

THE ROLE OF MAGIC OR FANTASY IN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

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Abstract: The role of fantasy in literature is to provide an escape from reality, allowing readers to explore new worlds, ideas, and possibilities. Fantasy literature often features magical elements, mythical creatures, and otherworldly settings that spark the imagination and transport readers to a different realm. Fantasy literature can also serve as a powerful vehicle for exploring complex themes and issues, such as good versus evil, the nature of power, the hero's journey, and the human condition. The connection between fantasy and children's literature is indeed a prominent and important aspect of the genre. Writers often use fantasy elements to engage young readers' imaginations and help them explore the world around them in new and creative ways. J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter series is a prime example of this, as it not only captivated readers with its magical world but also addressed important themes and questions relevant to young people. By offering fantastical scenarios and characters, children's literature can provide an avenue for children to grapple with complex emotions, navigate difficult situations, and ultimately develop their own understanding of the world. The article gives clear information about how magic and fantasy can contribute to children and their mental progress. The Harry Potter series were appropriate example to analyse the benefit of magic in children's literature and their readers. The material contributes to the comprehensive understanding the role of magic and fantasy in children's literature.

Key words: magic, fantasy, Harry Potter, magical world, heroes, power.

Magic and fantasy have long been prominent features in children's literature, captivating young readers with enchanting worlds and extraordinary adventures. From whimsical creatures to spellbinding realms, these elements of magic and fantasy play a crucial role in igniting children's imaginations and fostering their creativity. In this article, we will explore the significance and impact of magic and fantasy in children's literature, examining how they offer a sense of wonder, provide valuable life lessons, and allow children to navigate their own emotions and challenges. Fantasy serves as a powerful tool in children's literature, allowing young readers to escape into exciting realms while also addressing important aspects of their development and understanding of the world around them. Magic and fantasy play a significant role in children's literature for several reasons:

Imagination and Creativity: Magic and fantasy in children's literature ignite the imagination and creativity of young readers, allowing them to explore worlds beyond their own reality. This helps children develop their cognitive abilities and think outside the box.

Emotional and Moral Development: Through fantastical elements, children's literature often conveys important moral lessons, such as the importance of courage, friendship, and perseverance. These stories can also help children understand complex emotions and moral dilemmas in a relatable and engaging way.

Escapism and Entertainment: Magic and fantasy provide an escape from the everyday world, offering entertainment and excitement for young readers. This can be a source of joy and wonder, allowing children to immerse themselves in enchanting and extraordinary tales.

Exploration of Complex Themes: Fantasy and magic in children's literature often serve as a platform for exploring complex themes and issues, such as good versus evil, the nature of power, and the value of diversity. Authors use fantastical elements to address real-world problems in a manner that is accessible and engaging for children.

Fostering a Love for Reading: The enchanting and captivating nature of magic and fantasy can foster a lifelong love for reading in children. When they encounter fantastical worlds and magical creatures, they are often inspired to seek out more literature, fueling their passion for storytelling and sparking their curiosity.

Magic is one of the major themes in *Harry Potter and the philosopher's stone*. In this novel, Rowling presents the reader with two worlds, the magic world as different from ours that is called (in the books) the Muggle world. However, one can see traces of similarities between the two worlds. We would now analyze some episodes in which magic is portrayed.

The description of Quidditch is one of the interesting examples of magic in *Harry Potter*.

“So what’s Quidditch?”

“It’s our sport. Wizard sport. It’s like football in the Muggle world” (Rowling 2000:90).

Rowling describes Quidditch in details, as a game, which shares some characteristics with football but is played in the air, on broomsticks, and with four balls. It is in this game that we see Harry as a talented and skillful player. His skill brought him fame and makes him more popular.

In other areas in the novel, we see a tape measuring on its own (Rowling 2000:95), a hat singing, a pudding that disappears, Hermione saying “*Wingardium Leviosa*” to make a feather rise off the desk and hover about four feet above their heads (Rowling 2000:187). This incident portrays Hermione as a witty pupil and brings to light the normal relationship among students, when Ron was angry as Hermione wanted to

correct him. Professor Flitwick's appraisal to Hermonie's success is a normal thing any teacher would do, if a student excels. This shows that pupils life at Hogwarts is not totally different from school life in the modern (muggle) world.¹

The goal of using fantasy in children's literature is to invoke the children's imagination and critical thought to encourage them develop their mental understanding of the world. Fantasy serves the narrative in creating tension and develops the plot and organizes it in depicting strange world that has no real existence outside of language.²

When young reader is engaged with reading fantasy books he or she can foster his imagination and mental understanding. Magic in books can make children believing in himself or herself, child starts looking into world with another view, he can widen his horizons and also behavior of children can improve because very book has its happy end. The fantasy books can make them comprehending world with new ideas and beliefs.

Sparking Imagination and Wonder:

Magic and fantasy in children's literature serve as gateways to the limitless realms of imagination. By introducing extraordinary elements into stories, authors open up a world of possibilities, expanding children's minds and encouraging them to think beyond the boundaries of reality. This sense of wonder fosters a child's innate curiosity and fuels their desire to explore and discover new ideas, ultimately nurturing their creativity and problem-solving skills.

Escapism and Emotional Development:

Magic and fantasy provide a refuge for children, offering an escape from the confines of everyday life. Through these fantastical worlds, children can embark on thrilling adventures, encounter fantastical creatures, and confront their own fears and challenges. This escapism allows children to navigate complex emotions, discover their inner resilience, and develop a sense of empathy. By identifying with courageous characters and witnessing their triumphs over adversity, young readers learn important life lessons about bravery, friendship, and perseverance.

Teaching Valuable Lessons:

Children's literature often uses magic and fantasy to convey valuable lessons in a captivating and accessible manner. By employing fantastical elements, authors can tackle complex themes such as good versus evil, morality, and the importance of ethical decision-making. Through magical characters and extraordinary settings, children learn important values and gain a deeper understanding of the world around them. The escapades of characters like Harry Potter, for instance, teach lessons about loyalty, courage, and the power of love.

¹ STEPHEN EKOKOBE AWUNG,(2003). *Magic In Harry Potter*. Elaboration.p-11

² . Wafa Salim Mahmood (2020) *Fantasy In Children Literature*. Iraq-Institute of Fine Arts - Ministry of Education.Journal of Arts, Literature,Humanties and Social Scineces.p-14

Enhancing Literacy and Language Skills:

Magic and fantasy offer an inviting path into the world of reading for children, captivating their attention and nurturing their love for books. The whimsical nature of these stories engages young readers and encourages them to eagerly turn the pages. As they immerse themselves in these enchanting tales, children naturally improve their literacy and language skills. Exploring the rich vocabulary, descriptive imagery, and captivating narratives of fantasy literature develops their reading fluency, comprehension, and communication abilities.

Overall, the role of magic and fantasy in children's literature is to stimulate the imagination, convey important life lessons, provide entertainment, and encourage a love for reading. These elements help shape the literary experiences of young readers and contribute to their overall development and understanding of the world around them. Magic and fantasy in children's literature have an extraordinary impact on the imaginations and hearts of young readers. They provide an avenue for escapism, emotional growth, and invaluable life lessons, all while enhancing literacy and language skills. Through enchanting tales of magic and fantastical realms, authors create a world where children can explore their own abilities, face challenging situations, and find solace in the power of their imagination. By incorporating these elements into children's literature, authors and storytellers continue to inspire generations of young readers, fostering a lifelong love of books and a spirit of unbridled curiosity.

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