



The Role of Patriarchy and Gender Stereotyping in Children's Books: with Reference to Harry Potter and The Chronicles of Narnia

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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on the mechanisms of patriarchy and gender-stereotyping that influences the plots and characters in children's books. To shed light on these aspects, two of the most prominent series of novels in children's literature have been focused on namely, J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter series and C.S. Lewis' The Chronicles of Narnia. It also explains how these elements leave traces in their psychology that continue as children grow up. Harry Potter depicts the life of a young wizard and the adventures he undergoes in his attempts to defeat the dark wizard, Lord Voldemort. The Chronicles of Narnia depicts the Pevensie sibling's accidental discovery of a fictional land called Narnia and the adventures that follow. Both these series represent the highly creative realm of childhood imagination. The innocence of these novels, however, is shredded through their portrayal and treatment of both sexes. Thus, this study works on debunking these misogynist stereotypes to suggest a gender-neutral friendly field of children's literature.

Keywords: Patriarchy; Gender-Stereotyping; Children's Literature; Harry Potter; The Chronicles of Narnia.

1. Introduction

Harry Potter is a series of seven novels written by the British author J.K. Rowling between 1997 and 2007. The series centres around the adventures of a young wizard named Harry Potter and his friends Hermione Granger and Ron Weasley who are pupils of Hogwarts, a school that trains children the magical elements of Witchcraft and Wizardry. The main subplot deals with Harry's battle against Lord Voldemort, the main antagonist of the series, who wishes to become immortal, defeat the wizard governing body called the Ministry of Magic, and conquer all wizards and *Muggles*, that is, the non-magical people. Since the publication of the first novel titled *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, the books have gained immense recognition, critical attention and commercial success around the world. They have not only grasped the attention of young readers but also of the adult readers, and are mostly conceived as classics of modern young adult literature. The series has also received negative criticism, such as the distress over the increasingly intense tone by each book and the horrific and vivid violence it portrays. Rowling fixates on death as the main theme of the series: "My books are largely about death. They open with the death of Harry's parents. There is Voldemort's obsession with conquering death and his quest for immortality at any price, the goal of anyone with magic" (Rowling quoted in *The Telegraph*, 10 January, 2006).

The books have sold more than 500 million copies worldwide by 2018, marking a record of being the best-selling book series in history, and have been translated in eighty languages. The ambience Rowling created is closely linked with reality. Farndale (2007) explains this stating that the magical community of the *Harry Potter* series is inspired by the 1990s' British culture, European folklore, classical mythology and alchemy including objects and wildlife such as magic wands, magic plants, potions, spells, flying broomsticks, centaurs and other mythical creatures.

The Chronicles of Narnia, like *Harry Potter*, is also a series consisting of seven fantasy novels by C.S. Lewis published between 1950 and 1956. It is known to be a classic in children's literature and is the author's most prominent work. The plot is mainly set in the mythical world of Narnia, a magical world of mythical beasts and talking animals. The series describes the emprise of the Pevensie children who are the lead protagonists in unravelling the history of this unknown realm. Lewis borrows ideas from the traditional Christian themes, the Greek and Roman mythology and the traditional British and Irish fairy tales. These seven books have collectively had a deep impact on children and adult's fantasy literature since the Second World War. It has also had its share of criticism due to Lewis' unusual incorporation of themes peculiar in children's literature such as religion, race and gender. The mythical realm of *Narnia* is that of one completely different from reality, whereas the magical world of *Harry Potter* relates to the real world containing fantastical interpretations of the ordinary elements of everyday life.

2. Literature Review

The critical responses to *Harry Potter* and *The Chronicles of Narnia* appear to have established a connection between the two works. This section attempts to formalise the connection as pointed out by the critics while at the same time reviewing the literature.

Eccleshare (2002) explains how the first book of the *Harry Potter* series titled *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* was initially accepted on a positive note by the English newspapers following its publication in 1997. The newspapers equated Rowling's narrating skills to Roald Dahl's *The Mail on Sunday* terming it as "the most imaginative debut since Roald Dahl" (10). Wallace and Pugh (2007) focuses on the critical study of the *Harry Potter* series, and how a fan can turn into a critic of the series by delving into the social issues represented in the text such as class, gender, race, etc. As they state: "Using popular culture texts that capture students' interests, we can move students from reading as fans to reading as critics if we are prepared to help them think deeply about how issues such as class, gender, sexual identity and race operate in fiction" (97).

Cherland (2008) constructs a Feminist Post-Structural approach to the *Harry Potter* series to explain the ways of the world to adolescent readers: "Feminist post-structural theory offers me some new approaches to teaching critical literacies, ways of reading, writing, and thinking that unsettle our common sense notions of how the world works and that can lead us to challenging our ideas of what is "normal" (273).

Pfaltzgraff Jr. (2007) stresses on the international influence of the *Harry Potter* series on popular culture, politics and religion.

Arden and Lorenz (2003) use Arthurian Romance as a base to draw parallels between the *Harry Potter* series and Chretien de Troyes' *Perceval*. "The continuing role that the family of the hero plays in his life and his need to resolve that loss – these are the key elements in both Chretien's romance of *Perceval* and Rowling's *Harry Potter* stories" (65).

Gwilyn, et al. (2005) shows a statistical study on the influence of the *Harry Potter* craze on the accident prone children. The craze is so apparent that it diminishes the number of accidents in children:

Harry Potter books seem to protect children from traumatic injuries. Fashionable or "craze" activities have previously undoubtedly contributed to the two million children who attend emergency departments with traumatic injuries each year ... We observed a significant fall in the numbers of attendees to the emergency department on the weekends that of the two most recent *Harry Potter* books were released (1506).

Like *Harry Potter*, *The Chronicles of Narnia* also draws its fair share of criticism. Russell (2009) illustrates the niche marketing techniques of the book in that it attracts the attention of Evangelical Christians.

Echterling (2016) elaborates the necessity of postcolonial eco-critical emphasis on the canonical and classical children's books and critically emphasizes that *The Chronicles of Narnia* is based on those claims.

Butler (1999) argues against the preconceived notions of gender, and asserts that the categorizing of genders is limited to class, ethnicity and sexuality which cannot define an individual's identity as a whole.

Cheung and Pomerantz (2011) present an empirical research that studies the academic and psychological influence of parents on their Seventh Grade children in the United States and China. It examines the similarities and the differences between the rearing of both countries: "... parents' heightened involvement predicted children's enhanced engagement and achievement similarly in the United States and China." (932).

3. Gender and Patriarchy in Children's Books

Gender roles in the society were a practice that had circulated for generations. It is believed that the actual term was first coined by the sexologist John Money in his 1957 article "Imprinting and Establishment of Gender Role". The author is popularly known as "the man who invented gender". It was after then that the societal aspects of

Patriarchy and Gender Stereotyping had come into question. Since then, they have been two of the most essential tools for analysing literature and movies. Children's books, one of the most innocent and imaginative areas of literature, is yet to be liberated from the shackles of these aspects. Gender continues to play an integral role in shaping the personalities of characters in these books. According to Jean Piaget's theory of cognitive development, children are mere imitators whose minds are formed based on their biological maturation and the external influences in their environment. The concepts of gender are so heavily ingrained in the society, media and printed documents that children subconsciously develop these superficial ideas surrounding the term. As Piaget famously quotes, "Each time one prematurely teaches a child something he could have discovered himself, that child is kept from inventing it and consequently from understanding it completely" (27). Erikson's (1950) stages of psychosocial development further explain this phenomenon. He describes how every individual faces a conflict with the society at each stage of development and that these social interactions play a huge role in developing their psychology.

Gender roles were circumscribed to the extent where education and literature were only confined within the male population. The ideas of gender and women in particular were circulated by the male writers. While men's writings were lauded, women's writings were speculated as signs of evil. Publishers and male readers did not take women's writings seriously. The patriarchal ideals had permeated through human minds so much that it is believed to have also had an impact on the language. Spender (1981) claims that language is not an unbiased medium of expression but a medium which gives space to the patriarchal voice. This phenomenon explains the birth of the concept *Écriture féminine* by the French theorist Helene Cixous in her book *The Laugh of the Medusa* (1975) where she states:

Woman must write herself: must write about woman, and bring women into writing, from which they have been so violently driven away from their bodies . . . I write this as a woman, toward women. When I say "woman", I'm speaking of woman in her inevitable struggle against conventional man; and of a universal woman subject who must bring women to their and to their meaning in history (875-876).

Female writers were compelled to adopt niche marketing techniques by hiding their real names and embracing male pseudonyms to grasp the attention of male readers. The limitation of female writers had created a misconstrued idea of gender. Anne Bradstreet's poem titled "The Prologue", published in 1650, allows an insight into the condition of women writers during her time:

Let Poets and Historians set these forth.

My obscure lines shall not so dim their worth . . .

I am obnoxious to each carping tongue

Who says my hand a needle better fits.

A Poet's Pen all scorn I should thus wrong,

For such despite they cast on female wits.

If what I do prove well, it won't advance,

They'll say it's stol'n, or else it was by chance. (5, 6, 25-30).

It was not until the seventeenth century that women's writing had been taken into account. The fairytales and short stories circulated for generations have shaped their minds accordingly, and thus, the succeeding stories are formed based on those circulating ideals. For instance, the stories of Cinderella, Sleeping Beauty and Snow White feature "damsels in distress" who cannot save themselves without the help of their prince charming. Recent attempts have been adopted in the twenty-first century to alter this situation. Elena Favilli and Francesca Cavallo's *Good Night Stories for Rebel Girls* (2016) is one of the present greatest examples encouraging children to equate both genders socially, mentally, physically and economically.

3.1. Portrayal of Women in the History of English Literature

In a world where social traditions, behaviour and status are mostly determined by the male figures, their female counterparts comparatively become greater victims of gender stereotyping. As we dig through the fossils of English Literature, we observe the misperception of women throughout the ages. The following are examples of some prominent works in English Literature and their treatment of women throughout history.

3.2. Old English/Anglo-Saxon (600-1200)

One of the Anglo-Saxon period's most notable masterpieces is *Beowulf* which depicts the theme of Man vs. Wild. According to the descriptions of Wealtheow and Grendel's mother, women were confined within some specific gender roles to be performed within the four walls. Wealtheow's hospitality to Beowulf by passing the cup is a signal of peace-keeping and it proves her to be the ideal woman. On the contrary, Grendel's mother is showcased as a vicious monster who seeks revenge for the loss of her son. According to Overing (1990), "The role of peace-weaver is one of the most familiar and best defined roles for women in *Beowulf* and throughout Old English poetry; it is also one of the most problematic" (74).

3.3. Middle English (1200-1500)

Geoffrey Chaucer, one of the pioneers in Middle English Literature, has given a sarcastic portrayal of his female characters. His female characters in *The Canterbury Tales* (1475), the Nun and the Wife of Bath are featured negatively as they are far from the average medieval woman. The Nun leads a life in contradiction to an aesthetic. The Wife of Bath is bold and outspoken who has more than one husband. She is experienced in the matters of love, sex and relationships, and does not hesitate to express her opinions on them. Such women were dealt with high controversy in the medieval period.

3.4. English Renaissance (1500-1660)

The Renaissance period was an age of advancement where literature had its part with the birth of legends such as Edmund Spenser, William Shakespeare and John Donne. However, the advancement of women's worth in the society was very acute. Shakespeare's famous line "Frailty, thy name is woman!" (1.2, 15) in *Hamlet* (1603) is a saying difficult to digest for the modern reader. John Donne in his "Goe and Catche a Falling Starre" (1633), explicitly questions the honesty of a woman. The poet justifies his point by comparing a fair lady to impossible and imaginary things such as getting back lost time, singing mermaids, and the success of an honest man. He concludes by stating that a woman's honesty is short-lived. The women of this age were seen as weaklings who had no sense of tact. They, like in the previous ages, were dependant on the men's approval for their well-being. "Freedom", "liberty", and "dignity" were words erased in the dictionary of women.

3.5. Romanticism (1785-1830)

Romanticism was an age full of imaginary and abstract concepts with hyperbole used in plenty. An instance is William Wordsworth's "Perfect Woman". The poet enlightens the poem on a positive note by comparing the perfect woman to an angelic spirit who has "endurance, foresight, strength and skill"; the simple yet rare qualities which were seen non-existent in the woman of that time as assumed by the male-dominating society:

Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill;
A perfect Woman, nobly plann'd,
To warn, to comfort, and command;
And yet a Spirit still, and bright
With something of angelic light (26-30).

Jane Austen's female protagonists in *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) take us into a further and harsher insight of women's roles in the society. It seems the ideal woman was only limited to external beauty and in having a well-off life partner. This can be easily portrayed through the Bennet family where Mrs. Bennet's only tasks were to take care of the household and find perfect matches for her daughters. Similarly, young women's only tasks were to look beautiful, find a perfect partner and woo them. The situation takes on a different turn for Elizabeth, who has "unwomanly" passions of the time such as reading books and interest in out of the house topics. Despite being the most interesting and wisest woman character as well as being the most admired by her father, she is considered a misfit to her mother, sisters and the society.

3.6. The Victorian Period (1830-1901)

Violence in love was one of the characteristics in Victorian poetry, and women were mostly subject to such tortures. Robert Browning in his "Porphyria's Lover" (1842) describes the innocent Porphyria mercilessly assassinated by her lover in dramatic monologue:

"In one yellow string I wound
Three times her little throat around,
And strangled her" (39-41).

Thomas Hardy's *The Return of the Native* (1878) consists of three female characters of which one is emphasized for her unique qualities i.e. Eustacia Vye. Eustacia is a highly ambitious, outspoken young woman who loathes the simple life in Edgemoor Heath. She always lives within her fantasy of the high-statured life in Paris which limits her communication with the people of the heath. This leads to her being an outcast in her community which goes to the extent of her superstitiously being called a "witch".

The portrayal of women in these poems and texts reflects the societal treatment of women during their respective eras. These women are constantly being defined according to the patriarchal needs and principles of the society; as a result of which the women share common dilemmas that surpass time.

4. The Masculinity and Femininity Myth

The elements of Masculinity and Femininity are determined based on the societal expectations of genders in their day-to-day affairs. Men are expected to bear masculine traits such as being strong, brave and successful whereas women are expected to bear the feminine traits of being soft, submissive and weak. These traits reflect the nature and speech of the characters in literature. According to Kortenhaus and Demarest (1993), "the activities of males and

females were so extremely disparate in children's literature examined from the 1940s through to the 1960s that this topic requires a special comment" (230). John Stephens' *Gender, Genre and Children's Literature* shows an outline of masculinity and femininity (18) as follows:

Male Characteristics	Female Characteristics
Strong (inner strength)	Beautiful (outer beauty)
Violent	Non-violent
Unemotional	Emotional
Aggressive	Submissive
Transgressive	Obedient
Competitive	Sharing
Rapacious	Caring
Protective	Vulnerable
Powerful	Powerless
Player	Prize
Independent	Dependent
Active	Passive
Rational	Intuitive

Source: John Stephens, "Outline of Masculinities and Femininities" (1996)

Harry Potter's central character Harry himself can be one of Rowling's most controversial characters in this regard. Despite being a woman herself, Rowling chose the series main character to be a male. Harry, despite not always bright with academics, seems to get his way and be the talk of the school for his *quidditch* skills and brave feats against evils. His character may be juxtaposed with his female friend, Hermione Granger, who is the most intelligent of the Harry-Ron-Hermione trio; yet she is never considered a match to Harry. The following is a conversation between Harry and Hermione in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*:

" 'Harry- you're a great wizard, you know' "

"I'm not as good as you", said Harry, very embarrassed as she let go of him.

It shows how Hermione's qualities as a great witch are completely overshadowed by Harry's. Bravery, which is mostly associated with the male species, that is Harry, is accounted more of credibility than intelligence. The tenth chapter of the book portrays the typical "damsel in distress" mode where Hermione unknowingly traps herself in the bathroom with a troll. She is unable to rescue herself despite knowing all the spells by heart only to be saved by Ron and Harry who intervene to mend the situation. This section also creates the notion that women are the problem creators and men are the fixers of everything. As Kortenhaus and Demarest (1993) state, "In the last two decades, boys were still shown engaging in active outdoor play three times as often as girls, and they solved problems five to eight times as often" (230). Hermione struggles immensely to gain Harry and Ron's approval which is not seen so the other way round on Harry and Ron's part. Social boundaries imposed on gender and her so called feminine emotions get the best of Hermione. In *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, Hermione waits for Ron to ask her out to the ball instead of initiating the proposal herself. Here, she is bound by the social tradition of men approaching women first instead of women. However, she ends up going to the ball with Krum due to Ron's delay. Both become grim of the circumstance and express their sadness to each other after the ball. Their modes of expression, however, can be very well differentiated which is visually evident in the cinematic version of the book. Hermione's expression is dramatically over-emotional and teary as opposed to Ron's raged yet composed expression.

A similar juxtaposition may be drawn between the level of authority of Dumbledore, Headmaster of Hogwarts and McGonagall. Although she does not approve all of Dumbledore's risky decisions and predictions, she is forced to conform to them. Dumbledore is characterized as the male authoritarian figure that always seems to possess the composure, accurate vision and courage to act upon them. McGonagall lacks those very qualities which make her a weaker person. In *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, McGonagall clenches her bosom and gasps and converses meekly upon Harry's return from the chamber of secrets whereas Dumbledore shows joyousness.

Ron's younger sister Ginny has a crush on Harry and expresses her feelings in the utmost traditional way possible. She is introduced as the shy little girl who blushes and stammers around Harry. Ginny is nowhere near Hermione's level of intellect which makes her easy bait for the opposite sex. Her naivety is displayed right from the beginning when she foolishly writes everything in a magical diary. She is at times referred to as "the stupid little Ginny" and "the foolish little brat" and her stories as "pitiful worries and woes". We are constantly reminded of how weary it is to listen to "the silly little troubles of an eleven-year-old girl".

Mrs. Weasley, Ron's mother, is a perfect example of the traditional portrayal of women in literature. Her role is of the mother who nurtures and caters to her family's needs including Harry. A similar behaviour is observed in Hermione when the three friends go into hiding in *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*. Hermione serves as the motherly figure that takes care of their needs. "Tricky, but I think I've done it okay; anyway, I managed to fit everything

we need here" (162). Here, Hermione serves as the grown-up mother who packs for her children despite the three of them being of the same age. Her role as the provider and Harry and Ron's treatment towards her is shown clearly as the plot progresses:

"Well, don't bother increasing this, it's disgusting", said Ron.

'Harry caught the fish and I did my best with it! I notice I'm always the one who ends up sorting the food, because I'm a girl, I suppose' " (293).

Kortenhaus and Demarest (1993) state in this regard, "Girls were cast in a nurturing role far more often than boys." (230).

The male characters appear to inhibit "feminine traits" as well. Dumbledore is an instance of the good man who bears the nurturing habit. In *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, Harry is seen bestowed with the opportunity to envision Voldemort's mind as a result of the bond that they share caused by the rebounded killing curse that Voldemort applied on Harry as an infant (761). Dumbledore confesses to initially refrain from keeping touch with Harry to send Voldemort into oblivion regarding their relationship if he, by any chance, also took a shot at reading Harry's mind (762). After Dumbledore's death, Harry also compares Dumbledore to his late parents and godfather and contemplates on how they had been so "determined to protect him" (536).

Arthur Weasley and Remus Lupin possess fatherly and nurturing features as well. Although one needed to maintain prudence in the midst of dangerous situations in *Deathly Hallows*, Mr. Weasley shows reluctance to providing evidence of his identity until he catches a glimpse of his wounded son. Harry is narrated as having "heard Mr. Weasley shout like that before" (58), which explicitly explains how tensed he is for his son and that he shows indifference towards his own safety. Remus Lupin is another father who sacrifices his life to save his son. Lupin is resurrected to assist Harry in his sacrifice to defeat Voldemort. Voldemort, who is the darkest antagonist of the *Harry Potter* series, stands in stark contrast to Harry's quality. He does not hesitate to take anyone's life including children which is evident from his attempted murder of Harry as an infant. Voldemort goes to the extent of disowning his birth mother as he allegedly discover her weak and vulnerable. This correlation among his mother and vulnerability, most probably is the reason for the absence of nurture and sympathy in his character, as nurture is a feature typically embedded in good mothers. Despite being a father, Lucius Malfoy lacks nurturing qualities as well. Although he is very protective of his family, he assists Voldemort in his motive of murdering Harry after his birth.

The Chronicles of Narnia is inclusive of some transparent sexism as well. The Pevensie brothers, Peter and Edmund in *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe*, prepare to fight in battle but do not include their sisters Susan and Lucy. Young girls were free from this distinction until they reached adolescence and required to be a good woman and wife. This can be observed that the young girls in the series, especially the ones portrayed as most admirable and better girls, appear to have tomboyish attitudes one way or the other. Lucy bears more masculine traits and is more ambitious than Susan, and so, she is handed over with the less feminine ammunition, that is, a knife. Susan is handed with a bow that has for ages been considered as a more epicene ammunition due to its poor effects of killing in lieu of having to duel in person. This explicitly portrays Lucy as having, metaphorically, a small, approximate congratulatory phallus as her older brother is provided with the more masculine ammunition, the sword of a warrior.

Healing has always conventionally and securely been feminine; this part of the novel transparently stresses and supports that notion while affirming Lucy's character as a chaste, safe female. Susan is a skilled archer and Lucy argues on her behalf stating that she believes Susan "could be brave enough" (61) to fight. The Christ-figure replies in a misogynistic way: "battles are ugly when women fight" (62). The message runs clear that women can never restore harmony through the so-called masculine means. Lewis also manages to immerse sanctity in Aslan although being commonly known as one of the most dangerous animal species on the planet. He is a male lion figure that protects the children in the novel whereas in reality lions are expected to eat them alive. Lewis seems to bring references from ancient mythology that bear biased views of gender. In the end of his last book entitled *The Last Battle*, Susan is outcasted by her siblings and prophesied to damnation simply due to her maturation to adulthood: "My sister Susan" answered Peter shortly and gravely, "is no longer a friend of Narnia". "Yes", said Eustace, "and whenever you've tried to get her to come and talk about Narnia or anything about Narnia, she says "What wonderful memories you have! Fancy you're still thinking about all those funny games we used to play when we were children" (741).

Susan's willingness to blur her connections with her childhood and embrace adulthood makes her a sinner. Her growing femininity and sexuality comes in the way of her being pure in the eyes of Lewis as it goes in stark contrast to childish innocence. In Graham's (2004) words:

he suggests that normal adolescent behavior can result in damnation for girls, whereas the approved adult women who occasionally appear on the periphery are highly domesticated.... These disturbing glimpses of what it means for a girl to grow up, along with the peculiarly misogynistic theology resulting from combining Circe and Lilith with Satan, threatens to undo the positive representations of gender in the Narnian Chronicles (41).

It is thus evident that "masculinity" and "femininity" are mythical terms that are merely set by the patriarchal standards. In reality, it is difficult to place any individual character within a specific genre as all of them have a combination of traits intermingling between these two gender roles.

5. Femme Fatale Trouble

Femme Fatale is described as the mysterious and seductive woman who lures her man into deadly situations. This archetype is a common usage in literature. History shows numerous characters in this regard. Eve from the Biblical account of Adam and Eve, Medea from the Greek Classic, the wicked step-mothers from the fairytales and the three witches and Lady Macbeth in William Shakespeare's *Macbeth* are to name a few. This phenomenon persists to be used in contemporary literature.

The truest essence of *Femme Fatale* can be explored from the fifth book of the Harry Potter series through the characters Dolores Umbridge and Bellatrix Lestrange, who appear to have a lot in common. Umbridge was raised in an unhappy, broken family that made her sceptical and uncompassionate of her surroundings more than ever. However, her intelligence, overtly-emotional attitude towards seniors and cunning techniques favoured herself a suitable position in the magical world. Her power in the Ministry of Magic and Hogwarts gave her full authority to exercise her cruelty towards the half-bloods and muggles she detested all her life despite being secretly half-blood herself. Her power led to her undoing after her association with the death-eaters and Lord Voldemort himself. This is the phase in Umbridge's life where she finally exposes her honest instincts and proves she is no different than Voldemort and his allies. Bellatrix Lestrange is a skilled witch of the renowned Black family who studies in Hogwarts under the Slytherin House. Her immense self-proclaimed admiration for Voldemort earns her a secured place in the death-eaters where she becomes one of Voldemort's most loyal allies. So pronounced is her admiration for Voldemort that she does not even express a little bit of admiration for her husband. Her sense and sensibilities lie in her devotion towards the one who must not be named also known as Voldemort.

Despite the fact that the characteristics Lestrange and Umbridge bear are typically masculine, they are not equated with all the men in the *Harry Potter* series. These evil women are only compared to the evil men. Similarly, the good women are also compared to the good men who bear the typical good characteristics. Like Lestrange and Umbridge, the evil men also use violence to accomplish their motives and use forbidden curses often to get their way. On the other hand, Harry only uses harmful spells at times of urgent need to protect himself or others as innocent as himself. He uses a disarming spell against Voldemort's killing curse in his last battle with him, avoiding the option of directly trying to murder Voldemort himself (*Deathly Hallows*, 608). One requires the severe emotional urge from within to harm someone in order to make the curse successful. Nevertheless, Harry is too good at heart to cause anyone harm and so he fails the first time that he casts the spell on Lestrange after she has killed his godfather and it fails (*Order of the Phoenix*, 746). His later application of the spell on another Death Eater to save McGonagall becomes fruitful. It is then that he comprehends what Lestrange meant and that one does "need to really mean it" (*Deathly Hallows*, 483). His animalistic evil side thus grows as someone who desires to cause harm to those who intend to harm the ones he deeply cares about. He seldom utters having the best interests in casting this spell, a contrary to what Lestrange had formerly informed him of. Therefore, there are apparent differences between when the good and evil use these harmful spells.

The desire for power, one of the innate features of the evil characters in the series, is also a feature absent in the good characters. Apart from Voldemort, who desires to reign the whole wizarding world, his subordinates are also motivated towards power. Like Lestrange and Umbridge, they are not willing to initiate power themselves but stay in close connections with the dark hierarchy. Lucius Malfoy is one of the male characters fascinated by Voldemort's power. Once known as a Death Eater during Voldemort's reign, "Lucius Malfoy came back saying he'd never meant any of it" (*Chamber of Secrets*, 30) after Voldemort's vanish when unsuccessfully attempting to murder Harry. In *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, Mr. Weasley states that Lucius Malfoy has become a charitable figure to the Ministry of Magic and has come in acquaintance with "the right people" (143). He refers to him as well-connected enough to be able to project his power, for example, "delay laws he doesn't want passed" (143). It is thus clear that Malfoy is addicted to power and takes every means to snatch it. In Voldemort's absence, Malfoy builds connections with the Minister for Magic and the other powerful wizards related to the Ministry. Dumbledore also has his share of a desire for power as well but not in his later years. He claims about power being his weakness in his youth to Harry (*Deathly Hallows*, 586). Dumbledore was once a companion of the prominent dark wizard Gellert Grindelwald and shared Grindelwald's notions for power (291). The two friends became separated after the death of his sister (292). Since then, Dumbledore lost his urge for power. In *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, after Harry decides to end his life to end Voldemort's reign, he meets the demised Dumbledore for the last time. This is when Dumbledore asserts to him that "perhaps those who are best suited to power are those who have never sought it" (586). He has apparently come to terms with the fact that how lusting for power can cause harm to others. Harry, being the only one who can overthrow Voldemort, is bestowed with this strength through a prophecy and a spell that rebounded, equating him to Voldemort's level of power (*Order of the Phoenix*, 774-775). After the death of Dumbledore, Harry, alongside his companions, go to meet the demised Headmaster's brother, Aberforth. Aberforth expresses his doubt regarding Dumbledore's care for Harry and questions why he never advised Harry to keep himself aloof from danger and stay in hiding if he had genuinely cared for him. Harry speaks in support of Dumbledore stating that "sometimes you've got to think about more than your own safety! Sometimes you've got to think about the greater good!" (*Deathly*

Hallows, 463). Harry cares about the security of the people around him and that is why he is drawn towards giving up his life for the sake of it. Lily Potter's sacrifice is the reason why Harry was saved from the killing curse during his infancy. Her sacrifice for Harry was a sign of love that saved him from Voldemort's clutches (*Philosopher's Stone*, 321–322). Harry has only repeated history doing what his mother had done. He had spread love to others in order to dethrone Voldemort's hatred. Hence, he empowers himself in a caring way instead of in a self-absorbed or demeaning manner. It may also be claimed that Harry's power comes from nurture and love, considering how it was born from his mother's sacrifice. He sacrifices the Elder Wand as well, which is the most powerful wand created by Voldemort. He explains that even though it is powerful, he feels content with his original wand which is the only one he fathoms (*Deathly Hallows*, 612). Rather than bringing him happiness, he believes that the Elder Wand would bring trouble (613), hinting on a belief that power does not bring good things with it.

The first book of Lewis' *The Chronicles of Narnia* entitled *The Lion, Witch and the Wardrobe* exhibits similar characteristics in which the White Witch tricks the Pevensie siblings with her warmth in the beginning only to turn her ill motives into reality. She wins young Edmund Pevensie's trust in the most typical way of offering Turkish delight and hot chocolate. Edmund falls into her trap and is imprisoned thus endangering his other siblings. Similarly, the Queen of Underland, also known as, The Lady of the Green Kirtle in *The Silver Chair* keeps Prince Rilian of Narnia hostage and enslaves him in order to rule the land. This woman misleads the children with her beauty, kind hospitality, advices and musical voice.

It is evident that these women bear no "feminine" trait. They equally bear all the traits the male unruly king of Narnia, named Miraz, possesses in *Prince Caspian*. King Miraz usurps the throne by killing his own brother and ruthlessly plans to kill his nephew. But he too lusts for the same privileges and can go to any extent to execute them, be it killing a child. They all represent the qualities of the seven deadly sins irrespective of gender. Lewis apparently orchestrates the evil women to possess power. A woman of the soft, sympathetic and compassionate build is no match to fight against the opposite gender. This equates them to the Biblical Lucifer with the exception of a woman's body (Gallegos, 2014).

According to the patriarchal outlook, there is a general angst of women as being likened to animals and therefore on the verge of turning wild and cause harm whenever they find scope. This perspective may be seen justified as their opposites, that is, the "good women" are compared to domesticated pets, the makers and preservers of the social system. This bears great emphasis as it projects how Lewis' works portray and define women the way in which these ideas are stereotypical.

Aravis' friend Lasaraleen is introduced as the complete opposite in which Aravis is considered the better of the two, she is praised in the book and although Aravis is considered as what females ought to be; this does not disguise the fact that Aravis is accepted as a good girl due to the masculine traits being associated within her character: "The fuss [Lasaraleen] made about choosing the dresses nearly drove Aravis mad. She remembered now that Lasaraleen had always been like that, interested in clothes and parties and gossip. Aravis had always been more interested in bows and arrows and horses and dogs and swimming" (*The Horse and His Boy*, 251).

One may question why the term "Femme Fatale" was even established bearing in mind that such behavioural qualities are empirically present in all species irrespective of gender. It seems that patriarchy is covertly seeping through these ideals which prevent people from thinking outside gender. As Butler (1999) states, "gender is culturally constructed" (9). According to this philosopher, gender is defined by what we do instead of what we are.

6. Conclusion

We approve of the fact that the *Harry Potter* series and *The Chronicles of Narnia* are fantasy novels designed to meet young children's literary needs. As fantasy series, they encourage the young minds' to improve language and develop reading habits, think out of the box and put their creativity to use. They also incite pleasure with the benefit of teaching morality, such as good versus evil; how the good always become victorious and rewarded and the evil get reprimanded and punished in the end.

Despite these positive elements, we cannot avoid the fact that they subconsciously infuse the ideas of gender roles into young minds that are sustained throughout their adulthood. Rowling addresses these concrete ideals on a social level whereas Lewis brings them to light on a religious, or to be more precise, on a traditional Biblical level. Rowling's characterisation of Mrs. Weasley as a wife and mother, portrayal of Hermione's unconventional wit and the evil women reflect the exact portrayal of women in the male-dominated society. Lewis' biblical allegories of Aslan the Lion as the Christ-figure, the evil women as Lilith and the frank criticism of Susan's maturation and sexuality that prohibit her from entering the heavens shed light on these religious aspects.

However, their paradoxical grounds of expression do not come in the way of their common notions of both sexes. These ideas of gender, thus, are circulated generation after generation which eventually turn into concrete reality. These preconceived notions of the sexes, influenced further by the male dominated society, have a huge impact on children's day to day speech, actions and life habits, hence, putting a boundary on individual development as a whole.

As children's literature plays a vital role in developing the mindset of children, more literature with the aim of promoting gender neutral ideas is required to eradicate the typical stereotypes passed on for eons. This will help secure the rights of both the genders and eradicate the curse of gender inequality, a problem that still persists in the twenty-first century. Therefore, it is most important to infuse gender-neutral ideas in an individual from the early stages of their life. Building a harmonious world is impossible when either gender is excluded. As Emma Watson, who plays Hermione herself in the movies of the *Harry Potter* series, rightfully pops the question at the *He for She* campaign held in 2014, "how can we effect change in the world when only half of it is invited or feel welcome to participate in the conversation?"

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