



HÁSKÓLI ÍSLANDS

Hugvísindasvið

Gender attitudes in Harry Potter

*A study of the portrayal of gender in the Harry Potter franchise,
and its effect as an agent of socialization*

Ritgerð til B.A.-prófs

Hugrún Ósk Óskarsdóttir

Janúar 2012

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Enskuskor

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Abstract

This essay will look at gender attitudes in J.K. Rowling's fantasy book series Harry Potter, as well as in the Harry Potter movie adaptations. The books and the films will be compared and contrasted.

We are born either male or female but our gender is learned. The society we live in is very preoccupied with gender and how we are to behave according to our sex.

Socialization is the process where we gradually learn how to behave according to our gender. Socialization begins from the minute we are born and continues throughout our lives. Parents, peer groups, and the media are all agents of socialization. The media is perhaps the biggest one today. Books like Harry Potter are a major agent of socialization, without intending to be. This essay shows how males and females are represented in a different way. I will cover characters that represent different types of characters.

Table of Contents

List of Abbreviations	1
Introduction	2
Socialization	4
i. What is Socialization?	4
ii. Gender Socialization	4
Harry Potter.....	6
i. About the Harry Potter series.....	7
Family Life	8
i. The Dursleys	8
ii. The Weasleys	10
Gender in Harry Potter.....	12
i. Giggling Girls.....	12
ii. Strong Males.....	16
iii. Weak Males	18
Notable Characters	20
i. Hermione Granger.....	20
ii. Ginny Weasley	25
iii. Neville Longbottom	27
Conclusion.....	29
Bibliography	30

List of abbreviations

Harry Potter book series

HPPS	Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone
HPCS	Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secret
HPPA	Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban
HPGF	Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire
HPOP	Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix
HPHP	Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince
HPDH	Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows

Harry Potter movie series

PSTM	Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone
CSTM	Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secret
PATM	Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban
GFTM	Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire
OPTM	Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix
HBPTM	Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince
HPDH1	Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 1
HPDH2	Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 2

Introduction

When we are told that someone is having a baby it is thought to be perfectly normal if not in order to ask “Do you know if it is a boy or a girl?” The society we live in is so preoccupied with gender that we have to know how to identify that little baby from the start. We are either born male or female but our gender is learned. From early age and until we pass away society tells us how to behave, what is expected from us, and what kind of behaviour is considered to be feminine or masculine. We learn our behaviour from socialization agents such as our parents, peer groups, relatives, schools, and from the media. The media is perhaps the biggest agent of socialization today. Everywhere we go we are bombarded by these agents that tell us through sources like magazines, advertisements, films, and books; what we should wear, what is considered attractive, how we are to behave according to our sex, and so on. This is called socialization and it starts from the minute we are born.

Lenore Weitzman and her colleagues analysed gender roles in some of the most widely used children’s books and found several differences in gender roles. They found out that males played a much bigger part in the stories, outnumbering females by a ratio of 11 to 1 (Giddens 292). The activities of females and males were different: the males engaged in adventurous pursuits while girls mostly confined to indoor activities like cooking and cleaning (Giddens 292). Recent research suggests that this has changed somewhat for the better but that large degree of children’s literature remains the same (Giddens 292). The Harry Potter series is arguably the most popular children’s phenomena in recent decades and it is interesting to look at gender attitudes in the series with regards of socialization. When the first book of the Harry Potter series *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone* was published no one could have imagined just how popular it would become. Written by J.K. Rowling the

series tell the story of Harry Potter, a young orphan who learns at the age of 11 that he is a wizard and is to attend Hogwarts, a school of wizardry. There were seven Harry Potter books and the last one *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* was released in 2007. In 2001 a movie adaptation of Harry Potter was released. Both the book series and the movies are widely popular among people of all ages and of both gender and Rowling has become a household name. Rowling decided to use initials rather than her full name; Joanne Rowling for her novel. She added the name Kathleen and used the initials J.K. Rowling. She did that to disguise her gender because her main target audience were young boys. She did not want them to shun her books because of her gender (J.K. Rowling).

In this essay I will look at gender attitudes in the Harry Potter series. I will compare the movies and the books and find what is similar and what is not. For this essay I will use all the Harry Potter books as well as all the Harry Potter films. When referring to the Harry Potter books and films I will use the abbreviations given above.

Socialization

i. What is Socialization?

Socialization is a term used by sociologists to describe how infants gradually become a grown up, self-aware, person fit for the society into which he or she was born. Socialization allows for the general phenomenon of social reproduction. Societies are generally the same; there is structural continuity over time (Giddens 284). Children are influenced by the society they live in and there are different agents of socialization. Primary socialization occurs in infancy and childhood when children are most receptive. The family is the main agent in socialization during the first phase. In the second phase of socialization, other agents take over some of the responsibility from the family. This second phase takes place later in childhood and even when children have become young adults. Socialization in later years comes from schools, the media, friends, and eventually the workplace (Giddens 288). These agents are very important in shaping individuals. There is constant stimulus from various outside sources. Probably the biggest agent today is the mass media. The mass media involves television, records, movies, television, and print media such as books and newspapers (Giddens 290).

ii. Gender Socialization

Sex is a biological trait while gender is culturally produced. Through contact with agencies of socialization, children gradually learn what the society expects and consider a normal behaviour for their gender. Differences in gender are not something persons are born with rather these differences are culturally produced (Giddens 602). The socialization starts right after we are born. In Western societies when children are

born they are dressed in different colours according to their sex. Girls are dressed in pink outfits while boys are dressed in blue. Studies have shown that parents treat boys and girls differently, even if the parents think that they are treating them just the same. In one study five young mothers were observed during interaction with an infant called Beth. The women handed Beth dolls to play with, smiled at her often and thought her to be sweet and to have a soft cry. The reaction of a second group of mothers, to another infant named Adam, were noticeably different. The mothers offered him “male toys” such as train and cars to play with. Beth and Adam were the same child dressed in different clothes (Giddens 291). Once a gender is assigned, society expects children to behave accordingly (Giddens 292).

Toys, television shows, and books which are marketed towards children tend to emphasize differences between the sexes. Female characters are generally outnumbered by male characters in children’s books, films, and television shows aimed at children. Also the male characters are more active and adventurous while female characters are more passive and domestically oriented (Giddens 603). Lenore Weitzman and her colleagues did an analysis of gender role in some of the most commonly used children’s books and found several clear differences in gender roles. In the stories males played a much greater role than females, outnumbering them by a ratio of 11 to 1 (Giddens 292). The ratio was 95 to 1 when animals with gender identities were included (Giddens 292). Since Harry Potter is without a doubt one of the most popular children’s franchise of the past decades children are influenced by the books and films.

Harry Potter

According to Lynn F. Williams there are generally two types of utopias in fantasy novels: “Arcadian” and “Authoritarian.” “Arcadian” is Edenic and non-competitive (Williams 224) with a minimum of social distinctions and government while “Authoritarian” is a conservative society modelled on medieval Europe (Williams 223). These two utopias treat women very differently. In Arcadian society the inhabitants are sensitive to their environment and close to nature. The men and women have equal status but if there is any difference the women come out slightly ahead. They are sexually liberated and their lives are relaxed and free (Williams 223-224). The second type of utopia that Williams calls “Authoritarian” is usually set in the future but still looks back to the worlds of heroic romance and pre-industrial societies, usually medieval Europe (Williams 227). There are differences in social class and hereditary rules that are seen as natural and desirable. It is a man’s world and the women accept a subordinate role (Williams 227).

Out of these two types Harry Potter falls in the second category; the magical world described by Rowling is Authoritarian. The magical world in which the books are set is old fashioned compared to the muggle world or non magical world. The main transport to Hogwarts is with an old steam train, they wear capes, and the nuclear family with male breadwinners and stay-at-home mothers is predominant. There are only two families mentioned from the muggle world; the Dursleys and the Grangers. Mr. Dursley is the main breadwinner for the Dursley family and Mrs. Dursley a stay-at-home mother. However the Granger’s are both working dentists but they are not further introduced to the reader while the Dursleys and their family life is mentioned in each book.

i. About the Harry Potter series

As mentioned before the Harry Potter books have been a huge success. Although set out to be a children's book, people of all ages enjoy reading Harry Potter. Each book represents one year of Harry's life; from the age of 11 to 18. The books are told from his point of view. The reader first gets to know Harry Potter right before he turns eleven. Harry became an orphan at the age of one when Harry's parents were killed by an evil wizard named Lord Voldemort. Harry has since been living with his aunt; Petunia Dursley, her husband Vernon Dursley and their son Dudley Dursley. He was highly neglected by his relatives, only getting what was vital for him to live. Because of that Harry is thrilled when he learns at the age of eleven that he is a wizard and is to attend Hogwarts; a school of wizardry that has the most skilled wizard in the world as headmaster, Albus Dumbledore. There are four houses in Hogwarts named after Hogwarts founders; Godric Gryffindor, Salazar Slytherin, Rowena Ravenclaw, and Helga Hufflepuff (*Chamber of Secrets* 114). Gryffindor seems to be the house most of the children want to be assigned to (*Philosopher's Stone* 79). The students in Gryffindor are known for bravery and chivalry; Slytherin is the most popular among those who have leanings towards the dark arts; students who are assigned to the house of Ravenclaw are highly intelligent; but those in Hufflepuff are just and loyal (*Philosopher's Stone* 88).

Harry has two best friends; Ron Weasley and Hermione Granger. They all meet at Hogwarts and they are prone to getting themselves into adventures. Eventually Harry finds out what the wizarding world has been dreading, that Lord Voldemort has returned to power. He sets out to kill Harry Potter and Harry must fight with all his might to stop Lord Voldemort from ruling the wizarding world.

Harry would never have succeeded in stopping Lord Voldemort without his friends help. Harry especially needed Hermione Granger because of her intelligence.

In 2001 a major Hollywood adaptation of the books was released. Although the books were seven there were eight movies because the final Harry Potter book was split into two movies. Like the books they were a major success. The script writers tried to be true to the books and Rowling had her saying on the script and what actors should be hired. Because of that the movies did not differ much from the books although there were minor alterations.

Family life

Since Harry Potter became an orphan when he was one year old he grows up with his closest blood relatives; The Dursleys until the age of 11 when he first attends Hogwarts. The only other family we do get to know are the Weasleys. Harry gets to know the Weasley family through Ron Weasley, his best friend. Both of the families are very traditional nuclear families: a married heterosexual couples with children, a stay-at-home mother and a father who is the breadwinner and a head-of-the-household. There is no other family dynamic portrayed in the series. There are no single parents' and no divorcees. Rowling's description of each family household is very traditional. The fathers work outside the home while the mothers do the cleaning, cooking, and taking care of the children. When Harry, Ron, and Hermione grow up they also have a traditional life. They all eventually marry their partners and have children. (*Deathly Hallows* 603)

i. The Dursleys

The Dursleys are Harry's only blood relatives. Petunia Dursley is Harry's aunt, she is married to Vernon Dursley and they have a son Dudley Dursley. The Dursleys

are not pleasant people. They treat Harry more as a servant than a member of the family, his room is a cupboard under the stairs, and they do not tell him the truth about his parents' death or their magical abilities. Harry is always miserable during the summer breaks from Hogwarts because he has to go back to the Dursleys.

Aunt Petunia is described as being thin and blonde, and having nearly the twice the usual amount of neck which is handy because she spends so much time spying on the neighbours (*Philosopher's Stone* 1). Aunt Petunia is rarely seen in the Harry Potter movies outside the kitchen or without an apron. "The kitchen door had opened, and there stood Harry's aunt, wearing rubber gloves and a housecoat over her nightdress, clearly halfway through her usual pre-bedtime wipe-down of all the kitchen surfaces" (*Half-Blood Prince* 49). Even in HPPS when Harry starts getting his letters from Hogwarts, letters the Dursleys do not want him to see, Petunia shreds letters in her food mixer. Mr Dursley is more proactive and calls the post office with complaints and nailed up the letter-box (*Philosopher's Stone* 34). There Aunt Petunia uses the female equipment she has i.e. the food mixer while Mr. Dursley tries to attack the source of the problem and uses his masculine resources or his tools.

Aunt Petunia does not seem to have any real power over her home. She is even portrayed as fragile in HPPS. "There was no point in worrying Mrs Dursley, she always got so upset at any mention of her sister." (*Philosopher's Stone* 9). Mr Dursley is the one who is clearly the head of the household. In HPPS, when the Dursleys are trying to avoid Harry knowing about his magical abilities and Hogwarts, Mr Dursley decides it is best to run away from the problem and decides without consulting his wife that everyone is to pack and be ready within five minutes. No one dares to argue with him, not even his wife dares to ask where they are going (*Philosopher's Stone* 35). He even threatens the life of their family by going in a stormy weather on a boat

to a little rock in the sea to hide from the letters sent from Hogwarts (*Philosopher's Stone* 37). Only once we get to see Aunt Petunia standing up to her husband. When Dudley is attacked by dementors and Mr Dursley wants Harry out of the house and to never come back, Petunia gets a letter saying "Remember my last, Petunia." (*Order of the Phoenix* 41) after that she tells her husband Harry will have to stay. That letter is from Professor Dumbledore reminding her of a previous letter he sent her, urging why Harry should not be kicked out. Reluctant Mr Dursley listens to her and they send Harry off to his room.

The only place where Aunt Petunia seems to rule is in her kitchen. In the series the kitchen is described as her place. "It felt very strange to be standing here in Aunt Petunia's surgically clean kitchen..." (*Order of the Phoenix* 38). She is the one that cooks and cleans at her house. Neither her husband nor son offer to help her but she orders Harry to do chores around the house if he is to get food.

ii. The Weasleys

The Weasleys are a wizarding family whose son, Ron becomes Harry's best friend at Hogwarts. The Weasleys are the opposite of the Dursleys; they are kind and loving, show deep affection and respect for Harry, and make him feel like a part of the family. Mrs Weasley is an old fashioned mother. She does not work outside the house and in the movies she is rarely seen without an apron. Even though her children have either moved out of the house, or attend Hogwarts; it is interesting that Mrs. Weasley does not get a job. They are not wealthy people and they have to get second hand dress robes and books for their children.

When there are family gatherings at the Weasley home or at the Order of the Phoenix headquarters; Mrs Weasley is the one that prepares the meals. She has to ask for help in the kitchen and the girls are usually the ones that help her. "And if you

want dinner before midnight I'll need a hand,' 'Mrs. Weasley said to the room at large.' (*Order of the Phoenix* 78). Like Aunt Petunia, Mrs Weasley is in charge of the housework at the Weasley home. In HPCS the Weasley brothers state that their mother wishes she had a house-elf to do the ironing (*Chamber of Secrets* 27). Mr Weasley is looked after in his home by his wife. Mr Weasley does not even have to get himself his meal. "They shook hands and Mr Weasley dropped into the chair beside Harry as Mrs Weasley set a bowl of soup in front of him, too." (*Half-Blood Prince* 86).

Molly Weasley seems to be the main caregiver for the children and disciplines the children more than her husband does. In HPCS when Ron and his brothers, Fred and George, take their flying Ford Anglia without their parents' permission to save Harry from the Dursleys; Mrs Weasley is furious when they arrive home: "It seemed to go on for hours. Mrs Weasley had shouted herself hoarse before she turned on Harry, who backed away." (*Chamber of Secrets* 30). She expects her husband to be as furious but he is not. He is rather curious to know how the car worked since he had never tried flying the car himself.

'Your sons flew that car to Harry's house and back last night!' shouted Mrs Weasley. 'What have you got to say about that, eh?' 'Did you really?' said Mr Weasley eagerly. 'Did it go all right? I-I mean,' he faltered, as sparks flew from Mrs Weasley's eyes, 'that-that was very wrong, boys – very wrong indeed...' (*Chamber of Secrets* 35)

Studies show that mother's spend more time with their children doing specific activities, caring for their children, shopping for them and nurturing while the fathers spend time with their children doing fun activities (Renk et al 306). Mr Weasley is the one that does the fun activities with their children; he takes them to the Quidditch

world cup while Mrs Weasley stays home alone (*Goblet of Fire* 65), he looks the other way when the Weasley twins gamble - something that Mrs Weasley would have been furious about (*Goblet of Fire* 106), he does not ask questions what big plans the twins have with the money (*Goblet of Fire* 106), and he has to be told by his wife what to do when parenting his children “Arthur, I don’t want this lot up too late, all right?” (*Order of the Phoenix* 157).

Mrs Weasley is a typical character in children’s books since women are continually portrayed in a very stereotypical way. They are more likely to engage in nurturing behaviours than male characters while the men are more likely to be working, active and in motion (Denny 30).

Gender in Harry Potter

There is not an equal gender ratio in the Harry Potter books and movies and the important characters are predominantly male (Heilman 223). The genders are portrayed in a different manner in the series. This is especially so when the characters hit puberty, then there is more emphasis on gender differences.

i. Giggling Girls

The girls at Hogwarts, with the exception of Hermione, are not often mentioned in the first three novels. Perhaps this is because initially Rowling target audience were boys but it is still a concern how she portrays the girls. They are mostly described as giggly, and tearful. Hermione is often described as being on the verge of tears (*Order of the Phoenix* 64), trembling (*Philosopher’s Stone* 177) or with her eyes sparkling with tears (*Order of the Phoenix* 64). It appears that girls cannot control their giggles. At Quidditch practise when the Gryffindor team captain Oliver Wood is talking strategies and mentions the new Hufflepuff seeker Cedric Diggory the female

Gryffindor players all suddenly start to giggle. “‘He’s that tall, good-looking one, isn’t he?’ said Angelina.” (*Prisoner of Azkaban* 127). The girls all burst in to giggles if the name of a handsome boy is mentioned. It is not just the young girls who are constantly giggling but also the older ones. “... Mrs Weasley was telling Hermione and Ginny about a Love Potion she’d made as a young girl. All three of them were rather giggly.” (*Prisoner of Azkaban* 56). Even Professor McGonagall a highly skilled witch and the deputy headmistress cannot control her giggling. “... finally kissing Professor McGonagall on the cheek, who, to Harry’s amazement, giggled and blushed, her top hat lop-sided.” (*Philosopher’s Stone* 150).

Rowling is prone to demonstrate her opinion that males and females are not alike. Sentences like this one “Girls were strange sometimes” (*Half-Blood Prince* 293) and “Women, he said wisely to Harry. ‘They’re easily upset.’” (*Half-Blood Prince* 438) are used to demonstrate that the boys do not understand the girls. On Harry’s 17th birthday, Ron gives him a book that explains everything that is to know about girls (*Deathly Hallows* 97). Harry Potter males and females have different interests. When Fred and George Weasley open their joke shop they have special WonderWitch products for women “Near the window was an array of violently pink products around which a cluster of excited girls was giggling enthusiastically.” (*Half-Blood Prince* 117). Among the products are love potions, Daydream Charms, and Ten-Second Pimple Vanisher (*Half-Blood Prince* 117).

Women of all ages are concerned about their appearance and that is largely because of the message from socialization agents around them. Women are taught by the mass media that they have to be beautiful and desirable (Connell 2). There are billboards and magazine covers everywhere sporting beautiful women selling products that promise to better their appearance. One would think that children could

be safe from this stimulus in the books they read. But this is even the case in a children book like Harry Potter. The female characters in Harry Potter are much more concerned with their looks than the males. The Ten-Second Pimple Vanisher the Weasley brothers sell is intended for girls (*Half-Blood Prince* 117). In HPGF a female student of Hogwarts; Eloise Midgen uses a spell to rid her face of acne. She was so desperate to be acne free that she accidentally blew her nose off (*Goblet of Fire* 173). In the books Hermione is not supposed to be beautiful, when she is first introduced she is described in the following way “She had a bossy sort of voice, lots of bushy brown hair and rather large front teeth.” (*Philosopher’s Stone* 79). In the film series Hermione is quite attractive and the actress is not made to look like the book version of Hermione. In HPGF Hermione changes her appearance by getting her teeth shrunk, and gets a complement from Ron “... they’re all ...straight and – and normal sized.” (*Goblet of Fire* 352). At the Yule ball Hermione changes her appearance even more:

It was Hermione. But she didn’t look like Hermione at all. She had done something with her hair; it was no longer bushy, but sleek and shiny, and twisted up into an elegant knot at the back of her head. She was wearing robes made of a floaty, periwinkle-blue material, and she was holding herself differently, somehow – or maybe it was merely the absence of the twenty or so books she usually had slung over her back. She was also smiling – rather nervously, it was true – but the reduction in the size of her front teeth was more noticeable than ever. (*Goblet of Fire* 360)

(*Goblet of Fire* 360). Harry and Ron are not considered very handsome but still they manage to get a date to the Yule ball with the best looking girls of their year (*Goblet of Fire* 358). The message is that girls need a makeover so that they can

become beautiful and therefore desirable but boys do not have to. Even love potions work better if the girl that uses it is more attractive “‘Best range of love potions you’ll find anywhere.’ Ginny raised an eyebrow sceptically. ‘Do they work?’ ‘Certainly they work, for up to twenty-four hours at a time depending on the weight of the boy in question -’ ‘- and the attractiveness of the girl,’ said George.” (*Half-Blood Prince* 117) In HPGF Hermione and Ron have a heated argument about what boys should look for in a girl:

‘... We don’t want to end up with a pair of trolls.’ Hermione let out a splutter of indignation. ‘A pair of ... *what*, excuse me?’ ‘Well – you know’, said Ron, shrugging, ‘I’d rather go alone than with – with Eloise Midgen, say.’ ‘Her acne’s loads better lately – and she’s really nice!’ ‘Her nose is off-centre,’ said Ron. ‘Oh, I see,’ Hermione said, bristling. ‘So basically, you’re going to take the best-looking girl who’ll have you, even if she’s completely horrible?’ ‘Er – yeah, that sounds about right,’ said Ron (*Goblet of Fire* 344)

In HPGF physical appearances of the girls is repeatedly under discussion. When Harry is asked to the Yule ball by a girl that is only one year older than he is she is described as someone who could beat him up if he said no, Ron then mentions that she was quite good-looking but responds by asking him how he would look like during their dance because she was much taller than he (*Goblet of Fire* 339). The message is that there are different standards for males and females and it is not ok for boys to go on date with older girls. Still there are boys in the book that attend the Yule ball with younger females as dates. Ginny Weasley is Neville’s date and Hermione is Viktor Krum’s date, even though he is around eighteen years old and Hermione only fourteen years old.

ii. Strong Males

Boys learn what is considered masculine and what kind of behaviour is considered masculine from traditional views of the society. They adopt that behaviour because they think that is how they should behave (Ingólfur Ásgeir Jóhannesson 62). The male characters in Harry Potter have to be masculine to be popular. They do not giggle, they do not cry. “Hegemonic males do not express fear, cry, giggle, or gossip, and they are not concerned about their appearance. Hegemonic males are good at sports and have access to possessions, money, and prestige.” (Heilman 234) Harry Potter fits exactly into this description. In the books he never cries or giggles. He does not gossip and is not bothered that he wears old clothes from his cousin Dudley and that he has untidy hair. Harry inherits a lot of wizard gold from his parents and a house and a servant from his godfather, he is naturally talented in Quidditch, and he has had prestige since he was a baby. He does not even cry when he watches his godfather being killed in battle, he does feel a great deal of pain but it is never mentioned that he cries (*Order of the Phoenix* 723). When Cedric Diggory is killed in a cemetery in front of Harry in HPGF, Harry does not shed one tear. (*Goblet of Fire* 583). After the students discover that Cedric has been killed only the girls are screaming and sobbing hysterically, it is never mentioned how the boys reacted to the death of their friend and fellow student. It is only after he has been sent to the hospital wing that his emotions are mentioned. “The thing against which he had been fighting on and off ever since he had come out of the maze was threatening to overpower him. He could feel a burning, prickling feeling in the inner corners of his eyes. He blinked and stared up at the ceiling.” (*Goblet of Fire* 620). Harry tries his best not to cry, he does not want to lose his masculine status by crying. “Now the burning feeling was in his throat, too. He wished Ron would look away.” (*Goblet of Fire* 620). Earlier in HPGF

Harry is being interviewed for the Daily Prophet and when his dead parents are mentioned the journalist writes down that he has tears in his eyes, Harry loudly responds that he does NOT have tears in his eyes (*Goblet of Fire* 269).

This is not the case in the Harry Potter movies. There Harry is seen crying several times. GFTM Harry is crying uncontrollably and is beside himself when he returns with Cedric's body while the girls and other fellow students are bewildered and the girls are not as hysterical as in the book (*Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*). In PATM he finds out that it was his godfather Sirius Black that betrayed his parents and he is so shaken by the news that he cries and Hermione comforts him (*Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*).

It is not just Harry who does not show weakness. When George Weasley loses an ear and is gravely injured by dark magic he just makes a joke after gaining consciousness to his twin brother Fred who is shocked and lost for words while their mother is crying uncontrollably (*Deathly Hallows* 67). In HPDH1 this scene is very similar but Mrs Weasley is not crying her eyes out like in the book, but is rather shaken and worried about her son. In HPCS Ginny Weasley is taken into the Chamber of Secrets and no one knows if she is dead or alive, or how to get into the chamber to rescue her. When Ron and Harry return from saving Ginny, Mrs Weasley is devastated and crying like any parent would be in these circumstances (*Chamber of Secrets* 241), still Mr Weasley is only described as being shaken (*Chamber of Secrets* 243).

Through a memory we get to see Harry's deceased father and his friends; Sirius Black, Remus Lupin, and Wormtail. Like Harry they all attended Hogwarts in their youth. James and Sirius are depicted as very carefree, arrogant, misbehaving boys but still popular:

‘Messing up your hair because you think it looks cool to look like you’ve just got off your broomstick, showing off with that stupid Snitch, walking down corridors and hexing anyone who annoys you just because you can – I’m surprised your broomstick can get off the ground with that fat head on it. (*Order of the Phoenix* 571)

They were bullies and bullied Professor Snape who was their fellow student. Harry’s mother tried to help Snape but that did not make any difference. “‘Leave him alone,’ Lily repeated. She was looking at James with every sign of great dislike. ‘What’s he done to you?’ ‘Well,’ said James, appearing to deliberate the point, ‘it’s more the fact that he exists, if you know what I mean ...’” (*Order of the Phoenix* 570). Even though James is clearly not a nice person he still ends up marrying Lily the girl who did not like his antics. The saying “boys will be boys” is clearly appropriate here. Behaving like a fool and not showing respect for others is depicted as somewhat of a normal behaviour for boys, they still get the girl, and they still are successful in life while weaker males like professor Snape end up bitter and are undesirable.

iii. Weak Males

There are several non desirable and non Hegemonic characters in the Harry Potter series. Among those are Gilderoy Lockhart, Professor Flitwick, Professor Snape, and Mr Filch.

Professor Gilderoy Lockhart is the Defence Against the Dark Arts teacher in HPCS. He is described as being a very handsome wizard, with blonde hair, and bright blue eyes (*Chamber of Secrets* 32). He sleeps with rollers in his hair (*Chamber of Secrets* 107), decides to cheer up the students by celebrating Valentine’s Day (*Chamber of Secrets* 176), and dresses in robes in array of different colours not

typically connected with masculinity; like lilac, turquoise, and pink. “Ron pointed to the teachers’ table, apparently too disgusted to speak. Lockhart, wearing lurid pink robes to match the decorations, was waving for silence.” (*Chamber of Secrets* 176)

Lockhart is extremely popular among witches of all ages, but not as much among wizards. Harry and Ron suspect that he is not all that he says he is while the brightest witch of her age Hermione does not agree with them. “‘Rubbish’ said Hermione. ‘You’ve read his books – look at all those amazing things he’s done ...’ ‘He says he’s done,’ Ron muttered.” (*Chamber of Secrets* 80) While she is without a doubt the smartest of them all Hermione has faith in Lockhart and is only able to notice how handsome he is but not his lack of skills. Professor Snape is the opposite of Lockhart. He is not handsome and is a very gifted wizard but was bullied in his youth (*Order of the Phoenix* 570), had a rough childhood (*Deathly Hallows* 535), and is because of that bitter.

The impression is given that men have to be a very specific type to fit in. They have to act and dress in a certain way to fit in. Before the Yule ball Mrs Weasley buys Ron second hand dress robes (*Goblet of Fire* 140). The robes are considered to be dated and so Ron does not want to wear them fearing being ridiculed. “There was just no getting around the fact that his robes looked more like a dress than anything else. In a desperate attempt to make them look more manly, he used a Severing Charm on the ruff and cuffs.” (*Goblet of Fire* 358) It seems for men nothing is worse than being a girl. Ron is shocked when he finds out that Crabbe and Goyle have been transforming into girls in order to guard the corridors for Malfoy “‘He’s got Crabbe and Goyle transforming into girls?’ guffawed Ron. ‘Blimey ... no wonder they don’t look too happy these days ... I’m surprised they don’t tell him to stuff it ...’” (*Half-Blood Prince* 426) The weaker males are often on the verge of tears. In HPSS

Professor Quirrell stammers, he is pale and is frequently described as looking as he is about to cry (*Philosopher's Stone* 180). In HPCS Mr Filch the squib, caretaker at Hogwarts is sobbing and has a blotched tear-stained face (*Chamber of Secrets* 108).

The exception is Professor Flitwick the charms teacher. He is tiny and has a squeaky voice (*Philosopher's Stone* 126). His words and his characteristics are connotative with cultural stereotypes of gay men (Heilman 233). Flitwick decorates his classroom “with shimmering lights that turned out to be real, fluttering fairies.” (*Prisoner of Azkaban* 141), while others drink beer Flitwick drinks cherry syrup and soda with ice and umbrella (*Prisoner of Azkaban* 150). In the Harry Potter novels males establish their masculinity by avoiding behaviours common to female stereotypes (Heilman 234). Those who do not end up being undesirable like the males mentioned.

Notable Characters

i. Hermione Granger

One of the most interesting female characters is Hermione Granger. She is one of the three main characters in the Harry Potter novels and films. For the first three Harry Potter books Hermione seems to be in Rowling's way; she repeatedly puts Hermione on the sideline. For the most part of HPPS she is not their friend and is therefore not a big part of the book aside from being a tiresome character that is always nagging them about their rule breaking “Hermione wasn't going to give up that easily. She followed Ron and through the portrait hole, hissing at them like an angry goose.” (*Philosopher's Stone* 115)

She does not come off as very pleasant, she sniggers and scold the boys for not being ready and for not following rules. A bit of a know-it-all she tells them she has

learnt all the schoolbooks by heart and hopes that it is enough. Research on boys' culture suggests that academic achievement and bookishness are considered feminine (Heilman and Donaldson 148). Hermione is described as a very bookish character. She helps them with their homework (*Philosopher's Stone* 133), corrects the boys' homework before they hand it in (*Philosopher's Stone* 134), and is the one that pushes the boys to start studying for their exams. Even though Hermione is highly intelligent and the best student of her year she is not sorted into Ravenclaw. In HPOP when she is asked why this is she says that the sorting hat considered putting her into Ravenclaw but eventually decided to rather put her in Gryffindor house (*Order of the Phoenix* 353). Clearly bravery is evaluated higher than intelligence.

In HPPS Hermione hides in the girls bathroom crying. When a troll enters the castle Harry and Ron go to warn her. When the troll enters the bathroom Hermione cannot defend herself, even though she has learnt all the spells and books by heart. She shrinks against the wall, looking as she is about to faint (*Philosopher's Stone* 129). Even though knowing half as much as she does the boys still manage to save Hermione. They used their bravery and daring attitude "Harry did something that was both very brave and very stupid" (*Philosopher's Stone* 130). Males in books and other media are often represented exactly in this way. The men are depicted as braver, wiser, more powerful, and more fun than the females portrayed in books and films (Heilman 223). In PSTM this scene is different than in the novel. Hermione has indeed been hiding in one of the girls' bathroom and the boys go to warn her about the troll. But it is how Hermione is portrayed in the movie that is different. In the novel she is petrified with fear and cannot move when Harry tells her to, in the movie she tries to escape from the troll and is able to talk to Harry and Ron. In the novel Ron is able to use the spell against the troll without any help but in the HPPS movie

Hermione talks him through it, showing him the right hand gesture (Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone).

In the final scene of PSTM Hermione, Harry, and Ron go to save the Philosopher's Stone. The stone is guarded by one enchantment from each teacher at Hogwarts. In HPPS book the first spell is a plant recognized by Hermione as a Devil's Snare. She remembers that the plant likes to be damp and cold but is not able to use that information to free Ron and Harry, who are being crushed by the plant. Harry has to tell her to light a fire and when Hermione wonders that there is not any wood to light a fire Ron has to yell at her that she is a witch and that she should be able to light a fire with her wand (*Philosopher's Stone* 202). Again Hermione cannot use her wit when she has to “‘Yeah,’ said Ron, ‘and lucky Harry doesn’t lose his head in a crisis – “there’s no wood”, *honestly.*’” (*Philosopher's Stone* 202). In the PSTM Hermione uses her wit to solve the problem and saves the boys from the Devil's Snare, without their help (Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone). That scene was probably changed because there was a final scene cut from the movie where Hermione uses her logic to get Harry through the last enchantment (*Philosopher's Stone* 207). Before Harry goes to face the danger that lies ahead Hermione dismisses her talent as only books and cleverness and that there are more important things like friendship and bravery; qualities that Harry has (*Philosopher's Stone* 208).

At the final scene in HPPS Harry, Hermione, and Ron are given points for their bravery. Hermione is described as such “Hermione buried her face in her arms; Harry strongly suspected she had burst into tears.” (*Philosopher's Stone* 221) In the movie she is just seen smiling and being proud of herself, just like Harry and Ron (Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone).

It is very common that female characters are at first part of the action but as the story evolves something always happens to them (Heilman 224). In HPCS Hermione is the enabler of Harry's adventures. When they decide to drink Polyjuice potion, a potion that allows the drinker to assume the form of another person, to get information from Draco Malfoy; Hermione is the one that comes up with the idea, she comes up with the solution how to get the materials needed from Professor Snape, and she is the one that makes the juice. Accidentally Hermione turns herself into a cat. She is left behind sobbing while Harry and Ron go and get the information (*Chamber of Secrets* 163). Later in HPCS Hermione is found petrified (turned to stone) after being in the school library. Harry and Ron find a note in her hand where she has written down the solution to the mystery. Hermione remains petrified throughout the book while Ron and Harry go on their adventure (*Chamber of Secrets* 215).

In HPPA Hermione does not have a big role for the most part of the book, but in the end Hermione and Harry are the ones that have the adventure. Because of a Time-turner that professor McGonagall gave her in the beginning of term she and Harry are able to travel a few hours back in time and change the events. Still it is Harry that realizes what they are supposed to do and when he tells Hermione she is described as terrified. She is doubtful that they will make it but Harry with his undying courage tells her that they will have to try (*Prisoner of Azkaban* 290). In the PATM it is Hermione that both figures out what Dumbledore wanted them to do and finds out how to do it. She does not doubt herself and thanks to her they are able to set Sirius Black free and save Buckbeak (*Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*).

In HPDH Hermione is a very motherly figure to the boys. In the days previous to their departure she packed everything they could possibly need into a small beaded handbag (*Deathly Hallows* 135). She watches Harry closely (*Deathly Hallows* 144)

and makes sure they do not need anything (*Deathly Hallows* 145). She is the one that collects fungi for them to eat (*Deathly Hallows* 240) and cooks dinner “Harry caught the fish and I did my best with it! I notice I’m the always the one who ends up sorting out the food; because I’m a *girl*, I suppose!” (*Deathly Hallows* 241). This is not the case in HPDH1; there Hermione is not as motherly on their journey to find Horcruxes and she is not in charge of any domestic work. It is still Harry that is the enabler of adventure (*Deathly Hallows* 190) and he and Ron are protective of Hermione, wanting to leave her out of danger (*Deathly Hallows* 190). That is not the first time the boys are protected of Hermione. In HPHP Malfoy insults Hermione by calling her a Mudblood and only the boys raise wands at him while Hermione stands behind them “Hermione, who was standing slightly behind them, whispered, ‘No, don’t, honestly, it’s not worth it ...’” (*Half-Blood Prince* 110). Even though Hermione is the smartest of the bunch and has repeatedly found out what they are meant to do she is not considered as fit for adventures as the boys.

The HPDH1 and HPDH2 Hermione’s role is much bigger and she is equally brave as the boys. They would never have gotten anywhere without her. As Ron puts it in HPDH1 when Harry asks him to go with him that night and start searching for Horcruxes: “And leave Hermione? You mad? We wouldn’t last two days without her.” (Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 1) In the HPDH1 it is Hermione that tells Harry that snitches have flash memories but in HPDH Harry and Ron already knew that fact and are surprised that she does know so much about Quidditch (*Deathly Hallows* 108). In HPDH1 Hermione also figures that Dumbledore left Harry the sword of Gryffindor to destroy Horcruxes with it, (Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 1) but in the HPDH book version Harry and Hermione figure it out at the same time.

It is evident that Hermione is altered in the Harry Potter movie adaptations. But why is that? Rowling was highly involved in the whole process of adapting the books to the big screen. In an interview, after the release of HPCSTM, Steve Kloves the writer of the screenplay admits that Hermione is his favourite character. He finds her to be a tremendous character, very entertaining, with fierce intellect (Chamber of Secrets Commentary). Because of him Hermione becomes a stronger character and does not rely as much on the boys to save her. At the time of the interview Kloves had already written the script for the movie adaptation of HPPA and Rowling mentions that she is completely happy with it (Chamber of Secrets Commentary). HPPATM is without a doubt the movie where the role of Hermione is changed the most. Since Rowling approved those alterations she could have made Hermione like that from the beginning but she did not do so.

ii. Ginny Weasley

Ginny Weasley is the youngest of the Weasley family and the only girl. Ginny is somewhat of a mute in the first books and films. She is rarely mentioned in the first half of the book series with the exception of HPCS. When she is mentioned it is when she is blushing and awkward in the presence of Harry. When Harry first stays at the Weasley's family house, Ginny is very shy when Harry is around. She peeps at Harry through the door of her room (*Chamber of Secrets* 35); she knocks things over when Harry enters rooms (*Chamber of Secrets* 37); and she squeals and runs away when she sees Harry for the first time in the Weasley home (*Chamber of Secrets* 31). Because of her admiration she completely shuts down. However later in the series she becomes a kind of an opposite of Hermione, Ginny changes and becomes a stereotypical catch. Unlike Hermione she plays Quidditch, she is physically attractive, popular and is rarely weepy; something that Harry appreciates. "She was not tearful; that was one of

the many wonderful things about Ginny, she was rarely weepy. He had sometimes thought that having six brothers must have toughened her up.” (*Deathly Hallows* 99) When Harry is banned from playing Quidditch it is Ginny that replaces him (*Order of the Phoenix* 400). When they were growing up her brothers would never let her play Quidditch with them. From the age of 6 Ginny had to break into the broom shed at the Burrow and practiced on her own (*Order of the Phoenix* 506). Unlike Hermione Ginny is a rule breaker; she brings a Pigmy Puff to Hogwarts (*Half-Blood Prince* 118) even though they may only bring an owl, a toad, or a cat (*Philosopher’s Stone* 53), she hexes a boy at school because he annoyed her (*Half-Blood Prince* 141)

There are still double standards for men and women in our society. Men are rewarded for having high numbers of sexual partners while women are scorned for similar behaviour. This attitude is presented in Harry Potter. Ginny is extremely popular and her brothers are concerned that she is seeing too many boys. Fred and George interrogate her about her love life while she is at their shop “Are you or are you not currently going out with a boy called Dean Thomas?” (*Half-Blood Prince* 117). They also ask her about her previous boyfriend and express their concerns that she is moving through boyfriends a bit fast (*Half-Blood Prince* 118). Ron has shares those worries with his older brothers. When he sees his sister kissing her boyfriend at a deserted corridor at Hogwarts he gives her a piece of his mind. ‘It is none of your business who I go out with or what I do with them, Ron -’ ‘Yeah, it is!’ said Ron, just as angrily. ‘Do you think I want people saying my sister’s a -’ ‘A what?’ shouted Ginny, drawing her wand. ‘A *what*, exactly?’ (*Half-Blood Prince* 268) Harry agrees with her brothers. He thinks she is too popular for her own good (*Half-Blood Prince* 486). Ginny is not the same person in HBPTM. She does play Quidditch with the Gryffindor team, but she is not as headstrong and independent as in the books. She

does not talk back nor is she a rule-breaker. She is obviously into Harry and is somewhat submissive to him. During the Christmas holidays she bends down and ties his shoelaces and she serves him cookies (Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince).

iii. Neville Longbottom

Neville Longbottom is a fellow student of Hogwarts and belongs to the house of Gryffindor. When Neville is introduced in HPPS he comes into Ron's and Harry's train compartment looking tearful because he had lost his toad. Previously in HPPS Hagrid told Harry the following: "I'll get yer animal. Not a toad, toads went outta fashion years ago yeh'd be laughed at..." (*Philosopher's Stone* 62) From the start Rowling shows Neville as an undesirable character. In HPPS he is repeatedly sobbing; at a Quidditch game he sobs into Hagrid's jacket (*Philosopher's Stone* 140), he sobs into his pillow after getting detention (*Philosopher's Stone* 178), and he cannot stand up to bullies (*Philosopher's Stone* 160). He is also weaker than the other boys. After he falls off his broom he is sent with tears in his eyes to the hospital wing, when helping Ron fighting other boys he is the only one knocked out and sent to the hospital wing for an overnight stay. Neville is also good at Herbology which is more of a feminine subject and a subject not many are interested in pursuing more than is required.

In the movie adaptation of HPPS Neville is made up to be some kind of a comic relief. He is the one that is obviously not as resourceful and courageous as the other boys but he is not always tearing up and sobbing as Rowling makes him out to be. At the Quidditch game Neville is shown watching the game just like the other children; not sobbing into Hagrid's jacket; he does not cry when he falls off his broom; and he does not have tears in his eyes when he loses his toad (Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets).

Neville grew up with his grandmother who is not pleased with him. He does not live up to her standards. “He’s a good boy, she said, casting a sternly appraising look down her rather bony nose at Neville, but he hasn’t got his father’s talent, I’m afraid to say.” (*Order of the Phonenix* 454) The misery that Neville experiences is a testament to the consequences of failed masculinity (Heilman and Donaldson 158). Neville slowly becomes braver and because of that his grandmother is more pleased with him. In his 5th year at the age of 15 Neville went with his friends to save Harry’s godfather. Even though Neville almost got killed his grandmother was immensely proud of him “Yes, I thought Gran would be angry about all the publicity, said Neville, ‘but she was really pleased. Says I’m starting to live up to my dad at long last.” (*Half-Blood Prince* 131). Eventually Neville finds his masculinity and bravery and becomes a rebellious leader at Hogwarts.

Conclusion

Although female characters in recent books are not as passive as the female characters in older books and fairytales, they are still not as active and adventurous as the males. Rowling tried to make females more active in Harry Potter but did not succeed. She tried to do so by making one of her main character a female, the deputy headmistress a woman, and had a gender mixed sport. But she failed because the girls share stereotypical traits like giggling, are concerned about their physical appearance, and are gossipy. Rowling also only represented the nuclear family with male breadwinners and stay-at-home mothers.

The difference between the Harry Potter book series and the film series is interesting. Even though the Harry Potter Movies are not perfect regarding how women are portrayed, they do it better than the books. It is especially interesting how Hermione is altered. The scriptwriter made Hermione a braver person that was not as giggly and bossy as she was in the novels. If these changes were approved by Rowling she could have written Hermione in that manner from the start.

Though the Harry Potter books are highly entertaining and humorous they do maintain common stereotypes and opinions that the sexes are different by nature. The books are widely read by children and adults all over the world and so they are an important agent of socialization. They will continue to maintain widely spread stereotypes about the difference of males and females and teach our children how to act according to their gender.

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