



# **Females and Harry Potter: Not All That Empowering (Reverberations: Contemporary Curriculum and Pedagogy)**

*Ruthann Mayes-Elma*

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*Females and Harry Potter* is a deconstruction of the representations of women's agency in *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*. Using critical discourse analysis and focusing on five themes (rule following and breaking, intelligence, validating and enabling, mothering, and resistance), Mayes-Elma explores the construction of traditional gender roles in the book. Additionally, the author locates the foundations of feminist epistemology?binary oppositions, gender boundaries, and woman as "other"?that is deeply embedded within the book's themes. Traditional gender constructions of both men and women are found throughout the *Sorcerer's Stone*.

Ultimately, the book explores the sexism inherent in the Harry Potter series: a hero and his male friends are the focus and center of activity and the female characters are enablers?at best. Passive and invisible female characters exist only as bodies, "bound" by traditional gender conventions; they resist evil, but never gender stereotypes. Mayes-Elma concludes with a discussion of the implications for development of school curricula that enable students to critically deconstruct these texts.

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