

# Harry Potter, Heteronormativity and Pronatalism - the Villain as the Antinatalist

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### ***Harry Potter, Heteronormativity and Pronatalism – the Villain as the Antinatalist***

*Natalism is a belief that promotes human reproduction, that is child-bearing and parenthood, as desirable for social reasons. In J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter series, the key characteristic of the heroes seems to be their adherence to heteronormativity and natalism (they are straight, they wed young and have multiple children or are children themselves). In contrast, the villains are characterized as both not conforming to heteronormativity in various overlapping modes – implied homosexuality (Greyback, Voldemort, Bellatrix, Grindelwald), pedophilia (Greyback, Voldemort), implied incest (the Carrows, Bellatrix and Narcissa), rape (Merope), asexual forms of reproduction, i. e. horcruxes (Voldemort) – and as being markedly antinatalistic – lack of children, or only one child (the Lestranges, Voldemort, the Malfoys), also, in books 1-6 the core of their opposition consists of children (Harry and his friends) and in book 7, the majority of their opposition consists of children (Hogwarts students). In fact, the whole series is a result of Voldemort's readiness to kill baby Harry and his young parents for his own immorality achieved through asexual means and Harry's mother being willing to die for her son – this event forms a basic structure in which natalism and antinatalism clash forming a template that we can find reproduced throughout the series. Interestingly, the villains' pure-blood ideology can be brought down to their own racist natalist agenda, which, the books seem to imply, is a result of their nonconformism to heteronormativity and therefore equals antinatalism.*

Key words: natalism, antinatalism, heteronormativity, queer, villain.

## INTRODUCTION

In his book *No Future – Queer Theory and the Death Drive*, Edelman defines pronatalism as those “values that center on the family (...) but that focus on the protection of children” (2004: 1). He further argues that pronatalistic politics construct “(...) an appeal that is impossible to refuse (...)” (Edelman 2004: 2) because pronatalists are “fighting for the children” (ibid.). In a similar vein, Benatar, who defines pronatalism as “an encouragement or at least endorsement of procreation” (2015: 13), argues, “It is always difficult to convince people that a widespread practice in which they participate is morally wrong. (...) The task is made still more difficult when the practice is one that is fed by powerful biological drives with deep evolutionary roots” (ibid. 11).

Homosexuality hinders procreation (because same-sex couples cannot biologically procreate), and thus can be seen as actively antinatalistic. Since pronatalism is a “powerful force, which has biological, cultural, social, religious and legal manifestations” (Benatar and Wasserman 2015: 13), the connection between homosexuality and antinatalism can be a powerful tool of homophobia. Pronatalism is “preserving (...) the absolute privilege of heteronormativity by rendering unthinkable, by casting outside the political domain, the possibility of a *queer* resistance to this organizing principle of communal relation” (Edelman 2004: 2).

The *Harry Potter* book series arguably posits that procreation (and all of the heteronormative practices surrounding it) is never wrong. In part because of the boarding school setting of the books and the age of the heroes (the books start when Harry is eleven and end with Harry being seventeen), the heroes in *Harry Potter* are always literally ‘fighting for the children’, while the villains are always literally ‘fighting the children’, which becomes interesting in the context of Edelman’s arguing that *queerness*<sup>37</sup> “names the side *not* ‘fighting for the children’, the side outside the consensus by which all politics confirms the absolute value of reproductive futurism” (2004:

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<sup>37</sup> As Pugh and Wallace, I use *gay* and *homosexual* “to refer to sexual desires and acts between two people of the same biological sex” (2006: 277), and “*queer* more generally to indicate disruptions to culturally gendered normativity” (ibid.).

3). This is also accentuated by Harry Potter, the main character of the series, being, as Pugh and Wallace put it, a “heteronormative hero” (2006: 260). In their view, “heteronormative heroism serves as a repressive force of ideology in relation to gender and sexuality” (Pugh and Wallace 2006: 263) and “ultimately squelches gender equality and sexual diversity in favor of the ideological status quo” (ibid. 260).

Indeed, if we accept Judith Halberstam’s claim that “there is such a thing as ‘queer time’ and ‘queer space’” (2005: 8) and that they “develop, at least in part, in opposition to the institutions of family, heterosexuality and, reproduction,” (2005: 4), the queer space in the Harry Potter book series is the space occupied by the villains. In this paper I will investigate how *Harry Potter’s* arguable pronatalistic politics construct the villain(s) as antinatalist(s) and deny them a valid political ‘queer space’ (Halberstam).

### **‘QUEER SPACE’ IN *HARRY POTTER* BEYOND THE REALM OF VILLAINY**

However, first we should examine if there is a queer space articulated in *Harry Potter* beyond the space occupied by the villains. Magic itself could be considered to be a metaphor for queerness (Bronski 2003), however, Pugh and Wallace (2006: 266) challenge Bronski’s view that the *Harry Potter* books make a connection between a resistance to heteronormativity and wizardry and in that way *queer* the text:

If wizardry allows Harry the opportunity to resist normativity, it is imperative to realize that it permits him merely to resist Muggle normativity but not the equally repressive force of wizarding normativity. That is to say, Muggles and Wizards may define normativity differently in relation to magic, but they agree tacitly on the sexual behaviors constitutive of cultural normalcy.

The ‘magical’ aspect of the story thus does not introduce or represent alternatives to sexual normativity, as much as it tries to hide the conservatism of Magical Great Britain. As Pugh, Wallace and Bronski emphasize, Harry does emerge from his cupboard, like the homosexual emerges from the ‘closet’ to enter the wizarding world, but it might actually be that he just enters another ‘closet’, another



deeply conservative world. Inside the confines of the wizarding world, lycanthropy seems to be an even more overtly problematic metaphor for homosexuality than wizardry,

A more disturbing queer figuration in the *Harry Potter* series is the parallel between werewolves and gay men due to their shared status as marginalized figures. Werewolves serve as a figure for queerness in that families must readjust their relationships and expectations of one another when a member becomes a werewolf, as families must likewise do when a loved one comes out of the closet as homosexual. (Pugh and Wallace 2006: 267)

Lycanthropy as a metaphor for homosexuality has homophobic undertones for Pugh and Wallace, as it associates homosexuality with pedophilia in characters of both Remus Lupin (a hero) and Fenrir Greyback (a villain). While Lupin removes himself from employment at Hogwarts as soon as it becomes clear he might harm the students, “Fenrir Greyback delights in the pederastic pleasures of preying on children” (ibid. 268). As Pugh and Wallace state: “(...) the failure of werewolves to serve as suitable figures of queerness arises in the fact that lycanthropy cannot be imagined as a positive force” (ibid.). In fact, “lycanthropy in the *Harry Potter* series also bears the markers of AIDS, in that it is a ‘disease’ transmitted through the exchange of bodily fluids (...) the metaphor between werewolves and gay men marks all queers as quite literally sick” (ibid.). In addition, there is evidence of Greyback trying to create a queer space while being this highly problematic figure of queerness, “Greyback specializes in children... Bite them young, he says, and raise them away from their parents, raise them to hate normal wizards. Voldemort has threatened to unleash him upon people’s sons and daughters; it is a threat that usually produces good results.” (Rowling 2005: 334-335)

That Greyback, as a figure of queerness, wants to “raise (young werewolves) away from their parents, raise them to hate normal wizards” is in line with queer space being, according to Halberstam, “develop(ed), at least in part, in opposition to the institutions of family, heterosexuality and, reproduction” (2005: 8). However, by introducing Greyback, Rowling does not only denigrate the oppressed queer figure of the werewolf to pederasty, but also connects his ‘urges’ to murder,

“He died?” repeated Harry, shocked. “But surely werewolves don’t kill, they just turn you into one of them?”  
“They sometimes kill,” said Ron, who looked unusually grave now. “I’ve heard of it happening when the werewolf gets carried away.”  
(Rowling 2005: 473)

Edelman warns against such a literal representation of the death drive as this, since it is the place where queerness can be found, “The ups and downs of political fortune may measure the social order’s pulse, but queerness, by contrast, figures, outside and beyond its political symptoms, the place of the social order’s death drive: a place, to be sure, of abjection expressed in the stigma, sometimes fatal, that follows from reading that figure literally (...)” (2004: 3). By associating Greyback, as a figure of queerness, with the death drive, the queer place he creates becomes a place of stigma.

### **A CLASH BETWEEN PRONATALISM AND ANTINATALISM, NOT FEMININITY AND MASCULINITY**

*Harry Potter* is also remarkable for an investigation of pronatalism and antinatalism because the main villain gets defeated by a baby whom he intended to kill. Gallardo and Smith state, “As Harry is reminded repeatedly, he survives Lord Voldemort’s Killing Curse as an infant because his mother, Lily, sacrificed her life to save his” (2009: 97). They argue that this is the “first clash between the masculine principle and the feminine principle” in the series, as they see Voldemort as “the extreme expression of aggressive masculinity in the series” (ibid.). They link Voldemort’s supposed extreme masculinity to his ties to snake imagery (“To signal his role as the narrative’s grand tempter and emasculator, Voldemort is associated with the image of the snake” (ibid.)). But it is also possible to make a connection to the *ouroboros*, the snake eating its own tail as a symbol of eternity. This is an appropriate comparison because Voldemort’s acquisition of snake-like features follows his efforts to gain immortality by making Horcruxes and is the direct result of that effort, “(...) Horcruxes in the plural, Harry, which I do not believe any other wizard has ever had. Yet it fitted: Lord Voldemort has seemed to grow less human with the passing years, and the transformation he has

undergone seemed to me to be only explicable if his soul was mutilated beyond the realms of what we might call ‘usual evil’...” (Rowling 2005: 502).

In contrast to Gallardo’s and Smith’s claim, placing priority on the protection of children (understood here as a hallmark of pronatalism) does not seem to be gender specific in the *Harry Potter* series. The central struggle of the series is not between masculinity and femininity, as Gallardo and Smith claim, but between pronatalism and antinatalism, or even more precisely, pronatalism and queerness, as can be seen in the figures of Tonks and the werewolf Lupin who are, though married, both queer figures, who both fail to place priority on the protection of their child, and are consequently both punished for that by the narrative (they both die in the Battle for Hogwarts).

Gallardo and Smith identify Tonks, along with Bellatrix Lestrange and Umbridge, as “witches who transgress gender expectations” (2009: 92). In fact, they state that “Tonks is at her most transgressive in her pairing with the werewolf Remus Lupin, for while she enters a conventional heterosexual marriage arrangement, she cares little for the societal intolerance she and her husband will have to face from the wizarding community” (ibid. 93) and that “we are to understand that her active role in the fighting is appropriate in even though she is a new mother” (ibid. 94). However, Harry says to Tonks during the battle for Hogwarts, “I thought you were supposed to be with Teddy at your mother’s?” (Rowling 2007: 624), which can be compared to his rebuke at Lupin who earlier in *Deathly Hallows* attempts to join Harry in his search for Horcruxes, “I’m pretty sure my father would have wanted to know why you aren’t sticking with your own kid, actually. (...) My father died trying to protect my mother and me, and you reckon he’d tell you to abandon your kid to go on an adventure with us?” (Rowling 2007: 212-214)

Markedly, it is Harry, Pugh and Wallace’s “heteronormative hero” (2006: 260), who does not approve of Lupin’s and Tonks’ decision to fight at the expense of their child, while Lupin and Tonks’ *queerness* is what, arguably, makes them want to fight in the first place, and what, in the end, costs them their lives. Thus, not placing priority on the protection of children does not seem to be gender specific in the *Harry Potter* series, but rather a question of whether a certain character, male or female, exhibits *queer* traits or not.

## VOLDEMORT AS A QUEER FIGURE

Voldemort's readiness to kill baby Harry and his young parents to sustain his own immortality achieved through Horcruxes (that is, through asexual means of reproduction) and Harry's mother being willing to die for her son, seem to form a 'basic structure' in which pronatalism and antinatalism clash and which is then reproduced as a place of conflict in other parts of the series. Notably, the text overtly makes a contrast between Merope, Voldemort's mother and Harry's mother Lily, "Yes, Merope Riddle chose death in spite of a son who needed her, but do not judge her too harshly, Harry. She was greatly weakened by long suffering and she never had your mother's courage." (Rowling 2005: 262) Unlike Lily Potter, Voldemort's mother died not to protect her child, but *despite* the need to stay alive and protect it ("Merope Riddle chose death in spite of a son who needed her"). Thus Voldemort becomes a victim of his mother's antinatalism.

However, it is primarily the depiction of Voldemort's family of procreation and his alternative way of life which does not lead to heteronormative marriage that makes Voldemort a compelling figure of queerness. Notably, Voldemort's family of procreation is differently depicted in the *Harry Potter* books 1-7 than in the play *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child* (2016), coauthored by Rowling, which can reasonably be seen as a kind of 'backtracking' of Voldemort's depiction.

In *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*, Bellatrix gives birth to Voldemort's daughter a year before her and Voldemort's deaths in *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, "The child of Bellatrix Lestrange and you. I was born in Malfoy Manor before the Battle of Hogwarts..." (Rowling et al. 2016: 210). This implies that both Bellatrix and Voldemort were supposedly heterosexual. However, despite being depicted in *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child* as both a mother and a heterosexual, Bellatrix, similarly to Voldemort's mother, Merope, could still be considered as a non-conformist in the context of pronatalistic norms.

In their analysis of female *Harry Potter* characters who transgress gender expectations, Gallardo and Smith argue that "the most important piece of [Bellatrix's] depiction as a monstrous female is that she, like Umbridge, does not display the motherly feelings

commonly associated with women” (2009: 96) and continue, “her callous attitude toward the fate of her nephew Draco is purposefully contrasted to that of her sister Narcissa, who is almost out of her mind for worrying about her son” (ibid.). In fact, Bellatrix does not care about the lives of her own hypothetical children either, as she says to Narcissa, “If I had sons, I would be glad to give them up to the service of the Dark Lord!” (Rowling 2005: 35). Notably, the text clearly admonishes this stance taken by Bellatrix, describing her words as “ruthless” (ibid.). Bellatrix thus, even as a supposedly heterosexual woman, does not abide to pronatalistic norms, because she does not have a focus on the protection of children, neither for her hypothetical own, nor for those of others.

It is also interesting that Bellatrix and her husband Rodolphus do not interact with one another in any of the books. In comparison, both the ‘heroic’ married couple, Molly and Arthur Weasley and the married ‘villain’ couple, Narcissa and Lucius Malfoy, have many mutual interactions. The utter lack of interaction between the Lestrange spouses seems odd in this context. Sirius’s comment on Bellatrix and her sister, Narcissa, making “respectable pure-blood marriages” (Rowling 2003: 113) implies that Bellatrix’s marriage might have been made just for ideological reasons. However, the text also carries some hints of Bellatrix’s (sadistic) homosexuality. Firstly, Bellatrix does prove to have both an understanding of Greyback’s predatory appetites (“Cissy, I think we ought to tie these little heroes up again, while Greyback takes care of Miss Mudblood. I am sure the Dark Lord will not begrudge you the girl, Greyback” (Rowling 2007: 473)) and shows excitement (perhaps of a sexual nature) when torturing Hermione, “Wait,” said Bellatrix sharply. “All except. . . . except for the Mudblood.” Greyback gave a grunt of pleasure. (...) Hermione screamed again from overhead, and they could hear Bellatrix screaming too, but her words were inaudible (...)” (Rowling 2007: 462). In the text, Bellatrix explains that she chose to torture Hermione in particular (out of Hermione, Harry and Ron) because Hermione is the only Mudblood (meaning, Hermione’s parents are not wizards) of the three, but Hermione is markedly also the only *female* of the three and this is the reason why Greyback fixates on Hermione in the same chapters. The similarities between Greyback and Bellatrix are problematic because Greyback, as a werewolf, is shown to be a problematic queer figure. These similarities also make Bellatrix a

problematic queer figure, as she too is identified by Gallardo and Smith as one of the “witches who transgress gender expectations” (2009: 92) in *Harry Potter*.

Furthermore, Bellatrix has an arguably incestuous relationship with her sister, Narcissa. Bellatrix, a fanatical Voldemort supporter, notably does not report her sister to Voldemort when Narcissa decides to break Voldemort's explicit commands in front of Bellatrix in order to save her son. As she shows callous indifference to her nephew's fate, Bellatrix's disobedience to Voldemort is an expression of her remarkable attachment to her *sister*, not her sister's child. Bellatrix and Narcissa are both juxtaposed and contrasted repeatedly in the text (“[Bellatrix] sat beside her sister, as unlike her in looks, with her dark hair and heavily lidded eyes, as she was in bearing and demeanor; where Narcissa sat rigid and impassive” (Rowling 2007: 9) and “Dark as her sister was fair [Bellatrix] did not take her gaze from Snape as she moved to stand behind Narcissa.” (Rowling 2005: 23)), forming a kind of a mirror image. Narcissa also seems to be an indicative name – homosexuals being believed by Freud to be stuck in the narcissistic phase of sexual development. Narcissa seems to represent to Bellatrix her own narcissistic mirror image, from which she cannot step away to form functional heteronormative relationships.

Repeatedly throughout the books, Bellatrix is shown to have utter disregard for the rest of her family of origin, killing or attempting to kill other relations. Bellatrix is the one who kills her first cousin, Sirius Black. It is also strongly implied that she specifically targeted other members of her extended family after Voldemort advises her to ‘prune her family tree’ (Rowling 2007: 12). Bellatrix's homosexuality or, at least, queerness, is thus disturbingly presented as a ‘killing drive’, similar to the werewolf Greyback's murderous animalistic “pederasty” (Pugh and Wallace 2006: 268).

The depiction of Voldemort's Horcruxes is also interesting in the context of Edelman's ‘death drive’, as Horcruxes are created by murder. Horcruxes are also somewhat described as possessing attributes of children, since they grow, and thus can be seen as Voldemort's ‘progeny’. For example, this is the case with the diary, “It looked bad, all right... but the longer Riddle stood there, the more life was dwindling out of Ginny... and in the meantime, Harry noticed suddenly, Riddle's outline was becoming clearer, more solid... (...)” (Rowling 1999: 316). Horcruxes also feed on the emotions of those

carrying them in what might be termed as a kind of a mock pregnancy (“ (...) Harry lifted the golden chain over his head (...) He had not even realized (...) that there was a heavy weight pressing on his stomach until both sensations lifted.” (Rowling 2007: 286)). Voldemort protected the Horcruxes with various spells, which is evocative of the protection the womb provides to the fetus, and the last Horcrux to be destroyed, the snake Nagini, is enclosed in a protective cocoon reminiscent of a womb, “(...) there was the great thick snake, now suspended in midair, twisting gracefully within the enchanted, protected space he had made for her, a starry, transparent sphere somewhere between a glittering cage and a tank.” (Rowling 2007: 642).

Horcruxes can hypothetically ‘grow’ until they become like the copies of the person who made them, as the person was *at the time* of the soul-splitting. Thus Voldemort's mode of procreation is not reproduction but replication, that is, he makes copies of himself which are then presumably not capable of further reproduction or growth. This is subverting the biological mode of procreation, as the production of children in humans is not replication of one parent and the children do not directly enable the parent to become immortal, which is the Horcruxes’ sole purpose.

Again, there are some interesting similarities between Voldemort's mode of reproduction by Horcruxes and werewolf Greyback's mode of reproduction as they are both asexual. Greyback's mode of reproduction is his lycanthropy, strongly connected in the text with “pederasty” (Pugh and Wallace 2006: 268), which curiously connects literal asexuality with pederastic undertones. Voldemort’s behavior in the graveyard chapters of *Goblet of Fire*, where he tortures Harry, a fourteen-year-old boy, and the ‘cave incident’ in which Voldemort was involved while still a prepubescent boy at the orphanage (“And he brought two small children with him, probably for the pleasure of terrorizing them.” (Rowling 2005: 556)) could be seen as hints of Voldemort’s own pederasty. Voldemort’s pederasty, similar to Greyback’s, is coupled with a curious ‘sexlessness’, since he reproduces asexually, through Horcruxes.

Interestingly, not only have homosexual undertones, present in both characters, been denigrated to pederasty, but also pederasty loses its place as a sexual alternative to heteronormativity, as it is simultaneously presented as a rejection of *every* sexuality.

This is even clearer in *The Warlock's Hairy Heart*, a story from Rowling's *Tales of Beedle the Bard* (2008), where hints of homosexuality are again presented as a rejection of every sexuality. The story's main character, the warlock, notices that "(...) his friends grew foolish when they fell in love (...) The young warlock resolved never to fall prey to such weakness, and employed Dark Arts to ensure his immunity" (Rowling 2008: 43). The connection between Horcruxes and the warlock's 'locking away his heart' is made overt by Dumbledore's in-story commentary,

[The Warlock] locks away his own heart. The resemblance of this action to the creation of a Horcrux has been noted by many writers. Although Beedle's hero is not seeking to avoid death, he is dividing what was clearly not meant to be divided – body and heart, rather than soul – and in doing so, he is falling foul of the first of Adalbert Waffling's Fundamental Laws of Magic (...) (Rowling 2008: 58).

When we take into consideration the similarities between Voldemort and the warlock in *The Warlock's Hairy Heart*, both in the way they are described (handsome, talented, accomplished in "martial magic" (Rowling 2008: 56)) and in their shared contempt for both the family of procreation and the family of origin, it seems that Voldemort's making of a Horcrux and the warlock's 'locking away his heart' are tied to a rejection of heteronormativity and pronatalism. Voldemort expresses repeatedly his derision for 'love', and thinks of it as a weakness, i. e., "Is it love again?" said Voldemort, his snake's face jeering. "Dumbledore's favorite solution, love, which he claimed conquered death, though love did not stop him falling from the tower and breaking like an old waxwork? Love, which did not prevent me stamping out your Mudblood mother like a cockroach, Potter (...)" (Rowling 2007:739). The warlock similarly thinks of 'love' as a weakness ("The young warlock resolved never to fall prey to such weakness (...)") (Rowling 2008: 43)). However, both are actually not only expressing their rejection of pronatalism and heteronormativity, but trying to simultaneously create a queer space, a queer way of life, since 'love' in this context implies a heteronormative lifestyle.

An attempt to create a queer space is also visible in Voldemort founding the Death Eaters, whom he considers to be his "true family" (Rowling 2000: 646). But the Death Eaters do not only have a name



connected with death, they also use a skull-based sign, the Dark Mark, to communicate with each other. The descriptions of Voldemort himself are reminiscent of 'death' (as both a Grim Reaper figure and a dead body), "Tall, thin, and black-hooded" (Rowling 2003: 812); "skeletal thin" (Rowling 2000: 643), "A face whiter than a skull . . ." (Rowling 2003: 586), a metamorphosis stated to be triggered by Voldemort's attempt at an alternative to heterosexual procreation (the making of Horcruxes). All of these instances show an inextricable connection between Voldemort's attempt to create a queer space and the text's taking the death drive as an organizational principle of that queer space.

## **ALBUS DUMBLEDORE AS A GAY CHARACTER**

Dumbledore being the one voicing the connection between a rejection of pronatalistic values and the creation of Horcruxes in *Tales of Bard the Beedle* is especially problematic if we remember that these are the words of a character said to be written as gay by the author herself ("Dumbledore is gay" (BBC NEWS)) and whose attempt at a homosexual relationship has been depicted in the books. Therefore, we should take a look at how Rowling constructs the overtly gay character and if this construction is any different from her construction of her arguably queer villains.

Dumbledore's inability to conform to the needs of the remaining members of his family after the death of both his parents and pursuing instead, not only his homosexual relationship with Grindelwald, but his self-actualization ("I was gifted, I was brilliant. I wanted to escape. I wanted to shine. I wanted glory. (...) I loved my parents, I loved my brother and my sister, but I was selfish (...)") (Rowling 2007: 715)) leads to the death of a child, Dumbledore's sister Ariana. Similarly to Voldemort, Dumbledore's self-actualization, connected with a realization of his sexuality, ends up connected to the death drive. When Voldemort kills, he experiences a sense of purpose, as evidenced when Harry 'becomes' Voldemort in his scar-related visions ("And he was gliding along, that sense of purpose and power and rightness in him that he always knew on these occasions..." (Rowling 2007: 342) and "He was possessed of that cold, cruel sense of purpose that preceded murder." (Rowling 2007: 607)). Voldemort finds himself self-actualized in the death drive.

Because of his homosexual relationship ending in a child's death, Dumbledore does not pursue other homosexual relationships until his death. Dumbledore remains 'stilted', as evidenced by him not achieving a family of procreation. Therefore, Dumbledore seems to be punished by the narrative for not sacrificing his homosexuality to his family of origin. However, first as a teacher and then as a Headmaster at Hogwarts, Dumbledore dedicates his life to the protection of other's children.

The protection of children is central to pronatalism, even above the concept of the heteronormative family, as we have seen on the example of Bellatrix. Thus Dumbledore lives in accordance with heteronormative pronatalistic constructs – he does not live his homosexuality and in that way he 'protects the children', similarly to Lupin not living his lycanthropy during his tenure as a professor at Hogwarts in order to 'protect the children'. As Dumbledore's only known attempt at trying to live his homosexuality by having a relationship (with Grindelwald) results in the death of a child – that is, it proves to be 'antinatalistic' – the moment of Dumbledore's 'moral pinnacle' is that he does not sacrifice another child, Harry ("I cared about you too much (...) more for your life than the lives that might be lost if the plan failed" (Rowling 2003: 838)).

It seems that the only alternative to heterosexuality Rowling offers is not homosexuality, but its repression. Especially indicative in this regard is the 'breaking of Dumbledore's tomb', perpetrated by Voldemort. We learn that Grindelwald, Dumbledore's former romantic interest, lies to Voldemort in order to prevent the breaking of Dumbledore's 'white' tomb. Markedly, the journalist Rita Skeeter writes a biography on Dumbledore in which she uncovers his former liaison with Grindelwald in an effort to trample Dumbledore's reputation after his death, and in that way metaphorically 'breaks Dumbledore's tomb'. Thus Dumbledore's white tomb becomes not only a symbol of his untarnished reputation, but also of his virginity. Taking into account Dumbledore being clearly touched by Grindelwald's refusal to lead Voldemort to open his tomb in the *King Cross* chapter ("Perhaps that lie to Voldemort was his attempt to make amends . . . to prevent Voldemort from taking the Hallow . . ." " . . . or maybe from breaking into your tomb?" suggested Harry, and Dumbledore dabbed his eyes." (Rowling 2007: 719)), the text gives a worrying indication that, similar to the best way of dealing with

lycanthropy being a potion that prevents the transformation from ever happening, the only acceptable form of homosexuality is its suppression.

## THE POLITICAL VOLDEMORT

Because of Voldemort's own pervasive nonconformism to heteronormativity, what seems to be a racist natalist agenda of the villains ("And in your family, so in the world . . . we shall cut away the canker that infects us until only those of the true blood remain . . ." (Rowling 2007: 10-11)), is actually an antinatalistic agenda. The main, or the most present, villains (Voldemort, Bellatrix, Greyback) would arguably not reproduce even if they were surrounded only by purebloods, because of their implied homosexuality, literally expressed in the text as a 'death drive'.

Another way in which the text refuses to affirm Voldemort's antinatalistic political position as a valid one is by denying him a political function – even when Voldemort assumes power in Magical Great Britain, he himself does not assume any political function publicly. It is indicative that Lupin, as a queer figure, is the one who says, "Declaring himself [Voldemort] might have provoked open rebellion: Remaining masked has created confusion, uncertainty, and fear" (Rowling 2007: 208). This is a repetition of Voldemort's curious refusal of pursuing a political career in his youth overtly, even though he obviously wants to gain political power. For example, a gay character, Dumbledore, says, "I know that several teachers, Professor Slughorn amongst them, suggested that [Voldemort] join the Ministry of Magic (...) He refused all offers" (Rowling 2005: 431). Even Voldemort himself states, "I don't know that politics would suit me, sir" (Rowling 2005: 495), after professor Slughorn says, "I confidently expect you to rise to Minister of Magic within twenty years" (ibid.). Similarly, Dumbledore does not assume the position of Minister of Magic, even though he had been offered it repeatedly, *specifically* because he wanted to atone for sacrificing his family to his homosexuality, "Grindelwald ran, while I was left to bury my sister, and learn to live with my guilt and my terrible grief, the price of my shame. (...) I, meanwhile, was offered the post of Minister of Magic, not once, but several times. Naturally, I refused. I had learned that I was not to be trusted with power." (Rowling 2007: 717)

Interestingly, Voldemort's soul is described as being "mutilated beyond the realms of what we might call 'usual evil'" (Rowling 2005: 502), which is relevant as Voldemort's soul-splitting is shown to be closely connected to his rejection of heteronormativity. It is Voldemort's creating an alternative to the heteronormative way of life that marks him as worse than a 'usual evil' and thus in the end casts him out of the political domain into a limbo, into a *non-space* between life and death (in the *Deathly Hallows*' chapter *King's Cross*) in which he is destined to remain forever in the form of an injured baby and towards which even the heroic Harry feels disgust, and even fear,

He recoiled. He had spotted the thing that was making the noises. It had the form of a small, naked child, curled on the ground, its skin raw and rough, flayed-looking, and it lay shuddering under a seat where it had been left, unwanted, stuffed out of sight, struggling for breath.

He was afraid of it. Small and fragile and wounded though it was, he did not want to approach it. Nevertheless he drew slowly nearer, ready to jump back at any moment. (Rowling 2007: 706-707)

That the 'heroic' Harry reacts with fear and disgust at a small, injured child and that his reaction is justified by Dumbledore's authority (Dumbledore says to Harry about Voldemort's final transformation, "You cannot help." (Rowling 2007: 707)), can be explained by Harry being a "heteronormative hero" (Pugh and Wallace 2006: 260). In this context, Halberstam's quote of Foucault again becomes important, "homosexuality threatens people as a 'way of life' rather than as a way of having sex" (2005: 8). Voldemort does not engage in overt homosexual relationships, but represents an alternative way of life. This alternative way of life which, similar to lycanthropy, "cannot be imagined as a positive force" (Pugh and Wallace 2006: 268) because its organizing principle is murder, fails (just like the alternative lives of werewolves) "to serve as (a) suitable figure of queerness" (ibid.). The final stage of Voldemort's alternative existence is shown to be a problematic representation of antinatalism hurting the antinatalist – Voldemort himself becomes the child that is 'suffering' because of his non-compliance with heteronormativity.

## CONCLUSION

By not providing the reader with any suitable figures of queerness, Harry Potter is preserving the privilege of heteronormativity. Because of its literally presented connection to the death drive, Halberstam's 'queer place' in *Harry Potter* becomes a place of stigma. The possibility of forming an alternative to heteronormativity in *Harry Potter* is cast outside the morally acceptable and, simultaneously, outside the political domain.

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