**Harry Potter and the Portrayal of Women**

Harry Potter is a pop culture phenomenon that has swept our society for over a decade, consuming fans with excitement every time a new book or movie is released. The Harry Potter series has created a billion dollar industry that has made its author, JK Rowling, one of the richest people in the world. (Forbes) The fantasy world of witches and wizards has become a popular discussion and is being replicated, at least in part, in our own reality.

Harry Potter has piqued children’s interest in reading and enraptured the minds of both children and adults. Readers become lost in the stories and find themselves siding with their favorite characters, talking about them as though they are friends they have known for years.

As readers get swept up in the literature, many questions about its contents have risen. How will the portrayals of women in the books affect readers? Are the portrayals a fair assessment of reality? How do the views children learn from reading books help them develop their ideas of the world?

The purpose of this research is to address the portrayals of women in the series through an analysis of the seventh and final book in the series, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*. Focusing on power, sexuality, and motherhood, this study will look at how women are portrayed and whether the primary portrayal of women in the series is positive or negative.

**Literature Review**

The Harry Potter series has been a popular topic of research for years because there are so many aspects that can be examined through varying views such as feminism and social issues that are addressed. (Heilman, 2003; Fry, 2001; Croft, 2009) The current study specifically focuses on three areas of research – power, sexuality and motherhood. Through these viewpoints and the lens of framing analysis, the study hopes to answer questions about gender equality in the Harry Potter series. Most research in this area can be divided into three areas – children’s literature, gender and social commentaries.

**Theoretical Framework**

Framing explains how society uses the media we consume to create shortcuts about how society forms an understanding about the world. We use stereotypes to symbolize different people and situations, often as a substitute for creating a background story for each character. Some of the stereotypes used in the Harry Potter series include the good girl, the sexual object, the mother figure and the stern woman of power. Entmann (2004) defines framing as “selecting and highlighting some facets of events or issues and making connections among them so as to promote a particular interpretation, evaluation, and/or solution.” (p. 5)

In his work on framing Scheufele (1999) explains that “research on framing is characterized by theoretical and empirical vagueness. This is due, in part, to the lack of a commonly shared theoretical model underlying framing research.” (p. 103). Views on the world are framed by limited points of view, and this is what shapes common opinions and portrayals of the world.

Tuchman describes framing theory using an analogy to a window, remarking that “the view through a window depends upon whether the window is large or small, has many panes or a few, whether the glass is opaque or clear, whether the window faces a street or a backyard.” (p. 1). Our perspective is limited only by our personal experiences and ideas of the world that have been personally formed. Each individual may have a completely different opinion of or reaction to a portrayal of a character or event.

Framing theory is an effective way to study Harry Potter because each character is written into his or her position in the story. This study will examine power, sexuality, and motherhood and framing contributes to who will fall into these categories and how they address these issues. In the beginning of the series Hermione Granger is framed as the studious girl who always follows the rules, but as she grows to fill the role of the protector, helping her friends out of tough situations and taking care of them when they are injured or ill, her frame changes.

In his study on the success of Harry Potter, Tucker (1999) explains how framing is used to create characters. He concludes that “characters are on the whole two-dimensional, picked out by particular physical features plus one overriding personality trait.” (p. 228) By using framing like this, Rowling has found an easy shortcut for character descriptions based on how certain people should act in society.

Many others (Burcar, 2004; Damour, 2003; Croft, 2009) have studied Harry Potter through the lens of feminist theory, but the shortcoming of this approach is the built in bias of the analysis. Yeo (2004) discusses that a feminist reading of the books is appropriate, considering the widespread appeal and influence the books have had. A feminist analysis would look at the portrayal of women in non-traditional roles. Through the lens of framing, it is possible to look at the roles that have been applied, rather than just looking for the non-traditional roles that are used. It is important to look at the issue from more than one angle, to create a fair assessment of the literature.

**Children’s Literature**

Harry Potter is, first and foremost, children’s literature. While many of the readers are adults that have found refuge in a simpler fantasy world, the target audience has always been children. Because children use information gathered from the media to form their ideas on the world, it is important to look at how gender roles are portrayed in popular children’s literature.

In her study on children’s literature, Merisou-Storm (2006) looks at the reading habits of children and finds they use the media around them to shape their opinions of the world. She argues that it is important to find stories children want to read instead of forcing them. Children are more apt to read a story that is part of a series because they can predict the plot and follow it more easily. Children are drawn to a story that they can lose themselves in and become a part of. This ability to be absorbed into the fantasy is one of the things that so strongly attract children to Harry Potter.

Damour (2003) finds, in a study on children’s attraction to the Harry Potter series, that children are so drawn to the series because it touches on situations and feelings they can relate to. The characters in the story are experiencing the same problems as their readers as they grow up. Children can associate their feelings with what the characters are going through and learn about themselves from the character’s experiences. By forming a connection with the characters, children can both find and lose themselves in the story.

In her study on narrative storytelling, Green (2007) agrees with Damour and discusses her own I-SELF theory, stating that there is an essence of transportation when the readers see themselves as part of the story. Readers can become immersed in the narrative world and it can loosen the boundaries of self and allow them to see the world from the view of the author. With the I-SELF theory, the reader is given an opportunity to escape the reality of their own world and enter a world of fantasy where there are fewer problems and life may seem easier.

**Gender**

Even though the Harry Potter series has a male role, females are prevalent throughout the story in many different roles, such as the student, mother, sister, or friend. Traditionally, there is an absence of strong female roles in fairy tales and literature. Heilman (2003) in her study on Harry Potter discusses that, as a girl, she had a hard time finding females to relate to because the stories are dominated by male characters. She argues, “Males are represented more often, but they are depicted as wiser, braver, more powerful, and more fun than the females.” (p. 223)

In *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, Hermione Granger is portrayed in many ways. In her study on sexuality in Harry Potter, Cherland (2008) says “we see Hermione the giggler, Hermione the helpful and capable, Hermione the emotionally expressive, and Hermione the clever.” (p.278) She may not fight in the same ways as the boys, but her other characteristics make her a strong, powerful female.

Fry (2001) agrees with Cherland in that female characters, primarily Hermione Granger, have essential roles in the series. While Hermione does not usually cast spells or necessarily fight as strongly as the boys; her strength comes from a different source - her intellect and logic. This is also reflected in Burcar’s (2004) study on the Harry Potter books. She adds that Hermione’s knowledge is constantly mocked and viewed as insignificant, even though she is possibly the brightest witch of her year. Hermione spends countless hours in the library, studying the theory of spells and potions, but rarely puts it to practice other than to help Harry and Ron.

In a study comparing Hermione Granger to Mary Lennox, a character from *The Secret Garden*, Friedst (2005) defends Hermione’s equality to male characters. Friedst agrees that Hermione may not be as physically aggressive as male characters, but she uses her keen logic to show her strength and capability. “Much of Hermione’s strength lies in her ability to learn. Hermione also manages to put her learning into practice. This enables her to help Harry and Ron who consistently find themselves in trouble.” (p. 5-6)

The issue of sexuality in Harry Potter is addressed by Cherland (2008) in a study on the portrayal of women. She talks about how veelas are used as beings that invoke a feeling of desire in men. In the story, veelas are magical beings similar to the mythical sirens and attract the attention of men sexually. They are human characters with extraordinary magical abilities including the persuasion and deception of men. She says “it is all too easy for young female readers to insert themselves into this story line, to ‘take up’ the subject position of the beautiful, sexual being with power over men.” (p. 276) The male characters show their attraction for Fleur Delacour, a girl whose grandmother was a veela, passing her beauty and ability to captivated men to her predecessors. The boys are often scolded by female characters for stopping to stare or losing their train of thought when Fleur enters the room.

Despite the controversy of how women are portrayed, there are some areas in which women are displayed as equal to men. Croft’s (2009) study on females in Harry Potter agrees, contending that, in many aspects, a level playing field is created for both male and female characters in the story. Both boys and girls in the wizarding world have the same opportunity to learn and become powerful witches and wizards. They can enter the same jobs after graduation and magic is not limited to males or females, but all those who have the power and choose to learn how to use it.

**Social Commentaries**

The way women are portrayed is often a commentary on how they are viewed in society. If women are portrayed in literature as capable of less than men, whether scholastically or physically, it reflects how they are viewed in society.

Fantasy literature is a reflection of how our society sees itself. Through that, we see an image of the world of which we wish to be a part; something happier or more enjoyable. Authors, like Rowling, write about a world full of new and exciting challenges that would not be faced in our world, but can arise in an almost parallel reality. Tucker (1999) discusses the draw that Harry Potter has on its readers. It is, in some aspects, a better world. It is a place where “contemporary social issues do not exist. Harry’s fellow pupils live in a world where drugs, alcohol, divorce or sexual activity of any kind is simply not a problem. The image of our suburban world is shown to us in an exaggerated way, reflecting the way that we may view ourselves.” (p. 221)

In a study on responses to Harry Potter, Cockrell (2006) discusses how opponents argue Harry Potter is trying to use its lure to pull children toward the evil and occult. Through the shadow of reality, the unreality of Harry Potter has become a concern for those with this belief. We grow comfortable in the knowledge that what we see is real and that the familiar, while it may be a shadow of true reality, is safe and normal. Critics have questioned this blind faith in our concepts of reality in these stories, some even going to the extent to say that Harry Potter is teaching children that witchcraft is acceptable. Cockrell says that opponents contend “if art may make the unreal real, it may also disguise the real as fiction, and teach witchcraft in the guise of fantasy.” (p. 28)

As scholars, there are large inconsistencies in our understanding. Because Harry Potter is a reflection of our reality, any literature we would study on it would be a reflection of that view on reality and would show exaggerations of how things really are. We can use it to gain insight, but this information is still only secondhand to the true information that is being studied and only through our own experiences can we find real answers on these topics. Further research should be done because there is still little research on the last half of the series and the implications of the portrayals therein. Each person adds to the discussion, but no one has the same answer because everyone brings a different view.

By analyzing the seventh book in the series, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, this study hopes to provide insight on whether or not women are portrayed in a positive light in the Harry Potter series. This book was chosen because it contains the highest concentration of characters and will allow for a more widespread view of the women in the series instead of examining an earlier book with fewer contrasting characters.

Using only the last book in the series provides the opportunity to look deeply at the text and decipher the symbolism and consider the situation before making a conclusion about what the possible meanings could be. Also, many of the studies performed on this topic focus on the first three books in the series, which provides a more narrow perspective because many of the female characters grow up during the series and become different people than they were in the first books.

**Research Question and Hypotheses**

Based on previous research, this study will provide insight into the question of how women are portrayed in the Harry Potter series. The hypothesis of this paper is that women are treated differently than men in the book, but not necessarily as unequal. Previous research shows that there is still debate on sexual equality and offers ideas from both sides of the argument. While males and females are approached in different ways, they both have their strengths and weaknesses and may approach situations in different ways.

**Method**

This study used rhetorical analysis to examine *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* to determine the portrayal of women in the series and whether or not they have been cast in a positive light.

According to Berger (2000) in a rhetorical analysis, the reader must ask questions about the validity of this writer’s point of view. What makes them credible? Does the author work to put the reader in a certain frame of mind about the character or story? What does this story make the reader feel about the characters and the images they portray? What arguments are made for or against the images portrayed in the series? After reading the passages in the books, the answers to these questions will be sorted into the three groups; power, sexuality and motherhood, each including two subgroups to reflect both positive and negative aspects.

**Defining Concepts**

The following concepts were used in the analysis of the text. They helped to guide the research and allow for a thorough analysis of how women are portrayed in the series.

***Power***

Based on the definition set forth by Fristedt (2005) *high* *power* is “having control over others and someone who is firm in wit and purpose.” (p. 2) Someone who is independent is not subject to the authority or control of a male character and is free to act as she pleases. *Low power*would be exhibited by a character that cowers in fear because a situation is overwhelming or she is not able to perform a task or is ordered around by male characters. She could also find herself defenseless in a crisis situation.

Fry (2001) discusses that stories tend to stereotype females as either the powerful evil stepmother or the damsel in distress, waiting to be rescued. This analysis is a look at the difference between high and low power in both the Harry Potter series and children’s literature, also realizing the issue of a *moderate* view of women in which they are shown as equal to the male characters in the story. This study focuses on high and low power because time is limited to one semester and more time is needed to include an analysis of moderate power.

***Sexuality***

This study will also focus on the *demonstration of sexuality* by female characters. If a character is sexual without acting in a way to draw sexual attention to her, but is not being viewed as a sex symbol, it will be considered a *positive sexual portrayal*. However, if a character uses her sexuality to get her way or is viewed as a sexual symbol because of attention she draws to herself as a way of persuasion; it would be considered a *negative sexual portrayal*.

The definition of the demonstration of sexuality is partially based on Cherland’s (2008) study. Cherland talks about a discourse of rationality in relation to male’s reactions to females in the story. *Negative sexual portrayals* are characterized by the males becoming irrational in the presence of women and becoming helpless in their presence, such as when they encounter a veela. “Rowling uses a certain discourse (a familiar pattern of language) to create gender as a set of two opposite categories and to support a common-sense view of how the two genders interact and relate to each other.” (p. 275-276)

***Motherhood***

This study examined the views of *motherhood* in the story. There are several mothers throughout and each is shown a little differently. Heilman (2003) says that “in spite of their efforts to be beautiful and accepted, females in the series are often treated with secondary status in familial and romantic relationships.” (p. 230) Even though mothers support their families and work hard to make sure their needs are met, “both nuclear families, the Weasleys and the Dursleys, have stay-at-home mothers and employed, head-of-the-household fathers.” (p. 230) A *positive portrayal* of motherhood is represented as a woman who cares for her children and can run a household without falling into panic. She is assertive and in control of the situation in equal or higher proportion to the father. A *negative portrayal* of motherhood would be a mother who sits and worries about a situation but cannot do anything about it because of fear or another hindrance. It shows a mother as a woman who has to wait and take cues from the man of the house before making a decision.

**Results**

The results of this study found that the women in Harry Potter were treated as equals to men in most instances, but have different strengths than other characters. While male characters are often at their best in the heat of battle, female characters often use their wit and logic to get out of dangerous situations and protect those they care about. Female characters also support the male characters and fight alongside them when everyone is needed to defeat the evil of their nemesis, Lord Voldemort.

The issues of power, sexuality, and motherhood are throughout *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*. They permeate the characters and help to progress the storyline and develop personalities for the characters themselves. Because of how these issues are portrayed, the reader can develop a quick shortcut into the background of the character and how they can be predicted to react in situations. The portrayals of the characters also help to create a fluid continuity throughout the series, though many of the characters change as they grow up and mature. In this book, the characters have grown to adulthood and face their challenges with the knowledge they have gained through their experiences at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry.

**Power**

The issue of power is in the forefront of the entire series. You have the main character, Harry, fighting against the antagonist, Lord Voldemort. Both of these characters are male, but they also rely on female characters to achieve their goals. Two of the primary female characters, Hermione Granger and Ginny Weasley, display the contrasting ways in which females are portrayed in the series. While both characters have moments of weakness, they also show great moments of strength.

***High Power***

Hermione Granger is the main female character and is a best friend of Harry Potter. Throughout the series and this book, she uses her logic to solve puzzles and get them out of dangerous situations. In Deathly Hallows, Granger is called on many times to protect Ron, Harry and she as they travel trying to defeat the forces of Lord Voldemort. In these situations, she draws upon her years of study at Hogwarts and the theory she learned in both class and library books.

Ginny Weasley is also a primary female character and she truly comes into her own in this book. In earlier books, she was shown as the younger sister of Ron, but as she grew and blossomed through the series, she became an intensely strong and willful woman who challenges authority and sets herself apart from other students in the school. She does not turn down the chance to rise against those who she sees as a threat to peaceful wizarding order and works to bring down Lord Voldemort and his followers.

Ginny works with other students to devise plans to stop the rise of Lord Voldemort. She is an example of a powerful female character because she carries on the revolt against the changes by dark wizards who have taken over Hogwarts. It is the strong will of Ginny that makes her a strong leader in the group of students who are left at Hogwarts.

She and a couple of friends got into Snape’s office and smashed open the glass case where he was apparently keeping the sword. Snape caught them as they were trying to smuggle it down the staircase. (p. 297)

When they planned to go into Professor Snape’s office and steal the sword of Gryffindor because it was left to Harry and was not given to him by the Minister of Magic, they knew that they risked being caught and severely punished, but they disregarded this and pushed on with their plan. Ginny’s strong will leads her to disregard the consequences of her actions because she feels what she is doing is for the greater good.

Hermione does show her strength, though it may not be leading her friends into battle. When she, Ron, and Harry are traveling the countryside in pursuit of clues that can help them defeat Voldemort, she casts protective and healing spells so they can continue their mission. Also, when they are preparing to leave the Burrow, she packs a bag that holds an enchantment allowing her to fill it with much more than it appears to hold so that they will be prepared to leave at any moment and be able to carry on safely and have resources at their disposal such as potions and reference books.

***Low Power***

The contrast between the portrayals of Hermione and Ginny is shown throughout Deathly Hallows. There are several instances in which Hermione is pushed aside at the beginning of a battle, only to emerge at the end to tie up the loose ends that are left by the male characters. This is exhibited when the trio find themselves on a Muggle, non-wizarding, street after they escape from the attack at the Burrow, the home of the Weasleys.

The two workmen made identical movements, and Harry mirrored them without conscious thought: All three of them drew their wands. Ron, a few seconds late in realizing what was going on, lunged across the table, pushing Hermione sideways onto her bench. (p. 165)

This is not the only instance of Hermione being pushed out of the way of danger in a battle. In the final fight against Lord Voldemort and his followers, Ron and Harry pull Hermione out of the way and fight the battle while protecting her. (p. 638) By doing this, they are somehow saying that Hermione is incapable of defending herself and that she cannot practice the same strong magic as the males.

**Sexuality**

The issue of sexuality presents itself in the later books, including *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*. Rowling introduces a love story into the already established plotline of fighting Lord Voldemort and thus creates tension between several sets of characters. Ron and Hermione have shown attraction toward each other for several books and so have Harry and Ginny.

***Negative sexuality***

Starting in Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire, veelas are shown as sexual beings that are able to distract men simply by being present. They are similar to the mythical sirens whose song often led sailors to their demise. Fleur Delacor is part veela and because of this she attracts the sexual attention of men. At the wedding of Fleur to Bill Weasley, the Weasley twins, Fred and George, show their attraction to Fleur’s relatives as they seat the guests. “‘Excellent, I think I see a few veela cousins,’ said George, craning his neck for a better look. ‘They’ll need help understanding our English customs.’” (p. 138) The twins disregard the other guests and go directly to the Delacour relatives, obviously showing a strong attraction to them. This is an example of a negative portrayal of women because they are shown as purely sexualized beings and objectified.

***Positive sexuality***

Sexuality also gives Harry a reason to stay strong and fight because he has something to fight for. As Ginny grows up in the series, Harry sees her as more than his best friend’s little sister, he sees her as a beautiful woman and develops a romantic interest in her. He tries to end his relationship with her before going on his journey to defeat Lord Voldemort, but finds it difficult to do when he is in her presence. He cares so deeply for Ginny that he cannot bear to hurt her when he leaves.

As they stand in the garden outside the Burrow, he notices her beauty. “She was looking at him steadily; he, however, found it difficult to look back at her; it was like gazing into a bright light.” (p.115) He knows at that point he does not only want to be with her, but spend his life with her. It is this attraction to her that makes it so difficult to leave, but he knows that if they are to ever have a chance at a life together, he must go and fight the forces of Lord Voldemort.

**Motherhood**

Motherhood is something that other researchers have overlooked in the series, but it has been an underlying theme from the beginning. Harry’s own mother died trying to save him from Lord Voldemort and he is given to his aunt who raises him, but does not treat him as her own. Harry then finds a sort of second mother in Molly Weasley, who takes care of Harry and protects him like he is her own child, feeding him when he is hungry and trying to protect him from all danger.

***Positive Motherhood***

Motherhood is an issue that is presented in the Harry Potter series and often looked over by other research. Harry’s own mother was killed in an attempt to save him when he was a baby. Readers find that her sacrifice left a mark on him that protects him from the evil of Lord Voldemort and separates them. The protection of his mother can only leave him when he becomes an adult and no longer calls his aunt and uncle’s house home. This clearly demonstrates a positive portrayal of motherhood that even though his mother is no longer alive, he can find her protection and strength within himself.

Molly Weasley becomes a mother to Harry and treats him as one of his own. She wishes to protect him from any harm that may come of him. As he, Ron, and Hermione prepare to leave the Burrow, Molly keeps trying to delay their departure.

‘I think Mum thinks if she can stop the three of you getting together and planning, she’ll be able to delay you leaving,’ Ginny told Harry in an undertone, as they laid the table for dinner on the third night of his stay. (p. 89)

As many mothers, Molly wants to keep her children safe and watch them grow up to be strong adults. In the main fight scene at the end of the book, she takes her life into her hands as she fights to defend her daughter from Bellatrix Lestrange, a Death Eater. She pushes Ginny out of the way and proclaims “NOT MY DAUGHTER YOU BITCH!” She has already seen one of her children hurt at the hands of a Death Eater and another killed. She does not wish to see another of her children harmed.

***Negative Motherhood***

In contrast, when Draco Malfoy, one of the dark characters in the series, is given his mission by Lord Voldemort, his mother, Narcissa Malfoy sits frozen in fear, unable to do anything but worry about what will become of her son.

The hilarity mounted; Draco Malfoy looked in terror at is father, who was staring down into his own lap, then caught his mother’s eye. She shook her head almost imperceptibly, then resumed her own deadpan stare at the opposite wall. (p. 10)

Narcissa is so afraid of what will happen to her son that she is unable to react to the situation. She cannot do anything but sit and hope that the will be ok and his mission will not lead him to his death. She would fight to save her son if he was in danger, but Lord Voldemort is so much stronger than her and possesses such greater magic that she dare not argue with him.

**Conclusion and Implications**

This study examined the equality and portrayal of females in the Harry Potter Series, focusing on women in *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*. It is important to look at how women are portrayed in literature because children use images in the media to form their own opinions of the world. This is done through framing, a process whereby people are categorized into groups so they may be quickly and easily understood. The stereotypes created by framing have become a way for writers to easily identify the personality of characters and also a way for readers to apply these ideas to people in reality.

How are women portrayed in the Harry Potter series? Women are shown in many different lights throughout *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*. They can be shown as strong and able to take initiative to handle a tough situation, or they can be shown as someone who should be protected and allow men to fight the dangerous battles. They can be shown as sexual objects to be lusted after, or a force to join and rise against adversity with. Women are the protectors and fighters, leaders and followers throughout the series.

The findings of this study disagree with Tucker (1999) and his claim that in the world of Harry Potter sexuality is not a problem. This may be true for the earlier books on which he bases his research, but in the later books in the series, sexuality plays a role in the storyline. Few stories do not have a romantic subplot, and the Harry Potter series has several instances of romantic and sexual interest that are portrayed.

Girls and young women can look at the series and see models of women who are able to stand up and fight for what they believe in, even though it may be dangerous and difficult. They can find strength in the characters and choose to stand up for what they believe in. They can see that adversity can be conquered through hard work and determination, whether it is physical or mental. They can be intelligent and use that knowledge to find solutions to difficult problems.

Girls and young women can also see that there is more to being a girl than just sexual appeal and that they can be strong and support those around them. The views of motherhood show that mothers are a strong and important part of adolescents lives and they desire to protect their children, sometimes risking their own lives in the process.

This study furthers research in the field by looking at gender portrayals through the viewpoint of framing instead of feminist theory, allowing for a less biased point of view. It also examined *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, the last book in the series. Because this book is the most recent, fewer researchers have used it in their work.

The use of the last book in the series gives strength to this study. *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* has nearly all the characters and allows researchers to look at how those characters interact as a whole instead of a few isolated circumstances. Because of the dire nature of the final battle in this book, the reader can see the true behavior and strengths or weaknesses of each character.

With the use of only one book, there are some limitations. A more complete assessment of attitudes toward females might be made if one were to look at the series as a whole. Many of the characters grow and gain maturity as the story progresses, changing their reactions to situations.

This study was also limited by time constraints. If there had been more than one semester to devote to research and writing, it may have allowed for a more in-depth analysis. There are so many books and so many angles from which to look at each character that this, and any study, may never be comprehensive.

Volumes of research have and can still be done on the Harry Potter series. Additional research in the area of the portrayal of women can be done to refute the findings of this study or support it further. It would be good to include all books in the series for research such as this to see how the female characters grow and develop as they age.

Research can also be done into the fandom surrounding the series and the way it reflects how people are shown in the series. Every time there is a movie or book release, costumed fans show up in masses to enjoy another installment. It would be interesting to look at how the reflections of the characters are affected by the portrayals of the characters in the books.

The obsession with Harry Potter looks as though it is going to stay for quite some time, and as long as people are interested in the series, more research will be done in the area. One could write volumes on the stories and still never have complete answers because Harry Potter is, and always will be, a work of fiction. Its intent is to entertain and provide excitement and joy in the lives of those who read it. Few can refute that the story has and does do this very well.

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