

Narrative analysis of Enid Blyton series of Malory Towers

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Abstract

The research is done to understand how girls are treated and represented in the girl's boarding school Malory Towers, a six-book series written by Enid Blyton. The researcher has used a narrative analysis approach to understand the motifs of the books. Malory Towers describes a journey of the girls from the beginning till the end of the term. The researcher tries to highlight the difference in treatment of girls considering the then societal perspectives during the period of 1930's to 1950's. The research follows the girls through six years at the school, sharing in their successes, failures and achievements as they work and play hard and observes whether they live up to the headmistress's expectations and turn from silly school girls into good, sound women. The researcher has vividly explained how Enid Blyton, has incorporated the ideas of feminism, casteism, racism etc, and yet has been accepted whole heartedly by her readers, who are especially children (Lee-Potter, 2017).

Keywords: *narrative analysis, treatment of girls, feminism, casteism, racism*

1. Introduction

Malory Towers takes us into a world of fiction where a girl was allowed to have as much fun as she wanted, not that she would convert to feminism, but it was hard to accept the fact that girls are seen as objects. Malory Towers is a female boarding school for in Cornwall, England. Blyton wrote six books between 1946 and 1951. Darrell is the protagonist, who arrives at Malory Towers and studies there from the first term till the sixth. She thinks things would move easily in the beginning but later realizes that she has a lot to take and learn. She becomes a head girl in the last term and is totally proud of her achievements.

There are six forms at Malory Towers from first to sixth and has four towers- North, South, East and West towers. There are approximately thirty-five to forty girls in each form, all who are divided among four houses. Darrell and her friends are in the North Tower, where most of the story takes place, and where the girls try to stay safe from getting into wrong books of Miss Potts, the house mistress or Matron, a motherly figure who took care of sick girls in the dorms. She arrives at Malory Towers very curious and eager. She is immensely impressed by Miss Grayling's speech which she always told the new girls on their first day of school. Hearing that, like all other girls, Darrell dreamt of being Malory Towers' successes. She thinks that everything would go smoothly, not in the least imagining that she would have to deal with her temper which could flare up anytime and anywhere. She wished that Alicia would be her friend, but was sad to know that Alicia already had a best friend Betty. She finally befriends sensible Sally and finds out that she could have never asked for a better person than Sally as her friend.

Darrell's school friends include sharp-tongued Alicia and her friend Betty, who liven many dull lessons with a trick or a joke, dependable Sally, timid Mary-Lou and spoilt, Gwendoline Mary Lacey. The research follows the girls through six years at the school, sharing in their successes, failures and achievements as they work and play hard and observes whether they live up to Miss Grayling's expectations and turn from silly schoolgirls into good, sound women (Gustafson, 2017). The aim of the research is to find out how the girls are treated and represented at Malory towers. This is done by using a narrative analysis approach on the basis of parameters like the point of view, setting, style, characterization, theme, plot etc.

2. Review of literature

In *The Other in the School Stories: A Phenomenon in British Children's Literature*, Ulrike Pesold studies the depiction of class, gender, race and ethnicity in certain school story books and shows how the treatment of the other gender developed over a given period. The study also portrays the transformation from the traditional school story to the witch school story that turned into a subgenre of its own. The school stories underwent analysis include famous works by Thomas Hughes, Rudyard Kipling, Enid Blyton and J.K. Rowling. It is not surprising when we look at Malory Towers; we clearly see the formulaic nature of her school stories. Almost every feature of the school story genre is there. This starts already with the setting. Malory Towers appears to have a tradition as a boarding school and is thus comparable to Rugby as depicted in Tom Brown's school days, since it is mentioned that Alicia's mother attended Malory Towers, too. Although Blyton has always been accused of "racism, chauvinism, anti-feminism, caste-consciousness" and bad-style, her books are widely read and loved by children (Pesold, 2017).

The concern here is to focus on Blyton's treatment of gender in her school series namely St. Clare's and Malory Towers. The world that is portrayed in the books is essentially a homogenous world inhabited by likeminded girls and conformity is one of the prime features of both her school series. Both these schools are boarding schools where girls come to receive an all round education after having been already schooled for a certain number of years. Those girls who have not received education at schools earlier and were actually taught by a governess at home like Gwendoline in Malory Towers and Alison in St Clare's are again criticized and are inevitably

portrayed as spoilt and weak. Tradition is again a very important aspect of education and most of the girls either had their mothers or aunts already as students of these schools or have sisters like Darrell's who follow their footsteps. At the same time, foreigners are always looked upon with a suspicious eye and are found to be non-conforming which tilts the balance that the English education system maintains. These are perspectives gleaned from an adult reading of the works and are assumptions formed after a long process of reading and rereading that has taken place over a lengthy period of childhood, adolescence and adulthood (Laskar, 2013).

One of the most useful aspects of this book, then, is the synthesis of themes found in Streatfeild's children novels. Huse delineates how a number of these interwoven themes create the fabric of Streatfeild's fiction for juveniles, including the role of a nanny or surrogate female caretaker in nurturing children; the importance of children's learning being encouraged so that they can explore opportunities for economic independence, especially those that evolve from artistic expression; the valorization of rebellious daughters' voices; the support siblings can provide one another; the significance of domestic management; the love that can be generated in multigenerational and multiclass nontraditional families; the need for courage during times of war and national duress; a respect for nature; and the joy animals, especially dogs, can bring to families. Huse employs feminist dialogics, for example, to analyze *Ballet Shoes* and Carol Gilligan's theories of female voice to establish the critical significance of *Party Shoes*. She integrates feminist reader-response theory into her text as smoothly as she does semiotics; her recognition of a child's desire to wear the marigold dress her mother has chosen for her, for example, resonates on both the levels of feminist symbolics and of visual iconography (Seelinger, 1997).

Enid Blyton's variety of dominant discourses of when she was alive and wrote books, are portrayed in her written works and this led to a lot of negative criticism of her work. But then, her writings are examples of alternative and emergent discourses as defined by Raymond Williams. In this article, the way Blyton has represented gender roles is considered, with specific reference to the characters Anne and George in the *Famous Five* series. Blyton's often contradictory representation of gender roles is considered, with particular reference to the portrayal of the characters Anne and George in the *Famous Five* series. There are lot of evidences available through her written works that she supported a discourse that boys or men were portrayed in a dominant manner when compared to girls or women. She ignores all kind of stereotypes and writes what she thinks is right. She shows different ways in which girls are not submissive to boys. Through her character of the tomboy George, Blyton shows that girls can do as well as boys in masculine tasks, and at the same time she also says that a feminine role like Anne is also available to them (Coetzee, 2011).

In the first place, Blyton focuses on the fact that women had a freedom to choose, at the time when they were not really given freedom by the society. That is shown by Coetzee, when Anne is always in confusion whether to join her cousins in their scary and mysterious adventures or not. That was because she was a fearful and not so bold girl like George. Coetzee also says that even though Anne shows discomfort, she is not forced or compelled by her cousins, neither is criticized for not participating in their activities. She is very well understood and her choice is

left to her. This shows that every girl's choice is accepted heartily. However, Coetzee fails to acknowledge George as an additional character exhibiting a freedom of choice, when choosing to be different from other girls.

In the second place, Blyton tries to create opportunities through her books for females to participate in masculine tasks just like George. Even Jo is another example of such a character. Certain aspects can actually be criticized from Blyton's books of *Five Fall into Adventure* and can be called sexist. The examples of Anne and Julian as a weak female and powerful male respectively can easily be understood from the book. These roles show men as brave, strong, over protective and stubborn whereas women are casted as sentimental, irritational, caring, down-to-earth and humble. These roles have been used to confirm the use of inequities, which still prevails today, such as not allowing women to become leaders and make decisions in fields like politics, in the family, academics and in the corporate world. Also, there exists the trend of paying men higher wages than women for doing the same job (if women are even able to obtain the job), and convincing women that they are not fit for careers in such areas as mathematics and engineering (Paunia, 2015).

The study on *The Narrative Techniques in William Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha Novels: The Sound and the Fury (1929) and As I Lay Dying (1930)* throw light on the thought processes, attitudes and behavior of the modern man in his personal life as well as in public life. The two novels reflect man's internal and psychological struggles which are minutely observed by William Faulkner. In both the novels, Faulkner has presented the thought patterns, attitudes, psychological imbalances, and memories from the past through the different kinds of narrative techniques.

The narrative techniques employed by Faulkner are unique which have never been experimented by the other writers of Stream of Consciousness. Faulkner has used Stream of Consciousness, Point of view and Multiplicity of narration based on the idea that human consciousness is fluid, moving like a stream. This fluidity is presented by the inner thoughts, feelings and reactions of his characters, so that he is close to the truth of the subjective human experience. By using the Stream of Consciousness in these novels, Faulkner reveals the characters not through their actions but through the inner workings of their mind. He has a unique way of narrating that helps the readers to find out the event of the story from each of the characters. The readers also come to know that the attitudes of the Compsons and the Bundrens towards others through their own eyes and the (Maharudrappa, 2013).

3. Methodology

The researcher has employed a narrative analysis approach with a feministic perspective. A Narrative is a sequence of events told to the narratee by the narrator which means that it is the kind of art that helps to tell a story in an understandable and easy manner so that the story sounds to make a story more effective and more interesting for a listener/reader to understand properly. All types of media can be analyzed used narrative analysis on the basis of the plot, theme, characters, narration, point of view etc. The narrative theory is not about what lies within stories but what is common in those stories (Gehrke, 2009).

Foss explains four characteristics that distinguish narratives from other rhetorical forms. Firstly, narratives should contain at least two happening events which can be passive or active. Secondly, then events must be in a particular sequence. Even if they are in order, they cannot be just listed as occurrences, which lead to the third factor. There must be a relationship existing between events. They are not random, unrelated phenomena. Instead, both parts are dependent on each other and the subjects must be in unity. They must have a connection and you cannot order disconnected thoughts and put them in a list of events, considering them a coherent narrative. Some of the parameters used for analysis are the following: setting, themes, characters, relationships, narrators, and the audience. These characteristics can help by defining narratives broader implications. The narratives analyzed in the research are the seven books of Malory Towers by Enid Blyton. These books consist of fictional events whose plot is a mix of introduction, conflicts, action, climax, falling action, and the solutions. To analyze the text with a feminist perspective, it is important for the researcher to understand feelings, actions, observations, conflicts etc. of characters i.e. the plot as a whole. Thus a narrative analysis approach would be the most appropriate research method for performing a research on the books of Malory towers.

3.2.1 Point of View

Point of view or narrative mode is the mode of narration of a story. It is the parameter of a literary text which talks about the method employed by the author to spread the story to the reader. It describes many overlapping fields of concern, most important of which is the point of view. The story is either read through a person's eyes, thus narrative voice determines the way in which it is read.

3.2.2 Setting

Setting is the background where the real action of a narrative takes place. It talks both about the time and place of events and also the particular time or period, geographic location, environment as well as social and political realities. The setting is based primarily on the theme and choice of the places like a house, forest, castle, or office.

3.2.3 Plot

A plot is the most important part of a novel. Without a plot, there won't be any story. It structures the story and holds important elements of the story. The plot has to be legit; readers must be able to believe it, understandable, acceptable and interesting. A sequence of events in a story, make up a plot.

3.2.4 Theme

A theme is the major comprehension of the story that the author wants the reader to be aware of while he reads. It is the unique idea of how the story is structured. It gives the significance or concept that we would want to know while reading a fictional piece.

3.2.5 Characterization

This does sound very unreal but characterization is all about describing imaginary figures or people who may seem real to the reader while he reads. Most of the stories are driven by the

characters and increases the suspense and thrill of the reader. Characters are the ones that allure the reader into the story. It is all about how a character is represented or developed.

3.2.6 Style

Style is about a particular manner of using language and gives more information about the traits of an author. It describes the manner in which the writer uses language. It may be defined by the use of diction, tone, syntax, imagery, rhythm, and figures of speech, or by any other linguistic feature.

4. Analysis

Enid Blyton's series of Malory Towers is a well received fictional collection especially among children. The books are known for its variety of popular techniques experimented by her in the twentieth century. Malory Towers is a female boarding school for in Cornwall, England. Blyton wrote six books between 1946 and 1951. Darrell is the protagonist, who arrives at Malory Towers and studies there from the first term till the sixth. She thinks things would move easily in the beginning but later realizes that she has a lot to take and learn. She becomes a head girl in the last term and is totally proud of her achievements. There are six forms at Malory Towers from first to sixth and has four towers- North, South, East and West towers. There are approximately thirty-five to forty girls in each form, all who are divided among four houses. Darrell and her friends are in the North Tower, where most of the story takes place.

4.1 Point of view

The title of the novel series Malory towers very well indicates that the six books revolves at Malory Towers which are some sort of buildings . The protagonist is Darrell Rivers. The narration in the 1st book 'First Term at Malory Towers' begins with the narrator introducing Darrell to the reader. Later on, the narration happens mostly through Darrell's observations and thoughts. In other words, the story is explained through her eyes i.e. a third person perspective. *"Darrell stared about her at the girls on the crowded platform. They all seemed to be Malory girls, for she saw the brown coats and hats, with the orange ribbons, everywhere. They all seemed to know one another, and laughed and chattered at the tops of their voices."*

The novel's central concern is about how the girls are expected to transform from their irresponsible, immature ways to hard working, independent girls. This is understood by Miss Grayling's (the school principal) speech to every new girl who joins Malory Towers: *"One day you will leave school and go out into the world as young women. You should take with you eager minds, kind hearts, and a will to help. You should take with you a good understanding of many things, and a willingness to accept responsibility and show yourselves as women to be loved and trusted. All these things you will be able to learn at Malory Towers—if you will. I do not count as our successes those who have won scholarships and passed exams, though these are good things to do. I count as our successes those who learn to be good-hearted and kind, sensible and trustable, good, sound women the world can lean on. Our failures are those who do not learn these things in the years they are here"* (Blyton, First Term at Malory Towers, 2013).

The basic meaning of feminism is that women are equal to men. In the past, women's identity was made for them by men. Mrs. Grayling's words clearly indicate that she wants her girls to grow creating their own identity for themselves rather than accept one made for the convenience and domination of others. This is understood by her use of phrases like '*good, sound women the world can lean on*' and '*a will to help*'. She stresses on the thought that one day when they learn to be independent, they must not just stay in their shells but move out into the world. This is understood in her phrase '*go out into the world as young women*'. Most of the narration in the six books is in the protagonist Darrell's point of view. But, certain sections are also presented through other's perspectives. For instance, when Zerelda, the American girl was introduced in the third term, most of the sections were explained through her view, ie. what she observed about the other English girls at school. In the second year, the section 'Ellen has a bad idea' is described completely using Ellen as the narrator. In fact, the narration of multiple voices reflects the design of the novel by explaining the personality of each of the characters and their inner thought processes. In other words, though Darrell is the lead narrator, there are a number of narrators.

4.2 Setting

Malory Towers is described as an ancient castle-like building, even with a quadrangle, called "the Court". Thus the school can be seen as drawing tradition from both, the building and the institution. There are houses like the North, the East, the West and the South Tower, and the girls consider their house as the best house in the best school: "*Malory Towers. Best School in the world.*" The most compelling image in the Malory Towers books is that of the school swimming pool, hollowed out of a stretch of rocks down by the sea: 'Seaweed grew at the sides, and sometimes the rocky bed of the pool felt a little slimy. But the sea swept into the big natural pool each day, filled it, and made lovely waves all across it. It was a sheer delight to bathe there.' For years, the thought of the pool filled me with conflicted longing (Pesold, 2017). In the series, most chapters begin not with particular dates or years but according to relevance and significance. There are no specified figures depicting time periods, but the events are described with relevance to seasons and the climate.

4.3 Theme

Each book is about a single school term which describes newcomers trying to fit into a new community in a fantasy world, the challenges and happiness of making new friends, the visits by parents in between terms (also the fact that they appear very rarely between terms), the end term exams and most importantly the lacrosse games and other sports that were played.

The headmistress says that the best way to stay happy is by providing happiness to others, in other words give more priority to other's happiness rather than yours. The books are centered on this idea. All the characters must learn from their mistakes, face them without fear, and stand boldly when consequences are bad especially when they are responsible for causing grief to others. The basic phenomenon is that Malory Towers is like a circle of life where something that begins at one point ends at the same point.

4.4 Characterization

The book *In the Fifth at Malory Towers* (1950) is the most entertaining one according to the researcher. 16 year old Darrell is now in-charge of script writing for a pantomime that was to be held at the end of the term. The pantomime is named Cinderella. She is in a dilemma as to whether she is the right person chosen. She does not know if she will be able to do a good job of writing the script. Later she realizes that she possessed the talent of writing and that was when she tells Sally : *“It’s wonderful!” she said to Sally. “I didn’t know I could. I’m loving it. I say, Sally – do you think, do you possibly think I might have a sort of gift that way? I never thought I had any gift at all.”*

Similar to other writers, Enid Blyton gave a lot of importance to sport and physical fitness—clearly the girls who were pictured favourable were the ones who always involved in swimming, lacrosse, gym, nature walks and tennis. On the other hand, she did not put down other kind of girls who liked horses or maths. She explained with more interest of girls who loved writing. (Krishna, Enid Blyton, moral guide , 2016). A most important character is Miss Grayling, the headmistress who thinks that she knows all about her students. But, there are many things that she does not notice about them too: *“The things that go on in this school that nobody knows about!”* Still, she is loved by every girl and teacher of Malory Towers.

Another big insult is expulsion. A girl being expelled would not have a good future as it is mentioned that schools exchange student details. This would thus affect the admission of the expelled child to a new school at any point in her life. This can be seen when Miss Grayling says: *“It is the custom at Malory Towers to get a confidential report of any new girl’s character from her previous Head Mistress. We do not, if we can, help it, take girls of bad character”*. Blyton retains much of the original didactic element of the school story and occasionally we even have the narrator commenting on and evaluating the characters and their behavior.

The motif of being accused of stealing or destroying and of trying to prove one’s own or a friend’s innocence is a recurring event in the Malory Towers series. In First term at Malory Towers, Gwendoline tricks Mary Lou very shrewdly and then puts all the blame on Darrell. But, shy Mary Lou who always admired Darrell did not believe that Darrell would do such a thing and stood staunchly by her. In Second Form at Malory Towers, Daphne is shown as a real thief, but is also forgiven at the end, whereas the wrongly accused thief Ellen, who fell a prey to overwork and desperation, thinks of stealing the exam paper. Finally, she is forced by her mind to choose stealing the papers since she had already been accused of theft, and is caught. Once Daphne said the truth to everyone and Miss Grayling calmed down things, both the girls were accepted whole heartedly by all the girls. This motif then again comes up in Upper Fourth at Malory Towers, when the twins Connie and Ruth Batten come to the school. After the School Certificate exams, Connie who always dominated Ruth faced the insult of her doings. She failed and had to go down one form, whereas Ruth passed and moved on to the form above. She then learns to ignore her dominant sister and speak for herself. The girls in her form support her fully for this and always shooed Connie away whenever she turned up to meet Ruth.

The motif of getting lost is another recurring theme in Malory Towers. In Second Form at Malory Towers, Mary Lou falls over a cliff when she goes to post a parcel for Daphne. She goes out in the bad weather only to do a favour for her friend, not in the least knowing that the parcel contained stolen stuff of the girls in the dorm. Daphne, feeling terribly sorry for her and struck by Mary Lou's goodness goes out to find her in the storm. In Third Year at Malory Towers, Mavis, a girl with an amazing voice gets lost when she sneaks out of the school to participate in a talent spotting event conducted somewhere far from the school. She misses the bus and then is forced to walk back. Fortunately, she is found lying unconscious on the road. This deed of Mavis receives terrible punishment that is by her losing her beautiful voice. She wasn't able to sing for almost two years. The transgression of the school rules is immediately punished, as Mavis loses her voice. A good thing that came out of it was that she changed as a person and began to be liked by all the girls. She then regains her voice and leaves the school in the middle of the last term to train for singing.

We can also observe how a junior treats a senior, if she is not happy with the older student's behaviour. For example, Moira receives anonymous letters from someone and nobody has any idea as to whom it is. The letters turn out to have been written by June. Ellen forces herself to work hard for exams and be the topper, but she strains herself too much that she falls sick. This is shown right when Ellen is introduced into the story. "She had a very pale face and looked tired out. In the middle of her forehead was a deep line, cutting down between her eyebrows". The author has very well described Ellen's irritation and desperate feelings and why she is not able to focus on her work. Still, since Ellen is not from a rich family and is of middle class, she is not portrayed as having a bad character. This can maybe explain why she is the thief. Thus, when she gets the idea of stealing question papers, her character is tested slightly. She first decides not to cheat and then decides against that only when she is angry with the fact that she was already suspected for stealing stuff from the girls. Therefore, her act of stealing is supported by her reasons.

On the contrary, Daphne who is from a poor family, behaves differently. She boasts of being very rich, owning yachts and mansions and lies about being wealthy. In reality, it is her godmother who pays her college fees as her parents cannot afford to. The only girl who is no way affected by her study and stay in Malory Towers is Gwendoline Mary. She is part of upper middle class and a spoilt child. She never attended school and was educated at home by Miss Winter, her governess, whom she least respected. Later, she is punished for her behaviour-her father falls seriously ill and passes away. Thus, she who wanted to study abroad in a posh school in Switzerland ends up in doing a job to support her family. She finally understands her faults and is rewarded with the end of the father's life. Ultimately, she changed and has developed a better understanding of life:

Tidiness is yet another factor observed. Most of the characters are described as neat and tidy not only in their appearance but also keep their surroundings clean. Female friendships are encouraged and despite their share of frayed tempers and small altercations friendships are generally maintained but the narrative voice discourages wrong friendships. Darrell's liking for Alicia in the beginning is shown as a wrong start for Darrell and things go back to normal, when

each of the character chooses a like-minded friend for themselves. The teachers are generally shown to be adjustable with and calm but also strict and disciplined. Only the French Mamzelles are described slightly differently from others. They are portrayed as comical and people whom you could actually make fun of.

Characters like Gwendoline, Alison, Claudine and Zerelda, who show dislike for sports or outdoors, are in fact portrayed to be weak or silly and are teased often by the other girls. But at the same time, skill and liking for sports is to be kept within the limits and there shouldn't be any attempt to go beyond one's set limits. This is proved in a very telling manner in Blyton's treatment of Amanda's expertise in swimming in Last Term at Malory Towers where she almost drowns herself because she tries to swim out into the rough sea. Accordingly, Zerelda and other characters like her who are susceptible to any kind of female preening are presented as worthy of despise by the other characters (Laskar, 2013). Fortunately, all the girls were known to be successful later in their lives. Darrell and Sally went to study in St. Andrews University. Alicia and Betty too chose the same college. Mary Lou went to become a hospital nurse for children. Mavis went to train for a singing career. Irene went to learn music. Bill and Clarissa decided to put up a riding school together.

4.5 Style

The success of a novel depends on the creativity of a writer and whether the readers can involve in the world of fiction through the language. The explanation below is to try and analyze the author's narrative style used in Malory Towers. A writer's style and individuality can be observed by noticing his fondness towards use of certain types of words which gives a hint about the prevalent attitude of the writer. The writer is fond of using a wide variety of adjectives to describe a situation or a character. The description may seem exaggerated but makes it easier to picturise due to good use of verbs and adjectives. The way Darrell's playing has been described can prove this point. *"So Darrell did. She was nimble and swift, she was deft at catching, unselfish in her passing, and very sure in her attack on goal."*

Also, Amanda's swimming skills are described in a similar manner, what seems like an exaggeration, but imaginative due to the verbs and adjectives.

"Currents aren't dangerous to a strong swimmer like me," said Amanda, and flexed her arms to show Darrell her enormous muscles. She had great strong legs too. She was heavy in her walk, and not at all graceful in ordinary life- but when she was playing games or swimming, she had the strong grace of some big animal, and was most fascinating to watch (Blyton, Malory Towers: Last Term, Book 6, 2016)." Here, Amanda has been compared to a big animal which is a metaphor.

Many critics have also emphasized on the use of imagery and not only the use of syntax or language. This is because it is a definite representation of a sensible impression, a theme or an idea that appeals to human senses. Hence, imagery or figurative language, as a structuring device, is of prime importance in a novel as it helps in learning about local effects (Varghese, 2012).

The writing style that the author has used is powerful, creating a strong impact in the readers mind, yet the style staying simple and well presented. Enid Blyton is known for her ways of writing that would affect the reader forever. She has given prime importance to imagery and figurative speech like simile, metaphor, and hyperbolism, Onomatopoeia, Alliteration, Personification and Idioms.

The use of metaphor can be seen when Moira describes her sister Bridget to a tough nut. Later on, she describes her again to a rubber ball that can be squashed, which is hyperbolism. After that, she describes her sister again as awful. *“I've got a sister like that in the fourth,' said Moira, unexpectedly joining in. 'a tough nut if ever there was one. She's like a rubber ball — if you sit on her and squash her flat she bounces back to shape again immediately. Awful kid (Blyton, 2016).’*

The use of idiom can be seen in this context. *“Irene was in the seventh heaven of delight — if they did a pantomime, would they let her write the music? (Blyton, 2016)”*.

Personification can be seen in this context- *“Peters was riding fast through the night. The rain beat down on her but she didn't mind (Blyton, 2013).”*

Onomatopoeia can be seen in the sentence- *“Matron clucking behind like an astonished hen”*.

Alliterations used are numerous. Few examples would be- *a big black horse, colourless child, see the fur fly* etc. The use of language here reveals the nature of the character. For instance, the diction of Darrell in the beginning showcases her as a shy, curious girl and then later the same person is shown as losing her temper terribly in many situations. There is a clear variation in her thoughts and feelings as each term passes. The first perception of Darrell about herself is seen in the first term: *“ (Blyton, 2016)”*. She is not satisfied with not being very popular like Alicia in this context. In the last term, the same Darrell thinks: *“Darrell went out of the room, feeling so proud and pleased that she could have sung out loud. She was one of the successes!”*

The difference in voices also helps to find out the important differences among the characters. Blyton makes use of long sentences as well as short sentences. Her long sentences sometimes culminate into a paragraph, and she uses it with great skill. An example can be seen when Miss Hilbert gives an advice to Zerelda. *“Well, Zerelda, in order to be able to put yourself properly into some other character, you have to forget yourself entirely--forget your looks, your ambitions, your pride in acting, everything! And it takes a strong and understanding character to do that, someone without conceit or weakness of any sort--the finer the character of the actor, the better he can play any part (Blyton, 2016).”* It is so clearly seen that Blyton has made the best use of imagery in her work. The entire series is a blend of a connection of images. She forces the readers to leave their actual world and enter the world that she is talking about, through the use of her visual images. Thus, the figurative ideas or images add to the literal meaning of the story.

On further analysis, one finds out that the most distinctive trait in Enid Blyton's narrative style is repetition. Few instances that show repetition in the novel are: (1) Miss Grayling's speech to the

new comers is repeated almost four times in the whole series. That shows how the writer tried to inscribe it in the reader's mind. (2) The element of friendship being formed is another instance. It is always girls with similar characters who team up and become close friends. Either there is a pair of girls walking together or there is someone walking alone. A group is never mentioned anywhere. (3) Also, the idea of teachers creating a fast impression on the child is commonly seen. They tend to scan the girl and be judgmental about her character, mostly being right about their judgments. (4) The domination over Americans and the French is another context.

The two French Mamzelles are portrayed rather comically, immature and quarreling with each other, someone whom the girls did not respect much. Suzanne, the French girl is also shown to not being very clever. Similarly, Zerelda the American girl is considered inferior in a number of situations by teachers and her fellow mates. In the end, she herself starts to doubt her culture and battles her mind as to whether the British is actually better than the American or not. The description of food is another of Enid Blyton's ability to create a sense of anticipation and to make any reader go hungry. The main idea was to make it sound wonderful and tasty. Her characters and their immense adoration for food is the inspiration behind the food she describes that can thrill kids and adults alike. It is more like a stuff of nostalgia and childhood food fantasies (Kohli, 2017):

"There were tongue sandwiches with lettuce, hard boiled eggs to eat with bread and butter, great chunks of new-made cream cheese, potted meat, ripe tomatoes, ginger bread cake fresh from the oven, shortbread, a great fruit cake with almonds crowding the top, biscuits of all kinds and six jam sandwiches (Blyton, 2016)".

We have observed that the extent to which reading stories and narratives brings us closer to lives also has the ability to develop a person's growth and bring about a change in him. Thus, it can also affect children socially and morally in their development process.

5. Conclusion

Malory Towers was an early example for what the critics called female *subjectivity*. The books lead the reader into a fictional world where being a girl meant being normal and free just like boys (Krishna, 2016).

Unlike other school stories, academic lessons are quite left out at *Malory Towers* and games or sports are given too much importance. The need for team-spirit and character are of prime importance here and we read more about the girl's sport abilities and interests. Very rarely has it been mentioned that the girl's have to learn French verbs and French translations. Their lessons included math, Latin, music, history and art and this has also been mentioned very scarcely. It is quite funny to observe that classroom scenes are mostly filled with playing tricks on teachers and chattering amidst themselves. Outdoor activities like swimming, lacrosse, matches, pantomime etc are explained in detail. Sports are seen as a great form of talent and something that each girl had to be part of whether they approved of it or not. Those who did not like it are seen as deficient in character.

The importance of developing a good character is reflected in the speech of Miss Grayling given to the new girls each term. The speech is repeated several times in the series which emphasizes how important it was for the school to mould the girls in that particular way. Many gender aspects can also be observed. It is seen how intelligence is dominated by hard work and sincerity when Miss Oakes states that she expects Darrell and Sally to perform well in college since they were hardworking and sincere girls even though they had lesser brains and wit than Alicia and Betty. She could imagine Alicia and Betty wasting their time partying and using their brains for unnecessary things while they were at university since they were not used to freedom that would be provided at the university. Thus again intellectual abilities are again seen ambiguously, in contrast to hard work- an important value in the Malory Towers series.

There is no mention of ragging too – it is nowhere mentioned that the younger girls have to work for the older girls. Still, the older girls are given the power to punish the young ones by making them learn lines by heart. They usually fished out a little Punishment Book that they carried in their pockets and wrote down the names of young girls whom they wanted to punish. We also have the obligatory outlook on the girls' future, here given by the girls themselves. Moreover leaving school is less than sad than one might expect it to be. Although it certainly will be missed, the outlook on the future is bright-lamenting is not one of the educational subjects at school (Pesold, 2017).

We read about a school that showed no differences in classes, for instance all lower form students were allowed only ten shillings of pocket money whether they are rich or poor. This would imbibe a sense of equality amongst the girls such that poor girls do not feel low when they compare themselves to the rich ones. Still, most of the girls come from an upper middle class background, since boarding school is expensive and some of the girls even bring horses with them. For example, Darrell's father is a surgeon and the family seems to be quite wealthy. They can afford to send both their daughters to Malory Towers, and later in the books we hear of a cook and Jane and also a gardener who are employed at the Rivers'. Most girls arrive from a similar background, like Bill and Clarissa, one of them who own horses and are allowed to bring her own horse to school and the other being a child of nobility called Honourable Clarissa Carter, born of wealthy parents.

There are exceptions like Ellen and Daphne who are not rich and have attained admission in Malory Towers without much ease, unlike others. Daphne's parents never could afford such a school and it was her godmother who paid her school fees whereas Ellen's parents also faced a similar situation. They did not have the money to purchase uniforms and books for her as well. Although Ellen has won a scholarship, sending her to school is still a financial effort, and Ellen is aware of it: *"The uniform had been so expensive. Even the train fare was so expensive...Mother had bought her a new trunk and a new suitcase. More expense. Oh dear-was it really a good thing to win a scholarship to a school like Malory Towers if you had to count your pennies? Perhaps it wasn't. Then another thought struck her. She had to have the doctor. That would be another expense on the bill* (Pesold, 2017)". Anyhow, people of lower class are shown in a positive manner too, for example, the cook in Malory Towers who is mentioned as giving the girls two jugs of lemonade, or Pop, the handyman of the school, very much beloved,

who is responsible for the electric effects of the pantomime. It is surprising to notice that Josephine or Jo is the only case of expulsion in the series for the act of stealing. Earlier there have been two other cases of theft by Ellen and Daphne, but both forgiven. Thus, this can be seen as a case of class-consciousness, accumulating prejudices.

Also, since authorities know best, orders are obeyed blindly (Pesold, 2017). In case a girl causes punishment for the whole form, she can be sent to the Coventry (that is nobody is allowed to speak to her). Another punishment is being spanked by a hair brush, though it is rather a threat than carried out. In this way, boys are different as they go out of bounds and are not controllable. Malory Towers is all female boarding school so we have an all female community. Fathers, brothers, two male teachers, Mr. Young, the music teacher, Mr. Sutton, the carpentry teacher and Pop, the handyman are the very few men mentioned. Thus we can understand that girls at Malory Towers enjoy a leniency and freedom that would otherwise not be given to them outside. This can be seen in many instances. (Pesold, 2017). Fathers are surprised to see their daughters as equal to boys in Upper Fourth at Malory Towers: *“The tennis exhibition was loudly applauded, and the swimming and diving were exclaimed at in wonder, even the fathers admiring the crisp clean strokes of the fast swimmers, and the beautiful diving (Blyton, 2016)”*- the underlying notion that the fathers do not expect much of their daughters. They were compelled to react in awe when they saw the brilliant skills of the girls. No fathers are mentioned as their daughter’s favorites or vice versa in any of the books.

In the Fifth at Malory Towers, when Alicia plays the part of demon king in the pantomime, fathers are again referred to: *“Fathers turned to one another and exclaimed in astonished admiration”*. Again, fathers are mentioned and mother’s perceptions are ignored. This shows that ladies are judged as lacking in a sense of judgement and it is only the males who have the ability and wisdom to make appreciations. In most of the girls homes, the fathers earn for the family and mothers stay at home to look after the household. Nowhere has it been mentioned about mothers going for work and earning money, be it in the case of Darrell, Ellen or Bill. Also, in the Second Term at Malory Towers, we see that- *“Mrs. Rivers took the wheel of the car once to relieve her husband”*. With this we can understand that Mrs. Rivers does know how to drive a car but just chooses not to, unless her husband feels tired. Even in this context, it is her husband who has the priority of driving his family to the destination. The wife needs to offer support only if her husband requires her help. Whenever Mr. Rivers is not available, his wife has to travel with Darrell by the train. Another instance is when Gwen and her mother are opting for the Swiss finishing school to conclude Gwen’s education, her father claims not only that it is too expensive, but also that it would be better for her to take a job. Mrs. Grayling agrees with the father, blaming Gwen and her mother for trouble in the family. Also, in the whole series it is mentioned that only Gwen’s father seems to have common sense in her family and her mother is solely responsible for spoiling her.

It can also be noticed that mothers are described in par with their appearances that is their dressing style. While Darrell’s mother who is always elegantly dressed, is commonsensical and cheerful, Gwendoline’s mother who wears flowery hats and clothes, is silly and stupid. Another thing is that girls with feminine features are seen negatively, because common sense,

responsibility and sports are more important than femininity. A good example is of Catherine in *In the Fifth at Malory Towers*, who sees herself as self-sacrificing and really good, but not liked by the other girls in her form. “*She’s going to stay at home and help Mama...Mama thinks herself a bit of an invalid,... Catherine will really enjoy herself, being a saintly little daughter*”, sneers Alicia.” Thus she is the only character who will not train for a career but stays in the domestic sphere- a criticized choice. Thus the sport girls are depicted as attractive role models.

Among the feminine girls are Gwendoline, Margaret and with certain reservations Mavis and Daphne. Gwendoline even voices her problem once- “*Why aren’t there any nice feminine girls here-one who likes to talk and read quietly, and not always go pounding about the lacrosse field or splash in that horrible pool!*” Only unpleasant girls like Gwen, Margaret and Jo, hate taking part in games and try to escape sports that are silly and deceitful. Team spirit and character building are considered important for the girls’ development. Still, the aspect of feminism still manages to revolve. Apart from other things, the girls are also made to learn sewing, and darning. More than once it has been mentioned that when girls fail to darn properly, Matron forces them to undo the darning and start anew. Miss Grayling’s speech also says that the girls must have the traits of femininity like caring for others, being kind and helpful, accept responsibility and become good sound women the world can lean on.

The best thing is that the Malory Towers girls are free to choose their own career, based on their talents and interests. None of them even contemplates marriage. Attending university is nothing unusual. Instead, Darrell, Sally, Betty and Alicia will all attend St Andrews University and Irene will study music at Guildhall. There is also a choice of work that would be considered traditionally feminine, as Mary Lou wants to become a hospital nurse for children. This choice is immediately explained as fitting her quiet, loyal and idealistic character, rather than being a typical woman’s job. It has been argued that the discrepancies between the activity of the girls in searching a career and the traditional role models reflect the problems women had to face at the time when they were written (Pesold, 2017). It is well known that Blyton herself did not agree with her mother’s opinion that women belonged in the home and became a teacher against her wishes.

One of the reasons the girls are able to be active is due to the absence of boys. The brothers in the series are mentioned to explain the characters’ traits of their sisters. The best example is Bill, who grew up as the only girl among seven brothers, which accounts for her being a tomboy. Yet, it is interesting to note that even when she was taught at home with her brothers, their tutor displayed the prejudice concerning girls and mathematics: “*She didn’t know much math because her brothers’ tutor had devoted all his time to them at this subject and hadn’t bothered much about her. He didn’t think we did much math in a girls school, explained Bill*” Suzanne and Mamzelle Dupont are also associated with femininity for example Mamzelle Dupont wears high heels and Suzanne is described as small, beautifully made and having small hands and feet, in contrast to the other new girl in the Sixth Amanda who is tall and sturdy and rather masculine looking. As usual, femininity here is associated with deficiencies in character. (Pesold, 2017)

From characters like Darrell, Bill, Clarissa, Alicia etc, we learn that girls can do anything equally like boys, despite the societal perspectives that still linger around in the present era too. Times have changed from girls being made to play with dolls and cook to boys sent out on hikes and other adventures on their own. This injustice is not seen much now but yet prevails. Reading books of Enid Blyton, be it about George in the Famous Five or Darrell in Malory Towers, has taught kids that there does not lie any kind of disparity amidst girls and boys. Blyton has proven that gender cannot control a character if you really do not want it to.