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Power Acquisitions and Trust

The theme of power and corruption in literature is one of the most widely explored and enduring themes. Among the many works that delve into this complex interplay, J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter series provides a particularly compelling examination. The character of Lord Voldemort in the series serves as a case study of how power can corrupt individuals. This paper aims to explore the dynamics of power and corruption using Voldemort's character as a prism through which to view these themes. The study will examine how Voldemort's pursuit of power and fear of death drives him to embrace increasingly corrupt actions. The analysis aims to provide insights not only into the fictional world of Harry Potter but also into the broader human struggle with the darker aspects of ambition and control. This study will specifically have the following topics:

- Voldemort's Life Analysis
- Define what Power means in the real world

- How power can corrupt an individual's personality.

Since his early days at Hogwarts, Tom Marvolo Riddle had a way of charming people, but there was also something sinister about him. He had a talent for manipulating others and always seemed to be one step ahead. He was very proud of his pure-blood heritage and looked down on Muggles. He even changed his name to Lord Voldemort to distance himself from his Muggle father and establish himself as a powerful dark wizard (*Rowling, Chamber of Secrets*). Voldemort believed that power came from having pure blood and being able to conquer death. He did some very dark and unethical things, such as creating Horcruxes, to become immortal (*Half-Blood Prince*). He split his soul into pieces to achieve this, but it also made him lose his humanity. Thus, Voldemort gained many followers who were either afraid of him or were seduced by his promises of power. He wanted to control everything and everyone, including the Ministry of Magic and Hogwarts. He was very good at manipulating people and using his power to get what he wanted (*Deathly Hallows*). Voldemort was afraid of death. He believed that death was a weakness and sought to overcome it at any cost. He was particularly scared of Harry Potter, who he believed was destined to defeat him. This fear made him do things that were even more dangerous and unethical, leading to his downfall (*Order of the Phoenix*). Voldemort's story is a warning about the dangers of seeking power without considering the

consequences. He became so obsessed with his power that he lost sight of what was truly important. In the end, his actions led to his destruction (*Deathly Hallows*).

As a matter of fact, Voldemort was not able to understand and appreciate the power of love, which ultimately led to his defeat. In the story of Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone, we see the recurring theme of Lily Potter's sacrifice for Harry, which serves as a symbol of protection and ultimately leads to Voldemort's downfall. Through this, Rowling suggests that true power is not found in domination and fear, but rather in love and sacrifice. This message denounces the corrupting influence of power and emphasizes the importance of empathy and compassion.

Lord Voldemort's journey from a charming but dark student to a tyrannical wizard reflects the struggle against the temptation of absolute power and the destruction it brings about. Therefore, the exploration of the character Voldemort has given readers insight into the cruelty that power can change one's conscience. However, dark magic can hardly show people the relationship in real life. As a matter of fact, it is needed to clarify the meaning of "Power".

In basic words, "power" can be defined as the capacity or ability of one individual. Furthermore, power can also be used to influence, control, or direct the

actions, behaviors, and outcomes of another. In any kind of relationship, whether between friends, at work, or in families, one person might depend more on the other. The person who is needed less has more power. For example, if you're really good at math and your friend needs help with homework, you have some power in your friendship because your friend depends on your help. However, if a person wants to know whether other people have good intentions for him, he needs to base it on trust. It can be shown by the fact that “ trust may primarily depend on how power is distributed within a relationship, suggesting that both parties in unequal-power relationships might trust each other less compared to those in equal-power relationships” (du Plessis, C., Nguyen, M. H. B., Foulk, T. A., & Schaerer, M. (2023). *Relative power and interpersonal trust. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 124(3), 567-592. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1037/pspi0000401>) .

Besides that, as stated by the National Library of Medicine, power has some negative effects that can promote various problematic behaviors and attitudes. Some of their main key points are:

- Power is addictive and can lead to efforts to accumulate and hold onto power at all costs.
- Power is associated with aggressive, dehumanizing treatment of those with less power as well as the sexualization of interactions.

- Ambition is linked to the pursuit of power, but when taken to extremes it can breed greed, obsession, recklessness and unethical behavior in order to achieve goals.

In conclusion, this research paper explores the relationship between power and trust within relationships. The example of Voldemort's interactions with the Death Eaters in the Harry Potter series illustrates how unchecked power, driven by fear or ambition, can damage relationships and weaken trust. Such relationships rely on fear rather than mutual respect, creating a fragile alliance. The paper emphasizes the importance of balancing power with empathy and understanding to foster healthier interpersonal dynamics. By examining the consequences of power imbalances and the critical role of trust in mitigating these effects, this paper contributes to a deeper understanding of how power operates in relationships and how vulnerable one's conscience is in the call of power acquisition. The lessons learned from Voldemort's failure serve as an advice, reminding us that true strength lies in collaboration and the right choice made at the right time in order to maintain the morality of a good person.

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