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Edifying Conscience By Means Of Explicating Disability In *Harry Potter Series*

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The responsibility of a writer is not only to inform but also to preach values to his readers. Hence writers must focus on all the topics that the readers must be aware of. One such kind throws light on 'disability'. Readers should be enlightened about the 'other' people with whom they share this world. Always everything may not be proper but the improper ones may also possess magnificent strength. *"Every art and every kind of inquiry, and the likewise every act and purpose, seems to aim at some good: and so it has been well said that the good is that at which everything aims."* (Aristotle: I, 1)

The concept of Disability in Children's literature evolved since 1970s. They focused on the physical, emotional, social, and cognitive disability in the human beings. This concept of disability is intentionally and abundantly focused in the stories of children. A good example is the story of the tortoise and the rabbit. In the story, the strengths of tortoise and the rabbit cannot be measured with the aid of a same balance, as the ability of an animal is totally different from the other. Tortoise's amphibian quality is not similar to the rabbits that belong to the order of lagomorpha. But all the children are aware of the story of these two animals. Through the race between these unsuitable matches, children are taught that people possess unique abilities that should not be compared with the other. This concept of disability is included in the works written exclusively for children because through these stories the budding generation are unconsciously made to feel proud about themselves and also respect the others.

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Studying disabilities in literature makes its readers become humane by highlighting the difference between 'normal' and 'abnormal'. It also helps to understand the experiences that the disabled ones have experienced. In classrooms, this leads the teachers and the students to have discourse on 'Skill Sets'. Through these, children are made to realise and respect their skills. In Johanna Spyri's *Heidi*, the author has portrayed a crippled girl called Clara who with her will power and the aid of her friend Heidi finally walks. The transformation in Clara is mainly due to the people who treated her alike. This also teaches morality and shows the disabled people in new perspective.

In the famous *Harry potter Series* several characters have disabilities that at times make them suffer and also make them take pleasure in their exceptionality. J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter Series*, though appears to be novels for children they are packed with copious values. This paper probes into those characters that change the perspective of the readers towards those distinctive characters who dwindle and flourish amidst their disabilities. This fantasy series have fictional characters that make its' readers resemble themselves to it at several summits.

Through giant characters such as Rubeus Hagrid, Madame Maxime and Grawp, Rowling probes into the other side of these large humanoid fictional characters. Though these giants appear to be mountainous creatures they too have admirable hearts. They side to the good when their help is in need. Hagrid and his half-brother Grawp are good epitomes for this. In the story, Madame Maxime is put into a new light. She is a learned giant who teaches at a wizard school. She is filled up with modesty too. Grawp appears as a *"great lump of earth"(OP:608)* but he is also a friendly giant like Hagrid. Rowling through the depiction of these colossal characters tries to make her readers feel the fine quality of such deformed people.

The character of Hagrid talks about compassion for animals. He pours unconditional love for animals. He is a half giant who doesn't even speak a good language. Through him the writer delivers the fundamental morality, *"A Book should not be judged by its cover"*. Hagrid may have a rugged look, but he does not harm anyone. He is named for his trustworthiness in the good books of Dumbledore. Life gives everyone a reason to live. Hagrid found his passion in animals.

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Even in the venomous creatures, he sees the heart. This is indeed a good quality to be pinned in the hearts of the readers. The meaningful saying *"Don't judge a person until you have walked a mile in their shoes"* is a good example for empathy. Sympathy can easily be felt by anyone. But empathy is really a very hard value to be learnt or understood by anyone. J.K. Rowling has uncomplicatedly showed the meaning for empathy to her readers through Hagrid. Another such deformed yet good soul is Dobby, the house elf. Dobby is an elf who is known for its humble nature. Harry frees it from the bondage of Malfoy family. In turn, Dobby rescues Harry from danger and sacrifices its life for him. Dobby happily dies for Harry. Harry showed his gratitude by burying Dobby without using any magic. What many people do not show in their life is gratitude. It is an essential morality needed for any individual to lead a meaningful life. Even through creatures, J.K. Rowling has conveyed morality. She cagily created ways to convey values in her story. Travelling along with her characters, the personality of the readers is stabilized.

Hermione Granger is the studious confidante of Harry Potter who rescues him whenever he gets trapped in any ambush. She belongs to a non-magic family and hence she was ill treated at times by the bad ones. She was literally abused as a *"muggle"(PS:107)*but she with her zealous will power overpowered her disability in the wizard world and proved that she is no less than the other "true bloods". She is also placed equivalent to Harry in the series. This female character shows will power, strength, bravery, studiousness, independence, confidence, loyalty and smartness. Even Harry does not possess the presence of mind that she has. When girls and women read the story, they also aim to be unique as Hermione. She elegantly spreads out the fragrance of Girl Power. The character of Hermione elevates the status of women in the minds of the readers.

Harry Potter also faces the same issue of abnormality and discrimination when he lived with his uncle Dursley. He was humiliated due to his disability of being a normal chap. He was provided a place to stay in where he couldn't even stretch his legs. He was kept apart as he had the traits of wizards. As pointed out by Diana Mertz Hsieh in contribution to the book *Harry Potter and Philosophy*, "Every encounter with the Dursleys in the novels emphasizes their

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obsession with appearing- both to themselves and others- wholly "normal", in other words completely untainted by magic." (Bassham:24)Though Harry wants to accustom to the world of Dursleys, they were not ready to accept him not even as a human being. His Aunt Petunia hated his sister Lily for having been 'abnormal' and after her sister's death, her rage rested upon her son Harry. But the 11 year old orphaned Harry Potter's bravery is something highly remarkable. He has to kill Voldemort to live. Either Harry or Voldemort must live, is their destiny. Voldemort has cruelly killed the parents of Harry Potter. So, in a way Harry has to take his revenge. But Harry did not act as a fanatic. Before confronting Voldemort, he battles with many of his supporters and Harry tries his best to wound rather than killing them. He tries his best to avoid killing. Only after a great deal, Harry kills men. He values life and that should be marked as true bravery. Forgiveness is also considered as bravery and it can be given only by great souls. In the war between Harry Potter and Voldemort many lose their lives to destroy the vice. That too proves the real meaning for bravery and selflessness. Breaking all the barriers to fulfil the meaning of true being is the real achievement and Harry potter stands as its epitome.

The Weasley family's disability was their financial crisis. Hence the Weasleys were looked down by the aristocrats. But all the Weasleys were given a prominent dynamic role to play in this series. The issue that haunts the society is dealt by Rowling through these characters; the eternal conflict between the rich and the poor. Even the female Weasleys bravely take part in the battle between virtues and vices and even slaughter several bad ones.

Animagus is the concept that plays an imperative role in *Harry Potter Series*. Remus Lupin and Sirius Black are notable for it. Lupin changes into a werewolf and Black transforms into a huge hound. Their outer appearance deceives people like the famous proverb "Barking Dogs seldom Bite", but they excel in virtuous qualities that register their names in the minds of the readers. These characters are the friends of Harry's father, James Potter. They love Harry as he is the son of their best friend and they sacrifice their lives for Harry. They are also excellent examples for everlasting friendship.

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The characters that have physical, mental and cognitive disability include Professor Mad-Eye Moody, Professor Quirell and Ariana Dumbledore. Mad-Eye Moody lost one of his eyes in a battle and he *"used to work at the ministry" (GF 144).*He is rightly stated as *"a great wizard in his time" (GF 144).* Though he has a physical disability Charlie praises him as *"one of the best . . . a Dark-wizard-catcher" (GF 144).* He also points out Mad-Eye Moody's audaciousness as *"Half of the cells in Azkaban are full because of him. He made himself loads of enemies, though . . . the families of the people he caught, mainly" (GF 144).* Age wither away the strength of all the creatures of the earth. Though people expose their bravery at the young days they become physically weak as they attain old age. Mad-Eye too faced this. *". . . I heard he's been getting really paranoid in his old age. Doesn't trust anyone, any more. Sees Dark wizards everywhere." (GF 144)* Professor Quirell was a squib i.e., he is a non-magic. Though he was born to magical parents, he didn't attain that skill. He was bullied and neglected by others. This made him a easy prey for the greatest Dark Wizard Voldemort to reside in him. His disability was not conquered by him.

J.K.Rowling has illuminated the power of the disabled ones who have the ability to reach greater heights through their will power. *Harry Potter Series* are not only meant for children but it is also an interesting book for adults whose consciences are veiled by the discrimination towards the disabled ones that unconsciously prolongs in the abnormal society that always searches for 'normality'.

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