

Dedication

I dedicate this humble work to my lovely families for their support, love and care.

To my most esteemed teacher and supervisor Dr. Azzeddine BOUHASSOUN for being a great source of inspiration and constant encouragement. Thank you for being the teacher I always want to be.

To “my person” for his constant concerned nagging without which I would not have finished this work.

To all my chingu-dul for their positive feedback and uplifting encouragement. Also, for the marvellous adventure we had these past two years.

Acknowledgment

First of, I would like to acknowledge the contribution of my respected supervisor, Dr. Azzeddine Bouhassoun for his valuable suggestions, incisive comments and considerable support.

Special thanks are due to the board of examiners for their precious time and invaluable feedback.

I would also like to express my great thanks to all the teachers who taught us during the master course. It is their inspiration that helped us pursue our studies and complete our projects.

Abstract

The supernatural element has become a prevailing component of today's contemporary literature. Growing from a niche to a popular culture sensation, the fantasy genre has intrigued both readers and scholars equally. Furthermore, this genre has emerged in time with the political awareness of the women rights movement. Therefore, it is crucial to examine this relationship between the fantasy and feminism and explore the existing influence between the two concepts.

The present work aims to investigate the use of the urban fantasy genre's conventions to explore and depict issues of feminism in Ilona Andrews' series *Kate Daniels*. The research is conducted through the study of the author's employment of the supernatural elements with a focus on the characterization of the female protagonist. The relationship between the urban fantasy genre and feminism proves to be a strong causality since the supernatural world provides the author with unlimited possibilities. Hence, the supernatural aspect of fantasy literature helps weaving a world with heroines who are empowered and emancipated, can be rebellious, and are able to shed patriarchal ties.

Keywords: Feminism, Fantasy, Supernatural, Urban Fantasy, Empowerment, patriarchy, Ilona Andrews, Kate Daniels.

Table of Contents

Dedication	I
Acknowledgment	II
Abstract	III
Table of Contents	IV
Glossary	VI
List of Figures	VII
1. General Introduction	1
2. Chapter one: Fantastic Literature and the Enhancement of the Feminist Thought	8
2.1. The Supernatural Shades to Modern Fantasy Literature.....	9
2.2. Urban Fantasy and the Shift in the Perception of the Monstrous Supernatural	14
2.3. Contemporary Novelty of the Feminist Thought in a Supernatural World.....	19
3. Chapter two: Exploring Kate Daniels Series through Feminist Lens	25
3.1. A Feminist Author or a Feminist Novel?	25
3.2. Characterization of the Female Protagonist	28
3.3. Shero: Urban Fantasy’s unique hero	31

4. Chapter Three: A Heroine in a Male Dominated World	40
4.1. Female Empowerment: Autonomy and Self-Reliance.....	40
4.2. Performance of Femininity and Gender Role Distribution	42
4.3. Perfect Daughter, Perfect Killer: Dismantling Patriarchal ties.....	45
5. General Conclusion	46
6. Works Cited	50

Glossary

Alpha: The leader of the shifters' clans

Archetype: A set of characteristics or a pattern that is specific to a certain type

Beast Lord: The leader of all shifter clans

Fabulism or **New Weird:** A form of magic realism in which fantastical elements are placed into an everyday setting.

Guild: Mercenary Agency

Keep: the fortress where the shifters live

Monomyth: A Hero's journey

People: necromancers who have the ability to control the minds of the vampire

Power words: Very ancient words that give the holder great power to control others.

Shapeshifter or **Shapechanger:** A person who have the power to change into an animal and vice-versa

Shero: Female hero

List of Figures

Figure 1: Stages of Kate's Heroine Quest32

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1. General Introduction

Trends in literature vary through times, tastes and cultures. Modern times have brought an upsurge in the appreciation of the literary fantastic accompanied with an increasing interest in all that is supernatural. Science fiction, fantasy, and many other genres that fall under the umbrella of the fantastic, have attracted the attention of a growing number of readers. As an established genre of fantasy fiction, urban fantasy is no exception garnering interest and gaining fame among young and adult. Most of the urban fantasy books and series feature a female lead figure. A capable, independent and supernatural being who leads life with no restrictions and under no male domination.

Supernatural fantasy worlds and superhuman characters flood contemporary popular culture, and magic, rewritings of myths and other religious phenomena and expressions teem in many different media. Fantasy fiction, which was once a niche genre immersed in the cultural practices of a minority of readers, has now become part of mass-mediated popular culture for mainstream users on multi-media platforms. Literature is the vessel through which authors can reflect their times and societies. Hence, any shifts and changes occurring in the writers' lives will seep into their pages transforming the face of literature and its nuances. Fantasy literature, being no exception, has existed through waves of change to the extent that even the term fantasy has served many purposes and undertones.

In a world where magic and technology are in constant struggle, the main character of Ilona Andrews series, Kate Daniels, a mercenary who relies on her wits and sword wielding skills to lead a risk-addled life. Highly competent and self-reliant, Kate Daniels represents the life of an active free woman who does not cave under the pressure of social norms and restrictions. Common in most urban fantasy literature, the female figures always occupy unusual jobs for women; a

mechanic, a mercenary, an assassin, etc. all jobs that show that there are no holdbacks for a woman. Furthermore, adding the supernatural element paints the story with a flair of intrigue making it more captivating and fascinating. Hence, attracting more attention and reaching farther grounds of influence.

The topic of this project entitled *The Role of Fantasy Fiction in Promoting Feminism* has been the result of a gnawing curiosity. The main reason that motivated me to seek to accomplish this endeavour is my love of all that is supernatural. I have always been an avid reader of supernatural works. The fascinating and surreal worlds piqued my interest and quenched my thirst for adventure. I have always been drawn to stories with strong female characters because I felt that they offered a realistic depiction of what a woman should be. These literary works opened up the horizon for women by providing them with abilities and powers that enabled them to be whatever they wanted. Whereas, in real life, some might say that women are restricted by their biological roles and societal norms. Furthermore, these strong females characters were scarce and few until recently where more and more strong female protagonists are emerging in books, on television and in films. Judging the audience reception of these artistic works and the increasing fame they garner among young and adult has triggered many questions in my mind wondering if these authors could be using the supernatural appeal to increase the feminism reach.

This project is primarily concerned with the relationship between feminism and the supernatural, and, the way the author utilizes the urban fantasy genre's conventions to explore and depict issues of feminism in the *Kate Daniels Series*. The main objective is to attempt an understanding of the relationship between fantasy fiction and feminism. The growing interrelating relationship between the two concepts is increasingly intriguing and incites further research to have a clear grasp of the existing connection. The choice fell on the *Kate Daniels Series* by Ilona

Andrews because after reading many series, the present work was the most satisfying on all account. It gathers many elements that might possibly make it a feminist work including a strong female protagonist, a supernatural setting for the story to take place in, and the use of powers to enhance the characters' interactions with each other and with whatever issues that they might encounter and a strong supporting cast of secondary characters. A couple of secondary questions stem from the abovementioned research statement:

-What is the relationship between the supernatural elements of fantastic literature and the feminist thought?

- Why is it that readers hold the supernatural in such esteem? And how does it affect their attitudes?

- How does feminism figure in supernatural fiction? And how do authors merge between the convention of the supernatural and feminism principles?

Through an analytical approach, the research is conducted based on the following hypotheses. The first hypothesis states that female authors of the contemporary literature use the supernatural element to attract the readers and promote feminism through their characters' traits. The second hypothesis claims that there is a strong relationship between the supernatural and feminism as the former provides a world with unlimited possibilities. The last hypothesis suggests that writing about women and often by female authors illustrates how literature can challenge the restrictions of a patriarchal society and culture. In order to test the hypotheses and answer the research question, this work has been divided into three chapters.

The first chapter, *Fantastic Literature and the Enhancement of the Feminist Thought* tackles the definition of key concepts. Primarily the fantastic literature and its supernatural shades. The feminist thought, the origins and a short historical account of the emergence of the movement. The

other key concept that needs to be clarified as well is urban fantasy, a sub-branch of fantasy fiction, which is the focus of this research. Furthermore, this chapter elaborates on the shift in the perception of the monsters in fantasy literature since it had evolved radically since the Dracula and Frankenstein times. The series is based on a supernatural premise with monsters roaming the land hence, it is crucial to understand the changing perception of the monster in contemporary fiction and what the reasons behind the growing fascination with these creatures are.

The second chapter entitled *Exploring the Kate Daniels Series Through Feminist Lens* deals with a dissection of the series investigating feminist shades. The series is written by Ilona Andrews, a husband and wife writers collaborating together to make these stories. Hence investigating the nature of the work from a feminist perspective is essential. Furthermore, and to avoid any confusion the authors will be addressed as one single author throughout the work. Afterwards, the way Ilona Andrews depicts the protagonist and finally, an exploration of the term Shero and how it applies to the heroine of the *Kate Daniels* series.

The last chapter, *a Heroine in a Male Dominated World*, focuses on decorticating the main principles of feminism, mainly three of them including empowerment and female autonomy, gender role distribution in the series and the dismantling of patriarchal ties. This chapter seeks to reflect the use of those principles in the series and expose the merger of feminism principles with supernatural conventions by the author.

CHAPTER ONE

FANTASTIC LITERATURE AND THE ENHANCEMENT OF THE FEMINIST THOUGHT

Chapter one: Fantastic Literature and the Enhancement of the Feminist Thought	9
2.1. The Supernatural Shades to Modern Fantasy Literature.....	9
2.1.1. Definition and Origins	9
2.1.2. Characteristics of Fantasy Literature	11
2.2. Urban Fantasy and the Shift in the Perception of the Monstrous Supernatural	14
2.2.1. Definition and Main Elements	14
2.2.2. The Supernatural Monsters: Then and Now	15
2.3. Contemporary Novelty of the Feminist Thought in a Supernatural World.....	19
2.3.1. Definition and Origins of Feminism.....	1922
2.3.2. The Three Waves of Feminism	22

2. Chapter one: Fantastic Literature and the Enhancement of the Feminist Thought

Fantasy literature is a world weaved out of imagination. It is a fictional universe where the laws of reality do not apply. As an umbrella term, fantasy literature branches out into many other subgenres such as historical fantasy, science fiction and urban fantasy. The latter entails supernatural stories set in an urban setting almost similar to the real world except when monsters and creatures roam the land and heroes wield their swords to save humanity. The present chapter revolves around introducing the key concepts and their evolution in modern times.

2.1.The Supernatural Shades to Modern Fantasy Literature

Literature is the vessel through which authors can reflect their times and societies. Hence, any shifts and changes occurring in the writers' lives will seep into their pages transforming the face of literature and its nuances. Fantasy literature, being no exception, has existed through waves of change to the extent that even the term fantasy has served many purposes and undertones.

2.1.1. Definition and Origins

Fantasy fiction, famous as a literature rich with fascinating creatures, developed around the 19th century and reached its peak in England in the middle of 20th century. During the 1970's, fantasy was finally spread as a commercial label to describe the adult fiction that was popular at the time. Whilst before, the term was exclusive to some kinds of children's literature and fantasies that were considered childish (Stableford). Fantasy as a whole could be traced back to literary works that invoked supernatural creatures such as *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, *Beowulf* and *sir Gawain*. However, there have been many debates over the fantasy fiction; whether to consider it as a genre or not, what works should be included and what works to reject and more question that made it immensely difficult to assign a definite definition for the term. Many of the major theorists such as Tzvetan Todorov, Rosemary Jackson, Kathryn Hume, W. R. Irwin, Colin Manlove, to mention

a few, all agree that fantasy involves the “construction of the impossible”. From this definition, they all diverge to providing a definition to fantasy according to their preferences or intuition (James and Mendelsohn 1).

Going back to the Eighteen Century and before the term fantasy was quite used, Joseph Addison introduces the notion of fantasy as “reader’s imagination and a “poet’s fancy”. Accordingly, the very first definition of fantasy has been an attempt to distinguish between imagination and fancy, which has been demonstrated in Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s essay *Biographia Literaria* in 1817 (Wolfe 7). The Romantic Age later brought a new meaning to imagination and viewed it as a light into unknown worlds. This appreciation of the imagination, coupled with Coleridge’s distinction, lead to an increasing interest in the fantastic and the establishment of the basic terms on which Fantasy fiction should stand on. Still, the theoretical debate over the legitimacy of fantasy as a genre continued and this created a controversy that engendered multiple interpretations.

Jackson, in her book *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion* (1981), argues that the term fantasy has been used too loosely including any literary work that defies the rules of the real world as she posits that fantasy texts should challenge the social and cultural restraints (Clute and Grant 511). In accordance, she describes fantasy as a “deliberate departure from the limits of what is usually accepted as real and normal” (qtd. in Downing 11). Fantasy, according to her, is the exclusion of the realistic. In an attempt to distinguish fantasy from other genres, Hume in her book *Fantasy and Mimesis: Responses to Mimesis in Western Literature* (1984), proposes that mimesis is what actually gives birth to literature and that fantasy is a separate “phenomenon” (Traill 147). Jackson further links fantasy to desire, a desire born from the need to be free of any conventions and restraints. It is considered as a literature that celebrates freedom of time, space and character.

2.1.2. Characteristics of Fantasy Literature

William R. Irwin defines fantasy as a “story based on and controlled by an overt violation of what is generally accepted as possibility” (Qtd. in Clute and Grant 506). In the same current, and according to Rosemary Jackson, fantasy literature is not related to possible and tangible scenarios of past or future, it is a literature that transgresses on the possible to explore and celebrate the impossible. This genre features a world built solely on imagination and have no grounds in what is real. Providing a clear and firm definition of fantasy has raised many controversies and debates among theorists. Hence, it has been quintessential to assign the fantasy fiction with a determined set of characteristics and stylistic elements. John Timmerman, in his book *Other Worlds: the Fantasy Genre* (1983) suggests six traits that should set fantasy literature apart from other literatures.

The first element shared by fantasy works is the “evocation of another world” or what the escapist function they provide by creating a distinction between the real world and the “other” worlds that Jackson calls “paraxial- imaginary worlds”. (Downing 12) Fantasy fiction tends to resist fixity of any kind. This creates new spatial and temporal systems where commonly established rules all dissolve.

The second character is the use of a good story. It has always been the purpose of fantasy writers to provide a compelling and well-constructed story. C. S Lewis, author of *Chronicles of Narnia* (1950-1956), elaborates on this trait when he states: “[he] fell in love with the Form [of fantasy] itself; its brevity, its severe restraints on description, its flexible traditionalism, its inflexible hostility to all analysis, digression, reflections and ‘gas’” (qtd. in Timmerman 5). The fantasy story has specific stylistic elements, according to Lewis. Its form is built on a traditional arc but this does not infer that it is bland or has no flair. Quite the contrary, most of fantasy stories

are made to captivate and hold, it is the main axis around which the other aesthetic traits may orbit. The story in fantasy fiction has a purpose of setting imagination free and offering it a space and a time to live.

The third trait concerns the central characters of fantasy literature. The characters are engaging personas to the point that they invite the readers into their realms where they believe for a while they are part of the adventure. These common characters offer the readers a view into themselves, while providing a reality that is eerie and marvellous yet at the same time familiar and relatable. In this context, Timmerman clearly states, “[f]antasy is essentially rejuvenative. It permits us a certain distance from pragmatic affairs and offers us a far clearer insight into them.... It does more than simply restructure a reality which we already know – it also offers a parallel reality which gives us a renewed awareness of what we already know” (qtd. in Thanki 19). In other words, fantasy, through the common characters, gives way to the readers to relate to the story and live through the affairs of those characters while learning their personalities, strengths and shortcomings, and even their potentials.

The fourth trait is one that takes a central role in any fantasy fiction, the employment of the supernatural and magic. Manlove argues that the use of the supernatural is the driving force of the story, without it, the development and sculpting of the characters as well as the plot would not be the same. (Manlove 3-10) Magical powers and supernatural traits are the elements that give the story that distinctive edge. Magic entails power and with power comes responsibility, a famous issue in fantasy literature that introduces the fifth characteristic which is the matter of the balance between good and evil, all central themes that showcase the struggles faced by supernatural beings and magic users to reflect the struggles of the readers themselves in their mundane life.

This balance between good and evil is not always clear and definite. Sometimes it turns blurry and the lines shimmer to the point that the characters themselves do not know whether they are right or wrong. Making choices is an elemental part of the character's journey and assuming responsibilities is a big part of that process. It is an overwhelming trouble as Robert Browning refers to it in *The Ring and the Book* (1886) as "Life's terrible choice" (Timmerman 74). Indeed, this reflects the real life and how decisions are shadowed in an overlaying cloud of doubt and obscurity before an action is taking place. The readers, eventually, will identify with the characters in their struggles and experience the turmoil as if personal.

The quest marks the final and most fundamental characteristic of fantasy literature. The quest in fantasy surpasses a normal adventure where a character might live it for any reason. The quest requires a predetermined destination, a goal that needs to be achieved by the characters in order to fulfill a sense of accomplishment. As stated by W. H. Auden in his essay *The Quest Hero* for the *Texas Quarterly* in 1961, the quest is "one of the oldest, hardest and most popular of literary genres.... The persistent appeal of the Quest as a literary form is due to its validity as a symbolic description of our subjective personal experience of existence as historical (qtd. in Izzo 224). The quest is a crucial element of the fantasy literature because it reflects the individual journey into unknown events and towards obscure futures. Auden provides six specific components of the quest which consist of the need to find a precious object or person. The unknown whereabouts of that object (or person) require the character; who must be a hero, to venture in an obscure and dark journey to reach it; a set of tests to prove the hero's worthiness; the guardians that protect the object and finally the hero's helpers that could be humans or animals.

2.2. Urban Fantasy and the Shift in the Perception of the Monstrous Supernatural

Supernatural realms and superhuman characters roaming the modern cities started to have an eminent presence in contemporary popular culture garnering much appreciation and interest from readers. Hence, calling for the emergence of a new category a fantasy which is the urban fantasy.

2.2.1. Definition and Main Elements

In recent decades, readers of fantasy started to encounter fantastical works set in an urban setting. The phenomena gained increasing interest; however, it remained “unexplored” by scholars (Ekman 452). These novels, that garnered much fame, needed to belong to a certain genre, hence the emergence of the term. Urban Fantasy is a “genre of imaginative fiction featuring supernatural characters or elements in an urban setting” (Urban Fantasy). It revolves around mystical, mythical and supernatural creatures living in modern times and cities. Urban fantasy fiction, according to Irvine, includes all tropes of supernatural, historical or heroic novels painted with a fabulism brush (200).

In an article for *The Guardian*, Damien Walter describes urban fantasy as “The numinous. The weird. The fantastic or even The spiritual.” he continues, “[w]hatever name it goes by, humans have a profound need to glimpse some greater reality beyond our mundane existence” (qtd. in Blakemont). In other words, humans have a need to step outside the everyday life to shed the mundane existence and escape to a fantastic reality.

Considering the nascent interest in this production of literature, it harboured a lot of controversy and debates over setting a clear and definite definition. However, the city as the setting represents one of the most essential elements of urban fantasy that all scholars agree on. Fantasy elements are woven into a modern story giving it life. The city is one of the characters that give the story a pulse and provides that element that influences the narrative and the lives of the living

characters (Pohl). Further elements entail prominent characters who occupy peculiar jobs, revisiting old folkloric and fantastic tropes under a new light. This literature explores old traditional rituals in an urban context and provides it with a new completely different existence (Irvine 201). The magic in urban fantasy is integrated in the lives of the characters. Sometimes it takes a principle role where it is a big part of the everyday life. In the *Kate Daniels* series, for example, magical creatures and humans live in harmony together. Whereas sometimes, magic is hidden and exists in the peripheries of human society where the existence of monsters is unbeknown to humans and this creates conflicts and struggles.

2.2.2. The Supernatural Monsters: Then and Now

Mentioning a vampire to a teenage girl would entice a squeal of excitement and an hour long monologue on who are her favourite monsters. Once the terror they used to be, monsters no longer are those hideous, foul and terrifying creatures who dwell in the shadows and prey on poor unaware humans. Literature and movie premises, nowadays, are loaded with vampires, werewolves, ghosts and other creatures who are beautiful, rich and well educated. These creatures are no longer rejected and despised by people like Mary Shelly's *Frankenstein* was, instead they are welcomed and loved and even some people envy them and want to become like them. The shift in the perception of the monster happened in the 21st century where authors and filmmakers started portraying monsters, especially vampires, as charming and flawless superhuman. *An Interview with a Vampire* (1994), a movie adaptation of Anne Rice's novel and first book in the series *The Vampire Chronicles* (1976) can be considered as the very first milestone in the evolution of the shift in the vampire archetype as it existed before. The pop culture vampire and monster in general, might have been greatly inspired by Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) or Shelly's *Frankenstein, The Modern Prometheus* (1823); however, they show radical changes to the image of the monster. Of

course, the authors and filmmakers have kept many characteristics which pose as similarities between today's monsters and those of the past such as the Gothic settings and architecture, the foreboding and "gloomy, omnipresent shade" (Meyer 3) that reigns the place as described in *Twilight* (2005). Still, the monster today does not infer that horror that would make it impossible to read the book or watch the movie without turning all lights on. The old monster's appearance in itself incurs terror and fright as they are depicted as undead creatures with hideous and cruel appearances. Count Dracula's physical traits, for example, was worth noting by Jonathan Harker in his diary who states that,

His face was a strong, a very strong, aquiline, with high bridge of the thin nose and peculiarly arched nostrils, with lofty domed forehead, and hair growing scantily round the temples but profusely elsewhere. His eyebrows were very massive, almost meeting over the nose, and with bushy hair that seemed to curl in its own profusion. The mouth, so far as I could see it under the heavy moustache, was fixed and rather cruel-looking, with peculiarly sharp white teeth. These protruded over the lips, whose remarkable ruddiness showed astonishing vitality in a man of his years. For the rest, his ears were pale, and at the tops extremely pointed. The chin was broad and strong, and the cheeks firm though thin. The general effect was one of extraordinary pallor (Stoker 17)

Dracula's appearance steers uncanny feelings in Harker, and consequently in the reader as well, and triggers a sense of mistrust and wariness without even knowing he is unworldly creature. Finding out the true nature of Dracula is a shocking event for the narrator. Though doubt has consumed his mind still, seeing the creature in all its horrifying appearance for the first time when he sees Dracula come out the window and climb down the castle's wall like a lizard, he exclaim, "What manner of man is this, or what manner of creature is it in the semblance of man? I feel the

dread of this horrible place overpowering me; I am in fear— in awful fear— and there is no escape for me; I am encompassed about with terrors that I dare not think of....” (Stoker 33). Harker is terrified of the scene and overwhelmed in despair because he knows there is no way out for him. This despair and fear all transfers to the reader and creates the ominous atmosphere famous for gothic horror.

Today’s monster, in contrast, is appealing and loveable. They would blend in with humans unbeknownst to most because they are mostly depicted as these beautiful, perfect and very accomplished persons. Taking the Cullens from Meyer’s *Twilight* series as an example of a vampire clan who live in town and no one has an inkling about their true nature. These monsters might share some features with the old vampire with their fangs, need to sustain on blood and ability to walk under the sun. However, whereas Dracula loses control of his powers in daylight, Edward and his family sparkle under the sun and risk exposure. Most of the contemporary monsters have a sense of morale since they do not feed from humans directly. They either drink from blood bags like Damon and Stefan from L. J. Smith’s *The Vampire Diaries* (1991). Proclaim themselves vegetarians and drink only animal blood like the Cullens. Or, find volunteers who would happily offer their blood in exchange of the very high feeling of ecstasy they receive from the vampire venom left by their fangs like in Richelle Mead’s *The Vampire Academy* (2007). Furthermore, the new monster is never portrayed with a horrifying sight. They are always composed and in control. When Bella Swan first sees the Cullens in the first *Twilight* book, she is taken and mesmerized by their “devastatingly, inhumanly beautiful” appearance (Meyer 17). She describes them as pale with perfect and angular features, as people who could be models for some magazines. These physical traits are perfect for attracting and fascinated to the point that even when Bella learns the truth she is not terrified of Edward. She is the one who seeks him out and confronts him with the truth in

spite of Edward's effort to stay away from her. He tries to dissuade her "What if I'm not a superhero. What if I'm the bad guy?" However, to no avail, Bella is not scared of him and neither of the teenage fans are.

Monsters today garner an increasing amount of interest and trigger a lot of queries. The reason for this altered perception of the monsters, according to Erin Collopy, A Texas Tech Professor, is because they "are such an effective metaphor for our own anxieties and desires" Collopy adds, "We often try to work things out about ourselves through them" (qtd. in Bradshaw). Monsters have become a crucial part of pop culture. The latter has a great effect on the construction of identities of teenagers because pop culture is made out of trends that are transformed into norms that the individuals go by in their daily lives (Humphries). Vampires are portrayed into these flawless and perfect beings who still have struggles and face inner conflicts about. They are made easy to identify with and their struggles are adopted and assimilated to help fight one's own demons. In other words, they learn to recognize their own selves through the monsters they adore. Furthermore, readers often witness the rebirth of the protagonist monster in supernatural fiction. They are often offered a second chance hence; this provides the readers with a sense of optimism. They can thrive to achieve their dreams no matter how unattainable they are because these monsters who are like role models also err many times before they get it right. In this regard, Collopy confirms that monsters are "effective metaphor for our own anxieties and desires." Readers live through them, fulfill their dreams and lose their anxieties through the force of escapism.

On another note, In *The Science of Monsters* (2012), Matt Kaplan investigates the reason why monsters are so enticing and addictive. He explains how the readers cannot help but be fascinated by these creatures even when they are scary and frightful because of some masochism tendencies and the love to take risks. (qtd. in ABC Science) According to Kaplan, the mind is capable of

recognizing the unreality of these stories which leads to realizing a sense of mastery of mind over body that some individuals enjoy tremendously. Monsters engender feelings of fright because they pose a danger to humans because of their preternatural strength and powers and this activates a fear factor that the mind analyses as non-real and fictional and here lays the thrill.

2.3. Contemporary Novelty of the Feminist Thought in a Supernatural World

The term feminism denotes political, cultural, and economic movements that have for an objective to guarantee equal rights and legal protection for women.

2.3.1. Definition and Origins of Feminism

The face of feminism changed over time, and the concept has been constantly evolving due to the changing circumstances. Moreover, the term, coined in 1895 (Jenainati and Groves 20), encompasses many ideologies, attitudes, concerns and strategies. Therefore, it is important to provide a simple definition that would fit to the feminisms known through the different places and times. Marie Shear, in 1986, defines feminism as “the radical notion that women are people” (qtd.in Cameron n. pag). Feminism is further defined as “the movement to end sexist oppression.” Another definition for the term in *Feminism: Short Histories of Big Ideas* (2007), states that feminism is “a set of ideas that recognize in an explicit way that women are subordinate to men and seek to address the imbalance of power between sexes.” (Hannam 3). These definitions illustrate how the movement highlights the male dominance and oppression women are subjected to in the society, as it aims for the recognition of women as equals to men. The term proved to be complex to define in a clear and simple way since it branches out to dabble in different situations and contexts; therefore, it is important to go back to the history of the term to gain a better understanding of the movement and its main principles.

The roots of feminism, according to some theoreticians, trace back to the ancient world with some organized protest in the 3rd Century B.C. However, that was the only recorded case of grouped effort that called for the rights of women. Later, only isolated voices challenged the prevailing male dominance and superiority such as Sappho in ancient Greece, Hildegard of Bingen or Christian de Pisan who called for education for women (Burkett and Brunell). In addition to some figures who are considered as the “foremothers” of the modern movement including Olympe de Gouge, Mary Wollstonecraft and Jane Austen (Rampton). The progress in science, politics and many other aspects of life that swept over Europe did not improve women’s situation and the attitude inherited from the old times persisted such as Virgil’s and Thomas Aquinas’ quotes “Woman is Fickle and always changing” and “Woman is an imperfect man”. In addition to William Shakespeare’s famous saying in Hamlet “Frailty, thy name is woman.” (qtd. in Jenainati and Groves 21). Women kept an inferior position to men because they were supposedly frail and fragile creatures that were to be protected by men. Women were captives in their own societies with no control over their lives. In fact, women were confined to their respective roles as housewives; they had no social or political stand compared to men, they could not receive proper education beyond what was considered lady-like like art, poetry and embroidery. Furthermore, women had no right to hold property or handle their inheritance. This situation had found its way in literature where authors thrived to reflect the lives of women in their time and encourage women to revolt against such undermining treatment. As an example, Aphra Behn in her poem “To The Ladies” that was a reaction to the Glorious Revolution in 1688,

Wife and servant are the same,
But only differ in the name.

When the word "obey" has said,
And man by law supreme has made,
Fierce as an Eastern Prince he grows
And all his innate rigor shows.
Then shun, oh shun that wretched state
And all the fawning flatterers hate.
Value yourselves and men despise:
You must be proud if you'll be wise. (qtd. in Jenainati and Groves 12)

Behn, in this poem, clearly mirrors the feelings of women at the time and their revolt against patriarchy and male dominance. Virginia Woolf, as well, addressed women to evoke their awareness and entice their rebellion in the following quote:

There they go, our brothers who have been educated at the public schools and universities, mounting those steps, passing in and out of those doors, ascending those pulpits, preaching, teaching, administering justice, practicing medicine, transacting business, making money. It is a solemn sight always—a procession...For we have to ask ourselves, here and now, do we wish to join that procession, or don't we? On what terms shall we join that procession? Above all, where is it leading us, the procession of educated men? (Kemp and Squires 3)

Virginia Woolf in this excerpt points to the way men ascend in society through education and then occupying any work profession such as teachers, doctors, preaches, businessmen and so on of the jobs that women were not allowed to. By the end of the passage, she asks the ladies if they were to accept the situation, then on which term should they join? She entices women to think ahead and take control of their future. The late nineteenth century and early twentieth century,

later, witness the emergence of the first surge of feminism in its modern sense, and though it started as a political movement, it soon spread out to touch different aspects of women's experiences.

2.3.2. The Three Waves of Feminism

The history of feminism is divided into three phases called the waves of feminism. The first wave also called the suffrage movement, was mainly concerned with establishing women's right to vote. It further sought after an equal property and contract rights for women. In 1919, the 19th amendment to the US constitution granted women the right to vote which was basically a winning card towards better improving women's condition in society (Drucker). The second wave feminism, during the 1960's and 1980's is famous for its focus on discrimination and equality issues. Discrimination was due to the "socially-constructed" notion that sex and gender were defined as "a set of arrangements by which the biological raw material of human sex and procreation is shaped by human, social intervention" (qtd. in Feminism). Hence, and based on biological standards, women's roles were socially predetermined and their sole purpose was to be mothers and caregivers. The subject of woman at the time rose many debates and feminist activists sought to establish the knowledge that a woman's identity was shaped by symbolic and psychoanalytical nuances. The second wave feminism introduced measurable breaks in the social composition of the British and American societies when women identity was concerned. However, that was not the only claim of feminism at the time, and, other concerns have been tackled that shifted radically the circumstances of women's life challenging patriarchy and addressing legal and social established laws that were clearly disadvantageous to women. This movement was criticized by the later called third wave feminism for its shortcomings. Nurtured in a greater social and economic and legal circumstances offered by the two first waves, a third wave feminism came,

in the 1990's to address the shortcomings of the second wave feminism and the established "essentialists" definitions of femininity.

Supernatural fiction opens way to the authors to set free their imagination as well as freeing them of any restraints. Due this fact, fantasy authors venture in territories unknown to others and aim towards higher objectives that might go unnoticed because of the supernatural settings and marvellous elements that throw a veil on what is apparent and obvious.

CHAPTER TWO

EXPLORING THE KATE DANIELS

SERIES THROUGH FEMINIST LENS

**Chapter two: Exploring Kate Daniels Series through
Feminist Lens25**

3.1. A Feminist Author or a Feminist Novel?	25
3.1.1. The Story in a Nutshell	25
3.1.2. The Aesthetics of Feminist Literature.....	256
3.2. Characterization of the Female Protagonist	28
3.2.1. Physical Description of the Protagonist	28
3.2.2. Childhood and the Shaping up of personality	259
3.3. Shero: Urban Fantasy’s Most Unique Hero	3128
3.1.1. Peculiarity of a Heroine	31
3.1.1. A Heroine’s Quest	3225

3. Chapter two: Exploring Kate Daniels Series through Feminist Lens

Urban fantasy steps out of the shadow of its fathers, fantasy, fairy tales and gothic literatures by painting common characteristics with new and unique colours that are particular to this relatively new genre. It is a literature that grew in popularity in parallel with the spread of the feminism waves therefore, the present chapter deals with exploring the feminisms characteristics and elements as they are employed in the Kate Daniels Series through investigating the authors of the series. Furthermore, the chapter tackles the characterization of the protagonist and the notion of a *shero* a new concept privy to urban fantasy and what makes urban fantasy female hero so unique.

3.1.A Feminist Author or a Feminist Novel?

3.1.1. The Story in a Nutshell

The series takes place in a slightly futuristic Atlanta. The world has long since it succumbed to magic but not entirely and now technology and magic shift intermittently. When technology is down, nothing electronic or metal can work and magic becomes potent enough to cast a spell or even conjure a demon from another dimension. In the midst of this world, and creeping out of the dark, a plethora of creatures who are not so human and others who are merely unworldly and mythical roam around causing trouble and creating havoc. Kate Daniels is a mercenary who thrives on fixing these magical messes. However, she is yanked from her daily routine by the murder of her guardian. Fuelled by vengeance; she stumbles upon a territorial war between the biggest factions of Atlanta's magic dwellers; the Shifters and the People. The latter, are necromancers called Masters of death. They are the one who control the vampires because they are merely shells with no conscience of their own. The other faction represents the shifters; people who are attainted by lycanthropy and can turn into animals. The leads of her guardian's death are

interwoven with several deaths from both clans and Kate investigates the case in her style of poking at the people involved until the guilty party tries to kill her.

3.1.2. Aesthetics of Feminist Literature

Lizabeth Goodman in her book *Literature and Gender* (2013), addresses the issue of distinguishing between a feminist literature and an author with a feminist agenda defines feminist works as the literature that is “written by contemporary women within the context of ‘second wave’ or even ‘third wave’ (that is, current) contexts of feminist awareness.” She elaborates further, “‘Feminist authors’ have a political agenda in the writing of their work” (Goodman xi) Therefore, and in order to make a work into feminist it is important to know the intentions of the author in question because some works might have feminist nuances regardless of the author’s political orientation or their intentions.

Ilona Andrews is the pen name used by husband and wife authors Ilona and Gordon Andrews. Ilona was born and raised in Russia until she was a teenager and moved to the USA. As for Gordon, he is a former communications sergeant in the US army. They both went to Western Carolina University where they met in English Composition 101 (Andrews). They would compete against each other in writing assignments and then edit each other’s papers. Realizing they work better together, they started co-authoring the now New York Times Bestselling series *Kate Daniels* which was then named *Lost Dog*. Ilona, having majored in Biochemistry, has always wanted to become a scientist, however, life has put a dent in her plans and she had to give up her dream to take care of her children. She never fathomed taking up writing as a career but she had all these stories that she wanted to share with the world and that is what pushed her to venture into the publishing world. After many rejections and facing so much criticism, they finally publish the first *Kate Daniels* book *Magic Bites* in 2007 to good reviews. A year later, the sequel *Magic Burns* was

released and then in 2009, the third installation *Magic Strikes* hit the stands (Andrews). From the little information provided by the authors, it is hard to label them as feminists. First, the issue of them being a couple writers who collaborate in writing so there is a fusion of their personalities into the stories, of their ambitions, their expectations. Hence, it is difficult to separate the two or to label either or each as a feminist author since their intentions are unbeknownst.

According to Marilyn French, there are two essential principles that are related to each other and allow an identification of a work as feminist. The first one consist of dissecting reality through feminist lens and the second one concerns dealing with and endorsing solely female experience (French 69). Feminism seeks equality between men and women and that is the first objective this movement aims at. A feminist literature exposing reality through a feminist outlook would either explore patriarchal dominance and its effect on women's life or depict a world where it is possible for men and women to live on equal standards. In the series, the protagonist manages to achieve an equal status to that of highest-ranking man. Kate lives in a male dominated world, however, that does not prevent her from successfully climbing the social ladder to stand equally next to Curan as an Alpha. Furthermore, she is portrayed as equally powerful as Curran is as many scenes show them sparring or trying to kill each other yet they always end up in equal amount of damage. They both stand on equal footing and complement each other as they learn to compromise in order not to disturb each other's balance. Alone or in a relationship, Kate stands on her own yet knows how to accept support from others. Kate is not the only female character who displays such feminist traits. Many other female characters are successful women in both their personal life and careers. Andrea Nash, a knight of the Order of Merciful Aid, is a smart and passionate woman who excels at handling guns. She is a career driven woman and successfully maintains that balance between her personal life and career. Julie as well is showing signs of growing into an independent

and strong woman despite her young age and the tragic past she had. In addition to the alpha females of the different shifters clans who have equal rights to their partners when it is concerning making the pack's political decisions.

3.2.Characterization of the Female Protagonist

One of the appealing elements in a story or a novel is the characters involved. The way they are described and depicted, how they interact with the other characters, what they feel and think every detail captivate the reader and make it easier for them to relate to these fictive people (Croft 142). Hence, it is primordial to conduct a proper characterization of one's characters because those description help the reader build impressions of the character through which they could love, hate, despise, empathize with and a myriad of other feelings that could be evoked by the author with a good portrayal.

3.2.1. Physical Description of the Protagonist

The series by Ilona Andrews is told from the first person perspective. Therefore, the reader is offered a description by the protagonist herself. Within the pages of the first book, *Magic Bites*, the reader learns that Kate is 25 from a flashback to one conversation with her guardian Greg Feldman. Learning about his death brought her back to the last time she saw him and the reader inadvertently learns that she dropped out of the Order, a law-enforcing academy, when she was younger (6). The death of Greg severed Kate from any family ties leaving her alone and lonely with only ghosts of memories for company. Kate does not consider herself as beautiful; she believes she lacks feminine gentleness with her bold features and an exotic air. She has a large mouth with dark brown hair, slightly elongated almond shaped dark brown eyes that she inherited from her mother and a lightly tanned skin (21). Kate further describes her physical appearance in the following passage:

I wore my work clothes: jeans loose enough to let me kick a man taller than me in the throat, a green shirt, and comfortable running shoes. Slayer rested in its sheath on my back, partially hidden by my jacket. The saber's hilt protruded above my right shoulder, obscured by my hair gathered into a thick plait. (10-11)

Kate does not make an effort to appear appealing and beautiful instead, she seeks practicality considering her line of work. In the name of functionality, Kate has to give up femininity and all that it entails from pretty clothes to make-up. However, she draws the line at her hair and refuses to cut it off in spite of it being "cumbersome" because "it made for an excellent hold in a fight" (11). She also includes her saber Slayer in the description because she considers it part of her. The reader further discovers that she is tall with a lean muscular build, have many scars and a tattoo, on her left shoulder, of a raven holding a bloody sword with words *Dar Vorona* which means Raven's Gift in Russian.

3.2.2. Childhood and the Shaping up of Personality

Kate is the daughter of Roland, a mythical figure who possesses a god-like power. He is the one who created the vampires and rumoured to be over 4000 years old. Because of a prophecy foretelling his end at the hands of one of his children he refused to have any until he met Kate's mother, Kalina, a witch who charmed him into having a baby. He regretted his choice a few months later and decided to kill Kate but her mother escaped with his Warlord Voron before he could do so. Kalina died while trying to protect Kate and Voron raised her to become the perfect killer to be strong enough to revenge her mother. Voron isolated Kate from the world and trained her how to fight and survive on her own. His training was very strict and unyielding he would leave her for days alone in the woods with only a small knife and a canteen or he would make her hunt feral dogs with a knife. When she was ten, he hired a street thug to kill her but she managed to kill him

instead. Later, they travelled the Americas and Kate had to fight in different tournaments while being trained by several masters of war. When she was fifteen, Hugh d'Ambrey, one of Roland's warlords killed Voron and Kate went to stay with Greg.

Kate's harsh upbringing forged her personality in peculiar ways. She wraps herself in a cocoon where it is hard for people to break through. She is strong headed and determined with a high sense of duty and a very protective nature towards those she considers family to the point where she is ready to sacrifice her own life in order to save them. She loves fighting and putting Slayer to practice and has an engraving touch of wit with a dry sense of humour. She uses sarcasm as one of her defensive techniques. She often tends to employ sarcasm and infuriating comebacks when she finds herself at a disadvantage. When she meets the Lord Beast for the first time, it happens in Unicorn Lane. Shrouded in danger and in the midst of strange and perilous surroundings, she crouches down and calls for the Beast Lord "Here, kitty, kitty, kitty" (Andrews Magic Bites 46). Furthermore, she is very straightforward, upbeat and has an unbiased outlook on people. She is fully aware of her shortcomings and continuously acknowledges "(...) I'm not a team player. I'm undisciplined and I have a problem with authority" (Andrews Magic Bites 264). Under the surface, exists a simmering rage within her that fully erupts when she fights or someone she loves is hurt. That rage manifest itself in a shimmering Slayer as the saber feeds off her rage and violence. Her deranged smile could easily translate to "I really need to hurt something. It'll make me feel good" (Andrews Magic Bites 37). Kate never uses her smile to seduce; instead, she smiles to convey her murderous intent.

3.3. Shero: Urban Fantasy's unique hero

3.3.1. Peculiarity of A Heroine

Brian Attebery in his *The Fantasy Tradition of American Literature* (1980) provides five characteristics of the fantasy genre, “setting, structural framework, role and character of the protagonist, types of secondary characters, and ways of tying events to values and ideas (Attebery 12)”. Fantasy works are observed to display certain similarities when it is related to these five characteristics. Indeed, even urban fantasy, considering it is a subgenre of fantasy literature, shares these particulars. With some exceptions such as the setting, or the “realm of the impossible” as described by Attebery, is set in an urban environment. The magical is brought to modern life incorporating with all its contemporary features. Another feature that sets the urban fantasy apart is the deployment of a female heroine. The quest is a key element of any fantasy and the journey taken by the hero is the centre focus of the narration. It is common to have a hero as the protagonist of the story, however, in urban fantasy, the tendency to use a female hero has grown in popularity and this feature grew to be a distinguishing trait of this genre. The merger of urban and fantasy has crept to touch the way the protagonist is portrayed. The heroine is not a descendant of a god or some kind of an unworldly creature who comes to the rescue whenever trouble hits. This fact makes the female protagonist acquire a unique “amalgamation between urban realism and fantasy” (The Artifice). In fact, she is seemingly a mere human being leading a normal life with mundane issues and conflicts just like the rest of us. Furthermore, she is part of the society and often belongs to the lowest hierarchical circles. Kate Daniels, as an example, she is a mere mercenary who can barely pay her rent and does the odd job to make ends meet. Same case for Mercedes Thompson protagonist of *Moon Called* (2006) by Patricia Briggs who is a coyote living next to the werewolves and a mechanic as well; an outcast with an unusual job for a woman. The fact that the

heroine lives on the fringes of different communities makes it easy for her to integrate among the rest with the added complication of the supernatural and the unreal. (The Artifice)

3.3.2. A Heroine’s Quest

According to Joseph Campbell, every quest has a certain pattern and undergoes twelve stages to be fulfilled divided into three parts which starts with the “call to adventure” and ends with triumph and “return to the ordinary world” with some variations in every story (Campbell 28). A heroine’s journey is slightly different from that of a hero’s making it unique to the urban fantasy genre. In first stages of Kate’s life (figure 1), she starts out by hiding and denying her quest. She stays under the radar at all costs in fear of discovery until she is yanked from that life and thrown into adventure by the death of her guardian.

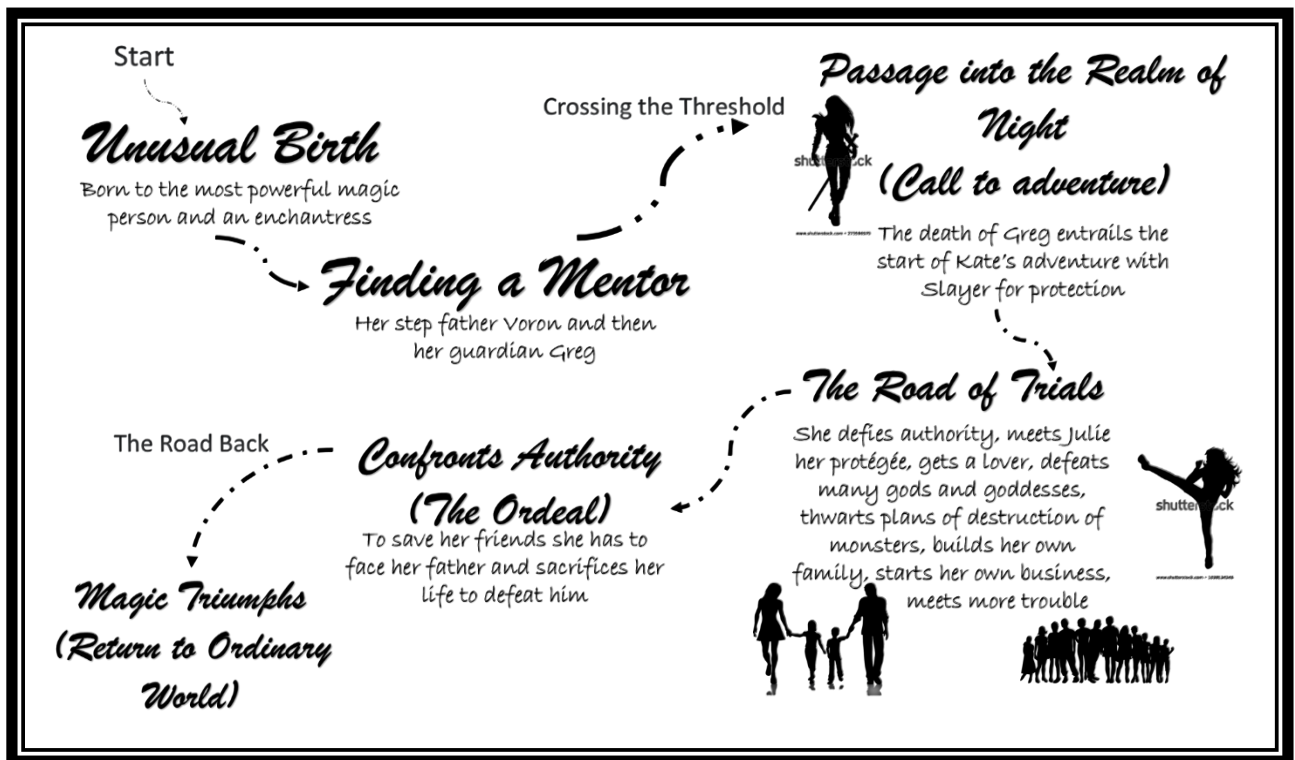


Figure 1: Stages of Kate's Heroine Quest

Source: Based on Campbell’s Monomyth stages and the structural form of Christopher Vogler (Bronzite)

Kate's quest starts out simple, she just needs to find Greg's murderer. However, her journey gradually deepens into several adventures that allow Kate to make alliances, defeat enemies, and form anchoring ties that help her build her strength. Campbell distinguishes three phases to the journey the "departure", the "initiation" and the "return" (28). The departure starts with Kate's unusual birth. She is the daughter of the most powerful man on earth and a very strong enchantress. She leads her life going the opposite way of her quest because she is not strong enough to face her father who sought to kill her. Both her stepfather and guardian prepared her to be the perfect killer, however, they drilled into her the importance of staying hidden, of not forming any ties that might hinder her flight at any moment and protecting her secret at any cost. Kate's departure might not be from the ordinary world to a supernatural one, like suggested in Campbell's book *A Hero with a Thousand Faces* (42), since she is already immersed in the monster and marvellous world. However, the departure could be a connotation for Kate's leaving the shadows to live in the open instead of keeping at the fringes with a nobody profile.

The call of adventure or the event that ripples the status quo in Kate's life comes with the death of her guardian. This death marks the end of all ties Kate had with her past life. It is a sign that a big change is heading towards Kate, a change that would uproot her known life and toss her into the unknown. Since every hero needs a protection or a companion of some sort, so does Kate. She has Slayer that she uses for protection as well as company. Along the Journey, Kate, and after a long lonely phase, succeeds in gathering her own entourage. Starting with Jim Shrapshire a werecat who is the chief head of the pack's security, a part time mercenary at the Guild and Kate's partner in tough cases from the Guild. Their relationship starts as purely professional but gradually shifts towards close friendship after Kate association with the pack. Jim proves to be a reliable partner and lays great trust in Kate and her strength and power. He is the one who introduces her

to Curran to help her with Greg's case. There is also Saiman who is Kate's source of information. He is a Frost Giant and a demigod descendent of the Aesir, the best known Norse gods. She also obtains two protégées along the way towards achieving her quest. The first one is Derek Gaunt a teenage werewolf who accidentally, or not so accidentally, end up being bound to her with a blood oath and swears on protecting no matter what, a promise that he keeps even after he is released from the oath. Reckless that she is, Kate challenged Curran when they first met so he had to retaliate. He set a group of teenage wolves, when she visited the Keep, to unsettle her by challenging her to a fight in the midst of countless shapechangers. Kate's typical response is to fight but she could not risk losing the cooperation of the pack because of a petty challenge therefore she used the power word *Amehe* which is an ancient language which means obey, to control the mind of the closest teenager and that happened to be Derek (93). Curran could not let that direct challenge to his authority go without causing trouble in the pack so he made Derek take a blood oath to protect Kate. The second protégée is Julie Olsen a little girl who hired Kate to find her missing mother in *Magic Burns*, the second book of the series. The little girl steers Kate's protective instincts, she ends up being her guardian, and later Kate and Curran adopt her as their daughter. These relationships form anchors in Kate's life and provide her support enough to increase her strength and power and her will to stay and fight for her loved ones.

In Marleen Barr's *Alien to Feminist: Speculative Fiction and Feminist Theory*, she comments extensively on the changes occurring in speculative fiction, including fantasy literature, in the late 1980's, which coincides to the development of urban fantasy. She states that: "[s]peculative fiction has in recent years been enlivened by the contribution of new female (often feminist) voices. Because these writers are not hindered by the constraints of patriarchal social reality, they can imagine presently impossible possibilities for women. Their genre is ideally suited for exploring the potential of women's

changing roles” (qtd. in *The Artifice*). Barr further elaborates on the female warrior and relates fiction to reality in comparing the female protagonists to successful women in real life.

Women who succeed in both their professional and personal lives must be superior to men and must fit their roles as nurturers within the definition of ‘careerist’ which does not quite include ‘mother’, ‘wife’—or even ‘female’. The mother and wife who does excel professionally receives special acclaim. She is the achiever of a nearly impossible feat, a female hero. She appears on the cover of the *New York Times Magazine*. She is a woman warrior. (Barr 83)

This description fits perfectly to Kate Daniels as she proves to be successful in her career, in other words, saving the world and at the same time manages to maintain a family that she builds gradually. After quitting the Order, Kate starts her own business Cutting Edge, an investigative agency. She obtains help from the pack since she is the alpha’s consort, however she refuses to take advantage of that and prefers to stand on her own means financially. Kate struggles for a while with petty and small cases, later, Andrea joins her and gradually gains a successful reputation.

The female protagonist depicted by Ilona Andrews is the product of supernatural features and feminist nuances. The result is a heroine who answers to the requirements of a feminist heroine.

CHAPTER THREE

A HEROINE IN A MALE DOMINATED

WORLD

Chapter Three: A Heroine in a Male Dominated World	40
4.1. Female Empowerment: Autonomy and Self-Reliance.....	40
4.1.1 An Independent Heroine	40
4.1.2. Self-reliance and Autonomy	41
4.2. Performance of Femininity and Gender Role Distribution	42
4.3. Perfect Daughter, Perfect Killer: Dismantling Patriarchal ties.....	45

4. Chapter Three: A Heroine in a Male Dominated World

Feminism awareness has risen in answer to the oppression and inequality that women were subjected to. The different feminisms all called for different purposes that all catered for the interest of women. Moreover, in spite of their diverging methods and approaches they share some principles on which feminism as a doctrine stands on. Among these principles, the following part discusses the three main principles that manifest themselves in the Kate Daniels series.

4.1. Female Empowerment: Autonomy and Self-Reliance

Empowerment is one of the important principles of feminism. “For liberal feminists, empowerment has meant extending the options of women beyond the domestic to the public sphere. This focus sought to extend to women certain "rights" which typically were assumed to be granted to males, or at least white males” (Rowland-Serdar and Shia 605). Thus, the concept seeks to encompass the public rights of women and not just limit its range within the domestic borders. Empowerment stands on two pillars, autonomy and self-reliance.

4.1.1 An Independent Heroine

These two concepts hold a central focus point in feminist studies since feminism’s main concern is “living according to one’s own lights” (Veltman and Piper 1). Firstly, most feminist theorists do not agree with Kant’s definition of Autonomy which states that, “Autonomy of the will is the property the will has of being a law unto itself (independently of every property belonging to the objects of volition)” (qtd. in Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy). As stated in the Encyclopaedia, the feminist philosophers’ disagreement is based on the rejection of the notions of *nature of the self* and the *value of autonomy*. The conception of these two notions is men proportioned and does not fit to a woman’s social and political stand. In an attempt to alleviate the disagreement rising from the different feminist critiques there was the conception of a relational

autonomy. This new concept is defined by John Christman as “the label that has been given to an alternative conception of what it means to be a free, self-governing agent who is also socially constituted and who possibly defines her basic value commitments in terms of inter- personal relations and mutual dependencies (143). In other words, the construction of autonomy needs to adhere to some social integration of the individual self while respecting the values of justice. Secondly, self has great importance in women’s cause. Women have been considered as the “other” as declared by Simone du Beauvoir, “He is the Subject, he is the Absolute—she is the Other,” (Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy). Women were oppressed by their men on a social, political and even an economic level and, though feminism with its three waves have disintegrated many of those hurdles women encountered, yet some would criticize some theories for victimizing the women. Many philosophers and thinkers started encouraging women to nurture their self-definition and self-valuation. Depending on a man for protection or for other matters undermined women’s independence thus, engendering a “sense of vulnerability and helplessness” (Boles and Hoeveler 288).

4.1.2. Self-reliance and Autonomy

Consequently, empowerment is a feminist strategy that encourages women to handle the reins of their own lives. Ilona Andrews infuses this strategy into Kate Daniels character profile. From the very first book, Kate shows strong independence and autonomy. Her circumstances have made her learn how to survive on her own. Kate embraces her style of life and moves ahead with no lamentation over the past or what could have been. She does not rely on anyone for her protection but her own strength, magic and sarcasm. The opening scene finds Kate in her kitchen nursing a Boone’s Farm bottle. Magic collapses taking with it her defensive wards and that is when she feels the presence of the vampire in the vicinity. After planting a dagger in the creature’s throat,

she learns that it is a visit from Ghastek, one of the masters of death. Ghastek complains about the welcoming act and she declares, "It's a reflex. Hear a bell, get food. See an undead, throw a knife. Same thing, really" (3). Kate has harnessed her powers to the point that her throwing knife was faster than the vampire who is famous for its preternatural speed. Furthermore, Kate's mantra in life is to "kill first, ask questions later" and this has been handy for her. Kate's self-reliance and autonomy does not deter her from seeking a love relationship. Of course, she is stubborn but that does not prevent her from establishing a relationship with the Beast Lord Curran Lenart. Instead, her autonomy helps her move on when a misunderstanding takes place and she thinks that Curran has left her. She does not pine and whine while crying the lost love, she is hurt sure but she still keeps on moving.

4.2. Performance of Femininity and Gender Role Distribution

The portrayal of female protagonist in literature has witnessed a constant shift, which reflected the society's way of treating women at the any given time. The protagonists have evolved from damsels in distresses who frail as they were need constant protecting to seductresses who exploited men through their vile femininity to the femme fatale who could fight off an army dressed in a tiny dress. Female characters have always been assigned roles according to their gender. However, with feminism came the understanding that biology is not destiny and women can occupy jobs equal to men. Judith Butler defines gender as "a performance" or a set of acts and behaviours that are predetermined by certain social norms (Butler 522). Joan Scott also defines gender as: "a constitutive element of social relationships based on perceived differences between the sexes,..."(Scott 66). Apparently, gender is socially constructed; society plays a great role in forming gender roles and determining distinctions between male and female based on biological differences. Theorists such as Betty Friedan and Kate Millet draw on the topic of gender-role

stereotyping in the early 1970's. This approach drew attention to the oppressive nature of how women were represented, for example as a sex object, a wife and a mother. These particular roles demonstrated how women were relegated to the private sphere of both family life as well as sexual relations. Likewise, they were left out of the public and professional life.

Kate does not adhere to any archetype or stereotype related to the female protagonist. She is strong but not stronger than a man is and instead of strength, she utilizes agility to overpower her opponent. She dresses with practicality in mind and never uses her femininity as a weapon. In addition, the several roles she occupies, in the midst of professional and social ranges, are nothing but female specific.

4.2.1. Mercenary

The series protagonist start working for the guild, the mercenary company, to make ends meet. She constantly handles the odd jobs, those no one wants to take care of. She forms a partnership with Jim a werecat mercenary. Their relationship is built on mutual respect and trust. Kate has other relations with the rest of the mercenaries from the Guild but it is distant at best until a job brings them together. The job is not easy since it is highly risky and takes a toll on the person. However, Kate enjoys it because of the thrill she gets and it pays the rent.

4.2.2. Law Enforcement Agent

After taking care of Greg's case, Kate obtains a post among the Order. This agency is the embodiment of the patriarchal society where there is no acceptance of the "Other". Officially, it seeks to provide help to whomever is in harm's way be it human or nonhuman. However, the leaders of the agency conspire to eradicate the whole monster population. A plan that Kate dismantle with the help of the werewolves, the witches and even the wizards. The agency has very discriminating recruiting policies. Anyone with any magic in their blood could not have a job with

the agency. Andrea, Kate's best friend and a werehyena, is a highly ranked officer who had a hard childhood hides her identity in fear of losing her position. And, when later she risks exposure to save lives she is fired on the spot. Kate could not compromise her principles while working for the Order. She quits when she is given a choice, either stay with the Order or go and save those monsters.

4.2.3. Alpha

Kate becomes the female alpha of the shifters clan through her relationship to the Beast Lord and Alpha of all shifters in Atlanta. She has a hard time adjusting to the life of an alpha's consort. Furthermore, she is not accepted by the majority of the shifters since she is seemingly human and so frail. Therefore, when Curran is injured and lost consciousness for many weeks she has to fight challengers on a daily basis and multiple ones per day. She has an injured knee and she hurts a lot however, showing weakness or refusing a challenge would mean abdicating the alpha position. At the same time, she has to learn pack politics which is very complicated and intrinsic. When she first meets the pack's council, she is underestimated and undermined because she is a mere human. Kate is aware of that and acts accordingly by kicking the door and mouthing off to the alphas. "Ready to put your claws where your mouth is, or are you going to cringe behind the big boys and yip all day?" Kate declares challenging the Rat alpha, "his eyes flared yellow 'Is that a challenge?' 'Yes it is'" (Andrews Magic Bleeds 338) He burst into his furry form mid-flight and she slashes his neck and then stabs his mate when she tries to come after her. After this display of dexterity and power she gets the acceptance of the other alphas. Still and to prove her ruthlessness, Kate departs from the meet declaring, "Have your vote. But know this: if you come to remove me, come in force, because if you try to separate me from him, I will kill every single

one of you. My hand won't shake. My aim won't falter. My face will be the last thing you'll see before you die” (Andrews Magic Bleeds 339).

Kate assuming the role of the alpha in the story exceeds the literal meaning of the word. Referring back to the scriptural reference of the word Alpha which denotes God’s assertion in Revelation “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end” (qtd. in Jeffery 32). Alpha and Omega are the first and last letter of the Greek alphabet hence, they present the beginning and the end or the “commencement and the termination” of any matter arising. Kate’s powers allow her to stand in the same position of the alpha male and assume its responsibilities equally. Furthermore, she can even bring Julie back to life after she kills her in order to save her from the bite. Of course, it is a perilous act and almost killed her in the process but the blood magic she inherited from her father helps her succeed in giving Julie a new form hence making Kate a beginning herself.

4.3.Perfect Daughter, Perfect Killer: Dismantling Patriarchal ties

Women are considered primary care givers, empathic and suitable for housework because this serves the family-unit. Men are considered breadwinners and thus, they must be assertive and emotionally distant. It is like a vicious circle; there is a stress on the differences in gender, supposedly based on biological sex, which creates an institution of marriage in which strict gender roles must be adhered to. In turn, these strict gender roles perpetuate the gender roles as natural assignments.

Consequently, the institution of marriage serves to suppress women. It turns them into breeding mares with no outside agency. In the past, this meant that women were often sold for political or financial means by fathers to future husbands. These husbands had absolute control over their wives, both in a financial sense as any money or property they had on entering the marriage legally became the property of their husband. Legally, husbands were also allowed to discipline their

wives, which was code for beating them. Marriage was often seen as a contract or a matter of convenience that benefited the wife's father and husband. The romantic ideal is a very modern notion. Feminist scholars and philosophers rebelled against these notions. The first wave feminism obtain political rights for women then the second wave feminism brought on some social and cultural reforms that were much needed.

Kate Daniels has always had trouble adhering to patriarchal rules. Her denying her blood magic is symbolic of her rejecting to belong to her father. Throughout the story, she goes to great lengths to hide her identity. She burns all her bandages and wipes any fight scenes she has been at in fear that some of her blood is left behind and that could be traced back to her father. Kate was raised to become a killer. Her stepfather kept on drilling that she needed to stay alone. That friends and acquaintances with anchor her and forming ties would pose a danger to her because she needed to be on constant move. At a certain moment, Kate hears Voron's voice and believes she is undeserving of love. However, the need to protect her friends pushed her to discard that voice and do what her heart dictate her to do.

The ultimate fight against patriarchy is symbolized in Kate's face off with her father. Roland has always had a grudge against shape shifters and wanted to eradicate them all. Kate could not let that happen and for the sake of their lives she sacrifices herself in order to be able to vanquish him into another dimension.

To sum up, Ilona Andrews has utilized a mixture of feminist principles and the supernatural elements to depict Kate in the shade of this powerful and autonomous woman who defies authority and have no fear of disturbing the status quo. The way Kate is portrayed as a killer, a mercenary and even an alpha conveys that not just because she is a woman she has to adhere to societal doctrines and give up control over her destiny.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

5. General Conclusion

The present extended essay, entitled *The Role of Fantasy Fiction in Promoting Feminism* has undertaken the objective of investigating the relationship between fantasy and feminism and undertake the ways authors utilize the techniques and conventions of supernatural literature to infuse them with feminist influence. This journey of research started by inquiring the influence feminism has on supernatural fiction and how do authors explore these imagined worlds to share and promote their thoughts, beliefs and orientations.

The 21st century witnessed the emergence of fantasy fiction and the supernatural which also has coincided with the growth of feminist awareness to the point that it became impossible to discern the influence of the feminist thoughts on contemporary writers. Fantasy works have become a vehicle for tackling women issues and liberating female writers from any social or cultural inhibitions and restrictions. The premise set in supernatural worlds, unreachable realms or a magical urban city allows for some liberalities and encourages fighting stereotyping and taboos that would hinder authors' creativity and flow of expression.

The work has been divided into three chapters, the first one entitled *Fantastic Literature and the Enhancement of the Feminist Thought* has dealt with defining what fantasy literature is, the elements involved in the production of this kind of literature, and its origins and emergence. It also has tackled, although briefly, the concept of feminism and what it entails. In addition, the chapter has dived into explaining one subgenre of fantasy literature which is urban fantasy. Because the chosen work, *The Kate Daniels* series by Ilona Andrews, is shelved under urban fantasy category, it has been important to devote a section of the chapter for the definition and origins of this genre and the main elements that make up the form. Moreover, there has been a reference to the way monsters are being perceived in the 21st century and how the old fear and terror that was caused

by the sight of monsters has shifted into love and fascination in contemporary times rendering them a big part of today's pop culture.

The second chapter has explored the series through a feminist perspective. Starting with question whether the author is a feminist or the novel is. On the one hand, and due to the fact that the author Ilona Andrews is actually a husband and wife writing team and the lack of ample information on their life and biographies it has been a testing task trying to discern their intentions and political orientation. On the other hand, the series display feminist nuances in the way the protagonist is depicted and portrayed throughout the story as well as in the power balances between the male and the female characters. Then there is the introduction of the new notion of shero, the urban fantasy heroine who represent a distinguished feature of this genre. because, in addition to the urban setting that sets this literature apart from the other fantastic works, the heroine makes a new addition in ways that differs from the old depictions of female characters who has been assigned roles because biology dictates it.

The last chapter focuses on three main principles of the feminist thought, empowerment, gender roles and patriarchy. It sheds the light on the way the author fuses these principles with supernatural elements to create a female protagonist who is a strong, self-reliant, and capable woman in both her personal and professional lives. Autonomy proves to be a crucial element from a feminist perspective. A woman has to learn how to stand on her own without expecting the protection of a man or his financial support. However, this does not mean she has to deny the existence of men in her life instead learns how to accept help and support when necessary. In the series, the protagonist occupies different unusual jobs for a woman. No job is out of the reach of women because of her physiognomy. Kate works her way from a mere mercenary who works for hire to the owner of her own investigation agency.

In conclusion, the hypotheses adopted in the beginning of the work have been investigated and analysed. This urban fantasy work and through an analytical approach, has proved to be painted with feminist brushes. Although it has been difficult to pin the authors' orientation as feminist because of lack of ample data and academic reviews of the work, however the work displays feminist nuances through the protagonist and her entourage. It features a female heroine who is easy to love and admire. She is set as an ideal role model and considered as such by many the reader fans that helped the series rank among the top in New York Times Best Sellers. As for the author's use of supernatural elements and a protagonist of a monstrous nature, studies examining the relationship between popular culture and the shaping up of identities of teenagers have reach the conclusion that there is a strong influence because individuals are subject to certain patterns that they adopt as their own. Hence, the fascination with monsters increased and this is why authors use such tropes to have greater reach with the readership.

WORKS CITED

Works Cited

- Andrews, Ilona. *Magic Bites*. New York: Ace Books, 2007. Print.
- . *Magic Bleeds*. New York: Ace Books, 2010. Print.
- . “Short Biography.” 17 March 2007. *Ilona Andrews*. Web. 5 April 2019.
- Attebery, Brian. *The Fantasy Tradition of American Literature: From Irvin to Le Guin*. Indiana University Press, 1980. Print.
- Barr, Marleen S. *Alien to Femininity: Speculative Fiction and Feminist Theory*. Greenwood Press, 1987. Print.
- Bell, Susan. “Monsters on our minds: What our fascination with frightful creatures says about us.” 30 October 2017. *USC News*. Web. 29 March 2019.
- Blakemont, A.J. “Urban Fantasy: Definition and Characteristics.” 8 October 2015. *Blakemont.com*. Web. 4 January 2019.
- Boles, Janet K. and Diane Long Hoeveler. *Historical Dictionary of Feminism Second Edition*. Maryland: The Scarecrow Press, 2004. Print.
- Bradshaw, Lindsey. “BLOOD THIRSTY: WHY ARE VAMPIRES RULING POP CULTURE?” 2 July 2012. *Texas Tech Today*. Web. 30 March 2019.
- Briggs, Patricia. *Moon Called*. Ace Books, 2006. Print.
- Bronzite, Dan. “The Hero's Journey- Mythic structure of Joseph Campbells Monomyth.” n.d. *Movie Outline*. Web. 6 April 2019.
- Burkett, Elinor and Laura Brunell. “Feminism.” *Encyclopedia Britannica*. 21 June 2002. Web. 3 April 2019.

- Butler, Judith. "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory." *Theatre Journal* (1988): 519-531. Print.
- Cameron, Deborah. *Feminism: Ideas in Profile*. Oxford: Profile Books, 2018. Print.
- Campbell, Joseph. *The Hero with a Thousand Faces Third Edition*. California: New World Library, 2008. Print.
- Christman, John. "Relational Autonomy, Liberal Individualism, and the Social Constitution of Selves." *Philosophical Studies: An International Journal for Philosophy in the Analytic Tradition* Vol. 117.No. 1/2 (2004): 143-164. Print.
- Clute, John and John Grant. *The Encyclopedia of Fantasy* . Orbit, 1997. Print.
- Croft, Steven. *English & English Literature*. Letts and Lonsdale, 2006. Print.
- Downing, Lisa. "The early and Influencial role of science fanatsy." *MAI 52/02M(E), Masters Abstracts International*. Illinois: Dekalb univesity, 2019. Web.
- Drucker, Sally Ann. "Betty Friedan: The Three Waves of Feminism." 27 April 2018. *Ohio Humanities*. Web. 3 April 2019.
- Ekman, Stefan. "Urban Fantasy: A Literature of the unseen." *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts* Vol. 27.N. 3 (2016): 452-469. Print.
- Feminism. "Feminist Perspectives on Sex and Gender." *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy/Summer 2010 Edition*. Sydney, 12 May 2008. Web. 5 April 2019.
- French, Marilyn. "Is There a Feminist Aesthetics?" Hilde, Hein and Carolyn C. Korsmeyer. *Aesthetics in Feminist Perspectives*. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1993. 68-76. Print.
- Goodman, Lizbeth. *Literature and Gender*. New York: Routledge, 2013. Print.

Humphries, Mark. "Popular Culture as a Placeholder Identity for Teenagers." 2019. *Canadian Teacher*. Web. 30 January 2019.

Irvine, Alexander C. "Urban Fantasy." James, Edward and , Farah Mendelsohn. *The Cambridge Companion to Fantasy Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012. 200-213. Print.

Izzo, David G. *W.H. Auden Encyclopedia*. London: Macfarland and company, 2004. Print.

James, Edward and Farah Mendlesohn. *The Cambridge Companion to Fantasy Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012. Print.

Jeffery L., David. *A Dictionary of Biblical Tradition in English Literature*. Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1992. Print.

Jenainati, Cathia and Judy Groves. *Introducing Feminism*. Malta: Gutenberg Press, 2007. Print.

Mead, Richelle. *Vampire Academy*. USA: Razorbill, 2007-2010. Print.

Meyer, Stephenie. *Twilight*. USA: Little, Brown and Company, 2005. Print.

Pohl, Laura. "Knowing your Genre, Part One: Fantasy." 27 July 2017. *OnlybyLaura.com*. web. 12 April 2019.

"Urban-Fantasy". *Merriam-Webster.com*. n.d. Web. 4 January 2019.

Rowland-Serdar, Barbara and Peregrine Schwartz-Shea. "Empowering Women: Self, Autonomy, and Responsibility." *The Western Political Quarterly*, Vol. 44, No. 3 (1991): 605-624. Print.

Sarai, M.W. "Urban Fantasy's Unique Female Hero." 1 November 2017. *The Artifice*. Web. 5 April 2019.

Scott, Joan W. "Gender as a Useful Category of Historical Analysis." Parker, Richard G. and Peter Aggleton. *Culture, Society and Sexuality: A Reader*. Psychology Press, 1999. 57-75. Print.

Smith, L.J. *The Vampire Diaries*. USA: Harper Paperbacks, 1991-1992. Print.

- Stabelford, Brian. *The A to Z of Fantasy Literature*. Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, 2009. Print.
- Stoker, Bram. *Dracula*. New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1897. Print.
- Stoljar, Natalie. "'Feminist Perspectives on Autonomy'." *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Winter 2018 Edition)* (2018). Web.
- Thanki, Pratiksha H. "'Time, Space and Fantasy' in the Novels of H. G. Wells, Arthur C. Clarke and J. K. Rowling: A Critical Study." *Thesis PhD*. Saurashtra University Theses Service, 2011. Web.
- "The science of monsters." 8 July 2013. *ABC Science*. Web. 29 Mars 2019.
- Timmerman, John H. *Other Worlds: The Fantasy Genre*. Ohio: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1983. Print.
- Trill, Nancy H. "Book Reviews: Fantasy and Mimesis: Responses to Mimesis in Western Literature by Kathryn Hume." *Style* Vol. 22 .No. 1 (1988): 147-150. Print.
- Veltman, Andrea and Mark Piper. *Autonomy, Oppression and Gender*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014. Print.
- Wolfe, Gary K. *Evaporating Genres: Essays on Fantastic Literature*. Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 2011. Print.
- Wolfe, Gary K. "Fantasy from Dryden to Dunsany." James, Edward and Farah Mendelsohn. *The Cambridge Companion to Fantasy Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012. 7-20. Print.