

## Feminism and Female Autonomy in *Short Stories from Hogwarts: Minerva McGonagall*

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### ABSTRACT

The wizarding world created by J. K. Rowling continued to attract scholarly interest because it offered narratives with recognizable social structures through which gender roles could be examined. However, many discussions of gender in Harry Potter-related texts tended to emphasize younger characters, while the feminist values of mature female figures received less attention. This study examined how feminist values were reflected in the character of Minerva McGonagall in *Short Stories from Hogwarts of Heroism, Hardship and Dangerous Hobbies* by J. K. Rowling. The aim was to explore how McGonagall's actions, leadership, and moral choices expressed ideas that aligned with feminist thought. The study employed qualitative research design to identify patterns in McGonagall's portrayal. The data were collected through intensive reading of the text, focusing on passages that illustrated her values, decisions, and leadership style. The analysis used the feminist theoretical framework proposed by Tong and Botts, focusing particularly on liberal feminism and radical feminism. The findings showed that McGonagall's character embodied feminist values such as equality, justice, and autonomy. These values were expressed through her commitment to her profession, principled decision-making, and resistance to restrictive gender norms. Her leadership demonstrated that feminist values could be conveyed through calm, consistent, and principled authority. These results suggested that McGonagall represented a form of female empowerment that was both subtle and impactful, offering an alternative model of feminist leadership in literature.

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

Feminism is a movement and a critical framework that focuses on examining and challenging inequalities based on gender. At its core, feminism believes in the equal value, rights, and opportunities of women and men in all areas of life, including education, politics, and the workplace (Fotaki & Pullen, 2024). It also looks closely at how systems of power affect individuals differently depending on their gender, and how these systems can be changed. Feminism has developed through different waves and perspectives, such as liberal feminism, which focuses on legal equality; radical feminism, which highlights patriarchal control in everyday life; and intersectional feminism, which explores the ways gender overlaps with other identity factors such as race, class, and sexuality (Kark & Buengeler, 2024). While these branches may emphasize different issues, they all share the goal of building a more equal and fair society (Baysal, 2022). Feminism also provides useful tools for analyzing texts, including literary works, to see how gender roles are represented, reinforced, or challenged in stories that people read and watch.

In today's world, feminism continues to be relevant because gender-based problems still exist, even though society has made progress. Women still face obstacles in accessing leadership roles, equal pay, and fair treatment in many parts of the world (Agung, 2024). Cultural expectations often shape how women are supposed to behave, and these expectations are repeated through the media, including

books, films, and television (Sachar, 2024). These representations help form public ideas about gender, which can influence both personal behavior and institutional policies (Naufina, 2021). Therefore, analyzing how female characters are portrayed in popular literature is an important part of feminist work. Stories can be a powerful way to either question or reinforce social norms (Agung, 2025). Through literature, readers are introduced to characters who either resist or conform to certain gender roles, and these characters can shape how readers understand what it means to be a woman (Pujimahanani et al., 2022). For this reason, feminist literary criticism continues to play an important role in both academic and social discussions.

The *Harry Potter* series by J.K. Rowling is a well-known example of how literature can reflect and shape ideas about gender. The series has had a strong influence on global readers, especially younger audiences. Previous studies on gender in the *Harry Potter* series have mostly focused on younger characters and how they grow into their identities (Hakim et al., 2024; Nasrullah & Supriyadi, 2024; Wara & de Bruin, 2024). While this is an important area of research, it often overlooks more mature female figures whose roles are equally meaningful, such as Professor Minerva McGonagall. In many literary works, mature female characters are often confined to limited roles, typically portrayed as caregivers, maternal figures, or background characters, especially when they do not fit into traditional roles such as mothers or romantic partners (Ladzekpo et al., 2024; Tindale, 2023). However, Minerva McGonagall stands out as a powerful exception. She holds a high-ranking position within a traditionally male-led institution, and she leads with both competence and conviction. She is someone who makes her own decisions, speaks up against injustice, and takes part in important events that shape history. Studying Minerva McGonagall through a feminist lens allows us to explore how feminist ideas can be embodied by characters who lead with integrity, make independent decisions, and uphold justice through institutional roles rather than dramatic acts of rebellion.

Another important point to consider is that McGonagall challenges traditional ideas of femininity and leadership, not by rejecting them entirely, but by reshaping how they are expressed. She is not portrayed as overly emotional or dependent, traits that are often used to reduce women to stereotypes (Stuhler, 2024). However, she shows a strong sense of care and protection toward her students and colleagues. Her nurturing qualities are evident in the way she defends her students, supports their growth, and maintains fairness in her decisions. What makes her stand out is that she combines this nurturing nature with firmness, discipline, and authority. She shows that a woman can be powerful without being romanticized or softened to fit into expected roles (Falaily & Dewi, 2023). Her leadership is based on competence, trust, and responsibility. She supports her students, but she also holds them accountable. She is loyal to her values, even when it means standing up to people in higher positions. These actions reflect feminist principles such as justice, equality, and moral strength (Benschop, 2021). McGonagall's character invites readers to rethink what leadership looks like and to consider how women can lead in ways that are ethical, strong, and independent (Pullen & Vachhani, 2021).

Several previous studies have explored feminist representations in literature by focusing on female characters who resist patriarchal norms, assert agency, or challenge traditional roles. Wara & de Bruin (2024), for instance, examine Hermione Granger's transformation in the *Harry Potter* through the lens of postfeminism and "girl power." They argue that Hermione's character was reshaped to align with the ideal of an empowered girl, especially by reallocating lines from male characters and enhancing her physical agency. Similarly, Suwastini et al. (2021) analyze *Matilda* using liberal feminist theory, showing how both Matilda and Miss Honey subvert oppressive family structures through intellectual and emotional independence. Anggraini & Retnaningdyah (2022) in their study of *Enola Holmes*, emphasize women's rebellion across individual, familial, and societal levels, using Mill's feminist theory and Bartlett's rebellious feminism to trace how female characters resist Victorian-era gender restrictions. Yusuf & Susilo (2020) adopt existentialist feminism to study

*Cigarette Girl*, emphasizing women's resistance to objectification and their pursuit of subjectivity and economic independence. Meanwhile, Aeniaska et al. (2025) explore *Little Women* through Simone de Beauvoir's framework, focusing on themes of transcendence, otherness, and the complexity of women's autonomy within 19th-century gender norms. These studies demonstrate the richness of feminist readings across genres and time periods, but most of them focus on younger female protagonists and dramatic acts of resistance. In contrast, this article examines Minerva McGonagall, a senior female character whose leadership, principled stance, and quiet strength reflect feminist values that are often less visible but equally impactful.

The urgency of the present study lies in the fact that feminist values in literature are not only expressed through youthful rebellion but also through mature forms of agency that are quieter, institutional, and sustained over time. This article offers novelty by shifting attention from young protagonists to Minerva McGonagall as a senior female figure whose choices, discipline, and moral consistency shape an institution and the people within it. More specifically, while the previous studies examine empowerment through visible performance, rebellion, or personal emancipation, this research examines empowerment through long-term autonomy, professional commitment, and principled decisions that protect one's identity and purpose. By applying the feminist theoretical framework outlined by Tong and Botts (2024), this study clarifies how liberal and radical feminist concerns can be traced in McGonagall's life narrative. In this way, the article contributes to feminist literary criticism by showing that feminism can be represented through mature female agency that is firm, consistent, and socially meaningful.

The aim of this article is to examine how feminist values are reflected in the character of Minerva McGonagall as depicted in J.K. Rowling's *Short Stories from Hogwarts of Heroism, Hardship and Dangerous Hobbies* (2016). McGonagall is a central figure whose professional achievements, moral convictions, and leadership decisions position her as a role model within the narrative. The analysis focuses on how her actions, leadership style, and ethical choices reflect core ideas in feminism, including justice, equality, compassion, and principled strength. By observing her consistent commitment to fairness, her ability to lead with authority while maintaining empathy, and her willingness to challenge unjust practices, the study identifies how McGonagall embodies a feminist approach to leadership. This research applies the feminist theoretical framework proposed by Tong & Botts (2024) to explore how her character represents a form of female empowerment. The findings aim to contribute to existing discussions on gender representation in literature by offering a new perspective on how feminism can be expressed through characters who lead with a balance of strength, wisdom, and integrity.

## 2. METHOD

This study employed a qualitative method to examine the feminist values reflected in the character of Minerva McGonagall in *Short Stories from Hogwarts of Heroism, Hardship and Dangerous Hobbies*. Written by J.K. Rowling and published by Pottermore Publishing in 2016, the collection presents biographical narratives of several Hogwarts staff members, including Professor McGonagall. The work was chosen as the data source because of its detailed portrayal of McGonagall's personal story, professional achievements, and leadership style, which offers a rich context for exploring feminist ideas through a mature female character. McGonagall was selected as the research focus because she represented a mature female figure whose feminist values were often less discussed than younger characters, even though her life story included key moments related to autonomy, career, and gender expectations. Data were collected through intensive reading of the text, with attention to passages that highlight McGonagall's actions, decision-making, and relationships in ways that align with feminist principles. Relevant excerpts were highlighted, and detailed notes were taken to capture instances of empowerment, ethical leadership, and resistance to restrictive gender norms.

The data were then analyzed using the feminist theoretical framework proposed by Tong & Botts (2024), which served as the foundation for analyzing how McGonagall's character reflects feminist values. Each excerpt was examined by matching its key ideas with the characteristics of feminist perspectives discussed in the framework. In particular, liberal feminism was used to interpret data related to equal opportunity, education, and women's access to professional roles. Radical feminism was used to interpret excerpts that revealed deeper patriarchal restrictions, especially when marriage and domestic expectations threatened women's autonomy.

### 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study show that Minerva McGonagall consistently embodies feminist values through her life choices, leadership, and moral principles. Set within the wizarding world, patriarchal environment is often shaped by institutional authority, status expectations, and gendered constraints. Power is concentrated in formal institutions such as the Ministry of Magic, Hogwarts, and Daily Prophet, which regulate what counts as legitimate knowledge, acceptable behaviour, and lawful resistance. Social rank also functions as a powerful organizing logic through blood purity ideology and elite family networks, where lineage, reputation, and inherited privilege are treated as markers of credibility and entitlement. Within this setting, gendered expectations further narrow the space available to women, who are often pressured to be compliant, restrained, and nonthreatening even when they hold expertise or leadership roles.

However, McGonagall maintains her autonomy and refuses to let social pressure determine her role and identity. Across key moments in her life, she demonstrates both liberal and radical feminist values by asserting her right to pursue a career without sacrificing her autonomy, resisting social pressures tied to gender and status, protecting others under oppressive authority, and maintaining resilience despite personal losses. Her portrayal reveals a form of empowerment grounded in autonomy, integrity, and resistance to restrictive gender norms. Building on these findings, the following discussion examines how McGonagall's life choices, professional conduct, and acts of resistance align with key ideas from liberal and radical feminism, highlighting the ways in which her character challenges and redefines traditional gender expectations.

#### 3.1 Minerva McGonagall Through The Lens of Liberal Feminism

Liberal feminism, as described by Tong & Botts (2024), emphasizes the pursuit of gender equality through legal, political, and institutional reforms that grant women the same opportunities, rights, and access as men. It focuses on dismantling barriers that prevent women from advancing in education, careers, and leadership roles, while affirming that merit and individual capability should determine one's success rather than gender. This perspective assumes that when women are given equal opportunities and fair treatment, they can achieve the same levels of accomplishment as men in all areas of life. The following examples illustrate how McGonagall's life choices reflect the ideas of liberal feminism.

##### Data 1

*"Minerva was quickly recognised as the most outstanding student of her year, with a particular talent for Transfiguration. As she progressed through the school, she demonstrated that she had inherited both her mother's talents and her father's cast-iron moral sense. By the end of her education at Hogwarts, Minerva McGonagall had achieved an impressive record: top grades in O.W.L.s*

*and N.E.W.T.s, Prefect, Head Girl, and winner of the Transfiguration Today Most Promising Newcomer award.”*

(Rowling, 2016, p.12)

The excerpt in data 1 reflects the principles of liberal feminism as outlined by Tong & Botts (2024), which advocates for women’s equal access to education, career advancement, and leadership opportunities, emphasizing the removal of structural and social barriers that limit women’s potential. Minerva McGonagall’s journey as described in the text illustrates the liberal feminist belief that talent, dedication, and moral integrity should be the basis for success, rather than gendered expectations. Her recognition as the most outstanding student of the year signifies not only her exceptional intellectual and practical abilities, particularly in the challenging discipline of Transfiguration, but also the institutional acknowledgment of a woman’s competence in a sphere traditionally associated with intellectual rigor and authority.

McGonagall’s achievements demonstrate her capacity to excel within merit-based systems. From a liberal feminist standpoint, such accomplishments challenge any assumption that leadership roles or academic excellence are inherently male domains. Her success also highlights the role of educational institutions, such as Hogwarts, in providing platforms where women’s achievements can be formally recognized and rewarded. Furthermore, the mention of her “cast-iron moral sense” suggests a leadership style grounded in ethical consistency, aligning with liberal feminist ideals that leadership should be evaluated by competence and integrity rather than adherence to prescribed gender roles.

#### Data 2

*“The school greeted Minerva McGonagall’s return with delight. Minerva threw herself into her work, proving herself a strict but inspirational teacher. If she kept letters from Dougal McGregor locked in a box under her bed, this was (she told herself firmly) better than keeping her wand locked there.”*

(Rowling, 2016, p.16)

In the passage in data 2, McGonagall’s return to Hogwarts as a teacher marks a significant moment of self-determination. Dougal McGregor, the man whose letters she keeps locked away, was a Muggle farmer to whom she was once briefly engaged. A Muggle, in the wizarding world, is a person born without magical abilities and outside the magical community. Although they shared affection and mutual respect, Dougal was unaware of McGonagall’s identity as a witch, a truth she was legally forbidden to reveal under the International Statute of Secrecy. In ending the engagement, McGonagall had already chosen to protect her independence and pursue her career rather than enter a marriage that would have required her to hide her identity and abandon her ambitions.

Her return to Hogwarts signifies a continuation of this choice. Immersing herself in her work, she builds a reputation as a “strict but inspirational” educator, a role that allows her to fully exercise her talents and authority. This decision reflects the liberal feminist emphasis on women’s right to pursue fulfilling careers based on merit, skill, and dedication rather than conforming to traditional expectations of domestic life. The symbolic contrast between keeping Dougal’s letters locked away and her earlier fear of keeping her wand locked away is striking. It represents her conscious prioritization of her magical ability, professional identity, and independence over a traditional marriage that could have curtailed her agency. By prioritizing her teaching career, McGonagall embodies the liberal feminist belief that women’s worth should not be defined by marital status but by their abilities, contributions, and achievements. Her role as a teacher who inspires students while upholding high standards demonstrates that female leadership can be both principled and empowering. This reinforces the idea that women can, and should, thrive in positions of influence

when given equal opportunity, further illustrating how her life choices align with the principles of liberal feminism.

Data 3

*“The accidental death of Elphinstone from a Venomous Tentacula bite, three years into their marriage, was an enormous sorrow to all who knew the couple. Minerva could not bear to remain alone in their cottage, but packed her things after Elphinstone’s funeral and returned to her sparse stone-floored bedroom in Hogwarts Castle, accessible through a concealed door in the wall of her first-floor study. Always a very brave and private person, she poured all her energies into her work, and few people excepting perhaps Albus Dumbledore – ever realised how much she suffered.”*

(Rowling, 2016, p.18)

In the excerpt in data 3, Minerva McGonagall’s response to the death of her husband, Elphinstone Urquart, underscores her resilience, independence, and commitment to her professional life. These are the qualities that align with liberal feminist values. Rather than remaining in the shared home that now symbolizes loss, she makes the decisive choice to return to Hogwarts, reclaiming both her personal space and her identity as an educator and leader. This act reflects the liberal feminist principle that women’s self-worth and fulfillment are not solely dependent on their roles as wives or partners but can be defined through their professional contributions and personal autonomy.

McGonagall’s decision to channel her grief into her work demonstrates the liberal feminist emphasis on equal opportunity and self-determination, as she continues to assert her place in a position of authority at Hogwarts. Her role in the school remains grounded in her capability and dedication, not her marital status or personal loss. The description of her as “a very brave and private person” who maintains her responsibilities despite deep sorrow suggests a quiet yet firm model of female strength, one that resists societal narratives of women as emotionally incapacitated or dependent in the aftermath of a spouse’s death. From a gender perspective, her choice to immerse herself in meaningful work rather than retreat from public and professional life challenges the traditional expectation that widowhood should define a woman’s identity or limit her societal engagement. By sustaining her leadership and influence at Hogwarts, McGonagall affirms the liberal feminist view that women have the capacity to continue leading, achieving, and inspiring regardless of personal tragedy.

Data 4

*“Minerva McGonagall’s actions during the famous Battle of Hogwarts proved that her allegiance to the Order of the Phoenix had never wavered. She was one of the last to duel Voldemort before his death, an encounter she survived, and she subsequently became a successful and inspirational Headmistress of the school she had served so long and well. Minerva McGonagall was later awarded the Order of Merlin, First Class, by the new Minister for Magic, Kingsley Shacklebolt, and shortly afterwards appeared on a card in the Chocolate Frog Famous Witches and Wizards series, an accolade she admitted she had never imagined receiving.”*

(Rowling, 2016, p.20)

From a liberal feminist perspective, McGonagall's actions during the Battle of Hogwarts and her subsequent career milestones illustrate the belief that women should have equal opportunities to demonstrate their abilities, take on leadership roles, and receive recognition for their achievements. Her decision to remain in the heart of the battle, engaging in a direct duel with Voldemort, reflects not only personal bravery but also a commitment to the protection and liberation of her community. This moment positions her alongside other key figures in the resistance, proving that leadership in times of crisis is not determined by gender but by skill, resolve, and moral conviction.

Following the war, her appointment as Headmistress of Hogwarts underscores her professional competence and the trust placed in her to guide the institution into a new era. The formal recognition of her contributions, through the Order of Merlin, First Class, awarded by Minister for Magic Kingsley Shacklebolt, and her inclusion in the Chocolate Frog Famous Witches and Wizards series, serves as symbolic and institutional acknowledgment of her exceptional service. These honors carry weight not just as personal achievements but as public affirmations that women's leadership, intellect, and courage are worthy of celebration and historical remembrance. McGonagall's narrative reflects the liberal feminist aim of dismantling gender-based barriers to success, promoting the principle that merit and capability should define one's opportunities and rewards. Her life story challenges the cultural and institutional biases that have historically restricted women's roles, instead presenting a vision of female leadership that is competent, principled, and deserving of both authority and acclaim.

### 3.2 Radical Feminism in Minerva McGonagall's Agency and Leadership

Radical feminism, as described by Tong & Botts (2024), views gender inequality as stemming from deeply rooted systems of patriarchy that shape laws, institutions, cultural norms, and personal relationships in ways that maintain male dominance and female subordination. It seeks not only to address surface-level inequalities but also to challenge and transform the underlying structures that limit women's autonomy, agency, and self-determination. This perspective emphasizes that achieving true equality requires dismantling oppressive systems rather than simply working within them. The following examples from Minerva McGonagall's life illustrate how her choices reflect the ideals of radical feminism.

#### Data 5

*"Minerva had witnessed at close quarters the kind of marriage she might have if she wed Dougal. It would be the end of all her ambitions; it would mean a wand locked away, and children taught to lie, perhaps even to their own father. She did not fool herself that Dougal McGregor would accompany her to London, while she went to work every day at the Ministry. He was looking forward to inheriting his father's farm. Early next morning, Minerva slipped from her parents' house and went to tell Dougal that she had changed her mind, and could not marry him."*

(Rowling, 2016, p.14)

In the passage in data 5, McGonagall's decision to end her engagement to Dougal demonstrates a deep awareness of both the structural and personal limitations that marriage, in her specific social context, would impose upon her. Dougal McGregor is a Muggle, a person born without magical abilities and who does not belong to the magical community. In addition, he has no knowledge that McGonagall is a witch. This secrecy is not merely a personal choice but a legal obligation under the International Statute of Secrecy, which prohibits witches and wizards from revealing their magical identity to Muggles. McGonagall understands that marrying Dougal would not simply alter her daily life but would fundamentally change her opportunities, aspirations, and personal freedom. The

statement that such a union would mean “the end of all her ambitions” captures the reality that traditional marriage for women of her time often entailed abandoning professional goals in favor of domestic responsibilities. This awareness reflects an advanced consciousness of how cultural norms surrounding marriage can operate as mechanisms of control, restricting women’s independence and reinforcing a gendered division of labor. Her vision of a future where her “wand (would be) locked away” and her children “taught to lie” underscores the conflict between her magical identity and the domestic expectations of a Muggle household, signaling her rejection of a life marked by secrecy, suppression of talent, and conformity to an oppressive system that dictates both her professional and personal conduct.

From a radical feminist standpoint, McGonagall’s choice to prioritize her career at the Ministry over the socially sanctioned path of marriage is a deliberate challenge to patriarchal norms that define women’s worth through their roles as wives and mothers. By refusing to subordinate her identity, abilities, and ambitions to the expectations of her fiancé or society, she enacts the radical feminist call to dismantle systemic barriers that limit women’s agency. Her decision is not merely an individual act of self-preservation but a rejection of the broader societal structures that normalize women’s sacrifice for male-centered domestic life. The fact that she cannot reveal the full reason for her refusal to marry, as doing so would violate wizarding law, adds another layer of complexity to her choice. Even under the constraints of secrecy, the act of walking away from the engagement, despite emotional and social costs, becomes a symbolic act of resistance. In rejecting the life of domestic confinement and concealment that awaited her in a Muggle marriage, McGonagall affirms the radical feminist belief that women’s fulfillment, autonomy, and public contributions should never be compromised to satisfy traditional gendered expectations.

#### Data 6

*“The death of Dougal McGregor, however, although traumatic, seemed to free Minerva. Shortly after Voldemort’s first defeat, Elphinstone, now white-haired, proposed again during a summertime stroll around the lake in the Hogwarts grounds. This time Minerva accepted. Known to successive generations of students as ‘Professor McGonagall,’ Minerva – always something of a feminist – announced that she would be keeping her own name upon marriage. Traditionalists sniffed– why was Minerva refusing to accept a pure-blood name, and keeping that of her Muggle father?”*

(Rowling, 2016, p.18)

In the passage in data 6, McGonagall’s relationship with Elphinstone Urquart, her former superior at the Ministry of Magic. It illustrates another significant moment in her negotiation of personal relationships and professional identity. Elphinstone persistently proposed to her over the years, though she initially refused his offers due to her enduring feelings for Dougal McGregor. Dougal, a Muggle farmer and her first love, had been central to a difficult earlier decision in which McGonagall chose independence and a magical career over marriage and secrecy. His death, though deeply painful, eventually allowed McGonagall to reconsider Elphinstone’s proposal without the emotional conflict of unresolved attachment. When she finally accepted, the union was one of mutual respect rather than personal sacrifice, as she could continue her work at Hogwarts and maintain her autonomy.

What is particularly notable from a feminist perspective is McGonagall’s decision to retain her own surname after marriage. This choice directly challenges the traditional wizarding custom, mirroring patriarchal naming conventions in the non-magical world, where women adopt their

husband's surname. Elphinstone's surname, Urquart, is a pure-blood family name, regarded by some within the wizarding community as socially and culturally superior. In wizarding society, pure-blood names are often regarded as more elite and respectable, reinforcing a hierarchical system that privileges magical heritage over Muggle ancestry. By choosing to retain her Muggle father's surname, McGonagall not only resists the patriarchal tradition of women taking their husband's name but also challenges the bloodline-based prejudices of her community.

Minerva McGonagall's decision to keep her own surname after marrying Elphinstone Urquart reflects a radical feminist stance. From a radical feminist perspective, this act goes beyond personal preference and constitutes a rejection of the systemic norms that seek to define a woman's identity through her marital status and her husband's social standing. McGonagall's choice undermines two intersecting power structures: patriarchy, which assumes a woman's surname should be subsumed under her husband's, and the elitist blood-purity ideology that values pure-blood lineage above all else. By deliberately holding onto her father's Muggle surname, she affirms her own identity, resists assimilation into a more socially "acceptable" pure-blood identity and makes a statement about equality and integrity.

This action also aligns with McGonagall's broader characterization as "always something of a feminist," demonstrating that her principles are not situational but consistent across her personal and professional life. She does not compromise her beliefs for social approval, even when faced with "traditionalists" who disapprove. Instead, she embodies the radical feminist commitment to dismantling deep-seated cultural norms that limit women's autonomy and reinforce unjust hierarchies. Her decision reflects a belief that a woman's identity should remain self-defined, unmediated by the expectations of patriarchal or elitist systems, and it serves as a powerful example of personal resistance within a broader struggle for gender and social equality.

#### Data 7

*"Following the promotion of Severus Snape to Headmaster, after her temporary stewardship of the school, Minerva McGonagall remained in post to protect the students as best she could from the malicious attentions of the Carrows, the Death Eater teachers imposed upon the school by Lord Voldemort."*

(Rowling, 2016, p.20)

The excerpt in data 7 illustrates Minerva McGonagall's decision to remain at Hogwarts following Severus Snape's promotion to Headmaster, despite the oppressive presence of the Carrows, Death Eater members loyal to Lord Voldemort. Her decision reflects a form of radical feminist resistance grounded in the protection and empowerment of the vulnerable. Rather than withdrawing from a hostile and dangerous environment, she chooses to stay in a position of authority, using the power she retains to safeguard the students under her care. This choice represents a direct challenge to an authoritarian and patriarchal system, as the Carrows' teaching methods embody violence, fear, and ideological control.

From a radical feminist perspective, McGonagall's actions are crucial because she refuses to cooperate with an oppressive regime and works to challenge the system that causes harm. Her role is not just about surviving; it is about actively protecting the students from the abuses of those in power. This aligns with radical feminism's aim to confront and dismantle systemic power imbalances, particularly those that maintain dominance through coercion and violence. Her commitment to protecting the students, even when doing so requires enduring personal risk, also reinforces the idea that feminist leadership can be both protective and oppositional. By staying in her post, McGonagall uses her authority not to uphold the existing order but to subvert it from within, challenging the legitimacy and control of those in power. This strategic defiance positions her as a figure of principled

resistance, embodying the radical feminist belief that transformative change often requires confronting oppressive systems directly, even under dangerous circumstances.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This study examined how feminist values are reflected in the character of Minerva McGonagall. It addresses the gap in existing discussions of gender in literary texts, which often focus on younger characters and overt form of resistance, while paying less attention to the feminist values embodied by mature female figures. The analysis reveals that McGonagall's life choices, professional dedication, and acts of resistance embody key principles from both liberal and radical feminism. Her refusal to enter marriages that would limit her ambitions, her decision to retain her Muggle father's surname despite pure-blood elitism, her unwavering protection of students during oppressive leadership, and her resilience in the face of personal loss, all highlight a form of women's empowerment rooted in integrity, wisdom, and independence. The key takeaway is that feminist values in literature can be effectively conveyed through characters whose leadership and influence are grounded in ethical conviction rather than overt activism. Practically, this study encourages further exploration of mature female characters in literature as role models who challenge restrictive gender norms. Theoretically, it expands the understanding of feminist representation by showing how subtle yet consistent resistance to patriarchal structures can be as transformative as more visible forms of activism. Future research could extend this analysis to comparable literary figures in fantasy and other genres. It would allow for a broader examination of how feminist values are embedded in diverse narrative contexts.

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