

Fiction as a Political Tool: Hate Propaganda vs. Freedom of Expression

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Unlike fairytales, 21st-century lives are unfortunately not that simple nor amusing. Besides our individual problems, there are so many external issues that occupy our minds all day long: Economy, politics, never-ending wars, violence, chaotic debates... As we are living in an age of the Internet and super technology, it is nearly impossible to stay away from the harsh realities completely; however, within the development of our modern world, have we totally lost our exit to a free space where we can clear our minds and calm ourselves? Is it now impossible for us to spend time away from the daily chaos?

Reading has always been one of the most popular activities to do during free time. Alike past decades, in our current world, people read different kinds of books for many distinct purposes. Fictions are also one of them. People have always enjoyed and still are enjoying traveling amongst a fascinating dreamland. Exploring a different world in which wizards exist, spells being cast, animals talking is an escape for the majority from their daily human and world struggles. These fascinating dreamlands at least allow people to relax for a tiny period, many assume. However, are these imaginary lands entirely purified from any types of political approaches? Are they really ideology-free zones? Well, unfortunately not. Although we might think that we are completely out of our world, we might be exposed to some kind of ideological propaganda.

Similar to all other authors, fiction authors are also entitled to their own political views. Sometimes openly, sometimes covertly by using, for instance, metaphors, fiction authors also project their political ideas in their books. It is surely understandable for authors to speak of what they support and believe, but we should not forget the difference between hate speech/propaganda and expressing an ideology. Suppose the projected views include hatred, insult, or abusive expressions towards a community, belief, or gender. In that case, no one can serve their violent opinions on a golden plate while hiding behind the term “freedom of expression.

When we try to explain the difference between hate speech and the expression of political views via fiction, there is no better example than the famous transphobe of the century: J.K. Rowling. Most of you might know her as the writer of the children’s book series Harry Potter, including anti-semitic representation and BIPOC representation controversy related to some of her tweets. [\(1\)](#)

The controversy surrounding her tweets do not end there; unfortunately, the backlash she faced from the public did not limit the impact of her transphobia-supporting tweets, and Rowling published a book titled “Troubled Blood” where a man dresses in women’s clothing in order to access women’s bathroom and murder women. [\(2\)](#) The amount of damage her influence is capable of causing to the transgender people demanding their right to use the correct bathroom according to their gender is excessive, and she is persistently defending her transphobic ideas and book. Her tweets were about the specific issue of transgender people should not be “allowed” in the one-sex areas if they did not have a bottom surgery which is so out of line and

transphobic to intervene and comment about another person's body, and if they should be allowed or not into a bathroom that they feel more comfortable. Using fiction to hurt a group of people cannot be justified as freedom of expression.

In conclusion, there is nothing more natural than someone reflecting their political ideas into their artwork, however, hate speech/propaganda cannot be justified as fiction or freedom of expression. Expression of hate cannot be freedom, even if it is fictional. Inasmuch as packaging the hate as fiction or artwork is worse than direct expression. It creates the illusion of the absence of the hatred for the people that the hatred was not directed to, then only the people that the hate was towards to get offended. When they express that they are offended, they get called "snowflakes" and gaslighted by the public about the offense's existence. In order to avoid such conflicts, artists should be aware of what is hate and what is a political view.