



A Portrayal of Power Relations and Aetonormativity in Diana Wynne Jones's Chrestomanci Series^{*}

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The growing interest in and the expanding market of children's literature have established the genre as a major part of the publishing business. In the academic realm, scholars have applied existing literary and cultural theoretical concepts to the study of children's literature to formulate a specific literary theory for the field. Attempts have also been made to understand its narratological methods and functions. However, the general application of existing theoretical perspectives onto the works of children's literature, so far, has not focused on their socio-ideological influences.

This research paper specifically draws on the existing modalities of power and ideology conceptualized by Michel Foucault and Maria Nikolajeva's concept of 'aetonormativity' to examine the relations of power between adult and child protagonists in Diana Wynne Jones's Chrestomanci series. Repression and subversion of power are portrayed through adult and child characters in Jones'

Research Article

Abstract

Keywords

aetonormativity;
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power relations;
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fantasy works for children and are represented throughout the development of Jones' fantasy novels series consisting of seven books written from 1977 to 2006. The portrayal of adult villains' influence and the manipulative use of power calls for a deconstructive view toward adults who refuse the position of righteous authority, in contrast to a representation of children who, as in most fantasy works, are subsumed under the influence of ideologies and the authority of adults. A study of this role reveals the use of children's literature as an ideological platform to support children's growth into adulthood. The texts communicate the importance of self- recognition and the ability to be critical of the adult counterpart. This role reversal and ideological reading reveal an alternative critical perspective on the tendency of texts for children which are normally created under the concept of adult's normativity.



ความสัมพันธ์เชิงอำนาจและบรรทัดฐานของผู้ใหญ่ ในวรรณกรรมชุด Chrestomanci ของ Diana Wynne Jones*

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วรรณกรรมเยาวชนแฟนตาซีเป็นงานเขียนที่ได้รับความนิยมแพร่หลายในปัจจุบัน ในแวดวงวิชาการ การศึกษาส่วนใหญ่ใช้ทฤษฎีการศึกษาวรรณกรรมด้านศาสตร์การเล่าเรื่อง การนำมุมมองด้านสังคมวัฒนธรรมมาศึกษายังไม่ปรากฏแพร่หลาย

บทความวิจัยฉบับนี้นำเสนอแนวคิดความสัมพันธ์เชิงอำนาจและการสร้างบรรทัดฐานของสังคมตามแนวของมิเชล ฟูโกต์ (Michel Foucault) และแนวคิดของมาเรีย นิโคลาเจวา (Maria Nikolajeva) ซึ่งเสนอให้เราอ่านวรรณกรรมสำหรับเด็กโดยตั้งข้อสังเกตถึงลักษณะบรรทัดฐานทางสังคมที่ถูกกำหนดโดยความเป็นผู้ใหญ่มาศึกษาความสัมพันธ์เชิงอำนาจระหว่างตัวละครผู้ใหญ่กับเด็กในวรรณกรรมชุดเครสโตแมนซี (Chrestomanci) ของไดอาน่า ไวน์ โจนส์ (Diana Wynne Jones) ซึ่งตีพิมพ์ระหว่างปี 1977 ถึงปี 2006 ผลวิจัยพบว่าบรรทัดฐานทางสังคมของผู้ใหญ่วัฒนาความสัมพันธ์เชิงอำนาจระหว่างตัวละครผู้ใหญ่กับเด็กได้อาณัติซึ่งปรากฏทั่วไปในงานวรรณกรรมสำหรับเด็ก อนาคตความมหัศจรรย์ทำหน้าที่สลับบทบาทระหว่างผู้ใหญ่กับเด็ก โดยกำหนดให้ตัวละครผู้ใหญ่ชั่วร้ายสูญเสียอำนาจและให้เด็กได้ใช้อำนาจ การอ่านด้วยวิธีนี้หรือสร้างเปิดเผยให้เห็นถึงรูปแบบการใช้อำนาจและการต่อรองทางอำนาจของตัวละครผู้ใหญ่และเด็กในงานเขียนสำหรับเด็ก

บทความวิจัย

บทคัดย่อ

คำสำคัญ

บรรทัดฐานของผู้ใหญ่;
วรรณกรรมเยาวชน;
อุดมการณ์;
ความสัมพันธ์เชิงอำนาจ;
ไดอาน่า ไวน์ โจนส์

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1. Introduction

This article is part of a research which critically engaged with the power relations between adults and children depicted in children's literature with a presupposition that these literary works represent views on both adult's and children's social roles. Apart from a discussion on adult and child relations, this critical reading of Diana Wynne Jones' Chrestomanci series also answers the line of inquiry about the connection between the function of the texts as an ideological tool and its main message on the dynamic of power. Stories written for children often replicate the real world. The fantasy in the Chrestomanci series by Diana Wynne Jones is portrayed in the world within a school story with a metaphorical implication of ideological and discursive powers. The theoretical concept of "aetonormativity" proposed by Maria Nikolajeva (2010) regards the works created for children as an ideological apparatus representing adults' social norms. With an application of Nikolajeva's concept, this article aims to analyze the portrayal of the adults' authority and domination to explain how power may be transformed and transferred between children and their adult counterparts in Jones' Chrestomanci series.

The fantasy world in the Chrestomanci series by Diana Wynne Jones makes the most use of a school-story plot and fantasy power elements as a metaphor for an exercise of power. Generally, a reading of magic in children's stories does not commonly engage with their socio-political dimension nor discussion of power relations. However, it is undeniable that a representation of adult and child relations in the fantasy genre also includes their uses of magical power as a tool for repression. Therefore, in this study, the necessity for a critical reading of magic is underlined with a nod toward the binary positions of adult and child characters in Jones' works.

To be introduced here in order of publication, the Chrestomanci books series, nevertheless, can be read separately as an individual fictional book, or by the author's own suggested reading order, and by the chronological order of the events in the stories. The series consists of six books that recount stories of child protagonists. *Charmed Life* (1977) narrates a journey to self-discovery of the next Chrestomanci. The book reverses a tradition of an adventurous excursion story popularized by Edith Nesbit by presenting a true-to-life adventure of two orphans. Instead of departing one's home for a journey, the protagonist and his sister are left stranded by an unexpected accident that leads them to the care of

their uncle, the Chrestomanci. In *The Magician of Caprona* (1980), two rival families – the Montanas and the Petrocchis - run a magical business. When all the spells go astray, they start putting blame on each other. The story opens with a catchy line, “Spells are the hardest things in the world to get right” (Jones, 1980, p. 1). *Witch Week* (1982) presents an alternative universe of 60s England, set in a boarding school, where the law stipulates witch hunt. *Witch Week* is the first fantasy children’s fiction set in a boarding school and also the first in the Chrestomanci series which depicts an alternate world for children. The work serves as a strong connecting point between the school story tradition and the fantasy genre. The life of Christopher Chant (1988) tells the story of the child protagonist who discovers that he possesses nine lives and is destined to be the next ‘Chrestomanci.’ His childhood, including a boarding school experience, shows the hard way a child learns about human conceit and the importance of self-discovery in the face of social expectations. *Conrad’s Fate* (2005) is a story of another boy protagonist who meets with the teen Christopher several years after *The life of Christopher Chant* (1988). Conrad is at an important turning point in his life, to continue his school education or to work as a butler in a strange castle. In hope to regain control of his life, the twelve years old explores the idea of identity and self-fulfilling prophecy. Finally, *The Pinhoe Egg* (2006) shows that all spells have consequences and it is Chrestomanci’s job to maintain order when secret magical misuse is conducted in the nearby village to the Chrestomanci Castle.

All stories in the Chrestomanci series are generally about a child protagonist’s self-discovery. The plot circling around a quest and the reversal of power dynamic between adult and children are common in fantasy works to serve as a temporary space in which children can achieve a sense of freedom and self-discovery. A closer look at the implications of power in Diana Wynne Jones’ works reveals a portrayal of different levels and types of power exercised by both adult and child characters.

Selected readings on power in Jones’s works include an article, “ ‘Why don’t you be a tiger?’: The Performative, Transformative, and Creative Power of the Word in the Universes of Diana Wynne Jones”, by Debbie Gascoyne (2010). This is an interpretation of the power of speech in Jones’ work reflecting the importance of word choice and discussing the use of magic in Jones’ fantastic universes. The selection of works discussed in Gascoyne’s article includes *Charmed Life* (1977) and *Howl’s Moving Castle* (1986). In Gascoyne’s reading,

the use of magic is compared to the power of speech. Another work by Martha P. Hixon (2002) also compares Jones' two different series, *The Merlin Conspiracy* (2004) and *The Pinhoe Egg* (2006), based on their reflections of political power in the fantasy rendition of English society and heritage. All books in the series contribute to the interesting change and development of the series in portraying the changing power dynamic between adult and children characters. The secondary world of Chrestomanci yields itself to an analysis of power in terms of its representation of an authoritative governmental figure. The "Chrestomanci" title represents an adult's position of power which requires a person with powerful magical ability to fulfill the position. Children in the story represent a newly-found alternative body of power. The interaction between adults and children happens inside the schooling space of the Chrestomanci castle. Jones' works show the development from the school story model into a blended fantasy environment in which the power dynamic between adults and children shifts balance through the use of discipline, authority, and freedom.

The formation and the extension of disciplinary power, Michel Foucault (1977) argued, aim to establish a society within the state of conscious and permanent visibility and the school space. The power "to supervise, train and correct" (Foucault, 1977, p. 37) is achieved through the school and adult power. The expected outcome is to produce an able adult being informed of the worldly gesture of the adult society. The social institution is used for surveillance on young students who are subjected to self-development in accordance with rules. There are, however, insufficient studies on the characteristics of the observing gaze in the panoptic environment in fantasy children's literature, rather several studies focus only on the interaction among children and how children reconcile with their dilemma when encountering general rules and progressing towards adulthood. The fantasy works by Diana Wynne Jones portray panoptic surveillance and fantasy power as a learning ground for the children characters. The analysis of school space in the Chrestomanci series done in this study also includes the interpretation of gender roles, power dynamics, and ideological communication in Jones' works.

2. A Critique of Adult Normativity in the *Chrestomanci* Series

Jones' criticism of adult's standards in works written for children is mentioned in her essay "Children in the Wood" (Jones, 2012) which explores her view on writings for children. She discusses the role of child's play in fantasy works and supports the use of the fantasy world as a way a child experiments on their role in society. The use of power in her fantasy universes goes beyond her attempt to create a space of experiment for children to be an embodiment of social rearing. The plot of each story in the *Chrestomanci* series starts with child characters in their developmental stage and their progress toward social status in the world while adult characters play roles of a supporter for the child's development and a suppressive authority for the child's establishment of their agency and learning. The contrasting difference in Jones's portrayal of adult and child characters is evidently a critique of adults' position. Adult antagonists including Christopher's uncle and parents from *The lives of Christopher Chant* (1988), the evil uncle from *Conrad's fate* (2005), and adults in the school setting in *Witch Week* (Jones, 1982) exemplify the gradual process existing within the children's fantasy story that keeps the child protagonists and child readers under adult normativity. As the *Chrestomanci* title represents the righteous and powerful adult power, the construction of the child's identity is shaped and reshaped by the presence of this authoritative figure.

In this paper, the first part is a discussion of how families play a part in the child's understanding and misconception of their life as well as their own potential and power in the series. As portrayed in *The Lives of Christopher Chant* (1988) and *Conrad's Fate* (2005), the transformation of child Christopher into an adult Christopher shows impacts of adult's oppressing power on children. *Magician of Caprona* (1980) and *The Pinhoe Egg* (2006) comparatively show uses of power by adults. Both stories are a comment on hierarchical status within family and social institutions. Christopher as the *Chrestomanci* plays a directive role on the reconciliation of family conflicts in both stories. Lastly, the school surroundings and the social context in *Witch Week* (1982) will be discussed to compare the use and the abuse of power in a school story.

Through Maria Nikolajeva's concept of aetonormativity, an analysis of L. Frank Baum's *Wizard of Oz* (1900) may reveal that the Wizard (an adult) introduces moral norms to the children and proposes that they exercise their authority. The social standard asserted in Baum's text implied that children follow the way the world is introduced to them. The use of power in the constructed domination of adults may or may not repress a child through the exercise of authoritative or coercive power, but it can hinder or adversely affect the self-construction of the child. The mechanism of power in line with Michel Foucault's conjecture emphasizes the place of individuals in society. The disciplinary and bureaucratic form of organization in place establishes and influences the mechanism of power. Foucault also argued that "the human psyche, subjectivity, personality, consciousness and individuality" (Foucault, 1977, p. 11) became the product of the exercise of power. Thus, an analysis of the role the child protagonists play in children's literature by adult authors may reveal the construction of a child's identity under such coercive and formative discipline. With a portrayal of the home and schooling system as well as the use of fictional elements in Jones' *Chrestomanci* series, it is in line with the usage of texts written for children as an ideological state apparatus.

2.1 *The Lives of Christopher Chant*

In *The Lives of Christopher Chant*, the boy protagonist, Christopher, is neglected by his parents before being sent away to school and to the care of the Chrestomanci. The power to control the child's destiny is passed on from his parents to his uncle when he displays his magical ability. The interpretation of the role of adults in Christopher's life through the concept of aetonormativity highlights the submissive status of a child under the power of his family and the governmental rules and regulation even when he assumes a position of a Chrestomanci prodigy. With the plot circling around Christopher, Jones uses the relations between the child character and the adults around him to reflect how adults' normativity mistreats children.

The older Chrestomanci, Gabriel de Witt, whom Christopher has never known before, represents an authority of the world he lives in. The fantastic parallel universe in the Chrestomanci series hosts an enchanter who has a rare condition of having multiple lives.

The nine-lives character owes those lives from a magical power of nine people who are compressed into one and give Christopher his greater power. The magical power and more lives make Christopher, the child, more powerful than most adults. However, Christopher himself is not aware of his power when he is relocated from his home to school and to the new surroundings of the Chrestomanci castle.

In *The Lives of Christopher Chant*, the social surroundings of an English boarding school is portrayed in a positive light. However, when it comes to the description of Chrestomanci Castle, Christopher expresses his negative reaction toward its surroundings. As Jones puts it,

For the first week, Christopher could think of nothing else but how much he hated Chrestomanci Castle and the people in it. It seemed to combine the worst things about school and home, with a few special awfulnesses of its own. (Jones, 1988, p. 163)

The comparison between school and the castle he now lives in provides a sense of duty and oppression for Christopher. These different settings and their moral lessons serve as an important turning point that leads Christopher to an illegal business. In the first part of the story, Christopher is not aware of being used by his uncle who fails to teach him the different notions of right and wrong. The change in social status at the Chrestomanci castle, ironically, helps him learn about morality. However, as Jones later critiques the ideological and moral function of school that “it was as if school had taught him how to be frightened” (Jones, 1988, p. 139), the school replaces the child’s innocence and equips him with a sense of duty and moral judgment. The child Christopher is temporarily freed from adult villains’ influence in the space of school, and towards the end, he corrects the disastrous result of the adult use of power.

Aetonnormativity in Jones’ *Lives of Christopher Chant* is demonstrated through the development of Christopher’s agency. The bildungsroman fiction presents a world with absent adults, the child’s determination and leadership allow him to temporarily replace adult authority. Free from the influence of ideologies and the authority of adults, Christopher takes an adventure to another world. The subversive message of the adult’s normativity rule is portrayed through the differences of people from a different world in which adults and

children are the binary opposites, and there is a lack of mutual agreement on what is good, fun, and important in life.

Jones' comments on these differences are seen through the rehabilitation of Christopher into the temporary authoritative position of the Chrestomanci figure with Gabriel de Wit's absence. For Christopher, the changes of social status and surroundings at the Chrestomanci castle make him understand what is morally right or wrong. The reconciliation between adults and children towards the end of the story resonates the responsibility adults have over children in their care which concludes with their placement in the school system. As the story ends, Christopher resumes his education to re-assume the adult Chrestomanci position later. In other books from the same series, Christopher is seen as upholding adult normativity including the legality and righteousness of this powerful title. His own child identity disappears and the child role is passed on to other main child characters in the series which will be further discussed in this paper.

2.2 Conrad's Fate

Magical power and ability in Jones' Chrestomanci universe is not equally distributed. Not everyone is naturally gifted with magic and natural magical power can be used to differentiate one person from another, thus portraying a certain level of their identity. This difference of magical ability level is repeatedly depicted in all books of the series. The level of magic ability is classified by different titles including the nine lives enchanter or the Chrestomanci, the enchanter (male) and the sorceress (female), a wizard (male) and the witch (female), and a warlock. In *Conrad's fate* (2005), Conrad, the protagonist, is a child without magical ability who lives under the influence and manipulation of his uncle while being neglected by his mother and sister. Under adult manipulation, an encounter between Conrad and Christopher happens in their teens in an alternate-world setting. The representation of manipulative magic in this story can be read as a metaphor for the manipulation of stock market investors. The world affects Conrad's life in more than one dimension; however, these overwhelming power of social ideology and economic controls are not more powerful than a child's will.

While *Conrad's Fate* focuses on alternative possibilities of a boy's future as people around him and wealthy ones determine the fortune and fact of the real world, it is the first work that introduces an alternate world possibility when the old world is divisible into a new one. The connection between World 12A, World 12B, and the unidentified World X in Jones' *Witch Week* (1982) suggests the possibilities and open-ended futures outside our present. The possibility of an alternative world is split at a point in history where two possibilities can occur. The multiple dimensions of the use of magical power to create both the creative possibilities for children and the world-making metaphor are presented in connection to each other. The character of the non-magical Conrad shows children's natural ability to observe changes on par with the magical power wielded by his magical friend, Christopher.

The magical control in *Conrad's Fate* also features "the pulling of possibilities" (Jones, 2005, p. 14). These changes create a butterfly effect that has an impact on the future. The changes attract Conrad's interest when his beloved children's book series disappear. Jones portrays adult selfishness as they alter the future without considering its side effects. Conrad's choice is limited though he prefers the power of magical ability to house chores. Attending school becomes part of his rebellious act. The child can only escape the abusive power of their family by submitting to the social ideological apparatuses. Evidently, he remains under control of the authoritative system, only moving from one setting to another. While the quest model in other fantasy adventures may focus on the protagonist's search for magical objects and power as well as the child process of learning about morality, Jones's *Conrad's fate* ironically portrays the adult's untruthfulness. Power relations between adults and children and family ties can be seen as institutional and structural powers which have control over the child protagonist from which they need to escape.

2.3 *Witch Week*

Witch Week (1982) also uses an alternative universe where the law stipulates witch burning. This work is one of the first of its kind with the combination between fantasy and the school story sub-genre. The portrayal of witch punishment, the power relations between teachers and students and descriptions of magic in this fiction stresses the importance of self-discovery and the development of agency of the child protagonist. *Witch Week* is set in

a school where for witch-descendant students must avoid exposure and punishment. The implication of governmental power and control is directed towards the social outcasts represented by witches' descendants. The school represents the social discipline of the society, and the punishment is a powerful disciplinary tool that is used to limit the development of their identity and agency.

Charles, the protagonist, accidentally uncovers his magic ability then, upon his fascination, he instantly reminds himself that "it hurts to be burned" (Jones, 1982, p. 83), and he deliberately burns his finger to learn the pain. By portraying the child's fear of pain and punishment, Jones implies the power relations between authoritative adults and submissive children resulting from the adult implementation of structural and coercive power.

The student characters can be grouped in accordance with their school experiences and their attitude towards those situations. The oppressed are the two main underdog characters, Charles Morgan and Nan Pilgrim, who are under the control of government rules, school authority, and the other children. The other three student characters in the story are the reasonable Indian boy Nirupam Singh, the just and helpful girl Estelle Green and the weak and problematic boy Brian Wentworth. All these five characters represent the ones under surveillance as they all risk being exposed and being burned as a witch.

Michel Foucault (1977) posited in *Discipline and Punishment* that public torture and execution are intended for theatrical effect. In the story, the impact of the witch hunt on the psyche of children characters is related to their witnessing of a witch burn. Charles Morgan has first-hand experience of helping a witch escape burning. This occurrence not only ends with an accidental friendship and his sympathy toward the witch, but also leads to his self-identification and realization that he will possibly be a victim of such torture. However, with the help of the Chrestomanci who replaces the school authority as a body of power that upholds moral responsibility and mediates the situation, these five children are able to reconcile with their witch identity. In so doing, the self-righteous and controlling power of the school authority appears abusive and repressive while the Chrestomanci and other fantastic and magical elements become a presence of liberation for the students.

Also in *Witch Week*, magic and its creation of multiple possibilities are extended to exercise control of history, time, and socio-cultural norms. The child characters may feel

liberated, but it is so only within the limited space of these new norms. The didactic ending of the story with lessons about the necessity to grow up, to mature, and to be fully accepted as an integral part of the society are in line with the original purpose of children's literature that aims to teach how to differentiate right from wrong. In her book, *From Mythic to Linear: Time in Children's Literature*, Maria Nikolajeva (2000) states that the power of magic to grant a child's secret wish is common among works for children. Fantasy stories generally use magic as a tool for the development of children's agency and end with a reintegration to the normative society and a return to the safety of their home and the protection of their parents. The boarding school setting is, therefore, an authoritative space where adult normativity is projected through the school's regulations and its instructors.

2.4 Magicians of Caprona and The Pinhoe Egg

In Jones' *Chrestomanci* series, the adult antagonists are an important influence on the lives of the child protagonists, including an elder sister in *Charmed Life* (1977), the school's principal and instructors in *Witch Week* (1982), an uncle in *Lives of Christopher Chant* (1988) and *Conrad's Fate* (2005), and a grandmother in *The Pinhoe Egg* (2006). Among these relationships between adults and children in Jones's *Chrestomanci* series, there are only in *Magician of Caprona* (1980) and *The Pinhoe Egg* (2006) that an interplay and a tension between children and their adult family members, along with a conflict between the power of the adults and the ruling power of the town and the government can be observed.

Some comments on the uses of power in *Magician of Caprona* (Jones, 1980) include Martha P. Hixon's article, "Power Plays: Paradigm of Power in The Pinhoe Egg and The Merlin Conspiracy" (Ed. Charlie Butler, 2010) in which the application and relations of power in Jones's work is discussed. The adult characters hide their magical abilities from the government in *The Pinhoe Egg* (2006) and the metaphor of power and magic is used to represent the attempt of the government to rule the landscape in *The Merlin Conspiracy* (2004). Hixon points out the metaphorical implications of power in Jones' work as a display of a subversive use of power. For example, when Cat and Marianne in *The Pinhoe Egg* discover an unhatched egg, they need to seek approval and assistance from adults to hatch

the egg and raise a young griffin. However, the independent nature of the griffin results in the construction of new discourse on children's and animals' rights and is used as an instrument of power. In their resistance to adult power, these children succeed in liberating magical creatures.

Magician of Caprona (1980) and *The Pinhoe Egg* (2006) both portray comparative and competitive uses of power by adult and child characters. *Magician of Caprona* depicts social prejudice and strong institutional ideology. Christopher as the Chrestomanci mediates the conflict between the two rival families. Though the adult family members relate stories of each other's vice to their children as they are deadly rivals at the beginning of the story, their children do not believe in the family history of rivalry and find peace through their challenging commonality which is the loss of magical power.

Jones lightly comments on the use of power in a family hierarchy, but instead, focuses on the school system in a similar manner as previously discussed. *Magician of Caprona* (1980) demonstrates a process of learning as an individual experience. For example, Tonino comments on his school experience, "They keep making me learn the story—and all sorts of things—and I can't, because I know them already, so I can't learn properly" (Jones, 1980, p. 9). Here, the repressive nature of the schooling system is portrayed, the school mistakes the child's resistance as his lack of knowledge. The comment on schooling experience from a child's perspective also highlights the subversive plea for an individualized learning style. Jones seemingly proposes that the power of the education system and family should serve as an assurance for the struggling child. Similarly, *The Pinhoe Egg* (Jones, 2006), as discussed by Martha P. Hixon (2002), shows the relationship between a system of government and whom it governs. The Pinhoes family passes on negative views towards the Chrestomanci title, whose powerful position is feared and appalled by the local tribal governing system. The conflict may be viewed as a reference to Jones' comment on the British government and its support of the standardization as well as an enforcement of the British ideology that organizes and controls the others.

The important message conveyed in both *Magician of Caprona* and *The Pinhoe Egg* is that power is exercised by both the child and adult characters and that the power discourse and conflict all stem from prejudice and different ideologies. The child characters' possibility

and potential to be virtuous rely on the subversion of adults' power and the promotion of children's self-discovery.

From the four texts in the series discussed earlier, this work focuses on the adult's role and the school space as a space of panoptic surveillance and the establishment of adult normativity. Ulrike Pesold (2017) posits that the message in reference to school stories differs from story to story. In *Lives of Christopher Chant* and *Conrad's fate*, Christopher and Conrad enjoy their school experience but suffer from the control of their families while in *Witch Week*, the school represents the opposite. Boarding schools become an institution that abuses its power on children through Foucauldian punishment by physical pain and control which are discussed by the children as a threat to their body, individuality, and power. Similar control over the community is observably exercised by the Chrestomanci in *Magician of Caprona* and *The Pinhoe Egg*. A discussion of the establishment of personal power and fear of punishment in this paper focuses more on the child characters' experience in juxtaposition to their adult counterpart while Pesold (2017) takes notes of Jones' representation of the school story model as ambivalent and serving for othering the children. The second part of the paper will discuss Jones' portrayal of the child characters in a power model.

3. Children's Role: Power and Authority

This section aims to clarify and posit Jones' work as a Children's literature which tries to maintain the balance between its ideological implications and its aim to promote a child's growth and development. The opposing sides of the power and fantasy metaphor exist in Farah Mendlesohn's article, "Fantasy in Children's fiction" (Butler & Reynolds, 2014) in which she identifies the position of power and the function of magic in stories for children. According to Mendlesohn, magical elements always function as a type of empowerment for children. This supports an argument that Jones includes the use of magic as the symbol of the child's maturation and their power to undergo the omnipresent power dynamic between adults and children.

In the realm of fantasy works, the process of growth is symbolized by magical elements which serve to enhance the child character's abilities. Power to govern the society may be demonstrated through the magical ability to enforce and to persuade. In referring to the Foucauldian concept of power, an attention should be placed on the effects of truth that plays out for two child characters, Christopher and Gwendolen. Their views on the use of power and their maturity process allow a scrutiny of the positive and negative implications of the uses of power in Jones' series. In her writing of the fantasy metaphor of power in the Chrestomanci series, Jones depicts double implications of power. Child characters may connect to an influential source of power that facilitates their growth and, alternatively, that source of power may also represent social ideologies at work which plays an obstructive role in the development of the child's agency.

3.1 Authoritative Child Under Disciplinary Power in Charmed Life

Throughout the Chrestomanci series, most of the children's magical powers are metaphors for their own ability, desire, and growth. The dilemma between goodness and evil is what each character has to face during the course of their adventure. The setting of the castle mentioned above serves a school-like disciplinary function. Part of the castle ground is an old garden. The symbolic status of this garden as the source of natural magic is mentioned only in the first book, *Charmed life* (1977). The garden which represents the turning motion of the world and the seasonal cycle is portrayed as a supreme natural force that is larger than human lives.

A character's lack of agency as a result of his lack of education and solid family support has been discussed earlier. The same issue is also seen in another character, a girl called Gwendolyn from *Charmed Life*, who represents a vindication of a child's right. As she has a strong agency and aspires to be powerful, her magical power becomes a metaphor for Gwendolyn's personal drive to gain power. Cat, her younger brother and the main character, is purposefully delayed by his sister from learning about the extent of his power as Gwendolen manipulatively overtakes her brother's power to excel herself and to be praised by adults. The portrayal of Gwendolyn as a force that outshines Cat explains his delayed self-discovery. Obviously, it is not an adult influence that hinders a child's growth

in this story, but a misuse of power by another child. Nevertheless, the book focuses on Gwendolyn's lack of discipline and manners. She is a strong and spoiled child who is presented as a foil for her brother and the protagonist, Cat, who may interact with his sister but can still evade from her influence. Cat finally learns to separate right from wrong and formulate his own opinions beyond his sister's influence.

Additionally, the power relations between the siblings show an imbalance of attention and an infringement of personal rights. Gwendolyn resists falling under the moral and just predicament of their parents. The secrecy about Cat's power and Gwendolyn's use of witchcraft is neglected or concealed by all adults, as it is narrated in the story,

When he had asked his parents, they had shaken their heads, sighed, and looked unhappy. Cat had been puzzled because he remembered the terrible trouble there had been when Gwendolyn gave him cramps. He could not see how his parents could blame Gwendolen for it unless she truly was a witch. (Jones, 1977, p. 3)

In fact, Cat can only realize about his sister's abusive behaviors when he narrates the story in retrospect towards the end of the story. To compete for power, Gwendolyn fights and withholds power to the point of sacrificing her life. She is portrayed as an ambitious, power-crazed, stubborn child who refuses to grow up in a similar manner to J.M. Barrie's Peter Pan. Moreover, far from being an innocent one, she plots her advancement in life using her brother and their family connection to the Chrestomanci as a stepping stone to power. However, it is on her arrival to the Chrestomanci castle that she first learns to behave like a child and she fails to impress and influence people around her. The legitimate power that she used to claim slips out of her hands as she is under the authoritative power of the Chrestomanci. The social norms of the new setting do not favor her, yet Gwendolyn does not accept the truth.

In a discussion of the relationship between powers, Butler and Reynolds (2014) discuss the relevance between the type of powers known to people and its influence over their agency. For Gwendolyn, it is not a lack of agency, but it is her lack of maturity and responsibility for others that becomes an issue. Her challenge towards the Chrestomanci is an attempt to overtake the positional and systematic power of schooling and governmental

bodies. Finally, her leaving can be simply regarded as a dropout. But, in terms of power, it shows her refusal to submit to the system.

In addition, the castle and its staff represent Jones' attitude towards education as a system of learning for learners' benefit. Different expected outcomes of learners and the school authority explain the conflict between Gwendolen and her tutor, Mr. Saunders, upon her arrival at the castle.

Gwendolen, cheated of her grand entry, threw Mr. Saunders a seething look and wondered whether to say a most unpleasant spell at him. She decided against it. She was still wanting to give a good impression. "I'm taking you in this way," Mr. Saunders explained cheerfully, "because it's the door you'll be using mostly, and I thought it would help you find your way about if you start as you mean to go on. (Jones, 1977, p. 15)

The malicious and rebellious child such as Gwendolen is an exemplary case that is used to justify the necessity of the education system. Thus, while the adult normativity in this story is in favor of Cat, Gwendolen faces the opposite. Feeling disappointed and denied of her power as she is used to, Gwendolyn strongly opposes the authoritative power of the Chrestomanci and becomes a criminal. Power as a means of governing the society includes the ability to persuade or coerce other people. Because of its function in law enforcement, power is viewed from the perspective of the enforcer. The genealogical view of the development of power introduced by Michael Foucault (2000) allows us to imagine the implication of the uses of power and how different types of power are not only a means of enforcing the law and administering punishment but also as a means to instilling ideologies and influencing society. Observingly, an underlying message conveyed through Gwendolen's character and her mishap is in line with Foucauldian conceptualization that power is not allowed for the citizens. This also attests the existence of a power relation and children's limited liberty when compared to adults.

With the use of Gwendolen as the child-antagonist, Jones successfully delivers the messages on the moral codes and the importance of education as well as the acknowledgment of both the authoritative rule of adults and the limited power of the children. In addition to

the school norms enforced in the classroom, the castle ground represents the authority of the magic police and replicates the atmosphere of a boarding school. The experience that the orphan siblings receive in their first class is the evaluation of knowledge and when Gwendolen fails once, she continues to fail further in an attempt to fulfill expectations of the adult system. On the contrary, Cat regards people who live in the castle as members of the same family, and the organization and the bureaucratic atmosphere amazes the child who seems to be puzzled by new rules and expectations as the castle and its grounds are also full of displayed prohibitions. Though Cat's struggle with the limited freedom may first cause him to feel out of place, he soon learns to adapt himself to the new environment while Gwendolen chooses to leave.

In her discussion of the adult norms, Roberta Seelinger Trites (2000) sees "power [as] a trait and motive inherent in adolescent literature" (Trites, 2000, p. 473). It can be agreed that Gwendolen is the ultimate proof of the attempt to break free from the adult norms; however, the interrogation of the existing order of power is impossible without the balance of the protagonist like Cat. Trites, in *Disturbing the Universe* (2000), highlights the difference of power representation in children's and adolescent's literature. She remarks that the works aiming for children reconfirm their status and personal power. Jones' works on the other hand introduce the social forces and the protagonist's learning to negotiate and exist alongside the power relationships/ systems such as school, government, family, gender, race, class, etc. In Jones' *Charm Life*, it is a mixture of this negotiation and confirmation, or a complete denial in the case of Gwendolen. Instead of directly injecting ideological and moral lessons, Jones deals with different issues of power and introduces the negotiation between adult prohibition and reasons by the balanced characterisation of the two main characters. By positioning Cat in an opposition to his sister and apart from the adult counterpart, Jones establishes the learning and observing position for the protagonist who cautiously navigates his way towards self-discovery through the two extremes.

3.2 A Child's Growth and Shifting Power Position in Lives of Christopher Chant

Early in *The lives of Christopher Chant* (Jones, 1988), Christopher is portrayed as a child conditionally rewarded for his good behaviors. The focus on the child protagonist's

life is an indication of the text's purpose as a work for children, which focuses on the character's growth and development. All child characters in Jones's Chrestomanci series go through the process of self-realization and come to fully understand the extent of their magical power and the appropriate level of agency in which they can maintain when negotiating with their social surroundings. In other words, magic power and maturation in Jones' work coexist side by side. The double meanings of magic as ability and as maturation allow child readers to feel empowered and understand the consequence of power and obligation at the same time. In Christopher's case, he outgrows his attachment to his house and his parents and his dependency on the other magical authority. In coming to terms with his magical power, he also gains a legal-rational authority of a magic-user. Christopher's reaction to the truth of his heredity and his father's vision for his future is an example of an influence and implications of an adult power on children. Different attitudes of his parents towards the Chrestomanci title also represent the alternative views towards social authority.

As discussed earlier in this paper, the relationship between Christopher and adult characters in the story including his governor, his adult friend and his parents demonstrates the power dynamic between adults and children in Jones' works which demonstrate a subversion of the adult norm and authorities. This is a characteristic that is not commonly portrayed in a clear light in most children's literature. Apart from the adult characters, Jones also uses settings and story backgrounds as a symbol for the development of the child characters' power and the reaction of their social surroundings. The Chrestomanci castle, the world in-between where Christopher travels, therefore, represents the symbolic push and pull in the course of the development of the child's agency. As Jones puts it,

The Place Between made his voice sound no louder than a bird cheeping. The windy fog seemed to snatch the sound away and bury it in a flurry of rain. Right from the start of his dreams, he had known that The Place Between liked to have everything that did not belong sent back to the place it came from. (Jones, 1988, p. 117)

The setting of the natural world, the magical world, and the social space represent the worlds with which the child's power needs to interact. In this aspect, Jones' works separate adults' powerful influences from other social influences and portray how they influence the child protagonists. The Chrestomanci castle in the series is introduced in the first book and

continues to play a role of the symbolic space of moral and governmental authority. The castle also represents both family and school space for the protagonists and Jones characterizes her child protagonists through descriptions of their interaction with these spaces and power. The opposing power of the child's agency with the adult's normativity is done through the setting of magic and the implication of power in the surrounding which helps the child reader to understand other aspects of social ideologies at work.

4. Conclusion

The reading of Diana Wynne Jones's Chrestomanci series has opened a new line of inquiry into the text's function as an ideological tool and its message about power. In reference to Peter Hollindale's different levels of ideology in Children's text (Hollindale, 2011), the surface level and deeper level of social ideology prove to contradict each other in the works of Diana Wynne Jones. The active ideology shapes the function of text for children as a didactic tool while its subversive message of the passive ideology requires a more critical reading such as being done so far in this paper.

The metaphoric and metonymic nature of the fantasy parallel world allows the use of magic to represent each child's development. In most titles of the series such as *Charmed Life* (1977), *The Magicians of Caprona* (1980), *The Lives of Christopher Chant* (1988) *Conrad's Fate* (2005), and *The Pinhoe Egg*. (2006), while the children are learning to make sense of their own life in their surroundings, the real-world issues such as the capitalist financial market and the ecological problem are also mentioned. The power relations between adult and child in the series are reversed, raising questions about aetionormative roles and stereotypes. The adult and child antagonists also show the possible reversal of the power position. It can be concluded that a fantastic universe has been created to critically represent the real world. Other fantasy series by Jones such as the *Magids* series (Jones, 1997, 2004) also deal with an alternative world in which the protagonist thrives better under the fantasy circumstances.

The fantasy elements and magical powers in Diana Wynne Jones's *Chrestomanci* series connect to the child protagonist's realization of their power. Through the concept of aetonormativity (Nikolajeva, 2010), while adult and social rules in the stories delay the child characters' self-discovery and the development of their concept of morality, the children's magical power works in their favor and leads them to discover the truth about themselves and the truth about their unjust surroundings. However, the fantasy space in the *Chrestomanci* series does not allow the child characters to trespass the aetonormative boundary, the power hierarchy is still intact as the stories end. The power hierarchy is observably non-negotiable as an adult character always resumes power after a child character finishes the quest. Child characters, therefore, are empowered by magical powers, yet are disempowered by their social position under adult normativity. The agency of child characters is accepted or denied, but eventually, their life conditions compel them to grow up and empower themselves. The function of children's literature may raise the reader's awareness of the adult norms but at the same time, as Jones portrays in her series, the subversive message on power seems to suggest that certain rules are not absolute, and there is always a power dynamic at play.

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