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Desire is a concept that is generally understood as an instinctive “want” for something, either tangible (money, material items) or intangible (love, power). However desire is far more intricate; it incorporates theories defining it as either a positive or negative force and irrespective of the definition should always be controlled and/or channeled correctly. An example of desire being inputted into the wrong outlet can be seen in the Harry Potter series through Lord Voldemort, who ultimately uses it selfishly and ruinously which changes his whole perception of life and thus results in his defeat. In this essay, I argue that desire should not be interpreted as being psychologically impulsive but understood as a concept that can be managed and if not used in a morally acceptable way (specifically as it relates to power) can be detrimental to both the individual misusing desire and others, especially if their welfare and benefit isn’t taken into consideration. In order to verify that the above statement is true I will be examining Voldemort and his desire for power. Therefore desire should never be used for egocentric gain and understood as a concept brought about due to absence, but should always be thought of only as beneficial and productive and therefore directed towards social development and other altruistic endeavors, otherwise it can be self-destructive and cause harm to innocent people.

Understanding desire is complex because it doesn’t have one specific meaning but rather it depends on how one interprets what has already been conceptualized (by scholars in the social science field) and therefore how they allow their new perception (of desire) to affect their lives. One of the most common philosophies of desire is that it is brought about by a state of lack. This

theory first came about as stated by Deleuze, in *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, when Platonic logic (theories associated with the philosopher Plato) forces one to choose between production and acquisition as a way of categorizing desire. If perhaps desire is placed on the side of acquisition then desire becomes something that needs to be acquired and therefore is seen as something we lack (Deleuze and Guattari 26). French psychoanalyst, Jaques Lacan also refers to desire in this way. He states that lack is an inescapable condition that occurs upon leaving The Real (when we were whole and only a being) and entering The Symbolic (where language and meaning are introduced, we then become object and subject and thus we are no longer “whole”) (Storey 101, 102). Therefore it is “is the desire to find what we lack ourselves whole again” (102) or “we are driven by a desire to overcome the condition” which is what Lacan theorizes and claims to be impossible (104). However, he goes on to say that we use signifiers as a mean to fill the void, but since we are in an inevitable condition the signifiers will be ever changing and will have no significant impact (104). Lacan also assigns a name to these signifiers, referring to them as The Thing. He describes the Thing as being “constructed retroactively, to occupy the space of pure loss that is left by the erasure of the real, the Thing marks the place where the real was” (Belsey 47). The Thing then becomes the object a (an more explicit representation of the Thing) which would be the component that manifests itself in the signifiers if it were actually possible to accomplish finding something capable of filling the emptiness and thus they do not exist(49). Therefore Lacan looks at desire as a purely psychic concept that is personal and affects individuals unconsciously. Because we are empty we desire but we are ignorant as to why. Viewing desire in this way would enhance the fact that it is an innate quality and serves no developmental or useful purpose (especially if being “whole” is unachievable). Hence, this theory should not be considered and applied.

Deleuze, on the other hand, says differently. He approaches desire as production instead of acquisition. He claims desire is productive and real, because it produces real products that exist in reality and that it is not lacking anything (specifically an object), but rather it is lacking a subject to utilize it (Deleuze and Guattari 26). He also goes on to say that desiring-production and social production are correlated, ultimately social production is conditional desiring-production, that “social fields” or the foundation of societies are products of desire (29). However this also includes some of the most “deadly forms of social reproduction” fascism being a primary example (29). This is referred to by the psychoanalyst Wilhelm Reich as perversion of desire (Gao 418), however he doesn’t develop a proper explanation of this theory (Deleuze and Guattari 29). Deleuze therefore constructs his own explanation for the production of repressive forms by stating that it is a result of “group fantasy” (30). He claims that fantasies derive from the “identical nature” of desiring and social production and doesn’t occur individually, thus in groups (30). Also, there are two ways that group fantasies can be derived. They can be either be derived from social interacting masses or from the ideas that form the foundation of societies(30). With the latter different types of desire can be invested into a preexisting social system and thus repressive forms are produced/ maintained or if social production comes from the masses it can generate revolutionary desire that can cause disinvestment (of the desire used to produce/maintain repressive social forms) and thus changes the repressive social forms completely (30). Therefore desire is always productive (even if it produces dangerous reproductions) however the form of reproduction is dependent on the type of group fantasy and how desire is being utilized and thus desire (as a concept) specifically should not be judged based on morality and ethics (Gao 417) but rather what it’s used for should be judged.

Overall, desire can be interpreted in one of two ways, as stated before, either something experienced through “lack” or as something socially productive. Identifying with desire as acquisition essentially means that one would constantly feel “incomplete” without what they desire, time is spent obtaining possibly useless cravings and therefore desire is unnecessary (something that’s not needed by humans to function). This is why desire shouldn’t be thought of in this way but instead viewed as a productive force that can be manipulated, which can be seen through how society has progressed.

Another factor that should be controlled as it relates to desire is power. The desire for or the desire to maintain possession of power can have destructive effects if not managed correctly, because power by itself has the tendency to change how people view those who are subordinate to them. In the article, *Does Power Corrupt?*, Kipnis states that those in a higher position of power tend to think less of their subordinates, try to influence and manipulate them (thus viewing them as objects of manipulation) and overall the more influence they had over them the more space those in power put between them (limiting social interactions) (40). They also tend to “experience less reciprocal emotions (distress) and less complementary emotions (compassion)” as it relates to another’s suffering which was stated in the article *Power, Distress and Compassion: Turning a Blind Eye to the Suffering of Others*(Van Kleef et.al 1320). This article also stated that high power individuals aren’t necessarily insensitive to other’s emotions “but react selectively to these emotions when doing so can further their own goals” (1320). Therefore power can cause one to use those they feel are subordinate to them to their advantage without feeling any empathy as long as they’re benefitting and by limiting interactions view themselves as different from lower status. This puts individuals; utilizing the desire for power to achieve social production, in a position to preform destructive acts (by not considering the welfare of

those beneath them) and thus underserving people can be harmed. Therefore this shows how desire being channeled incorrectly can cause harmful traits.

However, power doesn't always have to have negative effects on the people who have higher powers. In *How Power Influences Moral Thinking*, it states that power has "transformative effects" on people in powerful positions that can be "negative (corruptive) and positive (commendable)" but is dependent on "the person, situation and context" (Lammers and Stapel 280). Therefore, someone can be powerful without damaging/degrading others. Because if the effects of power depend on at least two controllable factors, the situation (everyone has the right to decide what they want to participate in) and the person (people are autonomous, in control of their own actions and thus choose how they want to treat people) therefore individuals have control over their desires (as it relates to power), how it's used and how it affects them, hence they should choose to use it positively.

In the Harry Potter Series, Deleuze's theories of desire and the negative transformative effects of power can be seen through the character Voldemort. He tries to utilize desire (as a social producer) and group fantasy (a small group sharing the same desire) in order to take control and alter a preexisting social system and while attempting to do so, he develops harmful traits which ultimately cause him to execute cruel acts, such as murder, manipulation, torture etc. and thus his misuse of desire leads to his destruction.

The type of desire that Voldemort tried to utilize in order to accomplish social reproduction was his, his Death Eaters' (loyal followers), the dementors' and any other magical creatures' ("Goblet of Fire" 707) desire for power. His plan was to alter the way in which the magical world functioned by overthrowing the Ministry of Magic (the governing body in the wizarding world) ("Deathly Hallows" 5) and thus by doing so would gain authority. He planned

to use this control to establish an autocratic system and if anyone tried to defy him and rulings would have to face consequences (729). Also, his main objective while in power was to create a social hierarchy (based on ascribed status) by using his hatred for muggle-born wizards and his creed, that pure-bloods are superior and “the only kind of wizard worth being and knowing” (“Order of the Phoenix” 842) as a foundation for doing so. This can be seen after the Ministry has fallen and Thicknesse (who is being controlled by Voldemort’s followers) (“Deathly Hallows” 5) becomes Minister of Magic (head of the wizarding world). New regulations started to be enforced which sentenced mudbloods (individuals with muggle/human parents) to be imprisoned in Azkaban (a wizard world prison) (255). Therefore this shows how Voldemort channeled productive desire into the wrong outlet because he was attempting to establish a repressive system, whereby he would govern as an autocrat, enforce legislations that incorporated only his beliefs thus restricting the freedom of those under his rule.

Power affects those (who either have it or want to obtain it) in either positive or negative ways, but it is depends on how one chooses to manage their own actions and their lives.

From a young age Voldemort or Tom Riddle had a superiority complex, he didn’t like, as Dumbledore states, “anything that tied him to other people, anything that made him ordinary” but rather preferred to think of himself as special, separate and different (“Half-Blood Prince” 277). Individuals separate themselves from people who they think are subordinate to them thus limiting social interactions and this can be seen with Tom Riddle because he chose not to have friends (277). Also, during his elementary stages he expressed the desire to control others, because he knew how to use his magical abilities and chose to use them as a ways to manipulate animals and other children (276). Tom Riddle wasn’t put into any situations where he was forced to perform harmful magic but rather it was his choice. He wanted to control people and was

completely aware of what he was doing. Therefore by controlling: the situations he put himself into and his own actions he allowed power (the thing he desired) to affect him negatively.

Because Voldemort allowed power to affect and transform him negatively it changed how he interacted with others in two main ways. It caused him to feel less empathy, compassion and distress for those who are suffering (especially if doing so helped him further his goal) and it caused him to view those he thought to be subordinate to him as objects of manipulation. These effects led Voldemort to think of people as being disposable objects and therefore harmed undeserving individuals. After he was defeated attempting to destroy Harry he became as Voldemort refers to as being “less than spirit, less than the meanest ghost...but still, I was alive” (“Goblet of Fire” 653). In this form Voldemort had no body and became dependent on hosts to keep alive. He manipulated Professor Quirrell into becoming a host which brought about Quirrell’s death, he used Bertha Jorkins to obtain useful information and after which he “disposed of her” (655) and he used Barty Crouch as a way of getting Harry through the Triwizard Tournament which gave Voldemort the chance to kill him, this also led to Crouch killing his own father, him risking his life infiltrating Hogwarts which housed one of the most powerful wizards, Dumbledore and thus brought about his death (688- 90). After all of this took place Voldemort felt no remorse or compassion for the death of these individuals even they helped him regain his full form and without them would not be possible. This shows how he thinks of them just as objects of manipulation and therefore how his desire for power caused harm to other individuals.

The negative effects of power also led Voldemort to perform countless acts of murder. He was willing to slaughter anyone who stood in his way which included not only his enemies, or innocent bystanders but also included his followers. During his rise to power he killed: large

amounts of muggles as a way of bribing the Minister of Magic to surrender (“Half-Blood Prince”), a Hogwarts teacher who taught students something that he disagreed with (“Deathly Hallows”), James and Lily Potter because they stood in his way when he was trying to dispose of (who he believed) the only person that could bring about his downfall (“Sorcerer’s Stone”), Wormtail (a loyal Death Eater) (“Deathly Hallows”) who showed a little remorse to someone Voldemort despises and Severus Snape (his most loyal Death Eater) in order to obtain an item powerful item. He also was willing to sacrifice any Hogwarts student as a way of resurrecting himself (“Half-Blood Prince”) and Kreacher in order to hide a valuable object (“Deathly Hallows”). Even though Voldemort’s murders aren’t limited to these examples, these show how the effects of power caused him to overlook the suffering of others just to advance his own goals. Voldemort referred to the Death Eaters as his true family (“Goblet of Fire”), they helped him regain he power, especially Wormtail who risked his life keeping him alive and was the only reason he was able to recover fully after being destroyed and Snape who he believed to be the most loyal to him. Yet, he did not hesitate to dispose of these individuals as soon as they became obstacles. Power can be dangerous and cause one to harm people that are close to/have helped them and therefore needs to be initially channeled into something positively productive.