THE MAGIC OF BOOKS: A DISCOURSE HISTORICAL APPROACH TOWARDS MEDIEVAL LEARNED MAGIC AND LITERATURE

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**ABSTRACT**

This study offers a novel approach to the study of religion's "critical categories," which is receiving greater attention: How can researchers handle flexible or polyvalent ideas that lack commonly agreed-upon conceptualizations and often elicit misconceptions or even intense disagreements over their correct use? Instead of unilaterally lowering the semantic depth of these categories by "definitions," the essay proposes recognizing polysemantic as a key characteristic or unavoidable aspect of many, if not every, essential category in the study of religion. Similarly, the study offers a new methodological tool called "polysemantic analysis," which has two parts: narrative analysis and intellectual reverse engineering that deconstruct a contested category into a semantic matrix, or "net of conceptions," which can then be used to analyses religious data. This method applies a polysemantic notion to religious data without losing its analytical usefulness, enabling more sophisticated and fine-grained analysis. The study applies such a method to "religious individualization," a process classification that has garnered increased academic interest. "Polysemantic analysis" shows a matrix with category conceptions in four domains. This "net of conceptions" is then used to "magic" conceptual history, both polemical and positive. a number of certain ambiguities, the written text history of "Western taught magic" activates a broad variety of "religious induced cognitive" ideas and might serve as an especially notable example of these kinds of dynamics.

**KEYWORD:** Magic, History, Medieval Learned, Magic and Literature, Magic Book.

**INTRODUCTION**

Stories unite people because they share language and experience. It's a novel way to share and communicate. Without the ability to pronounce and regulate sounds, people would have to use body language and lose the magic of language. Culture and civilisation cannot grow without this connection. Words are really the best way to express all human emotions, from sadness to joy to the mere wonder of someone being alive. Language is the most powerful—even magical—weapon researchers have. Language can elevate and degrade. Books may transfer readers to another location with only the content of the page, which captivates them. The reader may feel transported to another realm and part of the event simply by reading the words. Throughout the Medieval Ages, this remained true. The Medieval Ages thought books could educate and transfer the mind, and language and speech could cast spells on others. Medieval Ages people believed in magic and had a great yearning for understanding and connection with the world. Scholars may only begin to grasp their belief within magical powers inherent in the environment that surrounds them and the thought that words might harness this magic by studying mediaeval society's views about sorcery and those who perform it and the literature of the time. Researchers could only understand the concept that words can harness this power this way. Medieval literature shows how people thought about magic. While views towards magic and people who could make use of it were extremely different in the Eighteenth Century and now, there is a consistency in the way how beliefs about magical are represented in both the Eighteenth Century and today. Despite Medieval disapproval of magic, this is real (Bailey, 2006).

**BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

Magic was a genuine phenomenon throughout the Middle Ages. Because to the prevalence of scientific thinking in contemporary societies, some dismiss it as fiction or superstition. As magic is incompatible with this worldview, it is instantly dismissed. While the original purpose of magic was to convey a sense of significance from the world around us, modern society views magic as something that only exists in fiction and equates the term with witchcraft, effectively criminalizing it in the same way that a secular culture may be said to criminalize religion. Most people in the contemporary world think about religion the same way they do about magic: as something made up and based on superstition. All forms of magic, whether fictitious or real, have taken on a sinister hue because of their historical link with witches. An interesting definition of spell can be found in the OED: "without article: Discourse, narration, speech; occasionally idle talk, fable."

Thus, it seems that the term "casting a spell" in the Middle Ages referred less to any bad or magical practice than to an act of exerting one's influence (Bailey, 2006). If a spell is equivalent to a tale or speech, then people who perform them are only orators. In today's culture, to cast a spell is to do magic; anybody who does so is automatically labeled as a witch or wizard. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the word "grammar" originates from the word "grimoire," which is a synonym for a book of magic spells. By the term "glamour," which denoted magic or enchantment, it also created a tainted version of itself. This idea was expressed via language, giving it the importance medieval society yearned for. In today's more scientific and modern society, however, there are more possibilities than ever for people to dismiss magic as a myth or a bad force. Many modern individuals feel that "superstitious" rituals like magic are unnecessary because of the wealth of information available through scientific research. People tend to view it with suspicion or distrust if it contradicts their own beliefs or contains phenomena that cannot be explained by science (a phenomenon shared by many faiths). Because of this, contemporary readers are unable to properly appreciate medieval literature for what it was or even consider the notion that writing might be magical and entrancing. To this day, no conversation about witchcraft or magic would be complete without reference to the phenomenally successful Harry Potter books. It's no surprise that this series has stirred up controversy, since it follows a group of adolescent wizards and witches as they enroll in and study at a school of witchcraft and wizardry. Others worried that exposing kids to Harry Potter might make them interested in practicing wizardry. Even though Wiccans have stated that the books have nothing in common with actual practices of this religion, religious groups have tried to remove or restrict the access children had to these novels by attempting to ban those from school libraries in the hopes that they are not be tempted to start practicing magic or turn to the Wicca religion. Fear and misunderstanding of magic and witchcraft are revealing of contemporary culture, but they also demonstrate the continued power of words, even when hundreds of years have passed since magic was held in high regard (Klaniczay, 2010). This indicates that people are afraid of literature because they are aware of the immense effect it may have on readers. Despite the fact that the Harry Potter books are just a bunch of words on a page, many well-informed adults were concerned about the impact they might have on impressionable young minds. This was especially true of religious groups that view magic with deep suspicion and consider it to be inherently evil. The main difference is that people in the Middle Ages also thought that magic was a genuine force in nature, whereas modern people take the power of language for granted (Bailey, 2006).

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

In fact, mediaeval medical writing recommended using charms or magical objects for protection, health, and even birth control. This shows that magic and witchcraft were widely seen as a legitimate branch of medicine. Its rotula was the premier mediaeval women's medical treatise, and it advocated utilising amulets rather than medicines for achieving specific effects like birth control. The present attitude towards the topic of superstitious magic may be traced back to the fourteenth century, when the usage of charms or amulets (a completely typical and good kind of magic) became connected with demonic powers or wicked ceremonies. (McAlindon, 2013).

To fully understand what the magical story is about, you need to understand how mediaeval people thought about magic. At the time, magic was the same as science. It was a way to explain the mysterious because its ceremonies, rituals, taboos, and accompanying beliefs could be seen as a way to understand the whole universe, or at least a way to describe it. After establishing and explaining the mindset of mediaeval society regarding magic, it may go on to analyse how this mindset is portrayed and reflected in literature. The following examples are by no means exhaustive of the literary depiction of magic and witchcraft; rather, they are limited to female characters in Arthurian legends for one simple reason: in mediaeval society, women were more likely to be accused of practising witchcraft and persecuted for doing so. According to one scholar, "empirical confusion of sainthood and witchcraft arose, when it did at all, mainly in the case of women" because "women's spirituality was often morbid." Throughout history, women have consistently been targeted for accusations of witchcraft and persecution at a higher rate than men have been suspected of being wizards. Like most other cultures throughout history, mediaeval civilization was sexist and devalued women. Women were more likely to be accused of witchcraft because they were seen as more malleable and susceptible to influence than males. Many women were wrongfully accused and subjected to ludicrous and quite silly exams to prove their innocence since it was thought that the devil could more easily persuade women than men to sign a contract with him (Kieckhefer, 2013).

Morgan says that Gawain is a brave knight because the reader doesn't like that he failed, even though he yelled at women at the end. In the end, the ordinary Arthurian hero is saved from magic by his patience, persistence, honesty, faith, and celibacy. The sexist parts of mediaeval literature are not tied directly to the personalities of magic or witchcraft in mediaeval culture, but the examples are instructive in explaining how women were perceived in the eighteenth century and why women were much more commonly persecuted than men for witchcraft and sorcery.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Secondary research was conducted on the magic book discourse history of mediaeval magic and literature. According to (McAlindon, 2013) it was concluded that "In the century prior to the volcanic activity of Protestantism, reformist impulses already animated many administrative authorities, having to feed increased concern concerning proper religiosity, lay religiosity, and putative superstition," It meant that women who purported to have magical powers from Christ were instantly labelled witches and in danger of being punished as demons or heretics, even if they were telling the truth. Laypeople and also many clergy conduct spells, charms, therapeutic rites, and other fundamental practices that disturb these authorities. Authorities believed these practices invoked demons and were superstitious. This followed Christian beliefs that most magic is demonic. Another research conducted by (Michael D. Bailey, 2006) states that The Reformation marked a sea change in mediaeval society's view of magic and its practitioners. That was the thing that made the two different magical systems merge into a single, evil one. As the witches' possession of and authority over demonic power depended only on an explicit deal with Satan, the potency of whatever simple sorcery they performed was severely diminished.

**CONCLUSION**

The literature and language of any given time period are always reflecting the anxieties, insecurities, and beliefs of the culture at the time, no matter how different the current and medieval views on magic and witches may be. Language is the glue that holds societies together, and its potency as a tool for social change has been trumpeted time and time again. Books are priceless because of the power of language to take the reader to another world or to persuade them to change their perspective with nothing more than the written word. Magic was widely known and accepted in medieval culture. Even though issues in the past and society inevitably led to the downturn of magic or the muddying of something like the lines between good and bad magic, it is crucial to examine the past of the societal structure and how it was meant to reflect in the publications of such a time to comprehend how individuals believed there had been magic all around them or how it might have been used through the power of language. Utilize it just as well as works of literature from this period.

**LIMITATION**

Reliability and accuracy of data: The reliability and accuracy of secondary data may be uncertain because it is not collected specifically for the purpose of the researcher's study. There is also the risk of errors or biases in the original source material, which can be perpetuated through secondary research. Limited control over data collection: Researchers have no control over the data collection process, which means that the data may not be in a format that is suitable for their specific research needs. Lack of context: Secondary data often lacks the contextual information that is necessary to understand the data fully. Researchers may not know how the data was collected, what the sample size was, or what the original research question was. Time limitations: The data may be outdated or not relevant to the current research question, especially in rapidly changing fields. Availability: There may be limitations in accessing certain sources of data due to copyright or other legal restrictions, as well as the availability of data on specific topics. Inability to probe deeper: Researchers may not be able to probe deeper into certain issues because they cannot directly ask the original sources questions or conduct their own data collection methods. Lack of originality: Secondary research is not original research and may not provide the unique insights or perspectives that can be gained through primary research.

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