world. “*Limpieza de sangre*”, the purity of blood, is a principle which gained increasing importance in 15<sup>th</sup>-century Spain (Geulen 35). During the following centuries, not much changed regarding this principle. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the stratification of human lives based on outward appearance and origin gained scientific and intellectual justification and significance with Darwin’s *The Origin of Species* (1859) and Comte Arthur de Gobineau’s “*Essay on the Inequality of Human Races*” (1853-1855) (Weitz 34). Both authors provided their contemporary readers with “explanations for the development of humankind” (ibid.) and gave voice to and were incorporated into “new political and intellectual developments [that] would make race and nation, along with gender, the most prevalent and powerful forms of articulating the differences among people and of organizing political and social systems” (Weitz 32). While Darwin’s approach is biological and an articulation of what appears to be “a simple but very powerful law” (ibid. 36), de Gobineau “provided an anthropology and a history of the human species”

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<sup>210</sup> Michael Omi and Howard Winant developed racial formation theory. According to Omi and Winant, race consists of political, religious, and scientific elements, and therefore is a social construct rather than a biological one. Racial formation is the “sociohistorical process by which racial categories are created, inhabited, transformed, and destroyed” (125). This includes social, economic and political factors, which determine the content and importance of racial categories (ibid.).

(ibid. 34) which locate, for example, intelligence and morality within the framework of racial determinants (ibid.).

In the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century, many southern states of the U.S. had adopted the ‘one drop rule’ “which implied that any black ancestry, however far back, [determined] [...] where [a person] could live, what kind of work was available, and whether marriage or even relationships could take place with a white partner” (Rattansi 7). According to Ali Rattansi, similar practices of classification were accepted and had been employed, for example, in the UK and Nazi Germany (ibid. 43).<sup>211</sup>

By the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, “many people believed that racial characteristics were hierarchical, inheritable, and immutable, and that they entailed not only physical but moral and intellectual qualities as well” (Weitz 50); the reader can still perceive these ideological ideas within the books under scrutiny. Racist ideologies appear “when differences that might otherwise be considered ethnocultural are regarded as innate, indelible, and unchangeable” (Frederickson qtd. in Weitz 260); being inferior is thus based on a framework of biological determinants and located in one’s ‘nature’. Omi and Winant are convinced that ideas of racial superiority are still present today, as “the concept of race continues to play a fundamental role in structuring and representing the social world” (Omi and Winant 124), a statement which rings true for reality and fiction alike.

Racial segregation is still employed to categorize and explain the world (Geulen 118) and to give voice to the creation of a new world order (ibid. 36), as becomes apparent, for example, in the seventh installment of the *Harry Potter* series. The books which pursue this subject do not discuss issues which are far-fetched, but which are still relevant today. As history has shown, categorizing people by blood is not a fictitious practice but has been and still is a frightening problem in the reader’s world.

Weitz states that “[w]hile racial distinctions have most often been based on phenotype, race is not essentially about skin color but about the assignment of indelible traits to particular groups. Hence ethnic groups, nationalities, and even social classes can be ‘racialized’ in particular historical moments and places” (Weitz 21). This process of racialization finds its application in the stereotypicalization and marginalization in the wizarding world, for example regarding Mudblood wizards: evil characters utilize this process and its apparent social acceptance to exploit their racial Other.

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<sup>211</sup> Ali Rattansi is a Professor of Sociology and has extensively published on race, postcolonialism, and cultural imperialism.

The concepts of race and racism are highly compatible with other issues such as class, nationalism, and imperialism, as these subjects are used to establish power relations (Geulen 73). The different races and species in fantasy fiction also often function as metaphors to visualize and personify different concepts, such as cultures, classes, or the Other. Culture, in the reader's world, "*can also function like a nature*, and it can in particular function as a way of locking individuals and groups a priori into a genealogy, into a determination that is immutable and intangible in origin. . . . [This perspective] *naturalizes not racial belonging but racial conduct*" (Balibar qtd. in Weitz 22; emphasis in original).

Evolutionary biologist, geneticist and social critic Richard Lewontin argues that, like class or gender, race is a "purely social construct" (Lewontin n.p.). The reason for this is that genetic variants only sum up a very small part of the human gene pool (Dawkins 566) and are therefore an insignificant factor in categorizing the individual's character. Though belonging to a certain race in the *Harry Potter* books makes a difference concerning the ability to use magic, within the human wizarding population race likewise becomes a social construct. In both worlds, racism is a belief in the generalization and stereotypicalization of a certain people; it oversimplifies and radically categorizes the world, while focusing on the inferiority/superiority of specific races. This paradigm inevitably connects and justifies racism with the quest for power over people who are defined as being inferior to others, and thus able to be overpowered due to naturalized circumstances in a social-Darwinian conquest.

Omi and Winant even argue that "there is no biological basis for distinguishing among human groups along the lines of race" (Omi and Winant 123). One of the problems with classifying people into races is that the category has no scientific foundation, but works with underlying ambiguous and subjective structures (Rattansi 75); biology only "provided the pseudo-scientific underpinnings for race thinking in its heyday" (Weitz 22). According to Weitz, "[r]ace thinking, formulated in the complex interactions among Europeans, Native Americans, and Africans, established a fixed hierarchy of difference rooted in the body" (ibid. 23), which the colonists employed to "articulate their differences from —and superiority to —" conquered nations (ibid. 24).

Frequently, the default position of regarding races and racism is from the privileged human, Caucasian, perspective. Fantasy literature, however, provides the reader with more than one species, and consequently, with reasons to wage war that are not only multiracial or multicultural, but which also describe the conflicts between these different species. This creation of otherness encourages the reader to feel sympathy for

people who do not necessarily share his/her cultural or religious background and could therefore create tolerance for other cultures.<sup>212</sup>

It is important to clarify that racism is an ideology, and as such, it actively creates a new world picture; this world picture is not based on how the world is, but how it is supposed to be in the eyes of those who raise the question about races (Geulen 12). In most cases, the aggressors raise the question of race in order to justify their striving for power through “biologically deterministic logic” (Barratt 76); ultimately, the struggle between the races turns into the survival of the fittest and is thus naturalized. In all the books, this serves as the justification to rule ‘weaker’ races; a reasoning which is not only apparent in fantasy books, but can also be traced through history, especially regarding slavery in the U.S. and the politics of Nazi Germany.

### Racial Discriminations in J. K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter* Series

In his book *Re-Reading Harry Potter*, Suman Gupta declares that “[t]he *Harry Potter* novels constantly echo the faintly familiar” (Gupta 97). Although Gupta specifically refers to fairy tale motifs and conventions, this statement is nevertheless true for reasons and techniques regarding racial segregation in the *Harry Potter* novels. J. K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter* books incessantly feature the topics of race and racism in different variants. The plot concentrates on races such as Muggles, wizards, house-elves, giants, werewolves, goblins and centaurs, and the conflicts which appear regarding ideological implications concerning biological differentiations. Whilst the topics of race and racism are visible in the interplay of all species in the books, I concentrate on the inter-human relationships. This species-centrism focuses on the wizard population; within its centre, wizards and witches have created differentiations which categorize their kind into “pure-blood”, “half-blood”, and “Mudblood”<sup>213</sup>. This grants the books the opportunity to establish references to historical events in the reader’s world. Therewith the books not only create clear dichotomies between good and evil, but also fill these terms with very specific values and actions.

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<sup>212</sup> I decided to include both categories (race and species) in this chapter, as the discrimination against different races and species occur according to the same parameters. Although the term ‘species’ may incorporate more objective scientific research than the term ‘race’ (Geulen 15), the plots do not necessarily provide the reader with sufficient scientific evidence regarding the possible distinction between race and species. Furthermore, as there is no scientific term to describe the discrimination of a species as they occur in the books under scrutiny, I henceforth continue to talk about races and racism, and include the appropriate analysis about different species as far as the books allow me to do.

<sup>213</sup> “Mudblood” is a racial slur; being called Mudblood is equivalent to having dirty, impure blood.

Like Elaine Ostry in her analysis of the *Harry Potter* books, I regard the racial conflicts and racial ideologies as the series' *leitmotif*.<sup>214</sup> My analysis emphasizes that race lies at the heart of the conflicts, especially within the human races. The further the series progresses, however, the further away it moves from a fairy tale comparison foregrounded by Ostry (92), towards historical allusions and stronger and more applicable statements concerning the past and the present of the (Western) world.

Regarding the human population in the books, the reader has to acknowledge that there are differences: wizards are able to use magic and Muggles are not.<sup>215</sup> Besides categories such as Muggles and wizards, unsympathetic characters in the wizarding world, such as the Malfoys or Voldemort, further categorize wizards according to blood status. The most valuable status according to them appears to be wizards who can trace their magical ancestry through innumerable generations; their ancestors were exclusively wizards, they are therefore considered as pure-bloods. In the middle of the racial spectrum are half-bloods. Half-blood wizards form the most difficult and fuzzy category.<sup>216</sup> The least valuable population group according to this school of thought is Mudbloods. Mudbloods have non-magical parents/ancestry. My main foci are on the relationship between Muggles and wizards, and between Death Eaters and those whom they call Mudbloods; discriminatory actions between these groups are the most prominent in the human-human relationship. Race and racism are prevalent topics in the *Harry Potter* books and accompany the reader from the very beginning until the end of this series, increasing in social and political importance and culminating when racial ideologies take centre stage in the last book.

As seen above, Terry Eagleton defines ideology as “a body of ideas characteristic of a particular social group” (Eagleton 1991, 1), “ideas which help to legitimate a dominant political power” (ibid.), and an “action-oriented sets of belief” (ibid. 2). Using Eagleton's rough clarifications, I examine the ideological frameworks which serve as legitimation of (dominant) power structures, especially when it comes to pure-blood (and wizard) supremacy in the *Harry Potter* series. Naturally, these power

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<sup>214</sup> Racial conflicts not only depict racialisation and racism as main problems; regarding fantasy fiction, these topics may also be metaphorical representations of multiculturalism, as Ostry states (Ostry 92). This is only one example of how “fantasy books deal with issues as thoroughly as realistic fiction— but one step removed” (Yolen 88).

<sup>215</sup> The difference between the two groups can apparently be located in the blood; however, how a magical gene is given to the next generation is never explained. Muggles do not appear to have ‘magical blood’.

<sup>216</sup> The plot regards Voldemort as a half-blood wizard, as he has a witch and a Muggle as parents. Harry, on the other hand, also appears to be a half-blood wizard, as his parents are a Mudblood witch and a wizard. Tess Stockslager provides further analyses of this category in her article “What it means to be Half-Blood: Integrity versus Fragmentation in Biracial Identity” (2012).



structures are grounded in the representation and legitimization of specific “ideas, beliefs and values in social life” (ibid. 28), and demonstrate how ideologies, in this case concerning ‘natural’ superiority, are used to establish and confirm belief systems and the seizure for power by a specific group (ibid. 5). The conflict between the Death Eaters and Mudbloods clearly incorporates Eagleton’s definitions and points to the performativity of this set of beliefs.

Concerning the *Harry Potter* books, I only examine the justifications of war in regard to the human races, as the war that takes place “is a wizards’ war” (*Hallows* 243). Although the goblin Griphook predicts a potential war between wizards and other races as “the Dark Lord becomes ever more powerful” (*Hallows* 395), I do not concentrate on non-human races, namely on werewolves, giants, house-elves, goblins, and centaurs, as this goes beyond the scope of this thesis. Though no direct war takes place between humans and non-human races, there is evidence for a considerable amount of racial conflicts. The non-human races shed light on racial, and hence social, hierarchies in the wizarding world, which are not solved after the battle takes place, but are perpetuated through the established systems of power.

I focus on the different racial conflicts and the claim for racial superiority. Before moving to the central conflict of the books, I concentrate on the periphery, namely on the Dursleys, who are the first characters to be mentioned *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone*. The Dursleys are clearly emblematic of racial prejudices, and serve to justify wizarding behavior to a certain degree. The Dursleys give voice to the fears and anxieties of the non-magical population, and thus unconsciously replay past conflicts between wizards and Muggles. This leads me to the main racial conflict in the books, the one between the Death Eaters, who take pride in claiming that they are pure-blood wizards, and non-pure-blood wizards. This is the conflict which ultimately leads to the war portrayed in *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*. During this analysis I take a closer look at the underlying ideological structures dominating the conflict between wizards.

One aspect which strikes the reader as being important from the beginning is the emphasis which is put upon the difference within the human population, namely between wizards and non-wizards; as Suman Gupta states, “the wizards as a magical race *are* in some significant and unquestionably ways *superior* to the Muggles” (Gupta 108; emphasis in original). This feeling of superiority, shared by many wizards, finds its expression, for example, when it comes to means of transportation, the manipulation of

space, and daily chores; for instance, wizards are able to travel via Floo powder (*Chamber* 55f.), use a Portkey (*Goblet* 66), or simply Apparate (ibid. 63). Space can be manipulated according to the wizard's or witch's needs: purses and tents, for example, are able to be bigger from the inside than from the outside (*Goblet* 74; *Hallows* 135). Some wizards can also manipulate their own body and transform themselves into animals (*Stone* 16). The reader can find example for the simplification of household chores in Mrs Weasley's kitchen: with a flick of her wand Mrs Weasley bewitches the dustpan to clean up, and the knives to chip the potatoes (*Goblet* 55f.). One of the most frightening factors concerning wizard superiority is the easy way in which Muggles can be 'played with' or even killed (ibid. 108).

From the beginning, the magical population appears to be superior, and the magical world appears to be a perfectly exciting and safe haven for Harry, who escapes from abuse. Nevertheless – and this is often overlooked in, for example, Gupta's argumentation – wizards appear to have been stuck in a far away past, as their clothes (*Stone* 9) and their ignorance regarding, for example, physics and technology testify. Muggles do not have the luxury of magic and had to develop other forms to manipulate their environment; they use technology, which is something absolutely unfamiliar to wizards.<sup>217</sup> Muggles, consequently, have their own kind of magic, one that does not violate the laws of physics; a fact that is often neglected in the series and its interpretations.

#### Creating Opposites, Reinforcing Prejudice: Harry and the Dursleys

Initially, Harry is part of both worlds, and shares the reader's sense of wonder and yearning for explanations when it comes to the wizarding world. Without the assistance of his magical parents, he grows up at his aunt and uncle's house, where magic belongs outside the boundaries of the 'normal' world and is hence stigmatized. The Dursleys seem to belong to the few Muggles who know about the magical world. They are, however, the only ones who are granted a constant voice within the books.<sup>218</sup> The narrator expresses their obsessive wish to fit into society and their pride in being the epitome of normativity in the first two sentences of the first book: "Mr and Mrs Dursley, of number four, Privet Drive, were proud to say that they were perfectly normal, thank

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<sup>217</sup> Ron, for example, is overwhelmed when it comes to using the telephone (*Prisoner* 9); Mr Weasley is fascinated by planes and wishes to understand the way they work (*Prince* 85).

<sup>218</sup> Other Muggles, such as Hermione's parents, or the British Prime Minister, only make a very short appearance. None of them, however, forms such a regular and long-time part of the plot as the Dursleys.

you very much. They were the last people you'd expect to be involved in anything strange or mysterious, because they just didn't hold with such nonsense" (*Stone* 7).

The Dursleys are portrayed as very unlikable characters, mere caricatures than actual people: Mr Dursley is a big man "with hardly any neck", whereas Mrs Dursley, a rather thin woman, has "nearly twice the usual amount of neck" to simply accomplish the act of "spying on the neighbours" (*ibid.*). Their son Dudley's obesity progresses with every book; while they fatten up Dudley, they starve Harry which demonstrates their superiority while simultaneously punishing Harry for his "unnaturalness" (*Goblet* 35). Most of the time, the Dursleys seem to function as a plot device to enhance the differences between Muggles and wizards and enable a fairy tale framework.<sup>219</sup> To the Dursleys, Harry is a necessary evil stemming from the wrong lineage, as "having a wizard in the family was a matter of deepest shame" (*Chamber* 10). He is constantly abused physically, emotionally, and "about as welcome in their house as dry rot" (*Goblet* 23).

To emphasize his dependence, and hence his inferiority, Harry has to wear Dudley's old clothes (*Stone* 27) and sleep under the stairs (*ibid.*); the Dursley's do not even have a photograph in the house which proves Harry's existence (*Stone* 25). His magical abilities are a factor they perceive as something unnatural and that they try to "squash" out of him (*Prisoner* 8).<sup>220</sup> When this does not work, they employ racial discrimination by omission and neglect: They pretend that the magical world does not exist and act in denial of Harry's magical abilities (*ibid.*). The home Harry returns to at the end of books 1-6 is not a place of love and care, as the Dursley's wish is to keep Harry "as miserable as possible" (*Goblet* 26).

On the surface, their behaviour is rooted in the desire and pride to fit into their neighbourhood and hence into the normal world. They constantly fear what the neighbours would say because "[t]hey didn't think they could bear it if anyone found out about the Potters" (*Stone* 7). They repeatedly demonstrate their incessant desire to please the neighbourhood and to maintain the mask of ideal normal behaviour; they do not want to stand out from the crowd and to be recognized for their individuality, but to define themselves according to their group membership of white British (non-magical)

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<sup>219</sup> This topic has been extensively explored, for example, in Amanda Cockrell's "Harry Potter and the Secret Password. Finding Our Way in the Magical Genre", Ximena Gallardo-C. and C. Jason Smith's "Cinderfella: J. K. Rowling's Wily Web of Gender", Katherine Grimes's "Harry Potter. Fairy Tale Prince, Real Boy, and Archetypal Hero", and Anne Klaus's "A Fairy-tale Crew? J. K. Rowling's Characters under Scrutiny".

<sup>220</sup> This choice of words already indicates the violent potential of conflict between the two worlds.

middle-class. Thus, they regard everything which deviates from their concept of normativity as abominable and inferior to them.

Mrs. Dursley labels her sister as being “*abnormal*” and “a freak” because of the latter’s magical abilities (*Stone* 62f.; emphasis in original); Petunia and her husband further talk about “*her lot*” when talking about the magical community (*ibid.* 13; emphasis in original) and define their identity against wizards and witches, constructing and perceiving their magical fellow humans as different and therefore Other. They aim to form a stark contrast to the magical community and hence establish a dialectic relationship with witches and wizards as they “perceive the Other as everything that [they] are not” (Rana 13). This becomes obvious when the Dursleys directly or indirectly interact with wizards such as the Weasleys. Again and again, Rowling creates a comic relief concerning these two opposites: the reader might regard Mr Dursley’s greatly exaggerated rage for instance as extremely funny when Mrs Weasley sends a letter to Harry which is covered in stamps (*Goblet* 33), or when Ron tries to call Harry via telephone (*Prisoner* 9). One of the most telling examples of Vernon and Petunia Dursley’s attempt to appear superior to Harry and his friends is when the Weasleys try to collect Harry from his home: “Uncle Vernon had put on his best suit. To some people, this might have looked like a gesture of welcome, but Harry knew it was because Uncle Vernon wanted to look impressive and intimidating” (*Goblet* 40). This also exemplifies their “obsession with excess and luxury as they constantly strive to prove their financial and social standing” (Park 186) and thus emphasises their superiority as white (British) middle-class people.

The Dursleys try to create an emotional, social and racial distance between themselves and wizards and witches whenever possible. They consequently demonstrate a preference towards their own kind and exclude the ‘unnatural’ foreigners from every frame of reference which may mark the magical race as superior. Their xenophobic behavior can be explained by numerous reasons: most prominent are fear of the unknown and uncontrollable, and envy.

In the last book, it becomes apparent that Petunia Dursley is envious of her sister, as the latter is invited to join Hogwarts; Petunia even writes a letter to Dumbledore to beg for her admission (*Hallows* 537). Her envy soon turns into hatred, which makes her even spat at her once beloved sister (*ibid.*).

The Dursleys have never had positive experiences with magic. Numerous situations display the negative encounters they have had with wizards. In the first book, the Dursleys are threatened by Hagrid, and Dudley is violated and even traumatized

during his encounters with the half-giant (*Stone* 69), and later with the Weasley twins (*Goblet* 47). During a meeting with Dumbledore, the Dursleys are treated as mere puppets that bend to the wizard's will (*Prince* 50). Especially in *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, Harry abuses his magical power, and one might argue that he terrorizes his family in the beginning of the book: he pretends to bewitch Dudley (*Chamber* 16), and purposely enrages his uncle by merely alluding to magic (*Chamber* 8). Without a doubt, Harry and the reader gain satisfaction from Harry's behaviour particularly because the Dursleys seem incapable of change and treating Harry kindly.<sup>221</sup> Although Harry enjoys his wizard privileges in these scenes, they only further fuel the Dursley's hatred and increase the gap between the two groups. No matter what heroic deeds Harry accomplishes, the Dursleys will not accept him in their midst, and this grudge holds until their last parting (*Hallows* 39).

The Dursleys' hatred and fear of the racial Other establish impenetrable boundaries. Thus, their opinions and prejudices have a highly counterproductive effect: they cause the disidentification with their system of values and nurture the image of Harry as a "Cinderfella" figure (Gallardo-C and Smith 194f.). According to Shira Wolosky, "[t]he Dursleys incarnate not only coercive conformity, but a wilfull interpretive refusal. They are bad readers, glued to interpretive frameworks that refuse to acknowledge any anomalies that challenge their expectations and preconceived understandings" (Wolosky 2010, 7). This, however, is only partly true regarding Dudley Dursley. At the beginning of the last book, Harry and Dudley reconcile (*Hallows* 39), which leaves the reader with the hope that the next generation is not as set in its ways of normative performance and binary interpretation of what it means to be normal or Other.

The Dursleys display the closest connections to 'real world racism', in which the magical population is a metaphor for other nations or cultures deviating from the dominant one. While the racial conflict between the Dursleys and wizards takes place in a private, every-day setting, the conflict between wizards displays what happens when such resentment becomes political. In the books, the reader finds a race-conscious society, promoted on the one hand by the Dursleys, and on the other hand by a pure-blood ideology basing its claim on 'natural' superiority. Suman Gupta correctly states that "it is this fascist ideology that primarily characterizes the evil of the Dark Side" (Gupta 101).

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<sup>221</sup> Although the plot constructs Harry's behaviour as a form of poetic justice, the justification that springs from it should be looked upon critically by the reader.

## Pure-blood Fantasies

The Dursleys and Voldemort have quite a lot in common. In fact, they are characters at opposite ends of the same (xenophobic) scale; they demonize the Other and glorify the self. They appear to be emblematic of race-conscious societies that base their claims on what they perceive as ‘natural’ superiority. While the Dursleys’ technique of racial discrimination focuses on their microcosmic world, Voldemort and his Death Eaters cloak the macrocosmic world with their convictions and try to indoctrinate the next generation of Hogwarts students with their ideology.

Regarding the character make-up, the reader can easily pinpoint these ideological convictions within a very specific group of wizards. Draco Malfoy is one of the many unsympathetic characters in the *Harry Potter* series who draw lines between blood statuses; this also includes the entitlement to a magical education (Barratt 13) and lifestyle. In the context of cultural and social lives, magic and, the further the series progresses, pure-bloodedness become a metaphor for privilege. Malfoy talks about a desired exclusiveness of the wizarding world and at the same time expresses a value judgment on the worthiness of lives: “I really don’t think they should let the other sort in, do you? [Muggle-born wizards and witches are] just not the same, they’ve never been brought up to know our ways. Some of them have never even heard of Hogwarts until they get the letter, imagine. I think they should keep it in the old wizarding families” (Stone 89). Although “[p]arentage is no guarantee of wizarding ability” (Barratt 64),<sup>222</sup> in Malfoy’s opinion, his pure-blood privilege entitles him to status, power, and even wealth. Bethany Barratt calls this attitude “*droit de noblesse*” (Barratt 15; emphasis in original), referring to the chivalric motto *noblesse oblige* (nobility obligates). As a wealthy and powerful pure-blood family, “[t]he name Malfoy still commands a certain respect” (Chamber 60), although “[w]izard blood is counting for less everywhere” (ibid. 61). According to Draco, a wizard has to display “proper wizard feeling”, which should emphasize the exclusiveness of this world and leave no space for any sympathy for Mudblood wizards (ibid. 242). Lucius Malfoy goes one step further when he expresses the opinion that “the school needs ridding of all the Mudblood filth, but not to get mixed up in it” (ibid. 243), which is in accordance with Salazar Slytherin’s idea of a pure-blood school. The Malfoys’ conviction demonstrates that “self-esteem is closely linked to social identity because ‘by identifying with a group, that group’s prestige and status in society attaches to one’s self-concept’” (Rana 18).

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<sup>222</sup> Neville Longbottom’s low achievements at school during books 1-6, for example, or the existence of Squibs, who are descendants of magical families but are not able to perform magic, prove this point.

The Malfoys implicitly talk about a racial decline strongly tied to reproduction, which is based on the interminglement of pure-blood wizard and witches and Mudblood wizards and witches, or even Muggles. This reveals another parallel to the reader's world: From the nineteenth century onwards, "race thinkers cast Jewishness 'in the blood.' Jews became a constant, pulsing threat to the purity of the racial group" (Weitz 47). Inheritance plays an equally important role in both worlds. Although "being Muggle born makes no difference for wizarding ability, many 'purebloods' believe that it makes a great deal of difference to the witch or wizard's legitimate claim to magical power and privilege" (Barratt 64).

Supporting such an elitist and dangerous ideology, Draco Malfoy reveals himself to be "both a classist and a racist" (Ostry 92); these two concepts are intricately linked as pure-bloodedness is often associated with the highest classes in society, namely "nobility" (*Prince* 423) and royalty (*Order* 104).<sup>223</sup> Shira Wolosky also interprets the racial conflicts as class conflicts: "The prejudice of race parallels prejudice of class. Generally, the Death Eaters seek wealth, titles, and position. Tom Riddle comes to call himself 'Lord.' The Malfoys live in a Manor House, [...]. Voldemort sees Muggles and elves, as inferior to wizards, as deserving to be enslaved" (Wolosky 2010, 38). Death Eaters view and explain the world in terms of racial division and privilege, and see themselves on top of the racial pyramid.

Language serves as one of the tools to express this perception. According to Barratt, "[a] careful examination of the rhetoric of the wizarding community certainly reveals a pseudoscientific element to the pureblood obsession" (Barratt 71). Mrs. Black, Sirius's mother, is a good example of this. She is obsessed with pure-blood lineage and her main function is to display wizarding racist ideology in the most obvious way. She defines herself through her pure-bloodedness; she is proud to be part of "*The Noble and Most Ancient House of Black*" (*Order* 103; emphasis in original) whose maxim "*Toujours pur*" (ibid.) is not only a privilege but also a fundamental obligation to her. Against everyone who does not follow this "pure-blood mania" (ibid. 104) she uses a litany of all too real slurs that have been deployed against racial minorities.

Pure-blood rhetoric is also highly allusive to the reader's world. This is especially true of Malfoy's racial slurs such as "filthy little Mudblood" (*Chamber* 122) which refers to the (im)purity of blood and represents "the N-word for the wizarding

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<sup>223</sup> The reader can clearly perceive a defamiliarized parallel to traditional ideas and perceptions of nobility here: everything is transmitted via blood: money, status, worth; hence, marriage ought to happen within the 'noble houses', and not due to love. This stands in stark contrast to Molly and Arthur Weasley, who married for love and are representatives of the impoverished gentry.

world” (Ostry 92).<sup>224</sup> Bethany Barratt explains that “[r]acist slurs in both the U.S. and the United Kingdom (and elsewhere) have compared racial minorities to rats and parasites, implying that they are dirty by nature and compartment” (Barratt 72). Again, the reader can ground the plot and characters in his/her world, revealing the subversive and didactic force of the books. Anne Fausto-Sterling who has extensively published on questions regarding the biology of gender and gender identity, argues that majority groups have often used biology against minority groups to explain the make-up of society, often with disastrous consequences (Fausto-Sterling 9). Although the *Harry Potter* books turn this assumption upside-down,<sup>225</sup> it does not lose its validity; the reader needs to be aware that minority groups can also successfully orchestrate a (fascist) take-over of the state, with all its consequences, even the violent suppression of the majority.

In associating Mudblood with attributes such as “filthy” (*Chamber* 122), “dirty” (ibid. 127), smelly (*Prince* 110), “untrustworthy” and “unworthy” (*Chamber* 165) or “riff-raff” (*Goblet* 147) unsympathetic characters such as the Malfoys or Mrs. Black not only create “second-class” people (ibid.), but also express an opinion that equals de Gobineau’s deterministic statements about race: that “races were by definition unequal, and the qualities of each, physiological and moral, were permanent, immutable, and inescapable” (Weitz 34). Following this train of thought, racist wizards believe that in mixing the races, wizarding society undergoes a process of degeneration which can only be stopped by “the purification of the wizarding race, getting rid of Muggle-borns and having pure-bloods in charge” (*Order* 104).

Here, the characters employ racist thinking to explain the desire for racial purification and perfection. For the evil side, purging the wizarding society of Mudblood wizards is deeply connected to reproduction. As a consequence, interbreeding is the only possible technique for wizard purification and perfection. This argumentation clearly refers to the concept of eugenics, which is “a complex set of ideas about how to improve the human race” that emerged in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Fausto-Sterling 9). There is an obvious connection between the wizards’ goal of a purified magical race and eugenics; the latter “is often divided into negative policies, such as preventing

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<sup>224</sup> Ostry further argues that Rowling might have been “aware that one of the worst insults levelled against African Americans is ‘mud people’” (92) which refers to Christian identity doctrine (ibid. 99). I rather agree with Shira Wolosky who views the label of ‘Mudblood’ in a far more universal light when she states that “[p]rejudices like those that erupted in World War II are widespread. ‘Mudblood’ can stand for any racist name-calling” (Wolosky 2010, 38).

<sup>225</sup> In the *Harry Potter* books fascist ideology does not originate within the majority group in the wizarding society, but in an elitist minority group, which tries to force its conviction onto the majority of the wizarding population.



reproduction by those thought to emanate from weak or damaged genetic stock, and positive ones, such as promoting marriage and reproduction among those thought to be ‘well-born’ – the literal meaning of the word ‘eugenics’” (ibid.).

The plot, however, frequently deconstructs this racist ideology, as for example by the fact that both Hermione Granger and Lily Potter are exceptional witches, although both count as Mudbloods. Furthermore, Hermione’s logical approach to the construction of racial hierarchies unmasks pure-blood hypocrisy: “[t]he Death Eaters can’t all be pure-blood, there aren’t enough pure-blood wizards left [...]. I expect most of them are half-bloods pretending to be pure” (*Prince* 227). Early in the series, Ron even reveals this pure-blood ideal to be extremely destructive as it would have led to the extinction of the wizarding race (*Chamber* 127f.). The evil wizards’ eugenic policies are not only deconstructed by Hermione’s and Lily Potter’s superior magical abilities, but also by the character of Merope Gaunt, who is Voldemort’s mother and belongs to “a very ancient wizarding family noted for a vein of instability and violence that flourished through the generations due to their habit of marrying their own cousins” (*Prince* 200f.). Not only is the idea of heritage and purity reduced to its absurdity, it also stands in stark contrast to the importance of ability and talent which the books propagate.

#### From the Past to the Present – Justifications of Wizard Domination

As seen above, the trajectory of the plot reveals that the escalation of the construction of difference eventually leads to uprisings and war. With regards to human cultural history, in the series the reader finds a society built on racial conflict and segregation. Once upon a time, Muggles and wizards lived side by side (*Prisoner* 7). During these times, wizards benefitted from the fact that their phenotype does not differ from Muggles, that there is no outward bodily racial marker to identify them as what they are: magical and hence different and fearsome to Muggles. The hatred towards Muggles originated in the Middle Ages due to the Muggles’ discrimination against wizards (ibid.).<sup>226</sup> Wizards and witches were forced into hiding, and at the time that Hogwarts was founded, “magic was feared by common people, and witches and wizards suffered from persecution” (*Chamber* 164).<sup>227</sup> Consequently, even before Voldemort’s rise to power, and as a countermovement to the marginalization of and discrimination against wizards, the magical society displayed “a long history of wizard fascism, going back to one of the

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<sup>226</sup> Although this point functions well for the plot as it explains the secret wizard society, it is rather inconceivable that powerful wizards went into hiding due to discrimination; the victimization of the Muggle family at the beginning of *Goblet* proves this point (*Goblet* 108).

<sup>227</sup> The Dursleys’ reaction echoes past conflicts between wizards and Muggles, and is even described as “a very medieval attitude towards magic” (*Prisoner* 8).

founders of Hogwarts, Salazar Slytherin” (Gupta 101), who “believed that magical learning should be kept within all-magic families” (*Chamber* 264f.). According to Rattansi, racialization takes place over “several decades of a social and political [...] inclusion” (qtd. in Barratt 61), which is also apparent both in the wizarding world and in the reader’s world. Voldemort grounds his attempt to create a pure-blood society that dominates Muggles in the nostalgic claim to restore the former greatness of the magical race.

As Muggles were the reasons wizards went into hiding, the plot here establishes clear ideas of perpetrators and victims. The fact that wizards have become victims of Muggle persecution establishes a line of argument parallel to how the Nazis established the stereotypical image of the Jewish enemy. In his book *The Jewish Enemy. Nazi Propaganda During World War II And The Holocaust*, Jeffrey Herf critically replicates the arguments that the Nazis constructed their propaganda around “a national struggle for freedom and against the ‘chains of slavery’ imposed by Jewry” (Herf 38). According to this argument, Germans simply “[responded] to the initiatives, injustices, and threats of others. It was a propaganda that trumpeted innocence and self-righteous indignation and turned the power relations between Germany and the Jews upside down: Germany was the innocent victim; Jewry was all powerful” (ibid. 5). Herf also quotes Gombrich, who even goes further and claims “that Nazi propaganda had created a mythic world by ‘transforming the political universe into a conflict of persons and personifications’ in which a virtuous young Germany fought manfully against evil schemers, above all the Jews” (ibid. 2). This flipping of victim and perpetrator image also happens in the wizarding world; it creates an inversion of power structures, which reveals how the powerful and privileged wizards and witches believe themselves to be victims and act accordingly to justify the oppression of the less powerful populations. It serves as an implicit explanation of Voldemort’s regime, its political direction and that, according to its line of thinking, Muggles deserve their fate. According to Voldemort’s ideological proclamations, purging wizarding society becomes an act of salvation (*Hallows* 16f.), which is highly reminiscent of what “Saul Friedlander has called Hitler’s early ‘redemptive anti-Semitism,’ which combined paranoid fantasy about an all-powerful international Jewry with promises of redeeming and saving Germany from that pernicious influence” (Herf 3).

Another peak of wizard uprising is Gellert Grindelwald’s rise to power and his justification of “wizard dominance being FOR THE MUGGLES’ OWN GOOD” (*Hallows* 291; emphasis in original) including the axiom “[f]or the Greater Good’

[which] became Grindelwald's slogan, his justification for all the atrocities he committed later" (*Hallows* 294). This slogan is highly reminiscent of Western justifications for colonizing and 'civilizing' other countries.

The introduction of the Death Eaters happens in the context of the hate crime they commit: under the cover of anonymity they violate and victimize a family of Muggles in front of a huge terrified audience (*Goblet* 108).<sup>228</sup> While "[h]alf the Muggle killings back when You-Know-Who was in power were done for fun" (*ibid.* 128), the last book sees a stark increase of this mentality in the present day, as "Muggle slaughter is becoming little more than a recreational sport under the new regime" (*Hallows* 356). Again, the plot draws a parallel with European imperialist endeavours: according to Weitz "for so many of its European practitioners, imperialism was also a sporting game" (Weitz 46). For Winston Churchill, for example, imperialism consisted of "colonial conquests [which] were 'only a sporting element in a splendid game'" (*ibid.*).

Except for the major uprisings, wizards have separated their sphere from Muggles and have not taken (public) advantage of their power. Suman Gupta fittingly concludes that "[i]f Muggles are left free and in control of their world it is because wizards have kind-heartedly and charitably chosen that it should be so" (Gupta 108). This statement not only states the clear hierarchy of power, but it is also an allusion to the colonizing / 'civilizing' undertone which characterizes the depiction of the Muggle-wizard relationship.

In drawing on real-life events, such as allusions to witch-hunts and the Inquisition, as well as reasons mirroring religious and culturally-based missionary doctrines as displayed in Grindelwald's justifications, the series establishes a parallel to the reader's world. The books criticize the behaviour of the powerful wizards and their abuse of power. Following this line of thought with reference to the power relations and the different races in the fictitious world, the books clearly criticize Britain's role as colonizer in the British Empire.

During the latest upheaval, namely during Voldemort's rise and reign of terror, a multitude of feelings characterize the non-wizard – wizard relationship: "Across the wizarding world, attitudes toward Muggles include egalitarianism, disregard, avid curiosity, paternalism, and outright hatred" (Barratt 65). None of these attitudes, however, suggests a wish to establish equality between the races. In book five, Mr. Weasley directs the reader's attention to the fact that there are underlying reasons for

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<sup>228</sup> Their entry into the camp is as orchestrated as, for example, a major event in Nazi Germany; Leni Riefenstahl documented such events which were supposed to display German solidarity and grandeur.

this aggressive behavior: “Muggle-baiting might strike some wizards as funny, but it’s an expression of something much deeper and nastier” (*Order* 140).<sup>229</sup> The motive for the abuse of power probably lies in the wizards’ discontent at living in secret instead of ruling the world, as their ideological convictions and, therefore, their self-conception demand.

At the beginning of the seventh book, Voldemort declares his aim to commit genocide in order to purify the magical race and to thus prepare it for world domination:

‘Many of our oldest family trees become a little diseased over time,’ he said, [...].

‘You must prune yours, must you not, to keep it healthy? Cut away those parts that threaten the health of the rest.’

‘Yes my Lord,’ whispered Bellatrix, and her eyes swam with tears of gratitude again. ‘At the first chance!’

‘You shall have it,’ said Voldemort. ‘And in your family, so in the world ... we shall cut away the canker that infects us until only those of the true blood remain ...’ (*Hallows* 16f.)

Voldemort bases this plan of purifying the magical society on the dominant ideology that Muggle blood has “deleterious traits, leading to the decline of the race” as Weitz states concerning Nazi ideology (Weitz 39). This consequently justifies pure-blood domination over other, ‘lesser races’. Jeffrey Herf points to Goebbels’s rhetoric, which also corresponds to Voldemort’s declaration: Goebbels “said that taking such people ‘out of circulation’ was not terror but ‘social hygiene,’ just as ‘a doctor takes a bacillus out of circulation’” (Herf 38).<sup>230</sup> Murdering Mudbloods thus correlates with the process of euthanasia; Weitz explains euthanasia as “the murder of those deemed the carriers of genetically transmitted mental and physical handicaps” (Weitz 114). This strictly hierarchical thinking establishes an apparently natural classification which rates the worthiness of life by blood-status. Blood seems to be the only biological determinant to separate people with the ability to perform magic from Muggles.<sup>231</sup> Due to their inability to use magic, Muggles do indeed appear to be handicapped.

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<sup>229</sup> Arthur Weasley talks about “the mistreatment of Muggles” and “spend[s] half [his] life campaigning against [it]” (*Goblet* 50). Even positively portrayed characters such as the Weasleys accept and perpetuate the maxim that Muggles should be kept ignorant for the benefit of a peacefully functioning wizarding society. According to Horne “Dumbledore and others are praised for their support of “Muggle Rights,” but no Muggles speak of their oppression, oblivious as they are of it” (93).

<sup>230</sup> According to Herf, Goebbels is quoting Mussolini.

<sup>231</sup> The plot provides no other (genetic) explanation; this factor is never scientifically analysed and it leaves the reader in the dark. As there is no science to support or argue against, it is easy to establish pseudoscientific explanations.

Like the Nazis, Voldemort employs gardening analogies to express his ideas about, what Rattansi refers to as “*racial and political hygiene*” in Nazi Germany (Rattansi 60; emphasis in original). The ultimate aim of both Hitler and Voldemort is to purify the blood of the Aryan / wizard races, and create a Master Race, which in the books is supposed “to join [Voldemort] in the new world [they] shall build together” (*Hallows* 584). Hitler regarded history and society as dominated by “a hierarchy of races” (Weitz 106), as does Voldemort. Parallel to Hitler and the Jews, the reader can perceive that Voldemort regards Mudbloods as sickness to the race. To quote Weitz, such a view contains “characteristics that are indelible, immutable, and transgenerational” (ibid. 21). According to this line of thoughts, racial hygiene is an aim only genocide can achieve.

With the exact degrees of blood purity (pure-bloods, half-bloods, Mudbloods) this ideology recalls Nazi blood registries. As Rowling explains, Voldemort takes what he perceives to be a defect in himself, in other words the non-purity of his blood, and he projects it onto others. It’s like Hitler and the Arian ideal, to which he did not conform at all, himself. And so Voldemort is doing this also. He takes his own inferiority, and turns it back on other people and attempts to exterminate in them what he hates in himself. (qtd. in Wolosky 2010, 34)

In the above quotation, Rowling explains that Voldemort’s ideology is far from consistent. He wants to purify the race until “only those of the true blood remain” (*Hallows* 17). If being pure-blood is most desirable, then being half-blood is a degradation of this status, and he himself has to occupy a marginalized position as a half-blood. As this does not happen, these “very inconsistencies in Voldemort’s ideology and statements underline the socially constructed, rather than natural, importance of Blood Statuses” (Barratt 63). The wizarding world further proves that genocides do not appear out of nowhere, but, as in the reader’s world, genocides “are also embedded in complex historical processes, notably, the emergence in the modern world of race and nation as the primary categories of political and social organization” (Weitz 2).

According to Rowling, the moral message the books display regarding such an abuse of power is that “we should judge how civilized a society is not by what it prefers to call normal, but by how it treats its most vulnerable members” (Rowling qtd. in Barratt 56). This statement is reflected in the statues in the Ministry of Magic. In *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, the Fountain of Magical Brethren at the Ministry of Magic reveals an artificially created display of hierarchical structures and ideological

convictions the regime strives to turn into reality. This fountain contains a centaur, a goblin, and a house-elf who are “all looking adoringly up at the [noble-looking] witch and wizard” (*Order* 117); obviously the latter are constructed as the epitome of the racial hierarchy. This pseudo-reality is deconstructed by Harry himself after he catches a glimpse of the Ministry of Magic’s deceptive practices. Harry’s trial opens his eyes to wizarding politics, and he is able to recognize the false façade of the statue:

but close-to Harry thought [the wizard] looked rather weak and foolish. The witch was wearing a vapid smile like a beauty contestant, and from what Harry knew of goblins and centaurs, they were most unlikely to be caught staring so soporily at humans of any description. Only the house-elf’s attitude of creeping servility looked convincing. (*Order* 142)

The statue that replaces the Fountain of Magical Brethren incorporates the slogan “MAGIC IS MIGHT” (*Hallows* 198). In combination with the behaviour of Voldemort and his followers, this slogan refers to the ultimate justification of wizard superiority, namely that might makes right. The maxim of might makes right becomes an integral part of the new Ministry of Magic and serves as manifestation of the Ministry’s policy to foreground racial superiority and the seeming consequential right to enslave and kill less powerful races such as Muggles. In the centre stands the hypothesis that wizards “*have been given power and, [...] that power gives [wizards] the right to rule*” (*Hallows* 291) which appears in Grindelwald’s body of thought.<sup>232</sup>

The new statue at the Ministry of Magic, which is installed after Voldemort’s seizure of power, is an unambiguous visualization of the ideological convictions and the final solution Voldemort and his followers promise to deliver; this time in an even more racist, brutal, and uncompromising fashion. It is aesthetically disturbing, as it shows a wizard and a witch sitting on “mounds of carved humans: hundreds and hundreds of naked bodies, men, women and children, all with rather stupid, ugly faces, twisted and pressed together to support the weight of the handsomely robed wizards” (*Hallows* 199). Wolosky draws a direct connection to Nazi Germany and describes this statue as a “fascist monument that suggests concentration camps” (Wolosky 2010, 34f.). A key factor in this display of superiority is the racist conception of physiognomy: the Muggles’ ugliness becomes a symbol of outer and inner deformity, while the display of the witch and wizard are created as a testimony of their outer and inner nobility. For de Gobineau and in other racist discourses, an “inequality in beauty is ‘rational, logical,

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<sup>232</sup> Though Dumbledore agrees with this in his youth, he also points to the responsibility that such power brings (*Hallows* 291).

permanent and indestructible’—that is, it is based on racial inequality. The same is true for strength, courage, intellect, and morality” (Weitz 35).<sup>233</sup>

Furthermore, the new statue foreshadows the final goal of Voldemort and his followers, and the duty of the state to put Muggles “[i]n their rightful place”, as Hermione subsumes (*Hallows* 199). Weitz’s analysis of different fascist states eerily echoes these thoughts:

The leaders viewed the state as the key agency in the creation of the future society and sought to build states that would exercise total control over society. [...] all the regimes [...] obsessively divided and classified the populations under their domains. They went to great lengths to define the legal criteria of identities and then to place individuals in their ‘proper’ class, national, and racial slots [...]. (Weitz 14)

These points fittingly describe the state’s actions and definitions of identity: To be accepted within the new wizarding society, a wizard or witch must have a specific blood status. Those who cannot deliver any proof of a magical heritage are confronted with a range of methods that cause racial segregation within the wizarding society: from being insulted by being called Mudblood, which develops from being a shocking isolated incident to an everyday slur, to having to face the Repressive State Apparatus. The regime establishes new laws and discrimination methods and thus displays a new level of racialization; for example, “Muggle-Born Registration Commission” comes into existence: Citizens with magical abilities, but without a ‘proper’ magical lineage are summoned to court to be judged concerning their blood status (*Hallows* 205). This appears to be another echo of Nazi Germany, as it is highly reminiscent of Nazi Germany’s “fascistic methods before and during World War II” (Kokorski 2012, 145). This commission “serves to enforce pure-blood supremacy within the wizarding society” (*ibid.*), and apparently does not shy away from committing genocide. Here, the wizarding society equally becomes a “nation obsessed with tracking, diagnosing, registering, grading, and selecting” as Weitz characterizes Nazi Germany (Weitz 140); equally, the wizarding society becomes very efficient with its bureaucratic apparatus. Barratt comments on these new methods and emphasizes their politic significance: “name-calling is hurtful, but more dangerous is making it official with the creation of the concept of Blood Status by the Ministry, [...]. The fact that this distinction is sanctioned by the state (a) expands the conceptual territory of legislation to include

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<sup>233</sup> These aspects also found their way into architecture in Nazi Germany and the wizarding world. The new statue in the Ministry of Magic is a show case for pompous display of ideological convictions and space, and therefore intellectual superiority.

Blood Status and (b) makes Blood Status politically relevant” (Barratt 74). Ian Kershaw also stresses that the radical shift from social discrimination to political actions in Nazi Germany was a significant indicator of what was to come (Kershaw 191), as can be perceived in *Harry Potter*.

The Muggle-born Registration Commission is emblematic of the bureaucratic totalitarian regime which now rules Britain’s wizarding world. The plot emphasizes that the members of the Muggle-Born Registration Commission, namely Umbridge and Yaxley, are the real predators and the people on trial become “their prey” (*Prince* 214). As head of the commission, Umbridge’s position enables her to destroy (human) lives in an institutionalised way. She does not appear to feel guilt or remorse when she sentences witches and wizards to death because all this happens within the range of the law; therefore, it seems to be legally justified. On the contrary, she savours her power, as “she was happy [...], in her element, upholding the twisted laws she had helped to write” (*Hallows* 212).

Within the Ministry of Magic, dementors dominate the passage outside of the courtrooms and turn into the embodiment of what the Ministry has become, a place of misery: “the cold, and the hopelessness, and the despair of the place laid themselves upon Harry like a curse” (*Hallows* 212). Not only does this reveal the terror tactics of the state, the fact that so many people are waiting for their hearing and the way in which the hearings take place proves an escalation and might foreshadow the next phase, namely that mass executions might be on their way.

A prime example the plot reveals is the case of Mrs. Cattermole who cannot sufficiently prove her magical lineage and is therefore not recognized as a witch under the new law. Therefore, the Commission accuses Mrs. Cattermole of the illegal acquisition of a wand which, following Umbridge’s twisted explanation of the laws of magic, can only have happened through theft. According to the new regime and its convictions “[w]ands only choose witches or wizards” (*Hallows* 214), implying that only pure-bloods and half-bloods are true witches and wizards. Although the fact that wands choose the wizard or witch is well-known and mentioned in the first book, the new policies at the Ministry of Magic use this initiation rite and twist it, until it is no longer in accordance with the maxim of tolerance and the internal laws of magic the reader has known from the beginning: magic does not discriminate. The invention of a new ‘truth’ regarding magical entitlement clearly aims to purify the wizarding society, and strengthen the dominant status of the witches and wizards who support the new



regime such as Dolores Umbridge, reinforcing the regime's ideologically-based power structures.<sup>234</sup>

For witches and wizards found guilty in the show trial, such as Mrs. Cattermole, the punishment is twofold. Firstly, they are stripped of their wands. The wand is a racial marker which functions through absence and becomes the physical sign that turns the witch or wizard into an *unperson* with no legal rights.<sup>235</sup> By taking away the wand, the Ministry of Magic takes away the wizard's or witch's power, social status and identity, and actively disadvantages the members of the subordinate group. Now they are handicapped and unable to defend themselves or control their environment. This enactment of psychological, legal, and even physical power mirrors a metaphorical act of castration. Secondly, after being found guilty during this farcical process, a witch or wizard will be submitted to the Dementor's kiss, which is akin to a death penalty in the wizarding world.<sup>236</sup> Furthermore, the severity of the punishment does not correspond to the crime, which is alleged theft. Here, the Ministry of Magic abuses its authority as embodiment of the executive, legislative and judicial power to reinforce their ideological convictions and ultimately realize the purification of the wizarding society. Harry comments on the state strategy after his rescue of Mrs Cattermole as follows "[g]o home, grab your children and get out, get out of the country if you've got to. Disguise yourselves and run. You've seen how it is, you won't get anything like a fair hearing here" (*Hallows* 216). Eric Weitz's insights into Soviet and Nazi ideas about the disposability of human lives apply equally to the final *Harry Potter* instalments:

From the legacy of World War I, both Soviet and Nazi leaders adopted a casual attitude toward human life, a willingness to countenance death on a massive scale; a model of a powerful, interventionist state; a commitment to political violence as the means of societal progress; and, each after its own fashion, the ideologies of race and nation. (Weitz 52)

Umbridge and the Death Eaters who are members of the Ministry of Magic fabricate a bureaucratic apparatus which allows them to commit bureaucratic

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<sup>234</sup> I have already shortly discussed this scene in "The Invisible Threat: Symbolic Violence in Children's Literature and Young Adults' Fiction".

<sup>235</sup> Jeffrey Herf makes an interesting statement about physical signs to discriminate against a specific group. He subsumes that "the Nazi regime forced all Jews to wear the yellow Star of David precisely because its leading officials could not distinguish, strictly on the basis of physical appearance, who was and was not Jewish" (151). The inability to visually distinguish between witches/wizards and Muggles is equally impossible, which means that it bases its validity to distinguish by appearance (cp. the new statue) on ideological indoctrination.

<sup>236</sup> As shown in *Prisoner*, the Dementor's kiss sucks the soul out of the victim's body; "[t]here's no chance at all of recovery. You'll just – exist. As an empty shell. And your soul is gone for ever... lost" (183).

criminality. This apparatus also provides the opportunity for them to hide behind it and excuse their actions with the “I was only obeying orders”-maxim which was frequently used in the Third Reich (Taylor 30). Although the reader never sees Voldemort giving orders to the Ministry, the Death Eaters are caught in Voldemort’s ideological world perception and their actions fall under the category of what Weitz calls “working toward the [leader]” (Weitz 284); in the Third Reich this attitude “captures the essence of Nazi functionaries acting more or less on their own according to what they thought were [Hitler’s] wishes” (ibid.). In this time of political reconstruction and state terror, people such as Umbridge and the Death Eaters exploit the leverage this world view grants them to increase their power and act out their superiority.

To facilitate the ultimate goal, the Ministry aggressively thins out the wizarding society; for example, it employs “Gestapo-like Snatchers” (Wolosky 2010, 35), “gangs trying to earn gold by rounding up Muggle-borns and blood traitors” (*Hallows* 311). This is another marker of the arbitrariness of the totalitarian regime and the chaos, greed, and abuse of power it fosters. The snatchers reveal a further parallel to Nazi Germany, as, within “the chaos that typically accompanies the extreme events [...] all sorts of people —local residents, criminal bands, tribal groups — joined in to rob and beat those identified as ‘alien’ elements and to steal their belongings and property” (Weitz 6). This is made possible in times of war, as “[w]ar provided the cover, but war also provided the great opportunity [...] to refashion drastically the very character of the population” (ibid. 4), and to accumulate wealth, power and status through the subjugation of others.

The books reveal how the Ministry tries to convince the wizarding population of the righteousness of its cause. The regime establishes a propaganda apparatus, an important tool in shaping popular opinion and justifying the goal of a purified wizarding society and the actions needed to achieve this. As Voldemort’s convictions draw on an elitist tradition in the wizarding world, his ideas about racial purity easily find their way into his followers’ minds, the media, and the school curriculum. “But propaganda alone can never change social and political conditions; it acts in conjunction with other factors, like organisation” (Welch 4). For such doctrines to work, be it on a religious, social, or some other level, there has to be “something in it” which appeals to an audience (Eagleton 1991, 12), as with the idea of racial superiority. For those who want to believe in these aspects, they have a ring of truth to them.

Voldemort’s nostalgic claim for a pure-blood society and his emphasis on the glorious past, strengthen the ideological world picture. Propaganda is not only “the art

of persuasion”, but “[m]ore often, propaganda is concerned with reinforcing existing trends and beliefs; to sharpen and focus them” (Welch 2). Propaganda does not only consist of “lies and falsehood” (ibid.). To fulfil its function successfully, “it operates with many different kinds of truth — from the outright lie, the half truth, to the truth out of context” (ibid.). Propaganda has to preach to those who are already partially converted. Writing before the Second World War, Aldous Huxley observed that “[p]ropaganda gives force and direction to the successive movements of popular feeling and desire; but it does not do much to create these movements. The propagandist is a man who canalises an already existing stream. In a land where there is no water, he digs in vain” (Huxley qtd. in ibid. 7).

The first step is to glorify the target group; therefore, the regime in *Harry Potter* constructs a very specific picture of the pure-blood wizard: He is the epitome of evolution, he is the noblest creature on earth, and he is the most powerful being, which therefore grants him the right of total domination. On the other hand, however, wizards are created as victims who went into hiding from Muggle persecution. This factor generates sympathy among the wizards for themselves and hatred towards the Other. Jeffrey Herf fittingly subsumes this contradictory world view regarding Nazi Germany as follows: “Hitler and his leading propagandists were able to entertain completely contradictory versions of events simultaneously, one rooted in the grandiose idea of a master race and world domination, the other in the self-pitying paranoia of the innocent, beleaguered victim. Grandiosity and paranoia were two poles of one fanatical ideology” (Herf 5f.).

The Ministry not only employs state control, but also uses the Ideological State Apparatus to indoctrinate both victims and perpetrators; both groups have to actively learn their new place within this fascist society in order to either adapt to these circumstances or work against them.<sup>237</sup> The ISA labors to create and shape the reality of the subject, and furthers the understanding that the subject’s position in society is a natural one (Althusser 207). The methods of the ISA are also visible in the wizarding world. In order to “educate” witches and wizards and thus to reinforce prejudices against Muggles and Mudblood wizards, the Ministry publishes a pamphlet with the title “*MUDBLOODS, and the Dangers They Pose to a Peaceful Pure-Blood Society*” (Hallows 205). This pamphlet appears to be designed not only to convince its readership through content, but also through language as it evokes a (pseudo-)scientific

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<sup>237</sup> As I have already stated in Chapter 2.2, Terry Eagleton convincingly argues that “people who are characterized as inferior must actually learn to be so. [...] they must be actively *taught* this definition” (Eagleton 1991, xivf; emphasis in original).

explanation and justification for racial stratification as, according to the pamphlet, Mudbloods pose a threat to pure-blood domination. The choice of words does not indicate any specific timeframe but presents a general intergenerational situation that calls for complete eradication. Furthermore, the pamphlet is another example of the role reversal that takes place: victims become perpetrators and vice versa to justify the regime's persecution and methods to establish a new utopia in which (pure-blood) wizards dominate all other races / species. With Mudbloods to blame, the regime has found a scapegoat to explain everything that is wrong with wizarding society and justifies its political violence as an act of self-defense. As shown in Nazi Germany, "propaganda can be an extremely powerful tool in shaping public opinion, and doing so is crucial if a leader bases his legitimacy on doing the will of the people" (Barratt 68).

Moreover, the pamphlet is evidence of the government's self-conception: The Ministry regards itself as the instrument of instruction and (re-)education of the population as it claims to have the scientific and moral resources to do so; in an Orwellian sense, the government knows best. As the grand educator, it also incorporates its citizens in bringing about a transformed society. The police in Nazi Germany "had to actively forge the healthy social body by purging errant elements" (Weitz 112) through propaganda and violence, which is exactly what the wizarding government also does. The Nazi regime, "[relied] on the cooperation" of its citizens (ibid. 119), as does the Ministry in order to establish a lasting pure-blood society. A regime focused on genocide is possible because members of society participate in refashioning the population: The "total state led by the Führer was, however, never simply a dictatorship of one man. The new politics [...] required popular participation" (ibid. 112).

To increase the Ministry's and Voldemort's influence at Hogwarts and to encourage participation and uniformity of opinion, new, extremely racist teachers are hired, namely the Carrows, to turn Hogwarts "into an all-Pureblood institution, and a vehicle for indoctrination" (Barratt 75). The Carrows aim to establish a racist worldview by teaching that "Muggles are like animals, stupid and dirty, and [...] they drove wizards into hiding by being vicious towards them" (*Hallows* 462). This statement further reveals how this teaching is exemplary of ideological strategies: like all ideologies, it "elucidate[s] complex realities and reduce[s] them to understandable and manageable terms" (Hunt qtd. in Barratt 63). 'Muggle Studies' at Hogwarts thus strengthens the binary dichotomy between good (wizards) and evil (Muggles / Mudbloods). The ideological justification and the narrative constructed around the past of the wizarding society also might remind the reader of Nazi Germany, as "[d]uring the

Weimar years, Nazi propagandists learned how to translate fundamental ideological postulates into a continuous narrative of events, a heavily slanted story of good and evil, easily accessible to mass audiences” (Herf 17). In the long term, this marginalization of everyone who is Other will unavoidably lead to “educational segregation”, which then will further unravel the fabric of wizarding society (Barratt 74).<sup>238</sup> Furthermore, the depiction of Muggles in the teacher’s statements is extremely important as it encourages the students to ‘put Muggles in their place’. As soon as this dehumanization takes place, (Western) values and virtues no longer apply to the treatment of the marginalized group. Rather, Muggles, and consequently Mudbloods become subhumans.

The animalization of Muggles and the construction of the stereotypical concept of the enemy demonstrate another parallel to Nazi Germany; there, too, “[b]iology and culture slid easily into one another as the Third Reich set out to define its enemies, demonstrating, once again, the highly malleable and mobile — and deadly — potentials of race thinking” (Weitz 115). Weitz goes on and states that “[t]he elasticity of racial categorizations, the easy slippage between biology and behavior” is also grounded in “the conviction that outward antisocial behavior was a sign of a degenerate inner constitution” (ibid. 119), which is also evident in the prevailing ideology of the evil side in the *Harry Potter* series.

One of the most important doctrines the Carrows attempt to teach the students is that the “natural order is being re-established” through the wizards’ acquisition of power and racial segregation (*Hallows* 462). Apparently the Carrows want to convince the students that “fascist wizards are fulfilling a natural, even cosmic, aim, and that it is their duty to seize power over others in order to improve the world” (Kokorski 2010, 194). In *Harry Potter*, those who want to be convinced are either those who already feel privileged and more deserving due to their ancestry, such as the Malfoys, or those who exploit the situation to improve their personal or professional status, such as Umbridge, or both.

All in all, the new teachers at Hogwarts attempt to “indoctrinate the students with their world view in order to legitimize Voldemort’s power” and their own racist actions (ibid.). Ian Kershaw’s thoughts on the Nazi propaganda apparatus are transferable to the situation in the wizarding world: The teachers employ “propaganda as the indispensable means of mobilising, manipulating, controlling, directing and (re-) educating” the students (Kershaw 180), which can be categorized “under the rubric of

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<sup>238</sup> Educational segregation and its effects are already visible in Lupin who is not able to secure any professional position and gets more and more marginalized (Barratt 75). Politicians in, for example, Nazi Germany also employed this policy to strengthen racial segregation (Barratt 75; Weitz 119f.).

‘ideological training’” (ibid. 181). Although propaganda only converts those who already believe in it, the school as educational state apparatus becomes the breeding ground for convictions that have the potential to persuade a younger, more impressionable, generation.

“Muggle slaughter” appears in a semi-public light; there are no inflaming speeches to manipulate the public, no grand choreographies to impress the audience. On the contrary, only the rebellious radio program *Potterwatch* reports Muggle deaths and the deaths of non-regime supporting wizards, and thus talks about “those deaths that the *Wizarding Wireless Network News* and the *Daily Prophet* don’t think important enough to mention” (*Hallows* 356). This absence of information suggests three things: first of all, it is proof of media control by the government and therefore the regime’s strategy of shaping popular opinion, which draws another parallel with, for example, Nazi Germany (Herf 13). Historian E.H. Carr points out that “[t]he art of persuasion has always been a necessary part of the equipment of a political leader”, as “[p]ower over opinion is [...] not less essential for political purposes than military and economic power, and has always been associated with them” (Carr qtd. in Welch 8).

Secondly, the absence of news demonstrates that the government’s actions, as well as Death Eaters’, are not based on public consent. Although this example reveals that the Death Eaters’ actions are not sanctioned by the public, the books demonstrate how ideological structures serve to create a new world order based on racial discrimination and persecution.

Thirdly, with the introduction of *Potterwatch*, the plot creates another parallel to World War II, especially Nazi Germany, as Wolosky states:

*Potterwatch* radio inevitably recalls the Resistance radio of World War II. What do such broadcasts offer, and stand for? Information, certainly—but even more, a sense of community, of mutual concern and pledge, and of shared effort in the name of common principles. This *Potterwatch* broadcast specifically focuses on the equality and value of all persons [...]. (Wolosky 2012, 201f.)

For the new regime, as well as for Voldemort and individual Death Eaters, silencing opposing voices appears to be as important as propagating the right belief. The reader can perceive this not only in the *Daily Prophet*’s campaign of discrediting Harry Potter,<sup>239</sup> but also at Hogwarts, where corporal punishment as well as kidnapping

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<sup>239</sup> This already started in book five of the series. As children’s literature scholar Noel Chavelier states: “the fact that the wizard press is so easily controlled by the Ministry allows Rowling to blend Harry’s personal story with a wider critique of systems of authority that define the wizarding world and to raise issues of political justice within a society defined by such rigid authoritarianism” (Chavelier 400).

relatives to enforce silence and obedience have become essential tools for control (*Hallows* 462ff.). Charity Burbage, a professor at Hogwarts who “taught the children of witches and wizards all about Muggles ... how they are not so different from” wizards, and who is convinced that the mixing of races is desirable (*Prince* 16f.), for example, is murdered by Voldemort. To justify his actions, Voldemort states that her instructions are “corrupting and polluting the minds of wizarding children” (ibid. 17), thus obviously referring to Hogwarts as an ideological training facility and equating his ideological convictions with mental health and purity.

In a typical fascist regime, “doubters and waverers were socially and politically isolated” (Kershaw 187), as the last book also reveals. The wizarding society becomes an Orwellian state: Citizens are not only categorized by blood-status, but also constantly monitored and their information is gathered by state intelligence in files (*Hallows* 207). Blood-status, however, does not provide security; while it goes without saying that Mudbloods, such as Hermione Granger, are even below the bottom of the social / wizarding hierarchy and need to be eliminated, even pure-blood wizards are not safe. Due to Ron Weasley’s strong connection to Harry,<sup>240</sup> and his actions against Voldemort and the Ministry, he is labelled as a “blood traitor” (*Hallows* 363). This means that Ron’s rights as a citizen have been revoked; he has also become an *unperson*. Although specific pure-blood wizards and witches are persecuted, Voldemort clearly refrains from unnecessarily spilling pure-blood at the Battle of Hogwarts (*Hallows* 529), thus acknowledging the difficulties and even impossibilities reproduction faces with such a restricted gene pool.

All in all, the new regime in the Ministry of Magic works in accordance with what Eagleton defines as strategies of legitimate power.<sup>241</sup> Although these strategies are defamiliarized in a fantastic setting, they nevertheless show the reader the workings of power, and the mechanisms of manipulations. As the propaganda apparatus encompasses several strategically important institutions such as government, press, and the education sector, the books function to negotiate power structures within these institutions and use these as a backdrop to discuss the importance of moral imperatives over lawful behavior.

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<sup>240</sup> Harry fulfils a special role within the new system: he is the “UNDESIRABLE NO. 1”, who needs to be found and punished (*Hallows* 208). Additionally, he belongs to the lower stratum of society according to the Ministry’s ideological guidelines, as he is only a half-blood wizard.

<sup>241</sup> As quoted above: “[a] dominant power may legitimate itself by *promoting* beliefs and values congenial to it; *naturalizing* and *universalizing* such beliefs so as to render them self-evident and apparently inevitable; *denigrating* ideas which might challenge it; *excluding* rival forms of thought, perhaps by some unspoken but systematic logic; and *obscuring* social reality in ways convenient to itself” (Eagleton 1991, 5f.; emphasis in original).

With the voice of Kingsley Shacklebolt, a member of the Order of the Phoenix, the plot emphasizes the importance of individual responsibility, and thus propagates active participation and just actions: “[I]t’s one short step from ‘wizards first’ to ‘pure-bloods first’, and then to ‘Death Eaters’. We’re all human, aren’t we? Every human life is worth the same, and worth saving” (*Hallows* 357).<sup>242</sup> Racial stratification serves to fabricate a world of first- and second-class people, a categorization which consists of the blending between biological and political factors. The same gradual discrimination happened during the Nazi Era, as Martin Niemöller demonstrates:<sup>243</sup>

*First they came for the Socialists, and I did not speak out –*

*Because I was not a Socialist.*

*Then they came for the Trade Unionist, and I did not speak out –*

*Because I was not a Trade Unionist.*

*Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out –*

*Because I was not a Jew.*

*Then they came for me – and there was no one left to speak for me.* (qtd. in Barratt 59; emphasis in original)

Both Niemöller and Shacklebolt Kingsley express the importance of social and political involvement guided by moral convictions, especially if it means to fight an unjust system. As Barratt proclaims, this is one of the central messages of the books: “that an unjust law should not be followed [...], and that any regime that embraces such laws is not a legitimate one” (ibid. 57).

In drawing strong and obvious parallels between the wizarding world and Nazi Germany, Rowling takes one of the most despicable events in human history and translates its ideas and mechanisms to the wizarding world of *Harry Potter*. The parallels between Nazi Germany and Voldemort’s fascism thus serve to foreground Voldemort’s evilness, as the plot turns Voldemort into an absolute and easily recognizable evil. To save wizarding society from a fascist regime and future which undermines the Western system of values, Harry and his friends fight for the liberation of the wizarding world, for freedom of speech, expression, free will, and free movement. Appeasement of the evil forces is never an option, which is also due to the

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<sup>242</sup> The only restriction here is that Kingsley solely talks about humans and does not acknowledge the different species. Though this helps the reader to draw parallels to his or her own world, it nevertheless foregrounds human privilege, which is rather counter-productive in the light of the series. Paralleling ‘human’ to ‘humane’ would bear an even stronger message.

<sup>243</sup> Bethany Barratt and Shira Wolosky (2010) have compared Kingsley’s remarks to Martin Niemöller’s speech after World War II. This reading not only strengthens Kingsley’s statement, but also draws another connection to historical events and therefore stresses the universality of the *Harry Potter* books.



depiction of absolute evil. Within the books, the plot creates a political and social framework in which an intervention becomes necessary and turns into a moral imperative in order to save and perpetuate Western values.

In his acceptance speech of the Newbery Award, fantasy author Lloyd Alexander made a valid point regarding fantasy fiction: “At heart, the issues raised in a work of fantasy are those we face in real life” (qtd. in Yolen 89). The *Harry Potter* books not only create a world of their own; in focusing on racist conflicts, they also draw historical parallels to the reader’s world, and thus talk about universal principles of power and ideology.

“Even in the absence of clear *biological* evidence” (Rattansi qtd. in Barratt 61; emphasis in original), both Nazis and wizards construct the idea of race within a social context (Barratt 61) and thus cleverly put into action the propaganda apparatus and with it the distinction between blood statuses. According to Rattansi, this racialization took place over “several decades of a social and political [...] inclusion” (ibid.), which is also both apparent in the wizarding world and in the reader’s world. “The stereotypical image of Muggles as being stupid and dirty and yet powerful enough to drive wizards into hiding is part of the contradictory doctrine of Voldemort’s regime, and establishes familiarities to the Nazi’s picture of ‘the Jew’” (Kokorski 2010, 195f.). The portrait of Muggles as archenemies is based on pure hatred and easily connects with those wizards who feel superior to Muggles and want to act on their emotions in order to take revenge for perceived wrongs. Furthermore, this black and white scheme aims to establish a unified pure-blood wizard community.

Another parallel to Nazi Germany is that “[l]ike Hitler, Voldemort creates a ‘Führer-myth’ around himself: he presents himself as an *Übermensch* – a larger-than-life-person, and the predestined leader who is capable of leading the wizard society into a new era” although he himself does not necessarily fit into the myth he is creating (ibid. 196). Ultimately, in drawing a parallel to Nazi Germany, the plot demonstrates that ideological structures can manipulate the perception of reality, which might consequently “lead to the destruction of a whole race” (ibid.).

As a countermovement, the books go out of their way to explain and describe how Mudblood wizards are not different from pure-blood wizards; and here lies another parallel with the reader’s world: “The Other does not need to be different: It just needs to be *perceived* and *constructed* as different” (Rana 17; emphasis in original). The uncovering of these strategies, especially regarding the deconstruction of the pure-blood

– Mudblood paradigm in the *Harry Potter* series, might serve as a socializing tool for the reader. In his/her own world different perceptions and constructions of races as superior and inferior do not go hand in hand with the Western principle of equality:

it's this one idea – that some humans are less human than others – that might be the most dangerous in all of Voldemort's (or Hitler's) ideology. For if accepted, the entire philosophical and legal architecture of Enlightenment and Judeo-Christian morality collapses. Every major argument made about just treatment of others – from Jesus, to Hume, to Locke, Rousseau, and Jefferson – rests on the idea that people are born with certain unalienable rights that are theirs simply by virtue of being human, and in no way dependent on their race, gender, religion, sexual orientation – or magical status. (Barratt 67)

However, this statement does not cover all the different levels of discrimination the books expose, as it only applies to the conflict between Mudbloods, half-bloods and pure-bloods. Muggles, for example, still appear to be inferior, as do other races such as giants.

All in all, the new regime brings about enormous changes in the wizarding society; for instance, it creates and implements new 'absolute truths' to increase its power. "This method is another prime example of how ideologies work: through manipulating the mind by legitimizing the ruling class with new laws, and unifying opinions, if necessary by force and via a propaganda apparatus in books, newspapers and at schools" (Kokorski 2010, 195). The regime employs both, the RSA and the ISA, for its institutionalized discrimination in order to guarantee the maximum range of influence in and control of every aspect of life, as well as to create fear of the Other.

The parallels between the fictional and the real world serve to connect the plot level with the reader's world as the former places Voldemort's convictions and the Ministry's action into a specific historical discourse. This might create awareness of evil which is prone to repeat itself, and which therefore cannot be regarded as an isolated incident.<sup>244</sup> The novels obviously display parallels to the past – to the problematics of racist ideology and its heydays – and thus comment on the past and on contemporary society. Noel Chavelier convincingly argues that the social and political context in which the characters operate "repeatedly reveals the limitations of the very structures—education, law, government, and science—that enable the wizard world to function" (Chavelier 400). Here the parallels between Voldemort's regime and, for example, Nazi

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<sup>244</sup> An article in *The Scotsman. Scotland on Sunday* states that Rowling herself "was chilled to see that the Nazis used precisely the same warped logic as the Death Eaters" when she visited the Holocaust Museum in Washington after she had already defined her race parameters ("Author 'chilled'").

Germany, only highlight the fragility of the Western liberal democratic system. Though it is not possible to change a democratic state into a fascist regime ‘over night’, a long history of racist thinking, be it in Harry’s world or the reader’s world, furthers the process immensely and even facilitates a rewriting of the past. Rowling’s solution to this weakness is the call for personal social and political involvement and responsibility.

Comparing Voldemort’s ideas, the Ministry of Magic and its actions and propaganda to fascist regimes, emphasizes the dichotomy between good and evil. Furthermore, these parallels serve to reinforce the reader’s sense of justice, and the importance of social and political engagement, as well as a call for agency.

The books might be employed as preventive tools to create awareness of racism and its consequences, as race and racism are ever-present topics in the *Harry Potter* series. Jackie Horne claims that “the Harry Potter books are deeply invested in teaching their protagonists (and through them, their readers) how to confront, eradicate, and ameliorate racism through its depiction of the racism that underlies Voldemort’s campaign against ‘Mudbloods’” (Horne 76). This is done, however, within a very specific, human, framework.<sup>245</sup>

Naturally, not every aspect of Voldemort’s regime and Hitler’s Germany are comparable. *Harry Potter* does not simply create another, fantastic version of the Nazis – the wizarding society is a world in its own rights and can rather be read as an example of any fascist regime, as the inferior-superior-paradigm possesses universal qualities;<sup>246</sup> in giving racist ideology a magical stage, the *Harry Potter* books point to the universality of such ideas, which can also be found in the analysis of the other works under scrutiny. The universality becomes especially apparent when looking at the long and rich tradition of racial thinking in the reader’s world. Weitz points out that “Hitler’s racial ideology, with antisemitism at its core, was by no means unique. Everything he wrote or said could have been expressed, almost word for word, by antisemites all across Europe” (Weitz 114). In fact, “many states, not just Nazi Germany, have organized the systematic killing of populations defined along national or racial lines”

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<sup>245</sup> One of Horne’s main points is not only that the *Harry Potter* works try to teach tolerance, but that this series’s approach to a different race outside the human paradigm, namely the house-elves, is extremely problematic, as in this case race serves to perpetuate ‘natural’ power structures.

<sup>246</sup> Unlike Hitler, for example, Voldemort does not concentrate on politics, but pursues personal quests far away from the political stage; his (high-ranked) followers manage the state and spread the ideology. Another ideologically exploited topic the *Harry Potter* books lack is the emphasis of motherhood, which is not nearly as strong as it was in Nazi Germany.

(Weitz 12);<sup>247</sup> this is one of the reasons why this ideology was so successful, because it built on well-established prejudices and emotions.

Throughout the *Harry Potter* books, race not only functions to explore ideological structures rooted in biological determinism, but also serves as a backdrop to discussions of, for example, class, ideological methods, as well as the racial and cultural Other. Furthermore, the topic of racial segregation not only expresses incidents of the past, but, more importantly, also gives voice to fears and anxieties of the present and future. Especially in the time of the refugee crisis currently experienced in Europe, negotiating racially based prejudices and propagating equality steadily increases in importance. The *Harry Potter* books are a warning, as they not only map out what happens when questions of race are put to the extreme, but they also call for the negotiation of Britain's and Europe's past, its present and its future in a world where individual states are becoming more multicultural every day, while a (small but loud) percentage of the population clings to nationalist ideologies due to the fear of globalization.

Instead of depicting an abstract fight between good and evil as *The Dark Is Rising Sequence* does, due to their focus on the construction of difference, the *Harry Potter* books engage the reader to “think more deeply about the world of politics” (Landman ix). Rowling herself states that the books are “a prolonged argument for tolerance, a prolonged plea for an end to bigotry... and I think it's a very healthy message to pass on to younger people that you should question authority and you should not assume that the establishment or the press tells you all of the truth” (Rowling qtd. in Barratt 4).

Elaine Ostry states that “[t]he battle between multiculturalism and racism provides the framework for the series; it is the modern liberal version of the fairy tale battle between good and evil” (Ostry 92). The books indisputably depict a fight between good and evil, but this battle is not only about fairy tale morality. Most of the time, the plot sets clear boundaries between moral and immoral action, especially in the context of racialization; the racist ideologies Voldemort and his followers display concerning the pure-blood question sets the stage for a war between tolerance and racism, freedom and tyranny, a fight against specific crimes committed against humanity.

Like many other works of fantasy fiction, the *Harry Potter* books defamiliarize rather than openly refer to certain historical events within the reader's world.

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<sup>247</sup> According to Weitz, “[g]enocides have occurred since the earliest recorded history, from the Israelite destruction of numerous communities in Canaan, depicted in the Book of Joshua, to the Roman annihilation of Carthage and its population” (Weitz 8).

Furthermore, in alluding to historical scenarios, the plot not only inscribes specific interpretive schemes into the depiction of the wizarding society, but provocatively reveals ideological implications, especially in the construction of evilness and world-destroying events. Racial categories, both in the books and in the reader's world display how the personal becomes the political, how intertwined these two factors can be, especially in a racist and totalitarian regime, and in the end, point to the importance of social and political responsibility.

By establishing racial boundaries, the characters not only create 'naturally' inferior races, but also gain the opportunity to define themselves as superior and thus fabricate their own sense of community, belonging, and exclusiveness. Furthermore, this principle allows the characters to attach themselves to a specific place in the fabric of their own world. Here fantasy literature provides the reader with the opportunity to think outside of everyday boundaries, and thus to explore race conflicts as metaphor for cultural conflicts. Moreover, the reader can also extend this metaphor and apply it, for example, to questions of power and authority, or national and international politics. Remembering the past and especially the atrocities of the past is another function these books fulfil; especially in drawing from the past, consciously or not, do these books preach for a better future the young reader needs to strive for. Tolerance therefore becomes one of the most important virtues these books foreground.

#### The Construction of Difference in the *House of Night* Series

*Harry Potter* is only one example which reveals the prominence of race ideologies within the genre of fantasy fiction. Among the books included in this dissertation, three other series also focus on this topic or at least peripherally discuss it. The *House of Night* novels, for instance, feature a conflict between humans and vampyres;<sup>248</sup> this dispute displays many similarities to the struggle between Muggles and wizards. Although the books undoubtedly include a substantial religious component in the argumentation for war, the plot clearly foregrounds racial ideology as justification of war.

In the books under scrutiny, *The Inheritance Cycle* and the *House of Night* are the only series that display characters that transitioned from one race to another.<sup>249</sup> In *Harry Potter*, a mixture of races is possible. In the *Sangreal Trilogy*, the races / species are biologically fixed, which is also true for Narnian animals. Race among the human

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<sup>248</sup> In order to simplify the transference between the fictitious world and the reader's, I call vampyres a different race instead of a different species.

<sup>249</sup> For example, Zoey turns from human to vampyre and thus acquires a different biological tool box.

population in *Narnia* is also deterministic; it is inert and unchangeable, though the characters might adapt to a certain extent, as shown by Shasta in Calormene culture, and the Pevensie children in Narnian society.

Just like Harry, Zoey starts out as a “normal” person. This concept of normativity is similarly constructed and emphasized, as becomes clear when looking at the Dursleys and Zoey’s family and friends. The initiation scene in which Zoey becomes a vampyre fledgling already gives the reader a glimpse of the conflict. Right after Zoey is marked as a vampyre by the Tracker, her friends display xenophobic behaviour in two ways. First of all, they reveal their fear and even disgust towards Zoey; Zoey’s best friend “actually cringed, like she was afraid of [Zoey]” (*Marked* 4) and she “was looking at [Zoey] like [she] had turned into a monster” (*ibid.* 5). Second of all, they take a more active and aggressive approach when they label Zoey “a fucking freak!” (*ibid.* 13).

From one minute to the next, Zoey’s life is no longer the same: she becomes a social and cultural outsider, almost as if she is carrying a dangerous infectious disease such as “the plague” (*ibid.* 7), she is shunned and avoided, and has to face disgust, contempt, fear, and aggression. As humans construct vampyres as Other, Zoey’s very first act as a vampyre fledgling is to establish her role and position in society. She must defend herself against the xenophobic behaviour and by doing so she even reinforces stereotypes humans have against vampyres. Zoey intimidates the boys who label her as freak, feels the power her new “nature” gives her, and more importantly, she lets the boys feel her power, too (*ibid.* 14).

As explanation for the change into a vampyre, the *House of Night* series turns to biology:<sup>250</sup> “Scientists have been trying to figure out what causes the sequence of physical events that lead to vampyrism for years, hoping that if they figure it out they could cure it, or at the very least invent a vaccine to fight against it” (*ibid.* 22). Scientists have concluded that “[i]t’s a physiological reaction that takes place in some teenagers’ bodies as their hormone levels rise. [...] In certain people the hormones trigger something-or-other in [...] a Junk DNA strand, which starts the whole Change” (*ibid.* 23).<sup>251</sup> This explanation informs the reader not only about the biological reasons for Changing, but also that humans are not accepting the Change, and rather see it as a disease that they have to cure. As science has not yet solved the mystery, becoming a

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<sup>250</sup> In contrast to *The House of Night*, no one attempts to find a scientific explanation for wizard and witches in the *Harry Potter* books. There, magic simply exist and the characters simply accept the fact.

<sup>251</sup> Fittingly, the marking occurs in the period of puberty, and thus marks the crossing of another threshold.

vampyre is heavily marked with superstitious conviction, victimization, and victim blaming.

Zoey's parents blame Zoey for her situation, as the plot displays when Zoey's mother confronts her daughter with the words "[w]hat have you done now" (ibid. 17). Zoey's mother's behaviour mirrors Aunt Petunia's xenophobic reactions: the craving to maintain the image of normativity appears to be more important than the child's welfare. Equally concerned about the standing in her community, Zoey's mother poses the following questions: "what are we going to do about her? What will the neighbors say? [...] What will people say at Meeting on Sunday?" (ibid. 23). For Zoey's mother, and equally for Aunt Petunia, losing face might mean being exiled from the community. Belonging to a community or tribe might have secured the survival of individuals in former times; today, however, the books under scrutiny make a statement for individuality within the framework of Western society, especially if this is connected to morally just actions.

Zoey's stepfather, a member of the religious group People of Faith, even includes religious belief in this blame culture; he reacts with words such as "[g]et thee behind me, Satan!" (ibid. 22) and, to mirror her mother's accusations, "I told you that your bad behavior and your attitude problem would catch up with you" (ibid. 22). While the plot uncovers that Zoey's mother is dependent on her husband's opinion, her husband is a religious fanatic. Religious connotations clearly point to a more medieval attitude towards magic and the supernatural, as the reader can also see in the *Harry Potter* works. The pre-enlightened era as a time of credulity and superstition serve as reference point to the origin of a deep-seated conflict between humans and vampyres (ibid. 53); a conflict which is rooted in fear and envy. Unlike the magical community in *Harry Potter*, vampyres do not live in hiding and the People of Faith bring a religious component to the struggle, which marks the latter as petty, condescending, and fanatic. As the sympathies lie with Zoey as main character, the plot here clearly indicates that society has to undergo a change because victim blaming is not acceptable.<sup>252</sup>

After the initial marking scene and the initial rejection of the vampyre status, all consecutive descriptions of the vampyre society and vampyre power reveal that belonging to this race actually means climbing the evolutionary ladder. Zoey's thoughts also wander in this direction when she says "*talk about ridiculous. More evidence of the stupidity of humans ...* the thought popped into my mind, shocking me by how easily I'd

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<sup>252</sup> This behaviour is closely linked to the blame-culture of rape. Voices are constantly getting louder that call for a shift of the blame from the victim to the rapist.

already started thinking of ‘normal’ people as ‘humans,’ and therefore something different than me” (ibid. 53; emphasis in original). Clearly, vampyres also construct themselves as superior and privileged and humans as Other. On the one hand, this notion of privilege might come from religious security, as vampyres know and often see their goddess, in contrast to the People of Faith, for instance.

On the other hand, the plot not only depicts vampyres as a further developed and therefore superior race, it goes even further and regards them as the epitome of perfection and peak of evolution. In the series, vampyres are depicted as smarter, prettier and stronger; for instance, brilliant historical figures such as Shakespeare become “vampyre playwright Shakespeare” (ibid. 112). More generally put: “The most successful actors and actresses in the world were vampyres. They were also dancers and musicians, authors and singers. Vampyres dominated the arts” (ibid. 62).

Once changed into a fledgling, the outer appearance of the character also changes; Zoye’s former boyfriend tellingly comments on Zoey’s change as follows: “You look seriously hot. You’ve always been beautiful, but now you look like a real goddess” (ibid. 178). Furthermore, the vampyres’ bloodlust is associated with sexual overtones, which mark vampyres as sexy and sexually powerful. All in all, not only are the vampyres physically stronger and more attractive, some of them are also granted specific powers, such as the power to command the elements.

That the vampyre society consists of physically stronger people might also derive from the natural selection the vampyres undergo: Before becoming a fully-fledged vampyre, the fledgling has to live through a transitional period in which sickness might kill him or her. Aphrodite clearly states their superiority when she compares humans and vampyres: “vampyres do not need weakness in their coven. [...] If we were humans we’d call it survival of the fittest. Thank the Goddess we’re not humans, so let’s just call it Fate” (ibid. 278).

In contrast to the *Harry Potter* series where wizards / witches and Muggles can have children together, ‘interbreeding’ is not possible in the *House of Night* series; new vampyres are only created by the touch of the goddess, or develop from vampyres.<sup>253</sup> Becoming pregnant and having children is not possible for vampyres. Therefore, the existence of humans is of absolute importance for the vampyre race. Although the touch of the goddess refers to the motif of chosenness, vampyres are nevertheless dependent

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<sup>253</sup> Stevie Rae’s trajectory shows how she dies as a vampyre with a blue mark and is resurrected as red vampyre. This is a new development in the vampyre universe and initiated by Neferet.



on the continuity of the human race to ensure their own survival,<sup>254</sup> as vampires are also subject to mortality.

As with *Harry Potter*, evil characters in the *House of Night* series take their superiority as justification for oppressing the other race(s). With statements such as “[s]o very human. So very weak” (*Redeemed* 22) Neferet reveals herself as one of the characters that use the argument of superiority to make a case against humans; a belief she also breeds into the next generation. As her utopia, Neferet envisages a society of domination and subordination, with the inferior race simply providing distraction and the main food source.<sup>255</sup> Similarly to the other series discussed in this chapter, the further blossoming of the one race requires the suppression of the other race(s).<sup>256</sup>

Within the series, it is always Neferet and her respective group of followers who voice their negative attitude towards humans. At the beginning of the series, Aphrodite and her powerful clique at school form the group of discontent and openly reveal their disgust and hatred toward the human race. They call what they perceive as a “loser vampymer” someone who is “practically *human*”, and therefore only exploitable as food source (*Marked* 166; emphasis in original). In calling the person “refrigerator” and “snack bar” (*ibid.*) they strip the person and humans in general of all attributes human/e, until what remains is someone’s usefulness. This dehumanization is a general strategy also seen in the *Harry Potter* series. This strategy absolves the perpetrators of having to apply a moral framework or legal boundaries to their actions.<sup>257</sup> Statements such as “[h]uman men suck. [...] They should all die” (*ibid.* 160) are not surprising when the reader takes into consideration how those vampyres define themselves: “true beauty and power in vampyre form—not tainted by human rules or law. We are *not* humans! [...] Free the power within us so that, like the mighty felines of the wild, we know the lithe suppleness of our animal brethren and we are not bound by human chains or caged by their ignorant weaknesses” (*ibid.* 163; emphasis in original).

Later in the series, when Aphrodite becomes one of Zoey’s friends and the text no longer focuses on her former clique, the red vampyres take her place as plot device. From *Betrayed* onwards, a gang of red vampyres murders without inhibition for food

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<sup>254</sup> This displays another parallel to the *Harry Potter* books, where the survival of Muggles is also necessary and beneficial for wizards and witches.

<sup>255</sup> Neferet demonstrates her perceived superiority in her behaviour at her lair in the last book. Here she engineers herself as goddess to the point where her behaviour is simply over the top and staged *ad absurdum* (cp. *Redeemed* 81ff, 33f, 272ff).

<sup>256</sup> This strategy is well-known in the reader’s world; e.g. from the settling of the Americas to Nazi Germany. However, as the heroes /heroines (and villains) are always part of a more powerful race, this might lead to the conclusion that the magical races still patronize the normal, ‘weaker’ races.

<sup>257</sup> This is a strategy well known in the reader’s world: from the crusades, over the settling of the Americas to Nazi Germany.

and entertainment. Due to Neferet's intervention, they have lost their humanity, and therefore are even more radical in their treatment of humans: "They aren't feeding. They're playing. They like terrorizing people; it's a kind of high for them. [...] We don't brutalize and torture them. [...] The High Council has even banished vampyres who misuse their power over humans" (*Burned* 202). This quote not only reveals the red vampyres' attitude towards humans, but also shows great similarity between the red vampyres and the Death Eaters' actions in the *Harry Potter* series. The red vampyres also abuse their power over an allegedly weaker race, and devalue and dehumanize their victims in order to enjoy their superiority uninhibitedly.

In dehumanizing and devaluing their victims, the red vampyres dehumanize and devalue themselves, turning into the stereotypical monster that humans in the novel fear – powerful predators driven purely by instinct. The reader can find the same pattern of othering with this level of escalation in *Harry Potter* and *His Dark Materials*: lives are devalued to make their murder less consequential or despicable. This is easily adapted to the reader's world, where there are many examples of groups that were othered to justify domination over them. All in all, the plot uses the red vampyres as a tool to demonstrate how a world ruled by Neferet (and later Kalona) would look like.

In contrast to the young vampyres, Neferet is more cautious in the beginning, until the character slowly becomes more outspoken the more powerful her supporters are and the more power she herself accumulates. Nevertheless, from the beginning her argumentation and mind-set foster a racist attitude towards humans. In her school, she uses her position and her influence to indoctrinate the young fledglings. Right at the beginning of the plot, she builds her argument on the chosenness and importance of their race: "Bask in your uniqueness. Revel in your strength. We stand separate from the world because of our gifts. Never forget that, because you may be sure the world never will" (*Marked* 149). These statements not only instill the impression of privilege in the fledglings, but also create the image of a chosen group in a world that is constantly threatening and victimizing the vampyres. To Neferet, vampyres are purer than and superior to humans as they are closer to nature in general and to their own nature in particular: "humans have learned to silence their instincts. Vampyres, on the other hand, have learned to listen and listen well to them" (*Betrayed* 62f.).

One of the reasons why the argument of the suppressed race functions well in the *Harry Potter* series is that J. K. Rowling creates the backstory of a century-lasting conflict which includes references to the reader's world. The same is true for the *House of Night* series. Here, too, the authors allude to the past, where the conflict apparently

reached a significant climax: “In the past, when humans attempted to hunt and destroy our kind, it was all that saved many of our foremothers and forefathers’ lives. [...] The Burning Times will never come again. We may not be revered as we were in ancient days, but never again will humans be able to hunt and destroy us” (ibid. 63). The school becomes a propaganda apparatus in which vampyre history and literature are taught in a way that glorifies vampyres and sets them apart from humans.

To instill fear and further the hatred and prejudice between vampyres and humans, Neferet stages a religious hate-crime: One of the teachers at the House of Night is found decapitated and crucified on the school grounds with the note “‘Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live. Exodus 22:18’ And REPENT written and underlined several times” (*Chosen* 159; emphasis in original). Being aware of the (religious) convictions of this group, Zoey and her friends can easily believe that the People of Faith have committed the crime in their religious zealotry. At first, the teenagers therefore do not see that Neferet instrumentalizes the reciprocal negative impressions to instigate a war in order to become more powerful and to avenge the wrongs committed against her in her past (*Untamed* 83). To stir the vampyres in her direction, she holds speeches to inflame the students and warriors:

“It hasn’t happened for more than one hundred years—not so openly—not so brutally. Humans have murdered one of us. In this case they have awakened not a sleeping giant, but have provoked a leopard who they believed was tamed.” Neferet’s voice rose, powerful with anger. “She is not tamed! [...] They believe our fangs have been filed flat and our claws removed, like a fat household tabby. Again, they are wrong.” (*Chosen* 216)

Neferet alludes to several points in this short speech, points that are almost all transferrable to the reader’s world. Firstly, she evokes a ‘we-against-them’ mentality and thus addresses her group’s tribal instincts and defence. Secondly, Neferet clearly oversimplifies the conflict as she blames humans in general; as the reader has become aware, the People of Faith are and remain a secular group. Due to this simplification, Neferet creates a dualistic world picture, which forces the characters to decide if they are with her or against her; this argumentation does not allow a middle way or compromise. Thirdly, Neferet talks about the forced but unsuccessful domestication of vampyres. With this strategy, Neferet reminds the audience of the feral and strong nature of vampyres, while making hidden references to their victimization on the one hand, and to a glorious and purer past on the other hand, when vampyres did not have to file their fangs and remove their claws. This is a strategy the reader might know from

his/her own world, as it is not only characters from fantasy fiction that paint a nostalgic picture of the past to convince the crowds to make their own race or country great again.

Furthermore, Neferet asks Nyx for her help in this situation, “[w]e also ask Nyx to rouse her righteous anger, and [...] the sweetness of her divine fury, [...] that we will not be caught in the humans’ murderous web” (*Chosen* 216). Evoking a deity to support and bless the plan of conquering and suppressing another race is also a parallel to the reader’s world. Her language of justification creates the illusion that the vampyres are walking on a divine path with their crusade against humans.

Neferet’s next speech is even more inflaming and to the point, and contains many similarities to arguments and consequences the reader can also perceive in the *Harry Potter* series:

We have long lived in peace with humans, though they have insulted and ostracized us for decades. They envy our talent and our beauty—our wealth and our power. And their envy has been steadily growing into hatred. Now that hatred has shifted to violence perpetrated against us by people who call themselves religious and righteous. [...]

It is true that there are many more humans than vampyres, and because of our smaller numbers they underestimate us. But I promise you this: If they murder just one more of our sisters or brothers, I will declare a state of war against them. [...] it will not be an outright war, but it will be deadly and we will be victorious. Perhaps it is time that vampyres take their proper place in this world, and that proper place is not being subjugated by humans! (*Chosen* 300 – 302)

Neferet utilizes religious belief and racial prejudices to lure the believers into starting a war in order to put humans into their “proper place”. The vampyre High Council, however, is not taken in by Neferet’s propaganda speeches and decides against the war Neferet wishes, as they want to “prevent more deaths” (*Untamed* 81) and “will not break that peace because of the obscene actions of a few religious zealots” (*Untamed* 84). Instead, they argue in the opposite direction: “We are more powerful now than we were in the seventeenth century. And the world has changed, Neferet. Superstition has been replaced by science. Humans are more reasonable now” (*Untamed* 84).

To achieve a peaceful coexistence between the races, the representative of the High Council supports Zoey in her integration project: “I agree with you that more interaction with the local populace is a good idea. Segregation breeds ignorance, and ignorance breeds fear” (*Untamed* 140). In their attempt to create a peaceful world, the characters in the *House of Night* novels go further than, for example, characters in the

*Harry Potter* books. Zoey tries to break through the boundaries of the separate societies, which is a clear message to the reader that integration and respect are integral features of a peaceful and well-functioning society.

The first three books allow Zoey's stepfather and the People of Faith's belief system main roles in order to create the conflict between the vampyres and the religious organization. The People of Faith give voice to human's prejudices and fears: "The People of Faith preached that vampyres worshiped a false goddess and that they were mostly selfish, dark creatures who cared about nothing except money and luxury and drinking blood and they were all certainly going straight to hell" (*Marked* 55). With their belief and social structure, they form a stark contrast to the matriarchal system of the vampyre society. Zoey's stepfather's belief is deconstructed by Neferet in the first books: he is a man who "admits to worshipping a God who vilifies pleasure, relegates women to roles that are little more than servants and broodmares, though they are the backbone of your church, and seeks to control his worshippers through guilt and fear" (*Betrayed* 12f.).

The clash of ideological beliefs of these two groups reaches its peak in *Chosen*, especially when Zoey's stepfather threatens the vampyre society before the dead bodies of the vampyres are found on school grounds: "There are many good, decent, God-fearing people who are tired of tolerating your evil, who believe enough is enough. We won't live side by side with worshippers of darkness for much longer. Mark my words ... wait and see ... it is time you repented ..." (*Chosen* 36). This dramatization is a narrative technique to create suspense and have the reader chase a red herring.<sup>258</sup> Nevertheless, the rhetoric is characteristic of religious zealotry, independent of the context.

The theme of war between the races, though never absolutely abandoned after *Hunted*, rises to prominence in the last book, when Neferet murders the mayor Mr LaFont, and stages it as a murder committed by one of the House of Night fledglings or vampyres. In this time of emotional turmoil and uncertainty, the widow easily reverts to old stereotypes and racial prejudices in order to express her fury and anger: "None of us will ever be *safe* as long as we coexist with you bloodsuckers!" (*Revealed* 32; emphasis in original).

For the People of Faith in general, and Mrs LaFont in particular, blaming the Other and generalising this blame goes hand in hand with their dualistic world picture:

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<sup>258</sup> The reader might first think that the People of Faith have committed the crimes, although it is Neferet who has murdered the vampyres, as it is later revealed.

either you are human and therefore good, or vampyre and therefore evil. Mrs LaFont's state of mind quickly catches on among the remaining humans and threatens to undermine the atmosphere of peaceful coexistence the fledglings have worked hard to create: "The rest of the crowd had begun to whisper with a restlessness that felt like anger and fear combined. The panic that was building was almost a tangible thing. [...] an already awful night could potentially turn dangerous" (*Revealed* 33). Mrs LaFont expresses a "pro-lynch mob state of mind" (ibid. 37) with her accusations and her racial hatred directed towards vampyres, who in her mind seduce and "prey on humans" (ibid.). This scene also reveals how fragile the peace between the two races is and how easily it can be destroyed. The voice of reason quickly loses ground to irrational fear.

As of book five (*Hunted*) the conflict between the People of Faith and the vampyres loses momentum, while the war between value systems, and consequently between good and evil, takes centre stage. One of the decisive factors for this is the appearance of Kalona in the plot. As soon as Kalona enters the stage, the nostalgic claim for a glorious past becomes more pronounced, especially in his rethoric: "I am going to rule this world very soon. I will bring the ancient ways back, and in doing so I will divide these modern people, separating the wheat from the chaff. The wheat shall stay by my side, growing and thriving as they feed me. The chaff shall be burnt into nothingness" (*Tempted* 96). Kalona states his nonambiguous claim to power which entails a declaration of war against his enemies; it is a statement cloaked in biblical language. Aphrodite's later vision bespeaks of a literal meaning of Kalona's words (ibid. 101). Not only humans are going to burn, but so are vampyres and fledglings alike – everyone who does not agree with his world view and the consequent subjugation of the whole world.

The battle of the vampyre world becomes a battle of ideologies, regardless of the race to which one belongs. This is a new level of conflict in which biology does not necessarily play a major role. Though the argument against the human race has not lost its validity among the evil characters of the series, it has lost its prominence to make way for a bigger and more diverse group of enemies consisting of members of both races. As Kalona fittingly states "If you do not join me you will be my enemy, and I will burn you with the rest of the chaff" (ibid. 97).

Instead of mainstreaming vampyres society, Kalona and Neferet draw on the nostalgic past of their culture and, not unlike Voldemort, want to return to the old ways: where once vampyres [...] strode the earth, proud and strong, instead of hiding in clusters of schools and only letting our young outside our gates if they have

their Marks covered, as if the Goddess's crescent is something of which they should be ashamed. [...] the Goddess never meant for you to cower in darkness. [...] we will bring the ancient ways to life again, so that we may all stand proud and strong—and not bow to human bondage and prejudice [...]. [...] vampyres founded the beauty of Pompeii. [...] vampyres ruled the Amalfi Coast, ushering in centuries of prosperity with their wisdom and benevolence. [...] Join us if you dare to live again! (ibid. 303ff.)

Another parallel to Voldemort's argumentation is that Neferet and Kalona depict vampyres as the victims dominated and terrorised by humans, and draw on a superior past in order to make their claims for world domination believable and justified; they speak of pride, strength, the superiority of their race, and their victimization through "human bondage and prejudice". Almost like the magical race in *Harry Potter*, vampyres are forced into hiding when in public. Vampyres are marginalized and, according to Neferet's rhetoric, dare not to live, although they deserve world domination. Throughout the books the plot emphasises how charismatic those two speakers are and how they mesmerize their audience (e.g. ibid.). This is an important factor within a propaganda apparatus in general; excellent public speakers are able to manipulate their audience efficiently and bind them to their ideology.

The *House of Night* novels centre on blood and its sexual and racial implications. Otherness remains contested, but in the end racial division remains the only solution for the characters in the series. Like the *Harry Potter* series, the *House of Night* books also negotiate issues of culture, which relate closely to race. While Harry and his friends are representatives of white heteronormativity, Zoey's heritage as part Native American waters down the theme of white privilege in the fantasy books under scrutiny in this thesis.

Just like *Harry Potter*, the *House of Night* series is a prolonged argument for Western values of humanity and tolerance. While Neferet tries to violently divide the world, Zoey aims to mend the rifts in the relationship between the two races in order to ensure a peaceful world: "'Because we're all the same.' I heard the words coming from my mouth, and silently thanked Nyx for them. 'Guy, girl, human, vampyre, what difference does it make? We're sharing Tulsa, and we love it. So, let's just all get along!'" (*Hidden* 159). Despite Zoey's plea for mainstreaming vampyres, the relationship between vampyres and humans will necessarily remain hierarchical and not reciprocal. They are in fact not "all the same"; vampyres feed off humans and not vice

versa, a fact which sets the vampyre one step above humans on the food chain.<sup>259</sup> A complete assimilation into human culture is neither desirable nor realistic as the vampyre society has its own rules and beliefs.<sup>260</sup> A peaceful coexistence between the two races is as far as it might go, with vampyres remaining an advanced form of civilisation.

### The Construction of Difference in the *Sangreal Trilogy*

Besides my two major examples, my corpus contains two additional series that focus on the construction of difference as justification of war, namely the *Sangreal Trilogy* and *Prince Caspian*. My main focus lies mainly on *Harry Potter* and extends to the *House of Night*; therefore, I will keep the discussion of the last two series short.

As Nathan's world as a secondary world in the *Sangreal Trilogy* is extremely similar to the reader's world, the underlying messages are much more open and the allusions are much more obvious – the connections are both metaphorical and literal and therefore easily applicable. During his quest, Nathan comes across different worlds that also face the problem of racism. In this discussion, I focus on three points: the conflict between selkies and the merfolk in *The Poisoned Crown*,<sup>261</sup> the Grandir's and his representative's attitude towards other races, and Eric's situation as immigrant. My analysis moves from the fantastic scenarios to those scenarios more easily applicable to the reader's world.

In the third book, Nathan travels to Nefanu's world – a world covered by the ocean. There the reader finds the selkies and the merfolk; both races are experiencing an escalating vicious circle of racial prejudice and violence. As Ezroc the albatross explains to Denaero, princess of the merpeople: "There are selkies who hate your people as much as you hate ours. Northfolk, south-folk – lungbreathers, coldkin – we're supposed to hate each other. Stupid, but true" (*Crown* 115). While Ezroc and Denaero are open to the contact with other races and not influenced and convinced by the perpetuated prejudices, selkie like Nokosha do not look sympathetically at these relations, as his confrontation with Ezroc reveals: "You're a traitor to your race, to all the People of the Ice" (*Crown* 91). The use of the word "traitor" is an eerie echo of the

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<sup>259</sup> The hierarchical relationship between vampyres and humans is also applicable to the relationship between Muggles and wizards, as the scenes between Dumbledore and the Dursleys demonstrates. In both cases, the focalised race has special gifts, which grant them superior powers over humans.

<sup>260</sup> The plot in the *Harry Potter* series also makes the point of not attempting the assimilation of both races.

<sup>261</sup> I do not categorize the conflict of this book into religious reasons. The emphasis does not lie on the religious aspects, but on Nefanu's greed for power and the differences between the races.



rhetoric in the *Harry Potter* books, as well as the historical context I have pointed out above. It is a further marker of expulsion from the community or tribe, evidence of the level of aggression in the conflict between the races, and proof of the deterministic logic connected to the hatred between the races.

On the other side of the racial divide, the priestesses of Nefanu take care to perpetuate and strengthen the impenetrable wall of hatred between the races. Not unlike the rhetoric in the *House of Night* novels, the priestesses declare the merfolk as “the chosen [people] of Nefanu” (*Crown* 171). This status is tied to privilege and the obligation to commit genocide on other races:

You must destroy the lungbreathers, the monsters who live on the northern ice. They are traitors who dream of the land and live half their lives in the air, eating our fish to stoke the heat of their blood – the fish which Nefanu gave us to protect and to feed on. If they are not stopped, they will eat all the fish in the sea to perpetuate their unnatural warmth. They despise us, calling us coldkin, wormkind, mackerel to be hunted and slain. They have dreadful weapons hidden on the ice [...]. You must attack first and destroy them ere they destroy us. Unite the merkings! Summon an army! Purify the ocean for the true children of the Sea! [...]

*They are different — they are dangerous – we fear them – kill – kill – KILL . . .*  
(*ibid.*; emphasis in original)

The lungbreathers do not comply with the merfolks’ way of life; their living conditions and (religious) beliefs are fundamentally different. Therefore, the priestesses demonize the northfolk and create a threatening enemy, whose existence jeopardizes their own survival. Their rhetoric sounds extremely familiar, as they paint the picture of “traitors” who betray their way of life and are out to destroy them; therefore, on the one hand they use an argument of self-defence, and on the other hand religious reasons, as their goddess Nefanu apparently craves the war. Although the merking brings forward strong arguments as to why an engagement in war would kill too many of his people, Nefanu expect her people to show unquestioned obedience and “[t]he Goddess expects her people to die—[...]—die bravely, die gladly, in a great cause”, namely to commit genocide on her enemies (*ibid.* 173).

Nathan himself points to the familiarity of the rhetoric and strategy: “Why does this sound familiar? Nathan wondered. Was the call to war always the same?” (*ibid.* 171). He thus invites the reader to come to the same conclusion. This “talk of war and blood” (*ibid.* 174) is also very similar to Neferet’s rhetoric in *The House of Night*

novels; this intertextual conclusion stresses Nathan's point. Denaero generalizes the emotions and justifications for the reader, and thus gives the reader an explicit indication on how to think about the matter: "Sometimes, I think people like to hate. It gives them somewhere to put all their anger, all their cruelty. They say: 'Northfolk are our enemies, we must hunt and kill them, or they will hunt and kill us,' and that makes it all right to be angry and cruel" (*Crown* 115). Her statement is only one example for the liberal and tolerant tone of the novels. More than the *Harry Potter* or the *House of Night* novels, the *Sangreal Trilogy* becomes an argument for tolerance, freedom, and peace. Through the rhetoric and construction of the books, these messages are transported more directly to the reader than in *Harry Potter*, the *House of Night*, or *Narnia*; Nathan repeatedly sums up and explains the ideological positions in the book for the reader to understand and transfer these points to his/her own reality more easily. The messages of the books thus transcend the fantasy world more efficiently. This becomes even more obvious in the conflict between Nathan and the Grandir, and in Eric's situation.

On first glance, the world of the Grandir seems to be further developed than Nathan's, and by extension, the reader's world. Their technology appears highly advanced, and they have almost reached immortality; Nathan's world seems "primitive" in comparison (*Crown* 406). As stated in the previous chapter, the Grandir and his plans for the domination of the cosmos are grounded in his perceived superiority. Like many other villains, his aim is to control and to suppress free will (*ibid.* 409); due to his ancestry and power he feels entitled to do so. As his own world is contaminated and dying, the Grandir now has to reach out for another cosmos. On Eos, a person is not able to stay outside for too long, less s/he wants to die of sundead. Furthermore, the population is rendered sterile, and there have not been any children in this world for a very long time (*Grail* 137).

The racist attitude of the Grandir and other characters from the Grandir's world finds its validity in the belief that their racial characteristics, in other words their blood, are the key to their accomplishments and genius. Oskva, the mage in the Grandir's world, explains to Nathan how the ruling family interbreeds to sustain their power (*Sword* 277).<sup>262</sup> Nathan, on the other hand, uses this conversation to emphasise that "we think incest is unhealthy. For the children, I mean. Too much inbreeding is supposed to make people stupid" (*ibid.* 277). In his reflections on this conversation, Nathan even

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<sup>262</sup> Oskva's theory finds its correspondence in the reader's world in for example Old Egypt. It seems to be no coincidence that Nathan compares Halme to Nefertiti early in the series (*Grail* 85).

goes one step further and, again, draws a direct reference to the reader's world which brings across this point more clearly:

He couldn't believe Osskva's theory about incest guaranteeing genetic supremacy – even if the biology was different in the world of Eos. “It's like Hitler and all that stuff about the Aryans,” he concluded. “Hitler was stupid and wrong – Osskva is clever and wrong – it's still wrong. Mixing genes is good for you.” (It sounded a little like an advertising slogan for a better, more tolerant world.) Whoever made the Ultimate Laws could not possibly have intended to encourage controlled breeding and the arrogant dominion of a single race – or a single family . . . (*Sword* 279f.)

As I have stated above, the problem of racial purity is a point frequently reflected in fantasy fiction, but seldom as explicitly connected to the reader's world.

It becomes equally explicit when the plot focuses on Eric's situation in Nathan's world. Nathan rescues Eric from Eos and brings him into his world. Now, however, Eric is a stranger in a strange world and becomes a refugee. As in other countries, people in the UK are not immune to xenophobic behaviour. Britain too has a long and troubled history of domination and immigration. While the Dursley express their xenophobic behaviour in the *Harry Potter* books, Anne reflects on such behaviour and explains it to Nathan and consequently to the reader: “The trouble is, people are afraid. They're afraid of strangers, of anybody different. They think immigrants will take their jobs or their homes, even though there aren't that many of them, and newcomers create jobs as well as doing them. But fear makes people stupid, and sometimes cruel” (*Grail* 47). Although Eric accepts his fate and becomes the cliché of the happy and thankful refugee who tries to assimilate to the host culture, the Grandir is too proud and powerful, and refuses to be denigrated to the refugee status (*Crown* 406f.).

In these instances, the books focus on a very sensitive topic and look at it from different perspectives. Using Erik as an example, the plot clearly points out that integration can be possible and successful if both sides accept the premises. That the Grandir literally wants to bring his own world with him is nothing new to the problematic topic of refugees. The *Sangreal Trilogy* focuses on the racial differences very explicitly and is openly didactic about it. The books stress the importance of heterogeneity and tolerance, as a countermovement to xenophobia and anxieties in the reader's world.

### The Construction of Difference in *Prince Caspian*

When analysing *The Chronicles of Narnia*, today's readership can perceive many instances in which racial ideologies play an underlying but important role. Within the *Narnia* series, *Prince Caspian* is a good example of the construction of difference in terms of race, as the book explores the conflict between Narnians and Telmarines. The reader can take a look at the conflict from different perspectives. On the one hand, it is a conflict between nature religion or the natural belief in Aslan, and no religious belief at all,<sup>263</sup> and between the purity of nature and the corruption of civilisation.<sup>264</sup> As said above, the books highlight nostalgia for a golden past, the beauty of civilised nature, mutual respect of man and nature. Narnia "is not the land of Men. It is the country of Aslan, the country of the Waking Trees and Visible Naiads, of Fauns and Satyrs, of Dwarfs and Giants, of the gods and the Centaurs, of Talking Beasts" (*Caspian* 50).

On the other hand, it is a conflict between pre-modern and modern society, in which the Telmarines have violently conquered Narnia, "silenced the beasts and the trees and the fountains, and [...] killed and drove away the Dwarfs and Fauns, and are now trying to cover up even the memory of them" (*ibid.*). Instead of living with and from nature, the Telmarines introduce a human society to Narnia and try to eradicate the native culture. They see themselves as superior race and therefore do not shy away from ethnic cleansing or genocide.

The Telmarines were successful in suppressing the conquered culture and establishing ethnocentric monoculturalism. In order to survive, the native people had to flee or assimilate to their invaders' culture: "Many Dwarfs escaped in the great battles and lived on, shaving their beards and wearing high-heeled shoes and pretending to be men. They have mixed with your Telmarines" (*ibid.* 51). As there is no trace left of Narnian beliefs in Telmarine society, Doctor Cornelius becomes emblematic of an underground culture the survivors have created: "But never in all these years have we forgotten our own people and all the other happy creatures of Narnia, and the long-lost days of freedom" (*ibid.*). Although he is part human, he clearly identifies with his Narnian heritage. Therefore, and to emphasise the depravity of Telmarine culture, Doctor Cornelius is never at risk of developing a double consciousness with all its consequences.

The reader can conclude that fear, hatred and perceived superiority have caused the brutality in the Telmarines' behaviour during the conquest. Brutality and hatred

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<sup>263</sup> Within the book, there is no reference to a religion which the Telmarines follow.

<sup>264</sup> I have already analysed this aspect in chapter 3.1. Wrongful Authority.

breed the same sentiments, and create the justification for a defensive war on the Narnian side. Nikabrik is an example for this: Like no other Narnian character, Nikabrik is extremely angry and deeply racist (ibid. 64). Nikabrik is an unsympathetic character whose allegiance lies with evil. He gives voice to the racist idea of the purity of blood, and, as a consequence, only trusts his own race. Although his character make-up gives him little persuasiveness, his racist mind-set is validated through the positive character of Trumpkin. With his exclamation “[t]he creature can’t help its ancestry” (ibid. 78) Trumpkin expresses his knowledge about and sympathy for the concept of the purity of blood; Trumpkin’s choice of words and sentiment give the impression that the mixture between dwarf and human is a defect.

Especially in *Prince Caspian*, but also in other *Narnia* books, racism is an underlying topic. The fact that it is not as thoroughly discussed as in *Harry Potter* or *The House of Night* leads to the conclusion that this topic is rather naturalised than problematized.

### Conclusion

The books under scrutiny in this chapter negotiate the construction of difference and how this is used to establish strict hierarchies and thus to categorize the world. In all cases above, the construction of difference inevitably leads to an escalation of (racial) violence, which functions as a justification of war on both sides. While the evil side wants to start a war to dominate the world, the male and female heroes engage in war not only to protect specific groups, but to defend certain values such as freedom and equality, and, in Harry Potter’s and Nathan’s case, democracy.

The books structure the conflicts around the process of othering, which is deeply connected to discourses of racism, xenophobia, ethnocentrism and class distinction. Each of these discourses possesses its own set of ideological convictions, formulations and strategies. Within the plots, all these discourses create clear dichotomies and thus lead to a dualistic world view: insider versus outsider, freedom versus oppression and tyranny, good versus evil. The reader can perceive racism as motive for action, as for example Draco Malfoy reveals in his treatments of and opinions on Mudbloods, as well as racism as consequential backlash in reference to the historical background of wizard persecution in the past. Reading the books under these premises can help the reader understand the racist and classist ideologies inscribed in the texts, and to initiate discourses centred on understanding, discussion and tolerance.

In the *Harry Potter* books, race cannot only be read as race, but also as class, as it conveys certain privileges and restrictions to its members. Pure-blood wizards such as the Malfoys regard themselves as the ruling class. They desire a society that is rigidly structured according to blood status and which therefore does not allow social mobility. In casting the Malfoys as negative characters, the plot deconstructs their world view and reveals “Rowling’s own ‘middle class worldview’” (Park qtd. in Pharr 2012, 223). Mary Pharr further points out that “a middle-class worldview often includes a sense of fair play and upward mobility, concepts crucial to the inclusion of talented Muggles like Hermione in the wizarding educational system” (Pharr 2012, 223). The plot consequently points to the desirability of such a worldview and invites the reader to take a firm stand against materialism and prejudice (Klaus 2014, 112f.).

In the books, unsympathetic characters such as the Malfoys use the differences discussed above to create dichotomies: they cast undesirable and dangerous traits onto the Other while simultaneously glorifying their own race. This psychological, social, and political strategy is not only employed in the fantasy novels, but also rings true for the reader’s world. In his book, for example, Eric D. Weitz explains that different regimes, especially “Nazi Germany formed a ‘racialized social system,’ a polity and society consciously shot through and through with race” (Weitz 132). The reader can perceive this racialized social system in the analysis above and find traces of racial politics and supremacy in his/her own world.

Anthony Pavlik’s interpretational reading of Umberto Eco’s ur-fascism is very helpful regarding this aspect of the books. In his theory about ur-fascism, Eco explains different strategies of fascism, such as “popular elitism”, the “*cult of tradition*”, “*scorn for the weak*” how “dissent is betrayal”, and that “to win popular support through an appeal ‘against intruders’ the fascist “[takes] advantage of people’s natural fear of the Other” (Pavlik 32f.; emphasis in original). The books under scrutiny echo all these strategies almost verbatim.

As Freeden explains, “Fascism combined a fierce and *aggressive nationalism* at the disposal of the state and its henchmen, a cult of the *leader* (Il Duce), *terror* and physical violence, and a *myth of regeneration* that resurrected the past glories of Rome and promised national rebirth” (Freeden 91; emphasis in original). The points that Freeden emphasizes in this quotation in particular become part of the fantastic worlds, such as the wizarding world or the vampire world. Both examples show “a cult of the *leader*”, “*terror* and physical violence” to promote the goals of a pure-blood society which is supposed to improve the world and correct (past) wrongs, and “a *myth of*

*regeneration*” that ties to the golden past the antagonists promote. To unify the magical race and desensitize the public, the Other is demonized to the point where there is little resemblance with the actual Other that the villains construct as enemies. By doing so, the conflict becomes an ideological struggle between two systems in which only right and wrong, good and evil, exist. All these points are emblematic for the fascist methodology described in the books, as well as in the readers’ world.

The characters in the books, as well as individuals in the reader’s reality, construct themselves around what they are, as well as what they are not. The books demonstrate that the evil characters in the books glorify the self and their own race and consequently construct the Other as purely negative, and an outsider to their culture. This fosters the belief in their own superiority and the inferiority of the Other, which leads to the denigration and dehumanization of, for example, Muggles in *Harry Potter* and humans in the *House of Night*. This hierarchical relationship, which is the result of such a racialization, functions as a justification for the acquisition of power. The evil characters establish power structures which reinforce their superiority and naturalize the inferiority of the Other.

Looking underneath the surface of the irrational and fascist argumentation developed by the evil side, the unsympathetic characters create an ideology that appears to be coherent and logical to those who want to believe in it, and who are prepared to violate fundamental human rights and restrict the liberty of the Other to forward one’s own position and satiate one’s own hunger for power. The stories and myths about the glorious past of the fantastic races are significant as they build an emotional ground for the support and justification of the fascist arguments. Furthermore, the villains instrumentalize these emotions to create the longing for a better and glorious future, which they promise to deliver. When it comes to implementing the strategies which are supposed to bring about the desired future, the antagonists display what Weitz describes as “a casual attitude toward human life, a willingness to countenance death on a massive scale” (Weitz 52). One of the messages of the *Harry Potter* books is that this view is absurd, and thus reveals the ideological, and apparently the (false) system of values of Voldemort and his followers. The consequence of ideological thinking establishes a subjective pseudo-reality and is thus also connected to Louis Althusser’s definition of ideology, as it “expresses a will, a hope or a nostalgia, rather than describing a reality” (Eagleton 1991, 19). Terry Eagleton works with Althusser’s statement and proclaims that “it is fundamentally a matter of fearing and denouncing, reverencing and reviling,

all of which then sometimes gets coded into a discourse which looks as though it is describing the way things actually are” (ibid).

Furthermore, this “casual attitude toward human life” facilitates the creation of what cultural theorist Giorgio Agamben explains as a *Homo sacer*. In his article on *The Hunger Games* Guy Andre Risko analyses the concept of the *Homo sacer* in the light of institutional violence towards the tributes. The tributes become completely meaningless regarding their juridical-political position (Risko 84), as are, for example, Lyra, Ron, Harry, Muggles, and Mudbloods, in the books under scrutiny. The *Homo sacer* is “a figure of law that is empty of political legitimacy”, which means that the state ceases to protect its citizen, as s/he “has lost all legal value, can be killed but not murdered (the killer isn’t held legally responsible) or sacrificed” (ibid. 82), the “*Homo sacer* literally ceases to be political” (ibid. 84; emphasis in original). It is no coincidence that this escalation of legal violence finds its way into the books under scrutiny. Again, fantasy defamiliarizes the familiar and makes it appear in a new light; for example, in Nazi Germany, Jews have occupied the position of the *Homo sacer*, as have slaves in the U.S.

Deeply connected to this is the reading of race as national and cultural identity. As Miller states: “National identities very often do emerge out of antagonism towards some neighbouring people: being British was once very much a matter of not being French” (Miller 2003, 114). Again, identification takes place through the demarcation of the Other: Being a wizard means not being a Muggle, and being a vampyre means not being human. Furthermore, “[n]ations also typically develop myths about themselves – about their unique moral or cultural qualities, about their past military or political (or sporting) achievements, and so forth. [...] Nation and state reinforce one another – the power of the state is used to strengthen national identity” (Miller 2003, 114-5). This is true for instance regarding the focus on the wizarding society in *Harry Potter*, as well as belonging to the vampyre community in the *House of Night* novels. The example of the *Harry Potter* novels demonstrates how the villains attempt to strengthen national identity through strengthening the state. By doing so, they create an oppressive state apparatus that threatens to destroy all those who dissent.

Miller continues in saying that “Benedict Anderson has [...] called nations ‘imagined communities’: unlike face-to-face communities, their very existence depends on a collective act of imagination. People had to learn to see themselves as French, or American, or Japanese, not just as family members or residents of a particular town” (Miller 2003, 114). This learning process and the demarcation of one’s own identity are



made explicit in the transition of, for example, Harry into the wizard community and Zoey into the vampyre community. Both characters have to renegotiate their own identity with respect to their new racial and cultural environment. They belong to the magical and in some respect superior community.

As Richard Bellamy explains, “[a] common nationality is said to foster solidaristic and trusting feelings by creating a common identity that draws on shared culture, history and language” (Bellamy 2008, 70). In combining nation and culture, the books under scrutiny erase national borders and create a shared culture. Nationality is no longer important, belonging to the magical race is. What remains the same are the shared values. Although I start with reading race as nation, it is a very general reading in which nation needs to be re-defined as Western, which leads to the conclusion that nation can rather be read as culture, making the wars in the books cultural wars. The didactic lessons the books convey are not openly discussed, but the reader needs to chip away each layer of the fantastic to uncover the core messages.

The construction of difference does not give specific races the right to discriminate against the Other. As all races display fundamental human values such as kindness, compassion and love, and the books preach to accept and tolerate the Other despite the racial / cultural differences. The books even go one step further: Upholding humanitarian rights of the oppressed race becomes more than a good cause; it becomes an obligation to the heroes in the books. This obligation leads to (military) interventions against the villains that aim to or already commit genocide and mass murder. The villains become the greatest threat and enemy to the otherwise peaceful communities; they are the ones who cannot be tolerated. In the end, it is them who are dehumanized and destroyed for the greater good, simultaneously uniting reader and heroes to a (temporary) psycho-cultural unity of shared values and a shared ideology.

### 3.3 The Use and Abuse of Religion

Religion runs like a red thread through human history. Therefore, the use and abuse of religion in matters of the state and warfare is nothing new.<sup>265</sup> This is especially true if there is no separation between religion and the state within the respective community. According to Nicoló Machiavelli, religion plays an important role when it comes to matters of the state and its population. In his book *Machiavelli. A Very Short Introduction*, Quentin Skinner summarizes Machiavelli's view on religion as follows: "the institution of religion can be made to play a role analogous to that of outstanding individuals in helping to promote civic greatness. Religion can be used, that is, to inspire – and if necessary to terrorize – the ordinary populace in such a way as to induce them to prefer the good of their community to all other goods" (Skinner 70). The fantasy books under scrutiny attest the validity of Machiavelli's opinion on religion in that the villains use religion in a similar way; however the antagonists do not use religion for the good of the community, but for their own selfish ends.

This subchapter focuses on the alliance of religion and ideology. This is extremely problematic as the role religion has played in society is deeply connected to the enforcement of values and moulding human behaviour. Terry Eagleton's warning about the manipulative power of ideology rings especially true for the abuse of religion: "[t]he most efficient oppressor is the one who persuades his underlings to love, desire and identify with his power" (Eagleton 1991, xiii).<sup>266</sup> Employing religion as justification for a cause grants one's actions ultimate value (Armstrong 3).

The books reveal how the antagonists use religion as an ideological tool, an excuse to oppress the population or to start a war, while simultaneously covering up personal interests. Furthermore, in the cases below, religion and politics merge: one shapes and affects the other. In contrast to the fields of justification I have analysed in the previous chapters, religion claims to establish and maintain not only political, but also divinely ordained order. The books reveal that religion grants cosmic legitimization to those who wield power and violence. This cosmic legitimization intensifies the level of danger the antagonists pose, as well as their religious zeal.

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<sup>265</sup> Karen Armstrong's *Fields of Blood. Religion and the History of Violence* (2014) is only one example for a book-length study on this matter.

<sup>266</sup> Although this is also true, for instance, for Lord Voldemort, in a religious context, this oppressor is even more effective because religious legitimization is connected to the cosmic order and grants a special meaning for each individual and the way he or she makes sense of his/her life. I have already employed Eagleton's quote in my discussion of the Authority in Chapter 2.2 Male Adversaries.

To illustrate my argumentation, this subchapter mainly draws its examples from Pullman's *His Dark Materials*.<sup>267</sup> Therefore, I begin with a thorough description and analysis of the series, specifically the role the Church plays in the books. Furthermore, I compare major aspects revealed in *His Dark Materials* about religion as legitimization for war with other books from my corpus, such as Lewis's *The Last Battle*.<sup>268</sup> The representation of religion as manipulative, and the trustworthiness or untrustworthiness of (organized) religion form further cornerstones of this chapter. In *His Dark Materials* and *The Last Battle*, for example, religion is reduced to the status of a catalyst and vehicle in the struggle for power.<sup>269</sup>

The most valuable source to further my interpretation is *His Dark Materials Illuminated*, a compilation of essays on Pullman's series edited by Millicent Lenz and Carole Scott. I have also turned to philosophers such as Machiavelli, Hobbes, and Rousseau who provide thought-provoking insights. Furthermore, Hartmut Heuermann's *Religion und Ideologie. Die Verführung des Glaubens durch Macht* (2005) and Karen Armstrong's *Fields of Book. Religion and the History of Violence* (2014) help me to shed light on the use and abuse of religion in contemporary and ancient society.<sup>270</sup>

The fantastic books I analyse in this chapter pinpoint the question of what religion is supposed to do and what religion actually does in the books. In contrast to the *Narnia* series, all contemporary books I take into consideration, namely *His Dark Materials*, the *Sangreal Trilogy*, and the *House of Night* series,<sup>271</sup> warn their readership about the manipulative power of (the wrong) religion. To emphasise this point, Philip Pullman, for instance, draws explicit references to the church's bloody history during the crusades and the inquisition, which the reader can more easily apply to his/her own world. While focusing on the interplay between religion and ideology, the books implicitly talk about the human desire for religion and the worth of religion in society.

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<sup>267</sup> I have already presented some of the descriptions and conclusions regarding the Church in several published articles.

<sup>268</sup> Although the *Sangreal Trilogy* and the *House of Night* novels also name religion as motivator for war, the construction of difference is oftentimes the stronger motive than religious aspects. Therefore, I have analysed these books in the previous chapter, and only briefly mention them in this chapter.

<sup>269</sup> The same is true for the *House of Night* series and the *Sangreal Trilogy*. Neferet and Nefanu both declare themselves as goddesses, demand utter obedience from their subjects and ignore all rules imposed by others. While Nefanu establishes a cult around her person, Neferet is not successful in doing the same.

<sup>270</sup> Both authors have published extensively on the topic of religion. Armstrong has won several awards for her publications.

<sup>271</sup> These books were written within the last 25 to 30 years.

### The Church in Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials*

The Church in Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials* is an example of organised villainy and systemic violence that is based on religious tradition and conviction. Lyra's "Brytain is ruled by a totalitarian theocracy" (Kokorski 2012c, 144), as the government combines both political and religious doctrines and power.

In the trilogy, the agents of the Church are trying to establish a system which dominates every world in the multiverse. The Church in Lyra's world exists in a parallel universe from the reader's world. It is so dominant that its "power over every aspect of life had been absolute" (*Lights* 31); as in pre-modern times in the reader's world, the Church in *His Dark Materials* permeates all aspects of life. Consequently, it possesses the monopoly on knowledge, values, and power, and it demands complete obedience from its subjects (*Knife* 229). Although the Church in Lyra's world dominates all ways of life and is also very powerful in Will's world, neither of the protagonists agrees with the Church's and the Authority's claims to rule the world(s) or their methods in doing so; this serves as a significant indicator on how to view the Church's and the Authority's actions, as Lyra and Will function as moral compasses for the reader.

Concerning the structure of the Church, the Magisterium has replaced the papacy (*Lights* 31) and forms "an umbrella organization" (Kokorski 2012c, 144) that consists of "a tangle of courts, colleges, and councils" (*Lights* 31). Agencies within this cluster, such as the College of Bishops or the Consistorial Court of Discipline as the most powerful body, "were not always united; sometimes a bitter rivalry grew up between them" (*ibid.*). This well-organized and highly hierarchical "state apparatus of the Church unites the legislative, executive and judiciary power" (Kokorski 2012c, 144). Within the organizations, human actors consist of, for example, priests, bishops and other agents, who often blindly follow the doctrines of the Church and the Authority. The Authority stands at the apex of the political and religious pyramid. In the third book the Church even has a whole army at its disposal.

In his article "Rediscovering Faith through Science Fiction: Pullman's *His Dark Material*", Andrew Leet argues that "although possessing a form similar to that of Anglicanism or Catholicism, the Church that these men represent is actually non-Christian in nature, as there is no mention of a Christ figure or incarnation and there is no sense of the Holy Spirit at work" (Leet 176).<sup>272</sup> The reader does not encounter any liberal believers of the Church, but only characters such as Father Gomez and Seymon

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<sup>272</sup> It is interesting to note that although the Church does not have a Christ figure, Lyra comes as close as possible to the Messiah, as she is the one who liberates the dead from their hell and thus from their sins with which the Harpies continuously torture their victims.

Borisovitch who are fanatics, misogynists, and xenophobes (*Spyglass* 104ff.). Other characters, such as the Master of Jordan College, only support the Church as they cannot withdraw from the Church's influence; but they do not appear to truly believe in its doctrines.

Mrs Coulter's Oblation Board proves that financial resources appear to be unlimited. Every organization functions with the help of religious doctrines, education, and surveillance, as "[e]very philosophical research establishment [...] had to include on its staff a representative of the Magisterium, to act as a censor and suppress the news of any heretical discoveries" (*Knife* 130).<sup>273</sup> This method of surveillance demonstrates that the Church is constantly protecting its monopoly on knowledge and power, while repressing contrary research and intellectual creativity.

Only "authorized" interpretations of the world are permitted to be talked about or taught (*Lights* 275), "and those who dare to challenge the Church's truths are guilty of committing blasphemy and therefore brought before the Consistorial Court of Discipline and 'sentenced to death before you could blink' (*Knife* 48)" (Kokorski 2012c, 144). Comparable to the *Harry Potter* series as well as the *Inheritance Cycle*, an atmosphere of threat and terror prevails: "It's death among our people [...] to challenge the church" (*Knife* 47).

Barnard and Stokes are an example of two "renegade theologians who postulated the existence of numerous other worlds like this one, neither heaven nor hell, but material and sinful. [...] The Holy Church naturally disapproved of this abominable heresy, and Barnard and Stokes were silenced" (*Lights* 31f.; emphasis in original). This censorship exemplifies the (legal) power the Church has in the use of the repressive state apparatus and to enforce its laws and inflict punishments on disobedient subjects. The silencing of dissenters is an essential tool of the Church's exercise of power.<sup>274</sup> At the end of book one, however, the plot reveals that Barnard and Stokes' findings are in fact true and that parallel worlds indeed exist. This has severe consequences: the teachings of the Church in Lyra's world prove to be false and thus call into question all other doctrines of the Church, not only for the characters but for the readers as well.

Furthermore, the Church aims to rewrite Biblical history; according to Mrs Coulter, "[i]f they could, they'd go back to the garden of Eden and kill Eve before *she*

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<sup>273</sup> Although the Church seems to be in the centre of Lyra's world, religious worship of a deity, including for example mass, does not appear to be the focus of its religion and politics.

<sup>274</sup> Karen Armstrong explains that this tactic has been long established within e.g. the (medieval) Church (Armstrong 224).

was tempted” (*Spyglass* 217; emphasis in original).<sup>275</sup> Killing the first Eve and the second Eve Lyra, would lead to a reinterpretation of their cultural reality and identity; for the Church, this act of distortion would ultimately culminate in what American historian Arthur Schlesinger calls “feel-good-history”: “das Geschichtsbild der guten Gefühle, [...] dieses typische Ideologem, das Ideologieträgern dazu dient, sich die Geschichte nach ihrem Geschmack zu konstruieren” (Heuermann 69).<sup>276</sup>

This not only points out the ambitions of the Church, but also its misogynist view of women. The Church masks its fear for the female body and its deeply seated anxiety regarding women with religious rhetoric (*Spyglass* 105). The demonization of powerful women such as the witches further reminds the reader of traditional and outdated convictions and practises. *His Dark Materials* thus call into question power structures and gender dichotomies which were and are propagated by the Church in the fictional and the real world.

President Hugh MacPhail fiercely believes in the doctrine of the Church, and for him the conflict can therefore only have one outcome and there is no compromise possible. This reveals that his fanatical belief compels him to view the world in absolutes. In the President’s mind, the righteousness of his actions justifies the death of Lyra, as, in his opinion, this would prevent humanity from a second Fall. The end justifies the means: “But better a world with no church and no Dust than a world where every day we have to struggle under the hideous burden of sin. Better a world purged of all that!” (*Spyglass* 74). The total indoctrination of the Authority’s ideology has thus been successful: the President of the Consistorial Court serves life-denying ideas and thus reverses what is (morally) right and wrong. Here, the plot not only announces a clear critique of religious fanaticism, but also demonstrates how the Church is a prisoner of its own ideological convictions and blind beliefs.

The indoctrination of its subjects leads to the conclusion that some people are willing to commit crimes in the Church’s name. “Many fanatic servants willingly sacrifice themselves for the church, because they desperately want to serve God and hope for salvation” (Kokorski 2010, 198f). Father Gomez, for example, is a member of the clergy who practices “pre-emptive penance” (*Spyglass* 75) which allows for a pre-emptive absolution so that the crime which will be committed is “no [crime] at all”

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<sup>275</sup> Millicent Lenz points out that the sin of acting against the will of a god is part of Western mythological consciousness, as the tales of Prometheus, and Adam and Eve demonstrate. The Christian church in the reader’s world calls the first Fall of humanity a *felix culpa*, a happy fault (5), which poses a stark contrast to Pullman’s fictional Church.

<sup>276</sup> “the conception of history of good feelings, [...] this typical ideologeme which serves ideologues to construct history as they please” (translation KK).

(ibid.).<sup>277</sup> According to the Church's doctrine, legalized murder is possible: "it was sometimes necessary to kill people, for example, and it was so much less troubling for the assassin if he could do so in a state of grace" (ibid.). The highest members of the Church have selected Father Gomez to murder Lyra in order to prevent her from becoming the second Eve; Father Gomez thus becomes soldier and assassin to the Church. When he hears of his mission "[t]he young priest was nearly weeping with pride" (ibid.), and is not concerned or worried that the Church will not take any responsibility for the mission, but washes its hands off the murder: "Once you leave here, Father Gomez, you will be completely cut off, for ever, from any help we can give. You can never come back; you will never hear from us" (ibid. 80). This strategy strongly hints at the immorality of the mission.

The Church's role as one of the villains becomes especially apparent in the fight for Dust. Dust settles on children after they have come of age, which the Church regards as proof that "Dust was the physical evidence for original sin" (*Lights* 371). To keep people in a state of innocence, agents of the Church aim at violently separating children from their daemons, thus preventing Dust from settling on the children. This separation, however, leads to "zombie"-like beings, without a clear perception of the world, without agency, purposeless, and with no will of their own (ibid. 375). For the Church, this use of power is based within the range of personal, moral and social integrities, as the end justifies the means.

Ultimately, however, destroying Dust allows the Authority and Metatron to maintain and expand their power.<sup>278</sup> Furthermore, the quest to destroy Dust uncovers the Church as a highly predatory organization that preys on innocent children. With this interference into their subjects' lives, the Church gives the impression that people are unable to govern themselves, and facilitates the absolute infantilization of its subjects. With its patronizing abuse of parental power, the Church thus creates creatures unable to question the legitimacy of the organization or of the (false) God. Furthermore, the Church would thus guide humanity backwards to the Dark Ages and initiate an infinite pre-enlightened era in human history, which prevents people from psychologically coming-of-age.<sup>279</sup>

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<sup>277</sup> This practice is reminiscent of the plenary indulgence the Pope granted for the crusades during the Middle Ages.

<sup>278</sup> In this case Heuermann's claim is true that "Kirchenpolitik war stets (auch) Machtpolitik" (Heuermann 82; "church's policy was always a policy of power (as well)" (translation KK)).

<sup>279</sup> This psychological coming-of-age might also refer to Kant's understanding of the Enlightenment as man's emergence of his self-imposed immaturity.

A more favourable opinion on Dust, the one that Lyra and her companions choose to believe in, is that the settling of Dust is “a physical proof that something happen[s] when innocence change[s] to experience” (*Lights*. 372). Here, Dust becomes a symbol of experience, enlightenment and human agency, and thus constitutes “a fundamental part of (human) nature” (Kokorski 2012b, 206). Its destruction would consequently mean that “everything good will fade away and die” (*Spyglass* 511). Basically, Dust is regarded “as the essence of goodness, or the epitome of evil, depending on the character’s allegiance and perspective” (Scott 100).

Like Voldemort and the Ministry of Magic, the Church discriminates against other species by othering them, and aims to destroy them. This is, for example, true for the race called Gallivespians. The Authority’s human servants almost succeeded in committing genocide against these people as the Church “regard[s] them as diabolic” (*Spyglass* 220). This technique of demonizing the enemy is an effective strategy the reader has already encountered for example in the *Harry Potter* books, and might have come across in his/her own world.

The persecution of witches and armoured bears further unmasks the theocracy as a tyrannical, pre-enlightened society. Moreover, it is not only a xenophobic society, but also an imperialistic one. Again, Father Gomez serves as a good example. His first action upon arrival in the Mulefa’s world, in the New World so to speak, is to calmly and cold-bloodedly kill one of the Tualapi (*Spyglass* 388).<sup>280</sup> This action establishes him as master over life and death, and consequently enables him to enslave the birds: “They understood. [...] If they knew what death was, thought Father Gomez, and if they could see the connection between death and himself, then there was the basis of a fruitful understanding between them. Once they had truly learned to fear him, they would do exactly as he said” (*Spyglass* 389). Based on this act of terror, Father Gomez forms a kind of alliance with the “foul creatures” (*Spyglass* 138), and instrumentalizes the Tualapi to facilitate his own goal. Father Gomez serves as the embodiment of the Church and its strategies.

When he is on the verge of completing his mission, he reveals that fanatic religious conviction and perceived righteousness is closely connected to his missionary zeal:

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<sup>280</sup> A Tualapi is a white bird which looks like a sailing ship from a distance. This description points to Tualapis’ characterization as invaders. The Mulefa fear the Tualapi, as the latter often invade and destroy the Mulefa’s village. The birds even defecate on everything they have destroyed while the helpless Mulefa can only flee, watch, and rebuild everything to keep Dust flowing (*Spyglass* 138).



He was so close to success now that for the first time he found himself speculating on what he would do afterwards, and whether he would please the kingdom of heaven more by going back to Geneva or staying to evangelize this world. The first thing to do here would be to convince the four-legged creatures, who seemed to have the rudiments of reason, that their habit of riding on wheels was abominable and Satanic, and contrary to the will of God. Break them of that, and salvation would follow. (*Spyglass* 490)

By othering the Mulefa and describing their way of life as Satanic,<sup>281</sup> Father Gomez marks them as misguided and inferior. In his mind, this gives him the right and obligation to impose his set of beliefs on them. He aims to conquer and dominate this world and turn it into an outpost of the Church, which is reminiscent of the discovery and colonization of the New World. In his analysis of the colonization of the Americas, Heuermann makes an important point which the reader can also apply to *His Dark Materials*: “Die Pflicht und das Recht der Christen zur Missionierung der Heiden standen von vornherein außer Frage, denn darin fanden Entdeckung und Eroberung ihren höheren, biblisch fundierten Sinn” (Heuermann 203).<sup>282</sup> The missionary work, however, would inevitably mean the destruction of the Mulefa’s harmonious and unobtrusive way of life and, consequently, the destruction of Dust in this world.

All in all, the reader gets the impression that the Church is an organisation with “a destructive use of power in which politics and debased practices have joined with the forces of evil to seduce and bully people from the truth” (Scott 97). The plot criticizes the members of the Church as being fanatic and uncompromising, following a goal which will only destroy humanity. Furthermore, the plot denounces striving for power for power’s sake and the theocratic control of the Church. The books highly encourage the reader not only to question the sacrosanct image of the church, but of all institutions which hold power.

As Leet states a “Church in the formal sense of the word controls Lyra’s world, but it is a church in name only, an empty shell run by ‘ancient and rheumy-eyed’ men who are superstitious of, and hostile toward, everything outside of their sphere of control” (Leet 176) such as the witches and Gallivespians. Leet continues and contends the following:

From a historical perspective, one could argue that organized religion attempts to reinforce the heaven and hell reward/punishment schemas in order to bolster

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<sup>281</sup> Father Gomez’s characterization of the Mulefa is purely arbitrary and unscientific.

<sup>282</sup> “The obligation and the right of Christians to missionize heathens was always a given, as this served to give discovery and conquest a higher, biblical-based meaning” (translation KK).

its own importance in people's lives and establish itself as humanity's conscience. Recognizing the danger of such control, it is not surprising that Pullman and other science fiction authors have chosen to shake up this particular dichotomy. (ibid. 178)

Although Leet's statement is extremely general and one could argue that it oversimplifies organized religion, it nevertheless bears merit for *His Dark Materials*. Not only does organized religion attempt to "bolster its own importance in people's lives", Pullman's Church aims at world domination and total control of all ways of live.

Instead of the kingdom of heaven, the plot clearly favours the republic of heaven, a concept which promotes freedom, wisdom, and free will. To facilitate this utopia, Lyra and Will have to sacrifice their happiness for the greater good. Although the republic of heaven remains extremely vague, the books construct it as a step in the "right" direction; it is emblematic of a state which takes its obligation to preserve freedom and peace seriously, and offers the best possibilities to develop into what Pullman would label an enlightened, graceful being.

#### Representation of religion as manipulative

While examining the Authority's and the Church's strategies, such as the censorship of rival thoughts and rewriting their own history, my analysis proves that Terry Eagleton's six strategies to legitimize power undeniably apply to *His Dark Materials*.<sup>283</sup> These strategies reveal the Authority and the Church as manipulative and dangerous ideologues, and depict religion as being prone to ideological misinterpretation and misapplication.

Even though Karen Armstrong does not agree with Richard Dawkins who states that "only religious faith is a strong enough force to motivate [...] utter madness in otherwise sane and decent people" (Dawkins 132),<sup>284</sup> she contends that those who wield religious power might use it to manipulate the population; after all, "[e]mpire-building works best when soldiers believe that they are benefiting humanity, so the conviction that they had a divine mission would cheer flagging spirits" (Armstrong 170).

Again, Father Gomez might serve as example for this point. In order to be able to complete his mission, he has demonised Lyra and thus rationalised his actions. His

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<sup>283</sup> As quoted above: "[a] dominant power may legitimate itself by *promoting* beliefs and values congenial to it; *naturalizing* and *universalizing* such beliefs so as to render them self-evident and apparently inevitable; *denigrating* ideas which might challenge it; *excluding* rival forms of thought, perhaps by some unspoken but systematic logic; and *obscuring* social reality in ways convenient to itself" (Eagleton 1991, 5f.; emphasis in original).

<sup>284</sup> Armstrong calls Dawkins' statement a "dangerous oversimplification" (Armstrong 313).

ruthless behaviour towards the Tualapi not only mirrors imperialism in its worst form, as it justifies and even sanctifies murder and the destruction of a race, his mission to kill Lyra also stands in stark contrast to his “horror of harming an innocent person” (*Spyglass* 489). The contradiction between his moral code and his actions during his mission reveal that the degree of manipulation is absolute. Father Gomez is convinced that he is saving mankind and thus acting righteously; especially since pre-emptive absolution has absolved him from sin. For him this sanctifies the violation of his moral code and Church doctrines.

His mission to kill Lyra furthers the Church’s cause to eliminate Dust from the world. This would lead to the preservation of what the Church perceives as innocence at the cost of experience. Naomi Wood stipulates in her analysis of the series that Father Gomez’s mission “perfectly captures the oxymoronic implications of valuing innocence more than development, experience, even life itself” (Wood 542).

Secondly, Karen Armstrong’s line of thoughts supplements my interpretation when she argues that “[r]eligious sentiments helped soldiers and generals to distance themselves from the enemy, blot out all sense of shared humanity, and infuse the cruel struggle with a moral fervour that made it not only palatable but noble; they give participants an uplifting sense of righteousness” (Armstrong 226).<sup>285</sup> For the reader, it is Father Gomez who creates distance between himself and the reader, and as a consequence, it is he who becomes dehumanised and a henchman of evil powers (ibid. 490).

The legal and moral loophole the Church has created with the ritual of pre-emptive absolution facilitates the maintenance and expansion of their power. The Church has built a state apparatus that uses religion as propaganda tool to lead public opinion and legitimize their religious belief as ruling power.<sup>286</sup> This also becomes apparent in two different scenes.

The first scene depicts the fight between Lee Scoresby and a Skraeling. Tellingly, the Skraeling is never referred to by name, only known by his ethnicity. Being nameless, he thus represents many scholars and soldiers who serve the Church.<sup>287</sup> The Skraeling tries to kill Lee Scoresby for the latter has inquired about Grumman and Dust, both topics the Church aims to suppress. When Lee defends himself, he mortally

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<sup>285</sup> Taking into consideration my analysis in the previous chapter, this also proves to be true for racial convictions and othering.

<sup>286</sup> The reader also comes across this strategy when looking at the Ministry of Magic, of course with the exclusion of religious undertones.

<sup>287</sup> This character is an obedient member of the Church. He wears a ring which proves him to be a representative of the Magisterium, the most powerful organization in his world (*Knife* 129f.).

wounds the Skraeling. Instead of accepting Lee's help, the Skraeling refuses any lifesaving actions: "No! [...] I am glad to die! I shall have the martyr's palm! You will not deprive me of that!" (*Knife* 132). His actions reveal a desperate attempt to give his life meaning and die of what he perceives as a heroic death. For him, his death promises future glory, and might thus compensate for any shortcomings in his earthly life. This serves as evidence that, like Father Gomez, the Skraeling is highly influenced by the Church's ideology. Furthermore, it is evidence that the Skraeling is convinced that he is taking part in the cosmic battle between good and evil, and that he has bought into ideological glorifications of the reality of war. However, the plot encourages the reader to take Hester's comment as reference point for the judgement of such actions and mind sets; Hester simply remarks that "[t]hese people are insane" (*Knife* 133).<sup>288</sup>

The Skraeling alludes to other tools of this ideological state apparatus, namely the depiction of life after death and the glory of martyrdom. In contrast to political or racial justifications of war discussed in the previous chapters, religious leaders in, for example, *His Dark Material* manipulate the believers with images and promises of the afterlife. The topic of the afterlife addresses the fear of death that not only the characters in the books are confronted with, but even the (young) reader. The Church glorifies life after death for those who believe and adhere to the Church's doctrines, and preaches that "heaven [is] a place of joy and glory and we [will] spend eternity in the company of saints and angels praising the Almighty, in a state of bliss" (*Spyglass* 335). In *Spyglass*, however, the reader learns that 'heaven' is akin to a "prison camp" (*ibid.* 35), "which means that everything people hoped for, the biggest consolation for believers of the church, is just another method of the propaganda apparatus" to ensure people's obedience to the Authority's will (Kokorski 2010, 198).

This leads to the second scene of importance at this point. In the land of the dead, Lyra witnesses the conflict between a woman who died as martyr and a man "who look[s] like a monk: thin, and pale even in his death, with dark zealous eyes" (*Spyglass* 336). He "thrust[s] aside" the woman in order to take over the centre stage and argue in favour of the Church's doctrines (*ibid.*). While the woman concludes that she "has wasted her life in obeying the doctrines of the church, and [that] she is disillusioned and feels manipulated, betrayed, and violated" (Kokorski 2010, 198), the monk claims that the opposite is true: "the Almighty has granted us this blessed place for all eternity, this paradise which to the fallen soul seems bleak and barren, but which the eyes of faith see

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<sup>288</sup> Hester is Lee Scoresby's daemon.

as it is, overflowing with mild and honey and resounding with the sweet hymns of the angels. *This is heaven, truly*” (*Spyglass* 336; emphasis in original).

Several things are important in the scene above. First of all, the monk is introduced as an unsympathetic character who figuratively lives and breathes the doctrines of the Church, while pushing aside contradictory opinions. He is emblematic of what the Church and its doctrines stand for: male privilege, violence, indoctrination, and zealousness. He sets the Church’s doctrines and promises as absolute, infallible truths and employs them self-righteously to justify his own feeling of superiority while simultaneously demonizing Lyra and her mission.

Although Lyra experiences a moment of doubt after the monk’s speech, she and Will cannot help but realize that the monk and his followers are blinded by the doctrines of the Church. They cannot see through the ideological veil. They are blind to the Church’s shortcomings, mistakes, and crimes. Like the Dwarfs in *The Last Battle*, they are trapped inside their own minds; their reality is distorted, and nothing can save them from themselves and the perverted path they decided to follow.

The Church in *His Dark Materials* promises glory and salvation in the afterlife, which motivates the agents of the Church to fight more aggressively and desperately for their cause. Although the world of the dead is nothing like the picture the Church paints, the reader is not left without hope. In fact, all of the books that address the topic of the afterlife do not take away the possibility of life after death and its consoling effect. While *Narnia* follows the Platonian model of the afterlife and focuses on eternal salvation, *His Dark Materials*, the *House of Night* series, and the *Harry Potter* books sanctify the world we live in, rather than encouraging the reader to find transcending holiness beyond this world.

(Religious) fanaticism not only appears as instrument of the Church but also as its undoing, as it fuels the rebels’ cause. The reader can perceive that the fulfilment of the Church’s goals grants its followers absolute satisfaction, which is the Church’s ultimate form of control. For the Church, the agents become interchangeable, which underlines the inhumanity and even unnaturalness of this organisation. The war between the Church and its adversaries is first and foremost a political manoeuvre and a war for power. As long as the Church and the Authority are the dominating forces of the fight “the power of the Church [...] increased greatly, and [...] many brutal laws had been passed” (*Spyglass* 541). Although this sentence remains vague, it bears witness to the Church’s inhuman practices and striving for power.

All in all, characters also employ religious ideology to obtain their goals. *The Poisoned Crown* for example depicts the conflict between the two races on Widewater and demonstrates how religious convictions might accelerate and intensify the fight. The Authority and the Church are another example of this, while Shift from *The Last Battle* serves as a third example. As said in a previous chapter, Shift is highly manipulative, and only interested in his own profit, even if this leads to the (unconscious) alliance with the devil. He can conveniently hide his economic interests and greed behind his religious rhetoric. As the self-declared mouthpiece of Aslan, Shift creates and seizes the position of what the reader might characterize as a pope, a position which assumes infallibility and enforces the obedience of others by default. Consequently, no one questions his authority enough to overthrow him; if the Narnians attempt to do so, they are ridiculed and punished. The ape employs the religious belief in Aslan as a coercive tool to break the spirit of the Narnians and to make them docile. Shift's position and the ease with which he governs Narnia raise the question of blind belief and (misplaced) trust in political and religious leaders. The plot of *The Last Battle* encourages the reader to question (earthly) authority; not believing in God, however, is no solution either, as the fate of the Dwarfs testifies.

#### (Un)Trustworthy Religion

Taking into consideration the plots of *His Dark Material*, *The Last Battle* and *The Horse and His Boy*, the *House of Night* novels, and the *Sangreal Trilogy*, all these books focus on religion as convenient tool for manipulation. Often, this interpretation leads to the juxtaposition of religious ideology and “proper” religion.

Two books in the *Narnia* series centralize this conflict, namely *The Horse and His Boy*<sup>289</sup> and *The Last Battle*. The former book introduces the religious and cultural conflict that is intensified in the latter book. There the Calormenes have entered the country and are in the process of bleeding it dry; they are constantly stressing the superiority of the Calormene culture over Narnia (e.g. *Battle* 62).

The introduction of Calormene society in *Horse* already pinpoints the cultural and religious conflicts between the two states. Not only do the Calormene ruler and his servants feel superior regarding their society's cultural output such as poetry, which the Vizier defines as “full of choice apophthegms and useful maxims” (*Horse* 95); they also constantly emphasize their culture as being further developed, which grants them an

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<sup>289</sup> The conflict in *The Horse and His Boy* is difficult to place, as there are many overlaps between racial and religious ideology. As I see a slightly stronger focus on religious argumentation, I have placed the book here rather than in the previous chapter.

advantage as well as ‘natural’ superiority (ibid. 91ff.). They clearly define Narnia as inferior and Other: it is a country “which is chiefly inhabited by demons in the shape of beasts that talk like men, and monsters that are half man and half beast. It is commonly reported that the High King of Narnia (whom may the gods utterly reject) is supported by a demon of hideous aspect and irresistible maleficence who appears in the shape of a Lion” (ibid. 92). These lines speak of the prejudice and fear the Calormene ruler has towards Narnia, as well as the religious differences and potential conflicts; the polytheist religion of Calormen is incompatible with Narnian monotheism.<sup>290</sup>

Furthermore, the Tisroc and his son Rabadash consider Narnians to be “barbarian” (e.g. ibid. 91). However, the Tisroc simultaneously characterizes Narnia as a free country: “Every morning the sun is darkened in my eyes, and every night my sleep is the less refreshing, because I remember that Narnia is still free” (ibid. 92). These two categories might strike the reader as contradictory, especially the choice of words. The Tisroc himself establishes Narnia as free country, which consequently makes Calormen the oppressor; the book clearly encourages the reader to follow this interpretation.

The plot uncovers that the main motivation to go to war is an economic one: “Narnia is now wholesome, fruitful, and delicious” (*Horse* 91). However, according to the Tisroc, Narnia needs to be in their hands and guided by their ideology to become profitable: “These little barbarian countries that call themselves free (which is as much as to say, idle, disordered, and unprofitable) are hateful to the gods and to all persons of discernment” (ibid.). The conquest of Narnia is not only cloaked in religious rhetoric, it also caters to Calormene economic interests and greed, as well as to their perceived superiority and what they understand as the consequent right of the mightiest.

The constant juxtaposition of Narnia and Calormene culture and religion has two effects. Firstly, despite the constant Calormene characterization of the Narnians as barbarians, the plot guides the reader to assume that Calormenes are the barbarians because they do not believe in Aslan and do not live according to Narnian/Western values and standards. Secondly, the conflict is not solely based on economic reasons, but it is also a conflict between two different, non-compatible religions and cultures. This line of argumentation, however, exposes the plot’s prejudice against Eastern

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<sup>290</sup> For this discussion I treat the belief in Aslan as a religion, although this is not explicitly referred to as such in the books.

culture, as the plot guides the reader to define this “quasi-Arabic society” (Manlove 162) as backward and barbaric, especially since they practise the “wrong” religion.<sup>291</sup>

As stated above, *The Last Battle* warns about the corruption of political and religious leaders. The plot does so in emphasizing the capitalist focus of Shift’s motivation and thus the manipulative power of corrupted religion.<sup>292</sup> Shift does not worship Aslan, but has clearly replaced him with the Mammon. The ape is thus worshipping a false deity, which culminates in the creation of Tashlan. This perversion of Narnian belief and the consequential capitalistic exploitation of the Talking Beasts are reasons for the war at the end of the book. *The Last Battle* displays the ultimate escalation of the conflict, which leads to the destruction of the world.

With Calormene religion and culture *The Horse and His Boy* and *The Last Battle* create a clear counter-culture and thus an example of how corrupted religious belief and political power should not go hand in hand. While the belief in Aslan comes naturally to the children and the inhabitants of Narnia, Calormene religion is Other and appears to solely support the despot and help him to maintain his power. Both systems benefit from the functions of religion. In both cases religion serves as “social cohesion” and provides a common set of values (Rousseau xi). Here, I rely on Rousseau who provides a starting point for the discussion about the role of religion and the state. Though the reader is dealing with fantasy fiction in the examples under scrutiny, Rousseau’s thoughts are transferrable when it comes to what “wrong” and fake religions do in Narnia and how they help to facilitate tyrannical politics and culture.<sup>293</sup>

Rousseau heavily criticizes and condemns Christianity “which he describes as best suited to tyrannical government” (Wokler 19). For Rousseau, religion becomes a tool that has “numbed and made [the people] passive” while making them subservient and obedient (Wokler 84). This is clearly recognizable in Calormen and the Narnia Shift creates. In *Horse, Battle, and His Dark Materials*, representatives of the respective faiths do what Rousseau warns his readers about: the “clergymen wield corporate power” (Wokler 101). They use their religious leverage to cater to their own interests, and thus exemplify Rousseau’s statement that “[in Christianity] the interest of the priest would always be stronger than that of the state” (Rousseau 132).

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<sup>291</sup> *The Last Battle* hints at a universality of all religions: with all good deeds one serves Aslan, while one serves Tash with all evil deeds (*Battle* 155). In *The Horse and His Boy*, however, there are no connections between the two religions.

<sup>292</sup> I have already discussed this point in chapter 3.1 Wrongful Authority.

<sup>293</sup> Rousseau’s emphasis is on civil authority rather than on religion. He criticized that Christianity subverted the “sacred foundations” of civil authority (Wokler 102).



Rousseau and Hobbes are both in favour of the uniting religious and state power, since religion could be used to support to the needs of the state. Wokler paraphrases Rousseau as follows:

For the state to draw real strength from its members it must be nurtured by a religion which makes each citizen love his duty without intruding upon his beliefs through canons, sacraments, and dogmas. It must require of its subjects a purely civil profession of faith, prescribed by the sovereign merely to excite a public sentiment of sociability, and its tenets should embrace only the existence of an omnipotent, intelligent, and beneficent divinity, the sanctity of the social contract and the law, and the proscription of intolerance. (Wokler 102f.)

In the books, the Tisroc, Shift and the Church have failed to make “each citizen love his duty”, but have instilled fear or fanatic sentiments into the believers’ hearts to make them compliant. The books reveal how Rousseau’s ideas about religious dominance might play out. Here the reader also sees that Machiavelli’s ideas about religion are also ingrained in the plot. Rousseau was a deeply religious person (Wokler 104), which definitely coloured his opinion about the interplay between religion and the state. However, he has not found a religion compatible with the state, which peacefully facilitates this agenda. The belief in Aslan is the only example the books provide where this thought experiment works.

*His Dark Materials* is far more outspoken in its criticism of religious ideology than the *Narnia* books. According to John Parry, people “had nothing but lies and propaganda and cruelty and deceit for all the thousands of years of human history” (*Knife* 235). This summary not only explicitly uncovers the Church’s ideological manipulations, it also provides an overview of the Church’s tools, and clearly justifies the rebellion.

In addition to John Parry, all the other sympathetic characters are extremely critical of Church and repeatedly point to its transgressions: “That is what the church does, and every church is the same: control, destroy, obliterate every good feeling” (*Knife* 52). According to the witch Ruta Skadi, the Church is responsible for “cruelties and horrors all committed in the name of the Authority, all designed to destroy the joys and the truthfulness of life” (ibid. 283). As seen above, the Church represses knowledge and strives for intellectual conformity; it thus tries to keep people ignorant and dependent on it. Serafina Pekkala reports Xaphania’s story to Mary Malone and states that “all the history of human life has been a struggle between wisdom and stupidity. Xaphania and the rebel angels, the followers of wisdom, have always tried to open

minds; the Authority and his churches have always tried to keep them closed” (*Spyglass* 506). Both Serafina and Mary instantly relate to the latter point which also encourages the reader to consider organized religion in his/her own world critically.

In fact, the plot repeatedly highlights parallels between the Church in Lyra’s world and episodes in the history of the church in the reader’s world. Leet points out that there are “some uncanny similarities to [...] historical examples” (Leet 176) which serve to stress and maintain the power of the Church: “Because people are afraid of being accused, as heretics, and punished by inquisitors [...], the decisions of the Church leadership are not questioned and their theocratic powers remain intact” (ibid.). The Church is a pitiless adversary, as it has “thousand years of experience” (*Knife* 39) in refining its methods of torture. Furthermore, “[k]illing is not difficult for them” (*Spyglass* 217), which emphasises the power and ruthlessness of this organisation. It becomes powerful as it imposes definitions of values, morality, and behaviour on its believers and creates a system of power perpetuation. The behaviour of Father Gomez discussed above, as well as institutions such as the “Office of Inquisition”<sup>294</sup> (*Lights* 218) “epitomize the fanatical violence inherent in religion”, a point Armstrong explains in her analysis of the Spanish Inquisition (Armstrong 216).

Pullman’s series displays a world in which there is no separation between religion, society, and politics. This world exists in contrast to what Armstrong terms as today’s understanding of religion which is “a private and personal activity, separate from mundane affairs” (ibid. 233). Pullman’s world is not only a world with an archaic understanding of religion and its place in society; on a different level, it is a world which is built “on an English tradition of religious dissent” (Bird 188). I agree with Anne-Marie Bird who further explains that “Philip Pullman’s *His Dark Materials* trilogy envisages a world in which God is thought to be redundant and traditional Christianity deemed dangerously repressive” (ibid.).

Leet also draws from this English tradition of religious dissent when he looks critically at Pullman’s Church and closely connects it to its real life counterpart:

As history suggests, [...] religious organizations—especially large ones—have tended to resist change by cementing outdated hierarchical structures and regulations and preventing the questioning of anything labelled doctrine. [...]; in [...] numerous [...] cases, the church organization involved chose to undermine the individual’s right to personal reflection and instead bolstered its own position by identifying itself as the final arbiter between humanity and God. (Leet 176)

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<sup>294</sup> This is a clear reference to the Spanish Inquisition.

Although Leet's point to draw connections between Pullman's Church and the reader's world is justified, it is also important to draw a connection between Leet's and Locke's criticism of the Catholic Church and religion as such; "because of the violent passions it supposedly unleashed, Locke insisted that the segregation of 'religion' from government was 'above all things necessary' for the creation of a peaceful society. In Locke we see the birth of the 'myth of religious violence' that would become ingrained in the Western ethos" (Armstrong 236). As Leet's argumentation shows, *His Dark Materials* perpetuate the "myth of religious violence".

To reduce the series to Locke's criticism, however, does not do the series justice. Although Pullman clearly criticizes the Church, it is important to note that he leaves the reader with the hope that Lyra might establish the "republic of heaven" (*Spyglass* 548) and thus build a (religious) counter world to the kingdom of heaven. In the form of the curious child Lyra, the series encourages the reader to seek the truth, to fight for justice, to defy adult authority, and to defend inalienable rights; in other words, to build their own republic of heaven. In emphasizing and deconstructing the ideology that makes up the fabric of Lyra's world, the series challenges the reader to question the values and ideologies prevalent in his/her own world. The books ask the reader to think more deeply of the world and to reject the simple dualistic world view they encounter elsewhere: "good and evil are names for what people do, not for what they are. [...] People are too complicated to have simple labels" as Mary Malone states (*Spyglass* 471).

Although religion functions as the opium for the people on first glance, *His Dark Materials* narrate a story of values such as justice, "courage, love freedom, responsibility, duty, [...] and tolerance" (Watkins 2004, 160) which are "not *distinctively* Christian" (ibid.; emphasis in original), but which nevertheless form "a core part of Christian behaviour" (ibid.). Pullman himself admits that these values are of the utmost importance as "we need Heaven [...] we need a connection with the universe, we need all the things that the Kingdom of Heaven used to promise us but failed to deliver" (qtd. in Schweizer 172).

### Conclusion

The books in this chapter demonstrate that religion can indeed be used as what Terry Eagleton calls an "extremely effective form of ideological control" (Eagleton 2008, 20). The dualistic credo the religions in the books display and which the reader can also find in the use and abuse of religion in his/her own reality, oversimplifies the world and

divides humanity into believers and non-believers and ultimately into good and evil. Wars turn into holy wars and mobilize the masses who thus fight with crusading zeal against the enemies of the faith.

Religious beliefs and statements of religious authorities turn into absolute truths and cease to allow any form of tolerance. Furthermore, religious authorities might aim to become holy and divine themselves so that they can claim unquestionable obedience of their subjects as well as justify their actions, no matter if they are committing good or evil deeds. This strategy has multiple effects. First of all, it supports the missionary endeavour the Church in *His Dark Material* and the Tisroc in *The Horse and His Boy* express. Both parties Other and even demonize those who do not belong to their community. This strategy has a scale-like trajectory: one movement influences the other; thus by denigrating the Other they simultaneously elevate themselves and their belief system.<sup>295</sup>

Second of all, their ideological state apparatus draws its strength from the dualistic world picture and finds easy access to the open and eager ears of the religious community. The propaganda they use does not have to be true at its core in order to be effective and mobilize the masses, as the reader can see in the Church's treatment of women, the attempted eradication of Gallivespians, or in the Tisroc's prejudices towards Narnians.<sup>296</sup> The two latter examples reveal that the conflict is not only a conflict between religious systems, but a clash of civilizations and concepts of identity. In consciously abusing the belief in Aslan and perverting Narnian religion, Shift even destroys Narnian identity. The war in *The Last Battle* is as much a religious one as it is about national identity and the destructive force of commercial greed. In emphasizing ideological mechanisms, the books constantly encourage the reader to reflect on who benefits from these power structures and in particular how the aggressor benefits. The religious zeal of the combatants is often powered by religious leaders who hide their thirst for power behind scripture and alleged truths; this is a tendency the reader can find in reality and in the books. As Karen Armstrong states, “[c]rusaders would always be motivated by social and economic factors as well as religious zeal” (Armstrong 191), a statement which is also true for some characters in the books.

In *His Dark Materials* and other books, moreover, the reader can look behind the façade of such (religious) leaders, and see how the combination of (religious) fanaticism, political conviction and personal greed can be seductive and lethal.

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<sup>295</sup> The reader can also find this strategy in the previous chapter.

<sup>296</sup> As religious belief is used as an ideology, the reader can perceive an overlap with strategies used in the previous chapter.

Charismatic leaders such as Shift, or the Authority and Metatron use and abuse religious convictions to satisfy their lust for power, and to manipulate their subjects into dedicating their lives to what they portray as a higher, even cosmic purpose in life. The manipulators are the ones that can brainwash and mobilize the masses into doing their bidding. In their use and abuse of religion, the villains in the books mirror political dictators more than spiritual leaders.

In his introduction to ideology, Michael Freeden also analyses the overlap between religion and ideology: “Religions only become political ideologies when they compete over the control of public policy and attempt to influence the social arrangements of the entire political community” (Freeden 101). Although religious beliefs and political ideologies have consciously moved apart from each other since the 19<sup>th</sup> century (ibid. 102), the books merge these two fields again, and in the end reveal this mixture to be dangerous. Freeden’s analysis of political Islam as an example of religious ideology also enriches the reading of the books under scrutiny; in both cases, religious ideology “possesses the function of an ideology in that it provides a collective political agenda, while maintaining a substantial overlap, even identity, between religion and politics” (ibid.).

Furthermore, Freeden points out that ideologues develop an emotional devotion to their belief system: “The more intensely emotional is one’s commitment to an ideology, the more does that emotional intensity replace the need for external linguistic control. And as with totalitarian superimposition of meaning, intense emotional support for an ideology introduces inflexibility, brittleness, and unwillingness to compromise” (ibid. 121). Father Gomez, the Skraeling, and the President of the Consistorial Court in *His Dark Materials* are prime examples for this attachment. All of them have built their whole world around their convictions, making them blind to other ideas and certitudes regarding the fabric of their reality; they are inflexible and unwilling to compromise in the extreme. In contrast to the Authority and Metatron who use religious ideology to maintain their power, Father Gomez, the Skraeling and the President intrinsically believe in the rightness of their actions. They believe that in preserving and expanding current power structures they are acting for the greater good. Religion has become ideologized to support those in power, for example the Authority and Metatron. *His Dark Materials* reveals how the merging of religion and politics might lead to the illusion of uncompromising and aggressive righteousness, a notion the three characters perfectly illustrate and enforce with rigorous violence.

In the books, religion and ideology are inseparable and the emotional connection between the two is extremely tight. With that in mind, the books clearly emphasise the negative aspects of religions, as it appears to be easy to manipulate religious believers. In accentuating the alliance between religion and ideology, the books warn of these structures, while at the same time emphasizing the importance of wise and virtuous political and religious leaders, such as kings and queens who rule with Aslan's blessing in *Narnia* and Xaphania in *His Dark Materials*.

All in all, the books create a case against the abuse of religion, as the negative consequences cannot be underestimated. To emphasise the relevance of past atrocities to present politics, *His Dark Materials* in particular draws explicit references to the church's bloody history during the crusades and the Spanish Inquisition. The series thus encourages the reader to use what s/he has learned from the books and apply it to his/her own world, and lends credibility to Pullman's religious abuse scenario and its consequences. Looking at human history, the reader can find numerous examples of wars that have been fought under religious pretence.<sup>297</sup> The use and abuse of religion to justify war has saturated and continues to saturate human history. The utilization of religion is not a marginal phenomenon, but had and still has a major influence on human history.

The books under scrutiny are not exploring anything new, but find themselves in a tradition of critical thinkers.<sup>298</sup> As already addressed above, Jean-Jacque Rousseau and John Locke also believed that religion could easily be abused for evil purposes.<sup>299</sup> In Rousseau's eyes, following the wrong religious doctrines can lead the state into a spiral of evil:

[...] it is evil in so far as being based on error and falsehood, it deceives men, renders them credulous and superstitious, and obscure the true worship of the Deity with vain ceremonial. It is evil, again, when, becoming exclusive and tyrannical, it makes a nation sanguinary and intolerant, so that it thirsts after

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<sup>297</sup> For example, several crusades during the Middle Ages, the decimation of American civilizations and colonization of the Americas by the Spanish conquistadors, and the attack on the World Trade Center and the acts of terror by the Taliban and ISIS at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

<sup>298</sup> In her analysis of *His Dark Materials*, Anne-Marie Bird also points out that Pullman moves within a tradition of political thinkers: "Nietzsche, for example, regarded the God of Christianity as, 'a crime against life' (Antichrist 163), Marx considered religion to be 'the sigh of the oppressed creature ... the opium of the people, which made this suffering, bearable' (qtd. in Peikan 80), while Freud (56) believed that religion belonged to the infancy of the human race—that it was a necessary stage in the transition from childhood to maturity, but now should be left behind and science, the new logos, could take its place" (Bird 188).

<sup>299</sup> Locke: "Almost 'all those tragical revolutions which have exercised Christendom these many years have turned upon this hinge, that there hath been no design so wicked which hath not worn the vizard of religion, nor rebellion which hath not been so kind to itself as to assume the specious name of reformation ... none ever went about to ruin the state but with pretence to build the temple'" (qtd. in Dunn 28).

nothing but murder and massacre, and believes that it is performing a holy action in killing whosoever does not acknowledge its gods. This puts such a nation in a natural state of war with all others, which is very prejudicial to its own safety. (Rousseau 134)

Although Rousseau's analysis of the interplay between religion and the state paints a very bleak picture, the core of his argument is transferrable to the books under scrutiny; the persecution of ethnic and cultural minorities in *His Dark Materials* bears witness to the intolerant and violent behaviour, and the consequential war of these convictions and actions. In displaying a wide variety of creatures and belief systems such as the Witches, the armoured bears, and the Gallivespians, *His Dark Materials* reveals itself to be an argument for tolerance.<sup>300</sup>

Rousseau was of course aware that religion has played a key role in the fabric of society of the past. Looking at human society from a conservative point of view, Freedon explains that “[a] common thread is the conviction that the social order is founded on laws that are insulated from human control” (Freedon 88). The notion of God/religion has therefore been used as one of the law-giving entities (ibid.). As a consequence, “[m]any conservatisms employ religion as a mainstay of the moral and political beliefs they espouse, and use the sanction of religion to impose political order” (ibid.) and legitimize social hierarchies. Religion thus becomes a self-regulatory tool of the state. Furthermore, it is useful “in inspiring the people, in keeping men good, in making the wicked ashamed” as Machiavelli points out (qtd. in Skinner 72). The idea that our morality originates in religion belief, however, is contested by *His Dark Materials*; the series rather displays how immoral those in power might act, although or even because they feel obligated to act in a certain way because of their religious belief.

The reader can perceive how, for example, Father Gomez and the Skraeling feel privileged by their belief. The devotion of their lives to the Church and its religious convictions gives their lives security and meaning, and their level of devotion elevates them from the masses: “[d]adurch schwindet das Gefühl der Zufälligkeit und Unberechenbarkeit des Daseins, und das Empfinden universaler Sinnhaftigkeit und Zielgerichtetheit allen Seins tritt an diese Stelle” (Heuermann 12).<sup>301</sup> However, this also makes these characters gullible and easy to manipulate. Consequently, the series

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<sup>300</sup> As Lyra aims to build the republic of heaven in the end, however, the reader might discern that this form of tolerance still means that there is a hierarchy in the belief systems, clearly favouring a Christian belief rather than a pagan religion.

<sup>301</sup> “through this, the impression of arbitrariness and unpredictability of one's existence dissolves, and is replaced by the feeling of universal meaningfulness and purposefulness of every form of existence” (translation KK).

demonstrates that instead of furthering moral convictions, religious influence on society can as easily go into the opposite direction, for example sanctifying greed and justifying slavery and war.

Until now, I have mainly focused on negative aspects of the use of religion. The books, however, do not only focus on the abuse of religion, but also point to positive sides of religion. Although there are many examples of religion starting war, there are also many that describe how religion can further peace. Authors such as Philip Pullman, and P. C. Cast and Kristin Cast do not blame religion as such for war or social injustice, but express a certain cautiousness concerning the agents of organized religion. In Pullman's quotation above he expresses the necessity of religion and the benefits for civilization, although he criticises the failure of its earthly agents.

Religion adds a cosmic dimension the battles as well as to the believer's life; both are points which I have analysed above, and which might worsen the situation rather than help it. However, religious belief might also guide the believer to improve him/herself (Minogue 32), and lets him/her aspire to an ideal of goodness and the divine. Karen Armstrong is a strong advocate for the importance of religion to criticise the status quo and thus further civilisation: "Yet, without such idealism, which reminds us of the imperfection of our institutions, their inherent violence and injustice would go without critique. Perhaps the role of religious vision is to fill us with a divine discomfort that will not allow us wholly to accept the unacceptable" (Armstrong 179).

Religion has been an important part of human culture, because it "[cultivates] a sense of community" (ibid. 6), verifies identity (Gant 90), confirms "rights and duties" (ibid.), and celebrates cultural accomplishments (Heuermann 174). Religion helps to define good and evil, differentiate between right and wrong by enforcing a moral code, and structure society.

The books that built their case on religion as justification of war focus on forms of Christianity. Only the future will show whether this will change in favour of something else, such as anti-Islam propaganda.<sup>302</sup> Western culture only grants these positive effects to religions that do not undermine Western values. Due to its historical and cultural development, Western culture naturalizes Christian values and sets them as a bench mark against which everything else is measured. *His Dark Materials* and the *Sangreal Trilogy* argue for a stronger separation between religion and the state than

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<sup>302</sup> My strongest case, Pullman's series, is dated pre-9/11. The books in this thesis that are published post 9/11 either do not discuss religion as war justification, such as the *Inheritance Cycle*, portray a form of cult, such as in *The Traitor's Sword*, or create their own religion, such as *The House of Night* novels. Peter V. Brett's *Demon Cycle* for example thinly veils Islam criticism in a fantastic setting. This series, however, is not part of my thesis as it addresses an adult readership.



displayed in the stories, and thus propagate a secular state the Western reader is already accustomed to in his/her own world.<sup>303</sup>

Even though the books under scrutiny privilege Western culture, Naomi Wood's argument for the didactic importance of *His Dark Materials* in supporting critical thinking in young readers also conveys important points when it comes to scrutinizing Western culture:

*His Dark Materials* encourages critical engagement with foundational myths of Western culture. Rather than obeying myths blindly, storytellers and readers might tease out possible meanings, other ways of interpreting truth. To become conscious of myth in the context of history as an evolving and changing means of understanding one's self in relation to the cosmos, to others, and to self – rather like Dust – is to become critically aware of the ways in which stories define children and adults, as subjects and objects in great dramas. (Wood 555)

Wood's argumentation is especially relevant to this thesis, as she too emphasises the formative power of stories in the socialisation of the reader.

All in all, in *His Dark Materials*, and to some degree in the *Sangreal Trilogy* and *The Chronicles of Narnia*, the young protagonists have to fight adults corrupted by power and blinded by their religious beliefs. These adults are a metaphor for tradition and conservatism. The young heroes display a level of innocence that none of the adults are capable of, and thus are able to look behind long established power structures that are the foundation of their culture. In successfully fighting the aggressor, the young heroes become agents of change and progress; a progress which brings the fictional world closer to the (Western) reader's reality concerning the structure of society and its ideology. On the one hand, with this movement, the plots stress the privilege the reader experiences in living in a world the books such as *His Dark Materials* clearly aspire to. On the other hand, this strategy encourages the reader to consider the parallels and to draw critical conclusions regarding the fabric of his/her own world.<sup>304</sup>

None of the books dispute the importance of religion for cultural and personal developments in human history. Mirroring the development in the reader's world, religion no longer forms the centre of the respective culture, but is banned to its periphery. Religion merely becomes a scapegoat the aggressors use to thinly veil their political, ideological, and economic reasons to wage war.

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<sup>303</sup> Even Narnian society in *The Last Battle* would have benefitted from this, as such a structure would not have allowed Shift to manipulate the masses as he did.

<sup>304</sup> However, the interpretative spectrum encourages the reader to think along the lines of Western ideology.

### 3.4 Just War

In the previous chapters, I focused on different trigger points for war and the reason to fight tyranny, namely character construction, the abuse of authority, and the scapegoating of otherness and religion. These trigger points build on the different manifestations of evil and executions of harmful ideologies. All books centre on the objective that evil has to be fought and eradicated. To achieve this, the protagonists participate in war to save the world(s). Whether good and evil appear in abstract form as in *The Dark Is Rising Sequence*, whether evil is depicted as otherness, as in *The Horse and His Boy*, or whether the abuse of power plays a role, as in *His Dark Materials* or the *House of Night* novels, all forms of evil have common denominators that justify the protagonists' decisions to participate in war.

The plots frequently portray the necessity and urgency of the heroes' interventions due to moral law: the protagonists regard it as their duty to liberate all people from the cruel, brutal and manipulative kings, queens, and institutions, and lead them into times of freedom and justice. As the sympathies lie with the protagonists, it is easy for the (young) reader to think in black and white categories, assign criminal responsibilities to individuals, and retrace the justifications of war.

In this subchapter, I seize the previously discussed aspects and set them in relation with just war theory. Just war theory is divided into three aspects: *jus ad bellum*, *jus in bello*, and *jus post bellum*. Due to my focus on war justifications, my argumentations exclusively centre on the *jus ad bellum* aspect. For this I have mainly consulted Michael Walzer's *Just and Unjust Wars. A moral Argument with Historical Illustrations* (2006), Alex J. Bellamy's *Just War. From Cicero to Iraq* (2012), and Helen Frowe's *The Ethics of War and Peace. An Introduction* (2015).

Just war theory not only facilitates a substantial and normative discussion about the wars in the books but its application also conveys value judgements the reader can apply to his/her own reality. Furthermore, I briefly analyse what kind of wars the reader can trace in the books in order to clarify the scope of the conflicts. My main argument rests on the assumption that it is imperative for the protagonist to intervene because the conflicts in the books are often substitutional battles which represent the cosmic battle between good and evil and decide the destiny of the saviour's world.

Michael Walzer's judgement of aggression mirrors the protagonists' underlying reasoning of going to war: "Aggression is a singular and undifferentiated crime because, in all its forms, it challenges rights that are worth dying for" (Walzer 53). All in all, the

saviours participate in war to fight tyranny and defend Western values and laws. That they are ready to sacrifice themselves for these principles conveys the ideological and educational importance of the books and the centrality of those values and laws for the survival of Western culture.

The just war tradition did not emerge in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This theoretical framework has its roots in “the writings of various ancient and medieval thinkers as they sought to understand the morality (and legality) of war” (Frowe 52). Among others, Cicero, Plato, St. Augustine, and St. Thomas Aquinas gave rise to and cultivated this theory. Bellamy subsumes one of the main aspects of just war thinkers when he points out Plato’s maxim that “war should only be waged for the sake of peace” (Bellamy 2012, 17).

In the Middle Ages, St Augustine embraced this sentiment as Saunders describes in her article on “Medieval warfare”: “Some of the earliest edicts of the Church [...] had condemned the involvement of Christians in war, but St. Augustine’s endorsement of war undertaken for the good of society and with the aim of peace was widely accepted” (Saunders 84). Frowe equally emphasizes St. Augustine’s role in shaping just war theory when she highlights that “Augustine’s general claim that wars must be fought for the purposes of justice (and not self-interest) persists, and influences several of the *ad bellum* conditions” (Frowe 53). Another significant scholar of this topic is Samuel von Pufendorf who advocated the idea of just war in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. According to Bellamy, Pufendorf “argued that even when a wrong was committed, war was only justifiable when more good than evil was likely to arise [...]. He also echoed his predecessors in arguing that the only just causes for war were a wrong received, the satisfaction of rights, reparation for wrong, and to guarantee future peace” (Bellamy 2012, 77). Since its beginnings, just war theory has been constantly scrutinized and developed further.

I agree with Alex Bellamy who points out that there are several perspectives to just war theory that need to be taken into consideration when evaluating a conflict, namely political, legal and moral (Bellamy 2012, 8). In the absence of a legal framework in the books, however, the reader has to rely on a moral code and natural law to qualify and judge of the justifications for war. All in all, the trajectory of the just war tradition from ancient times until today reveals that it is deeply rooted in Western consciousness and part of the fabric of Western culture.

### Jus ad bellum

According to Helen Frowe, “[j]us ad bellum is about whether or not one has a just cause for going to war: whether the war as an enterprise is morally permissible” (Frowe 52). For my analysis this means that I scrutinize the circumstances, characters, and plots in the books in order to evaluate whether the war the characters are waging or are about to engage in can be considered just. To determine this, I follow Bellamy’s categorization of *just ad bellum* criteria: “Jus ad bellum comprises three types of criteria: substantive, prudential and procedural” (Bellamy 2012, 121). My analysis clearly shows that not all criteria are equally important; while the substantive criteria are elementary for the books, the other two categories are either neglected or even contradicted.<sup>305</sup>

#### Substantive Criteria

Substantive criteria of *jus ad bellum* comprise the following: right intention, just cause, proportionality of ends, and last resort. I use this order to take a closer look at each criterion below. To fulfil the criterion of right intention “individuals must wage war for the common good, not for self-aggrandizement or because of hatred of the enemy” (Bellamy 2012, 122). Economic reasons or political discontent is not sufficient; rather, “[h]aving the right reason for launching war is not enough: the actual motivation behind the resort to war must also be morally appropriate” (Orend qtd. in Frowe 62). Like the other substantive criteria, right intention appears to be reactionary as it presupposes what Frowe calls a “received or anticipated wrong” which needs to be corrected (Frowe 63). This criterion can be easily traced in the books under scrutiny. As the previous chapters have shown, the protagonists fight perceived or anticipated injustices or violations in order to right the wrongs and re-establish a peaceful society. The reader is able to trace this development throughout all the series discussed: from *The Chronicles of Narnia*, over *The Dark Is Rising Sequence* to *Harry Potter*, and the *House of Night* series.

Harry Potter expresses the criterion of right intention, which the reader can perceive in the other series as well: “sometimes you’ve got to think about more than your own safety! Sometimes you’ve got to think about the greater good! This is war!” (*Hallows* 460). For “the greater good” is key in this sentence as it echoes Bellamy’s definition of right intention. Harry experiences the horrors of war, he even gives his life to stop the fighting and to enable the survivors to re-build a peaceful society without

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<sup>305</sup> This goes almost hand in hand with Alex Bellamy’s statement that “[s]ome writers argue that the first two types are more important than the third in framing judgement about the legitimacy of decisions to wage war” (Bellamy 2012, 121).

Voldemort. The conviction of fighting for the greater good is equally true for the other protagonists, such as Lyra and Will, Eragon, and Zoey. Nathan's exclamation "[e]veryone matters" (*Crown* 62) further subsumes that everyone should have access to basic human rights such as the right to live, and that everyone should be protected; this is in contrast to the Grandir's ideological conviction as he thinks hierarchically in terms of races and does not care that countless civilizations will die because of his actions (*Crown* 408). Although right intention is not included in international law as it is hard to sufficiently prove (Frowe 63), it is most important to the books under scrutiny and can be easily perceived through the eyes of the child protagonists. To summarize, "[a]ll these young heroes defy and defeat adult authority in order to create a better world" (Kokorski 2012b, 214).

The next criterion, just cause, is closely connected to right intention. Like right intention, just cause is reactionary; as Bellamy explains it "is usually limited to self-defence, defence of others, restoration of peace, defence of rights and the punishment of wrongdoers. Just cause is often viewed in absolute terms: a combatant either has a just cause or does not" (Bellamy 2012, 122). In the centre of this line of thought are only the most significant violations and threats that can be committed, "namely wrongs that threaten the lives or human rights of a sufficiently large number of people" (May qtd. in Frowe 68). The topics of wrongful authority and the construction of difference feature frequently as war justification and provide just cause as the previous chapters have shown. Although religion rather becomes the scapegoat for political power, the reader can find the abuse of religious doctrines as just cause in the books as well.

In the fantasy books under scrutiny, the aggressors are violating what Michael Walzer calls "the common life" (Walzer 54), which consists of peace, self-determination, freedom, and the lives people were able to build before the aggressors' actions. The villains breach fundamental absolutes, such as the right to live and the right to each individual's personal safety, on a massive scale. The reader can see this in the actions of, for example, the Church in *His Dark Materials*, the corrupted Ministry of Magic in the *Harry Potter* series, Neferet in the *House of Night* series and Galbatorix in the *Inheritance Cycle*.

Through their actions, the characters delegitimize their claim to power or their organizations and mark themselves and their organization as immoral. The wrongful sovereigns clearly have the intention and the means to harm their citizens or subjects. They violate their moral responsibility "to protect the physical security, material wealth and common life of their citizens, and these obligations override other obligations to

law and morality”<sup>306</sup> (Bellamy 2012, 118). Locke’s reasoning about the duties and obligations of a sovereign and the consequences of violating these also gives the protagonists valuable reasons to fight the villains:

[Sovereigns] hold their authority under law; [...]. Where they act against or outside this law to the harm of their subjects, they become tyrants. [...] For a ruler in authority to use force against the interests of his subjects and outside the law is to destroy his own authority. He puts himself into a state of war with his injured subjects, and each of these has the same right to resist him as they would have to resist any other unjust aggressor [...]. (Dunn 60)

As I have discussed at length in a previous chapter, in focusing on sovereignty, the books clearly favour the interpretation of “sovereignty as responsibility” (Bellamy 2012, 206) and that justice needs to be “central to the justification of political authority (Miller 2003, 74). The villains adhere to neither the idea of sovereignty as responsibility nor to the centrality of justice. Sovereignty poses an “instrumental value that enables governments to establish orderly and just societies, but when governments fail to fulfil sovereignty’s purpose, their legitimacy is diminished” (Bellamy 2012, 205). According to this and Locke’s argumentation, this gives the protagonists “the right of rebellion: the community may remove an illegitimate government and replace it with another” (Hindess 53). Although the right of rebellion is never explicitly stated in the books, the antagonists commit atrocities and create situations which are unbearable and thus justify the protagonists’ actions to overthrow the harmful regime.

The young protagonists pose the last defence against the villains’ acts of aggression and the ideology they support. These actions constantly place civilians in danger or punish them unjustly. The reader can perceive this in for example *Wardrobe*, when the White Witch turns the family of squirrels into stone (*Wardrobe* 125). The beginning of *Prince* illustrates a world in which the Death Eaters operate freely and hence serves as another example. Here, the manipulation of the weather and the destruction of a bridge are only two examples which have shocked the Muggle world and caused casualties (*Prince* 7f.). The villains and their associates are intentionally inflicting collateral damage on normal citizens in order to create fear and display their power and superiority. The violation of the sanctity of life gives the reader a glimpse of the world the antagonists will create if no one is willing to fight them. In *Eldest* Omoris equally points to the harm Galbatorix is causing due to his actions: “By killing dragons,

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<sup>306</sup> This line of thought continues as follows: “However, when the state’s survival or vital interests are at stake, political leaders are duty-bound to do whatever necessary to protect them, even if that means violating the Just War tradition’s rules” (Bellamy 2012, 118).

Galbatorix harmed his own race as well as the elves. [...] the elves are on the wane; their power is not what it once was. And humans have lost much of their culture and been consumed by chaos and corruption” (*Eldest* 439) This serves as a call to action and spells out the just cause, as Omoris continues “[o]nly by righting the imbalance between our three races shall order return to the world” (*ibid.*).

In his analysis of *His Dark Materials*, Bernard Schweizer also concludes that the atrocities the Church commits justify war: “What [Pullman] places in the void created by his iconoclasm are important values that define modern liberal societies [...]. If God and His servants on earth stand in the way of fulfilling such liberal objectives, then it is legitimate that the system be overhauled and dismantled by the story’s protagonists” (Schweizer 171). This is equally true for the other villains such as Voldemort, Galbatorix, Neferet, or the Grandir.

Taking into consideration the alternatives to going to a war against the antagonist, there is little ethical dilemma when making the decision to fight evil. Even if there is just cause, the decision of going to war and sacrificing oneself is never an easy one as Harry Potter reveals:

Terror washed over him, as he lay on the floor, with that funeral drum pounding inside him. Would it hurt to die? All those times he had thought that it was about to happen and escaped, he had never really thought of the thing itself: his will to live had always been so much stronger than his fear of death. Yet it did not occur to him now to try to escape, to outrun Voldemort. (*Hallows* 556)

This whole scene paints a picture of despair and hopelessness, something for example Nathan (*Crown* 421f.) and Eragon (*Brisingr* 131) also experience. Nevertheless, the lives and values under attack are too sacred to lose and therefore the plots do not allow any submission to unmitigated evil. The books repeatedly stress that conscientious objection is not desirable, but on the contrary, disruptive. It would mean the end of the world, as Serafina Pekkala explains in *Northern Lights* by highlighting the future effects of the triumph of evil: “[d]eath will sweep through all the worlds; it will be the triumph of despair, for ever. The universe will all become nothing more than interlocking machines, blind and empty of thought, feeling, life...” (*Lights* 310).

Due to the villains’ actions or planned actions, the plots build the cases for wars of self-defence and other-defence. Although other-defence is not an absolute duty, as individuals do not have to expose themselves to considerable risks (Frowe 29), the young heroes nevertheless commit themselves to their cause and risk their own lives for the greater good. Here, the plots construct the image that other-defence in these

situations is more important than one's own life. The following statement taken from *Eragon* possesses validity for all the other books as well: "As a Rider, it was his duty to assist those without strength to resist Galbatorix's oppression" (*Eragon* 337).

The aggressors' actions which I have analysed in the previous chapters build a case for a war of self-defence. Acts of self-defence not only contribute to the criterion of right intentions, but also are at the centre of Bellamy's explanation of just cause. Wars of self-defence are often considered as the only legitimate wars (Walzer 62, Dunn 61). According to Bellamy "[u]sing violence to defend another or the state was not only justified, therefore, it was a moral necessity" (Bellamy 2012, 27). Bellamy further describes self-defence as a "'fundamental principle' of international law and [...] also the bedrock of the natural law tradition's just causes for war" (ibid. 158). Frowe likewise considers self-defence as a fundamental right and other-defence as a duty (Frowe 27f.). The saviours in the books view self-defence and especially other-defence in the same way. In the books, it does not matter if the villains have committed an actual attack or if it is an immanent attack. Neferet, the Dark, and the Lady of the Green Kirtle, for example, are not only committing actual crimes, they are also setting the stage for world-changing immanent attacks.

In real life, it is much more challenging to determine whether a war is fought for a just cause or with the right intention, as it is highly unlikely that the party declaring war would admit an unjust cause. As my previous analysis shows, however, the reader can isolate good intentions and just cause more readily in the books. This is the reason why the criteria of right intention and just cause in particular are most prominent in the books. The reader can pinpoint them and easily grasp the moral concepts behind them, whereas the books are much more opaque when it comes to, for example, positive law and right authority in the books.

Just cause and right intention are only the first two criteria to determine whether a war is waged justly or not. However, they take centre stage in the books. Although proportionality of ends is also important, a discussion about it is often glossed over because it appears to be self-explanatory in the books. Those wars of self-defence and other-defence cause violence that is acceptable for the reader. The acts of violence are not only acceptable, but also desirable because they are the only way to stop the villains and save the worlds on the plot level. Furthermore, these acts are the climax of the plot and thus serve as entertainment for the reader.

As Bellamy clarifies, proportionality "asks whether the overall harm likely to be caused by the war is less than that caused by the wrong that is being righted" (Bellamy



2012, 123). Frowe likewise explains that “[t]he good that you are protecting must be worth the harm that you are inflicting” (Frowe 56). In reality, not all aggressions satisfy the proportionality criterion, as “[s]ome wrongs were neither grievous nor widespread enough to legitimize the inevitable evils that war entails” (Bellamy 2012, 123).

The reader can see that the books provide this calculation. In *His Dark Materials* it is imperative to fight the Church because else, “everything good will fade away and die” (*Spyglass* 511). In the *House of Night* series, Zoey and her friends try to stop Neferet from taking over the world as this would literally set the world on fire: “Lots of other people burned [...] —humans, vamps, and fledglings. All of them were burning in this same field, which seemed to expand to include the whole damn world” (*Tempted* 101). Will Stanton and the Old Ones face Evil incarnate in the form of the Dark which “was spreading its shadow not only over his quest but over the ordinary world too” (*Dark* 155). In the books, the battle between good and evil often takes place in its most extreme form. It becomes a cosmic, biblical battle, which is about to decide the fate of the respective world. Therefore, the stakes for the protagonists to save the world(s) is extraordinarily high, and a refusal to fight or even failure in war would result in a destruction of the worlds as the characters know them.<sup>307</sup>

As a consequence, in the books it is always deemed proportionate to fight the war against evil, even if the price for this is extremely high and painful. Harry Potter and Eragon, for example, experience first-hand the evils of war when loved ones are killed. Nevertheless, they deem their purpose worth it, because the fate of the world has more weight than the individual. Furthermore, the books view the moral integrity of the characters as exemplary and invite the reader to regard them as role models. In her article “In Medias Res. Harry Potter as Hero-in-Progress” Mary Pharr concludes that heroes “endure as goals to guide us towards our possible best selves” (Pharr 2002, 54), which again points to the didactic purposes of the stories.

The last criterion within the substantive category is last resort. As Bellamy proposes, “last resort demands that actors carefully evaluate all the different strategies that might bring about the desired ends, selecting force if it appears to be the only feasible strategy for securing those ends” (Bellamy 2012, 123). As I have made clear in my previous chapters, especially in the character analyses, the adversaries cannot be pacified by diplomacy, economic sanctions, or promises. This is mainly because the adversaries do not care about the welfare of their citizens or subjects. The White Witch

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<sup>307</sup> Economic reasons to wage a war or material costs involved do not play a major role in the books; in *The Horse and His Boy*, however, these reasons are prevalent.

and her strategy of turning subjects into stone is only one example that bears witness to this. What the reader can perceive in the books are small rebellions and civil disobedience, such as Mr. Tumnus in *Wardrobe* or the uprising of Eragon's village in *Eragon*. The villains, however, quickly and severely punish these actions in an exaggerated display of strength. The consequence of the antagonists' behaviour and character make-up is that the protagonists have to resort to counter violence in order to avert the threat and even eradicate this evil from the world; no other way than using force is feasible in the books.

### Prudential Criteria

As I have said above, the substantive criteria are most prominent in the books. Prudential criteria, on the other hand, are only considered briefly. According to Bellamy, "[t]he principal prudential check is reasonable chance of success. [...] From a realist perspective, prudence includes both the overall likelihood of success and calculations about the costs of success" (Bellamy 2012, 123). The calculation of a reasonable chance of success should "[prohibit] the fighting of war 'against all odds'" (Frowe 59).

Here, the books actively contradict this just war criterion: they create David versus Goliath situations. This means that the young heroes are fighting the adult adversaries and organizations against all odds, with only minimal chances of success, if any.<sup>308</sup> This factor contributes to the entertainment value of the books. In her book *Off with their Heads! Fairy Tales and the Culture of Childhood* Maria Tatar comments on this literary convention as follows:

We all rejoice to see Ulysses conquering the Cyclops, David defeating Goliath, and Jack outsmarting and killing the giant, in part because the two antagonists, so unfairly matched when it comes to size and strength, are even more polarized in their moral character. It becomes almost impossible not to sympathize with a diminutive hero who becomes the victim of a bullying giant. (Tatar 181)

Tatar's statement not only holds true for fairy tales, but also for the books in this thesis. The protagonists under scrutiny are chosen to save the world(s) and "obtain a representative function, as they become part of the tradition of young heroes" (Kokorski 2012b, 214), a tradition Tatar so fittingly describes.

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<sup>308</sup> In her book *Child Saviours in English Fantasy Fiction for Children and Young Adults*, Anne Klaus propounds that this is a convention which the whole genre follows. I agree with Klaus's conclusion.

The young heroes are not ordinary, but often wield magical power or instruments. These abilities and / or tools act as subversive instruments and enable the protagonists to reverse social order and power structures: in almost all cases, they become powerful enough to face and defeat the adult antagonists in the end.<sup>309</sup> In these scenarios, the plots display Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of the carnivalesque as literary device. Maria Nikolajeva also applies Bakhtin's theory to children's literature and explains that "the medieval carnival, Bakhtin points out, was the temporary reversal of the established order when all societal power structures changed places" (Nikolajeva 2003, 129). Although the chances of success do not appear reasonable to begin with, the carnivalesque changes this. Here, "[f]antasy literature acts as a catalyst which enables its characters and its readers to question [and defeat] adult authority" (Kokorski 2012b, 215). The reversal of societal structures, however, is only temporary and serves to win the war; afterwards, the young protagonists often return and continue to live their lives almost as before.<sup>310</sup>

Furthermore, the just cause and proportionality criteria make it imperative to fight the wars. Here, the end clearly justifies the means, even if it means that the chances for success are slim. When it comes to fantastic literature for children and young adults, the books establish fighting against all odds as part of their own just war theory. Secondly, fighting against all odds has symbolic value and alludes to metaphorical situations rather than official wars. Here, the demonstration that a young character can defeat an adult gives children hope to master even difficult situations, and empowers them to face conflicts against all odds.

The protagonists become freedom fighters and celebrate resistance. The books become stories of heroic agency and give the reader the impression that it is morally admirable and even desirable to fight for the greater good, even if one has only little chances of success. The young heroes do not force others to risk their lives. Rather, they inspire other characters to be equally heroic and encourage the readers to become moral agents and fight for (Western) values and ideals.

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<sup>309</sup> One of the exceptions is *Wardrobe*; here it is Aslan who defeats the White Witch and not the Pevensie children.

<sup>310</sup> This is true for example for Harry, Lyra and Will, Nathan, and the Drew children. Exceptions to this can be found for example in *Narnia* and the *Inheritance Cycle*. In *Wardrobe*, for example, the children assume adult authority when they become kings and queens. Eragon likewise assumes a different role than before and becomes a mentor.

## Procedural Criteria

Procedural criteria are the ones most neglected or even disregarded altogether in the books. In order for a war to fulfil these requirements, one has to have the right authority to declare war and one has to make a proper declaration of war (Bellamy 2012, 124). Helen Frowe explains that the just war tradition specifies “that a war can be just only if it is sanctioned by the head of the warring state, such as the president, prime minister or monarch, or by the elected representative body such as Congress or Parliament” (Frowe 61). In *Narnia*, this rule is adhered to: In *Wardrobe*, Aslan authorizes the children and Narnians to go into battle (*Wardrobe* 153f.). In *Horse*, the Tisroc sanctions the *Blitzkrieg* against Archeland and Narnia (*Horse* 93). In *Caspian*, King Miraz moves his troops into Narnia in order to fight against the rightful heir to the throne and his army (*Caspian* 151); in *Chair*, it is the Lady of the Green Kirtle who is the Queen of Underland and therefore technically has the proper authority to authorize war (*Chair* 126). In *Battle* it is King Tirian who mobilizes his troops (*Battle* 20f.).

On the other hand, young protagonists such as Harry, Zoey, Nathan, Will and Lyra are neither “an appropriate body” to fight war nor do they have the right authority to declare war. Looking at this from a different perspective, Bellamy explains that “[t]he question of who has the right to authorize war remains a moot point today. [...] Furthermore, it is widely accepted today that other actors may also legitimately wage war in some circumstances” (Bellamy 2012, 124). Frowe admits that it is possible for non-state actors to engage in warfare (Frowe 62) and that “[c]ivil wars and terrorism cast doubt on the traditional model of a sovereign (the head of state) as the only entity capable of declaring war” (ibid. 89f.). These non-state actors “are usually representatives of some identifiable group, often an ethnic or religious group” (ibid. 62). This is true for Will Stanton in *The Dark Is Rising Sequence* and Eragon. Will is part of the Light and therefore a soldier in his own rights who participates in an ongoing war of good against evil. Eragon is in an equal situation; as part of the Warden he is a soldier of the rebellious forces who, according to Frowe’s definition, can declare war.

As said above, in the books under scrutiny the saviours must take action because the state or sovereign is not adhering to its duty to protect its citizens or subjects.<sup>311</sup> The state / sovereign therefore loses its value, its rights, and finally its *raison d’être*. As Bellamy explains in reference to John Stuart Mill: “[M]any actors have recognized a right for citizens or subjects to rebel against oppressive governments, and the liberal

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<sup>311</sup> In the *House of Night* series, Neferet abuses her adult authority, giving Zoey and her friends the right to rebel against her. Furthermore, there appears to be no adult entity willing or powerful enough to stop Neferet. Therefore, this task falls to Zoey who has been chosen by her goddess to defeat evil.

idea that sovereignty is bestowed not by God but by the will of the people [...]. If that is the case, a people must have the right to use political violence in order to overthrow an oppressive government” (Bellamy 2012, 137).

In *The Chronicles of Narnia*, *His Dark Materials*, the *Harry Potter* series, and even the *House of Night* series and the *Sangreal Trilogy*, the regime has been infiltrated and / or overturned by evil powers and no longer represents its people or acts in the interest of its people, but rather violates their rights. Therefore, the rebellious forces deny the government / sovereign the power to speak and act on their behalf. The conflicts are not essentially politically motivated, but are wars that take place between different ideologies, and ultimately between good and evil. The children in these books become representatives of the good side. Characters such as Harry, Zoey, Eragon, and Lyra and Will are non-state actors who enjoy a high level of support within their definable community. Due to the dire situation, they are beacons of hope for their cause.

The procedural requirement of a public declaration of war serves several purposes. Firstly, it is a “right authority test”: only those with the proper authority can declare war and force its troops to adhere (Bellamy 2012, 124). Secondly, a public declaration of war “forced those about to embark on war clearly to state their case, providing an opportunity for peaceful restitution” (ibid.). And thirdly, “it clearly marks the transition from peace to war and hence the type of legal rules that ought to be applied” (ibid.).

In the books, the action builds up till the war happens. Often, there is no official declaration of war and this is often not necessary. Most of the time, the action is obvious, or the characters classify that what is going on as war for the benefit of the reader; examples for this is Merriman who explains the nature of the conflict to the Drew children (*Over Stone* 60), or Ron who cries out that “OI! There’s a war going on here!” (*Hallows* 506). In cases where pre-emptive action is taking place such as the *House of Night* series or the *Sangreal Trilogy*, there is no declaration of war. In *Horse*, the Tisroc and Rabadash purposefully omit a public declaration so that they can more easily conquer Archeland and Narnia, the same is true for *Chair* and the Lady’s nebulous and dark agenda. Even without a proper declaration of war, the children and young adults see no other way than to take on adult responsibility and save the day. It is the last resort the characters turn to, because the decision to fight the adult figures does not fall lightly.

### Categorizations of War

After I have clarified the *jus ad bellum* regulations above, I now want to shortly classify the wars that take place. As Michael Walzer states, “[w]ar is most often a form of tyranny” (Walzer 29). This is absolutely true for the books under scrutiny. The protagonists fight against the tyranny they experience.

In *Harry Potter* and the *Inheritance Cycle*, the reader finds civil wars,<sup>312</sup> which in the long run are supposed to prevent the antagonistic forces from world domination. In both examples, the war takes place against one’s own government on one’s own soil, with armies of both parties involved.<sup>313</sup> The same is true for *Wardrobe* and *Battle*. In *Horse*, *Caspian*, and *Chair*, the reader can see international aspects of war, as different states are involved. In *Horse* and *Battle* the reader can furthermore perceive that the aggressors violate Narnia’s political and territorial integrity,<sup>314</sup> when Rabadash starts the *Blitzkrieg*, and the Calormenes in *Battle* undermine Narnia politics and economy with their schemes. Although the war in *His Dark Materials* started as rebellion against the Church, in *Spyglass*, the reader is able to perceive that the war takes place between forces from different worlds.

In the *Sangreal Trilogy* and the *House of Night* series, the distinction is not as clear cut. This is because the reader is not able to identify open war as s/he can in the other books. In these two series, the conflict between the protagonist and the main antagonist has not yet developed into a war that encompasses fully-fledged armies; only a small group of combatants is involved, there are no armies. Rather, the protagonists fight on behalf of the (often) ignorant population. As the threat is imminent and will have an impact on the whole world due to the villains’ aspiration for world domination, Nathan, as well as Zoey and her friends, are fighting a pre-emptive war on a very small scale. As Frowe explains, “pre-emptive war aims at averting a specific threat of imminent harm [...] halting a threat in the final stages of development” (Frowe 76).<sup>315</sup> In both cases, the threat is “instant, overwhelming, leaving no choice of means, and no moment of deliberation” (Webster qtd. in *ibid.*).

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<sup>312</sup> According to Alex Bellamy, “[t]he most violent conflicts in the world today are civil wars” (199).

<sup>313</sup> In the *Inheritance Cycle*, however, the country Surda also supports the Warden and thus lends an international dimension to the war.

<sup>314</sup> The Tisroc and Rabadash are violating Narnian sovereignty: “Sovereignty can be summarised as the rights of political and territorial integrity. These rights require that outsiders do not try to interfere forcefully with the workings of a state’s political system, or to occupy or control its land” (Frowe 32).

<sup>315</sup> “‘Imminence’ is synonymous with ‘immediacy’ or ‘proximity’ and does far beyond the concept of ‘possibility’ ... the ‘extremely grave and imminent peril’ must have been a threat to the interest at the time” (Yoo qtd. in Bellamy 2012, 168).

Furthermore, the plot and character make-up make it obvious that a pre-emptive war is justified, as the plot provides the characters and the reader with sufficient evidence for the imminent threat of harm. It also makes clear that “not fighting will significantly increase the risk to oneself” (Frowe 81) and the risk to the rest of the world(s). As the protagonists’ actions count as acts of self- and other-defence, these pre-emptive wars are deemed morally permissible within the just war tradition. Furthermore, fighting against the antagonists is the only way to avert the threat, and therefore these actions satisfy the criterion of necessity. Although the books sanction pre-emption in these cases, it is important to keep in mind that this might easily be abused in the real world: “Making pre-emption more flexible blurs important moral and legal distinctions and creates avenues for political leaders to justify aggressive wars in terms of pre-emption” (Bellamy 2012, 169). This danger is not discussed in the books.

In *The Dark Is Rising Sequence*, the reader is able to perceive a war of self- and other-defence as well. However, this series has so far eluded all categorization I have worked with in the second part of the thesis because it is an abstract war. *The Dark Is Rising Sequence* easily labels the protagonists and antagonists according to the binary distinctions of good and evil. As Raymond Plante states in his article “[i]n Cooper’s fantasy, the Dark is clearly the undesirable side, as seen by its power to corrupt men and to instil fear and terror. On the other hand, it is not so clear why the Light is entirely desirable, when this side denies the importance of free will” (Plante 41).

Although the concepts of good and evil often remain abstract in this series, the protagonists’ duty is to assist in the aeon-long struggle, and thus tip the scale in favour of good and save the world from evil. The Old Ones do not oppose a corrupt sovereign, or ideologized religion like other characters do in, for example, the *Inheritance Cycle* or *His Dark Materials*. In the other books, good and evil are much more tangible, as for example the debate about race and racism sets out clear parameters and a concise message of tolerance. Fighting against an increasingly racialized society is also not the goal of the Light, although *Silver in the Tree* addresses the issue of racism as a manifestation of the Dark (*Silver* 50ff.); this is one instance in which the label of the Dark is filled with concrete ideas and values. In other cases, the reader has to fill in the blanks for him-/herself. There are universal values attached to the labels good and evil. However, this perception of what is good and what is evil might also change with the *Zeitgeist* of the reader and is thus extremely flexible and contributes to the timelessness of the books and the conflict. Rather than facing a specific evil, *The Dark Is Rising Sequence* becomes a blueprint for a cosmic fight between good and evil, and thus

subsumes the other books into its plot to a certain degree, as all the books incorporate a fight between those two forces.

Although only a small number of combatants in *The Dark Is Rising Sequence* are involved in the conflict, it is a war of cosmic significance nevertheless, as “the consequences of their struggle become the ultimate enslavement of the human race or its freedom to create its own destiny until the end of time” (Goodrich 168). This is very similar to the other books under scrutiny, where a victory of the evil side will bring about the same consequences, as for example *His Dark Materials*, the *House of Night* series, or the *Sangreal Trilogy* display.

The plot itself classifies the conflict as war: “in the old days [...] the struggle between good and evil was more bitter and open than it is now. That struggle goes on all round us all the time, like two armies fighting. And sometimes one of them seems to be winning and sometimes the other, but neither has ever triumphed altogether. Nor ever will [...] for there is something of each in every man” (*Over Stone* 60). As this quotation reveals, the books clearly proclaim that evil cannot be isolated as easily as the reader can see in for example *Narnia*. Moreover, unlike *Narnia*, *The Dark Is Rising Sequence* asks the reader to become a defendant of the Light themselves, as everyone is part of the struggle and has the potential to change the world for better or worse.

In general, the books in this thesis show that the antagonists are much more liberal in their decision of going to war than the saviours. For the antagonists, war is a way to strengthen their power and enlarge their influence. For the protagonists, war poses a threat and needs to be fought in order to secure fundamental rights and save the world(s), (often) at a painful a painful price. Neither the books nor international law in the reader’s world sanctions the villains’ justifications for war; these include wars of expansion and conquest as in *Narnia*, religious crusades as in *His Dark Materials*, or genocide as in *Harry Potter*, *The House of Night* series or the *Sangreal Trilogy*.<sup>316</sup>

Not only are the villains’ justifications to wage war invalid, the aggressors strip the population (or parts of the population) of basic rights and commit severe crimes; as seen above, people constantly fear for their lives. These crimes incorporate for example crimes against humanity, as explicit through the actions of for example the Grandir, Voldemort, and Neferet.<sup>317</sup> In these three instances, the reader is able to draw explicit parallels to his/her own world when comparing the villains’ actions to international law:

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<sup>316</sup> Additional justifications of war which are barred from international society can be found in Walzer 72.

<sup>317</sup> The villains commit crimes of aggression or war crimes, for example in *Horse* with the violation of Narnian sovereignty and *Hallows* with the torturing prisoners of war (375ff). However, I only breach these points as they are part of a *jus in bello* discussion and go beyond the scope of this paper.



in their willingness to commit genocide, murder, enforced disappearance and other acts the aggressors violate the Rome Statute, which marks their actions “as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against any civilian population” (Rome Statute Article 7 qtd. in Bellamy 2012, 112). This parallel strengthens the books’ applicability to the reader’s world and their emphasis on and perpetuation of Western values.

In their judgement of whether the war they are fighting is just, the protagonists have to rely on intuition, moral codes and logic, and rarely talk about the just war framework. In *Eldest*, however, Eragon and his mentor Omoris explicitly evaluate justifications for war. This is a rare exception in a genre in which the reasons to go to war are crystal clear due to the dichotomy of good versus evil, which the books develop and promote. Omoris’ guiding questions such as “why do you fight the Empire?”, “[w]on’t your war with Galbatorix cause more pain than it will ever prevent?” and “[h]ow can you justify invading their land, destroying their homes, and killing their sons and daughters?” (*Eldest* 351) ask for the substantive criteria: right intention, just cause as well as proportionality. This conversation prompts Eragon not only to act according to his overwhelming desire to fight Galbatorix, but also to take all the consequences and evils of war into consideration. Categorizing Galbatorix as evil does not satisfy these criteria in Omoris’s opinion (*ibid.* 374) and glosses over important calculations one should make.

Omoris and Eragon conclude that Eragon fights for “humanitarian reasons” as he wants to “fight to help the people who Galbatorix has harmed and to stop him from hurting any more” (*ibid.* 351). These justifications satisfy the criteria of right intention and just cause, especially since they focus on self- and other-defence.<sup>318</sup> Furthermore, Eragon elaborates on his reasons and takes into account proportionality of ends:

Galbatorix has already caused more suffering over the past hundred years than we ever could in a single generation. And unlike a normal tyrant, we cannot wait for him to die. He could rule for centuries or millennia—persecuting and tormenting people the entire time—unless we stop him. If he became strong enough, he would march on the dwarves and you here in Du Weldenvarden and kill or enslave both races. And [...] because rescuing the two eggs from Galbatorix is the only way to save the dragons. (*Eldest* 374)

As with the other villains, to stop Galbatorix would do more good than harm in the long run, which satisfies the proportionality criterion. The reason why Omoris wanted

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<sup>318</sup> That Eragon also wants to fight Galbatorix to take revenge which violates the criterion of right intention, is quickly glossed over (*Eldest* 351).

Eragon to logically justify his actions is also that he wanted to free him from any doubts that might come in the face of the atrocities of war (ibid.): soldiers need to believe in doing the right thing in order to be able to fight without constraints.<sup>319</sup> In contrast to the other series, *The Inheritance Cycle* puts a lot of effort into justifying the war against Galbatorix along the lines of modern rhetoric and just war theory. The application of just war theory hands the reader the necessary tools to judge situations like these and not to solely rely on emotional reasons.

#### Conclusion:

It is important to note that although the books lean on the just war theory to justify the protagonists' actions in the conflicts, the books are not war writings. Rather, they tell a moral story about what is the right thing to do and why it is important to do the right thing. Although the reader can perceive a high emphasis on the substantive criteria of just war theory, the books do not follow the just war theory excessively.

Throughout this thesis I have laid out reasons why the wars or imminent wars in the books are justified. These encompass character analysis, the evaluation of sovereignty, as well as social practices. My analysis reveals that the books are concerned with ideas that underlie character make-up, state-construction, and social practices, and categorize them into right and wrong. All these points are interconnected, and they reveal value transgressions that ultimately deliver justifications of war. Overall, the trajectories of the stories often go from order (at the beginning of the plot or prior to the plot before the respective villain interfered) to disorder (villain claims power) to order (protagonists defeat the villains).

To return to societal order the protagonists have to fight a war, namely a war to end injustice, corruption, and violence; often it is a war to end war. While the antagonists create fear of the Other, be it for example the racial or religious Other, and use this sentiment to mobilize the masses and lead them into war, the protagonists respond to aggression that threatens the sovereignty of the state and / or the rights and lives of its citizens which marks these aggressions as crimes against society; after all, “[n]othing but aggression can justify war” (Walzer 63). The reader can always see proof of the antagonists' (evil) intentions as well as the protagonists' good intentions. This strategy convinces the reader that the wars in the books are just, especially since the protagonists fight in self- and other-defence.

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<sup>319</sup> This conclusion has already appeared in chapter 3.2 The Use and Abuse of Religion.

The protagonists have no choice but to use force in order to resist the (imminent) threat and save the world(s). The war they fight is not only a war, but it becomes a (sacred) mission, and as such winning is terribly important. The aim is to defeat the villain and reduce the threat of future oppression, at least momentarily. Appeasement with the evil forces is never an option, because the aggressors force the population to decide between their rights and their lives. Therefore, the plots emphasize the notion of the “eradication of evil” (Walzer 111) as a desirable aim, especially since the antagonists are often evil personified.

The protagonists defend themselves as well as the moral goods that (should) make up the society they live in; this outweighs the losses of lives which become unavoidable but calculable risks to reach the aim. The books under scrutiny look at long-term consequences and come to the conclusion that the suffering the protagonists have to endure for the sake of the conflict is justified if evil is defeated; avoiding the long-term consequences is more important than a temporary peace under insufferable conditions, such as the violation of universal rights and values which the books portray as inalienable and non-negotiable.

Taking into consideration the conclusions from this division’s subchapters, the books promote the idea put forward by natural law. According to Walzer, individual rights to life and liberty “are somehow entailed by our sense of what it means to be a human being. [...] they are a palpable feature of our moral world” (Walzer 54) and thus “underlie the most important judgement that we make about war” (ibid.). Although today positive law outweighs natural law in real-life scenarios (Bellamy 2012, 121), the reader can see that the books under scrutiny invoke natural law-type arguments which point to, create, and perpetuate moral values and obligations. Although the books basically focus on natural law, both types of law are important: “Without natural law, positive international law potentially boils down to the preferences of the powerful. [...] However, natural law without positive law is a licence for war. It is too vague and ambiguous to guide our normative judgements” (ibid.).<sup>320</sup>

In the books, some things are simply, naturally black and white in accordance with a specific cultural code. This portrayal leads to the conclusion that natural law supersedes positive law. This has several messages and consequences. First of all, the books encourage the movement of moral considerations to the centre of daily interactions, no matter if this is the case for political leaders, or child readers. Secondly,

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<sup>320</sup> “This tension between positive law’s presumption against aggressive war and natural law’s ‘presumption against injustice’ [...] is arguably the central dilemma of *ius ad bellum* today” (Bellamy 2012, 108).

the books encourage the movement of egocentric thinking and acting to the periphery, thus forming a contrast to the central position of the 'I' in today's society; after all, the books portray intervention and other-defence as moral duty and imperative. Only through their selfless actions, even if they are violent and military, can the protagonists defeat the villains in a necessary just war and save the world(s).

The saviours see it as their duty to intervene in the reign of terror to protect their natural rights. *Eldest* is only one of the books which explicitly points to this: "For all the stories of Galbatorix's misdeeds, it was still a shock to have the king's evil roosted among their homes. A sense of history settled on Roran as he realized he was involved with forces he had previously been acquainted with only through songs and stories. 'Something should be done,' he muttered" (*Eldest* 87). In his contemplation about just war, Bellamy subsumes important factors underlying this sentiment:

Recognizing a duty to contemplate intervention is important, for two reasons. First, rights always entail duties. With universal right come universal duties. Rights without duties are hollow, and since there is broad agreement that there are some universal rights (such as the right not to be killed in a genocide), it follows that there must be some universal duties, including a duty to enable others to enjoy fundamental rights. [...] Second, acknowledging a right but not a duty to intervene creates the potential for abuse. (Bellamy 2012, 212)

Bellamy's quotation not only addresses the responsibility of (international) society when it comes to humanitarian intervention,<sup>321</sup> this quotation mirrors the sentiment the books portray in regard to natural rights as well as the use and abuse of power, and the privileging of human rights over non-intervention. Because of their special abilities and roles as the chosen ones, the young protagonists are powerful. The books preach that this power is always tied to responsibility. This responsibility is translated into the duty to help others under duress and free the world of the adversary. In *Narnia*, the Pevensie children experience it as their duty to end the reign of the White Witch; Harry Potter and Eragon likewise regard it as their duty to seek justice and peace in the face of evil; Nathan, and Zoey and her friends avert a major catastrophe that would have fundamentally changed the fabric of their worlds.

As Hindess points out: "Even the most oppressive oppressor leaves room for choice" (Hindess 151). Correspondently, the young protagonists always have a choice: The characters could just not intervene, but hide or leave the country. Although the

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<sup>321</sup> Humanitarian intervention takes place between different states. Nevertheless, the underlying reasoning and justifications for a humanitarian intervention can also be applied to the books under scrutiny.

choice the heroes have to make is obvious and to a certain degree expected from the readers, the decision to stand back and watch the antagonists take over the world is at least a theoretical option. However, as Helen Frowe points out, “[w]e generally condemn those who stand by and do nothing when a person is under attack” (Frowe 26).

Therefore, passivity in the face of the atrocities committed by the villains as well as the consequential future the worlds might face is morally unacceptable. Here the reader can perceive another substantial point of this genre: the protagonists have the “ability and willingness to choose freely between good and evil” (Kokorski 2012b, 215). As Dumbledore explains to Harry: “[i]t is our choices, Harry that show what we truly are, far more than our abilities” (*Chamber* 358). The protagonists are not ordered to participate in war by a (military) superior, they are not even traditional soldiers, but they choose to fight. Although the reader might not recognize the protagonists as soldiers s/he knows from his/her own world, there are strong allusions to their soldier or soldier-like status. Most protagonists are part of a movement or specific side in the conflict, they are part of an army, so to speak, and all become skilled warriors in the end; at least skilled enough to win the fight. Those who can be more clearly be defined as soldiers are Eragon, Will in *The Dark Is Rising Sequence*, and even the members of “Dumbledore’s Army”; they are not only part of an army, they have (military) training to a certain extent, and they have (military) superiors they follow.

The saviours are not driven by the will for self-preservation but by the impulse to protect others, the common good, or public order; Augustine points to the “moral necessity” of violence in the face of evil (Bellamy 2012, 27). The innocent lives are worth preserving, even at the cost of one’s own. The noble choice to set aside one’s concerns about personal safety in order to defend the lives and rights of other people even in the face of overwhelming odds mark the protagonists as role model figures and displays their moral superiority, especially in contrast to their morally inferior antagonists.<sup>322</sup>

That the protagonists at least temporarily win the fight and save the world(s) is a clear message to the reader. Firstly, morally admirable actions are necessary and will be rewarded, even if the price one has to pay is high. This also holds true when the saviours have to break the law. Secondly, it is important to fight for what one believes in, especially if it is for the greater good, the preservation or restoration of natural rights, and the adherence to the right values. Genocides, mass killings, and other violations of

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<sup>322</sup> This is in contrast to what Walzer calls the “moral equality of soldiers” (Walzer 34). A moral inequality, however, more often than not corresponds to the war propaganda of a nation, such as the American war on terror.

rights are always wrong and “constitute grave humanitarian crises warranting intervention” (Bellamy 2012, 201) in the fictional and in the real world.<sup>323</sup> Therefore, war is not always wrong. On the contrary: If it is a just war, it is a necessary war which one is therefore obliged to fight.

In adhering to just war theory, as well as alluding to examples from the reader’s world, the books encourages the reader to contemplate social, political, and religious debates without being overtly instructive or didactic. The books use historical allusions to emphasise the severeness and reality of the threat and the consequential justification of war. Furthermore, setting these debates in fantastic scenarios helps the reader to more easily identify important principles and values, which are otherwise difficult to understand due the complexity of historical reality.

The reader can perceive this not only in the allusion to for example, political theory by Locke, racial ideology, or just war theory, but also in (recent) political history. The ending of *Nephew*, for example, acts as a prophecy to instruct the reader to be aware of evil in the world:

It is not certain that some wicked one of your race will not find out a secret as evil as the Deplorable Word and use it to destroy all living things. And soon, very soon, before you are an old man and an old woman, great nations in your world will be ruled by tyrants who care no more for joy and justice and mercy than the Empress Jadis. Let your world beware. (*Nephew* 164)

Here, the book clearly alludes to the two World Wars that have changed the world tremendously. In building a bridge to the reader’s reality, the book makes clear that evil does not only happen in a fictional world, but that the reader needs also needs to be “beware” of it in his / her own world.

The books under scrutiny become *littérature engagée*, which according to Sartre is “writing that recognized its inevitable relation to its historical situation and strives to make its readers aware of and act on the potential for human liberation implicit in that situation” (Gutting 21). Contextualizing the books thus marks them as being deeply political and ideological. The reader is encouraged to be vigilant and to show responsibility and interfere if something is not right. Through making war and moral responsibility the focal points of these narratives, the books encourage the reader ‘to do the right thing’. To do this, the readers need to find out what ‘the right thing’ is; in the

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<sup>323</sup> Margaret Thatcher famously stated that “[w]herever naked aggression occurs it must be overcome. The cost now, however high, must be set against the cost we would one day have to pay if this principle went by default” (qtd. in Frowe 69). Thatcher’s quotation sounds eerily fitting regarding the books, as does Blair’s pledge “to use military force to prevent and halt future genocides” (qtd. in Bellamy 2012, 206). Those examples reveal the political opinion and tradition in which the books are set up.

books this constitutes for example, to stand up for weaker members of society, and to actively participate in making the world a better place. The books aim to enlighten the reader, especially concerning morality and (Western) values, and sensitize their outlook on the world when it comes to issues such as racism and untrustworthy organizations, and thus encourage and warn the reader not to conform to the wrong kind of societal pressure and conventions as displayed for example in the case of racial ideology in the *Harry Potter* books.. Basically, the books ask the reader in which world s/he would like to live in: the world the antagonist create or the world the saviours fight for.

The wars in the books are more than what von Clausewitz calls “a true political instrument, a continuation of political intercourse, carried out by other means” (von Clausewitz 28). The wars are instruments employed to protect and preserve humanity and goodness in the world, as well as to eradicate tyranny; not to balance out power, but to unify the actors under a certain ideology. If you subscribe to a racist ideology, you are automatically on the evil side, and vice versa. Taking this into consideration, wars in fantasy fiction are often metaphorical – they are wars between the right and the wrong ideology, between good and evil.

Under the circumstances portrayed in the books, war itself becomes a positive thing, an instrument to free the suppressed and unhappy masses and prevent future evil. The importance of fighting these wars, the moral imperative, overrides legal rules and sanctions the violation of positive law. The strategies the books follow are not unprecedented. In his lecture “The Liberal Way of War”, Michael Dillon describes how politicians instrumentalize war. This eerily echoes justifications of wars the reader finds in the books under scrutiny:

in pursuit of perpetual peace [...] translating war into crusades with only one outcome; the transformation of other societies and cultures into liberal societies and cultures. Liberal wars then ‘dehumanised the adversary’. He ceased to be ‘a party with fears, perceptions, interests and difficulties of his own; one with whom rational discourse was possible. (Dillon 4)

The make-up of the evil characters, the villains’ justifications of war, and the protagonists’ moral predisposition foreground the importance to wage war in order to gain “perpetual peace”. The books demonstrate the development, consequences, and power of ideological thinking. Furthermore, it is important to see this dehumanization of the enemy, as it serves as evidence of the villains’ wrongdoing; this is important in swaying the reader to understand and justify the hero’s actions.

There is an ethical dilemma involved in the books when it comes to war; especially since they also focus on personal relationships between the heroes and their (surrogate) families. As soon as these relations take centre-stage, as in *Harry Potter* or the *House of Night* novels, the reality of war also plays a role in the decision-making process to go to war and face its consequences. As the reader can see, especially in the Battle of Hogwarts, the books also display the horrors of war; they do not glamorize war, but criticize it, although they deem it necessary. War becomes the lesser evil.

There are two important aspects which are not thoroughly covered by the books: *jus in bello* and *jus post bellum*. First, the wars themselves often only happen quickly; the reasons to justify them are much more elaborately discussed than the wars themselves. However, taking a closer look at the *jus in bello* criteria of the books such as morality in war and the treatment of war prisoners goes beyond the scope of this paper. A thorough analysis of *jus in bello* could cover the following questions: What does warfare in fantasy fiction look like? How do the opponents fight? Are there any rules which correspond to *jus in bello* principles? While *jus in bello* concentrates on the conduct of war, *jus post bellum* deals with the “obligation to rebuild the target country afterwards” (Bellamy 2012, 214) and “a long-term commitment to post war reconstruction” (ibid. 212). *Jus post bellum* is often neglected, as the story frequently ends shortly after the war. In an analysis of *jus post bellum* criteria on the other hand, one should concentrate on the following questions in greater detail: What happens after the war? How is the country rebuilt?<sup>324</sup> Furthermore, the effects of war on the protagonists could also be taken into consideration.

The heroes ultimately set the corner stones of new, peaceful and safe societies in order to secure their own place and future in it, which is the most central aspect of the greater good that comes from war. I agree with Anne Klaus when she states that the post war process has only begun and that consequently “[t]he salvation is not depicted as a restoration of peace and order which lasts forever but as a shaky and insecure status” (Klaus 2014, 185). The saviours prepare and are ready for a new future, but they often leave the reconstruction to adult characters.<sup>325</sup> They have fulfilled their tasks and successfully secured important values and rights.

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<sup>324</sup> In *His Dark Materials* and *The Dark is Rising Sequence*, the protagonists promise to work hard as individual members of society, to make the world a better place, which means to help creating the republic of heaven, and to stop the Dark from rising again.

<sup>325</sup> To follow up on the political ramifications appears to be anticlimactic for the reader after such a great war; the reader appears to be satisfied with good conquering evil and might not be interested to see the remodelling of the world.



#### 4. Conclusion

“All stories teach, whether the storyteller intends them to or not. They teach the world we create. They teach the morality we live by. They teach it much more effectively than moral precepts and instructions.” (Philip Pullman)

The quotation above is an excerpt from Philip Pullman’s Carnegie Medal acceptance speech (qtd. in Schweizer 169), which perfectly sums up the most important statements of this thesis. This thesis bases its premises on the fact and emphasizes that all stories teach, they teach the world we create, they teach the world that creates us (even in a fantasy setting), and most emphatically, they teach the morality we (should) live by. They often do so in subtle ways, which makes them “more [effective] than moral precepts and instructions” (ibid.).

The wars in the books and their justification not only serve didactic purposes, but also provide a high entertainment factor. For the (young) reader, fantasy literature provides a portal into another world, a world which goes beyond the everyday, beyond familiar problems. It engages the reader on a different intellectual and emotional level than realist fiction. Gerard Jones contemplates that the most important function of a story is the emotional meaning it provides: “What matters most to a child’s development is the emotional connection he or she makes with the fantasy and the way the child works it, through play and imagination, into his or her emotional life. This is the power of symbol, myth, and metaphor” (G. Jones 2002, 56). Nathan from Amanda Hemingway’s *Sangreal Trilogy* likewise stresses the importance of fantasy literature for the emotional and intellectual development of the (young) reader: “If we know a story is made up, then it doesn’t matter. It’s good. We learn from stories” (*Grail* 135). In this conversation, Eric even goes one step further in their conversation about stories in general and *Star Wars* in particular, and echoes Pullman’s quotation above: “I think – you are right. We learn from made-up story, perhaps more than from history” (ibid. 138).<sup>326</sup>

Fantasy literature takes on another special role, which Gerard Jones as already marginally addressed in the quotation above, and Eric from *The Greenstone Grail* also alludes to. According to Gates et al, “fantasy literature, like all other forms of myth, springs from the human need to understand the struggle of good versus evil” (Gates et al

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<sup>326</sup> This conversation appears to be for the benefit of the reader and mirrors grown-up expectations about the power of stories.

2). This quotation provides two important aspects I want to discuss. First of all, Gates and her co-authors categorize fantasy literature as myth. But fantasy is more than that: fantasy literature provides today's mythology. Although Greek mythology and the *Bible* have played important roles in the make-up of Western culture, its character and mission, today's youth (and adults) are much more literate when it comes to *Star Wars* or *Harry Potter* than to for example *The Iliad*. Judged by the popularity of the movies, books and merchandise, today's fantasy stories have shaped generations of readers and viewers.

Second of all, from the quotation above the reader can infer the function of fantasy fiction: through fantasy, the reader learns about good and evil, about the values and morals which shape his/her world. This narrative form provides the reader with messages that are universal rather than bound to specific historical circumstances, as my analyses exemplify. These points illustrate best why it is so important to take a closer look at what children and young adults are reading.

The books' success betrays the tendency readers have for clear directives and a clear picture of evil, which a dualistic world view clearly offers; especially since the young readers' world becomes increasingly filled with shades of grey the older they get. At first glance, the books merely form a battleground between the forces of good and evil. However, by focusing on a myriad of topics, the books go further than that: Not only do they address the character make-up of the evil antagonists and gender stereotypes, they also negotiate political authority, religious systems, and the construction of difference. Topics such as political power and the use and abuse of religion give voice to more specific evils with a more significant relation to the reader's world. These themes finally come together to create an amalgam that culminates in imperative justifications of war. It becomes clear that the books do more than characterize (fairy tale) evil; they emphasise community and shared values.

The character constellation of an evil adversary coupled with a good (but still realistic) protagonist is the first aspect which draws the reader in and engages his/her imagination.<sup>327</sup> The characterization of the adversaries reveals the dualistic world view of the books: the antagonists are purely evil; there are no shades of grey. The books concentrate on behavioural patterns, and judge and perpetuate specific gender ideals and performances, especially in connection with morality. Here it is also important to

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<sup>327</sup> Maria Nikolajeva describes a postmodern trend in the creation of a character in fantasy fiction as follows: "we can clearly see that contemporary characters tend to become more like 'real people'" (Nikolajeva 2003, 136). Being realistic is a feature which most of the time solely applies to the protagonists of the stories, while the antagonists remain purely evil.

distinguish between male and female antagonists, as their tactics to overpower the protagonists and take control of the world(s) often differ and can be traced back to their literary predecessors. The emphasis on different motifs in the first part of the thesis leads the antagonists to be classified as more or less “ordinary” villains and reveals the intertextuality of the books and therefore the standards of evil the antagonists are held to and fulfil. Villains such as Voldemort are the embodiment of corruption, greed, and the loss of humanity and its consequences. It is the protagonists’ goal to defeat the villains and rid the world off their evil influence.

All the topics in this thesis reveal the juxtaposition of different ideologies, which allows for a clear creation and distinction between just and unjust characters and systems. Behaviour is categorized into right and wrong, smart and stupid, and can thus be easily spotted and equally categorized by the reader. The analyses in part two of this paper in particular show how the stories incorporate the workings of ideologies; after all, the evil antagonists use ideological strategies to facilitate their goals. This thesis explains how and why these strategies work: The antagonists propagate absolutes: the ‘right’ mind-set, the ‘right’ hierarchies, the ‘right’ truths, and the ‘right’ history. They give the illusion that they can establish their utopia only through these means, and use suppression and violence to achieve their goal. As this thesis has shown, the antagonists use what Eagleton calls strategies of power legitimization (1991, 5f.), which are in accordance with Kenneth Minogue’s description of ideological mechanism: “Ideologies [...] claim exclusive truth. They explain not only the world, but the false beliefs of opponents as well. Ideologists possess the long-sought knowledge of how to abolish politics and create a perfect society” (Minogue 100). Eagleton and Minogue stress the universality of these principles, a claim that is validated by the books.

Political reasons for the justifications of war form a substantial part of my analysis, after all “[p]olitics is [...] inextricably bound up with our humanity that a transformation of the state affects religion, culture, morality, and much else” (Minogue 109). It is important to note that an obsession with the sovereign plays a major role in contemporary politics (Hindess 157), even more so in the books. This obsession even hints at a more complex problem, as it is “symptomatic of a more general modern obsession with the idea of the person as autonomous agent, and consequently, with the idea that the community of such persons can, and should, be governed by the consent of its members” (ibid.). The chapter on wrongful authority in particular, reveals that the villains are corrupted by power, forming negative role models and revealing how not to lead.

Questions of legitimacy and morality take centre stage in the books under discussion, which points to the *Zeitgeist* of the books; after all, these books were written and published after the two world wars and some were published during the war on terror. Undeniably, these books give voice to the anxieties connected to illegitimate and immoral sovereigns. Their emphasis lies on the argument that a sovereign or a government can only rule with the consent of its people. If this is not a given, it is legitimate and even imperative to rebel against this wrongful authority. The books function as guidelines in respect to power structures and moral principles, a purpose Omoris is emblematic for in his position as a teacher: “My main task [...] is to help you [...] to understand what principles guide you, so that you do not make the right choices for the wrong reasons” (*Eldest* 273f.). In their representation of state power and authority, the books clearly favour Western ideologies of state and morality and guide the reader to interpret the world according to this view.

The books provide clear examples of what constitutes wrongful authority and they teach the reader to recognize and resist these forms of government. The form of resistance is the same in all the books: Each time, the protagonists overthrow oppressive regimes through militaristic, meaning violent means. There appears to be no alternative to this traditional approach to wrongful authority; a pacifist strategy of peaceful resistance and non-violence is not even discussed in the books, and it appears that the villains only leave little or no room for this strategy. Creating peace through war is the protagonists’ last resort in solving the problems they face.

The chapter on wrongful authority already discusses many parallels with the reader’s world. The resemblance to the reader’s world is even stronger when it comes to the creation of difference. This topic clearly shows how fantasy can be used to extrapolate tensions between races, class, and gender. The emphasis on race and racism shows the reader a deep-rooted sense of entitlement on the side of the evil antagonists and their followers, a belief that they, as the superior race, were born to dominate the other race(s). No matter if they are wizards such as Voldemort, vampyres such as Neferet, or humans such as the Telmarines, in defining themselves as master races, those groups are clearly characterized as evil and therefore easily recognizable. In demonizing and even animalising the Other, the evil characters attempt to elevate their own status and to create justification to rule over the Other. In doing so, the evil characters generate a vicious circle of othering, for which the Dursleys and the People of Faith are emblematic. With their actions they prove that othering is never a one-way street, as it creates similar reactions on the opposite side.

The victimization of wizards or vampyres for example, is used as legitimization to fight the Other, with this strategy leading to a narrative of a seemingly natural and therefore unavoidable turn of events. Parallels to the reader's world reveal how this form of evil is nothing new and might lurk within one's own society. The references to historical circumstances and events in the reader's world provide an important context for reading the books, and show how the construction of difference facilitates (social) hierarchies and might lead humanity to the end of morality and beyond. The popularity of this topic in the fictional world hints to the conclusion that such behavioural patterns might be a permanent threat in the reader's world, as this specific flavour of evil appears to be typical for minority-majority scenarios and for human nature in general.<sup>328</sup>

While "the construction of the Other is fundamental to the construction of the self" (Poutanen 182), and thus reinforces one's own identity, the books are extremely critical of othering that caters to a superiority-inferiority paradigm. The construction of difference, the abuse of power for personal gain and the abuse of religion demonstrate how the books turn personal ethics and morality into political ideals.

Although the books are extremely critical of racism and preach tolerance, the conflict between the different races in *Harry Potter*, the *House of Night* series and *Narnia* is never really solved. Muggles and wizards, vampyres and humans, Narnians and humans can only coexist, but never merge into one culture as the differences between the groups are too severe. Furthermore, complete annexation is not desirable, and the books point to the principles and limits of coexistence. Coexistence in racial and even religious terms is possible and even preferable to separation, but true equality is not possible or desirable: It can only be *either / or* not *both / and*.

Like the construction of difference, the use and abuse of religion fall into the realm of ideological manipulation within the books and thus serve as justification for war. *His Dark Materials* and *The Last Battle*, for example, portrait how religious representatives and organizations take advantage of the believers' faith, and how they use it for their own selfish purposes; this marks these people and institutions as untrustworthy and dangerous ideologues in the books. In particular, *His Dark Materials* purposefully draw from historical circumstances in the reader's world in order to make this point and to facilitate an easy transfer of knowledge for the reader.

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<sup>328</sup> Although I talk about races here, it is important to remember that in the reader's world "race" is a social construct, as I have explained earlier in this thesis.

The focus of the contemporary books<sup>329</sup> is on the present and the harm the abuse of religion can do to a community, especially when it is coupled with legislative and political power; after all, religion is a powerful tool to wield. In these cases, the contemporary books utterly reject totalitarian regimes operating through religion, suggesting a separation between the religious organization and the state as a result. *Narnia*, on the other hand, follows a Christian agenda to the extreme and merges state and religious power.<sup>330</sup> However, no matter how much the books criticise corrupt and compromised agents of the respective religion, the plots agree that religion nevertheless serves important issues within society, such as creating a sense of community, verifying identity, and providing hope and consolation.<sup>331</sup>

All literary texts under scrutiny favour the interpretation that it is morally just for the protagonists to intervene in repressive power structures, and thus suggest specific reactions to unjust behaviour and structures. Although the young heroes belong to the most vulnerable and powerless subjects in their societies, they manage to accomplish tasks that seem to be impossible for the adults in the novels: they see through the ideological manipulation of authorities and successfully fight for the liberation of their respective state, for freedom of speech, expression, choice, and movement; all are key values in Western society. The saviours fight discrimination, racism, hatred and greed, all attributes the adversaries personify. The heroes thus prove that they are not powerless after all, but can resist adult authority to a certain extent. Although the protagonists oppose repressive power structures in their fictitious societies, and win the struggle against the personifications of evil, they must also “learn their place in the power structure. They must learn to negotiate the many institutions that shape them: school, government, religion, identity politics, family, and so on” (Trites x).

When it comes to the protagonists and their actions, I agree with Minogue who states that “human beings are becoming the matter which is to be shaped according to the latest moral ideas” (Minogue 110). The protagonists conform to the demands of just war theory and thus execute their free will within the tight restrictions of societal demands. In her book *Child Saviours in English Fantasy Fiction for Children and Young Adults*, Anne Klaus argues that the execution of free will is indeed restricted (Klaus 2014, 272). Not only are the protagonists’ powers “perceived as a moral

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<sup>329</sup> Here, I am talking about all the books discussed in this chapter, except *Narnia*, *His Dark Materials*, the *Sangreal Trilogy*, and the *House of Night* novels were written within the last 25 to 30 years.

<sup>330</sup> The cardinal sin in *Narnia* is to not adhere to God’s / Aslan’s rules, as this means that one is no longer welcome in this world, as Susan exemplifies.

<sup>331</sup> Especially *The Chronicles of Narnia*, the *House of Night* series, and even *His Dark Materials* deal with the topic of life after death and aim to consolidate the reader with their solutions.

obligation” (ibid. 92), the scenarios in the books do not leave the young characters any choice but to become active agents<sup>332</sup> for the greater good and thus facilitate a happy ending.<sup>333</sup> This happy ending expresses hope (ibid. 184) and creates a positive outlook on the future.

Although goodness triumphs in the end, the decisions the protagonists have to make and the consequences they have to face are far from easy; especially Harry and Eragon struggle with the decision to sacrifice themselves for the greater good. The high amount of violence in the books initiate the hero’s painful maturation process; during times of war, they have to take on adult responsibilities and are forced to grow up.<sup>334</sup> In *The Greenstone Grail* Amanda Hemingway is very explicit when she stresses the importance of realistic characters in her series and the consequential believability of the characters’ emotions; in reality there is no black-and-white, but reality consists of shades of grey, as Nathan has to realize: “real adventures weren’t about good guys and bad guys. Real adventures were shadows and confusion and doubt, and a terrifying personal responsibility” (*Grail* 78). In all the books, the protagonists have to realize that war is full of uncertainties, that it is not the glorious and heroic fight stories might promise, but that it means sweat, blood, and tears, and does not spare loved ones. It is also important for the child reader that the heroes display determination and strength, as “of all the challenges children face, one of the biggest is their own powerlessness” (G. Jones, 2002, 65). The way the characters of good and evil are constructed “enables children to manage and defuse their feelings by displacing what they want or fear” (ibid. 66).

Characters and readers find closure in the eradication of evil. The books thus become war stories and anti-war stories at the same time and serve multiple purposes. In his book *Killing Monsters. Why Children Need Fantasy, Super Heroes, and Make-Believe Violence*, Gerard Jones states that “[s]ocieties have always used games and stories to teach people who to hate and how to fight” (G. Jones 132). War becomes a tool of liberation, a device to improve the world(s) which means to adapt them to

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<sup>332</sup> According to Amanda Firestone, “[a]gency is the ability to make decisions and effectively enact those decisions to achieve specific results, whereas activity simply denotes physical action that doesn’t necessarily require intense thought” (Firestone 215).

<sup>333</sup> On another level, the deterministic make-up of the story also plays an important part in the development of the plot. Catherine Belsey concludes that there is no free will within the framework of fiction: “narrative involves the reader in an experience of the inevitable in the form of the unforeseen [...]. The hero encounters an obstacle: will he attempt to overcome it or abandon the quest? The answer is already determined, though the reader, who has to turn the page to discover it, experiences the moment as one of choice for the hero. In fact, of course, if the narrative is to continue the hero must go on [...]. Thus the author’s autonomy is to some illusory” (666). Indeed, the child / young adult heroes can only decide the way they do in order for the story to progress, to serve as a role-model and uphold Western values.

<sup>334</sup> I have thoroughly discussed this point in my article “The Invisible Threat. Symbolic Violence in Children’s Literature and Young Adults’ Fiction”.

(Western) moral standards. The books themselves thus become tools of socialization and instruct the reader how to behave. As Eragon says: “I have the strength to help, so I must” (*Eragon* 443), even if this means to face painful consequences. Here, fantasy becomes what Sarah Gilead calls “a tool for confronting rather than evading reality” (Gilead 279), and facing and overcoming difficulties while acting in a morally desirable way.

The protagonists have to participate in the wars in order to save the world(s); there is no possibility for the young heroes to become conscientious objectors. On the contrary, it is imperative for the protagonists to fight the wars to re-establish order and peace on the one hand, and to defend absolute values such as life, liberty, and (human) dignity on the other. This serves to highlight that morality takes centre stage in the books. In forming a dualistic world picture and clearly labelling good and evil, the books establish and reaffirm our most important values.

This is possible because fantasy literature can create absolute evil. However, Michael Walzer’s depiction of Nazism as absolute evil eerily echoes the opponent’s actions and policies, and thus certifies that war rhetoric and the ideological convictions portrayed in the books are transferrable to the reader’s world:

Nazism was an ultimate threat to everything decent in our lives, an ideology and a practice of domination so murderous, so degrading even to those who might survive, that the consequences of its final victory were literally beyond calculation, immeasurably awful. We see it [...] as evil objectified in the world, and in a form so potent and apparent that there could never have been anything to do but fight against it. (Walzer 253)

Like Walzer in this quote, the books evoke a state of supreme emergency which serves as justification of war. In real life, wars are equally fought due to “religious or ideological absolutism, doctrines of racial superiority” (Bellamy 2012, 2) and thus do not distinguish themselves much from their fictional counterparts. Of course, this kind of war presupposes the fulfillment of at least some *jus ad bellum* criteria, such as just cause, right intention, and last resort. When it comes to justifications of war, the books clearly state that one should not have to abide a wrongful law or watch how human rights are being violated, but that it is justified to take matters into one’s own hand as long as it serves the community and is in accordance with the moral code propagated in the books. By facing and fighting the evil forces, the protagonists become autonomous moral agents and a role model for the reader. Taking up arms and fighting the evil



antagonist is extremely important as “[b]ad men need nothing more to compass their ends, than that good men should look on and do nothing” (Mill 36).

In the cases the books demonstrate, war as such becomes a positive thing, a cleansing force, despite the terrible costs the participants pay, and the means to end evil and to end war. The higher purpose and legitimization of war in the books outweigh what Armstrong calls “[t]he moral ambiguity and tragedy of warfare” (Armstrong 66). In her analysis of the *Harry Potter* novels, one can see how Mary Pharr perfectly subsumes this point. In their essence, Pharr’s points are of course also true for the other books under scrutiny, especially the argument about the hardship of war:

Innocents definitely suffer and die – but their creator keeps the combat perspective primarily focused on both the personal and the positive. We mourn the loss of individuals such as Tonks, Lupin, and Fred [...]. And Rowling often (though not always) offsets these individual losses with balancing triumph of goodness that bodes well for the future of the wizarding world. (Pharr 2012, 221f.)

According to Ian Morris, this is “the paradox of violence [...] – the fact that war eventually brought peace and prosperity” (Morris 281), and thus outweighs the suffering and hardship.

In depicting the wars as struggles over ultimate values, it becomes clear that the protagonists’ side is morally superior to the antagonists. Nevertheless, both sides often claim that their goal is to improve the world they live in. This is of course part of the propaganda apparatus and fits in well with what history has taught the reader: “Every successful empire has claimed that it has a divine mission; that its enemies are evil, misguided or tyrannical; and that it will benefit humanity” (Armstrong 359). Losing the fight against evil would be a disaster for everything good, as the books repeatedly proclaim.

The interdisciplinary approach of this thesis facilitates a greater understanding of the depth of the stories and highlights the interpretive implications of the books. In constructing *jus ad bellum* arguments around power, race, and religion, the books themselves become moral arguments to repeat and perpetuate Western cultural identity and defend Western culture and values. This ultimately helps the young readers understand the world around them and find their place in it. Through these topics, children and young adults learn how to organize and view their world: the books convey societal values, pose political questions, define what is good and what is evil, which values are important, and which rights should never ever be violated and work against

systemic oppression. By negotiating cultural meaning and values, and highlighting political and moral issues, the books confront the reader with contemporary problems and challenges and consequently facilitate an understanding of who we are and where we come from. In his introduction to ideology, Michael Freedon likewise points out that myth and story “are enjoyable ways of consuming ideological viewpoints. They offer attractive and imaginative packages for key social ideas, heavily disguised as forms of verbal entertainment” (Freedon 119). The interdisciplinary approach proves and emphasises that the books under scrutiny voice condensed ideological messages about good and evil, gender, politics, religion, and the construction of difference into the system they inhabit, and thus become forms of political expression. This marks the books as instructive, not escapist, with an emphasis on the present and an outlook to future.

According to Gerard Jones, fantasy which features violence “can help people take control of their fears and approach life’s scarier aspects more realistically” (G. Jones 2002, 98). Jones stresses that “[n]early all the violent stories that kids love enact powerful lessons about courage, resiliency, and development. It doesn’t matter who the good guys and bad guys are, who wins or loses, or what values are espoused by the characters in the course of the action” (ibid. 221). The latter claim, however, is contradicted in the narratives under scrutiny. My thesis argues that it does of course matter who the good and bad guys are, and especially which values the characters transport. The stories put enormous emphasis on who the good guys are and who the bad guys are and with whom the reader should sympathize.

Through fantasy literature, children and young adults receive role models who show them that it is ok to be scared and that this fear can be overcome, that standing up for one’s beliefs is necessary, even if it results in a conflict, and that some wars are worth fighting for. According to Christine Wilkie-Stibbs this is more than true for children’s literature as this genre “is charged with the awesome responsibility of initiating young readers into the dominant literary, linguistic and cultural codes of the home culture” (Wilkie-Stibbs 177). Terry Pratchett goes one step further and suggests that “[p]eople think that stories are shaped by people. In fact, it’s the other way around” (qtd. in McMurry 227). Both quotations allude to the ideological malleability of the reader.

This thesis has shown in which way justifications of war and their moral imperatives follow Christine Wilkie Stibbs’s claim and help to facilitate the integration of the young reader into the ideology of Western culture. In transporting important

social values and morals, the books represent the producer's and society's moral demands on the reader. The heroes enact an ideal and reveal how adults want children to become: reliable, responsible and good members of our community, upholding the virtues we treasure.<sup>335</sup>

Although the eradication of evil is a major issue within the books, this is not necessarily possible. On the contrary, by not evoking the fairy tale ending of "happily ever after" in which all evil is just absent from the world, the stories ask the characters to remain in the state of constant vigilance. As Merriman states in *Silver on the Tree*:

And the world will still be imperfect, because men are imperfect. Good men will still be killed by bad, or sometimes by other good men, and there will still be pain and disease and famine, anger and hate. But if you work and care and are watchful, as we have tried to be for you, then in the long run the worse will never, ever, triumph over the better. (*Silver* 272)

This statement can be easily extended to the reader. With their focus on political authority, the construction of difference, and religion, the books do not only warn about possible future catastrophes in the reader's world, but also keep the focus on the present, on scenarios and political rhetoric which happen on a national and international scale. Additionally, by alluding to the past and thus creating awareness for past atrocities, the books also try to work against political amnesia in order to avoid a repetition of the past, because "[t]hose who don't know history are doomed to repeat it" as Edmund Burke's famous saying goes.

Taking into consideration the results of this thesis, it becomes clear that fantastic literature for children and young adults is an amalgamation of conservative and liberal principles. The books under scrutiny are liberal in their belief in rights and "respect for multiple and diverse cultures and faiths within and across nations" and in their humanitarian effort to establish "[h]uman well-being, or welfare" (Freeden 82). According to Freedon, "[l]iberalism [...] always placed fundamental concepts such as liberty, individuality, rationality, and progress at its core. Other political concepts such as legitimacy and authority were made to be dependent on accommodating the core ones. The only *legitimate* government would then be one that respected individual *liberty*" (ibid. 51; emphasis in original). The reader is able to perceive all these points about liberalism and especially legitimacy and government in the books, as my analysis shows.

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<sup>335</sup> It is important to begin the socialization early. According to Gary Gutting, "As we grow up, a certain amount of what we have been taught becomes subject to reflective assessment, but certainly much of what we believe remains the result of social conditioning" (Gutting 53).

However, progress is something the books seldom show. This becomes obvious in their conservative attitude towards the belief in responsibility, traditional values, gender representation, and the reaffirmation of the status quo. Trites correctly states that, in the end, the books “are carefully constructed to perpetuate the status quo” (Trites xii) which leads to the conclusion that the books “themselves serve as yet another institution created for the purpose of simultaneously empowering and repressing adolescents” (ibid.). As the chapter on wrongful authority demonstrates, the societies within the books often return to the political system prior to the disruption of the villain, and thus reaffirm the political status quo in the reader’s world. This leads to the affirmation of the Leibnizian idea that “the *status quo* is the best of all possible worlds, which merits jealous protection against any and all changes” (Stableford 14; emphasis in original).

The reader has to take into consideration that the stories are written from Western point of view, which means from dominant social and cultural groups within Western society. The books consequently subscribe to and perpetuate Western ideologies, values, and political systems. The conflicts and justifications in the books are closely linked to socio-political reality and ideology in the reader’s world. Although they are works of fantasy fiction and as such create their own worlds, the books are not able to break free from the system that created them. The happy endings in the books are thus triumphs of Western culture, thus assuming and affirming its superiority.

Charles Sarland’s statement that “ideology is inscribed in text much more deeply and in much more subtle ways than we thought” (Sarland 45) gives voice to interpretation that especially literature for children and young adult is a form of social control. Sarland discusses Umberto Eco’s take on ideology and the plurality of reading to further express how these ideologies might work and influence the reader:

Eco agrees that all texts carry ideological assumptions, whether overt or covert, but readers have three options: they can assume the ideology of the text and subsume it into their own reading; they can miss or ignore the ideology of the text and import their own, thus producing ‘aberrant’ readings – ‘where “aberrant” means only different from the ones envisaged by the sender’ [...]; or they can question the text in order to reveal the underlying ideology” (ibid. 43)

The last interpretation in particular leaves the reader much more active. Here, it is important that the reader knows which influences are displayed and how to interpret the stories. This can only happen if s/he is aware of the web of ideology spun within the books, as “knowledge can have a transforming effect on the power structures that give

rise to it” (Gutting 51). My analyses provide the reader with important tools to untangle this web.

In focusing on justifications of war, this thesis uncovers that the books are privileging certain actions and morals, normalizing these actions and morals while marginalizing others. In promoting Western values and morals, as well as human rights, the stories establish what the reader might experience as common and dominant truths. As tools of socialization, the books become instruments to internalize and perpetuate these norms and truths that have the potential to subtly shape and direct the reader’s behaviour. The more the reader realises the mis/representation of the world in the books and their ideological manipulation, the more likely it is that s/he will consciously negotiate ideological structures in his/her everyday life. In decoding the ideological messages in the books my thesis aims to assist the reader in becoming a critical producer rather than a consumer of dominant cultural values.

In emphasizing Western culture and values, the books create emotional landscapes and cultural maps for the young reader. These maps help the young reader to find orientation in a world they might not understand yet; these maps provide the reader with a general direction of where s/he is going in terms of their emotional development and what the destination (becoming an adult in this society) might look like. My analysis reveals that this way is full of subtle and hidden constraints; however, for the young reader the stories are also stories of liberation which empower him/her. As Anne Klaus puts it: “Children reading these books are obviously encouraged to believe – despite initial doubts and humility which are necessary requirements as well – in their own powers and to show courage, stamina and trust while meeting the challenges of their daily routines” (Klaus 2014, 96).

The works under scrutiny problematize social constructions and critically approach representations of gender, race, religion, and class. In this process, the young readers are encouraged to remember and embrace core values such as love, liberty, and freedom, and naturalize civic responsibility in order to create a caring society. In focusing on fighting tyranny, the books reveal that at heart ideologies of freedom and peace shape our identity and humanity.

In his analysis of just war, Michael Walzer correctly points out that “we really do act within a moral world; that particular decisions really are difficult, problematic, agonizing, and that this has to do with the structure of the world; that language reflects the moral world and gives us access to it” (Walzer 20). The books under scrutiny give the reader access to the moral world, as well as tools to order and master it. In taking

place in a fantasy world, the books facilitate the emergence of a global morality which holds true for everyone. They teach and guide the readers, and encourage them to discover their best possible selves and make the world a better place.<sup>336</sup>

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<sup>336</sup> All this within the narrow framework of Western ideology.

## 5. Evaluation of Findings

This chapter serves as a more critical reflection on the books under scrutiny and their messages. Here, I seize up some of the topics already discussed above and evaluate in how far the books themselves become ideological tools and pose challenges to its young readership. Besides general ideas regarding the books, this chapter incorporates critical perspective on the (female) adversaries and the construction of difference, and offers final thoughts. The central point of this chapter is the books' function as formative device.

The books' plots are shaped by different forms of violence. However, violence and war are not the centre of attention, but rather a vehicle that sets in motion a process of critical thinking that involves topics such as the evaluation of adult authority and misbehaviour, state and religious power, the construction of difference, and the imperative to act morally just in the face of such violence. Seen in this light, the novels become a warning about destructive adult, political, racial, and religious forces, while at the same time highlight resistance, morality and heroic values. Justifications of war emphasize extreme poles of ideological thinking in an increasingly dangerous world, and thus reveal that persuasion lies at the heart of the books. Those ideologies guide the reader on how to interpret the world around him/her. Through the books, especially since these stories are so popular, there appears to be an emergence of a dominant (global) morality based on the universal values the books promote.

In many ways, the books under scrutiny have a surplus of meaning, often undetectable on first glance, but prevalent in the topics I mention in this thesis, namely gender roles, the make-up of societies, and justifications of war. The ideologies expressed therein are not necessarily undesirable, especially since the reader can neither escape ideological indoctrination nor "the impermanent and malleable nature of all human thought" (Freeden 19). The important thing is to highlight the 'right' ideology, the 'right' way to behave, the 'right' values. In this sense, the books are not only entertaining and educative, but also become highly political and manipulative. The readers must reinterpret the fantastic scenarios in the books in order to learn from the exemplary heroes and villains the stories provide. The readers can only use very selective tools and opinions to reinterpret the stories. As a result, the books are tools of socialization that favour very selective identity formation within carefully confined limits. The surplus of meaning neglects to clarify that these texts form signposts that

press the reader into forming a collective identity exclusively within the Western framework.

The analysis of the plots leads to the conclusion that the texts indoctrinate their readership with specific notions of good and evil, right and wrong. As Stephens argues, “[t]exts for young audiences are not mere narratives, but have an orientation toward models and ideologies already present in culture and, by giving these narratives form, may reinforce them and refract them back to the culture or may propose some modification of them” (Stephens 2002, 40). In terms of fighting tyranny, it is important to filter and highlight the interpretative implications of the texts to create awareness of their manipulative power.

The books introduce evil in its purest form to the reader, consequently supporting the central dichotomy between good and evil. The texts, however, are clearly biased: in case of the individual antagonists the books only highlight (gender) specific traits, and thus only pretend to enlighten the reader while supporting old gender stereotypes that the reader experiences in his or her own world.

A feminist approach to the female adversaries reveals the perpetuation of the misogynistic representation of women in literature. The frequency with which the *femme fatale* appears in different texts for children and young adults exposes how deeply this image is ingrained into (Western) culture, and how much it has been normalized. The representation of the evil adversaries, the heroes’ interaction with them, and even their victory over them “reflect subjective agency in that their purpose is [...] to model how readers (might) engage interactively with the social order. Hence they offer models of subjectivity to readers” (Stephens 2002, 39). The mainly black and white patterns of characterizations, however, are already part of the strategies that lead the reader in a certain direction and guide him or her to favour specific notions of, for example, good and evil, or masculinity and femininity.

I completely agree with Malwina Degorska who criticises the approach of scholars that such as Graham who emphasize “the dangers of female power and sexuality” (Graham 41):

The concept of a manipulative evil woman, the seductive and dangerous *femme fatale* in literature results from historical oppression of the female voice and the patriarchal nature of writing. The prevalent male perspective has depicted a *femme fatale* as a direct threat to masculine power and dominance. Such a portrayal of woman has been deeply ingrained in literary tradition [...]. (Degorska 81)



Degorska as well as my analysis of the female adversaries point to the dangerous implications and lingering stereotypicalization of women in literature and society as a whole. Gender performance as depicted in the female adversaries is “a symptom of patriarchal anxiety about feminism” (Doane qtd. in Braun 13). Foregrounding the instrumentalisation of sexuality is indicative of the still prevailing misogynist tendencies in Western societies and (re-)introduces the prejudiced picture of the *femme fatale* to a young audience. Stephens argues that “[t]he comic crone and wise witch can be used to critique or even subvert contemporary social attitudes and practices; the sorceress, however, despite having the most potential for disrupting common social assumptions is represented in such a way as to reinscribe traditional social values and hierarchies” (Stephens 2003, 201). I agree with Stephens that this image might still serve “to induce female conformity and docility” (ibid. 199), as it marginalizes the dark female other and imprints the reader with specific images of ‘good’ femininity, in contrast to “femininity gone wrong” (ibid. 200).

Especially in foregrounding their sexuality, the plot employs the female adversaries to “[express] the dark, wild and subversive elements of female desire, female pain, and female nature more generally” (Stephens 2003, 198), and consequently voices the necessity to fight and even master a specific gender stereotype in favour of a more ‘domesticized’ and thus respected representation of femininity. Most of the stories involving female adversaries are about taming women, which refers to the trope of the monstrous woman, which was extremely popular in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, as Gilbert and Gubar portray in their book *The Madwoman in the Attic*. In these stories, women are described as monstrous, because they deviate from the idea of a ‘normal, civilised’ woman, as is the case with the White Witch, Mrs Coulter, and Neferet. This classification is part of patriarchal literary tradition and has resulted, and apparently still results, in either the taming of the woman, the death of the woman if the first option cannot be achieved, or both, as Mrs Coulter demonstrates. This also refers to the child characters: Lucy remains innocent, angelic so to speak, until the end, while her sister Susan discovers her womanhood, which leads to her punishment and her disappearance from the story; Lyra is extremely tamed, while Mrs Weasley discovers her feral nature to save her children, only to become the prototypical “suburban earth mother” again (Weaver and McMahan-Coleman 156).

Even today, literature still engages in the perpetuation of a misogynistic portrayal of women. This is especially dangerous in children’s literature as this genre acts as a formative device. Fantastic literature for children and young adults often

conveys the impression that only two types of women exist, and that the female trajectory should solely develop in one direction. When it comes to expressing their sexuality, this genre does not empower girls, but rather shows them the limitations of their actions and development.<sup>337</sup>

Overall, my analysis of the evil antagonists demonstrates that intertextuality “is a common and important literary phenomenon” with influence on its readership (Cairney 484). Therefore, the way in which the texts construct female and male villains is extremely problematic; they reflect and foreground “dominant cultural codes and values” (Wilkie-Stibbs 174). I completely agree with Ann Lawson Lucas who argues that instead of being “socially progressive [...] fantasy [...] is deep-dyed conservatism with a fancy cloak” (Lawson Lucas xx). Being marked by the host texts, the female adversary, for example, perpetuates misogynistic depiction of femininity, while the male opponents are marked by destructive masculinity.

According to Wilkie-Stibbs, literature for children “is charged with the awesome responsibility of initiating young readers into the dominant literary, linguistic and cultural codes of the home culture” (Wilkie-Stibbs 177). This responsibility, however, is yet to be taken seriously, especially in the depiction of female antagonists. Although the female adversaries are victimizers, simultaneously, they are also victimized; these images of female monstrosity prove that the characters “cannot escape the confinement of biblical myth” (Gilbert and Gubar 386). The coercive myths of Western culture still entrap women into the images of monstrous femininity and encourage the young reader to recognize and perpetuate female stereotypes.

In the fight against wrongful authority, Political awareness and political participation after the war remain vague, fuzzy, and in some cases even obsolete. Even though the books focus on the sovereign and political power in the fight against wrongful authority, the books propose an easy solution, namely to cut off the snake’s head, and everything will be alright.<sup>338</sup> This oversimplification fails to go far enough, promoting political participation only in times of need when it is already too late. After the fight, almost everything returns to normal. In the end of the books, Eragon, for example, lives far away from political affairs after the war, in *Harry Potter*, there appears to be no opportunity to actively shape the political landscape, while in *His Dark Materials* the republic of heaven is not clearly defined, remaining vague. Therefore, the

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<sup>337</sup> This is solely true for female sexuality. This does not apply to other topics such as talent, (mental) growth, strength, power and will.

<sup>338</sup> Especially *The Lion, Witch & Wardrobe* (as well as the other *Narnia* books) cannot escape fairy tale simplification and reader orientation in the end, as content and tone attest.

books fail to go one step further and promote political awareness and participation outside of these troubled times.

Regarding the construction of difference in the *Harry Potter* series and the parallels between the wizarding world and the real world, the text invites the reader to interpret the plot in a specific way, and conclude what is right and just and what needs to be fought for. It can then be said that the text is guiding the reader to perpetuate core values of Western society such as equality and tolerance when it comes to inter-human relations.

All in all, the *Harry Potter* books make a good start in preaching tolerance, especially in the way the main characters and the antagonists are constructed and with whom or what they sympathize. It remains, however, only a starting point, as Harry Potter's world remains exclusive until the very end. The series thus emphasizes and perpetuates the political and cultural status quo rather than solving important problems such as racial inequality beyond the Mudblood – half-blood – pure-blood paradigm, and the conciliation of the magical and the mundane world. The *Harry Potter* books and the parallels I draw show that questions of race and racial superiority are deeply woven into the fabric of our society. Furthermore, the make-up of the series emphasizes the importance of holding up a fascist mirror to (young) readers to ensure the preservation of our cultural memory so that such a catastrophe people experienced in, for example, Nazi Germany does not happen again.

The construction of difference in the *House of Night* series also deserves further evaluation. Donna Haraway analyses the vampyre trope in literature as “signifier questioning the underlying assumptions of essences in Western culture, the racism, sexism, and homophobia at the heart of patriarchy” (Knewitz 122). The plot indeed negotiates racism, sexism and homophobia. Zoey's transfer to a matriarchal vampyre society puts the focus first and foremost on racism and sexism. The books clearly emphasise female community and power and thus battle sexist assumptions about “the weaker sex”. Although the plot repeatedly creates sympathy for Zoey's gay friend Damien, Damien appears to be the gay stereotype par excellence and does not take centre stage over Zoey's heterosexual relationships. Through the glorification of the vampyre, however, the books are not successful in diminishing the still existing boundaries between the races in the reader's world. All in all, Zoey is not a figure of resistance and destabilisation that aims at changing the reader's world, but one that adheres to the ideals of American exceptionalism and heteronormativity.

The *House of Night* novels repeatedly focus on ‘doing the right thing’; the vampyre Darius for example states that “‘I think you’ll find that some of us have rules written here’ – Darius pointed to his heart – ‘and rules written there aren’t subject to the changing whims of those around us’” (*Hunted* 266f.). With a strong focus on American movies and luxury brands, the quotation above is only lip service as the books are caught in a net of Western liberalism, morality, and capitalism. This leaves no room for the reader to interpret Darius’s statement differently, but demonstrates that the books rather reinforce the existing values instead of successfully challenging them.

In creating fantastic races, all the books under scrutiny create universality when discussing the creation of difference; this very universality, however, becomes restricted within the fantastic framework. In contrast to the reader’s world, for example, in fantasy fiction there are races which are fundamentally different and superior to other races; the reader cannot argue away the ability to use magic or the long life of vampyres. As Suman Gupta for example observes, “Voldemort and the Dark Side are not wrong considering themselves superior to Muggles” (Gupta 109). The superiority of wizards seems to be a rational observation, “in the sense of [being] internally coherent, consistent with the available evidence and held on what appear to be plausible grounds” (Eagleton 1991, 25). This notion of superiority, however, does not justify the prevailing opinion of Voldemort and his followers, or Neferet for this matter, that their lives are more important than the lives of Muggles or regular humans.

The books seldom discuss races the reader knows from his or her own world. In the *House of Night* series, it is essential for Zoey to be of Native American origin; however, it does not really matter which skin-colour members of her entourage have, be it white, like Erin and most of Zoey’s friends, or African American, like Shaunee.<sup>339</sup> A direct discussion about conflicts between races the reader knows from his/her own world does not appear verbatim, rather, the books foreground the differences between the fantastic versus mundane. Instead of stepping outside of the fantasy world to analyse racial implications, the reader is caught within the framework of the books, which glorify the fantastic race.<sup>340</sup>

Do the books successfully challenge prevailing ideological assumptions concerning racism, xenophobia and imperialism? Not always and not consequentially enough. Nevertheless, they are a good starting point.

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<sup>339</sup> That they include such a variety of ethnic backgrounds and sexual orientation leads to the conclusion that the writers go out of their way to provide figures of sympathy and identification for a large number of readers. It also gives the impression that the authors strive for political correctness.

<sup>340</sup> An exception to this is the *Sangreal Trilogy* as explained above.

Overall, looking at the justifications of war analysed in this thesis, it is interesting to see that all the books under scrutiny go out of their way when creating justifications of war; one can even say that this strategy is omnipresent in the genre and transcends the books in this thesis. Often the focus of these justifications lies on invoking moral principles. This is a way of ideological manipulation: The reader might automatically conceive the values propagated in the books as the right ones, which can cross cultural boundaries, prove their validity for everyone, and therefore claim universality. In the books, morality outweighs positive law and serves as hallmark of justification. This is especially true since the books do not highlight the laws of the respective world(s), but rather neglect those.<sup>341</sup> This, however, might be dangerous in the long run, as everyone could try to superimpose his/her moral code on others and use the language of morality to cloak his/her intentions; especially since morality “changes over time or varies among political communities” (Walzer 16).<sup>342</sup> This also means that morality is changeable and also manipulable. Bellamy subsumes that “overriding the law in favour of Just War thinking would, in all likelihood, help produce a more disorderly but not necessarily more just world order” (Bellamy 2012, 230).

In the end, the reader becomes judge and jury when it comes to the legitimization of war, although the argument for just war does not leave much room for anything than agreement with the protagonist’s side. The books form a moral argument that trains the reader to recognize unjust laws and advocates breaking those unjust laws in times of (humanitarian) crisis. The books aim to persuade the reader of the just cause and thus subscribe to their ideology supporting a dualist world view. Blindly subscribing to the ideology of the books and accepting the encompassing power of morality over positive law, however, is also dangerous. As Bellamy states, “divorcing law and Just War risks undermining the vitality of the latter. Just War thinking without law is theologically oriented, ethnocentric and lacking in authority” (ibid.). All that would be left to a society which is based on morality alone are “archaic notions of universal truth” (ibid. 165).

All books demonstrate a conflict with authority figures, and I agree with Trites that such a conflict “provides the author with opportunities for using ideology to manipulate the adolescent reader” (Trites xii). In portraying certain sets of ideological thinking as right and others as wrong, the books can easily convince the reader to agree

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<sup>341</sup> This might of course be due to the target audience of the books who might find discourses on law too boring or too hard to understand.

<sup>342</sup> A good example for this is Nazi Germany and the trajectory of racial thinking.

that the antagonists' actions are wrong and that the saviours do indeed further the cause of freedom by participating in war.

The books uncover ideological tools and mechanisms of evil. However, they simultaneously introduce the reader to and indoctrinate the reader with dominant discourses in Western society, such as democracy, anti-racism, gender stereotypes, and the importance of inalienable rights and values. It is highly problematic that the books only appear to empower the reader while indoctrinating him/her with a specific set of values the authors apparently privilege. The books actively tell the reader what s/he should admire and what s/he should condemn. The books thus clearly become tools of socialisation. This underlying (Western) ideology, however, is not easy to discern as it is naturalized within the books. Consequently, the reader has to actively read against the text and question what is displayed as normal and right and why it is so, in order to form a dialectic relationship with the text and develop (literate) agency and not only to consume and buy into the prevalent (Western) ideology.

Amanda Hemingway is quite outspoken when it comes to the potential influence stories can have on young people. Early in the *Sangreal Trilogy* the plot explicitly mentions that there are the "right" books to read which convey the "right" values: "Maybe [Nathan's schoolmates] had read enough of the right books, or at any rate seen enough of the right movies, to know that this was how a hero behaved" (*Grail* 23). Here, the plot presupposes that the reader knows which kind of books and movies it is talking about as no examples of the "right books" and the "right movies" are mentioned. Hence, the characters and readers are supposed to share the same opinions and values and know what is right and what is wrong. Standing up and fighting for a weaker member of society who cannot do so on his/her own marks Nathan as a hero, which his schoolmates recognize. This example is only on the small scale of the school ground but shows that everyone has the possibility to be a better person.

On a bigger scale, the reader is able to perceive that all the protagonists in the books are willing to sacrifice themselves for the greater good. They privilege the good of the community over the self, love over safety, compassion over rationality. Karen Armstrong states that "all communities throughout history have praised the warrior who gives his life for his people" (Armstrong 332). This places the child heroes in the tradition of hero worship Thomas Carlyle has also observed: "[a]ccording to Carlyle, societies are always 'founded on Hero-worship' [...], on a 'submissive admiration of the truly great'" (Klaus 2014, 123). It is interesting to see, however, that "this trend [of hero worship] apparently lost currency among adults and is clearly more readily

observable in fiction for children and young adults” (ibid.).<sup>343</sup> In all the books under scrutiny, good triumphs in the end. The young heroes not only embody the concept of hope, but also exemplify that the deed of the individual is meaningful and can make the world a better place. That the heroes fight for the benefit of the greater good gives voice to the importance of individual heroism and the celebration of it. However, it is extremely problematic that one of the books’ main messages centres on the most celebrated ideologies: that “[t]he ‘good’ of countless others takes precedence over personal desires” (Lenz 7).

The protagonists often feel helpless in the face of war and their grown-up responsibilities. Although the books often depict this helplessness and the tragic side of war, important issues and painful consequences are often left out. Loved ones seldom die, and except for Eragon, none of the main characters appear to suffer from posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). This leads to the interpretation that the books simplify and even downplay war and its consequences.

As my analysis reveals, war is often seen in a positive light; however, war is not only a positive action and a cleansing force, but it is “a force that gives us meaning”, as *New York Times* war correspondent Chris Hedges aptly describes (qtd. in Armstrong 7):

War makes the world understandable, a black and white tableau of them and us. It suspends thought, especially self-critical thought. All bow before the supreme effort. We are one. Most of us willingly accept war as long as we can fold it into a belief system that paints the ensuing suffering as necessary for a higher good, for human beings seek not only happiness but meaning. And tragically war is sometimes the most powerful way in human society to achieve meaning. (ibid.)

In the books, the aggressors’ actions force the protagonists to identify with certain values and define themselves and their community as counterparts to the antagonists. And here also lies the danger of war rhetoric, as it is highly manipulative and serves to foster a “we-against-them” and an “either you are with us or against us” mentality.<sup>344</sup> Furthermore, these processes follow Hedges’s descriptions, and reveal how the reader might easily buy into the ideologies propagated in the books, which means that the books might also suspend critical thought. This becomes visible in for example the perpetuation and propagation of gender stereotypes such as the *femme fatale*, the

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<sup>343</sup> However, I suggest that this is an important feature of fantasy fiction which also appears in fantasy books for adults, as this genre often builds on the conflict between good and evil, and highlights the imperative to fight evil and make the world a better place. One example for this is Peter V. Brett’s *Demon Cycle*.

<sup>344</sup> On September 20, 2001, President George W. Bush famously expressed this mentality with the sentence “[e]ither you are with us, or you are with the terrorists” (qtd. in Pavlik 37).

normalization of the house-elf culture in the wizarding society, and even the dehumanization of the enemy.<sup>345</sup>

As there is a significant overlap between what is propagated in the books and what the reader can see in his/her own world, the reader needs to think critically about what s/he is being told. One should not forget that “Western imperial aggression [is] often [...] couched in the rhetoric of liberty” (Armstrong 182), which is a fact the reader should be aware of. After all, the heroes do not fight for fame and glory, but to liberate the world from evil. They do so with almost biblical overtones, which the dualistic world view strongly supports.

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<sup>345</sup> Of course, the antagonists are dehumanized, as the character analyses reveal. Additionally, chapter 3.2 *The Construction of Difference* shows how the villainous forces dehumanize the Other as is shown in the case of wizards and Muggles. This dehumanization serves the purpose of significantly lower inhibitions and thus enables the “soldiers” to fight more effectively.



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