Using Selected Novels of Harry Potter as a Tool for Discussion in the English as a Foreign Language Classroom with Postcolonial and Marxist Perspectives

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Abstract
The Harry Potter novels written by J.K Rowling have been popular since the first book was released in 1997. Rowling has written seven books about Harry and the first four together with the Swedish National Agency for Education constitute the primary sources of this essay. The essay discusses how these supposed children’s novels can be used to construct a lesson for students in the Swedish upper secondary classroom. The lesson plan created is based on the analysis of the possible themes of the novels using Postcolonial and Marxist critical perspectives. The theories are used to show how discrimination and suppression can be seen in the Harry Potter novels. Previous research has shown that the occurrences in Harry Potter is similar to the occurrences happening in the real world and the lesson plan is created to compare these fictional happenings with the ones happening in our real society. The lesson plan constructed consequently focuses on how the Harry Potter novels can be used to discuss discrimination and suppression takes place in English speaking societies as required by the rules and guidelines provided by the Swedish National Agency for Education.
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1. Introduction

One can look at children’s novels and say that they are just children’s novels without a deeper reflection. This essay does not want to do that, but instead take the supposed children’s novels of Harry Potter and analyse them in order to find a deeper message. This essay will do that by taking the four first novels about Harry potter and analyse them to find evidence that support the theory that these novels can be used to explain more complex issues for upper secondary students around the age of 18. The goal is, not only to construct a hypothetical lesson plan that can be used by the author of this essay, but also to give inspiration and show that even though it might not seem like some novels are aimed to be read by students a certain age or used in classroom contexts, they can be. There are plenty of contemporary children’s novels, like these about Harry Potter that are popular amongst youth and can be used in a similar way. This essay will demonstrate one of the ways in which these novels can be used to try to encourage youth to view literature from a different perspective and at the same time inspire others to find new perspectives in already popular novels and use them in classroom contexts.

The events in the first four books of Harry Potter take place in Great Britain during the 1990’s in both a magical and a non-magical society. The protagonist of the story is Harry Potter who is a famous teenage wizard. Harry is in the first novel not aware of his magical abilities and lives with his non-magical aunt and uncle in a London suburb. Over the duration of the novels Harry shifts from belonging to the non-magical world, to belonging to the magical world and the reader gets to know the magical world and all its contents through Harry’s own transitioning. The occurrences in the fictional world are analysed in this essay with the aim of seeing how the fictional occurrences can be used to create a lesson plan aimed towards English as a foreign language learners in upper secondary education in Sweden.

The fictional world of Harry Potter is a magical world. However, that fictional world presents many common societal occurrences, which are comparable and similar to occurrences in the non-fictional or real world. An author named Luisa Grijalva Maza writes in her article on inclusion and exclusion in Harry Potter that “despite its wondrous characteristics, the magical world of Harry Potter fiction is not so dissimilar from the real world” (432) and another author named Nicolas Sheltron notes that: “The fictional world of Harry Potter is one that presents multiple occurrences, which are relatable to non-fictional world.” (47). Both of these quotes show that the Harry Potter series is portraying somewhat real world situations and the goal in this essay is to use these fictional examples to be able to discuss real life situations with the students at the upper secondary school level.
When teaching in the Swedish Upper Secondary classrooms, to be adaptable is vital. To teach ‘heavy’\(^1\) subjects, one might need to find ways to teach without getting out of hand or too difficult for the students. The connection between a fictional and supposed children’s novel like Harry Potter in relation to the serious subjects of suppression and discrimination makes it possible for teachers to bring these serious subjects down to a level that can be easier for the students to comprehend. Harry Potter can therefore not only show how to construct a fictional analysis but also exemplify how suppression and discrimination through class struggle or other complex societal situations can be manifested. These fictional examples of real societal issues can then be used as a springboard for the students to conduct a deeper analysis of society, in the English subject, as well as in other subjects the might have in school.

1.2 Aim, Background and Method

The Harry Potter Novels have on several previous occasions been analysed with the use of different theories and objectives. As the previous research will show later on in this essay, the Harry Potter novels have been used to discuss gender, hegemony, feminism and so on, both in traditional literature analyses as well as in classroom contexts. To show an example of how one of these theories could be applied to the Harry Potter novels in classroom a hypothetical example using the gender perspective is here shown. This hypothetical lesson could be to provide the students with an assignment that makes them discuss Hermione’s position as a girl and her good girl behaviour. With the help of a discussion about Hermione students could be introduced to talk about gender-normative behaviour within their own school environment and further on develop towards discussing about norms in general. This would give the students a possibility to show skills in several of the criteria provided by the Swedish National Agency for Education which will be described more thoroughly further down in this essay.

Even though the Harry Potter novels have been analysed from multiple perspectives previously they are so complex that new things always can be found. What makes this essay relevant is the connection between traditional literary analysis and education. This to show how an analysis on an academic level can be performed on a novel aimed towards children and is applied to a hypothetical classroom context on youth. This

\(^1\) The word 'heavy' is used in this case to symbolise subjects which can be hard to discuss or that can conjure strong emotions.
essay will with reference to terms in both Postcolonial and Marxist theories, to show how some occurrences in the first four novels of the Harry Potter series can be used to discuss discriminatory issues that can appear in society. Discrimination is discussed in the analysis through the Postcolonial terms Othering and Orientalism, as well as through the Marxist term Classism. The Postcolonial terms will be connected to, for instance, Franz Fanon who in his text *The Fact of Blackness* exemplifies how it is to be the victim of Othering. Examples are used in the analysis and conclusion to visualise and connect the fictional world to the real world through the aforementioned theories. Marxist theory was a critical influence to Franz Fanon’s texts about postcolonial and race issues (258).

Using the four first novels to make these theoretical tendencies visual provides a broader result than using only one of the novels. Moreover, using more than one novel makes it possible for the analysis to show general tendencies that are recurring throughout the series. It also gives opportunity to find multiple examples that might be suitable to use in the lesson plan in the appendix. The novels chosen are: *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone*, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, as well as *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*. To fully comprehend the analysis conducted in this essay one needs to have a basic knowledge of the Harry Potter novels and their contents. Although, most of the terms are described in the analysis, some background is important to explain before reading the essay.

Harry Potter attends a school called “Hogwarts school of Wizardry” and this is also the scenery in which where the majority of the events in novels take place. This magical world is a world that exist parallel to a non-magical human world, without the non-magical humans knowing about its existence. Harry Potter is a boy chosen to save the world from bad people who try to segregate the society even more than it is already segregated. These bad people try to segregate and create races within the magical society as well as segregate the non-magical society from the magical society. All inclusion and exclusion are by the bad wizards motivated with the reason being that they believe that they are the best kind of wizards in the top of the hierarchal ladder.

The Harry Potter series is written by J.K Rowling and the first book was published in 1997 (Philosopher’s Stone cover page). A lot of the content in the series is inspired by the Rowling’s life and the characters are inspired by people she has heard about or know (Telegraph, 20060110). The novels about Harry Potter became, after a few rejections by different publishers, a huge success and the novels have at the time of this essay been sold in “over 450 million copies” and “translated into 77 languages” (Philosopher’s Stone cover
page). J.K Rowling has a background in human rights after working at Amnesty. Her inner drive to change the world for the better did not disappear after the success with Harry Potter and she is now the founder of multiple charities and support many more (Philosopher’s Stones coverpage).

This essay intends to combine the analysis with the core content provided by the Swedish National Agency of Education with the aim of constructing a lesson plan. This lesson plan is created to show how the literary analysis could be used to conduct a lesson in an English classroom for upper secondary school. However, to understand how the Harry Potter novels could be used in the classroom one must first understand how teachers in Sweden are regulated and what goals and guidelines they need to follow. Swedish teachers are regulated by The Swedish National Agency for Education, which is a government lead institute that, amongst other things, develops the guidelines and requirements for Swedish pre-schools and other levels up until the upper secondary school level. They do this by setting national goals and objectives that all pre-schools and other levels in Swedish schools need to follow (Skolverket). These goals are divided into different sections depending on what grade is involved. The goals aimed towards the grades in upper secondary school are relevant to use in this essay and will consequently be the only mentioned. The Swedish National Agency for Education has chosen to create two different documents of objectives and goals. One of these is about the general objectives that all teachers in upper secondary school must aim to follow, no matter what grade or subject one is teaching. Then there are subject and level specific goals and demands that the teachers need to follow when planning their lessons for the year.

The first document with general goals and guidelines is named: “Curriculum for the Upper Secondary school”. The Curriculum contains guidelines for all teachers in upper secondary schools and some examples of what it covers are: Fundamental values, understanding and compassion for others, objectivity and open approaches, rights and obligations, an equivalent education etc. (Skolverket, Curriculum). The second document contains the specific course plans concerning the different subjects and the different grades. The second document which contains the aims, core content and grading criteria used in English 7 (Skolverket, Core) and is particularly relevant for this essay. However, references to both of these documents will be used when proving that the Harry Potter novels can be used to construct a lesson plan about societal occurrences from primarily English speaking cultures.

In these documents it is clearly stated that the students need to be taught about different occurrences in English speaking societies (Skolverket, Core). This essay choose to
construct a lesson plan in which English speaking societies is the focus in order to link this goal of learning about English speaking societies around the world. Most of the occurrences mentioned are not limited to only English speaking societies but they are occurring or have occurred in English speaking societies. The main goal of the lesson created is to provide an easier way of understanding how suppression and discrimination is or have been executed in English Speaking societies with reference the Harry Potter series.

In the Swedish National Agency of Education the definition of pupils studying in grades 10-12 is “Upper Secondary School”. This is the definition used throughout this essay, even though it is acknowledged that other definitions exist. These grades are made up of teenagers and young adults within the age range of 15-19. However, in this essay the focus will be to argue how these books can be used as a tool of discussion for pupils in the age range of 18-19, which generally is equivalent to year 12. In this grade pupils study English 7, which is the highest level of English possible to study during Upper Secondary School (Skolverket, Curriculum).

In the course plan created by the Swedish National Agency for Education aimed towards English 7, it is stated that students, after participating in English should have: “The ability to discuss and reflect on living conditions, social issues and cultural features in different contexts and parts of the world where English is used” (Skolverket, Core). One can argue that this novel can be used to start discussions to help fill these criteria by showing how suppression and discrimination are portrayed in a fictional setting. This will help the students understand how these ideologies work and it will help them recognise patterns of the ideologies that work in real societies. This essay therefore discusses how the Harry Potter series can be used to explain different social situations and problems in society by analysing how race and socio-economical class are portrayed. Further criteria from the Swedish National Agency for Education are placed in the lesson plan in the appendix to show what specific aims and goals are used for that specific plan.

As a conclusion, the aim of this essay is to find Postcolonial and Marxist evidence within the first four books in the Harry Potter series and uses that evidence to create a lesson, which is possible to execute in an English 7 classroom in Sweden.

2. Previous research

Many scholarly articles on the Harry Potter series exist that underscores the importance of using fiction and fictional characters to mirror ‘real’ societal issues. The articles and essays presented in this section are presented separately in order to minimize
confusion and because the whole content of these articles are considered to be relevant for the analysis and lesson plan constructed. There are two different types of previous research presented and the different types of research included in this essay are chosen for two reasons: Firstly, to find examples of how the Harry Potter novels have been used in classroom context since this is the main objective of this essay. They are included to show that constructing a lesson with the Harry Potter novels is possible and has been done before. Secondly, evidence that show how the Harry Potter novels previously have been analysed with theories similar to the theories used in this essay are presented to show how an analysis similar to this one has been conducted previously. This is important because the analysis conducted is the foundation on which the lesson plan presented in the appendix is based, without it, the lesson plan would not have be able to be constructed.

2.1 Casting *Lumos* on Critical Cultural studies: Gender, Hegemony and other social stereotypes.

This essay is an example of how the Harry Potter series can be used in the classroom with the help of gender theory and hegemony. The author, Amanda Firestone, motivates her usage of the novels by stating that they facilitates her relationship with the students as well as helps them to understand common problems occurring in ‘real’ society. The author is a teacher in Communication at college level and mostly teaches “Communication courses related to women, gender and identity in terms of communication tactics and discourses that construct our cultural ideas and beliefs about these categories” (Firestone, 179).

Firestone explains that her focus in her communication class is on critical cultural studies and defines it as a discipline that has its foundation in traditional literary criticism that wants to analyse “the everyday and the ordinary” (180). This criticism is further explained as being about looking at phenomena in everyday life that people do not notice because they are taken for granted. She describes, amongst other methods, that textual analysis can help find these cultural patterns in for example, novels. When these patterns are found, they can be used to illustrate gender, sexuality, race and class in the classroom to give students a clear example of how these norms are embedded in their everyday life without their realising it (Firestone 180).

In the subsequent part of the essay, she gives some examples of how she uses Cultural Criticism to analyse Harry Potter and uses these results in her teaching. Firstly, she explains how she uses gender and sexuality and in this section. Hermione is the character in
focus. Hermione is in one part of the fourth book, *Goblet of Fire* dressing up to participate in a Yule Ball on Hogwarts, this is the first time in the novels where she dresses up with a gown and combs her hair. She is described as a “sleek and shiny” and Harry calls her a “pretty girl”. This contrasts with her usual appearance with her classic robe and messy hair. This is one of the parts Firestone uses to exemplify how gender norms are constructed and expressed in everyday life. She expresses that this is one of the most giving sections to use, “I can see the light bulbs come on above their head” (182-3).

Secondly, Firestone shows how she uses hegemony to teach. Hegemony is according to the author the power of the “big five” and the big five being: Gender, race, class, sexuality, and religion. She exemplifies hegemony with the following quote “In the western world, the ideal representation of hegemony is a straight white man who ascribes to Christianity and who was born into or achieves upper-middle class or high class status” (183).

When using hegemony in her communication classes, the author highlights the difference in class between two families of the series, the Weasleys and the Malfoys. This is because both families are white, pure-blood wizards, but the Malfoys represents a richer social class while the Weasleys, on the contrary, represents the proletariat. So even though they both represent the same part of the big five, the power relationship between these two families varies. The author continues to explain that it does not matter if the reader perceives the Malfoys as the bad guys, when fulfilling these hegemonic criteria; the Malfoys have access and power in more social circles (Firestone 184).

By these examples Firestone shows the reader that the story of Harry Potter can be used to show students different cultural patterns. She uses this as a way to introduce cultural studies and she states that as a teacher Harry Potter helps her build an important relationship with her students (Firestone 186).

### 2.2 From Hogwarts Academy to the Hero’s Journey

In this text, two examples of how the Harry Potter novels have been and are used in the classroom is presented. The Author Lana A. Whited has used Harry Potter with students of varying ages and presents how she has succeeded in doing this. In the first example, she describes how she taught during a “Ferrum College Enrichment Camp Class called Hogwarts academy” (4) and the children participating are in the ages between 10-13 years old. In the second example she describes how she has used Harry Potter in a class of undergraduates with the majority of the participants being sophomore students (4).
In Hogwarts academy Whited describes a playful approach to teach the students about the different subjects in middle school. To teach religion, more specifically pagan symbolism, the wand-making process from the novels was used. In this case the students were supposed to choose the wood-type their wands were supposed to have and then discuss what the wood type represented as a pagan symbol (6). Another example is when the students participating in Hogwarts Academy had ‘potions class’ and the teacher chose to interpret is as an opportunity to teach chemistry. The specific teacher showed how liquids could switch colour, or how to “[Freeze] marshmallows in liquid nitrogen” (7). This shows how one can take an ordinary subject and bring it down to the level of the students, and that teaching can be made to be fun by mixing playfulness with education.

When using Harry Potter in another grade than middle school, Whited uses it on a sophomore student who takes classes in English literature (13). The aim in this class is to write a critical analysis on the “Hero Myth in Western culture” (14). Whited starts her course by conducting lessons about the Hero Myth in other English literature than Harry Potter, discussing the words “fantasy, myth, and the hero” (14). She makes her students participate in the decision-making process by making them contribute to the materials they use. Students choose what literary works they are going to use in the course and in combination with these, Whited provides additional theoretical texts to use as framework during the students’ construction of analysis (15). The content used from Harry Potter novels were in these cases adapted to fit to the level of the students participating in the class, and this shows how these novels are versatile and by switching focus from the more playful informative to the deeper analysis it shows that the novels are applicable for students in all ages (18).

2.3 Harry And the Other: Answering the Race Question in J. K. Rowling’s Harry Potter

This essay, written by Jackie C. Horne, the race question is discussed with a particular focus on antiracism. She explores how race is portrayed with the motivation that the Harry Potter series is educating the protagonist of the story as well as the reader at the same time. Her two approaches to antiracism are: multicultural antiracism and social justice antiracism. The approaches are used to highlight how J.K Rowling portrays anti-racist tendencies through her novels (76).

Firstly, the author chooses to define the word “antiracism” by discussing the wide use and interpretation of the word to state how it can be interpreted (77). The two main differences in interpretation are, according to Horne, between a Universalist perspective and a
relativist perspective. The Universalist perspective is closely related to colonialism and seeks to emancipate everyone from racism. The other approach, the Relativist perspective seeks to improve the problem of racism while honouring differences. These two primary examples show that one can “do” antiracism in a number of different ways (78).

The author presents six different ways one can do antiracism and notes that two of these are most used, ‘multicultural antiracism’ and ‘radical antiracism’. Of these two ways to construct antiracism multicultural antiracism is described as the one in which the value of diversity is a method to fight racial oppression. By this description the author means that one should not only know about other cultural traditions but should as well more explicitly feel empathy for other cultures. The other approach: radical antiracism, Horne also refers to as social justice antiracism. This approach focuses on teaching students to “examine the social, political, and economic structures in which they live” (79).

Further throughout the essay, the author explains that one can find both multicultural and social justice approaches in the Harry Potter novels. She narrows her race research down to focus on two of the “races” in the series: house-elves and goblins. When choosing these ‘races’ Horne acknowledges that these exist different opinions about J.K Rowling’s motive to include these in the series. One of these opinions is stated by Elaine Ostry who says that Rowling “means to help young readers understand the stereotypes about slaves when (or if) they learn about them in school” (81). By this quote, Ostry means that the enslaved race of house-elves can symbolise and show how slavery has taken place in the history of different cultures. Another opinion on the reason that house-elves exists in Rowling’s novels is that they are created to show the character Hermione’s political antiracist campaign to support house-elves and fight for equal rights between them and wizards (81). This represents according to Horne a social justice antiracist approach, when Hermione uses politics to perform antiracism.

Later on, Horne herself mentions a quote written in the novel from the headmaster of Hogwarts to show how her antiracist theories are visual. The headmaster, named Dumbledore, tells Harry that he “must learn to see elves as ‘beings with feelings as actuate as a human’s’” (82). This proves, in addition to Ostry’s statement that a multicultural antiracist approach is visible. These are some of the examples mentioned in the essay that show how Rowling presents antiracism with the help of house-elves.

On the other hand, when goblins are mentioned in the novels they are, according to Horne not described as slaves like house-elves. Opposed to house-elves the author mentions that goblins are allowed to interact with wizards in another way and are therefore
higher up in the hierarchy. However, goblins are in other ways subordinated to wizards through wizardry government control. Horne shows and example of this is when mentioning that Goblins are regulated under the “Goblin liaison office” in the wizard government. This is a subcategory to the “Department for the regulation and Control of Magical Creatures” in which all creatures who are not wizards are regulated and controlled. This shows that the goblins are separated from the wizards (89). This department is according to Horne one of many examples of how Rowling shows social justice antiracism.

This article is focused on researching the different ways antiracism shows in the Harry Potter novels, and through that analyse how racism shows. For example, when mentioning that Hermione is pursuing her belief that house-elves should have the same rights as wizards, J.K Rowling at the same time describes that those creatures are supressed. The text also shows that there are political structures (Ministry of Magic), which segregates different races in the Harry Potter novels.

2.4 Deconstructing the Grand Narrative in Harry Potter: Inclusion/Exclusion and Discriminatory Policies in Fiction and Practice.

“Despite its wondrous characteristics, the magical world of Harry Potter fiction is not so dissimilar from the real world” (Grijalva Maza 432). This quote exemplifies how the author of this article presents the fact that inclusion and exclusion in the Harry Potter series and that these are something that can be compared to situations happening in the real world. The author of the article analyses this through looking at the representation of the grand narrative, or as she also calls it, grand récit. She claims in her thesis that the Harry Potter novels contain a colonial discourse hidden in the liberal grand narrative (426).

The article is divided into three sections. The first section exemplifies where inclusion and exclusion take place within the magical grand narrative in the Harry Potter novels. The author states that magic is considered: ‘a tool of power’, ‘knowledge’, and ‘wisdom’ as well as a trait that most people in the Harry Potter novels want to acquire. The author describes that there is a clear superiority when having the ability to practice magic versus not having magical abilities. This shows a strong magical narrative in the novels, which is exemplified by the representation of the non-magical and magical perspectives. The non-magical world is according to Grijalva Maza partly represented by Harry potter’s aunt Petunia’s and uncle Dudley’s through their conservative characters who do not accept people who are different. This while the magical world is represented multiple times through different characters with Harry being the primary one. He is portrayed as “honest, brave and a
good-natured child” (428). The author mention that the hierarchical values between non-magical and magical people are shown in the dialogue between Harry and Hagrid, who is Harry’s friend and the gatekeeper at Hogwarts.

‘I’d like ter see a great Muggle like you [Dudley] stop him,’ he said


‘A Muggle’ said Hagrid, ‘it’s what we call nonmagic folk like them. An’ it’s your bad luck you grew up in a family o’ the biggest Muggles I ever laid eyes on.’ (428).

In this dialogue Hagrid is clearly degrading Muggles, more specifically uncle Dudley who he does not see as a threat. Furthermore, this first section of the article continues to enlighten its reader about where inclusion and exclusion take place in the Harry Potter novels in order to prove that postcolonial tendencies can be found (430).

In the second section, the author “outline the theoretical reasons underpinning the constant reproduction of the inherent contradictions in Harry Potter…” (427). This section interrogates how the liberal values in Harry Potter can result in its opposite: discrimination and exclusion. This is analysed with two perspectives, Derridean deconstruction and colonialist discourse (432). Derrida’s criticism on the western society “concerns its deep obsession with discovering transcendental truths that could not be questioned” (433). To discover these truths, it is explained that Derrida needs the exclusion and discrimination of the Other in order to gain identity. The Other is shown when looking into a binary couple and seeing what, the two dichotomies. We know what something is by knowing what it is not. In Harry Potter we mostly define what is non magical by analysing what is Magical and looking at the opposite (433). In the colonialist discourse the author looks at Orientalism by Edward Said and his view on the Other, which is based on defining western society in contrast to other cultures. The dichotomy becomes western/native and further: good/evil, dominator/dominated, superior/inferior etc.

In the third section the author “look at how recent practical policies reflect the same tension” (427) as the tension analysed in the two previous sections. Here connections to the real world are shown. The first practical example is the international institution the ‘World Bank’ whose goal is to reduce poverty. The author claims with the help of her theories that the people in power are the ones who decide what actions to take to reduce poverty, and thereby excluding the Other (436). Further, the author give other examples to show how these
fictional occurrences can be applied and one of these is the contrast between Hermione and Voldemort. Voldemort represents an ideology in which only pureblood magicians are considered worthy, and Hermione is according to him the “filthiest” kind, since she does not have any magical parents at all, she is a Muggle-born. His goal is to erase all magicians who are not purebloods and hunts them down (431). The author of the article connects this to the Arizona immigration law, in which the state of Arizona wants to hunt down everyone not legally in the country based on an increase of violence since the immigration of Mexicans increased even though, the state does not have any scientific background to prove that Mexicans are behind the increased violence (437).

This article’s three sections show how it is possible to start with an analysis of a fictional book and relate it to real world situations.

The previous research presented in all of these sections show the variety of ways in which the Harry Potter novels can be analysed as well as used in the classroom. The last two articles presented shows how discrimination, inclusion and exclusion can be seen in Harry Potter; the first two show how, amongst other things, these discriminatory practises can be used in the classroom context. The analysis presented in this essay can be seen as an extension of previous research to construct something new. The previous research presented by Grijalva Maza and Horne shows how discrimination can be seen in Harry Potter, and the previous research constructed by Firestone and Whited shows how Harry Potter can be used in a classroom context. In this essay a lesson plan is added as an appendix. This lesson plan shows how one can use discrimination in the form of racism and classism to create a lesson in the English as foreign language classroom and using the previous research as proof that this is possible and viable.

3. Theoretical approach

The theories used in this essay are Marxist and Postcolonial critical theories. The decision to use both of these is motivated by the fact that Marxist and Postcolonial theories both show how suppression and discrimination can be expressed. Moreover, one can argue that patterns of these theories can be found in the event occurring in the Harry Potter novels. One can also state that both of these theories can be used to support the thesis statement of this essay. The following section will now turn to a discussion of these theories and some of the terminologies associated with them. Further reason to use both theories is that
they complement each other in a way that will make it easier to find tendencies that will be possible to use in the classroom. 2

3.1 Marxist criticism

Marxist literary theory claims that literature is the construction of social forces and ideology (Castle 108). Further, some Marxists theorists describe Marxism as when “getting and keeping economic power is the motive behind all social and political education including education, [...] government and so on.” (Tyson 53). Marxist criticism is based on the assumption that there are two basic social classes in society, a high class called aristocrats or capitalists and a low class called the proletarians. Within Marxist criticism different approaches are used to visualise how the aristocrats supress the proletarians. Aristocrats are the people who have power, and these people use the proletarians who belong to the working class (Tyson 54). However, other interpretations of Marxist theory describe the powerful people as ‘capitalists’ instead of ‘aristocrats’. The use of capitalist instead of aristocrat is to express the economic differences between the two social classes (Castle 108). On the other hand, Tyson’s definition of aristocrat is used as a more general term to describe the overall power differences between aristocrats and proletarians (54), which for example, could be differences in institutional influence. According to Castle’s interpretation of Marxism, as long as the proletarians work for the capitalists they will work to sustain the economic power the capitalist have over them (Castle 110). Marxist analysis aims to explain the action of humans in relation to economic power and in the analysis visualise the different social classes that are present (Tyson, 54).

The goal Karl Marx originally imagined when formulating the Marxist theory was to get all the proletarians, despite their differences to unite to overthrow the Aristocrats in a rebellion in order to make society more equal. This is not the current aim within Marxism; the current aim is to make as many people as possible aware of the society and the structure in which they live (Tyson, 57). Tyson describes several ideologies and terms that can be used to accomplish a Marxist analysis; one of these terms is used in this essay. This term is later used in the analysis and discussion to exemplify how lessons about discrimination through class differences can be performed in the English classroom (Tyson, 59-60).

2 The result of how these tendencies can be used in the classroom will show in the discussion and appendix.
**Classism** is defined as an ideology in which the social class a human being belongs to is equal to the human being’s value. The higher the social class, the higher the value of the person because according to classism, the social class is something that is biological and inherited. When belonging to the higher social class, the person is considered “more intelligent, more responsible, more trustworthy, more ethical, and so on.” (Tyson 59). On the opposite, we have the people positioned lower on the social scale who in classism are considered: “naturally shiftless, lazy, and irresponsible.” (Tyson, 59)

### 3.2 Postcolonial Criticism

Postcolonial Criticism was originally created to analyse how colonisers affected the postcolonial countries. Some of the theories used in postcolonial criticism will be used to identify how discrimination is portrayed in the novels. The most relevant for this essay are the theories about Othing and Orientalism, which are chosen for the fact that in the majority of times it is hard to distinguish between these two theories since Orientalism, “is a specific form of Othing” (420). Further, quotes and thoughts by Franz Fanon translated by, Charles Lam Markmann, will be added to the theories to exemplify Othing and Orientalism and give a perspective from one who has experienced some of these occurrences (Solomon 13).

Tyson defines **Othing** as when a group of people from the same culture and who share the same values consider other people who in anyway differ from their culture and values as inferior. “The Other” is often described as inhuman and strange. When a hegemonic culture as such defines the Other, they the majority of the time construct a “us” in contrast to a “them” (433). Frantz Fanon describes it as the following “the black man among his own in the twentieth century does not know at what moment his inferiority comes into being through the other” (258). Tyson uses the suppression of the Native Americans in the United states as an example to show how Othing can be executed in a context:

In our own country [United States of America], for example, the justification for exterminating some Native American nations and assimilating others through compulsory colonialist education was that Native Americans were “savages”, literally inhuman.” (Tyson, 433)
This quote shows how the people presenting themselves as superiors push the constructed inferior people away with the sole reason being that they were not considered as human as the superiors.

Edward Said constructed the theory about **Orientalism** in which he states that people from the western part of the world are portrayed in a positive way in popular culture whilst people from the eastern part of the world are portrayed in a negative way in popular culture. In literature, the Western culture defines their characters with the help of its opposite, and in this binary opposition East is the opposite to West. The Eastern people were defined as “cruel, sneaky, evil, cunning, dishonest, given to sexual promiscuity and perversion […]” whilst the Western people on the contrary were “kind, straightforward, good, upright, honest and moral.” (Tyson 421).

Frantz Fanon also notes in his text on Blackness: “For not only must the black man be black; He must be black in relation to the white man.” (Solomos 257). This shows orientalism combined with Othering, where Fanon becomes the Other, in relation to what he is not. When reading the text by Fanon, the connection between postcolonial theory and race theory becomes obvious. In his text, he describes how he became black, for the sole reason that he was not white (257). In addition, Fanon also mentions how he was objectified and perceived as frightening as well as being described as uncivilized by Western people (259). These examples by Fanon can be used to relate the fictional occurrences in the novels through the theories to real world events.

The parts of the two theories mentioned in this section are relevant to prove how discrimination can be seen in the Harry Potter novels. The co-operation of Marxism and Postcolonial are used to highlight how differences between people can be seen in literature. One can argue that only using segments of two theories can create confusion instead of only using one theory in depth. However, in this essay they are used to complement each other and to show two different ways that discrimination can show in Harry Potter to provide depth to the analysis. The decision to only use parts of the theories is because Othering, Orientalism, and Classism are quite similar when looking at the definitions of these. Othering and Orientalism show how western people supress others, while Classism show how people with power supress others. Both of these theories then exemplify how suppression and therefore discrimination takes place with different perspectives. Together with the previous research, these theories will be the foundation on which the analysis stands and the analysis will prove how both of these theories can be used to construct a lesson plan in the English as a foreign language classroom.
4. Analysis

The focus in this analysis is to see how postcolonial and Marxist suppression and/or discrimination can be found in the four first Harry Potter novels. The focus will also be to analyse how different occurrences take place in the novel in terms of Orientalism, Othering and Classism. The analysis will not only analyse J.K Rowling’s intentions with these occurrences but also show how she has chosen to portray them through the characters and their activities. The aim is to present different ways discrimination and/or suppression can be interpreted to show in the novels and further use these occurrences to construct the lesson plan presented in the appendix. The analysis is the core on which this essay stands; one could not construct the lesson plan without the facts presented below.

4.1 Muggles and Wizards

As explained in the article by Grijalva Maza there are magical and non-magical humans in the Harry Potter series, and these magical and non-magical humans are portrayed by Rowling in different ways with different perspectives on each other. A certain hierarchy between non-magic and magical humans is visible in the novels and one could state that humans with magic in the Harry Potter novels are the superior race that on multiple occasions suppress and discriminate against non-magical humans.

While the magical Wizards are the primarily portrayed “race” in the Harry Potter series, “ordinary” non-magical humans, referred to as Muggles, also play a significant part. The following section of this essay will focus on the portrayal of wizards by Muggles, and the portrayal of Muggles by wizards in the novels. This part of the analysis will mainly be executed from a postcolonial perspective with particular reference to Othering and Orientalism in order to see if any racial discrimination takes place.

In the first chapters of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone* the reader encounters the Muggle world represented by the Dursleys. The Dursleys are portrayed as narrow minded, scared, and jaundiced towards Harry. This is demonstrated when a description of a dialogue between Harry’s aunt and uncle is written: “The Dursleys often spoke about Harry like this, as though he wasn’t there – or rather as though he was something very nasty that couldn’t understand them, like a slug” (Philosopher’s Stone 24). This quote demonstrates one example of when the Dursleys act in a way that dehumanises Harry and he is treated as though he does not exist. This dehumanisation by The Dursleys is recurring
throughout the novels and they express on multiple occasions how they do not want to be related to Harry with the sole reason being that he is not a wizard.

When Harry receives his letter of acceptance to Hogwarts school of Wizardry. Uncle Vernon explains that: “[…] these people’s [wizards] minds work in strange ways, Petunia, they’re not like you and me” (Philosopher’s Stone 42) meaning that “these people” are not normal functioning people. Aunt Petunia confirms Vernon’s way of thinking when expressing her disgust towards wizards and witches while talking about her sister (Harry’s mother): “Oh, she got a letter just like that and disappeared off to that – that school – and came home every holiday with her pockets full of frog-spawn, turning teacups into rats. I was the only one who saw her for what she was – a freak!” (Philosopher’s Stone 57). This separation the Dursleys constructs between themselves and Wizards is continuous throughout the series and it shows later on when Vernon yet again refers to wizards as something that is abnormal, he is upset and says “[…] PEOPLE LIKE YOU!” (Azkaban 5) to show that he himself is not like “Harry’s” people.

From a postcolonial perspective these quotes presented above is Othering. The Dursleys consequently constructs a ‘us’ or ‘we’ against ‘them’ or ‘you’ throughout the novels. The way Rowling chose to put an emphasis on the word ‘you’ in the quote mentioned lastly enhances this feeling.

Further, other aspects of the novels can be interpreted as an adapted modern version of Edward Said’s Orientalism in which it is explained people from the western part of the world picture people of the eastern part as savages. Examples of this being in the anti-wizard dialogues performed by the Dursleys throughout the novels when they describe Harry and his magical world by the words: “freak” (Chamber, 9) “Abnormality” (Chamber 2) “shameful” (Chamber 4). With these words the Dursley family portray the wizard community of the novels as something negative and not as good as their ‘own’ race.

Later in the Harry Potter novels, the wizard world’s perspective on Muggles is visible. One of the first occasions where the wizard world’s opinion on Muggles becomes apparent is when Hagrid speaks to Harry for the first time. On this occasion Hagrid explains that Harry is a wizard and at the same time emphasises that this is a world specifically for people with magical powers. Hagrid emphasises the difference between Muggles and wizards by stating: “‘About our world, I mean. Your world. My world. Yes parents’ world.’” clearly excluding the other, which in this case are Muggles and here he is acting in the same way as the Dursleys and creates a “we” and a “them” and defining himself by his opposite.
Othering reoccurs when wizards portray Muggles and it seems to be a normal part of their upbringing. Harry Potter’s best friend Ron mentions that they have a relative who is a Muggle but “we never talk about him” (Philosopher’s Stone 105) and Hagrid says that Muggles cannot be trusted with the knowledge of wizards because then “everyone’d want in’ magical solutions to their problems” (Philosopher’s Stone 70). This indicates that Hagrid believes that Muggles would depend on the superior knowledge of the wizard world, putting himself above them and signalling Marxist classism. This also shows when Hagrid says: “I don’t know how the Muggles manage without magic.” (Philosopher’s Stone 73).

The quote by Ron where he states that he has a Muggle relative whom they never speak about indicates that Muggles are not something that children in the magical world talk about during their upbringing. This thesis is confirmed further in that section as Ron starts to ask Harry how it felt to be raised by Muggles (Philosopher’s Stone 106). That Ron is unaware of how it is to “be raised by Muggles” is quite interesting since Ron’s father is very interested in Muggles and especially their inventions and is quite fascinated of them. In fact, his father works in the specific department in the Ministry of magic that handles Muggle issues (Chamber 32) and later on in the series it shows that he fights for Muggle rights (Chamber 54)

To conclude this analysis, Muggles and wizards both use Othering and in some cases Orientalism towards each other. The Muggles who are presented within the novels use more orientalism than the wizards. The Othering occurring between Muggles and wizards in the book could be used as a representation to discuss discrimination in the English as a foreign language classroom.

4.2 Mudblood and Pureblood wizards

In the previous section, the analysis is focused on figuring out whether there is a discrepancy between non-magical Muggles and magical Wizards in the Harry Potter series. This section will analyse how two different types of magical wizards are portrayed within the series, purebloods and Muggle-borns/Mudbloods.

It is possible for some wizards to have parents who are non-magical (Muggles) and these wizards are in the book named Muggle-borns. As a consequence of this, Muggle-born wizards have parents who are not aware of the fact that the magical world exists. According to some wizards, Muggle-borns are not considered to have the right blood, since they do not have pure wizard blood in their DNA and their blood is considered impure. The
Muggle-borns are the binary opposite of pure-blood wizards, and Muggle-borns are seen as filthy and impure. The wizards who consider Muggle-borns a disgrace to the name of wizards (Chamber 37) do not want the impure to mix with the pure-blood (Chamber 122) and thereby creating half-blood wizards.

These discriminating wizards call the Muggle-born wizards ‘Mudbloods’ (Chamber 121) and this word is used to suppress the Muggle-borns and to separate them from pure-bloods. On multiple occasions throughout the series the hatred towards Muggle-borns show amongst dark wizards. Hagrid explains it as the following: “there are some wizards – like Malfoy’s family – who think they’re better than everyone else because they’re what people call pure-blood” (Chamber 121).

The antagonist Lord Voldemort, who Harry, Hermione and Ron fight throughout the whole series, has a history of hunting Muggle-borns and killing them. Lord Voldemort’s frustration derives from his childhood; he is a half-blood who was raised by his witch mother. In a section of *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, Voldemort explains to Harry that he would never use his “filthy Muggle fathers name” (Chamber 331). This statement by Voldemort in combination with his devotion to pure-blood wizards throughout the series, show that his hatred for Muggle-borns, and Muggles generally, remains deeply rooted.

The hatred towards the thought of mixing Muggleblood with Wizard blood can be traced back to the origins of the Slytherin house, which was founded by Salazar Slytherin 1000 years earlier. The houses of Hogwarts are the homes in which the pupils live, they are divided into houses based on their personality as well as their skills on the first day at Hogwarts. The Slytherin house is famous for dark wizards because the house reflects its founder. Salazar Slytherin wished that Hogwarts would be more “selective about the students admitted to Hogwarts, he believed that magical learning should be kept within all-magic families. [...] He disliked students of Muggle parentage, believing them untrustworthy.” (Chamber 159). Consequently, this means that the majority of the students chosen to live in this house at Hogwarts share this opinion. More often than not, students in Slytherin house have parents who have brought them up with these opinions. An example of a member with these opinions belonging to the Slytherin house is Draco Malfoy, whose father, Lucius Malfoy has strong opinions on Muggle-borns. The Malfoy family is in the fourth novel described as a family “who pride themselves on being pure-bloods, in other words, they considered anyone of Muggle decent, like Hermione, second-class.” (Goblet 87). This shows when Lucius explains that Arthur Weasley is a “Muggle-loving fool” (Chamber 54) for trying
A law that would protect Muggles, and later degrades Arthur for associating himself with Muggles (Chamber 66). This behaviour is passed down to Malfoy, who openly calls Hermione a Mudblood at Hogwarts almost every time he sees her at Hogwarts (Chamber 117).

Even if the majority of the wizard population do not discriminate against Muggle-borns in the extreme way presented above, a distinction between Muggle-borns and Pure blood wizards are made in several occasions throughout the novels, for example in institutional contexts, and in the newspaper. In one newspaper a reporter describes Hermione as a “stunningly pretty Muggle-born girl” (Goblet 266). This shows that although some forms of Muggle-born discrimination are more prominent than others, there is almost always a distinction between “us” and “them”. One could also argue that even though the term Mudblood is used more overtly and by people who are generally considered as bad people in the series, that the term Muggle-born separates the wizards with magical parents from the wizards with non-magical parents in the same way. To be anti-racist in the way Firestone explains in her article, the term should not be used at all to show multicultural anti-racism and to include all the wizards as one.

4.3 The Malfoy’s and The Weasley’s

The Weasley family is an apparent representation of the proletarians in the novels. They live in a house called the Burrow, the father Arthur Weasley works at the Ministry of Magic, the mother Molly is a stay home mother. In several occasions throughout the novel, the fact that the Weasleys cannot afford new robes for their children is mentioned. One of the times being in *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* when the students of Hogwarts are supposed to have a robe when attending a ball and Mrs Weasley says “Because … well, I had to get yours second-hand, and there wasn’t a lot of choice!” (Goblet 133).

On the other hand, we have the Malfoy family who represents the aristocrat or capitalists in the novels. Malfoy talks about him living in a big manor with his mom and dad, being an only child. (Chamber 31). His father Lucius is a man of great influence over the people in the Ministry of Magic, which in a Classist perspective shows that with money, comes power and control over those with less money.

The fact that the Malfoys feel like they are superior to the Weasleys because they are aristocrats and consider themselves as better for having money and power is obvious in the novels from both the perspective of Lucius Malfoy and his Son Draco Malfoy. The Malfoys political power is confirmed when the Ministry for magic, Cornelius Fudge, meets
the Malfoy family and chose to introduce them to the Bulgarian Minister for Magic. When Fudge makes the decision to present an important man, such as another minister to Lucius Malfoy, it shows how powerful Malfoy’s influence is. This becomes extra obvious when Fudge chose to not introduce the Bulgarian Minister for Magic to Arthur Weasley who sat next to him (Goblet 86). That exemplifies the class difference in power between a Malfoy and a Weasley, where Malfoy becomes an aristocrat while Weasley is considered a proletarian.

The Malfoys belong as previously shown to a superior class and throughout the novels they on multiple occasions make sure that they tell Weasley family members that they are not as good as them. Lucius Malfoy refers to Arthur Weasley as a “flea-bitten, Muggle-loving fool” (Chamber 54) and tells Arthur that he did not believe his “family could sink no lower” (Chamber 66). At the same time Draco Malfoy harasses Ron throughout all of the novels for not being rich and being a part of the proletariat in the same way as his father. This shows when Arthur Weasley wins money on one occasion and Draco says to Ron: “I Heard your father finally got his hand on some gold this summer, Weasley’ said Malfoy. ‘Did your Mother Die of shock?’” (Azkaban 84).

These quotes all show how the Malfoys use their position of power and wealth to suppress the Weasleys and maintain their position in the highest class. This classist behaviour develops into a form of bullying in the school environment when Draco constantly attacks Ron about his hand-me-down robes and his “poor family”. The fact that Malfoy acts this way and is supportive of Harry’s enemy makes him to be portrayed as evil in the novels, whilst the Weasleys, without a big influence and money are portrayed by Rowling as good and loving people. But as Firestone mentioned in her chapter, it does not matter who is good and who is evil, Rowling’s portrayal of the Malfoy’s puts them in the highest social class as aristocrats and Weasley’s in the lowest as proletarians (184).

4.4 The Discrimination of House-elves

Multiple and different creatures are present in the wizard world of Harry Potter under different circumstances. These creatures are under the Ministry of Magic’s control with the “Department for the Regulation and Control of Magical Creatures” being the foremost responsible for them. This department make sure that all laws and regulations are being followed by the concerned creatures (Goblet 113). Thus, in this department a

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3 The primary goal for the Ministry is to keep the wizarding world from the knowledge of MugglesThis
demarcation between wizards and other magical beings as well as between Muggles and Wizards is being constructed. An example of a law presented only toward other creatures is “no non-human creature is permitted to carry or use a wand” (Goblet 113). It shows that Wizards are considered the superior race and construct the laws and rules for all other creatures. Wizards are the ones who control these “other” creatures and decide what rights and responsibilities a specific creature has. The creature that will be subject to this analysis is the house-elf.

House-elves are small creatures with big bat-like ears and eyes the sizes of tennis balls (Chamber 12). House-elves belong and are owned by families and their duty is to help the families with whatever chores they need help with. The members of the family of whom they serve are multiple times referred to as masters throughout the series. House-elves serve without payment and are bound to the families they serve until they die, unless freed by their owner (Chamber 14). To be freed from their masters, house-elves need to be offered a piece of clothing by their masters (Goblet 118).

Dobby is the first house-elf the reader encounters in the novels and his character is presented for the first time in the second book in the series. The reader directly encounters the inequality under which house-elves live when meeting Dobby. They are clearly not used to being treated as equals to wizards and Dobby shows this by saying: “Dobby has never been asked to sit down by a wizard – like an equal” (Chamber 13). It also shows when he explains that he (Dobby) does anything wrong he is to punish himself for disobeying. The pure fact that a “master” can punish its house-elf shows the unjust system under which other creatures live, even though house-elves are portrayed as the worst treated race in the novels. Dobby in this section clearly expresses his use to being unequally treated, which shows suppression in both Postcolonial and Marxist perspectives. Dobby in some way here shows that he is aware of the suppression in which he lives, and the reader gets the feeling that he is not satisfied with that suppression. Dobby is in the end of the chamber of secrets released by his master Lucius Malfoy when Harry Potter tricks him (Lucius) into giving Dobby his sock, Dobby is forever grateful for this act by Harry, and he loves being a free-elf.

In contrast to Dobby, Harry meets a house-elf named Winky in the fourth novel; she does not share Dobby’s love to be free. In fact, she considers Dobby a shame to house-elves and is horrified by the reason that Dobby, now a free house-elf wants payment for what she considers to be their duty in life. The following quote is a representation of Winky’s thoughts on what and how a house-elf should be and act, her view is quite different from Dobby’s:
House-elves is not paid, sir [...] No, no, no. I says to Dobby, I says, go find yourself a nice family and settle down, Dobby. He is getting all sorts of high jinks, sir, what is unbecoming to a house-elf. [...] House-elves is not supposed to have fun Harry Potter [...] House-elves does what they is told. I am not liking heights at all, Harry Potter [...] but my master sends me to the Top Box and I comes, sir. (Goblet 84)

This shows Winky’s total dedication towards her master in the quote she expresses her fear of heights, but even though she does not like heights she does what she is told without question and consider this the only right way to act. This total dedication towards her duty as a house-elf might be what she believes is right, which she repeats through out the novel or she is scared to say otherwise. One reason to believe that Winky might be scared of liberation shows when her master punishes her and threatens to provide her with clothes for misbehaving. He tells her “this means clothes” and Winky reacts with “No! No! No, master, not clothes, not clothes!” (Goblet 117). This use of scare tactic shows her fear of liberation, but why she is frightened one never really gets to know. Maybe she does not have anywhere to go? Or maybe she has been brainwashed to believe that it is horrible to be a free-elf.

The difference in Winky’s frightened attitude and Dobby’s grateful attitude is reflected in the attitude about house-elves amongst wizards. Some wizards use Winky’s reaction to justify the fact that house-elves are being used without being provided with rights and some try to fight against the usage of house-elves. This ambivalence about house-elves show clearly in a section where Ron’s twin brothers, Fred and George Weasley, have a conversation with Hermione: “we’ve met them [house-elves working at Hogwarts] and they’re happy. They think they’ve got the best job in the world.” (Goblet 201) and Hermione answers by saying: “that’s because they’re uneducated and brainwashed!” (Goblet 201) These quotes show that on the one hand, we have Fred and George who according to this interpretation could think that, if the house-elves are happy, why waste time caring about their rights? On the other hand, we have Hermione, who believe that they would not be happy in this situation if they were educated and understood the injustice they work in.

One could say J.K Rowling has constructed Hermione to be the representation of multicultural antiracism when feeling such strong empathy for the house-elves. (However, one could also argue that she tries to fight for their political and economical rights when she tries to collect money to start campaigns. (Goblet 155). This political and economic fight she
manages can be defined as social justice antiracism. Her multicultural antiracist behaviour shows when she is empathetic about house-elves’ need for experience, defining the house-elves as “slaves” (Goblet 113). Her social justice antiracism is demonstrated when she founded the organisation SPEW, an organisation which stands for “the Society for the Promotion of Elfish Welfare” (Goblet 189). This political and emotional fight Hermione conducts can be seen as Hermione’s multicultural antiracism developed into political injustice antiracism and that she developed both multicultural and social justice antiracism.

Hermione’s fight to give the house-elves equal rights instead of being slaves could be compared to the anti-racism act that Rosa Parks conducted in the year 1950 in America. Even though, black people were not used as slaves in America anymore at that time the political struggle to have rights and to be a natural part of society was a huge struggle, similar to the way Hermione tries to fight for the rights of house-elves. Some called Rosa Parks a civil rights activist; this is comparable to what one could call Hermione (History).

5. Discussion

One can see, both in the previous research presented and in the conducted analysis that Harry Potter provide many situations in a fictional magical world that are relatable to situations happening in the real world. The four Harry Potter novels analysed in this essay provides many examples of Postcolonial Othering, Orientalism, as well as Marxist Classism in ways that can be useful in the upper secondary classroom. The fact that the Harry Potter series is fictional does not mean that it is not useful or teaching about non-fictional situations in the classroom. As some of the previous research show, there are multiple ways to use the Harry Potter series in a classroom beyond the literary contexts. The fictional world of Harry Potter exemplifies non-fictional circumstances in fictional ways, which can be relevant for teaching these concepts in an English as a foreign language classroom. The complexity visible in the novel, which shows in the analysis, provides a way for an upper secondary student to understand the complexity that humans go through in the real world every day. If the teacher would present some basic knowledge about Postcolonial/Marxist theory in combination with the occurrences in this novel, it would give the students a opportunity to see these theories in action in other situation, maybe even during other subjects in school. This gives the teacher not only a way to teach literature but to teach them a way to understand other subjects in school, which makes this kind of teaching a perfect gateway for the students and provides them with additional knowledge.
The different sections of the analysis could all be used in different ways. In the first section and the second section of the analysis a lesson on discrimination in English speaking countries could be conducted. The first section about Muggles and Wizards shows how Othering and Orientalism has developed a wedge between Muggles and Wizards, the only thing differentiating them is the fact that Wizards can practice magic. However, although the difference is quite insignificant, it is interesting that the Wizarding institutions present in the novel, like the ministry of magic, believe that they need a completely different government and distances themselves from Muggles. This behaviour then becomes institutionalised which means that Wizards in the novels does not really have a choice but to distance themselves. An example being when Ron explains that he and his family chose to distance themselves from their Muggle relative. This distancing is not an active discrimination, but it is the only thing Ron knows, since it is deeply implemented by all institutions around him and therefore becomes the normal way to act. This point of view of distance between Muggles and Wizards is of course heightened when Voldemort and his supporters show hatred towards Muggle-born witches and wizards in the second section, even though their hatred is not institutionalised.

In the second section about Mudbloods and Pure-bloods one can compare the suppression and discrimination of the Muggle-borns to the postcolonial racism Franz Fanon experienced in his text. The usage of the word Mudblood could be seen as an invective word such as “nigger” which was used to suppress and discriminate people of colour in Fanon’s time (born 1925) and the Othering Fanon experienced is in some ways comparable to the Othering represented in Harry Potter.

The third section is a representation of Classism in the way the Malfoys use master suppression techniques towards the Weasleys and bully them. The Malfoys family is quite easy to analyse since both Lucius and Draco act the same way throughout the novels. Their hatred of Muggles is growing throughout the series as the fight between good and evil becomes more and more apparent. The way Draco Malfoy talks to Ron, constantly spattering his proletarian position to make sure that his own position, as an aristocrat in power remains is a good example of how classism works in the novels. When his father then acts similarly, towards Ron’s father Arthur the intention of J.K Rowling is clear she wants this class difference to be visible. In the fourth section, it is possible to analyse the governmental superiority and power wizards have over house-elves from a classist perspective. Wizards obviously feel that their heritage as wizards will make them superior to house-elves just through genetics while creating an institution just to control what they describe as “other
magical creatures”. It is also possible, as Elaine Ostry stated in the previous research section, to compare these events with house-elves to the historical events of slavery in the ‘real’ world.

These examples show that the majority of the sections in the analysis can be used to highlight issues in English speaking societies in the English as a foreign language classroom. Also, as this stands as a part of the core content it is relevant to use these issues to provide these examples for the students. However, these issues are not limited to only English speaking societies of course, but those are the only societies relevant for this essay. They are relevant to this essay as they match the core content of the guidelines provided by the Swedish National Agency of Education. In The Swedish National Agency of Education, it is stated that when teaching students English as a foreign language, the teacher should provide them with knowledge about the culture in English speaking countries and teach them about historical issues and occurrences (Skolverket, Curriculum upper secondary).

As the previous research show, the Harry Potter novels can be used to teach English based on the rules and guidelines provided by the Swedish National Agency for Education. In the previous research presented earlier it is also shown that the novels can be used in a variety of levels. From Whited who taught middle school children and sophomores on their way to college to Firestone who uses Harry Potter novels to teach about hegemony and gender related issues to college students, the series seem to be relevant as a teaching aid at different levels. Other authors have also described how Harry Potter can be used to symbolise current societal issues and exemplify these, even though these articles were not aimed towards using these issues while teaching, they are possible to translate to use in lessons when looking at the core content for English in upper secondary school.

The lesson plan created based on this analysis is an open one; the reason being that one can think it is difficult to create specific lessons until you know what kind of class is going to be taught. As specified in the previous research article by Whited, one can conduct a lesson on a subject in many different ways to suit different classroom assemblies. The classroom situations are often highly individual. For example: If one is teaching a highly motivated class who enjoys working individually and enjoy writing bigger essays this class should be examined in a way which suits them. This could be by writing an individual essay in which they truly can express their own thoughts and the theme should include them searching for their own facts. However, another class, that is also study motivated might not enjoy individual work and are very talkative. This class might need to be examined with a presentation and include a group discussion to really make them understand. These two
examples are the reasons why the lesson plans in the appendix is constructed in such a modifiable way. The lesson plan is included to show an example of how a lesson on the themes of the Harry Potter series could be created. The lesson plan is based on the core content for English 7, which is the highest level in Upper Secondary School in Sweden. This level is chosen because the ‘heavy’ subjects this analysis found in the result feels the most appropriate to teach older students, it also matches the best with the core content since the level is a bit higher. The grading criteria used in the lesson are the ones the students need to achieve E, which is the lowest passing grade in Swedish upper secondary school. The document created by the Swedish National Agency of Education from which the lesson plan is based is also included as the second appendix; to show where the rules and guidelines used in the lesson plans come from.

One can also argue that the lesson plan presented in the appendix makes the students acquire additional knowledge other than the knowledge that it is aimed. When reading and discussing matters they might not have encountered in English before plenty of new words might be encountered. Therefore, a vocabulary improvement can occur and the teacher can easily add a vocabulary assignment to support this improvement of grammar also. The written or verbally conducted assignment suggested in the lesson plan provides the teacher with evidence of which of these newly acquired words that the students understood correctly. This linguistic part of the lesson could be developed into a bigger section and one could expand the lesson plan to add more grammatical aspects. An example of this could be holding an additional lesson on grammar beyond the existing ones in the lesson plan from the appendix and then asking the students to focus on that grammatical aspect when writing the essay. A suggestion could be to create another grammar based lesson centred on the errors the teacher will discover while evaluating the written and oral exercises in the lesson plan attached in the appendix section.

6. Conclusion

This essay showed that different aspects of discrimination can be found in the four first Harry Potter novels. The few aspects presented in the essay seem only to be the tip of the iceberg and additional analyses can be made based on different readings of the novels. When conducting an analysis like this on a book that one is familiar with, it is interesting to see and read these books from different perspectives, these are books that has been read on numerous occasions and the movies have been watched plenty of times, but still, as one digs in to analyse it fifteen years after first having it read to you by your parent, it shows what
enormous content these novels have. New things and hints can always be found and this analysis raised even more curiosity to see what can be found when analysing this book again in the future, and to be able to construct a lesson based on the Harry Potter novels.

The way J.K Rowling constructs such clear hierarchal differences and the way Harry in the novel fights all of them places her in a position where she has shown this unfair conditions, shows the thoughts behind her book. She herself came from a very vulnerable position when writing these novels and that is felt when reading it. All of these reasons create a solid foundation to use Harry Potter in the classroom in other ways than only when teaching English. Further research might be to see how these novels could be used in the social science classroom, since these questions are highly relevant to the Swedish society of today.
7. Works Cited

Primary sources:

Secondary Sources:

Literature


**Web**


Appendix 1

Lesson Plan for using the Harry Potter novels as a Teaching Aid

Literature is a didactic tool, this lesson aims to both encourage the students to see that literature can be interpreted in a deeper way than they first might think as well as give them an introduction to understand the society in which they live. The lesson plan that follows is created as a guide for teachers while teaching the novels. The teacher chooses the entire specific content that is required by the Swedish National Agency of education as well as the general goals, which are not required but desirable to include in some way. When creating a lesson plan, the technique is individual; there is no right or wrong way as long as you include parts of the core content into the lesson you are planning in some place during the year. One does not even have to create a lesson plan, but for most this is the easiest.

This specific lesson plan includes the rules and guidelines from the Swedish National Agency of education and a brief instruction on how the lessons could be executed.

Aim: This aim is a general aim for the English subject in the Swedish upper secondary schools. The aims written here is the one created by the Swedish National agency of education for all English teachers no matter what grade. This is not what the students are graded on but what the teacher should have in mind to include every term. The general aim relevant for this lesson is:

“Students should be given the opportunity to interact in speech and writing and to produce spoken language and texts of different kinds, both on their own and together with others, using different aid and media” (Skolverket, Curriculum)

Core content:
The core content is created by the Swedish National Agency for Education and it contains the specific content that the teacher has to teach in English lessons. Normally a teacher chooses the part or parts from the core content, which he/she wants, to use for the specific theme or lesson. This is what the students are graded on. The specific parts chosen from the core content for these lessons are:
- Contemporary and Older literature
- Theoretical and complex subject areas, also of a more scientific nature, related to students' education, chosen specialisation area, societal issues and working life; thoughts, opinions,
ideas, experiences and feelings; cultural expressions in modern times and historically, such as literary periods (Skolverket, Core).

**Conducting the lessons:**
This is the general lesson plan, created for the teacher and inspired by the analysis of the Harry Potter novels. The theme presented below provides the students with opportunities to connect the fictional events of Harry Potter to real life events. The first part of this theme is intended to make the student aware of how a simplified version of Postcolonial and Marxist issues can look in literature, using harry potter to clarify this as an example. The second part of this theme is aimed to make the students use this newly retrieved knowledge and apply it to real world situations, making them see that the occurrences they discussed in Harry Potter actually exist in the world in which they live. This opens up for political discussion, which they can use in subjects like history or social science.

**Step one:** Use the Harry Potter novels to explain to the students how discrimination of minorities could look with the examples mentioned in my analysis:
- Muggles and Wizards
- Mudbloods and Purebloods
- Weasley’s and Malfoy’s
- House-elves

**Step two:** Provide them with different English Speaking countries in which I would want them to search to find any historical or current event that contains discrimination or suppression of some sort.

**Step three:** Tell them to write a paper or create a presentation where they compare the historical or contemporary event they found with the one described and chosen from Harry Potter during step one.

**Grading Criteria for E:**
This is used to decide if the student has passed or not during this theme.

- Students can choose and with some certainty use strategies to search for relevant information, structure it and assess the reliability of different sources.
- In oral and written communications of various genres, students can express themselves in ways that are varied, clear and structured.
- Students discuss in basic terms some features in different contexts and parts of the world where English is used, and can also make simple comparisons with their own experiences and knowledge. (Skolverket, Core)