The Subversion of Gender roles in the Harry Potter Series

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Abstract

The enormously successful Harry Potter books depict a supernatural civilization that is vastly different from the one that the reader is familiar with. Nevertheless, it soon appears that the world of Harry Potter has some of the same socioeconomic issues as traditional gender roles. The goal of this article is to show how traditional gender norms are portrayed in the novels by first demonstrating how these gender roles drive the magical society to privilege men while repressing women. In the magical society, which favours men as leaders, emphasises men as superior through its educational system, and considers women as feeble beings who ought to be safeguarded by men, women are shown to be irrational. The central women characters gradually break these stereotypical notions and emerge as powerful as their male counterparts. This article shall vividly capture this transformation of the women characters. In a way, this series can also be treated as a depiction of women's journey from suppression to progress.

Keywords: Femininity, Gender roles, subversion, role reversal,

Introduction

The goal of this article is to examine how gender expectations are depicted in the Harry Potter series, starting with the first novel. Since the novels provide many perspectives on gender roles, the essay dives deeper into the personalities and power institutions of the Harry Potter universe, looking for examples that challenge or impose established gender roles. Based on the data, I believe that Hermione Granger's character, who simultaneously confronts and defies the gender stereotypes that exist in the magical world, undermines traditional gender roles in the Harry Potter series. Hermione Granger's character, who simultaneously challenges and contradicts established gender roles, undermines traditional gender roles in the Harry Potter series that exist in the realm of magic.

Gender defines the roles, behaviours, activities, and traits that society considers masculine or feminine. "Gender refers to what society considers masculine or feminine, such as roles, behaviour, activities, and attributes, whereas sex refers to physiological features and characteristics that differentiate men and women (De Beauvoir, 23)." While the concept of sex does not differ greatly among cultures, the concept of gender does. Knitting and child care may be connected with the feminine gender in one culture but not in another. " Due to biological differences, men have male genitals, deeper voices, and are frequently more muscular than women (Connell 2009:5)."

J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter series has set sales records in seven nations. They've been adapted into films that have enthralled legions of fans, and the Harry Potter name has been linked to the new millennium for a long time. The series has gotten a lot of attention as a result of its worldwide success. The following are the primary variables that have contributed to the series' worldwide success: "a text that continues archetypal story-telling traditions while incorporating contemporary socio-economic, political, and educational issues; smart marketing; excessive media coverage; the Internet; film industry involvement; and the universal human need to believe that good can't be defeated (Cline, 61)."

In their essay Doing Gender, Candace West and Don H. Zimmerman state that an individual's gender is "not only a part of who they are, but, more essentially, it is something they do, and do recurrently, in connection with others" (136). They indicate that everyone does gender in everyday encounters as a matter of course. Gender is the outcome of socially constructed activities. Erving Goffman coined the term "gender display" to describe this occurrence. "If gender is defined as culturally established sex correlates [...] then gender display refers to conventionalized depictions of these correlates," he says (69). These depictions are viewed as the "ideal male or feminine persona. We soon learn to recognise and reproduce similar gender presentations as humans. Despite the fact that these disparities are not natural, necessary, or biological, they are utilised to "reinforce the 'essentiality' of gender" (Wallace)." As a result, "our gender is always on display, we're always performing gender, and we're always being classified as man or woman based on our actions (Austin, 124)." Everything is arranged to divide us into males and women in some situations, such as public restrooms or organised sports. Gender conventions would be violated if someone challenged these habits (137).

"Gender, and the roles and behaviours that come with it, are distinct from sex," Judith Butler, like Simone de Beauvoir, believes. You don't have to be feminine just because you're a woman, and you don't have to be aggressive just because you're a man (Judith 1999). Gender, according to Judith Butler, is rhetorical, dependent on one's conception of what gender is. She argues that a person's gender is determined by how often they conduct it. Gender is a phenomenon that we constantly build and replicate by doing the things we do and acting in the manner we do, according to Butler. According to Simone de Beauvoir, no one is born a woman. Butler says that no one is born with gender because gender doesn't exist unless it's articulated. These acts, or performances, are just reenactments of behaviours that have existed for many years. Butler defines gender as an impersonation of gender conventions and practises that no one truly follows (Butler 1999).

Lois Tyson discusses the concepts of sex and gender in her book Critical Theory Today: Gender and Sexuality. An easy-to-understand guide that explains why some gender conventions are deemed conventional. These gender roles, she claims, have been successfully used to legitimise male-female inequity and portray "women as inferior to men. She goes on to say that we've been persuaded to believe that it's about our sex, our bodies, rather than the gender construct (83)." However, as Nancy Chodorow notes in her book The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and Gender Psychology, one fundamental biological difference between men and women is that women bear children while males do not. According to Chodorow, women are mothers and caregivers. She also makes an effort to understand and theorise why this is the case. "One of the only universal and constant elements of the gendered division of labour is women's mothering," she asserts, adding that it has always been expected (3). It is natural for a mother to be her child's primary caregiver. Chodorow expands the idea of motherhood to encompass not only children, but also men. When women return home from work, they must be their husbands' moral moms, nurturing and caring for them in the same way that they care for their children (5). "Women's mothering functions have become increasingly important psychologically and ideologically, and have come to define women's lives," Chodorow continues (4). The mothering, loving, and nurturing attributes of a woman define her. According to Chodorow, "women's mothering is not a function of biology or conscious role-training, but rather reproduces itself in the mother-daughter connection (7)."

Gender concerns in children's literature are also a topic of discussion among today's researchers. Are the characters' performative genders revealed, and do some have a gender that differs from their biological sex? Stephens discusses how many narratives in children's books are based on male myths or hero sagas. He claims that the plot already contains clichés. For example, the narrative is based on "a masculine career pattern that follows a structure of anxiety, doubt, conflict, challenge, temporary setback, and then eventual victory and triumph," according to Wikipedia (19). Female parallels, on

the other hand, are scarce in the literature. Feminine plots differ from masculine plots in that they lack a clear beginning, middle, and end. This might make them difficult to distinguish. However, a few female patterns have been discovered. The first "is the green world, in which the young protagonist lives close to nature and escapes there frequently to escape the city and her parents (Pratt 22)."

Growing up ugly is another feminine stereotype, in which a girl must choose between isolating herself or succumbing to despair in order to reconcile her personal freedom with society's expectations (Patel 31). This is also known as abjection, the humiliating state in which a young girl's body is transformed into that of a young woman. In children's literature, the so-called tomboys exemplify abjection. They suppress their new feminine bodies by acting masculinely rather than embracing them (Nikolajeva 131). "Harry Potter & Women: Are Women Treated Equally in Harry Potter Stories?" she questions in her essay. Austin Cline is a spokesman for both sides of the debate. On the one hand, she claims that the novels are gender-neutral, with women treated equally throughout. In the Harry Potter books, Hermione is frequently shown as the most sensible and logical girl in her class. She cracked Severus Snape's conundrum, which was one of many impediments to anyone stealing the Philosopher's Stone when it was hidden at Hogwarts.

Results and Discussions
1. Inner strength has always been associated with men, whereas external beauty has been associated with women. In her books, J.K. Rowling has both upheld and defied such paradigms.
2. To be pleasing to the males' gaze is another stereotype that the author breaks. It's a quick way to assess Hermione's behaviour and anxiety about her appearance. Hermione doesn't fit the label of a beauty pageant with "a lot of bushy brown hair and fairly large front teeth" (Rowling 1997:79).
3. Hermione is the only one of the three characters who weeps or cries frequently, and the lads feel forced to console and comfort her. Butler believes that a person's gender is formed by their repeated expression of it. We are continually producing and reproducing gender through what we do and how we act. She displays her emotions the most, particularly grief, concern, and anxiety, and thus reproduces herself as a feminine, emotional woman.
4. Hermione's gender display deviates from gender norms, and Ron and Harry regard her as a threat since she behaves in unfeminine ways.

Conclusion
Hermione is the sole female protagonist in the series. She's also the character who exhibits the most feminine traits, such as being self-conscious about her appearance, being too emotional, and being vulnerable. Hermione, on the other hand, can be viewed as the most powerful of the three characters. She overcomes most challenges without the assistance of others, she is self-sufficient, and she looks after and protects the boys. The three chief women characters in the novel have both female and male qualities, giving the impression that they are questioning moral relativism. There is no such thing as a man or a woman who contains all-male or feminine qualities. Boys are allowed to cry in the Harry Potter books, but girls are allowed to be protectors. Girls, on the other hand, are allowed to guffaw, while boys are allowed to fantasize about following an athletic career. The characters in the Harry Potter books are complex, which sets them apart from other books in terms of gender stereotypes.

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