

COMPARATIVE LITERARY ANALYSIS OF THE CONCEPT OF MAGIC IN J.K ROWLING'S HARRY POTTER AND ANDRZEJ SAPKOWSKI'S THE WITCHER

BACHELOR'S THESIS

MAKSYM PAVLOVSKYI

SUPERVISOR: HANNA MUSIOL

Department of Language and Literature, Faculty of Humanities
Norwegian University of Science and Technology

Trondheim
June 2022

Maksym Pavlovskyi

Comparative literary analysis of the concept of magic and the role of mages in society in Joanne Rowling's *Harry Potter* and Andrzej Sapkowski's, *The Witcher*

Trondheim

15 June 2022

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	3
Introduction.....	4
Chapter 1 . Concept of magic.....	7
The world of “Harry Potter” by Joanne Rowling.....	7
The world of “The Witcher” by Andrzej Sapkowski.....	10
Chapter 2. Comparative Analysis	15
Conclusion	19
References.....	21

Abstract

Comparative literary analysis of the concept of magic and the role of mages in society in Joanne Rowling's *Harry Potter* and Andrzej Sapkowski's, *The Witcher* explores the concept, role and limits of magic in two popular fantasy literary works with an attempt to determine the similarities and differences in the use of the concept of magic by J.K Rowling and A. Sapkowski. Specifically, this paper focuses on defining what the term magic and exploring the ways in which the two authors use magic in shaping their fictional worlds and their structure. *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* and *The Last Wish* are the two first installments of each respective books series and these literary works will be the primary sources of this paper. The events of Harry Potter and the Witcher take place during different time periods which can have an effect on the role and importance of magic and those who wield it. This paper will also attempt to prove that magic and the ways in which it is used by the authors is a key component of the success and popularity of these books.

Key words: magic, political structure, prejudice, society, influence

Introduction

Literature has many genres. From primary school children get familiar with different genres in literature, what is poetry, fiction, or drama as well as the different literary periods like realism, romanticism or the Victorian period for example. Fantasy is one of the modern literary genres that has been gaining its popularity since the second part of the twentieth century. Initially emerged within the framework of the British culture this type of literature has assimilated its characteristic features such as the idea of supernatural, the use of references to mythology and perhaps the key feature, the idea of magic. Fantasy was ambiguously perceived in English speaking countries as well as internationally (BARRON, 2010). Over time the genre became more and more popular overtime especially among younger audiences.

Fantasy literature combines different works that share some common features. For instance, archaic symbols and plot as well as mythical motifs are actively used in stories and novels of this genre. The author's and therefore reader's attention is focused on the character maturation and general character development. More detail is often given to the physical and mental state of the characters. Furthermore, there is more focus on world order, society and sometimes politics like it can be seen in the Witcher book series. Due to the level of detail and extensive focus on individual characters and their development over periods of time, fantasy novels like Harry Potter, The Witcher and The Lord of the Rings are multi-volumed and designed for long acquaintance with them. These books include a large variety of concepts, representations and cultural references. The aim of the rich variety of references and concepts is to entertain readers, make the story more relatable for a wider audience (BARRON, 2010),

Perhaps one of the most remarkable authors in the fantasy genre is John Ronald Reuel Tolkien known worldwide with his The Lord of the Rings and The Hobbit. Tolkien has made tremendous contribution to the British literature and laid the foundation for the fantasy genre with his fictional world of the "Lord of the Rings" and "The Hobbit". Both his novels are still extremely popular worldwide today (Newman, 2005).

Joanne Rowling is another British author who could rival Tolkien in popularity within the fantasy genre with her fantasy novel about Harry Potter that has been first time released in 1997(J.K., 1997b). The novel consists of seven books and introduces readers to an alternative world that is full of magic. Originally, Harry Potter was intended as a book for children, but it has become popular among readers of all ages and is recognized as a cultural phenomenon in Britain, the bestselling book series worldwide in the history(Grynbaum, 2001). That was not a surprise that the Harry Potter story has made it to the big screen. Currently there are eight movies with the first one titled *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* released in 2001(Columbus, 2001). The movies also brought a huge success and further boosted the popularity of the story influencing the British culture and media.

In Europe the fantasy genre is represented by “The Witcher” – an eight-book novel written by a polish writer Andrzej Sapkowski. The First book titled “*The Last Wish*” which is a collection of short stories was released in 1993. The translated version was released in the UK in 2007(Sapkowski, 2007a). The fictional worlds of the Witcher and Harry Potter were written around the same time but describe the human society of different time periods. While the fantasy in Harry Potter is developing in the modern world, the Witcher story is taking place in the Medieval Times. Both authors put a lot of emphasis on politics, social hierarchy, and destiny, use the concept of magic to lift up their reader beyond the limits of her everyday life, to new experience of the magical and supernatural world.

What is magic? It is difficult to define. When one thing can be considered as magic for some people, it would be regarded as science to others(Awung, 2003). For instance, the modern technology that is a result of the scientific improvements that happened overtime could be a miracle for the primitive communities that lived centuries ago and have ever seen anything as advanced as an iPhone or a laptop. Magic is often compared to science, but the term magic is usually used to describe something supernatural or impossible, something that defies the laws of nature or exceeds the limits of what is possible(Kuhn et al., 2008).

This work will focus on how the magic context is represented in “The Witcher” and “Harry Potter”, how and why the authors use the tool to build their fictional words, to expand and challenge the common rules and boundaries of the human society, to get the message and idea across to their reader. The idea of magic is quite vague and if applied properly it shapes and riches storytelling

Theoretical framework and methodology of this paper is comparative literature analysis. This paper aims to perform a literary analysis of Harry Potter and The Witcher to figure out the similarities and differences between the two fictional worlds with the specific focus on the importance and role of magic within each respective world(Nemesio, 1999). While *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* will be the primary source for the analysis of the Harry Potter world, *The Last Wish* will be the main source for the analysis of the world of the Witcher. The first step is to analyze how the author represents and uses magic within his or her fictional world. Step two is to compare the similarities and differences in the idea of magic and its role in the two stories,

The paper consists of the two main chapters. Chapter one will focus on the presentation of the concept of magic, and in what ways authors J.K Rowling use it to build the story, send a message, open discussion. Despite the fact that the books were released roughly around the same time, magic is represented in completely different ways. Chapter two will represent a qualitative analysis of the magic in the works of A. Sapkowski and J.K.Rowling. The goal is to compare how each author uses magic motives and which role play their mages the society of the fictional worlds. The author of the paper believes that the authors' skills and ways in which they apply the magic context determine the success and popularity of the novels. Furthermore, the stories develop in the different time periods. This paper also aims to find out whether the choice of a time period has an influence on how the mages are viewed in society and the power that they hold

Once the analysis and comparison are complete, this paper will discuss the thesis question in a concluding section. Conclusion will summarize the similarities and differences in the use of magic by A. Sapkowski and J.K. Rowling and answer the question whether the difference in time periods of the stories affect the role of magic within the fictional worlds of Harry Potter and the Witcher. Furthermore, the concluding section will discuss and conclude how crucial magic and the ways in which this concept is used by the two authors, is to the popularity and quality of their respective works. Most importantly, base on the findings after comparison, the conclusion will state how the authors use the concept of magic to get their messages and underlying dilemmas to their readers,

Chapter 1 . Concept of magic

The world of “Harry Potter” by Joanne Rowling

Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone, the first installment of the Harry Potter book series, was presented to readers in June,1997. Joanne Rowling tells a story of a young boy Harry who got accepted into one of the schools of wizardry once he turned eleven years old and his adventures at the school(J.K., 1997b). Since Harry had no idea that he was a wizard and had no knowledge of the existence of the wizarding world until he turned eleven, the readers together with Harry are getting introduced into the wizarding world, its structure and code of conduct(J.K., 1997b).

From the very beginning Rowling makes it crystal clear that while the two worlds exist simultaneously in the same period of time, they are separate from one another. The wizarding world is hidden from the non-wizarding one. The regular people who cannot do magic are called muggles and the absolute majority of them have no idea about the existence of magic or wizards(J.K., 1997b). When Harry Potter goes shopping for all the necessary items for school the readers find out that the wizarding world is not just hidden from muggles, but it also has a completely separate independent structure, politics, banking system and basically everything one can find in the real world. For example, even the place where Harry goes shopping which is called “The Diagon Alley” is a place that is hidden from the real world and only available for the people who can do magic(J.K., 1997b). Wizards also have their own government which is referred to as the Ministry of Magic whose function can be compared with the parliament in the modern human society. The author provides extensive details about different aspects of the wizarding world and outlines the clear division between muggles and wizards. The important fact, the wizarding world is completely independent from the muggle world; however, is integrated in it at the same time. The reader gets to experience a variety of supernatural or unrealistic things throughout the whole book. Providing such a high level of details Rowling makes it even more believable and engaging for readers.

Once Harry Potter arrives to Hogwarts, the school he was accepted into, the reader learns about the magic, its aspects and limits. Lessons are mostly focused on magic learning and potion making. Even the PE class was full of magic as students were supposed to fly on broomsticks as opposed to the usual activities such as football or gymnastics. It is through the PE class that the readers learn about a new, completely unique sport for wizards called Quidditch(Columbus, 2001). Rowling describes the structure of education system in details to challenge the traditional perceptions of education system in the human society. All the small magical and supernatural things found in Hogwarts as well as Quidditch provide the reader with countless opportunities to experience something extraordinary, something that is not possible in the real world. This approach to storytelling holds attention of readers, triggers imagination and especially in children. Younger audiences were the primary target group for the novel. Magic plays a fundamental role in the wizarding world and in everyday life of wizards. So, what actually magic is and how does it work in Rowling's fictional world?

Every wizard has a magic wand which he or she buys at the age of eleven, before going to school. According to Olivander, the wandmaker «The wand chooses the wizard”(J.K., 1997a, p. 2). The wand is vital for doing magic, but it is only a tool that helps to direct and control the magic. The magic itself is represented as spells. There is a large variety of spells that are used for different purposes in the Harry Potter universe. For example, in the *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* Harry and his friends learn several spells such as: levitation spell and an unlocking charm among others. In order to perform a spell, a wizard must flick the wand and spell a specific incantation, unique to each spell. For instance, in order to perform the levitation spell, students had to pronounce the following incantation: “Wingardium Leviosa” and flick the wand in order to make an object levitate(J.K., 1997b). Learning to perform each spell correctly is vital because if performed wrong it can lead to injury or depending on the spell fatal incident. This shows that magic is not just a toy and must be taken seriously, and with great responsibility.

There is more than one type of magic in the Harry Potter universe. Besides casting spells, wizards can make various potions to bewitch someone or transform someone. Metamorphosis is also a rare type of magic where the wizard fully transforms into an animal without casting spells or saying any incantations. In the first installment, Professor McGonagall turns into a cat and back on several occasions. It is an incredibly unique and rare skill which does not require a wand to perform(J.K.,

1997b). Powerful and gifted mages can cast spells without a wand. Rowling's concept of magic can seem complicated because of the sheer amount of detail and rules. But it is the complexity of magic that makes the books exciting. This complexity allows the author to always provide something new for the reader which keeps the audience intrigued.

Magic can be used for different things in the world of Harry Potter. It can be used for doing chores or transport things or people from one place to another. It can also be used for combat and defense. Since the first year at Hogwarts students learn about combat magic and defensive charms. If the charms are performed incorrectly it can lead to physical harm or severe injury. Therefore, all lessons and practices at Hogwarts are supervised by professors(Snir & Levy, 2005). The variety in which magic is used in J.K Rowling's world keeps the readers interested and wanting more. From Quidditch to potions, to combat spells, there is something for readers of all ages in the Harry Potter books. The variety of magical things and adventures is one of the main reasons as to why the books and movies are as successful as they are today. The potion magic is complicated and dangerous as it requires not only the knowledge of spells but also the correct dosage and ingredients. Otherwise, the potion can be fatal or destructive. This once again shows the complexity and danger of using magic.

The magic of Rowling is not unlimited. The use of this powerful tool is regulated by law to which each wizard must obey. The author incorporates the system of justice similar to the one that exists in the muggle world. She sends a message that any powerful tool doesn't make one person all powerful or gives the right to abuse the power and not been punished. Thus, to use of magic in front of muggles is forbidden. If student broke the rule, he would be expelled from the school. If the rule was broken by an adult, the punishment would depend on the severity of the damage. There is even a prison for wizards that use the dark magic called Azkaban(J.K., 1997b).

The wizarding world is full of magical creatures and races other than humans. For example, goblins are a race of short but extremely intelligent creatures that often work in banks and other government institutions. Other magical creatures like unicorns, trolls and dragons also exist in the magic world. However, not all creatures can perform magic. House elves is an example of a race of creatures that have strong magical abilities. However, they are treated as servants by the wizards and are often discriminated or mistreated. The first house elf who appears in the books is called Dobby. He only appears in the second installment called "Harry Potter and the Chamber of

Secrets” and he serves the Malfoy family(J.K., 1998). Despite being able to perform powerful magic even without a wand, house elves are looked down upon and mistreated. They are often treated as slaves(J.K., 1998). This fact shows that Rowling’s fictional society has its flaws and has similar problems as the real world. J.K Rowling makes sure to remind the readers that magic is not a solution to all problems and that some problems that are common in the real world are just as relevant in the wizarding world. Dobby’s situation is an example of extreme prejudice which is a dilemma that is present throughout the Harry Potter books. However, the message is not easily recognizable for children and may be overlooked or misunderstood.

Despite the story of Harry Potter being a fictional tale primarily targeting the younger audiences, it raises awareness of social and political issues such as discrimination, racism, and abuse of power(Grynbaum, 2001). In her world of wizardry magic is a relatively rare skill that can be passed on only genetically(Ramagopalan et al., 2007). And this fact drives the social inequality in the society of wizards. Those who are born to muggles or have close relatives from muggles may be often bullied by other wizards at school and referred to as “mudblood”(Columbus, 2001). Being a pure-blood wizarding family, such as the Malfoys family. Being born in a full family of wizards is considered as something to be proud of.

These kinds of topics are relevant for any generation. It would be wrong to say that Harry Potter is a children’s book. The magic motives that Rowling uses makes her messages to reach the broader audience. Sometimes she hides the real message underneath the magic to open discussion with older readers about social dilemmas or political issues. She invites the reader in the fictional world and creates the space where the reader can freely think about issues of the modern human society.

From the first book it is evident how skillfully Rowling is using the concept of magic for various purposes, from entertainment the reader to conveying the actual messages and opening talk about social dilemma. In order to fully grasp the extent to which Rowling applies the concept of magic in storytelling, it is worth to have a look at another example of the famous fantasy book series

[The world of “The Witcher” by Andrzej Sapkowski](#)

The story of the Witcher consists of eight books that bring the reader in the fictional world where magic is a vital component r constantly present throughout all the eight books. The first work titled *The Last Wish*,

a collection of short stories, was released in 1993(Sapkowski, 2007b). The action of the Witcher story takes place in the medieval time period, in the fictional world called “The Continent”. Originally the Continent was inhabited by elves also known as sorcerers or users of magic. The cataclysm “The Conjunction of the Spheres” has led to the temporary merge of different magical worlds and allowed other races like humans and dwarfs to come over to the Continent(Sapkowski, 2007a). Besides humans and dwarfs there were countless number of monsters and magical creatures who also crossed over along with humans. All the different races and monsters were forced to find a way to coexist in the same world. Many creatures and monsters also possess magical abilities.

In Sapkowski’s world the concept of magic is quite complicated and associated with high cost and high risk. Firstly, magic is referred to as an uncontrolled chaos which is a form of natural energy present all around. Sorcerers are taught to control that chaos. The process of correctly controlling this energy takes a long time to master and has a price(Sapkowski, 2007a). This is best demonstrated in several episodes of the Netflix TV series. In the second episode, Tessaia de Vries who is the head teacher at the school for sorcerers explains the magic by saying: “Magic is organizing chaos. There is no conjuring something from nothing. There is a give and a take”(Schmidt, 2019). This means that in order to perform magic one must take the chaos or energy from something before putting it into something else. In this episode the students were given a flower and a stone. In order to make the stone levitate they had to take the energy from the flower, causing the flower to die(Schmidt, 2019). Without the will and skill to control chaos with magic it can result in fatal consequences to the user of magic or those around him. Sapkowski’s magic is unforgiving, dangerous and requires a tremendous responsibility from the users.

Sorcerers play a significant role in keeping the world order. Their women get political power and influence by taking positions in governments as king’s advisors. They can convince kings to make a certain decision or change their mind regarding a specific matter(Sapkowski, 2007a). The male mages rarely advise kings but instead take care of the brotherhood of sorcerers, schools of magic and other political and social matters, and maintain the peace between the kingdoms. Female mages are independent from male authority and work independently within the political system(Bertram, 2021). Sorceresses are placed also into a kingdom to spy and alert if its king is planning something that can have undesirable consequences. In other words, kings may rule their kingdoms, but the actual power is held by mages and their Brotherhood. The Brotherhood of Sorcerers is a term used to describe mages from Aretuza that collaborate with each other(Sapkowski, 2007a). Sapkowski uses mages as the image of ultimate power and beauty but at the same time shows the readers that they are not invincible. Mages are mortal and on top of that magic in Sapkowski’s fictional world is extremely dangerous. If used incorrectly it can often lead to severe injuries, blindness or death of the user.

While the Brotherhood have their set of rules and moral standards there are other mages who do not follow them. For example, mages are free individuals who can work for someone, but they are not forced to do so. As readers learn from *The Last Wish* as well as parts of the following books, mages in other states such as Nilfgaard for instance, are forced into servitude that can last many years(Sapkowski, 2015). Furthermore, Nilfgaard allows the use of all kinds of magic, including necromancy, fire magic and other forbidden forms of it. It is mentioned many times in several books that fire magic is dangerous and therefore forbidden. For example, Yennifer used pure fire magic at the Battle of Sodden and was temporarily blind afterwards(Sapkowski, 2015). This further shows that Sapkowski treats magic as something dangerous and potentially fatal. Necromancy is another form of forbidden magic used by Nilfgaard where the mages use their own lifeforce to conjure powerful magic which often results in their death. The Brotherhood banned the use of fire magic and necromancy because of the question of morality and safety. Nilfgaard has no such boundaries.

After the Conjunction of the Spheres monsters of different kinds began attacking humans and other races while trying to coexist with them in a new world. The task to contain monsters proved too difficult and as a result mages created witchers. The main character Geralt of Rivia is a witcher himself created by magic to fight monsters. Witchers are created through the use of forbidden mutagenic alchemy which is a forbidden form of magic(Sapkowski, 2007a). Their senses, strength and speed are enhanced along with their regeneration capabilities. While witchers are not mages they can use the most basic form of magic called signs. It is not nearly as powerful as the magic used by sorcerers, but it is a form of magic, nonetheless. The majority of the story in all eight installments of the Witcher is experienced by the reader through the eyes of Geralt of Rivia.

Despite Geralt being a user of magic, he does not have the same luxury of being respected envied or feared by other people, kings or mages. Witchers are viewed as mutants or “products of foul sorcery”(Kwang Il & Sapkowski, 2021). They are viewed as monsters created by to fight other monsters. Even though witchers are humans they are treated and viewed as a separate race in a way. However, the majority of hate towards witchers comes from humans while elves and dwarfs rarely express negative emotions towards the mutated warriors. Throughout *The Last Wish* readers learn and experience the negative way in which Geralt and other witchers are viewed and treated by regular people and kings. Part of the hate is a result of immense fear of the Witchers due to

their mutated eyes and inhuman strength and agility. Even though humans are often dependent on witchers to kill monsters or save them from monsters, the reputation of the witchers is largely shown in a negative way. The first episode of the Witcher TV show of 2019 provides several perfect examples of interactions between Geralt and regular people (Schmidt, 2019). Magic allows witchers and sorcerers to exceed the limits of what is possible and that puts the rest of the population on notice and causes them to fear this power.

Sapkowski uses magic as means to control and balance the power in his fictional world. He uses Geralt, a mutated witcher who is supposed to be indifferent to political disputes, wars and other conflicts to raise several important moral dilemmas. For example, Witchers are created to fight monsters but as the events of the books progress Geralt is forced to reconsider his morals and think who the real monsters are. Questions of racism, discrimination and violence are major parts of the books. Humans discriminate other races, especially elves (Sapkowski, 2007a). With time even an indifferent Geralt begins to see that the real monster are humans who destroy and slaughter everything and everyone in their path. Without mages and witchers the world would have fallen into chaos.

For example, readers learn about the violent history of elves who were slaughtered by humans in pursuit of power and land. This is a big topic in the books. There is a lot of hatred between elves and humans based on race (Sapkowski, 2007a). Magic is a power wielded by few and it is what keeps humans in check through fear and heavy political influence. While mages are mostly viewed as trustworthy advisors, witchers are viewed as monsters and abominations. Prejudice and racism are key themes in Andrzej Sapkowski's books and magic plays a key role in keeping people kings and people in power in check (Poradecki, 2020).

Sorcerers spend many years studying and once they graduate, they have an opportunity to undergo complete physical transformation. This transformation changes the looks of the person any way they want permanently. And the looks never change (Sapkowski, 2015). This also means that mages age extremely slowly and even if they are several hundred years old, they still look exactly the same as when they did when they graduated. However, despite the long lifespan mages are not immortal. Furthermore, they can be killed in battle or a duel just like any regular man or woman. Thus, they are not invincible. The physical transformation also has a high cost. It is a form of magic or in other words a strong permanent spell. The cost is the ability to bear children. Simply

put, those who undergo transformation become sterile. The procedure is more common among women than man as women are expected to look attractive and seductive. The cost of graduation and becoming a fully trained mage is extremely high and not every mage agrees to go through with the procedure. Tessaia de Vries justifies this procedure by saying "There is not a person alive who does not look in the mirror and see some deformity...Except for us"(Schmidt, 2019). This means that only mages have the power and opportunity to change their looks however they like. While this procedure could be considered cruel and perhaps even immoral, it is considered as a prestigious award and a form of power, which is desired by most students, especially those who have some physical deformities or scars since birth. Mages who graduate are assigned to a kingdom and are expected to not only do their job to perfection but also always look their best in front of the King and other influential people.

Due to the fact that the events of *The Witcher* are set in the Medieval era the society is quite undeveloped if compared to the real world of today. Therefore, prejudice and racism are more common as the people are not rarely open to discussing such dilemmas. On top of that, fear of the unknown or fear of someone being different further escalates prejudice. Regular people are terrified of Geralt and witchers in general despite the fact that they are often forced to rely on witchers to save them from various monsters. They are afraid of power that they cannot understand. Sapkowski puts Geralt into many situations where he is forced to make difficult choices and question what is good and what is evil or what is right and wrong. For instance, he encounters situations where humans abuse other races and act like the very same monsters that they higher Geralt to kill. By telling the majority of the story from Geralt perspective A. Sapkowski invites the reader to experience these situations together with the main character. In turn, this forces the readers to question these very same moral dilemmas and think of possible solutions. This allows the reader to further expand his or her imagination.

Sapkowski uses magic to further to exaggerate the problems of violence, prejudice and racism which makes these issues seem even more real and serious. While monsters try to adapt to their new environment on the Continent, humans act hostile to all races and creatures. Pushing elves out of their land is a perfect example of that. At first, *The Witcher* books may seem like an adventure fantasy meant for entertainment only, but if read closely it is clear that A. Sapkowski is trying to discuss serious topics that are relevant to the real world of today. And he uses magic to exaggerate

and highlight the conflicts and violence to make the readers ask the same questions. What is right and wrong and where does a man draw the line between good and evil.

In the first chapter of *The Last Wish*, a sorcerer asks Geralt to kill a monster for him. But the monster in question turns out to be a young human girl who was born under a solar eclipse. The sorcerer believes that the girl is cursed and must be eliminated before she causes havoc and bloodshed. And he tells Geralt that killing this monster would be “the lesser evil”(Sapkowski, 2007a). This is against Geralt code and he replies with perhaps one of the most important sentences in the whole book series “Evil is evil..Lesser, Greater, Middling. It is all the same. If I had to choose between the two, then I would rather not choose at all”(Sapkowski, 2007a). Already in the first chapter A. Sapkowski raises a major moral question of how far a man can go before he crosses the line. This dilemma is recurring throughout the books as Geralt travels the world and make difficult decisions at every turn. The readers get to experience this and eventually are forced to ask themselves the same questions.

Chapter 2. Comparative Analysis

Joanne Rowling and Andrzej Sapkowski’s are the two most remarkable authors in the fantasy genre. *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone* (J.K., 1997) and *The Witcher: The Last Wish*(Sapkowski, 2007a), are the stories that introduce their readers into the complex but enthralling world of magic. The authors use the magic motives to create a space that goes beyond the limits and boundaries of the real world, the space where the reader can experience something that is not possible in her daily life, to detach from realities and look at the actual dilemmas from new or other perspectives.

Magic is a complex and vital component of the societies of *Harry Potter* and the *Witcher*, it determines the structure of the societies and how they function, reveals their social issues. Even the choice of epoch in which the story develops matters and reflects the openness of human society to experience of something that is difficult to explain. Thus, in *The Witcher* events take place in the Medieval era while the *Harry Potter* story develops in the modern time, in late 1990th and early 2000th.

It is interesting to see how different the role of mages in the life of human society, how people perceive and aware about their skills and abilities. As can be seen in the first installment *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, the wizarding world exists parallel to the none-magic world and the regular people, muggles, do not know of the existence of magic or wizards. Only very few of them know about the schools of magic and this whole other world. Primarily these are muggles who have children or family members capable of magic. However, even in those cases the people's abilities are often kept in secret from the rest of the family for safety reasons.

In the world of the *Witcher*, humans, monsters, witches, and mages are all live in the same world, aware of each other existence, have to interact in the daily life. Therefore, the knowledge of existence of supernatural power is common and acceptable among the people.

In *Harry Potter* muggles and wizards do not often interact and when they do wizards usually hide their abilities since it is against the law to use magic in front of people. Sorcerers are respected and often service the common people either voluntarily or for money. In *The Witcher* it is the opposite. Mages and witches may openly use their abilities. Among the people just very few are capable of performing magic or casting spells of any kind. *Witchers* are seen as mutants and monsters, people are afraid and do not trust them. The author also talks about hate. His witches are hated for being different, for having unnatural abilities, for catlike eyes and other odd appearance regardless of their intention and motives.

Despite the difference in how the world of magicians and people are interconnected, both authors describe the society of magicians as highly structured and organized, with a certain authority hierarchy, regulated by code of laws. The special focus on the systems of education, justice and control. world.

In *Harry Potter* the universe is split into two worlds each of those is represented by own government, laws, justice system, and schools. The systems of the two worlds are not interconnected and exist separately and what happens in the wizard world has rare impact on the life of muggles. The extend of infusion of mages in the world of people is monitored by the Ministry of Magic, e the function of which can be compared with the purpose of parliament, but only for wizards(J.K., 1997b). Rowling uses magic context to build a factionary world and at the same time to make it as relevant and close to her reader as possible, to open the door to reader's

imagination, but at the same to navigate the reader's thinking around the messages she wants to convey through her work. This approach keeps readers engaged and connected to the life of mages.

The Witcher world of Sapkowski is quite different. He also portrays magic as a vital part of the society, but in his world, mages hold the ultimate power. Mages in Sapkowski's world do not have their own world or a separate society. On the contrary, they are highly integrated into the "*common world*". They have heavy political influence and control everything that is going on in and across different kingdoms. Mages are respected not only for their power but also for their wisdom and knowledge collected over their long lifespan. Kings listen to mages and have them as their advisors. The extraordinary abilities to perform magic make kings and others fear sorcerers. They have their headquarters in Aretuza and they are a part of the Brotherhood of sorcerers who act as overseeing power with the ability to take action and apply magic at any moment to manipulate the humans and their social construct. It is safe to say that mages in Sapkowski's books hold more power and influence, and they are more involved into the events of the world in comparison to Rowling's story. Important to note that Rowling and Sapkowski emphasize that the magic or the ability to use it do not make its user invincible or all powerful. There are limits, risks and cost the mages pay for the abilities. There is a requirement to be responsible for how, why, and where the abilities are exercised. Both authors introduce the importance of justice system, understanding of consequences of acting against the law, against the society and its members. Sapkowski uses the context of the medieval times and often refers to myths and legends to exaggerate, reveal on surface the cause an effect nature of each action, each decision, *The Witcher* targets mostly the adult audience, call for wisdom and courage, ethics and the greater good.

Though the storytelling of each author opens up a discussion about the major political and moral dilemmas such as racism and prejudice, make the reader change the perspective and see the issues that are real and important in the human society today and continues to be a major dilemma throughout centuries.

A lot of fantasy literature is created using the concept of magic, however, not all stories are successful. One of the main reasons why *Harry Potter* and *The Witcher* became as successful as they are today because they are unique and well thought through. The concept and mechanics of magic are complex in both works and are explained in great detail. Both authors use the magic motives to hold reader's attention. A such detailed description of their fictional world and

characters helps the authors engage the reader, immerse him in the context, get a variety of exciting magical experiences. It allows the reader to push the limits of the imagination and often experience the impossible. Even though Sapkowski puts more emphasis on ethical dilemmas and politics. Rowling does the same thing in the Harry Potter, only she keeps it covered up or more subtle because after all Harry Potter was originally meant for children. In Sapkowski's world the issues of prejudice and racism are very common and open than in the world of *Harry Potter*. One of the reasons for that is the fact that the events of Harry Potter happen in modern time where the society is more developed and open for discussions about such problems while *The Witcher* is set in the Medieval time period where the society is much less developed. In addition, the events of the Witcher happen during a war between kingdoms and different races and that just further escalates the problems.

The two books may seem completely different at first which magic being one of the few similarities between the two. However, both authors raise the same questions about what good and evil and open discussions about prejudice is. The fictional worlds and magic allow the authors to bring these problems to light by using magic and creating difficult situations for characters where they have to make a choice or question the choices of others from the perspective of morality. In order to be able to pass these messages and make sure that they are understood requires a lot of thought and skill as a writer. A. Sapkowski and J.K Rowling managed it quite well despite the major differences in their worlds and time periods.

Conclusion

J.K Rowling and Andrzej Sapkowski are world-famous authors mostly known for the story of Harry Potter and The Witcher. These books belong to the fantasy genre of literature and have become extremely popular worldwide for several reasons. After analyzing and comparing the two literary works it is evident that magic plays a key role in both stories. J.K. Rowling and A. Sapkowski use magic in a variety of different ways within their respective fictional worlds. In both literary works magic is used by the authors to expand the reader's imagination, provide unique, extraordinary adventures, and allow the readers to experience things that exceed the limits of the natural world and are impossible in real life. The events of the two novels occur in different time periods and as a result there are many differences in the structure of society and the distribution of power. Magic is present in almost every aspect of the stories, but its purpose and effects differ due to the difference in time period and ways in which each author uses the concept of magic. Rowling's main target audience are children while Sapkowski's are adults. A. Sapkowski puts a lot more emphasis on moral dilemmas such as prejudice, racism, social ladder, good and evil and politics. While these dilemmas and messages are present in Rowling's Harry Potter, they are more subtle, often hidden and therefore not as easy to recognize or understand. Wizards live among muggles, but they must hide their abilities because it is against the law to use magic in front of regular people. Most muggles have no knowledge of the existence of magic or the wizarding world. The events of the wizarding world have little to no effect on the muggle world as wizards have their own government and complete infrastructure. On the other hand, in the world of the Witcher mages are respected and placed at the top of the social ladder, having a lot of political influence and the ability to manipulate kings and government officials. The witchers themselves are also capable of magic. However, unlike mages, they are hated and feared by regular people just like elves and dwarfs. The ability to do magic and the fact that it makes mages and witchers different from regular people leads to fear and extreme prejudice. There is a major difference in how magic users are viewed and treated by the regular people in the Witcher when compared to Harry Potter. To conclude, Rowling and Sapkowski prove that magic is a powerful tool in fantasy literature and is vital to the success of both novels. They describe the concept in great detail and use the concept to perfection in their novels. Without magic neither of the two literary works would have become as popular as they are today. Both authors use magic as a tool to highlight the problems and

dilemmas of what is right and wrong and where does a man set a line between good and evil and allow the readers to think about these things and participate in discussion without the boundaries of the real world. The fictional worlds of both books push the limits and boundaries of the real world and provide an opportunity and space to think freely about such serious questions.

References

- Awung, S. E. (2003). *Magic in Harry Potter* (1st ed., Vol. 1).
<https://www.grin.com/document/108551>
- BARRON, S. (2010). The magic of fantasy: The traditional, the original and the wonderful.
Mallorn: The Journal of the Tolkien Society, 50, 31–34.
- Bertram, C. (2021). ANDRZEJ SAPKOWSKI'S WITCHER SERIES: FANTASY'S
APPROPRIATION OF MODERN POLITICAL LANDSCAPES. *LAUNCH:
Undergraduate Research Office at Texas A&M University*, 1, 43.
- Columbus, C. (2001). *Harry Potter and The Philosopher's Stone* [Fantasy; Movie]. Warner
Bros. Pictures. <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0241527/>
- Grynbaum, G. A. (2001). The Secrets of Harry Potter. *The San Francisco Jung Institute Library
Journal*, 19(4), 17–48. <https://doi.org/10.1525/jung.1.2001.19.4.17>
- J.K., R. (1997a). Chapter 2: The Choosing of The Wand. In *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's
Stone* (1st ed., Vol. 1, p. 32). Bloomsbury Academic.
- J.K., R. (1997b). *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (1st ed.). Bloomsbury Academic.
- J.K., R. (1998). *Harry Potter and The Chamber of Secrets* (1st ed., Vol. 2). Scholastic, Inc.
- Kuhn, G., Amlani, A. A., & Rensink, R. A. (2008). Towards a science of magic. *Trends in
Cognitive Sciences*, 12(9), 349–354. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tics.2008.05.008>
- Kwang Il, H., & Sapkowski, A. (2021). *The Witcher: Nightmare of the Wolf* [Action Adventure;
Animated Film]. Netflix. <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt11657662/>
- Nemesio, A. (1999). The Comparative Method and the Study of Literature. *CLCWeb:
Comparative Literature and Culture*, 1(1). <https://doi.org/10.7771/1481-4374.1000>
- Poradecki, M. (2020). The limits of magic: A study in breaking through barriers in fantasy
fiction. *Acta Universitatis Lodziensis. Folia Litteraria Polonica*, 57(2), 113–128.

- Ramagopalan, S. V., Knight, M., Ebers, G. C., & Knight, J. C. (2007). Origins of Magic: Review of Genetic and Epigenetic Effects. *BMJ: British Medical Journal*, 335(7633), 1299–1301.
- Sapkowski, A. (2007a). *The Witcher: The Last Wish* (Vol. 1). Gollancz (UK).
- Sapkowski, A. (2007b). *Wiedźmin: Ostatnie życzenie* (Vol. 1). superNOWA.
- Sapkowski, A. (2015). *The Witcher: Sword of Destiny* (1st ed., Vol. 1). Orbit.
- Schmidt, L. (2019). *The Witcher* [Fantasy Adventure Drama; Tv-series]. Netflix.
- Snir, A., & Levy, D. (2005). Popular Perceptions and Political Economy in the Contrived World of Harry Potter. *SSRN Electronic Journal*, 33. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.817346>