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**The Social Dynamics of Modern Britain  
Through the Critical Gaze of J.K.  
Rowling's Wizarding World of  
*Harry Potter* (1997-2007): A Marxist  
Interpretation**

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH IN PARTIAL  
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LITERATURE

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## **Dedications:**

I dedicate this work to my late father, Lamri Chadli.

I also dedicate it to my dear mother, the coolest and strongest person I've known, as well as to my parents' least favourite children Ikram and Amina.

Additionally, I wish to dedicate this to my my cherished friends and to my favorite companion, my cousin Zola, with whom I share a connection that surpasses words.

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## **Abstract:**

Joanne Rowling's *Harry Potter* series (1997-2007) is renowned for its captivating stories filled with magic and adventures. Introduced to readers at a young age, the wizarding world of *Harry Potter* enchants our minds and broadens our imaginations. However, beneath the allure of Rowling's magical realm lie profound messages conveyed through the series' intricate plot twists, complex characters and its insightful portrayal of the social dynamics of modern Britain. This study aims to explore how *Harry Potter* reflects those dynamics. We particularly focus on classism, alienation, and identity crisis. The main objective is to examine how the interactions and behaviors of characters such as Harry Potter, Hermione Granger, and Draco Malfoy articulate Rowling's critique of contemporary society. By employing a Marxist interpretation, we analyze how Harry's experiences with identity crisis, Hermione's encounters with class, and Draco's embodiment of social alienation serve as lenses through which we understand the author's commentary on modern Britain.

**Keywords:** Harry Potter, social dynamics, modern Britain, Marxist interpretation, classism, alienation, identity crisis, Joanne Rowling, Hermione Granger, Draco Malfoy.

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# **General Introduction**

## General Introduction

Written by Joanne Rowling, the *Harry Potter* series (1997-2007) is one of the most remarkable literary works of modern times. This literary series has seven books and deals with the story of a young orphan boy named Harry Potter who lives a very common life until his eleventh birthday. On that day, a wizard named Hagrid hands him a letter with the words “You're a wizard, Harry” (Rowling, *Philosopher's Stone* 22). Consequently, Harry goes to a magical school called Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. Along the way in Hogwarts, the boy makes friends and enemies and gains better knowledge about magic. Following that, life becomes more complicated for Potter who faces various challenges because of his connection to a Dark Wizard named Lord Voldemort. This connection leads to huge conflict between the two wizards and the forces of good and evil.

Furthermore, a few months after the publication of the first volume, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (1997), the series became so popular and famous among readers, mainly in modern Britain. The fictional work continued to grow and it became loved by many people of various ages and backgrounds around the world. In order to maintain this global success, the work has been translated to various languages and has sold millions of copies worldwide. Additionally, it became one of best-selling works in history and it also impressed many literary critics and was turned into movies that were also very successful.

Joanne Rowling is the author of the Harry Potter series. Before becoming very famous as J.K. Rowling, the author faced poverty and personal struggles in modern Britain. Modern British society has witnessed many changes in many fields like jobs and policies. Therefore, writing became Rowling's escape from the sudden changes and

their negative influence on her. By that, Rowling made a hopeful series from her hard life that also allowed readers to escape their tough lives and transport them into a magical world. However, despite the hopeful and magical elements, yet the *Harry Potter* series includes some real-life problems that are resulted from modern British society's social dynamics.

The fast changes of modern Britain have created some complicated social dynamics. Which include how people interact and connect in society. Complexities and social dynamics like classism, alienation, and identity crises play important roles in shaping both individual experiences and societal structures. Owen Jones debates in his work, *The Demonization of the Working Class* (2020), that classism happens when people get distinguished and get treated differently based on their social class have affected many aspects of life in British society and it still does continue to influences them till the present day. This influences can be seen in different facets of life like education and employment opportunities. Furthermore, the sociologist Richard Sennett sees in his book, *The Culture of the New Capitalism* (2007), that the issue of alienation became more noticeable in modern Britain. This observation of alienated individuals in modern Britain showed that they do not only estrange themselves due to economic purposes but these people do estrange themselves because they are increasingly alone because of living under the pressures of modern capitalism. Identity crisis is also another significant aspect of modern British life. One of the prominent commentators on this issue is Keith Robbins, who in *History, Religion and Identity in Modern Britain* (1993), attributes identity crisis to modern Britain's rapidly changing social norms as well as increasing multiculturalism.

In this thesis, hence, we argue that *Harry Potter* offers a glimpse into some realities of Modern Britain through a world of fantasy. In fact, due to the series'

widespread popularity, many scholars have conducted studies about the wizarding world of *Harry Potter* like Kristina Zirdum who in her research entitled, “Social Issues in J.K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter* Series” (2019), focuses on *Harry Potter*’s reflections of social issues arising from the struggles of Jewish individuals all around the world throughout history. Zirdum suggests that Rowling fictionalises social issues related to anti-Semitism through characters and magical creatures’ struggles with discrimination and prejudice.

In another work, Sana Lehoten debates in her thesis, “Contemporary British Society in the Magic World of J.K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter* books 1997-2000” (2003), that the *Harry Potter* settings are similar to contemporary British society. In this work, the researcher focuses on the broader settings and themes of the series in the first four volumes like the boarding school of Hogwarts and those of Britain. The researcher also draws comparisons between the societal structures of the wizarding world and contemporary Britain. She argues that Rowling was influenced by contemporary Britain, as exemplified in the social, political and educational structures of the wizarding world.

From another perspective, “Harry’s World: An Exploration of J.K. Rowling’s Social and Political Agenda in the *Harry Potter* Series” (2007) by Erin Vollmer analyses Rowling’s narratives to show how she offers a commentary about human experience under oppressive laws in Western societies. Erin debates that though *Harry Potter* is a fictional work, yet, it serves a critical commentary of Western societies’ ideologies and social structures.

Although many scholarly works have studied J.K. Rowling’s fictional treatment of some of the social issues in *Harry Potter* series, like the previously mentioned ones, this thesis, however, chooses to rather explain the British female author’s critical gaze onto the social dynamics of modern Britain by recourse to Marxist theories of class,

alienation and identity crisis. Applying a Marxist interpretation seems to adequately attend to Rowling's intriguing complexity of her fictional gaze onto modern British life. Besides, we aim to show how the seven volumes of the series not only display dominant social dynamics of modern Britain, but also make a commentary on how modern British people experience them. Moreover, we explore how the author herself reflected on her own experiences of modern Britain.

In order to achieve these objectives, this study addresses the following questions:

1. How does J.K. Rowling use the wizarding world of *Harry Potter* to offer a critique of modern Britain's social dynamics?
2. To what extent does a Marxist interpretation of some of the series' characters help us understand Rowling's fictionalisation of classism, alienation, and identity crisis?
3. To what extent do the experiences of Harry Potter, Hermione, and Draco reflect J.K. Rowling's experiences of modern Britain?

To answer these questions, this study employs a Marxist interpretation to draw parallels between the social dynamics in modern Britain and J.K. Rowling's wizarding world of *Harry Potter*. We apply his theories of class, self-alienation and alienation from others as well as identity crisis on some characters and use textual analysis to extract pertinent dialogues, interactions, and statements in the books.

This thesis is divided into three chapters. In the first chapter, we begin by exploring the socio-cultural context of modern Britain to set the stage in understanding how it influenced the British author's literature. Additionally, we examine the life of Joanne Rowling, the creative genius behind the Harry Potter series, and we see how her

experience and tough life in modern British society shaped her critical interpretation of it through the Harry Potter series. We also introduce the magical realm to lay out the foundation for our analysis. In the second chapter, we move into the theoretical framework to examine the impact of social modernity on individuals. We discuss the significance of social theories in literary analysis, mainly those of Karl Marx's. Most importantly we focus on his class, alienation and identity crisis theories and explore how they influence contemporary literature to set the stage for our analysis of Rowling's characters. In the third chapter, we examine the relationship between the relationship between Marx's ideologies and Rowling's fiction. Moreover, we analyse characters like Potter, Draco and Hermione through a Marxist lens of identity crisis, alienation and class to see how their fictionalised experiences reflect broader social dynamics in modern Britain. We also discuss how Rowling's own experience shaped the fictional world and characters she created.

**Chapter One:**  
**Introducing J.K. Rowling's Modern**  
**Wizarding Britain**

## **Introduction:**

Joanne Rowling's literary works captivated the minds and imaginations of readers around the world, mainly her famous series of *Harry Potter*. In her work, Rowling blends magic and reality by creating a world of characters with magical powers and relatable dreams and emotions. This chapter aims to introduce Rowling's perspectives on the social and cultural aspects of modern Britain as interpreted in the series. In addition, we aspire to highlight the relationship between Rowling's magical world and her perception of modern Britain's reality, where her narratives do not only fold within a reflection of the social and cultural landscape of British society during the era of her writing, but they also offer a nuanced commentary about it. Through this chapter, we seek to introduce the magical world of Harry Potter to provide more context. Additionally, we mention layers of inspiration and influence that led Rowling to mould and interpret British society in a certain way. Joanne Rowling's journey in the British society helped develop her identity as a writer and fuel her connection to her country. In conclusion, we set the stage between modern British society's influence on Rowling and her interpretation of it in the *Harry Potter* series, where magic, spells and real-life elements collide. This chapter invites readers on a magical journey of discovering modern Britain and Joanne Rowling's universe.

## **I.1 The Socio-Cultural Context of Modern Britain:**

During the late 1990s and early 2000s Britain was undergoing some major transformations. During this period, a magical realm was also in the making where Joanne Rowling was conjuring up her enchanting wizarding world of *Harry Potter*. These transformations profoundly affected the nation with a lot of changes in different aspects from cultural shifts, to political developments and technological advancements, all shaping modern British society. In another sense, people's perspectives have revolutionized amidst these changes, their interactions and information consumption fully changed as an outcome of the widespread of the internet and digital media where they became more accepting and expressive (Coxall et al. 159).

Politically speaking, the New Labour of Tony Blair won the election in 1997, who was in power serving the modest British class after a period of long rule under the Conservative Party. Following their electoral victory in 1997, the Labour Party set up a phase of somewhat stable economic conditions and higher investments in public services, alongside the historical devolution of powers in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland; allowing people from these lands to have more freedom and authority in decision making of their matters and to be more responsible, it also allowed them to be more opinionative and expressive about their thoughts without any fear (Coxall et al. 16-31). Britain under Blair's age was considered a capitalist country, characterised by the private ownership of the means of production and serving the upper class of society. "During late 1990s and early 2000s, the British society witnessed a raise in crimes, harassment and systemic oppression against individuals from the lower class of society" (qtd. in Seldon and Kavangh 16-17). In addition, derogatory terms such as "Scum" and "Chav" became very

common in modern British society. Therefore, Blair emphasised on the prioritization of human rights and led to a significant growth of immigrants in 1998 because of the Labour Party's shift of policies: transitioning from strict regulations into more tolerated ones towards immigrants. These reforms aimed to mark Britain as a welcoming nation, immigrants were offered housing and healthcare (Seldon and Kavanagh 150-165). Human rights were at the top of Blair's vision of modern Britain, a society that embraces diversity and change.

Religious ideologies of modern Britain had changed a lot as Britain is vividly known for its wide history with Christianity, yet its society at the time lost faith in divine powers and questioned their truth, as emphasised in an article titled "So the British Have become Atheist. Thank God" (2000) in *The Guardian* by Joan Smith, that the notion of believing in the battle between good and evil instead of believing in God became prominent and trendy, particularly among younger individuals. On top of that, the rise of multiculturalism<sup>1</sup> in the film industry also changed the perspectives of British individuals, these films celebrated diversity, equality and social issues such as those of racism and discrimination. Therefore, movie admirers around the world and mainly in modern Britain were affected by such ideas to a certain extent as obeying the unjust rules of the higher powers was no longer a priority in modern British citizens' lives (Lueders 309-310). With the help of the Labour Party, immigrants settled in British lands but due to the newly developed views, newcomers to the land were accepted and tolerated to openly embrace their cultures.

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<sup>1</sup> Multiculturalism which means the coexistence of people with many cultural identities in a common state, society or community.

Also, one of the major events that occurred at that time was Princess Diana's death, Lauren Cahn argued in her article "Princess Diana's Death: Details of Her Tragic Accident" (2023), that the princess of Wales's passing reunited the people of Britain and it reflected a collective sense of empathy and sorrow from different classes of society especially the ones from the lower class. Millions of British individuals mourned her death as she was regarded as a symbol of humanity and kindness. However, on the bright side of her death is that people renewed focus on the humanitarian causes and supported the underprivileged communities as a tribute to her, which resulted in encouraging individuals from lower classes and discriminated cultural backgrounds to be more expressive and engaging in society.

The musical industry also had its share in the country's development, as many bands rose to fame, such as Oasis, Radiohead, The Stones Roses and others (Lueders 132). These musical acts rose to prominence in the Britpop scene, captivating audience with their distinctive songs, these bands conveyed messages reflecting the political, cultural and social challenges of the landscape during that era. Moreover, these artists engaged in producing songs that were regarded as a social commentary, their music embraced themes of social disparity and justice. This music genre resonated particularly with individuals who found themselves facing similar societal issues and experiencing a sense of isolation, thus music became a source of comfort and validation for their feelings.

It is also worth noting that on the cultural facet, British society had a sort of a renaissance<sup>2</sup> in fashion, art, and literature especially for authors of colour. These authors

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<sup>2</sup> The Renaissance which translates to 'Rebirth' in French, is a period in European history between 1450 and 1600, characterised by an artistic revival in various fields mainly humanities and classical antiquity.

reflect the diversity of a new Britain. In contrast, some individuals felt lost and overwhelmed in the new society and could not adapt to economic, social and political transformations.

## **I.2 Joanne Rowling: The Creative Mind Behind the Magic:**

Joanne Kathleen Rowling, widely known by her pen name as J.K. Rowling is a British author born on July 31, 1965, in Yate, Gloucestershire, England, United Kingdom as “The eldest daughter to Peter James Rowling and Anne Rowling and only a few years later her beloved sister Dianne was born” (Smith 15-19). Joanne’s family was a modest one who rooted in her a deep love for reading and storytelling. As a child Rowling used to write fairy tales in her homemade books, not knowing that one day she was going to be one of the greatest fantasy writers of the century (Smith 13).

Following that, Joanne attended Wyedean school and college, where she deepened her passion for writing by focusing on English language and literature. In truth, Rowling’s journey was not devoid of challenges. Having had a very complicated relationship with her father who disapproved of her career especially after her parents’ divorce when she was so young, said Rowling herself during an interview with Oprah Winfrey in 2010, where she surprisingly mentioned the disagreement she had with him and argued that “The complexities she had with him helped build her personality as a parent and as a writer as well”. Unlike her father, Joanne’s mother Anne, was very close to her and supportive of her and was constantly by her side, particularly during the initial stages of her career, when she was still an amateur, yet sadly this relationship did not last long since Anne passed away in 1990 because of complications related to Multiple Sclerosis, at the time Joanne was twenty-five of age. She felt helpless as her mother’s disease was

incurable. Anne's passing deeply affected her beloved daughter where she stated; "She was 45. She'd been ill for a very long time, but none of us realised that death was imminent. That kind of took a wrecking ball to my life, really. To me, this decade now is infused of loss" (qtd. in Donaldson 13).

The British writer's love life was also challenging. Her first experience began after Rowling finished her education and moved to Porto, Portugal, to seek better opportunities. During this time, she managed to work as an English teacher and it was then that she encountered her first husband, Jorge Arantes in 1992. Over time, Joanne's marriage fell off and in December 1995 she was officially divorced with a child to take care of on her own. Therefore, she moved back to Scotland, UK to be closer to her sister (Smith 26). Eventually, Rowling felt alienated from her society when she found herself in a dreadful condition as a single woman with no job or means of support for her and her newborn baby. She stated in her celebrated speech titled, "We Don't Need Magic to Change the World" at Harvard (2008), where she described her situation at that time as follows: "I was jobless, a lone parent, and as poor as it is possible to be in modern Britain without being homeless" (16-17).

As a result of her financial struggles and constant rejections from publishers. J.K. "Rowling went through a non-ending loop of depression that she never thought would come out of at that time to the point where she hit rock bottom and attempted to take her life away" (Smith 15). Following her misfortunate events, one day Rowling was in the train station of Manchester waiting for her delayed train to arrive so she could go back home to London and rest after a long day of work and with all the exhaustion and boredom an idea of a young boy attending a school of magic on a train envisioned in her mind, and

just like that the long and daily train rides became her secret place to craft her magical world, and after numerous rides in the train her vision came to life through the first volume of the *Harry Potter* series; *Harry Potter and The Philosopher's Stone* (1997), after that her “life drastically changed for the better” (JKR 5).

### **I.2.1 The Influence of Modern Britain on Rowling's Literature:**

The cultural, social, and historical setting of modern Britain profoundly affected Rowling's writings, this influence can be noticed in various features of her work. Initially, “The *Harry Potter* series featured Hogwarts, the School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, whose uniforms and extraocular activities reflected traditional and modern British boarding schools as well, such as Harrow and Eton, among others” (Donaldson 27). Also, settings of the magical world were influenced by British landmarks, such as the Hogwarts castle's architecture and its halls and rooms.

Additionally, as emphasised in Alasdair Donaldson's article on the British Council, titled “*Harry Potter* and the Drivers of Trust” (2019), the wizarding world openly showcased modern British values such as tolerance and acceptance, and the desire for exploring themes of prejudice and mistreatment. Following into the Labour Party's footsteps and Britpop's humanitarian music, Rowling employed such themes as a counterpoint to the media and some of the public's anxious position towards immigrants.

Furthermore, based on a study titled “Development of Linguistic Complexity in *Harry Potter*” (2019), conducted by Martine Haueng, “the *Harry Potter* series utilised a contemporary and easy language style to facilitate accessibility for readers from different cultural backgrounds around the Kingdom and the world” (12-13). As the series continued

to grow, it developed in alignment with the societal transformations of modern Britain, including characters' journeys and growth as reflections to British individuals' change of perspectives. Additionally, the exploration of unjust aspects of society also were reflected in the work. Through time, the language of the work gradually introduced new terms reflecting the influence of British society.

Moreover, the early 2000s marked a major era for the *Harry Potter* fandom within British society. It was defined by devoted fan involvement and active online communities. Modern Britain's increasing fascination with digital technology and online platforms played a vital role in turning the series into an international phenomenon. Moreover, books were uploaded online for the sake of digital reading especially to younger audiences, who were mostly likely less interested in reading conventional literature. Furthermore, fan blogs were dedicated to the series such as, "The *Harry Potter* Lexicon Website", which was created and founded by Van Ark in 2000 that attracted millions of potterheads<sup>3</sup> around the world.

Rowling's writing era was influenced by the capitalist societal shifts that occurred in the late 1990s and early 2000s in British society. This impact animated her work with a variety of themes, narratives, settings and characters. The language used in the work also explored and discussed the complexities of the societal variations that was happening in Britain at the time and added more details and depth to the storytelling.

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<sup>3</sup> Potterheads is what Harry Potter's fandom refer to themselves as.

### **I.2.1.1 Rowling's Interpretation of Modern Britain in *Harry Potter*:**

Rowling's literature was not solely influenced by the societal shifts of modern Britain; her viewpoints were also impacted by cultural, political and personal factors to a certain extent, which can be seen in the way she translated the multifaceted aspects of modern British society into some of her narratives. *Harry Potter* as a literary work is seemingly regarded to be innocently revolving around children's fiction. However, the author's interpretation of her surroundings was quite deeper than that. Through the looking glass of Rowling's fictional creation, politics is an essential element since the author included elements that she reckoned as forms of political corruption like the Wizarding Ministry of Magic. This led to numerous comparisons between it and the previous ruling party, the Conservatives, in terms of corruption and elitism. Rowling's public support of the Labour Party (Pettinger 21) influenced her narratives, so her perspectives evolved accordingly.

Following that, Rowling's work touched upon the cultural hegemony between classes in light of the emergence of capitalism in Britain during that period (Pettinger 59). She translated the discrimination between classes in modern society through the mistreatment faced by wizards and witches in the magical realm. Furthermore, this idea brought attention to the newly born British mindset. Moreover, the mistreated wizards are set to symbolise the working class and immigrants, who struggle to perform their best so as to prove their existence and credibility in their society. In contrast, certain individuals in the wizarding world were pictured to be imperious and privileged because opportunities were served to them in silver platters. The elites of the magical universe are set to supposedly symbolise modern Britain's upper classes per Rowling's, in addition to the

“British public’s concerns revolving around immigrants, especially those belonging to the upper class and the British media” (Somerville et al, 4).

As previously mentioned, the author is a Labour supporter, which pushed her to reflect on themes of workers’ rights and depict them through the mistreatment of house-elves in the series. The *Harry Potter* series also embraced social diversity and tolerance towards immigrants by including Indian and Chinese characters in the narratives. The working class in Labour were represented through characters from different backgrounds and social classes who contributed to the storyline, the same way the working class do in British society.

As a literary figure received harsh criticism to her interpretations; however, that did not prevent her from writing. On the contrary, it pushed her to continue crafting her magical world and translate some of her personal experiences into sources of inspiration (13-14). In her work, Rowling focused on women’s struggles. The series featured many female characters to represent different modern British women from different backgrounds through the stages of childhood, adolescence and motherhood (McCarthy 16). Additionally, Rowling interpreted the hierarchical system of British society by portraying the influence of the wizarding world’s system on the struggles and triumphs of the female witches.

As a modern British individual, Rowling witnessed and was affected by the various transformations in contemporary Britain. Because of that, she offered an interpreted version of reality for her readers in a magical way. Her readers felt related to the characters, especially “the individuals who felt lost amidst the chaos and complications of the new modern life due to the sudden and rapid changes that forced

them to cope with it” (Somerville et al, 8). Thus, they treat Rowling’s work as a way to escape their scary realities.

### **I.3 Introducing the Enchanting World of *Harry Potter*:**

In this section, we explore the enchanting realm of the Harry Potter series where a literary wonder fascinated the minds and hearts of readers all around the world. With quill and ink Rowling crafted a splendid world where fantasy and magic connect within the great halls of Hogwarts, through seven volumes. She chronologically narrates the journey of an orphan marked by a mysterious scar on his forehead. The author describes him as a: “a boy with lightning bolt scar and round glasses named, Harry James Potter”. Harry went through a very rough childhood. However, on his eleventh birthday, his life took an unexpected turn. Harry received a letter to join the Hogwarts school of witchcraft and wizardry.

The majority of the series’ events unfold within the halls of Hogwarts, which is a fictional boarding school for young witches and wizards, aged eleven to eighteen. “the school was founded around 990 A.D by four of the greatest witches and wizards of that time named, Salazar Slytherin, Godric Gryffindor, Helga Hufflepuff and Rowena Ravenclaw” (Bassham 2-3).

The school of Hogwarts is located in the Scottish Highlands in a massive castle away from the sight of Muggles with wizards and witches as professors and students. Furthermore, Forbes discussed the system of the school in an article titled, “How Organization Can Benefit from a Harry Potter Sorting Hat System to Retrain Talent” (2022), where students’ houses get determined upon their arrival to the school in a

ceremony to welcome them in (8). Students are welcomed in Hogwarts from all over Great Britain, including those with no bloodline of magic in their families, except in Slytherin (Bassham 6-8).

Hogwarts is classified into four houses named after the four founders, each house holds a different sorting system based on the students' qualities and a representative creature set by the four founders (Bassham 30-32). Students get sorted into their houses through the hat due to its ability to read their minds and qualities, where each of the four houses has its significant characteristics, "Slytherin stands for cunning, ambition and the desire to achieve greatness, whereas the house of Gryffindor stands for bravery and courage, Hufflepuff aims for loyal and ethical students and finally Ravenclaw stands for creativity and intelligence" (Mogg and Tully 25).

Throughout his school journey, Potter knits a great bond with two wizards of his age named, Ron Weasley and Hermione Granger. They are collectively known as the Golden Trio and they share both joyful experiences and bitter challenges (Mogg and Tully 8-10). Amidst that, Harry uncovers the truth about his parents and the mystery behind his well-known scar. The scar is given to him by a dark wizard named Tom Riddle, famously known as Lord Voldemort. This revelation results in a battle of survival between the forces of good and evil (Brown 64).

The wizarding World of Harry Potter covers several social motifs, such as friendship, death, and courage. Friendship as a theme is central to the series from the very first moment the protagonist, Harry encountered his two friends. Their bond is characterised by its resilience against the dark powers and mutual experiences that grow

throughout the years and its inspiration to many admirers of the work (Mogg and Tully 13-14). As death is an inevitable matter in life, it also had its share in the work to show that the magical universe is not all about children having fun and forming friendships. Death did not make any exceptions in the series. This theme is mainly linked to the antagonist, the Great Dark Lord who murders everyone who stands in his way (Brown 6-10). Additionally, the story of the young orphan and his courage also inspired readers to confront danger and face their fears with all the rapid changes happening in modern societies (Marciniak 8-9).

In the wizarding world, magic is a commonplace aspect of daily life in the secrecy of muggles. This aspect of life in the magical realm functions according to the Ministry of Magic, which maintains law and order (Marciniak 31). The magical society upholds its traditions, attires and beliefs that are believed to parallel those of the British (Behr 23). However, the wizarding realm's ones are loaded with extraordinary sets that distinguish them such as the charming castles, villages and fairy figures.

## **Conclusion:**

Throughout the first chapter, we have explored the social and cultural context of modern British society in the early 1990s and late 2000s, examining how British author Joanne Rowling translated the influences of the landscape into her work in the *Harry Potter* series. In conclusion, we have found that modern British society played a significant role in influencing Rowling's perspectives, especially after all the struggles she had to undergo amidst the various transformations happening in the British society during that period. Rowling was partly inspired in her narratives from the societal and

cultural shifts, furthermore the author utilised her work to critique some of the traditional views and show support to the new ones that developed alongside the changes in society. Additionally, we have uncovered that the British author played a role of a sociologist by mirroring modern British society in her a work in a fictional way. The outcomes of this chapter reveal that Rowling managed to blend magical and real elements in the series to veil her implicit commentary about modern Britain and showcase the struggles of modern British individuals.

**Chapter Two:  
Theoretical Framework:  
Sociology and Literature**

**Introduction:**

Within the context of human culture and society, this chapter seeks to highlight the use of sociological theories in literary analysis and narratives. Through that, we can explore how societal issues shape individuals and their experiences. To deepen our understanding, we provide a theoretical framework that attempts to explain how sociology and literature are connected. In this chapter, we explore Karl Marx's ideologies and the ways they are interpreted by authors in their literary work and perceived by readers. Moreover, we focus on Marx's social ideologies that affect individuals' experiences in their societies such as classism, alienation and identity struggle. By examining these connections, we aim to show how society is shaped, the way literary works reflect that and how both relate to human existence and experiences.

## **II.1 The Impact of Social Modernity On Individuals: Classism, Alienation and Identity**

### **Crisis:**

When societies change from agrarian societies into contemporary, urban and industrialised environments, they result in a rise of industries, technological innovations and new societal systems, which causes drastic reforms in different communities (167-69). As societies modernise they witness various changes in their cultural, economic, and social areas, by influencing individuals' experiences and interactions and other traditional aspects of their lives like those of their relations with friends and family, lifestyle choices, in addition to personal morals and beliefs (Kumar 240-54). Moreover, the modernisation of cities and the rapid developments create both new opportunities and problems for these individuals as they adapt to their roles in society, and experience social dynamics like classism, alienation and identity crisis (Whitworth 32-44).

In order to begin with, social modernity did not only influence cities to be urbanised and industrialised, but it also provoked social issues for individuals, among these is the issue of classism, which is a social concept that sets boundaries and obstacles between the ruling class and working class within a society. Classism defines the social hierarchy and the way individuals interact. Consequently, they would be treated based on their social class, in addition to the shift in their behavioural responses, (Aubrey 189-190). The concept of classism significantly contributes to the development of individuals' characters and behaviours, where working class individuals tend to have low self-esteem in which they "do not express themselves which lead them to miss out several life opportunities, suffer from poverty, and to live under continues harsh life conditions" (Aubrey 193-195) Additionally, these individuals are also most likely to undergo physical

and mental issues like anxiety, frustration and depression. On the other hand, individuals from the ruling class are regarded to be more expressive and opinionative and are less likely to suffer from such problems, since they tend to receive good health care and healthy nutrition (Lopez de Arenosa 3-6). Another aspect to mention is the variety of education between class, where modernisation leads to how individuals access educational resources, in other words, some of the working class's individuals suffer from poor educational skills, whereas the majority of the ruling class's individuals receive better education and provide better outcomes (Lopez de Arenosa 5-9).

Following that, a group of individuals from both classes under the influence of social modernity tend to estrange themselves from society, where labourers prefer to alienate themselves due to their economic status out of hopelessness and frustration especially when they lose control over the products they produce (Aubrey 12-13). Alternatively, the elites estrange themselves as a result of their high status, which pushes them to look down at others and avoid interacting with them even if they do share the same interests (Ott 9). Additionally, social modernity's influence on the concept of alienation and individuals' complications with alienation extends to psychological and emotional complexities such as loneliness, social withdrawal and anxiety (Cauvin 15). Furthermore, due to alienation some individuals might fall into a loop of existential despair and question their identity and purpose in life, where aspects of modernisation push them to question their actual interests and likings, as they attempt to change them for the purpose of blending in. Additionally, social modernity's shift to individualism and the emphasis on personal desires, pushes individuals to define themselves according to the societal norms and the society's expectations upon them (Ott 7-8). Within this context,

self-discovery became challenging for individuals amidst the rapid pace of societal shifts; therefore, they become fragile and sponge-like, absorbing everything that has been given to them through media and others' opinions on them (Boyd 14-18).

## **II.2 The Significance of Social Theories in Literary Analysis:**

According to Abercrombie, Hill and Turner in the *Penguin Dictionary of Sociology* published in 2000, that sociology is “A systematic study of social behaviours and human society” (16). The authors state that it aims to comprehend the dynamics of society, as well as the individuals' interactions with each other. Additionally, sociology examines the structure, development and the functioning of human society and it also covers the study of social interactions, relationships and behaviours within various groups and communities (Abercrombie et al. 21-30). However, etymologically speaking, sociology as a word is derived from the two Latin words “Socius” which translates into “Companion” and “Logus” which means “Speech” in English. Moreover, it does not solely revolve around individual behaviours; rather, it sees that these behaviours are majorly connected to a larger societal system that affects them. As a discipline, it employs various theories in the interest of examining diverse subjects such as literary works, which are subsequently analysed and contextualized within real-world settings (Merill 640).

Sociology and literature are complementary to each other, as discussed by the French-American literary critic and scholar, Albert Léon Guérard in his work *Literature and Society*, he examines both sociology and literature through three facets:

1. The way literature reflects society and mirrors its values, norms and conflicts.

2. The role of literature in impacting society and how it influences its societal norms, beliefs and individuals' behaviours.
3. How literature justifies social structures and explain why things are the way they are.

Similarly, in 1976, Francis Merrill argues in his book *The Sociology of Literature* that scholars and researchers can deepen their comprehension of the author's intentions and motives (25-27), as well as the personalities of the characters by applying social theories to cultural, social and historical contexts in which the literary piece was shaped in. "This method enables examiners to gain a well comprehensive examination of how social and cultural factors reflect literature by focusing on the author's piece and the tight bond it holds with the societal landscape" (Merrill 16). Additionally, these theories do not only unravel the metaphoric sense between the lines of literary texts, but they give the readers and sociologists the ability to interrogate social norms and challenge the typical style of narration, so the non-apparent meanings can be deconstructed (Guérard 19-21).

Accordingly, applying social theories when analysing literary pieces holds significant importance, primarily in revealing hidden layers and enabling the critique of social structures. Authors often employ characters as tools to convey social commentary. Therefore, readers can detect the underlying motives behind characters' behaviours by using the theories. "Characters are not only employed as tools for the storytelling but they are employed to reflect various values and conflicts resulting from their struggles in their communities" (Noble 208). Literary characters embody individuals who suffer from social dilemmas and complexities of life, thereby this approach allows analysts to discover the unseen aspects of literature and implement on the notion that though individuals exist

within the same social and cultural landscape yet each one perceives literature differently (Noble 211-24).

Sociology as an academic discipline, carefully examines the different social challenges encountered by individuals to comprehend their complexities. “Social issues such as class disparities, the sense of alienation from societal norms, in addition to the constant struggle to establish one’s identity emphasise how society’s rules affect people’s lives” (qtd. in Harris 126) and show why it is important to learn about them and make things clear for everyone (132). Consequently, these aspects shape individuals’ perception of their societal landscape, thereby they build an opinion of and in society and eventually these opinions get portrayed in literary works (Harris 147-54).

In addition to the observations offered by scholars such as Francis Merrill whose work has been discussed previously, it is very important to acknowledge another figure whose theories left a lasting trace on literature; Karl Marx (1976). Marx’s theories helped broaden the scope of literary analysis, his revolutionary ideas dominated the field of sociology for quite a while which fueled the inspiration of various literary figures (Sperber 137). The connection between sociology and literature is based on the way society and its behaviours, structure and complexities are examined by sociology, whereas literature offers a vivid reflection of the examined societal facets (Merrill 681-688).

### **II.3 Marxist Principles and Their Literary Implications:**

Karl Marx is a German philosopher, sociologist and economist thinker. According to information provided by an article titled, “Marx: Biography” (2012), Marx was born to a middle-class Jewish family on May 5<sup>th</sup>, 1818, in Trier, Germany (18). In the early

beginning of his twenties, he studied law at Bonn University and then at Berlin University (23- 28), where he developed a strong passion towards philosophy and became a huge admirer of G.W.F Hegel<sup>4</sup>'s writings (Sperber 38-43). In 1841, Karl completed his doctoral dissertation in philosophy. However, finding a job proved to be a difficult challenge for him, due to his radical political ideologies. Two years later, he moved to Paris, France and joined a circle of radical politicians, which allowed him to speak his mind, he wrote several newspaper articles, and it was by then that he met his enduring companion, the German sociologist, Friedrich Engles<sup>5</sup>, with whom he developed his theories about communism<sup>6</sup> and socialism<sup>7</sup> (Sperber 31-40).

Marx is mostly known for his revolutionary and social ideologies of contemporary life. He was regarded as one of the most influential figures during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The principles developed by Marx, often referred to as Marxist Principles, had a remarkable impact across a wide ray of domains that influenced many figures in different fields such as literature. Most authors and literary scholars embraced and accepted his principles by applying them to their works through portraying characters

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<sup>4</sup> Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831) is a German philosopher who influenced Western philosophy in the nineteenth-century. His ideas had a huge impact on various fields such as politics, history and theology.

<sup>5</sup> Friedrich Engles (1820-1895) is a German philosopher, social scientist and political theorist. He is best known for co-writing *The Communist Manifesto* book with Karl Marx, which was published in 1848.

<sup>6</sup> Communism is a theory which advocates for the abolition of private ownership.

<sup>7</sup> Socialism is a theory based on collective ownership.

from different classes and backgrounds in order to support and ask for social equality, and this widespread acceptance proved how literary figures agree with Marx's principles and ideologies, especially those of historical materialism<sup>8</sup>, class conflict and the individuals' struggles with social instability and the journey of seeking identity, acceptance and a sense of purpose in their societies.

Karl Marx's ideas were built upon a mixture of economic, political, and social views that were shaped by two interpretations of capitalist life. Therefore, "he held various principles, and at their core was the concept of historical materialism" (Sperber 48). The idea suggests that the transformations occurring in society are mainly a result of material conditions throughout history. Marx thought that material conditions are shaped by economic production, and the way resources are shared among social classes, as well as how these social classes interact with each other (227-243). In essence, historical materialism revolves around the notion of how social classes and money are controlled by those who are in power, and by that they get credited for the historical changes in societies (Cohen 250).

In light of that, Karl Marx heavily criticises capitalism and its supporters. He believes that it exploits labour and he also argues that it is a harsh policy that inherits inequality and injustice between the owners who monopolise capitalism and the workers who have to adapt to it (80-93) which leads workers and readers who feel related to the

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<sup>8</sup> Historical Materialism is a concept primarily developed by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. It is a way of understanding how history and society are connected and influential of each other and it also focuses on how economic conditions shape individuals.

characters representing workers' struggles to alienate themselves from society as a whole (Fuchs 111-52). Moreover, Marx emphasises that capitalism grew the seeds of its own destruction.

It is also very crucial to highlight the sociologist's advocate call for his supporters, especially those in the position of literary power, as he referred to them as the "cultural elites", to actively embrace his principles and use their platforms to engage in spreading his ideologies to awaken social consciousness. "Karl aimed for radical social changes to establish an equal and justice world, by that individual can foster a deeper understanding of contemporary and capitalist realities" (Heath 301-302). Eventually, his supporters responded to Marx's call by producing works inspired by his principles. Writers used these ideas to reflect the socio-economic conditions from 20th century until today (Veblen 312-319).

In literature, historical materialism encouraged reader to analyse how authors depict illustrations of societal hierarchies and structures, for example, one of the major works is Charles Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities*, which was written during the French Revolution<sup>9</sup>(40-42). His work sharply emphasises on the disturbing relationship between social classes and their roles in crafting history (Heath 67) to prove how readers could see how an author's social and cultural surroundings can influence their writings, characters and how people can understand them due to historical materialism.

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<sup>9</sup> The French Revolution (1789-1799) was a period of political and social transformations in France, it was marked by the overthrow of the monarchy and changing the way the country was run. This period also caused a lot of violence and chaos in the country.

Furthermore, literature dealt with themes of labour and workers' rights to support Marxism and its espousal for social equality. For instance, Franz Kafka's novella, *The Metamorphosis*, which was published in 1915 portrays a protagonist who suddenly turns into a big insect. Therefore, he experiences feelings of estrangement in society and disconnection from his family (Heath 132-43). Additionally, authors like Ralph Ellison boldly investigated and criticised the themes of elitism and privilege in their narratives (Heath 144-146). Ellison's *Invisible Man* of 1952 portrays the protagonist's "struggles with social elitism and racial privilege as an African American man who feels invisible in his society" (Ellison 166). Moreover, these authors shed light on themes of social discrimination in numerous genres of literature including children's literature, such as J.K. Rowling in her *Harry Potter* series and *Matilda* by Roald Dahl in 1988. These writers applied these themes in works that captivate young audiences with the aim of raising an intellectual generation who are aware and caring about social issues and injustices in society (Harris 150-54).

Ultimately, Karl Marx's principles sparked a remarkable movement in literature. As a result, the mentioned writers among others also explored themes like labour exploitation, economic inequality and the impact of capitalism on workers and individuals of society as a whole. Characters in the mentioned works faced issues with belonging, estrangement and discrimination, these problems pushed people to question and writers to be active. In another sense, literature became a platform for social change through the use of Marxist theories.

### II.3.1 Marxian Class Theory:

Throughout the history of sociology, Karl Marx was one of the outstanding figures in the field. He revolutionised the discipline with his critique of capitalism and in-depth analysis of the working class's struggles (Cohen 211-30). Marx's criticism of the relationship between the capitalist class, which he referred to as the "Bourgeoisie", and the working class that he labelled as the "Proletariat" (Burawoy 8-21) paved the way for several scholars in various fields to criticise this social disparity and use their platforms. Furthermore, his theories encouraged critical perspectives and deepened historical understanding of contemporary societies for several scholars and readers (Burawoy 9-17).

Marxian Class theory is based on a hierarchical understanding of reality, in which it varies into levels which are the capitalist class, the petite bourgeoisie who are small business owners and lastly the working class. His theory suggests that individuals are essential elements in maintaining balance. However, "society views them differently, where some are regarded as more fundamental than others" (Ollman 28). Within the scope of this theory, Marx calls and focuses on the importance of interaction between the classes. According to his class theory, the working class are the weaker class that gets exploited by the bourgeoisie, especially when the bourgeoisie people mostly control and manipulate the means of production through the hard labour of the proletariat. Therefore, the capitalists' profits increase where the workers do not get any benefits except for their small wages for all the hard work they do (Ollman 38-41).

This theory became familiar to the public eye when Marx published his book *Das Kapital* in 1867. The concept was revealed through the first Volume of the work and then

continued to appear as a central tenet. Class Theory proposes that the exploitation of the working class will eventually work in the working class's favour, once they realise that they are the ones who sustain society through their constant and diligent efforts" (Marx 29). This predicted result would cause them to turn against the bourgeoisie, ultimately resulting in a clash between the two classes. Consequently, society would once again lose its balance.

Additionally, Marx emphasised on the importance of being aware about social injustices. Hence, people could explore their common interests, share them and promote them collectively with the opposing class of the same interests regardless of their background, beliefs or culture. This concept urges members living in the same society who share common environmental and social changes to feel more connected and empowered and it also enables them to address structural injustices and collaborate to achieve social change (Glaberman 233-37).

From a political lens, Karl Marx aligned class theory with the dynamic powers within society. He argued that it is essential to apply this theory to understand how political figures dominate society as a whole (Glaberman 162-173). Furthermore, he posited that the governments and privileged political parties are the ones who control class division to maintain their dominance. He also presented this notion as a possible revolution and unity of classes.

Additionally, he observed that some of the working class individuals are quite hesitant to rebel or to think against the norms which encourages the elites and the ruling powers to continue their discrimination towards them, and in case these individuals

manage to achieve success, they will be treated with disdain, where they also face many obstacles along the way (342-344). On the other hand, the bourgeoisie are more likely to enjoy their privileges and achieve success effortlessly. In essence, Karl Marx's theory aims to overturn capitalist systems to achieve an equitable society (Andrew 577-84).

According to Lestor Dekoster in his article, "Marxism, the Classless Society and History" (2018), which scrutinises Marx's ideologies, that "a classless society became Karl Marx's utopian<sup>10</sup> version of reality" (6-7). Within a classless society, social status, sources of wealth and income would no longer shape or define individuals' value in a society. Therefore, the majority of people would have equal chances and opportunities of achieving success and fulfilling their dreams. Marx argued that this concept would become real when the higher powers' structures are deconstructed and rebuilt upon the notion of communism, where private properties get eliminated. Eventually, the government would lose its credibility and the market would no longer be monopolised by them to serve their benefits and the ruling class's too. Additionally, the sociologist believed that this transformation would serve the majority of individuals especially the oppressed ones as they would not have to face issues of discrimination, exploitation and class struggle, leading to a more equitable and just society.

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<sup>10</sup> Utopian is derived from the word utopia which means a dream world where everything is perfect, in this sense it means idealistic visions or ideas about an imaginary, perfect world.

### **II.3.2 Karl Marx's Alienation Theory:**

The industrial revolution emerged at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century, scholars refer to it as one of the most remarkable eras in human history (Thompson 252-258), particularly in Great Britain. This transformation revolutionised different aspects of life and the way goods were manufactured and society was organized. It took a shift from agrarian, artisanal production systems into industrialized industries based on factory production (Dowey 9). Furthermore, the era marked a rise of inventions and technological developments, such as the telegraph which was invented by Samuel Morse in 1837, and the electric dynamo in the late 19th century by Michael Faraday. These innovations facilitated life for people (Dowey 11). These transformations began to take shape under the umbrella of capitalism, as it became the dominant regime in Britain and the world, many people took advantage of it and formed a new class called the bourgeoisie. These people dominated the market and British society during that era by investing in factories in addition to owning businesses, that mainly exploit the working class (Thompson 3-9). In other words, the industrial revolution paved the way for capitalism, to consequently take over social, economic and political dimensions that would shape modern societies. In contrast, social complications of individuals and labour struggles were brought forth along, causing several scholars to criticise capitalism and its notions, mainly Karl Marx (Elliot 383-91).

As a consequence of his unfavourable stance, Karl Marx composed several articles and books to convey his messages and show his opposition. According to David Harvey's perspectives in his book, *A Companion to Marx's Capital* in 2008, is that Marx never approved of this concept and made sure to criticise it as he saw it as, "nothing more

than exploitation of labour”, sated by Karl Marx (1932). This idea echoes in Marx’s work of 1848, *The Communist Manifesto*, where the rich become richer, and the poor become poorer which leads to class division and complexities for individuals.

Following that, Marx developed the theory of alienation, which explores how people in capitalist societies get estranged due to many factors, resulting from labour and injustice forms. Under capitalism, workers are separated from their fellow human beings and the products they produce (512-527) According to Marx, this alienation leads to the dehumanisation of the worker in addition to the loss of control over their lives (699-701). This theory includes concept that strengthen it and views it from the lens of individuals’ self and social complexities (Petrovic 416-20).

### **II.3.2.1 Alienation from Others per Marx:**

Karl Marx’s concept of alienation from others following his theory of alienation demonstrates the complexities of individuals that they undergo amidst the new societal changes. Alienation stands for the state of forgetting one’s identity and becoming a stranger according to the Oxford Dictionary, this term has various meanings that goes beyond Marx’s interpretation through his theory, where each one reflects a different facet of this social issue. The theory of alienation was first mentioned Marx’s papers in 1932, translated from German to English, “Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844”. These manuscripts fold within Marx’s earliest works, including this concept as revised by Bertell Ollman (1977).

Marx’s idea of alienation comes in the shape of several dimensions. However, in this passage we focus on the alienation from others theory. Moreover, interactions

between members of society diminish in value and instead, they become more transitional than meaningful. Therefore, the social pressure from not fitting in society alienate them from others (360,420). Individuals who estrange themselves from others limit their interactions to sustain themselves and survive instead of forming meaningful connections (764-801). This shallow connection with others leads to isolation and disconnection from society as a whole (Clark 849-52).

Societal alienation concept under the umbrella of the alienation theory by Karl Marx provides insights into how individuals live in a capitalist system and it aims to examine the sources behind this phenomenon, by addressing the following key questions:

1. What causes feeling isolated from others in a society?
2. How do societal standards shape individuals' behaviours towards others?
3. To what extent does capitalism influence societal alienation?

To answer these questions, alienation from others theory plays a central role in comprehending the disconnection that individuals feel within capitalist societies. Under capitalism, people feel less connected and powerless as if they do not fit into societal mould (Ollman 226-228). This alienation has different angles. First, workers feel less interested in the notion of belonging and would rather estrange themselves due to the products they produce but cannot control, second is the result of the hectic work they have to perform, and third one pertains to those who control the products. The people who are in control have a strong sense of belief in their superiority, rooted in their privileged status. Over time, they distance themselves from those whom they deem as inferior, to strengthen their elitism (Clark 301-308). Furthermore, within this class, some individuals may not

fully believe in the elitist concept but are hesitant to abandon it. Even if they have their doubts, this group of individuals remain attached to the social hierarchy, and they would neither admit it nor unleash it (417-23). As a result, they would estrange themselves from their surroundings (Twining 424-28).

This alienation from others is characterised by the individual's loss of agency over the course of their lives. In other words, a man is the creator of his own past and the origin of his actions but due to alienation he would lose human essence of his past, present and future. This alienated man would distance himself from his work and find no fulfilment in life and views it as a burdensome obligation rather than a humane interaction (Smith 11).

Moreover, Marx thinks that capitalist societies are characterised by inequalities, exploitation and commodification, all of which contribute to feelings of alienation among individuals. This concept is broadly rooted in broader social and economic conditions to show how societies can influence individuals' daily behaviours (Korpi and Shaley 164-87). According to a medical article titled, "Alienation: Symptoms and Causes" (2018) on Healthline, Rachel Barclay argues that alienation is both a sociological and psychological condition and it arises from individuals' internal conflicts, leading them to perceive themselves as unappreciated and disconnected and over time, the state of being alienated from others could result in a more severe mental and physical issues such as depression and uncontrollable anger issues that could lead to a total sense of alienation from their peers and society, and this totality of alienation is highly dangerous, which could cause an eternal need of loneliness and social separation (Zhong 23).

### **II.3.2.2 Identity Crisis: Self-Alienation according to Marx:**

In this section we aim to show another dimension of Karl Marx's Alienation theory to highlight the significant role of this theory and how it cannot be detached from Marx's work. Alienation concerns the human mind, body and mental process, it also refers to a state in which an individual feels disconnected and alienated from their inner feelings, thoughts and sense of identity. Moreover, it is characterised by having a person who experiences a sense of detachment from his true self, resulting in feelings of hopelessness and existential despair (Overend 301-22). In a capitalist society, self-alienation occurs when a man inherits his father's position in a company, with the anticipation of good pay and career advancement. However, he eventually realises that he cannot perform the job properly or live up to his father's legacy. Hence, he feels alienated from his role because the jobs' priorities have changed instead of his interpretations of them (Lowith 204-30).

The development of Marx's idea of self-alienation was mentioned in his papers, "Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844" in 1932 (Struik 283-301) as mentioned in the previous section. The first step into Marx's notion commences with understanding how things are produced like factories and making goods. The other side is about these goods are divided and who gets what. He emphasises the importance of the object and its devaluation in its relationship with the worker. Furthermore, Marx argues that self-alienation often results from social, economic norms and structures and even personal experiences. Thus, a self-estranged person finds it difficult to shape an identity. According to Jasmin Allen's "Alienation: Identity Crisis Under Capitalism" (2018), which analyses Karl Marx's criticism of capitalism. It reveals that "Within a capitalist society, individuals feel the need to express themselves and strive to blend in with the

society's stream to meet its expectations and when they do not achieve that -they most likely experience estrangement from themselves" (7-8). In a chapter titled, "Alienated Labour" in his 1932's manuscripts, Marx states:

For on this premise, it is clear that the more the worker spends himself, the more powerful the alien objective world becomes which he creates over-against himself, the poorer he himself ... his inner world-becomes, the less belongs to him as his own... Hence, the greater this activity, the greater is the worker's lack of objects. Whatever the product of his labour is, he is not. Therefore, the greater this product, the less is he himself. The alienation of the worker in his product means not only that his labour becomes an object, an external existence, but that it exists outside him. (qtd. in Marx 380)

These words of Marx's are built upon the way he highlights the consequences of capitalist self-alienation which leads to a deep sense of identity crisis for workers where it separates them from themselves and their interests and as a consequence, they question their value in the society and the purpose of their existence. As the workers' existence becomes more and more defined by their work and the product of their work, by that they develop a feeling of confusion and inner conflict about their identity as they seek to find answers for who they are. Likewise, they might doubt their goals and aspirations in the process as well. In accordance to the quotation aforementioned by Marx, we find him making parallels between identity struggle and self-alienation with religion, as he thinks that those who practice religion, often get involved in questioning divine powers and their accuracy, which is comparable to individuals who suffer from inner conflicts. This idea aims to further explain the understanding of individuals' mental health; therefore, they can have

more explanations about the challenges they encounter. Eventually, these individuals would be able to discover meaning for their lives and their identities.

#### **II.4 The Influence of Marx's Theories on Contemporary Literature:**

Karl Marx's theories impacted modern literature to a certain extent, by reshaping writers' and critics' traditional approach of writing which led to a shift in their perspectives on human nature and they began to treat their works as a means of controlling how people interpret and feel about their surroundings. Literature influences readers' perspectives, consequently its importance expanded beyond entertainment. The influence of Marx can be observed in the way writers took a revolutionary step of treating social themes in their works (115-120). Authors challenged themselves and pushed the norms of traditional literary storytelling and innovated new narrative forms. "Their narratives include social commentary and offer reflections of societies that individuals live in" (Lisman 148). Moreover, Marxian's influence is present through the authors' depiction of human relations and encouragement to their readers to develop social consciousness.

Within the framework of literature, Marxian influence can be broken down to several facets. Firstly, it shapes authors' ideologies and way of thinking and by that, it continues to influence their narratives through themes of class struggle, power dynamics and social injustice, and finally it reaches readers' perceptions of the literary work and its embedded messages (23- 41). Furthermore, Marx's ideas allow us to look closely at society in stories and they also encourage us to think about different viewpoints and challenge the norms of how things are usually seen (Hyman 60).

Following that, authors under the influence of Marxism attempt to shape their ideologies based on social aspects advocating human justice in capitalist societies like class struggle, historical materialism and the different complexities individuals face. Within the context of historical materialism, in which authors interpret human interactions as a battle between classes over who controls the distribution of goods and how they are produced, this conflict is set to exist throughout human history, since classism has existed (Levine 185). Writers employ social themes in their writings through portraying issues like enslavement, discrimination and social injustice through characters who reflect the classes affected by these complications and the struggles they face when they interact with the opposing class. Additionally, they encourage their readers to examine literary works in a socio-historical manner to pay more attention and develop a deep comprehension on how society functions (Levine 4).

One of the major literary works that were influenced by Marx's historical materialism and his social views is, *Brave New World* by *Aldous Huxley* in 1932 (Morra 125), in which the author utilises Marx's concept in his dystopian novel by focusing on the consequences of industrialisation in a society whose people are controlled by genetic engineering (Morra 13-18). Another work to mention which employs Marx's ideologies is George Orwell's *Animal Farm* in 1945, which tackles themes of power and corruption, where animals of the farm interact with each other as human beings and aim to rebel against their owner to establish an equal society without divine powers (Ramos Jr 3). This novel also implements on Marx's ideology of hegemony, where the oppressor develops social consciousness and uses it to change society (Ramos Jr 1-5).

Additionally, Marxism argues in “Communist Manifesto” (1848) that “Art and literature can operate as ideologies of society that they reflect to readers in both intentional and unintentional manners”. Moreover, individuals who engage with works that promote Marxist ideas are most likely to be unconsciously affected by it and perceive social aspects through these ideas and to ultimately develop social consciousness and rebel against injustice norms (Fischer 811).

Ultimately, both authors and readers play vital roles in developing a personal critical approach to viewing society and exploring way to cope with social and inner complexities. Writers through their works, provide perspectives and narratives that challenge the norms and provoke thoughts that focus on various aspects of society through themes, settings and characters that reflect Marx’s views. Consequently, readers can analyse and understand the reasons behind the complexities they face in the world around them (Showalter 435-60).

Following that, readers can connect to characters and reflect on themselves to find answers due to the authors’ application of Marxian perspectives, this helps to enrich the understanding of societal matters and it also fosters personal growth that allows readers to develop a critical mindset and to think about their roles and contributions to society (Register 268-82). On the other hand, authors expanded their visions and continued to receive inspiration from Karl Marx, as a result of this ongoing engagement, modern literature flourished and continued to offer deeper insights into human complications and social struggles in modern society (Cowley et al. 87).

## **Conclusion:**

In conclusion, chapter two has provided an examination of the theoretical framework that links sociology and literature, through the process of examination we have found how these two disciplines are complementary of each other, by dealing with the significance of applying social theories in literature, such as those of Karl Marx. Moreover, by exploring Marx's social, capitalist principles and theories of classism, alienation and identity crisis, our understanding on the relationship between sociology and literature deepened because we found that these theories do not only serve as social phenomena but they also affect modern literary figure's perspectives and writings. We have come to conclusions that most of modern literary works were influenced by Marx's principles, such as those of George Orwell's *Animal Farm* and Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*. The findings of this chapter highlight how readers who get exposed to works inspired by Marxist's viewpoints are most likely to develop critical mindset and perceive society in a different way. Also, this chapter provided an insight on how social modernity affect issues of class, estrangement and existential despair besides their impact on individuals. Consequently, we have found that these issues can cause psychological and mental problems like anxiety, frustration and lack of social skills. Additionally, this examination within this chapter allowed us to understand how Sociology studies society while literature aesthetically translates societal dynamics into narrative forms, alongside the significant importance of Karl Marx's ideologies in sociology and literature.

**Chapter Three:**  
**Exploring the Social Dynamics in**  
**J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter***

## **Introduction:**

In this chapter, we focus more on J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series. Firstly, we tackle the relationship between Karl Marx's ideologies and Rowling's narratives in her fictional series. Following that, we seek to show the way J.K. Rowling uses her work to comment and critique modern British society as well as her personal experiences in it. Furthermore, we use Marx's social theories and ideas to try and explain how individuals interact in the wizarding world. We also highlight how some unfair societal rules influence some people's experiences in society. We mainly focus on classism, alienation and identity crisis. In this chapter, we explore some unjust aspects of life in the wizarding world like discrimination and enslavement. Following that, we analyse some of the *Harry Potter* 's universe characters and the different classes of the wizarding society too. Additionally, we focus on characters like Draco Malfoy and his issues with alienation from his family and friends in society. Secondly, we talk about Harry Potter and his struggles with identity struggle. Thirdly, we examine Hermione Granger and her struggles in the wizarding world as a Muggle-born. Through this exploration, we seek to reveal the social dynamics of alienation, classism and identity struggle in the *Harry Potter* universe and analyse how the characters dealt with them and expose their relevance to modern Britain and Karl Marx's theories. Finally, we aim to show to the characters' experiences serve as a reflection of Rowling's own struggles that she faced during the late 1990s and early 2000s in modern British society.

### **III.1 The Relationship between Karl Marx's Ideologies and J.K. Rowling's Fiction:**

As previously mentioned, Karl Marx's ideologies focus on his critiques of capitalist societies and his proposals of achieving a more equitable and just ones (Karl Mannheim et al. 22-28). His ideologies are often referred to as Marxism, which is a social, economic and philosophical theory developed by Karl Marx, who believes that individuals are being exploited under capitalist systems, especially those belonging to the lower classes (J. Pederson et al. 275-292). Notably, in his "Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844", Marx states:

The worker becomes all the poorer the more wealth he produces, the more his production increases in power and size. The worker becomes an ever cheaper commodity the more commodities he creates... Labour produces not only commodities; it produces itself and the worker as a commodity... Under these economic conditions this realization of labour appears as loss of reality for the workers; objectification as loss of the object and object-bondage; appropriation as estrangement, as alienation. (qtd. in Marx 180)

The argument of this quotation supports the sociologist's view of modern society under the control of capitalism. According to his words, the elites practice power and control over the proletariat who are mainly known as the working class. Following that, Karl highlights the effect of labour and societal injustices on individuals and the issues caused by the harsh condition of capitalism and how they lead individuals into feeling estranged and alienated from society.

Similarly, Joanne Rowling composed her famous *Harry Potter* series while Britain was transitioning into capitalism and developing new societal changes. Through her fictional work, the British female author has been noted for preoccupation with societal issues faced by individuals and for deliberately criticizing some aspects of injustice within modern British society. Rowling called for social equality and diversity and embraced it by portraying characters from various backgrounds in her work. Moreover, the author's fiction used Marx's social ideologies that call for social justice and equal treatment in society. In her wizarding world, the British author portrayed characters from various backgrounds and different experiences to prove how the majority of individuals are equally essential to society.

The Ministry of Magic serves as the governing power in the *Harry Potter* universe, where it controls means of magical resources and manipulates information for its own good. In *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* (2007), for instance, the magical ministry manipulates the public opinion and devoice them by imposing oppressive laws to hide the ministry and its followers' weakness and maintain their social position. In fact, the ministry does not only control the flow of information but it also censors them from the public eye.

Additionally, the elite wizarding families contribute in such matters, as they show support to the ministry through their financial funding and the use of their connections to intimidate others and to be privileged such as the Malfoys, the Blacks and others. According to Birgit Blatzar in her thesis titled "Power and Evil in J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter*" (2007)" these families also control the economy in the wizarding world by living a luxurious lifestyle". Yet, as apparent in the series these wizards also control the economy

by exploiting the lower class of wizards and witches to maintain their power. The elite class of wizards and witches force and oppress the lower class of the wizarding world to be obedient towards their ideologies and to silently follow their instructions.

Simultaneously, Karl Marx's ideologies also argue that the capitalist class of society are controlling and manipulative who control the means of production and resources to ensure their social dominance even if this causes social inequality (Marx and Engels 243-255). Marx criticised the power dynamics in capitalist societies and class struggle, and Rowling uses this type of criticism in her work and comments on her own society's injustice forms.

Furthermore, both Rowling's narratives and Marx's ideologies deal with societal issues faced by individuals against the upper powers and rigid, unfair systems. The character Sirius Black in *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (1999), gets condemned without a fair trial as a way from Rowling to highlight the corruption within the wizarding system. Similarly, Marx openly criticised the unfair treatments of capitalist governments and the upper class towards the lower one. Rowling applies ideas that aim for social equality and justice for her readers, which mirrors the theorist's support of the proletariat to stand up for their rights and develop a classless society grounded on a fair basis of collective ownership.

Moreover, the German thinker and sociologist envisioned a classless society as a goal of social justice where individuals are treated justly and culture, income and social status would vanish and would no longer determine the worth of individuals, but instead they would be determined by their achievements and contributions to society. This vision called individuals to stand up against social injustices and challenge the harsh systems.

Accordingly, in *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* in (1998), Harry and a group of friends formed a group called Dumbledore's Army to stand up against the unjust treatment and oppressive laws issued by Dolores Umbridge. Barrat Bethany argues in her thesis "The DA: (Dumbledore's Army) Resistance from Blow" (2012), that "Dolores was sent by the Ministry of Magic to replace Albus Dumbledore to control the students and assure strict laws". However, Umbridge was sent for a deeper purpose than that because she manipulated the truth and aimed to hide it from these students and even used violence against them to prevent them from revealing the truth or even thinking about it. During her welcoming feast in the school in the *Order of Phoenix* (2003), she gave a speech to students by stating the following:

The Ministry of Magic has always considered the education of young wizards and witches to be of vital importance...the Ministry believes that it is irresponsible to start a panic over something that it is simply not true. Let us not indulge in wild imagining or dangerous speculation. You have been told that a certain Dark Wizard has returned from the dead. This is a lie. There is nothing to fear, and you should not believe those who seek to frighten you with tales of his resurrection. We must trust in the Ministry and our well-established practices to keep us safe and secure. (Rowling, *Order of Phoenix* 212)

The passage shows that Umbridge and the Ministry of Magic do not solely care about students' education, since they did not interfere in Hogwarts's business until Voldemort's comeback. His comeback from the dead threatened their position in power. Therefore, they want to blind people from seeing the truth and believing it and would rather call it imaginations and dangerous speculation, instead of warning the young wizards and

witches and teaching them how to fight and secure their safety. “This is a lie” proves the new assigned teacher’s inner fear of losing power. Out of fear, she tries to convince herself that Voldemort did not come back to avoid thinking out of the consequences. Marx debates that the higher authorities of society attempt to deprive the proletariat of knowing the truth because it would threaten their survival of oppression unjust laws.

Following Marx’s ideologies, Rowling portrays the group of young wizards who challenges the Ministry and their regime as a symbol of unity and solidarity of lower classes who are urged to fight against the oppressive laws of capitalist systems and fight for their rights. Through her books, the author also invites her readers to fight for their rights and seek social justice by constantly wording it in the series through characters such as Albus Dumbledore’s famous saying: “it is not our abilities that show what we truly are, it is our choices” (Rowling, *Philosopher’s Stone* 258). In this quote, Joanne suggests that individuals’ choices determine who they are and that their worth does not solely rely on their talents. These words of Dumbledore match Marx’s call for the lower class to determine their worth in society and fight against the oppressive laws.

The relationship between Joanne’s fiction and Marx’s ideologies is not forthrightly presented. However, it could be examined through the resemblance of interpretations in their different fields. Moreover, Joanne’s declared support for the Labour Party can be aligned with Marx’s call for workers’ rights as mentioned before. Rowling also portrays the working class through the characters’ diverse backgrounds and tough experiences in the wizarding world. For instance, Severus Snape came from a humble background but manages to supposedly be a part of the elites and enjoy the benefits of being one, though he struggles to cope with the system and follow its rules.

Additionally, Rowling highlights the privilege enjoyed by the elite class of wizards, who have had easier opportunities and extensive governmental support in the magical realm, as a representation of the capitalists per Marxism. Cynthia Perri argues in her work titled, “Harry Potter & the Riddles of Political Ideology” (2015), that “though there is an issue of classism in the wizarding world, opportunities are quite equal for wizards and witches” (12). However, we can see how characters coming from more modest backgrounds like Ron Weasley and his siblings do not enjoy that type of privilege or support, instead they faced challenges and obstacles in order to achieve success. Despite the Weasleys’ purity of blood, yet their social status and income prevent them from living a peaceful life. In a conversation, Draco tells Ron: “My father told me all the Weasleys have red hair, freckles and more children than they can afford” (Rowling, *Philosopher’s Stone* 74). This idea resembles how the working class of modern Britain struggle to achieve great things in society and are always looked down at. Following that, Rowling reflects on Karl Marx’s ideologies concerning the capitalist system and the issue of class struggle and its effects on individuals.

Overall, this analysis of the relationship between Karl Marx’s ideologies and J.K. Rowling’s fiction allows us to examine how her complexities in modern Britain help her craft her work and call for social justice and equality. The series play a significant role in embodying some facets of modern British society by exploring various problems that individuals go through due to harsh laws and oppressive regimes such as class struggle and inner issues. Both Karl Marx’s ideas and Rowling’s series urge individuals to make decisions and change their realities.

### **III.2 Alienation, Classism and Identity Struggle in *Harry Potter*:**

Nowadays, families in modern Britain often find themselves scattered around and scrolling up and down their devices for hours and are less interested in reading (Segall 22-23). However, through the pages of The *Harry Potter* series a magical spell gets casted, which shifts their attention from their phones into the fascinating adventures happening in the wizarding world. The series had a significant influence beyond the world of literature, where it touches upon timeless ideas and reflections of reality that make its readers feel connected to it. The work reflects individuals' struggles through the characters' experiences with grief, discrimination and unjust treatment and it highlights the importance of overcoming such issues and fighting for rights under unfair circumstances.

Rowling includes social issues of alienation classism and identity struggle in her work by weaving a narrative that combines them together to add more relevance to the series and reflect reality. Alienation is translated through characters and their experiences as a challenge that they have to deal with in the magical realm, where they develop a feeling of estrangement from their community due to societal pressure and their constant attempt to cope with the events and changes in the wizarding world. Most characters in the series suffer from the sense of being alienated, starting with Harry who is constantly treated as an outsider in his home by the Dursleys. However, Rowling did not directly portray Harry as an alienated individual. Rather, Rowling issues alienation through Draco Malfoy. By analysing Draco's experience, we can understand how "Rowling expresses alienation in her work, since Malfoy demonstrates the inner conflicts of individuals in a hostile environment and the way it affects them" (Segall 18-21).

Furthermore, “Classism is also one of the essential issues that captures the attention of the series’ admirers, as it reflects their struggles and make them feel seen” (Lisman 42). Class in the wizarding world is based on a classification system that which divides wizards and witches based on their blood status and wealth. The wizards and witches who do not meet the expectations of the classification systems are more likely to face bad treatment and receive less chances. This division of class shows how distinction is unfair and how it affects people and their ways of seeing life. Rowling shows the importance of accepting different people in society and the negative influence of class division on individuals like Hermione Granger and family of the Weasleys.

On a similar note, the issue of identity struggle is also important in the series. “The author presents a magical world where things magically change with a simple wave of a hand, but the reality is not always magical and easy” (Littler 35). Additionally, Rowling also gives an image of an unfair society that causes its individuals to severely estrange themselves. This problem causes people to feel uncertain and question themselves and try to find a place to fit in. The story of Harry and how he suddenly discovers that he is a wizard and his connection with the person who killed his parents is the most appropriate example to strengthen these words. This event affects Harry’s experiences and makes him lost and very uncomfortable about himself.

The way alienation, classism and identity struggle are connected can be seen through the way they influence the characters’ experiences and influence their ideas. The author mixes them together to create a “narrative which reflects the complexities of individuals in real-life societies, as the interconnectedness is related to how each complexity paves the way for the other one” (Littler 44). Classism sets barriers between individuals’ interactions with each other and estrange them from their peers.

This estrangement also causes them to question their purpose and worth. The Muggle-born, Hermione Granger is a good example for that, because she gets mistreated for not having magical heritage. In order to avoid that, she eagerly tries to prove herself and mark her identity by academically working harder than anyone. Additionally, Malfoy feels confused about himself due to the stereotypes and expectations of the social division in his society, consequently he alienates himself from his peers and family. Furthermore, Harry also had his share when facing such issues, as he mostly feels confused and lost about his identity due to the expectations of people around him, which pushes him to estrange himself in several occasions.

Most notably, in *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* (2005), Rowling shows a different facet of her series. Within this volume she deals with Snape as a half-blood who struggles in the wizarding society by showcasing his journey in the magical realm. The character Severus Snape's experiences with isolation and alienation as revealed by Harry when he goes through Snape's memories and sees that Severus had a very troubled childhood and a shaky friendship with Lily Potter. According to Peter Appelbaum's work "The Great Snape Debate" (2008), "Severus 's shy character pushes him to distance himself" (16). However, Snape did have a shy character but that did not prevent him from making friends. In fact, his interactions and involvement with Dumbledore and the Death Eaters significantly affect him and alienate him from his fellow schoolmates and fellow professors including the ones from Slytherin. In her work Rowling describes him as a very dark character, by narrating: "His eyes were black like Hagrid's, but they had none of Hagrid's warmth. They were cold and empty and made you think of dark tunnels" (Rowling, *Philosopher's Stone* 103). Through that, we can see how the British author always attempts to portray Snape as a complex character with a dark past. Despite his

talent in the magical arts, Severus is bullied and discriminated so he tries to seek acceptance and recognition by joining the forces of the Dark Lord. Though he does not approve of it and is constantly questioning his loyalty, he joins them to seek a purpose and identity. Through that, Rowling shows how individuals struggles with society such as classism are related to their personal complexities like identity crisis and alienation, as evident in Snape's experiences. Severus faces disadvantages due to his humble background, which causes him to have a very complicated relationship with Sirius Black and James Potter who frequently bullied him and made fun of his family's unwell financial being. Accordingly, he develops a feeling of alienation and he distances himself from everyone around him in the school. Then as he grew older, the issue of being a double agent causes Severus to have mixed loyalties and question his true identity.

Rowling makes her series more interesting by dealing with diverse experiences and interpretations of characters in the wizarding world. The author interconnects the dynamics of being left out such as alienation, class and identity struggle in her series through characters' experiences. Moreover, the characters' struggles and hardships allow readers to feel closer to these experiences, as the complexities get explained and treated. By dealing with issues like feeling alone, being in different classes and going through a journey to find out who they are as individuals, Rowling adds more depth and reality to the context of her magical series.

### **III.2.1 Classism in Rowling's Wizarding World:**

The *Harry Potter* series deals with several social issues and among these is the difference between social classes, known as classism. In this part, we deal with the way J.K. Rowling represents this issue in her work. Michaela Medved'ová in her work titled,

“Magic is Might: Racism and Social Inequality in the *Harry Potter* series” (2018) debates that “classism in the magical universe describes the mindset of some wizards concerning the standards of being considered worthy as a wizard or a witch based on their magical might and abilities” (12). However, we can see that Rowling’s representation of classes is more apparent through the social hierarchy of blood status and not magical abilities and how magical creatures are treated in the wizarding society. This idea reflects the real world’s social unfairness through pure-blood wizards’ arrogance and prejudice against Muggle-borns.

Some wizards believe that their bloodline determines their power and position in the magical realm. Rowling refers to this belief as “blood purity”, in other words the purer a wizard or a witch’s ancestors and parents are the more they are appreciated. This class of wizards refer to themselves as pure-bloods, where they consider blood purity as a highly essential aspect to receive respect and to choose who to associate themselves with, such as the Malfoys and the Blacks who are very proud with their blood heritage. These pure-bloods mostly look down at those with less valuable blood heritage and consider them as dirty and treat them badly.

In *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* (2003), Sirius Black shares with Harry his experience of growing up in the Sirius family and the toxic influence of their obsession with blood purity. Through Sirius’ experience, Rowling shows how some pure-bloods are different than their peers. During a conversation at 12 Grimmauld place, which is the ancestral home of the Black family, Sirius tells Harry that:

I despised every member of my family: my parents, with their insufferable obsession with blood purity, were convinced that being a Black conferred upon

you a status akin to royalty. From a young age, I was inundated with their toxic rhetoric, taught to believe that those with pure magical ancestry were inherently superior to Muggle-borns and half-bloods. The very mention of our family name was accompanied by an air of arrogance and entitlement, as if being a Black bestowed upon us some divine right to rule over others. (Rowling, *Order of the Phoenix* 450)

In this quote, Sirius talks about how his family members think that they are better than others because they have pure and magical blood, which somehow crowns them as royalty. From a very young age, Black was taught that families like his are better than those with Muggle parents or mixed ones and that just the thought of hearing his family name would automatically make him feel like he has the right to be in charge of everyone else. Black expresses his strong feelings of hatred towards his family and their beliefs. Through that, Rowling represents the notion of classism among people and how it is celebrated by the wizarding families who believe in their superiority over others due to their blood status, such as those of Salazar Slytherin. Being one of the four founders of Hogwarts, Salazar strongly believes in this ideology as he did not approve of the idea of Muggle-borns joining the school. Thus, the house of Slytherin only accepts those with magical-heritage and no Muggle-born is welcomed by Slytherins. This idea is supported by the majority of this house's students such as Draco Malfoy.

Sirius Black challenges his family and their beliefs and rebels against them by running away from home, which causes his family to abandon him. However, challenging this ideology of blood purity is not always easy for others as it creates divisions and tensions between pure-bloods, half-bloods and muggle-borns and even though the

classification system is unfair, many individuals feel pressured to follow it because it is what they have always known.

The British author uses characters in her fiction to represent her and the middle social class in many ways. In the series, the middle class people are called half-blood wizards and witches. Half-bloods have one magical parent and one non-magical one. Rowling states: “And the meaning of half-blood became clear. It meant anyone with Muggle parentage” (Rowling, *Order of Phoenix* 142). They are neither considered as pure-bloods nor as Muggle-borns, which often leaves them clueless and lost, especially when they do not feel welcomed by both sides. The pure-blood supremacists may disdain them or look down at them for not being pure enough while the Muggle-borns may treat them speciously because they have magical heritage in them.

As previously said, the *Half-Blood Prince* volume symbolises the inner conflicts that Snape faces as a half-blood wizard. Snape serves as a metaphor to represent the majority of his class. The wizard admits that being one is not an easy task when he addresses Harry and tells him the following:

Being a pure-blood doesn't automatically grant you an easy life, Potter. In fact, I've witnessed numerous instances where wizards believe their lineage gives them superiority, leading to unnecessary conflicts and troubles. But being a half-blood isn't any simpler. You find yourself caught between two worlds, never fully embraced by either side. It's a perpetual battle to assert your worth, to demonstrate your belonging, while constantly grappling with the expectations and biases of others. The struggles of being neither fully pure-blood nor fully Muggle-born can

be daunting, requiring resilience and determination to navigate the complexities of identity and acceptance. (Rowling, *Half-Blood Prince* 280)

According to the quote, Rowling talks about the struggles of being a half-blood in the magical realm and that being born as one does not necessarily make life easier as they are not accepted by either one of the other classes. Rowling represents half-bloods under the umbrella of classism to show the diversity and the importance of acceptance and treating people with tolerance, regardless of where they come from or who their parents are. The author believes that this class's being is essential to her story and to maintain balance in the magical realm. She uses characters like Snape, Harry and even the greatest wizard in the magical realm, Albus Dumbledore. The author narrates: "Dumbledore is the greatest sorcerer in the world" (Rowling, *Philosopher's Stone* 52). This shows that everyone has their own unique way of turning their struggles into a way to achieve great things. Additionally, she teaches those who oppose such mindset in modern Britain through her work that diversity is strength and it is a must to accept our differences and aim towards an inclusive and diverse society.

Throughout the series, conflicts between pure-bloods and Muggle-borns are very crucial. Lauren Littler debates in her work, "Pure-blood, Muggle-born, Why Does It Matter?" that "Muggle-borns are witches and wizards born to Muggle (non-magical) parents, who discover at a certain point of their lives that they have magical powers that allow them to enter the wizarding world and that they should overthink about their status" (12). However, in her work she underestimated the importance of the unjust treatment that they receive in the wizarding world. These wizards are mostly the first magical people in their families. Therefore, they are often treated badly by pure-bloods who disdain them

and do not tolerate their existence in the wizarding world, as they view them as outsiders and unworthy because they do not have magical heritage like them and the half-bloods. The pure-bloods constantly remind the Muggle-borns and half-bloods of their worth which make them feel inferior and unwanted.

The class of Muggle-borns is imagined by Rowling to reflect the discriminated minorities in modern Britain. Through characters like Hermione Granger, the author shows how it is important to accept the differences of others as Hermione is one the smartest witches in her school, yet she still faces prejudice and discrimination mainly by Draco Malfoy who constantly insults her by offensively calling her “filthy little Mudblood” to indicate on her impurity and inferiority and suggesting that her magical abilities are filthy and muddy.

In the *Harry Potter* series, blood purity is very crucial. It is treated as a way to measure how magical individuals or their families are, which somehow makes sense in the wizarding world: yet, it is unfair when we see it through the lens of British society, such as the huge population of immigrants who came in 1998. Moreover, Rowling utilises the blood purity system to show how some individuals are unfairly judged because of their backgrounds.

### **III.2.2 Societal Discrimination and Enslavement in *Harry Potter*'s Magical Realm:**

In the magical world of *Harry Potter*, societal discrimination and enslavement are emphasised by Rowling to highlight unfair treatment based on individuals' social backgrounds and identities. This discrimination affects various of her fictional characters and it shapes their experiences and opportunities in the wizarding society. Societal

discrimination and enslavement in the magical realm take several shapes mainly through the exploitation of house-elves, the social hierarchy based on blood status and the prejudice against werewolves and magical minorities. Moreover, this notion is very important in the *Harry Potter* series because it shows to what extent can social injustice and unfairness affect various groups of people.

House-elves are magical creatures who serve the wealthy wizarding families, their tasks are mostly related to performing house chores such as cleaning, cooking and serving their masters. They are often treated poorly and are enslaved to do various tasks without being paid or given any appreciation. This treatment is very unfortunate especially when they cannot control it because they are bound by powerful magical contracts that force them to obey their rules, unless they set them free. The *Harry Potter* author writes: And bond to serve one house and one family forever... if they call the house-elf they have to come..." (Rowling, *Goblet of Fire* 442).

Additionally, these creatures are mostly seen as inferiors due to their willingness of serving their masters without complaining. They are regarded as helpers instead of individuals with rights and feelings. Rowling represents these creatures through Dobby who is first introduced in the second volume of the series as an elf who serves the Malfoys and is badly treated by them as evident in his words: "... Dobby had to iron his hands, sir. ... Dobby had to punish himself, sir" (Rowling, *Chamber of Secrets* 154). Through these words, the author uses the mistreatment of elves to draw parallels with the real-world experiences of immigrants who represent minorities and low wage-paid workers in modern Britain. This interpretation of Rowling's serves as a reminder of the unfair system

which challenges the modern British minorities and some of the unfortunate complexities they have to go through.

Other than house-elves, werewolves are also victims of prejudice and mistreatment in the magical world because they are viewed as barbaric, violent and savages. In the *Harry Potter* series, Professor Remus Lupin is portrayed as a kind and an intelligent character who misfortunately happens to be a werewolf. Remus is also a skilled and compassionate about his profession as a professor at Hogwarts. He is a very loved and cherished figure at school, as evident in a conversation with Harry where he tells him: “You’re the best Defense Against Dark Arts teacher we’ve had” (Rowling, *Prisoner of Azkaban* 306). Furthermore, Rowling’s depiction of werewolves as victims of discrimination and stereotypes parallels immigrants and individuals with special needs who have been majorly labelled as violent and dangerous. Lupin’s character shows that individuals with differences can valuably contribute to society but it is those in society who refuse their contribution. Lupin states: “...they will not want a werewolf teaching their children...” (Rowling, *Prisoner of Azkaban* 305). This depiction of werewolves serves as a commentary on the challenges that individuals go through in modern British society and how their contributions are unwelcomed despite their brilliant skills. This idea also encourages the readers to emphasize with this class of people and neglect social unfairness and all shapes of stereotypes.

### **III.3 A Marxist Analysis of Rowling’s Characters:**

In her thesis, “Marxist Analysis of *Harry Potter*” (2014), Mariam Hussein only focuses on the *Philosopher’s Stone* (1997) and its social themes in a broad way by using

Marxist ideas. In her work she deals with social classes and their representation in the wizarding world. In contrast, in this work we go beyond that. We apply specific Marxist theories like alienation, identity crisis and classism on individual characters. We believe that through Marxism we are allowed us to understand not only themes or representations but we can also see how characters and ideas are shaped in the seven books. In other words, we go beyond just analysing the experiences of characters like Harry James Potter, Draco Lucius Malfoy and Hermione Jean Granger, who is known as the Muggle-born. But we see how their complexities and perspectives reflect modern British society and its individuals' struggles and connect them to Rowling herself. By doing that, we can learn more about how fictional characters and experiences can illuminate us about the real world.

### **III.3.1 Draco Malfoy through the lens of Alienation Theory:**

Draco Lucius Malfoy, born to Lucius Malfoy and Narcissa Malfoy (born Black) on June 5, 1980. Draco is first introduced by Rowling in *The Philosopher's Stone* (1997) as a character on the Hogwarts express, which is the train that takes young wizards and witches to Hogwarts School of Wizardry and Witchcraft. Rowling describes him as:

He was a boy with sleek blond hair, stormy gray eyes, and a pointed, sneering face. He stood tall with an air of arrogance, his posture exuding confidence and superiority. Dressed in expensive robes of black and silver, he looked every bit the epitome of wealth and privilege. As he surveyed the other students on the Hogwarts Express with a disdainful expression, it was clear that he considered himself above them all. (Rowling, *Philosopher's Stone* 81)

This quote gives us a detailed description of Draco's appearance and character. It paints him as an arrogant, snobby individual who disdains others and reinforces himself from his peers through the way he carries himself with confidence, which is what a typical pure-blood would do. Furthermore, his clothing proves his family's wealthy status in the wizarding world. These few lines give readers an overview about what to expect from Malfoy's character and behaviour throughout the *Harry Potter* series.

Upon his arrival to the school, Malfoy gets sorted into Slytherin. This event is a very important one in establishing his character and social status in the wizarding world. He limits his interactions and friendships to his fellow housemates and he becomes closely associated with Slytherin house and its reputation in producing dark wizards and witches. Moreover, his association with individuals who think the same way as him strengthen his social circle. Throughout the first four school years, Draco is painted as a pompous, talkative child who is fully convinced and supportive of his family's superiority and tells his fellow pure-blood friends; Vincent Crabbe and Gregory Goyle, about everything that goes in his mind. However, as the series progresses Draco's character changes and becomes dark and complicated because of the pressure and expectations placed upon him by his family and his alleged loyalty to the Dark Lord.

In *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, Draco's loyalty to his family and their principles evolves hugely. Because he officially joins the dark forces and gets ordered by Lord Voldemort to kill the headmaster of Hogwarts to prove his loyalty. Draco tries to find out how to accomplish his mission, so he seeks to repair an old vanishing cabinet in the school, which has a twin one in the Borgin and Burkes shop to allow dark wizards and witches to enter the school easily. By doing that, Draco distances himself from his close

friends and spends most of his time in the school's old girls' bathroom repairing the cabinet, where he expresses his sense of alienation during a conversation with Moaning Myrtle and conveys his feelings; Rowling writes: "I don't need your help, Myrtle! I do not need anyone's help...Can't you see? It's happening everywhere, Potter, the Dark Lord's influence is spreading like wild fire, creeping into every corner and every shadow...we're all under attack, every one of us The sooner you accept that, the better. So just leave me alone!" (Rowling, *Half-Blood Prince* 428).

According to the alienation theory, the quote evidently conveys the character's sense of estrangement and separation from others. The speaker feels overwhelmed by the powerful figure, Voldemort, and expresses his suspicion of people around him. The statement "I do not need anyone's help" strongly highlights the dynamic of alienation where according to Marx, alienated individuals feel disconnected from their society and see themselves as separate beings from everyone else.

Through a Marxist lens of alienation, Draco sees himself as a victim of large social forces caused by his parents' expectations and Voldemort's deadly demands. At the early beginning of the series, he unconsciously develops a sense of alienation, where he disconnects himself from the unworthy ones. However, this feeling gets more and more complicated as he grows older and becomes deeply involved in Voldemort's circle. His behaviours such as trying to repair the cabinet and distancing himself from his surroundings, all contribute to his increasing isolation and sense of confusion. In the Astronomy Tower of Hogwarts, Draco tries to accomplish his mission and kill Dumbledore but he hesitates. Rowling writes: "But at that moment, Draco Malfoy's wand was shaking so badly that he could hardly hold his wand steady and there was sweat

running down his face; he looked as though he were going to be sick” (Rowling, *Half-Blood Prince* 563). The author portrays Draco as an alienated and a hesitant individual who cannot make decisions. This shows how alienated individuals find it difficult to be assertive in making decisions out of fear of being judged and not fitting in society.

Additionally, Malfoy’s internal struggles and contradictory loyalties contribute to his feelings of alienation from others, where he feels confused and torn about what he thinks he should do and what he actually wants to do. Such thoughts make him feel scared, guilty and lonely because he finds it hard to open up about how he feels, not even to his two close friends or parents. By doing that, he cuts himself from everyone. According to Marx’s alienation theory, individuals alienate themselves due to the oppressive structures in society. Similarly, Draco feels oppressed by Voldemort’s orders and his family’s expectations and because of that he finds it difficult to connect with others. Rowling shows how powerful people and oppressive structures can control and hurt individuals.

Another quote that reflects Draco’s alienation with Albus Dumbledore who tries to make him feel less guilty about killing him. Rowling (2005) writes: “I don’t want your help! Don’t you understand? I have to do this... I have to kill you... or he’s going to kill me and my family... I’m sorry... I’m so sorry...” (565). Through these words, we find Malfoy expressing his senses of desperation and powerlessness because of the struggles of deep alienation he felt. The repetition of “I have to”, shows how much helpless and guilty he feels about the situation. Also it highlights his mixed feelings and how he feels like he is in a dilemma and has no other choice. The repetition of the “I’m so sorry” statement shows his inner struggles and guilt, where he knows that what he is about to do is wrong yet he is forced to do it out of fear of his own safety. Once again, Draco insists

on not receiving any help even in the toughest moments. This shows how much he feels separated and isolated from others. Yet, more importantly and much more badly, the expectations of his parents and Voldemort followers estrange him from people around him.

Under Marxist's thought, Draco tries to respond to his alienation by trying to have control over what happens because he feels like he has no power otherwise. Draco's labour at school as a member of Slytherin House might not involve typical proletarian work, but under by using Marxism, we can explain Draco's efforts to exercise influence over others differently. This can be seen as a way in which he seeks ownership over outcomes and to respond to the feeling of alienation from the system of power that control his life. His attempts are often illustrative of seeking control where he feels powerless. Rowling (2005) narrates: "the more people he could save with it, the more they'd like him" (273). This shows how though Draco does not serve as a labourer but he thinks about doing good deeds to gain approval and admiration, which totally goes against what he was and raised upon.

Draco's feelings of isolation from his society and his life in the wizarding world reflect Marx's theory of alienation and its effects on individuals. Rowling uses this idea through Draco's story in her series. She utilises him to show how individuals feel in tough societies where things change rapidly and unfairly. Through Draco, Rowling aims to reflect on a broader aspect and reflect the effect of harsh societies and rapid changes on individuals, especially those of modern Britain due to the shift of a new capitalist system under a new ruling party (Labour).

### III.3.2 Harry Potter's Experiences of Identity Crisis and Self-Alienation:

Following the previous chapter, identity crisis and self-alienation occur when an individual feels uncertain and confused about who they are. In other words, they feel like a lost piece of a puzzle that cannot find a place to fit it. Individuals who suffer from identity crisis do not only separate themselves from their surroundings but they also find it hard to identify themselves, purpose and value. In the *Harry Potter* series, we witness Harry's journey and his struggles to find out who he is as a person and as a wizard. Harry finds it quite tough to recognise himself in the light of his fame, legacy and Lord Voldemort.

Harry James Potter is the protagonist of the *Harry Potter* series which is named after him. He was born to James Potter (pure-blood) and Lily Evans (a Muggle-born) on July 31, 1980. Before his birth, his parents met when they were aged eleven at Hogwarts. Both were sorted into Gryffindor and became good friends and their friendship developed throughout the years. Eventually, they got married shortly after their graduation when they were both in their early twenties. However, as introduced in the first volume of the series, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* in 1997, their story did not last long because "they were brutally murdered by the Dark Lord on October 31, 1981 in their home in Godric's Hallow when Harry was only one" (Rowling, *Philosopher's Stone* 8-9). Voldemort targeted James and Lily Potter mainly because of Harry who became known as the "Boy who lived". He became famously known for surviving the killing curse, Avada Kedavra, because of his mother's sacrificial protection.

After his parents' death, Professor Dumbledore sends Rubeus Hagrid to take Harry and rescue him from the ashes and take him to his remaining family in the Muggle world.

Harry was left on the doorstep of the Dursley residence, where his aunt Petunia Evans, her husband Vernon Dursley and their son Dudley live. Harry was accompanied with a letter explaining his parents' death and a huge scar on his forehead. Rowling (1997) states: "Harry Potter lived with his aunt, uncle and cousin because his parents were dead. He had spent ten miserable years with the Dursleys, never understanding why strange things happened when he was angry or scared" (14). On his eleventh birthday, Harry receives his Hogwarts letter and gets exposed to his truth.

In the sorting ceremony, which takes time and place on the first day of school in Hogwarts, Harry silently pleads the sorting hat not to sort him into Slytherin as he states: "Not Slytherin, not Slytherin" (Rowling, *Philosopher's Stone* 94). According to Marx's self-alienation theory, this moment shows that the young boy wants to create his own story, separate from the dark reputation of the Slytherin house and the legacy of Voldemort. Additionally, self-alienated individuals try so hard to prove themselves and make their own stories at a very early age. During his first year, Rowling paints Harry as an excited child who feels amazed and lucky for learning magic, yet as soon as things dangerously deviate throughout the series, Harry realises that there is no way to escape from the connection he has with the Dark Lord. Everyone in the wizarding world recognises his scar and its story and expect him to live up to it.

As the series progresses, Harry's journey gets more complicated because he starts learning more about his life through strangers and prophecies. In *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* (2000), Rowling shows the protagonist's inner struggles and conflicts through the Triwizard Tournament. This tournament is a competition between three schools of magic around Europe. Wizards and witches are given the platform to win the

competition and seek eternal glory. Harry gets forced into the tournament, though he did not sign up for it because he was only fourteen of age. Following that, the teenage boy starts to be suspicious over everyone around him, including himself and he questions his authority and control over his own life. Harry states: “I didn’t ask to be put in the tournament...no one would’ve made me if they hadn’t been trying to kill me...I don’t want eternal glory” (Rowling, *Goblet of Fire* 342). According to Marx, Harry expresses his anger and feelings about being forced into the competition. The line “I don’t want eternal glory” shows that he rejects the idea of seeking fame and living up to the pressure that society has put upon him. Consequently, even his relationship with his dearest friend Ron Weasley gets affected. Rowling’s narratives reflect Marx’s theory, with how individuals who suffer from identity struggle sense about themselves and question their purpose and desires and push their dearest people away. With Harry’s case, he would have probably wanted to compete and seek eternal glory if he was not labelled as the “Boy who lived” and pressured to achieve wonders.

Additionally, the fifth volume of the series explores Voldemort’s true intentions behind his desire to murder Potter and his parents. In *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* (2003), Rowling reveals the truth about the tight connection that holds Harry and Voldemort. The prophecy states:

The one with the power to vanquish the Dark Lord approaches... born to those who have thrice defied him, born as the seventh month dies... and the Dark Lord will mark him as his equal, but he will have power the Dark Lord knows not... and either must die at the hand of the other for neither can live while the other

survives... the one with the power to vanquish the Dark Lord will be born as the seventh month dies... (Rowling, *Order of Phoenix* 742)

This quote highlights that Harry and Voldemort are heavily linked which sets the stage for a deep identity crisis for Harry. The prophecy puts a huge burden on the young boy, where a big responsibility weighs on his young shoulders and everyone around him expects him to defeat a very old and skilled wizard. The prophecy challenges Harry's sense of purpose as it reveals that his whole existence might have only happened to end someone else's. Similarly, Marx argues that self-alienation and identity struggle result from the pressure of society and oppressive, societal structure that are exemplified by Rowling through the expectations of the wizarding world upon Harry and Voldemort's oppression.

Being a half-blood, Potter develops a deep attachment to a potions textbook that says: "This book in the property of *the Half-Blood Prince*" (Rowling, *Half-Blood Prince* 114). The book helps him excel in Potions class, but instead of seeing it as a source of academic improvement, Potter becomes too connected to the mysterious book and seeks identity in the half-blood prince's book. Rowling narrates:

Harry was finding it almost impossible to resist the temptation to take out the Half-Blood Prince's book and start reading through all the additional notes and instructions written in the margins. He was bringing it with him everywhere in his bag, and simply taking it out and opening it at random moments when he could pretend to be looking for something else. Hermione was increasingly exasperated with him, but Harry had never been more interested in learning Potions. (Rowling, *Half-Blood Prince* 238)

In the quote, Rowling shows how Harry becomes so attached to the book and is constantly taking it everywhere with him because it became a source of inspiration and influence in his journey. Similarly, Marx's self-alienation theory argues that individuals who suffer from identity struggle and experience difficulties in understanding their purpose, are most likely to seek alternative sources of identity and purpose. Through that, Rowling addresses modern British citizens who see it hard to find themselves amidst the rapid changes in society. Therefore, they relate themselves to social classes, political parties and songs.<sup>11</sup>

In *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* (2007), Harry finds out that he is connected to Voldemort more than ever. In the last volume, Potter and his two friends, Ron and Hermione, go on a long journey to destroy the Dark Lord's Hocruxes, which are objects in dark and unforbidden magic where a wizard or a witch hides parts of their soul and splits it into pieces by killing others and hides these pieces of the soul in objects to achieve immortality. Through time, Harry realises that his mission to defeat the dark wizard is very hard after he discovers his secret about the Hocruxes. Following that, Harry looks at Dumbledore's picture on the wall and states: "I've been wondering why I can hear them, the Hocruxes... it feels like I've known the reason for some time now" (Rowling, *Deathly Hallows* 553). By that the boy finds out that the reason why he feels so connected to Voldemort and that his identity is nothing more than an object that must be sacrificed so the Dark Lord can be finally defeated. Rowling shows how Harry knew all along but he kept on lying to himself, when she narrates: "All those times he had

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<sup>11</sup> The rise of Britpop in modern Britain and their powerful music, pushed individuals to expect lyrics and speeches given by political leaders to define them, speak out for them and give them a sense of identity and belonging.

thought that it was about to happen and escaped” (Rowling, *Deathly Hallows* 691). This resembles how Marx describes self-alienated individuals’ behaviours when they see themselves through the lenses of others. By that, Rowling aims to show how individuals in modern Britain with the rise of Britpop behave in a rebellious way and tend to be so obsessive and create their whole personalities about musical acts and public figures. Where in fact, their behaviours are a disguise to avoid behaving according to their own desires and wants. However, even if they do remove the disguise they would not know how to act, because they have been hiding their true identities for so long until they lost the road back and they no longer know who they are, what they want or what they need.

In the epic conclusion of the series, the scale tipped in favour of good and Harry Potter defeats Voldemort. By that, the young boy gains the obedience of and control over the Elder Wand, which is the most powerful and eldest wand in the wizarding world. Instead of keeping the wand, Harry decides to break it and throw it. Through that, Rowling utilises this behaviour to symbolise Harry’s decline of power and Voldemort’s oppression. According to Marx’s theory and by throwing the wand, Potter would finally be able to create his own journey and identify himself. Additionally, Marx (1938) states: “Men make their own history” (23). He argues that if individuals want to understand who they truly are and create their own stories, they must break free from the expectations of the society’s norms and oppressive rules. Eventually, individuals would be able to shape their lives and find answers about their truth. And that is exactly what Harry’s journey is all about.

### **III.3.3 Situating Hermione Granger in Class Theory Context:**

According to Marx, class theory is how capitalist societies are divided into social groups based on their relationship with means of production. Marx mentions two main classes: the bourgeoisie who control resources and their distribution and the proletariat who work for the bourgeoisie. This distinction leads to struggles and tensions in society. Additionally, this theory looks at how economic and social factors affect individuals' experiences and opportunities.

Hermione Jean Granger is a Muggle-born witch who was born on September 19, 1979. She was first introduced by Rowling in the *Philosopher's Stone* (1997), on the Hogwarts Express where she eagerly introduces herself to impress her classmates with her knowledge about classes, spells and other magical crafts. Rowling (1997) writes: "She had a bossy sort of voice, lots of bushy brown hair, and rather large front teeth. It was no wonder that people often called her an insufferable know-it-all...behind her confident facade lay a keen intellect and an unwavering determination" (77-78). In the lines, Rowling exposes Hermione's engaging character and subtly aims at the character's need to prove herself to avoid class discrimination in the wizarding world. Granger works very hard to earn respect, appreciation and recognition for her abilities and intelligence. This idea reflects Marx's class theory, where some individuals from lower classes try hard to prove themselves to fit in with the higher classes.

In the second volume of the series, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (1998), strange things start happening as students started being petrified by a mysterious creature. This creature is believed to be a Basilisk, which is a mythological creature that resembles a huge lizard. The Basilisk was hidden in a mysterious chamber by Salazar

Slytherin when he left the school after he had an argument with Godric Gryffindor over Muggle-borns' legitimacy to study magic. Slytherin hated Muggle-borns so he believed that years after, a true heir of Slytherin would come to Hogwarts and release the creature to purge the school from the unworthy ones, mainly Muggle-born students.

During the unfortunate events that take place in school, some of the Slytherin students who reflect the bourgeoisie by Marx praised such action. At first, Draco Malfoy feels worried due to the sudden attacks on students. However, as the story progresses his fears transform into a sense of arrogance and superiority, as the creature only attacks those of impure blood. Marx mentions that the higher classes merely feel worried about the proletariat in dangerous situations, especially when they do not directly affect them.

Being a Muggle-born, Granger faces unfair treatment during her second school year. Malfoy hugely offends her and calls her a "Mudblood". Hence, Rowling narrates:

Some wizards like Malfoy's family who think they're better than everyone else because they're what people call pure-blood. Ron gave a small burp, and a single slug fell into his outstretched hand. He into the basin and continued...I mean, the rest of us know it doesn't make any difference at all. Look at Neville Longbottom ... he's pure-blood and he can hardly stand a cauldron the right way up. (Rowling, *Chamber of Secrets* 101)

In the quote, Rowling points how pure-bloods discriminate and disdain Muggle-borns. The quote states that having pure-blood parents does not make a person better than others or better at magic. They mention Neville Longbottom who is a pure-blood wizard but struggles with simple magic tasks. The fictional situation is similar to what Karl Marx

talked about in his class theory, where individuals who belong to higher classes tend to look down at those who come from the working class. Through the lens of pure-bloods and the bourgeoisie in real world, Muggle-born and the proletariat are not worthy enough to be classified in the same social structure as them. Through that, Rowling aims to show how it is unfair to classify people based on their background, wealth and social class. The author addresses modern British people to treat everyone fairly mainly immigrants, people of colour and the working class's individuals. Rowling wants her readers to question unjust systems and their beliefs and work towards a society where everyone is given a fair chance to prove their abilities. As exemplified by her portrayal of Hermione as a very smart witch, though she does not live in the magical world.

Additionally, in the *Deathly Hallows* (2007), Hermione gets extremely discriminated due to her blood status which represents her class in the wizarding world. A group of Death Eaters escort her with Harry and Ron to the Malfoy Manor to be checked. Therefore, one of the men asks her: "What's your blood status?", "Half-Blood." said Hermione (449). Through that, the young witch shows her fear posed from the fear of the dark wizards' obsession with blood purity. Therefore, she hides her identity and uses the term "Half-blood" instead though it still acknowledges her as a non-pure blood witch. She decides to not explicitly reveal her identity. Karl Marx issued that the proletariat in society attempt to hide their identities to escape the societal oppressions out of fear of being discriminated. However, that did not save her, as a very loyal witch to the Dark Lord named Bellatrix Lestrange (born Black) cruelly tortures Granger at the Malfoy Manor by using the unforgivable Cruciatu curse, a spell that inflicts pain upon its victim.

Following that, Bellatrix constantly refers to Hermione as a “Mudblood”, which is a very common and offensive slur used by pure-blood wizards and witches to demean those with Muggle heritage. The dark witch’s behaviours show her rooted belief in blood purity and superiority. She uses the offensive slur to humiliate her and degrade her, knowing that Hermione is the smartest witch of her age and the most outstanding student at Hogwarts. Bellatrix also disdains Ron for associating with Granger, as she states: “Blood traitor is next to Mudblood in my book” (Rowling, *Deathly Hallows* 462). The term “Blood traitor” refers to wizards and witches from pure-blood families, but they associate themselves with other classes and refuse to follow the ideologies of blood purity held by the wizarding community. In Marx terms, the bourgeoisie maintain their power through solidarity within their own class. The notion of associating with the proletariat is regarded as a threat that weakens their position in society. Just as the bourgeoisie in modern Britain who surround themselves with people who belong to the same social class as them.

Furthermore, Hermione’s experience and rebellion against the oppressive structures by working very hard and fighting the dark forces, embodies Karl Marx’s vision of a classless society. Marx asked the proletariat to be proud of who they are and to work towards a fair society, where they get credited for their hard work. Through that, Rowling wants her readers to challenge the norms of modern British society and its capitalist, oppressive laws against the lower class. She also highlights the danger of developing a very racist mindset that could lead to violence, as evident during the late 1990s and early 2000s in Britain.

### **III.3.4 Characters' Fictionalisation as a Reflection of J.K. Rowling's Experiences of Modern Britain:**

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, Joanne Rowling became very famous and wealthy for writing the *Harry Potter* series. During this era, Rowling became one of the most influential authors in Britain and the world. However, life was not always easy for her as she went through hard times before becoming the person we know today. At the age of 25, the author lost her mother, Anne Rowling, whom she had a very strong relationship with, and around the same time, she got divorced and was left with an infant daughter to raise. As a new mother and a lower-class woman, Rowling faced many financial difficulties and was living on welfare benefits. In an interview with the Guardian (2012), she said: "I was as poor as it's possible to be in modern Britain without being homeless" (16). Despite all the struggles she went through, Rowling kept writing and her series became very appreciated and loved all around the world.

Rowling had admitted that the books' character and settings are inspired from several people and places she knows in real-life. She stated in an interview with Herald Scotland (2012) that "The idea that we could have a child who escapes from the confines of the adult world and goes somewhere where he has power, both literally and metaphorically, really appealed to me" (12). Her words show that the author wants to escape reality by referring to it as "the confines of the adult world". It reads that she is not too fond of her experience in the adult world and its responsibilities, which caused her struggles and complexities like the ones she dealt with.

After graduating from the University of Exeter, Rowling faced a period of difficulties and uncertainty. She was unsure of what direction she should take in her life.

This led her to take on various roles, where she worked as a researcher, bilingual secretary and a teacher in Portugal as well. Furthermore, she could not figure out her purpose and identify herself as a person. The author felt lost and different in her society. This period of uncertainty, left the British author helpless and lost. Additionally, Rowling's search for identity was complicated by personal hardships which challenged and tested her strength.

Likewise, Rowling and the character Harry Potter whom she shares the same birthdate with, struggles from a deep identity issue in the series. He grew up as an orphan in a harsh environment. Hence, he feels like an outcast in the Muggle world and later in the wizarding world. He finds it difficult to understand his true identity and place in the world. Initially, he seems to be so certain about his rejection of the Slytherin house, but as the series progresses he begins to question whether he should have left the sorting hat to sort him there. This narrative is quite similar to Rowling's constant change of jobs and uncertainty about her career. When comparing it to Harry's constant questioning about his purpose we can see how she shares a piece of her troubling journey of identity struggle through her work's protagonist to issue the complexity of identity crisis and the issue of belonging.

Being a lower-class single mother in a capitalist modern British society during late modern Britain markedly affected the author. Rachel Gillette mentions in her article, "From Welfare to One of the World's Wealthiest Women" (2015), that "Before achieving success as a writer, Rowling faced financial challenges and social discrimination because of her class" (11). Therefore, her experience with classism and alienation from society influenced her work. Rowling expressed her feelings about her state at the time, saying that "Poverty entails fear and stress and sometimes depression. It means a thousand petty

humiliation and hardships”. In the quote, she talks about how her financial and social state influenced her psychologically. Additionally, “Petty humiliation” highlights her rejection of pity and stereotypes of classism. In this vein, Rowling portrayed Hermione as an independent, lower class (Muggle-born) and strong female in the wizarding world. This reflects Rowling’s own experience and the story of her success despite all the difficulties she went through.

Furthermore, Rowling’s experience with depression played a remarkable role in her decision to distance herself from her surroundings and society. She isolated herself from family members and friends. Even after her success, the author limited her social interactions and public events. This story of hers could be apparent through Draco Malfoy’s experience of alienation in the wizarding society. Both Rowling and Draco’s alienation results from the society’s expectations upon them, where the author’s family pressured her to write and placed heavy expectations upon her to be a successful author. On the other hand, Draco’s family also expects him to live up to their beliefs.

Joanne Rowling’s journey in modern Britain, and her success story, surely proves that “Happiness can be found, even in the darkest of times, if only one remembers to turn on the light” (Rowling, *Prisoner of Azkaban* 432). Her story teaches us that no matter how hard things get, there is always a way to find the light and seek a way out of the darkness. Additionally, we can see how Rowling’s life experience influenced her series, where her life resembles a complicated puzzle game and the *Harry Potter*’s characters are the missing pieces that explain it.

## **Conclusion:**

In conclusion, chapter three has provided an explanation about the connectedness between Karl Marx's ideologies and J.K. Rowling's narratives in the *Harry Potter* series. We came to conclusion that her narratives embody his social ideologies through characters' complexities and struggles in the wizarding world. Additionally, by dealing with the social dynamics of alienation, classism and identity struggle and their interconnectedness in the series, we have found that these dynamics are inclusive, as exemplified by Severus Snape. Furthermore, through Marx's theories we examined the experiences of characters like Draco Malfoy, whom we found out that his alienation from his surroundings and society is the final product of the oppressive societal laws and his family's expectations upon him. The self-alienation theory also allowed us to analyse the journey of Harry Potter and the challenges he faced while trying to figure out who he is. Hence, we concluded that the society of wizarding world weighed the young boy with high expectations and always linked to him to Voldemort, which pushed him to question his worth, identity and purpose. Similarly, Hermione who faced a lot of discrimination because of her background, which pressured her to behave in a certain manner. Finally, the findings of this chapter shows how Rowling's experience in modern Britain affected her personality and shaped the experiences of her characters, who she either intentionally or unintentionally portrayed to translate her struggles and complexities just like every other individual in modern British society.

# **General Conclusion**

This study dealt with the relationship between the famous series Joanne Rowling, *Harry Potter* and modern Britain. The focus of the study was to explore how Rowling reflected some social dynamics of contemporary Britain in her fictional series. Not only that, but we also aimed to see how she used her fiction as a commentary and a critique of modern Britain's social dynamics. In order to achieve that, we adopted a Marxist interpretation to investigate the dynamics of class, identity struggle and alienation from others. Additionally, we wanted to show how fictional literature is more than a means of entertainment that provides an escape for readers. Especially, people of modern Britain who suffered from the societal transformations that happened at the time. Therefore, the *Harry Potter* series offered them an explanation and served as a mirror for their complexities.

To a large extent, J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series (1997-2007) offered its readers an exploration of modern Britain's social dynamics through the gaze of her magical world. This research has shown how the series does reflect and critique contemporary Britain's social dynamics and individuals' complexities. We have examined the socio-cultural context of modern Britain during the time Rowling was crafting her magical world. Through that, we have concluded that the British author was significantly affected by the transformations that happened in Britain at the time.

A significant finding of the study is the reflections we drew between the social structures of modern British society and the wizarding society. It showed that Rowling was not only affected by the events that happened in Britain at the time but she was also influenced by them, and interpreted them in her work. Rowling's journey in modern

British society significantly shaped her identity as a writer, especially through her *Harry Potter* series.

Moreover, we explored the essence of Karl Marx's principles and ideologies and their influence on contemporary authors, including J.K. Rowling. Marx's ideas about class, alienation and identity struggle provided a lens that allowed to examine the *Harry Potter*'s characters from a social framework. By applying his theories, we have found that the commentary and critiques offered by Rowling proved that even fictional literature can serve as a powerful loom to reflect societal issues. Additionally, fictional characters of the wizarding world like Harry Potter, Draco Malfoy, Hermione Granger and others, were also affected by the social structures of their world just like those of modern Britain.

Furthermore, we come to conclusion that Rowling's tough experiences in modern Britain influenced her to use them to create a magical world that reflect these real-life issues. Similarly, Harry, Draco and Hermione and other fictional characters of the series also experienced tough challenges in their magical universe. Therefore, we concluded that these characters serve as a reflection of individuals' struggles in modern British society.

Another contribution of this study is resulted after analysing the characters and Rowling's journey in modern Britain. We have found that she made a critical statement about contemporary British society because the characters' issues are quite similar to what people went through in real-life modern Britain. Rowling showed that though her work is fictional and magical yet, social issues were inevitable in the series. This idea was evident in the oppressive laws of the wizarding society and their effect on the characters' behaviours and interactions.

Additional discovery of this research, showed that Rowling's tough experiences in modern British society, where she faced poverty, personal struggles and the big changes in society affected her writings and mirrored her struggles. Furthermore, we revealed that Rowling's fictionalisation of characters in the magical realm. She used her personal history to create characters and narratives that reflect her struggles of class, alienation from other and self-alienation, which also reflect some of modern Britain's social dynamics. Her story proved that no matter how tough life gets, it is possible to seek strength and make a difference. Rowling used her complexities and observations of modern Britain struggles and passed them onto the magical characters.

Despite the results we have offered yet, we have some limitations since the study is a qualitative interpretation of the series and may have not fully represented other complexities in modern Britain and have limited our research into three social dynamics. Additionally, our focus laid on Marxist interpretations, which means that it does not consider other perspectives that could also be relevant. The study also relies on certain characters from the books which may overlook other characters that are present in the work or in the movies. Also, our research context is based on modern Britain so the findings might not apply to other countries.

Future studies could look more at other ideas to understand the *Harry Potter* series in a better way. Researchers could study more characters and not limit themselves to the books and they could also study the movies to get the full picture. In our research we did not ask readers from modern Britain about how their opinions about the books because it is time consuming. Therefore, for further studies the researchers could do that and they could also compare the series to other works instead of societies or countries.

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## المخلص:

تعتبر هاري بوتر للكاتبة جوان رولينغ (1997-2007) سلسلة شهيرة ذات قصص ساحرة مليئة بالسحر والمغامرة. بعد أن اكتشفت السلسلة في سن مبكرة للعديد من الناس، سحر عالم هاري بوتر السحري عقولنا مثل جرعة قوية ووَّسع خيالنا مثل الممرات الشاسعة لمدرسة هوجورتس للسحر والشعوذة. ومع ذلك، تكمن وراء جاذبية عالم رولينج الساحر رسائل عميقة يتم نقلها من خلال التقلبات والمنعطفات العديدة في السلسلة، والشخصيات المعقدة والنظرة الخيالية المثيرة للاهتمام والتي تركز أساساً على الديناميكيات الاجتماعية لبريطانيا الحديثة. وبما أن رولينغ واكبت وال تزال تواكب هذه الفترة، فقد نسجت حكاية ال تحاكي تجربتها الحياتية فحسب، بل تحاكي أي ضاً تجربة أولئك الذين يعانون من تأثير الحداثة على ديناميكيات مجتمعهم. ومن المثير للاهتمام أن تمثيل روايات هاري بوتر لهذا التأثير يبدو أنه يعبر عن نقد متعمد للطبقية والاعتراب وأزمة الهوية. ولذلك، فإن الهدف الرئيسي لهذه المذكرة هو تقديم تفسير ماركسي لفحص مدى توافق تفاعلات وسلوكيات بعض الشخصيات في سلسلة هاري بوتر مع مقصد المؤلف. ولتحقيق هذا الهدف، يعتمد تحليلنا أساساً على نظريات كارل ماركس المتعلقة بالطبقية والاعتراب وأزمة الهوية لفهم كيف تتشكل شخصيات مثل هيرميون ودراكو وبوتر على التوالي لتوصيل نقد رولينغ لبريطانيا الحديثة في نهاية المطاف.

الكلمات المفتاحية: هاري بوتر، الديناميات الاجتماعية، بريطانيا الحديثة، التفسير الماركسي، الطبقة،

الاعتراب، أزمة الهوية، جوان رولينغ، هيرميون غرانجر، دراكو مالفوي

## Résumé:

*Harry Potter* de Joanne Rowling (1997-2007) est une série fameuse aux histoires séduisantes, pleines de magie et d'aventures. Ayant découvert la série dès notre plus jeune âge, le monde magique de Harry Potter a ensorcelé nos esprits comme une potion puissante et élargi notre imagination comme les vastes couloirs de l'école de sorcellerie de Poudlard. Cependant, derrière l'attrait du royaume enchanteur de Rowling se cachent des messages profonds qui sont transmis à travers les nombreux rebondissements de la série, ses personnages complexes et son regard fictif intrigant sur la dynamique sociale de la Grande-Bretagne moderne. Ayant vécu cette dernière, Rowling tisse un récit qui fait écho non seulement à son expérience de vie, mais aussi à celle de ceux qui souffrent de l'impact de la modernité sur la dynamique de leur société. Il est intéressant de noter que la représentation de cet impact par Harry Potter semble énoncer une critique délibérée du classisme, de l'aliénation et de la crise d'identité. Par conséquent, la présente étude vise principalement à fournir une interprétation marxiste afin d'examiner dans quelle mesure les interactions et les comportements de certains personnages de la société des sorciers de Harry Potter correspondent à l'intention de l'auteur. Pour atteindre cet objectif, nous nous appuyons sur les connaissances approfondies de Karl Marx sur les classes, l'aliénation et la crise d'identité pour comprendre comment des personnages comme Hermione, Draco et Potter, respectivement, sont façonnés pour communiquer en fin de compte la critique de la Grande-Bretagne moderne formulée par Rowling.

**Mots-clés :** Harry Potter, dynamique sociale, Grande-Bretagne moderne, interprétation marxiste, classisme, aliénation, crise d'identité, Joanne Rowling, Hermione Granger, Draco Malfoy.