The Female Identity in Harry Potter Novels

Tišljar, Sara

Undergraduate thesis / Završni rad

2019

Degree Grantor / Ustanova koja je dodijelila akademski / stručni stupanj: **Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences / Sveučilište Josipa Jurja Strossmayera u Osijeku, Filozofski fakultet**

Permanent link / Trajna poveznica: https://urn.nsk.hr/urn:nbn:hr:142:140310

Rights / Prava: In copyright / Zaštićeno autorskim pravom.

Download date / Datum preuzimanja: **2024-07-18**

FILOZOFSKI FAKULTET
SVEUČILIŠTE JOSIPA JURJA STROSSMAYERA U OSIJEKU

Repository / Repozitorij:

FFOS-repository - Repository of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Osijek

zir.nsk.hr

SVEUČILIŠTE JOSIPA JURJA STROSSMAYERA U OSIJEKU

dabar
DIGITALNI AKADEMSKI ARHIVI I REPOZITORIJI

Sveučilište J.J. Strossmayera u Osijeku

Filozofski fakultet Osijek

Studij: Dvopredmetni sveučilišni preddiplomski studij engleskog jezika i književnosti i mađarskog jezika i književnosti

---

Sara Tišljar

Ženski identitet u romanima o Harryju Potteru

Završni rad

Mentor: doc.dr.sc. Jasna Poljak Rehlicki

Osijek, 2019.

Sveučilište J.J. Strossmayera u Osijeku

Filozofski fakultet Osijek

Odsjek za engleski jezik i književnost

Studij: Dvopredmetni sveučilišni preddiplomski studij engleskog jezika i književnosti i mađarskog jezika i književnosti

---

Sara Tišljar

Ženski identitet u romanima o Harryju Potteru

Završni rad

Znanstveno područje: humanističke znanosti

Znanstveno polje: filologija

Znanstvena grana: anglistika

Mentor: doc.dr.sc. Jasna Poljak Rehlicki

Osijek, 2019.

J.J. Strossmayer University of Osijek

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Study Programme: Double Major BA Study Programme in English Language and Literature and Hungarian Language and Literature

---

Sara Tišljar

The Female Identity in *Harry Potter* Novels

Bachelor's Thesis

Supervisor: Dr. Jasna Poljak Rehlicki, Assistant Professor

Osijek, 2019

J.J. Strossmayer University of Osijek

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Department of English

Study Programme: Double Major BA Study Programme in English Language and Literature and Hungarian Language and Literature

---

Sara Tišljar

The Female Identity in *Harry Potter* Novels

Bachelor's Thesis

Scientific area: humanities

Scientific field: philology

Scientific branch: English studies

Supervisor: Dr. Jasna Poljak Rehlicki, Assistant Professor

Osijek, 2019

IZJAVA

Izjavljujem s punom materijalnom i moralnom odgovornošću da sam ovaj rad samostalno napravio te da u njemu nema kopiranih ili prepisanih dijelova teksta tuđih radova, a da nisu označeni kao citati s napisanim izvorom odakle su preneseni.

Svojim vlastoručnim potpisom potvrđujem da sam suglasan da Filozofski fakultet Osijek trajno pohrani i javno objavi ovaj moj rad u internetskoj bazi završnih i diplomskih radova knjižnice Filozofskog fakulteta Osijek, knjižnice Sveučilišta Josipa Jurja Strossmayera u Osijeku i Nacionalne i sveučilišne knjižnice u Zagrebu.

U Osijeku, datum

5. 9. 2019.

Sara Tišljar

0122223814

ime i prezime studenta, JMBAG

Table of Contents

Abstract……...6

Introduction……....7

1. The Intelligent Women in Harry Potter Novels……...……...8

1.1. Hermione Granger – The Brightest Witch of her Time….……8

2. Bravery……...…13

2.1. Evolution of Hermione Granger from a Scary Proponent of the Rules to Fearless Grown Up Witch.……13

2.2. Brave Women of Weasley Family – Molly and Ginny Weasley……15

Conclusion……...19

Works Cited…….....20

Abstract

The famous author of Harry Potter novels, J. K. Rowling, managed not only to invent an interesting, thrilling, and edifying plot but also to create a whole new magical world of characters that are loved all over the world. These characters are not perfect – they have many flaws and virtues which makes it easier for the reader to identify with them. Throughout the series, these witches, wizards, and muggles are spreading empowering messages of love, strength, and, most importantly, the significance of friendship which leads to tolerance. It can be said that these novels are equally appealing to adults and children regardless of their gender. Taking all of that into consideration, it was important to produce something that also reflects the world we live in. According to Heilman and Donaldson: "In the later books, Rowling depicts women in positions of leadership in which they often control the actions or even the thoughts of male characters, as the very many females develop beyond the stereotypical femininity in which they have previously been cast" (143). This paper will try to suggest that female characters in Harry Potter novels grew stronger, more independent, and were given more attention and influence in each sequel. It will trail the evolution of the main characters Hermione Granger, for whom even Mikulan says that her character develops from novel to novel (290) as well as the women of Weasley family, specifically Molly and Ginny Weasley.

Keywords: Harry Potter, novels, evolution, female characters, identity

Introduction

Harry Potter series is well known all throughout the world. J. K. Rowling is such a remarkable author who managed to create something that is appealing to all generations regardless of their class, race, and gender despite the fact that the main character is a boy named Harry Potter. The novels follow his life from birth, through adolescence to adult age. Although he is in the center of attention, Rowling created other inspiring characters around him that also undergo numerous changes throughout the series be they his friends, family, teachers, or enemies. However, this paper will focus only on a handful of female characters and their identity in Harry Potter novels.

When talking about Harry Potter novels it is important to point out that much has changed since the publication of the first book *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* in 1997. The marketing became different as well as the society, and what at first looked like the world of wizards became the world of wizards and witches.

The paper will be developed into two main parts talking about two main types of traits that can be seen in female characters. Firstly, their intelligence where the focus will be put on the main female character, Hermione Granger, who is the most complex and most developed female character in the series. This chapter will analyze her intelligence and bravery pointing to that fact that Hermione has significantly matured throughout the series. The focus of the second chapter will shift on the analysis of women of the Weasley family. Molly and Ginny Weasley are mother and daughter that also underwent an extensive transformation. They were at first quite a bit in the shadow of their male family members, but later proven themselves as equally brave and important. In conclusion, the Harry Potter series seems to reflect the social changes at the turn of the millennium regarding the position of women who become as significant as their male counterparts.

1. The Intelligent Women in Harry Potter Novels

1.1. Hermione Granger – The Brightest Witch of Her Time

When talking about the female characters in Harry Potter novels one does not start with anyone else rather than the young witch Hermione Granger. She has been one of the rare female protagonists whose character has been slowly developing through the series. According to Dresang, by giving Hermione her name and through personal identification, Rowling intended a much more important role for her and envisioned that her character will grow in power, independence, and confidence with each sequel (226). It can be said that she is the most important and prominent female character who made a world of a difference and without her the course of events would be so much different.

Although she is famous for her various and immense range of skills, she is most known for her intelligence. However, that quality of hers was at first portrayed in a negative way. Namely, at the beginning of the first novel *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* Hermione is characterized as a "know it all." Her first encounter with Harry and Ron was on a train to Hogwarts, when she walked in on Ron practicing magic and gave her iconic introduction:

> "'Are you sure that's a real spell'? said the girl. 'Well, it's not very good, is it'? I've tried a few simple spells just for practice and it's all worked for me. Nobody in my family's magic at all, it was ever such a surprise when I got my letter, but I was ever so pleased, of course, I mean, it's the very best school of witchcraft there is, I've heard -- I've learned all our course books by heart, of course, I just hope it will be enough -- I'm Hermione Granger, by the way, who are you." (*Philosopher's Stone* 65)

After stating this it is no surprise that Harry and Ron were annoyed with her to the extent that Ron did not want to be in the same house with her: "Whatever house I'm in, I hope she's not in it" (*Philosopher's Stone* 66). As Mikulan suggests: "Hermione is unable to suppress her boastful nature whilst on the train to Hogwarts and tells everyone that she has already read numerous books, that she knows everything about a variety of magical beings and that she is intimately acquainted with Harry Potter's history" (290). Another indicator of her seeming conceitedness was her need to intrude on other people in order to correct them or just to show how smart she really is. It is possible to conclude that her muggle background gave her the need to prove,

albeit unintentionally, that she was good enough: “Hermione Granger was on the edge of her seat and looked desperate to start proving that she wasn't a dunderhead” (*Philosopher’s Stone* 85). In her first potions class held by professor Snape she was so eager to answer the question: ”Hermione stood up, her hand stretching toward the dungeon ceiling” (*Philosopher’s Stone* 85) that she even got yelled at: "’Sit down,’ he snapped at Hermione” (*Philosopher’s Stone 85*). Another great example of that kind of behavior can be seen in Professor Flitwick’s Charms class, where they were ready to make object fly for the first time. After Ron had failed to do so Hermione decided to correct him: “’You're saying it wrong,’ Harry heard Hermione snap. ‘It's Wing-gar-dium Levi-osa, make the 'gar' nice and long’” (*Philosopher’s Stone* 105). Despite her excellence, Hermione's intelligence was portrayed in an irritating way.

However, towards the end of the series, the readers witness that her great mind was used for far more important purposes than just charms and spells. Heilman and Donaldson indicate that: “Throughout the series the presence of women develops quantitatively— there are more of them—as well as in terms of their influence—they do more” (143). It cannot be stressed enough that without her Harry and Ron would have died in the first novel. Firstly, she saved them from Devil’s Snare because she knew that the more they strain against it the plant would faster wound around them: “’Lucky you pay attention in Herbology, Hermione’, said Harry” (*Philosopher’s Stone* 170). Secondly, she solved Professor's Snape riddle about deciding which potion to drink. Mikulan confirms that by saying: “Thanks to the many books she has read Hermione often saves the other heroes” (290). In *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets,* she came up with the idea of using the Polyjuice Potion that transforms one into something or somebody else. Her plan was to go to the Slytherin house and find out as much as they can about the chamber of Secrets: “No one would know it was us. Malfoy would probably tell us anything. He’s probably boasting about it in the Slytherin common room right now, if only we could hear him” *(Chamber of Secrets* 159), she said. Harry and Ron successfully transformed into Crabbe and Goyle and went into a new adventure while Hermione had to be left out of this one because she accidentally transformed into a cat: “Her face was covered in black fur. Her eyes had turned yellow and there were long, pointed ears poking through her hair” (*Chamber of Secrets* 225).

The main critique behind all of her skill, knowledge, and intelligence is that they were only used to save two main male protagonists, Harry and Ron. In correspondence to this Heilman and Donaldson highlight: “Hermione’s advanced knowledge of magic shows potential beyond the other students, but she has only exercised her gift to aid Harry’s quests rather than focusing on her own career” (145). Another example of neglecting Hermione can be found in

Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire when Hermione was so passionate about house-elves and Harry and Ron did not give her the same amount of support or help. She was on their side for years and was doing everything in her power to help them, but when it was her time to shine Harry and Ron did not do anything in order to help Hermione in her fight for house-elves, they only paid two Sickles for a S.P.E.W. badge in order to keep her quiet (*Goblet of Fire 155*). Moreover, not only did they not provide any help, they tried to dissuade and discourage her: "Hermione, when are you going to give up on this spew stuff?" (*Goblet of Fire* 208). If Harry were to start that he would probably be considered a hero, and many students would join him in his mission and made a difference. Unfortunately, that was not the case as "Many regarded the whole thing as a joke" (*Goblet of Fire* 156).

If we delve into Harry and Hermione's relationship a bit more it can be seen just how helpful she was. When Harry asked her a favor: "'Hermione, I need to learn how to do a Summoning Charm properly by tomorrow afternoon'" (*Goblet of fire* 224) she agreed to spent the whole night teaching and practicing with him: "He forced down some dinner after Divination, then returned to the empty classroom with Hermione, using the Invisibility Cloak to avoid the teachers. They kept practicing until past midnight" (*Goblet of Fire* 224-225). This selfless action helped Harry to complete the task which later led to the winning of The Triwizard Tournament and surprisingly dealing with Voldemort and escaping from him with the same spell. Heilman and Donaldson criticize that although Hermione is good enough to provide necessary knowledge for Harry, in fact she: "does not compete or face Voldemort herself" (147). They add that: "In the later books, Rowling depicts women in positions of leadership in which they often control the actions or even the thoughts of male characters, as the very many females develop beyond the stereotypical femininity in which they have previously been cast" (143).

In *Harry Potter and The Order of the Phoenix*, Hermione is clearly shown to be emotionally superior to boys. When Harry told her and Ron how Cho Chang cried after he kissed her she had an intelligent, reasonable response, unlike Ron who showed immature, insensible, and frivolous behavior when he said: "You'd think a bit of kissing would cheer her up" (*Order of the Phoenix* 458). Hermione exhibited emotional intelligence that Ron and Harry were not yet capable of having: "she's feeling confused because she liked Cedric and now she likes Harry, and she can't work out who she likes best. Then she'll be feeling guilty, thinking it's an insult to Cedric's memory to be kissing Harry at all, and she'll be worrying about what everyone else might say", (*Order of the Phoenix* 459). In his essay, Mikulan states that: "Although the scene is somewhat comical, it clearly suggests that girls are emotionally more mature than boys…they do not behave irresponsibly and rudely like many boys (men), who

usually face such problems by neglecting them and leaving them unsolved" (295).

In addition, she thinks rationally and logically trying to dissuade Harry from going to ministry in order to save Sirius Black suggesting it could be a trap set by Lord Voldemort. Andrade conveys that Hermione: "evolves into a truthteller, the independent co-leader who does not shirk from speaking out honestly" (8). Moreover, she emphasizes that Hermione evolves into an investigator with a true sense of intuition: "Hermione's deductions are akin to the young girl detective's instant assumptions that are always accurate" (qtd. in Craig and Cadogan 155:9). By now it is well known that her abilities are unrivaled and she even more affirms that when in *Harry Potter and The Half-Blood Prince* she reveals the true identity of the Half-Blood Prince: "I was going through the rest of the old Prophets and there was a tiny announcement about Eileen Prince marrying a man called Tobias Snape, and then later an announcement saying that she'd given birth to a —" (*Half-Blood Prince* 637) which is according to Andrade: "the most compelling mystery in this novel" (9).

Perhaps she plays the most paramount role in the last book *Harry Potter and Deathly Hallows*. Many critics believe that is the time when the greatest role is given to her and when her character is pronounced the most. There are numerous times when she saves the lives of her friends. Firstly, she saved them from Death Eaters on Bill and Fleur's wedding: "all he could feel was Hermione's hand as he was squeezed through space and time, away from the Burrow, away from the descending Death Eaters, away, perhaps, from Voldemort himself. . . ." (*Deathly Hallows* 161). Her skill of thinking ahead was peerless, she charmed a small beaded handbag to become a bottomless one and was prepared for everything: "'Undetectable Extension Charm,' said Hermione. 'Tricky, but I think I've done it okay; anyway, I managed to fit everything we need in here.' She gave the fragile-looking bag a little shake and it echoed like a cargo hold as a number of heavy objects rolled around inside it" (*Deathly Hallows* 162). Secondly, Hermione was the one who thought of putting the protective enchantments all around the tent they were staying in after they fled from the wedding: "'if we're staying, we should put some protective enchantments around the place', she replied, and raising her wand, she began to walk in a wide circle around Harry and Ron, murmuring incantations as she went" (*Deathly Hallows* 272).

Furthermore, pursuant to Heilman and Donaldson: "Hermione's development in *Deathly Hallows* is showcased when for the first time she gives readers a glimpse of personal ambition" (144). That can be seen when she contradicts Scrimgeour by saying that instead of following a career in magical law she is hoping to do some good in the world (*Deathly Hallows* 123-124). Heilman and Donaldson add that: "With this ambition Hermione separates herself

from her partnership with Ron and Harry that has defined her and possibly restricted her for the past six years" (144). The thing that significantly marked the last book was, as Andrade confirms, that: "Hermione appears to be a better co-leader than Ron" (9). Ron abandoned Harry and Hermione in their search for horcruxes and Andrade emphasizes how Hermione shows "greater loyalty to the quest than Ron who leaves Harry mid-way during their sufferings in their escape into the wilderness" (10). She did not hesitate in her pursuance to help Harry get rid of Voldemort once and for all no matter what it takes. According to Andrade, she matures into an "independent young female whose curiosity and intelligence induce her to take action in solving mysteries even when she must break rules, all the while showing confidence and competence" (2).

To conclude, at the beginning of the series Hermione was manifested as an irritating "know it all" because her intellectual superiority and emotional intelligence served only as a support for the two main male protagonists. Nevertheless, as the series was reaching the end Hermione was in charge of implementing indispensable and influential actions, therefore becoming as important and prominent as them.

2. Bravery

2.1. Evolution of Hermione Granger from a Scary Proponent of the Rules to Fearless Warrior Witch

Another main characteristic that Hermione Granger possesses is her bravery, a trait traditionally attributed to male characters. There are numerous examples that reach from little things such as immobilizing a friend in *Harry Potter and Philosopher's Stone* all the way to destroying a horcruxes *in Harry Potter and Deathly Hallows*. Her evolution can best be seen while observing how brave she was throughout the sequences. It seems that the company of Harry and Ron made a real warrior out of a girl that was first portrayed as a "damsel in distress" while being attacked by a troll. It is disappointing that Hermione was portrayed in such a weak and feeble way. While boys bravely faced the troll, Hermione: "was shrinking against the wall opposite, looking as she was about to faint" (*Philosopher's Stone* 196). On their next mission when it was their goal to come to the Philosopher's stone: "Hermione shrieks, screams, and speaks 'nervously,' reactions the boys do not have" (Heilman and Donaldson 146). As they read through the first four books, Heilman and Donaldson conclude that: "it was clear that the Harry Potter books featured females in secondary positions of power and authority and replicated some of the most familiar cultural stereotypes for both males and females" (139).

In later events, however, Hermione not only saves the boys many times, but she also faces a giant, and therefore shows how much she has emboldened. In addition, although she was previously hurt and bothered by a degrading and rude expression mudblood, in last book she changes her perspective on it: "And I'm hunted quite as much as any goblin or elf, Griphook! I'm a Mudblood!' 'Don't call yourself —' Ron muttered. 'Why shouldn't I?' said Hermione. 'Mudblood, and proud of it!'" (*Deathly Hallows* 489), proving that she is brave enough to accept the reality and contend with established norms and false opinions, realizing herself what is right and what is wrong. According to Andrade, as Hermione grows, she develops into an attentive role model of the hero that foresees consequences (4). Despite the fact that she was afraid of breaking the rules at the beginning of her journey, "Hermione was the last person to do anything against the rules" (*Philosopher's Stone* 200), she accepts that some rules have to be broken for a greater good. In accordance with Mayes-Elma: "Hermione with each book breaks the rules ever so slightly more than in book before. She is in no way irresponsible, shall we say, as Harry and Ron in rule breaking, yet she still seems to grapple with rules and which rules can afford to be broken and which rules cannot" (90).

A great example of that kind of behavior occurs in *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* when she decides to save Buckbeak and Sirius Black from guaranteed death. Mayes-Elma adds how that is the case when rules breaking becomes a moral issue (Mayes-Elma 90). In later books, she becomes a powerful fighter and participates in real battels where her knowledge about charms and spells becomes practical rather than only theoretical and she presents a tremendous amount of valor. Andrade claims that: "Hermione's new role as the intrepid fighter in the battle for justice proves she has far outgrown any girlish terror" (8). By actively participating in battles against death eaters and in a battle for Hogwarts where she heroically destroys a horcrux in *Chamber of Secrets*. Perhaps the most heroic thing that Hermione does occurs at the beginning of the last novel when she obliviates her parents' memory. Even though fighting against dark forces is horrifying, it takes a greater amount of courage to leave your parents behind for their own good. She was the one who was carrying all responsibility on her back, and she had to be strong and brave for her parents' good: "I've also modified my parents' memories so that they're convinced they're really called Wendell and Monica Wilkins, and that their life's ambition is to move to Australia, which they have now done. That's to make it more difficult for Voldemort to track them down" (*Deathly Hallows* 96-97).

All in all, although at the beginning of the sequence Hermione was portrayed as a "damsel in distress", later she showed admirable mental and physical courage. Moreover, her actions were again crucial for the benefit of her male associates, as well as family and other companions.

2.2. Brave Women of the Weasley Family – Ginny and Molly Weasley

Hermione is not the only inspiring female character in the series. The Weasley women, too, are remarkably brave and inspirational. One of the main reasons why the Weasley's are such an extraordinary family is Molly Weasley, a strong witch who offered a great example for her family, and especially for her daughter Ginny. Despite assumptions about their age, size, and strength, they proved to be outstanding witches. Even though started out as sporadic characters, Ginny being just Ron's little sister, and Molly Weasley a domestic motherly figure, later they acquired much-deserved respect and recognition. After careful analysis of their actions and progression, it can be said that they were the ones with a steady hand on the tiller all along.

Ginny Weasley has been showing bravery ever since she was a little girl. While she was escorting her brothers to Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone,* she expressed her wish for going there: "Mom, can't I go..." (*Philosopher's Stone* 56). Not many girls of her age would do the same in that situation. Her role became somewhat greater in *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* when she is just like Hermione in the first novel a "damsel in distress." Heilman and Donaldson criticize that she is weak enough to be fully possessed and used by the evil Lord to open a chamber of secrets adding that early in the series Ginny is the archetypal girl that is presented to be weak and passive, unlike her male friends. (153-154). Ginny's role and character became unrecognizable as the novels were reaching the end. Especially in the *Order of the Phoenix*, when, in addition to her, "a startling number of new female characters are introduced and others are newly developed" (Heilman, Donaldson 142). Ginny's character is the one that becomes newly developed, she becomes almost unrecognizable. Firstly, she opposed to all grown-up members of order of the Phoenix: "'Fine! Ginny — BED!' Ginny did not go quietly. They could hear her raging and storming at her mother all the way up the stairs, and when she reached the hall Mrs. Black's earsplitting shrieks were added to the din" (*Order of the Phoenix* 91). Ginny did not want to be left out of such an important matter, no matter what her age was, and she was not afraid to show it. It can be said that in the same novel it is not only her temper that comes to light but also her rebellious side.

Secondly, she became Gryffindor's new seeker, and everybody was wondering how was that possible. Hermione informed that Ginny was so good at Quidditch because: "'She's been breaking into your broom shed in the garden since the age of six and taking each of your brooms

out in turn when you weren't looking…" (*Order of the Phoenix* 574). Moreover, she is brave enough to join Dumbledore's army and she even named it: "'Yeah, the D.A.'s good,' said Ginny. 'Only let's make it stand for Dumbledore's Army because that's the Ministry's worst fear, isn't it?'" (*Order of Phoenix* 392). As Kornfeld and Prothro contend, she emerges as a strong, independent popular girl, quite capable of acting on her own, even spearheading the secret resistance to Voldemort" (132).

Furthermore, Ginny's mother Molly Weasley is the most important motherly figure in the novels who by the end of the series assumes a crucial role. While raising seven children she manages not only to keep everything under control, but also to stay extraordinary in everything she does regarding the fact that the Weasleys are extremely poor, which makes all of this even more admirable. According to Kornfeld and Prothro, Molly Weasley: "keeps her family and house in order through cute and funny magical means" (122). She thoroughly takes care about everyone and anything with kindness and care, but she is also able to be strict when there is the need for that and she can dress them down in front of everyone, all for their own good: "Beds empty! No note! Car gone – could have crashed – out of my mind with worry – did you care? – never, as long as I've lived – you wait until your father gets home, we never had trouble like this from Bill or Charlie or Percy" (*The Chamber of Secrets* 33). Finally, she was like a real mother to Harry Potter as she took care of him and nurtures him all along.

However, in *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix,* Molly grows out of her role of just a caring mother and a competent housekeeper. The readers learn that Mrs. Weasley is a member of the Order of the Phoenix, a secret society that fights against Voldemort, which makes her a political character (Heilman, Donaldson 143). Even greater transformation occurs in *The Deathly Hallows* when she fights the principle female villain – Bellatrix Lestrange: "initially a narrowly written, exclusively domestically minded, worrying mother, seems transformed in the final battle of *Deathly Hallows*. She sheds the apron and oven mitts for a fierce and aggressive tone as she engages Bellatrix Lestrange in a duel" (Heilman and Donaldson 143). Heilman and Donaldson add that Molly underwent an enormous change of character and that: "Rowling's most matriarchal character finally leaves 'The Burrow' and involves herself first-hand in violent conflict with the Death Eaters" (143). To everyone's surprise, Moly transformed into a different kind of hero as she demonstrated that she is ready to do everything for her family: "Harry watched with terror and elation as Molly Weasley's wand slashed and twirled, and Bellatrix Lestrange's smile faltered and became a snarl. Jets of light flew from both wands, the floor around witches' feet became hot and cracked; both women were fighting to kill" (*The Deathly*

Hallows 736). With a valid reason, Molly can be considered one of the bravest women in the novels that would do anything for her children.

Conclusion

The focus of this essay was to follow the life and progress of Hermione Granger and women of the Weasley family, attesting that these female characters in the Harry Potter series became more prominent with each sequel. One can assume that this progression mirrored gender advances in terms of more power, opportunities, and rights for women at the turn of the millennium.

Although Hermione's virtues were initially portrayed as undesirable, if not outright annoying, later they became more appreciated apace with social changes in the real world. In addition, she grew into one of the most significant characters in the novels. Her incredible intelligence proved to be indispensable in many of the adventures throughout the series as she was the one who often saved the day, and without her, the course of events would be much different. Faced with many adversities, she always found a way out on her own and was always ready to help her friends without getting anything in return. Moreover, many instances support the idea that she become braver by facing her fears, accepting her heritage, and risking her life for a greater good.

In addition, once an innocent side character, Ginny Weasley transforms into a rebellious heroine demonstrating profound skills. Albeit starting as a vulnerable character she matures on many levels as she is ready to oppose others and stand for her beliefs. Her mother, Molly Weasley, is also an exceptional example of transformation. At first portrayed as an archetypal motherly figure, her instinct become crucial in the battle against the evil. Worry for her family never faded, and although initially surrounded by male characters who received more attention, she managed to stand out and to leave a mention-worthy impact.

Finally, one can conclude that female characters, portrayed in Harry Potter novels, exhibited considerable progress throughout the series. They come to be more independent and emerged as influential and worthy of recognition.

Works cited

Andrade, Glenna M. "Hermione Granger as Young Girl Sleuth in the Harry Potter Series." *Critical Readings of Nancy Drew and Other Girl Sleuths*, edited by Michael Cornelius, Roger Williams University, 2008. pp. 2-10.

Dresang, Eliza T. "Hermione Granger and the Heritage of Gender." *The Ivory Tower and Harry Potter: Perspectives on a Literary Phenomenon*, edited by Whited, Lana A., University of Missouri Press, 2002. pp. 226.

Heilman, Elizabeth E. and Trevor Donaldson. "From Sexist to (Sort-of) Feminist: Representations of Gender in the Harry Potter Series." *Critical Perspectives on Harry Potter*, edited by Elizabeth E. Heilman, Routledge, 2009. pp. 139-159.

Kornfeld, John and Laurie Prothro. "Comedy, Quest, and Community: Home and Family in Harry Potter." *Critical Perspectives on Harry Potter*, edited Elizabeth E. Heilman, Routledge, 2009. pp. 122-132

Mayes-Elma, Ruthann. *Females and Harry Potter: Not All That Empowering*. Rowman and Littlefield, 2006.

Mikulan, Krunoslav. "Harry Potter through the Focus of Feminist Literary Theory: Examples of (Un)Founded Criticism." *The Journal of International Social Research*, edited by Mehmet, Erler. vol. 2, no. 9. Usad Publishing, 2009. pp. 290-295.

Rowling, J. K. *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*. Bloomsbury, 1997.

Rowling, J. K. *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*. Bloomsbury, 1998.

Rowling, J. K. *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*. Bloomsbury, 2000.

Rowling, J. K. *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*. Bloomsbury, 2003.

Rowling, J. K. *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*. Bloomsbury, 2005.

Rowling, J. K. *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*. Bloomsbury, 2007.