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**From Perpetuation to Eradication of Gender Stereotypes:**

**A Feminist Critical Discourse analytical Perspective**

Thesis submitted in candidature for the Degree of Doctorat Es-Sciences in  
Sociolinguistics

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## DEDICATIONS

*To the memory of my father,*

*To my beloved mother*

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

|             |                                      |
|-------------|--------------------------------------|
| <b>CDA</b>  | Critical Discourse Analysis          |
| <b>CDS</b>  | Critical Discourse Studies           |
| <b>CL</b>   | Critical Linguistics                 |
| <b>CST</b>  | Critical Social Theory               |
| <b>DA</b>   | Discourse Analysis                   |
| <b>FCDA</b> | Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis |

## **ABSTRACT**

In the area of language and gender studies, (feminist) critical discourse analysts are concerned with revealing the hidden connections as those between gender, language, ideology and power. Their focus is mainly on the discourses which are ideologically loaded and act against the interests of women. Equipped with a strong critical theory, feminists working under the umbrella of critical discourse analysis believe in the freedom of individuals to make choices within discourse and they believe also in the possibility of changing and challenging the status quo. Challenging the status quo is challenging the stereotypes which involve ideologies that have become 'naturalized' 'common sense' or 'acceptable' despite the fact that they may be very bad and very harmful to women, girls and even men. Women and men are typed, classified and represented according to the classificatory schemes in their cultures, in terms of their social positions, their group membership, personality traits, and so on. Power is clearly a key consideration here. Stereotypes tend to be directed at subordinate groups (e.g. ethnic minorities, women) and they play an important part in hegemonic struggle. As Fairclough (1995:24) argues, ways must be found to 'denaturalize' them by increasing critical awareness. In the area of language and gender much of this awareness should revolve around the belief that gender remains highly salient, not only in terms of the public identities, women and men construct for themselves, but also in terms of how they are perceived and judged by others and represented in texts. Discourse is, indeed the locus of much of people's assumptions about gender. In discourse, gender ideologies are (re) produced, negotiated, sustained and resisted. Within the framework of Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA), this study is devoted to the analysis of gender stereotypes in children's fiction. The texts selected are produced by an Algerian writer. The methodology adopted is to connect the linguistics features in the texts (the Micro) to the social factors (the macro). The analysis reveals that the tools used to detect the existence of gender stereotypes have proved to be very efficient in uncovering the subtle configurations of the ideological embedment in discourse. Gender is still represented in a way that supports the status –quo. Children's fiction continues contribute to the socialization of children in a very traditional and stereotypical way and the process of legitimizing the illegitimate still continues.

The study also reveals that the authors of the books for children are not the only responsible for the production of the discourse addressed to children; many institutions such as the school, the family and the publishing houses are important agents of change.

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## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

While doing some research on my thesis, I came across an interview conducted by Rogers with Fairclough in 2003 and posted on the companion website for a book published in 2011<sup>1</sup>. I have to admit that this interview inspired me and motivated me to know more about critical language studies. As a student, I have always been curious to know about the circumstances which pushed certain academics and intellectuals to engage in public life. In the interview it is mentioned that Fairclough started teaching formal linguistics, such as Chomskyan grammar. Then he started to get quite involved politically in the 1970s. In the interview, he confesses that he became dissatisfied with the gross gap between his political interests and his academic ones. This confession made me even more curious to know how he could manage to bridge the gap. His eagerness guided him towards social linguistics and then the critical linguistics work of the late 1970s, Voloshinov and the Marxist Philosophy of Language. Fairclough was one of the major contributors to the emergence of the transdisciplinary approach, now known as Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). For him “*it was very much a matter of trying to develop some academic work that was a way of developing his political commitments in academic terms.* »<sup>2</sup>

Political and social commitments have turned many academics into moral agents whose role is to bring the truth about matters of human significance to the audience by publishing books and participating in conferences. The publication of two seminal books, *Language and Control* by Roger Fowler, Robert Hodge, Gunter Kress, and Tony Trew in 1979 and *Language and Ideology* by Gunter Kress and Robert Hodge in the same year, have revolutionized the field of language studies and marked the emergence of CDA, a multidisciplinary approach to the investigation of the problematic relationship between language and society. As Fowler and Kress (Fowler *et al.* 1979) note, central to CDA is the notion that “*ideology is linguistically mediated . . .*” (p.185). The central thesis in both books is that language is an instrument of control in the sense that “*linguistic forms allow*

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<sup>1</sup> [www.routledge.com/textbooks/9780415874298](http://www.routledge.com/textbooks/9780415874298)

<sup>2</sup> [www.routledge.com/textbooks/9780415874298](http://www.routledge.com/textbooks/9780415874298)

*significance to be conveyed and to be distorted*' (Hodge and Kress, 1979, p. 6). Another major work in CDA appeared a decade later, in 1989. It was Norman Fairclough's *Language and Power*, in which he provided an introduction to the critical study of discourse. In this book, Fairclough explicitly presented CDA theory in terms of intentions, goals, and basic tenets as well as a model for analysis. As was the case with earlier researchers in CDA, much of Fairclough's analytical framework was grounded in Systemic Functional Linguistics theory (SFL). Another major work is Lemke's *Textual Politics*, published in 1995. Though Lemke does not work within the CDA model, he adopts a social semiotic approach to deal with language from a critical perspective, sharing thus similar methods with the other researchers. The extension of CDA was introduced in *Language in the News*, by Fowler in 1996. In this book, Fowler extends critical language study, by rooting his analysis in SFL by focusing on transitivity, transformations, lexical structure, and modality.

Besides SFL, several other theories provided a theoretical foundation for CDA. Critical Social Theory (CST) was one of these theories. CST is a transdisciplinary knowledge base, structured by the dual agendas of critiquing and resisting domination and creating a society free of oppression (Anyon, 1997, Appadurari 1990, Apple 1995, Collins 2009). CST rests on the rejection of naturalism (that social practices, labels and programs represents reality), rationality (the assumption that truth is a result of science and logic), neutrality (the assumption that truth does not reflect any particular interests), and individualism. The aim of its practitioners is to describe the nature of power and their task is to penetrate to the core of domination, whether it is based in racism, classism, sexism, heterosexism or neo-colonialism. CST was first linked to the Frankfurt School, also known as the Institute of Social Research, founded in 1923 and was considered as the first institute for Marxist studies in the Western world. CST was also linked to such thinkers as Adorno, Horkheimer, Walter Benjamin, Erich Fromm, Herbert Marcuse, and currently Jürgen Habermas. A great deal of critical social theory, at least in the Western tradition, has drawn, in various ways, on this reworking of Marxist theory to include more complex understandings of, for example, ways in which the Marxist concept of ideology relates to psychoanalytic understandings of the subconscious,

how aspects of popular culture are related to forms of political control, and how particular forms of positivism and rationalism have come to dominate other possible ways of thinking.

CDA may be described as neo-Marxist; claiming that cultural and economic dimensions are significant in the creation and maintenance of power relations. Critical work in this sense has to engage with questions of inequality, injustice, rights, and wrongs. Critical, here, means taking social inequality and social transformation as central to one's work. Poster (1989) suggests that "*critical theory springs from an assumption that we live amid a world of pain, that much can be done to alleviate that pain and that theory has a crucial role to play in that process.*"(p.3). CST draws on various disciplines such as literature, philosophy, politics, economy, law studies, cultural studies, ethnic studies and feminism. One of the major tenets is that the purpose behind engaging in social and political life is to achieve social emancipation and to bring about changes. As Rogers (2011) points out "To *critique is not the end goal, the end goal is to hope, to dream, and to create alternative realities that are based in equity, love, peace and solidarity.*"(p.5). Equipped with a strong theory and a set of tools, researchers and scholars started to penetrate to the core of the social matrix. Unlike many other areas such as: pragmatics, conversation analysis, rhetoric, sociolinguistics, ethnography, among others, that may offer, to a certain extent, the same perspective, CDA is more critical, It regards discourse as "*a form of a social practice*" (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997, p. 258), and takes into consideration the context of language use as crucial to discourse (Wodak, 2001). Much of the discourse analysis of the twentieth century was essentially non-critical. That is to say, it did not present a critique of social practices. It was concerned with identification and description of how people use language to communicate. It was also concerned with the development of methods of analysis that help reveal the categories of discourse and the essential features of each, and build theories about how communication takes place. According to Wodak (1989) "*a critical analysis should not remain descriptive and neutral: the interests guiding such analysis are aimed at uncovering injustice, inequality, taking sides with the powerless and suppressed.*" (p.xiv).

In the field of modern linguistics, many linguists have been criticized for keeping distant from social and political issues. Chomsky, for instance was criticized for not considering language use by analyzing authentic texts such as committee meetings, letters, and books. Coulthard & Coulthard (1996) point out that discourse analysts, unlike Chomsky, should take part in the investigations related to society since their role is also to reveal and clarify how power and discriminatory value are inscribed in and mediated through the linguistic System. It is the responsibility of the researchers in such domains as Critical Discourse Analysis, sociology, anthropology and so on to “*help create a world where people are not discriminated against because of sex, colour, creed, age or social class.*” (Coulthard & Coulthard, 1996, p. xi)

Discourse thus, started to be viewed from new perspective, as a major instrument of power and control. The emergence of Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) marked the move from language – system to discourse - system. Functional linguists worked on authentic discourse, with a great interest, not only, in the word or sentence but the whole pattern which implies cognitive or social attitudes. Concerning the crucial role of language in post-structuralism, Weedon (1987) speaks about language as the place where actual and possible forms of social organisation and their likely social and political consequences are defined and contested. “*Yet it is also the place where our sense of selves, our subjectivity is constructed*” (p.21). In this sense, it is very essential to work with the constitutive model of language that is discourse. Discourse is a practice of not just representing the world, but of signifying the world, constituting and constructing the world in meaning. Discourse is the locus of ideology which is used to exercise power. On the other hand, discourse can also serve as an agent of change by challenging and resisting the status quo.

In the processes of (re) interpretation and (re)production of discourse, context plays a major role. In CDA, the context-dependent view of language is extremely advocated and throughout the extension of its analytical and theoretical framework, this concept has been subject to various adjustments. However the most common view is that context is not represented only by the immediate circumstances which surround text production and interpretation but also the larger societal context

including its relevant cultural, political, social parameters. Van Dijk (2008a, 2009) proposed a mental model of the notion of context. For Van Dijk, context is not represented only in the social environment which includes gender, age, race and other variables, but rather, a subjective mental representation enabling the participants to recognize relative properties of the communicative situation and control discourse processing and adapting discourse to the social environment. Such a representation is called a context model. In this sense the relation between discourse and society is not direct, but needs to be mediated by the so-called context models.

CDA has offered theorization and a wide range of tools and strategies for detailed analyses of contextualized uses of language in texts and talk, and not only for those interested in language matters but for all those who are concerned with social issues and want to deal with them from a critical approach. This emancipatory experience has been shared by all those researchers and scholars who are committed to achieving equality and justice.

Along with the development of CDA, many social movements have emerged to challenge the existing living conditions by promoting the empowerment of minorities, and improving their access to basic resources. One of these movements was represented by third wave feminism which began in the mid-1990s. It was not represented only by political and social activists but also by feminist discourse scholars who were, and still are, politically committed to uncover the complex, subtle and naturalized gendered assumptions and hegemonic power relations in discourse, which are responsible for the establishment of various forms of gender inequality and oppression. The adoption of the theories and tools of CDA on the part of these feminist linguists has resulted into the emergence of a new label: Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA). Within this multidisciplinary discipline, researchers started to deal with gender issues from new angles, by problematizing various concepts and notions such as, sexuality, identity, femininity, masculinity, among others. The concept of gender itself started to be considered as cultural and social

instead of being biological. Revolutionary ideas about gender started to be perpetuated within various academic institutions.

During the last few decades several analyses have been conducted, in the field of FCDA, to detect the impact of the discursive constructions in discourse such: as the construction of masculinity, femininity, fatherhood, motherhood and so on, and the effects of such representations on the perception and evaluation of individuals and groups. The outcomes reveal that most of the mechanisms responsible for the construction are based on stereotypical views about gender. Another revelation is that gender stereotypes may affect people negatively especially, women who are often underrepresented.

Recent studies on books written for children, however, have continued to show stereotypes and underrepresentation of female characters (Hamilton & Anderson, 2005; Diekman & Murnen, 2004; Gooden & Gooden, 2001; Hamilton et al., 2006). Although there is little improvement in representation of female characters, it cannot be assumed that this problem is completely solved. Gender discrimination in children's books still prevails. It is difficult, if not inevitable, for young children, especially those who are not aware of the difference between reality and fiction, to internalize stereotypes related to gender roles in these books. Female characters' representation in active positions in life can provide reduction of misrepresentations.

My choice of children's fiction as an area of research was motivated by my interest in identifying the connections between the textual structures, the social structures and the cognitive structures, i.e. the connections between gender representations or gendered discourses in the text and social and cultural contexts, and the social cognition which plays the role of the mediator between discourse and society. Thus, the main thesis in this work is that unequal gendered power relations and forms of empowerment and the ideologies in texts could be based on stereotypical categorization and dichotomous thinking. Feminist critical discourse analysis could offer suitable tools for the description, the interpretation and the

explanation of the multiple linguistic configurations that exist in narratives for children.

The discourse of fiction is indeed, considered as a powerful vehicle for perpetuating gender stereotypes as it takes a major part in the socialization of individuals in general and children in particular or as explained by Edwards et al (2003) "*Children's fiction contributes to the learning to function in a social setting.*"(p.34). The objective of this study is to encourage, the readers, the parents, the teachers, the writers and editors of children's books to develop their own critical intelligence with regard the gender stereotypes that are implicitly or explicitly produced and perpetuated in children's fiction.

Three main reasons stand behind my choice of literary texts and particularly texts addressed to children. The first reason is that the detection of gender stereotypes in children's fiction allows identifying the effects of various stereotypical representations on children and females in real life. The second reason is that most of the studies conducted on the investigation of gender stereotypes in literary texts revolve around content analysis, neglecting thus, the role of linguistic analysis and the third reason is the scarcity of such studies within the academic institutions in Algeria.

Throughout the study, I will demonstrate how the writer's syntactic and lexical choices serve to realise modes of ideology and the strategies associated with them to maintain and legitimize certain assumptions about gender, which in turn lead to the maintenance and perpetuation of negative gender stereotypes and impact negatively the child's gender identity. So, in this analysis I will focus not only on the overt markers of sexism but also on the covert stance taken by the writer through the subtle use of linguistic means.

In terms of methodology, I will draw on a range of theories and approaches that complement each other. I will employ a range of tools and use a range of methods which serve to identify, describe and explain the powerful socializing function of

language. For the analysis of gender stereotypes in the selected sample of fairy tales, a set of tools will be used for the analysis of the linguistic and conceptual dimensions of the texts, from socio-semiotic and socio-cognitive approaches. I will focus on the multidisciplinary nature of feminist critical discourse analysis by incorporating a range of theories from different domains such as gender studies, gender and language studies, systemic functional linguistics, psychology, children's fiction, sociology and education. In addition to Fairclough's three-dimensional framework of analysis (1992b) I will draw on Van Leeuwen's theory of social actors (1995 and 1996), Thompson's theory of modes of operation of ideology (1990), which are mainly grounded in Halliday's functional grammar (1985, 1994). I will also draw on Van Dijk's theory of social cognition, which is grounded in social cognition science. I will employ quantitative analysis to investigate the frequency of appearance of grammatical structures and lexical items to explain gender asymmetries. Within the same critical framework, the notion of discourse will be used as a means for change and emancipation to investigate the possibility of eradicating gender stereotypes.

This work will, therefore, attempt to discuss the following research questions:

- Why is children's fiction an important site for investigating gender stereotypes?
- How does children's fiction contribute to the socialization of children?
- Does stereotyping affect the gender development of children?
- Which tools of FCDA are suitable for the detection of gender stereotypes?
- Which features of language are responsible for the gender asymmetries?
- Which connections could be inferred in relation to the cultural and social context?
- How are power relations shaped by the linguistic choices?
- How does ideology operate in discourse?
- How does 'characterization' position children in the world and position the world to children?
- Is the eradication of gender stereotypes from children's fiction possible?

- Which alternatives could be offered from a feminist critical approach to discourse?
- Which agents could take part in the process of eradication of gender stereotypes?

To these questions a number of hypotheses will be advanced and developed throughout the work.

- Children's fiction is a good epistemological site to detect gender stereotypes.
- Children's fiction contributes to the construction of gender.
- Gender stereotypes are produced reproduced, challenged through discourse.
- Many of the children's books that the teachers and parents keep using, and that the editors and librarians keep selling and editing, do not meet the changing realities, needs, interests and expectations.
- In most fairy tales, femininity and masculinity are represented in a stereotypical way.
- Stereotyping impact the child's gender development negatively.
- Different tools of FCDA can be used to uncover the subtle connection between the use of language and the production of stereotypes.
- Gender stereotypes can be produced by means of lexical and grammatical choices.
- Different connections can be identified within and among the texts and between the texts and the world outside.
- Gender stereotypes are socially and culturally constructed.
- The writer's linguistic choices reflect asymmetrical power relations.
- Ideology operates, in discourse, in a very subtle way.
- The process of characterization in literary texts can be very revealing in terms of representation and positioning.
- Negative gender stereotypes can be resisted and eradicated by means of discursive adjustment.
- The social institutions such as: family, school, publishing house, are important agents of change.

The present study is divided into five basic chapters.

The first chapter which is entitled 'Language and Gender Issues: A Feminist Critical Perspective' is devoted to the theoretical framework. It contains a range of concepts and notions elaborated within the framework of (F) CDA. The notion of discourse is in the leading position as it serves as an introduction to other notions such as gendered discourse, power in discourse, construction of gender identity in discourse, representation of gender in discourse and so on. The Second part of the chapter deals with FCDA, the feminist version of CDA.

The second chapter, 'Gender Stereotypes in Children's Fiction', is devoted to the topic of children's fiction. In this chapter, many of the concepts, already discussed in the first chapter, will be connected to the discourse of children's fiction such as: socialization, representation, intertextuality, ideology, power and stereotyping.

The third chapter 'Methodology' is devoted to the research methodology. It contains the toolkit of analysis of gender stereotypes in children's fiction, including Halliday's systems of transitivity and mood, Van Leeuwen's patterns of inclusion and exclusion, Thompson's modes of operation of ideology. And Van Dijk's social cognition.

The fourth chapter, 'Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis', is devoted to the detection of overt and covert linguistic practices that contribute to the (re)production of gender stereotypes. The study covers a range of texts. I will approach the issue from diverse but complementary theoretical perspectives. My main descriptive and analytical tools are Halliday's functional grammar (1985, 1994), Van Leeuwen's theory of social actor (1995, 1996) and a range of theories developed within the framework of FCDA, such as the theory of power relations.

The fifth chapter, 'Towards Eradicating Negative Gender Stereotypes', deals with the process of eradication of gender stereotypes. Besides suggesting some alternatives to certain extracts from the stories analysed in the fourth chapter, I will shed light on the attempts of some writers of liberated books for children to break the gendered schemata. I will also investigate the reception of these narratives by the

readers. This chapter is mainly devoted to solutions, alternatives and suggestions at the micro (fiction) and the macro level (institutions). My main purpose is to raise awareness about the workings of ideology in liberated literature for children. I will demonstrate the role of three important institutions: family, school, and publishing house in the process of eradicating gender stereotypes. I will suggest a set of guidelines as to the production and consumption of children's fiction.

## 1.1. Introduction

CDA aims to investigate critically social inequality as it is expressed, signalled, constituted, legitimized and so on by language use (or in discourse)

(Wodak, 2001, p. 2)

The different waves of modern feminism may not share the same tenets but at least they share the objective of emancipating women. According to Christie (2000) feminism is realized in many different ways, uses many different methods, however, what characterizes feminist research, in general, is the two central issues: “*the theorization of gender and the project of women’s emancipation.*” (p.13). What distinguishes the third phase of feminism, which began in the mid-1990s, is its connection to post-colonial and post-modern thinking. In this phase many constructs have been problematized such body, sexuality, femininity, masculinity and gender. In the area of gender and language studies researchers were profoundly inspired by the social theory and critical linguistics.

Critical Linguistics (CL), which developed in the 1970s and 1980s, primarily at the University of East Anglia, around Roger Fowler, Tony Trew and Gunter Kress, was the starting point for many critical studies. The work of Fowler et al (1979) has been cited to demonstrate the early foundations of CL. Later work by Fowler (1991, 1996) shows how tools provided by standard linguistic theories (1965 version of Chomskyan grammar and Halliday’s theory of Systemic Functional grammar), can be used to understand linguistic structures of power in text.

In the 1980s, the work of Kress, Hodge, Trew (1979), Van Dijk (1985) Fairclough (1989) and Wodak (1989) demonstrated the main assumptions, principles and procedures of Critical Linguistics (CL) and then Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Indeed, More than three decades have passed since the publication of two extremely influential books, Language and Control by Roger Fowler, Robert Hodge,

Gunther Kress, and Tony Trew (1979) and *Language and Ideology* by Gunther Kress and Robert Hodge (1979)

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a rapidly developing area of language study. Unlike many other areas such as : pragmatics, conversation analysis, rhetoric, sociolinguistics, ethnography, among others, that may offer, to a certain extent, the same perspective, CDA is more critical. It regards discourse as “*a form as social practice*” (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997, p.258), and considers the context of language use to be crucial to discourse (Wodak, 2001). It takes particular interest in the relation between language and power. CDA may be described as neo-Marxist; claiming that cultural and economic dimensions are significant in the creation and maintenance of power relations. The key figures in this area include Fairclough (1992a, b, c, 1993, 1995a, b, 1996, 1998, 2000, 2001, 2003), van Dijk (1993, 1997, 1998a, b, 1999, 2001), Gee (1999, 2005), Van Leeuwen (1993, 1995, 1996), Wodak (1996, 2000, 2001) and Scollon (2001). It is generally agreed that CDA is not a school or a specialization next to the other approaches in discourse studies. It aims rather at offering a different perspective in theorizing, analysis and application.

Much of the discourse analysis (DA) of the twentieth century was essentially non-critical. This is to say, it did not present a critique of social practices. It was concerned with identification and description of how people use language to interact with one another. Within the framework of DA, the researchers have been concerned with the development of methods of analysis that help to reveal the categories of discourse and the essential features of each, and building theories about how communication takes place. According to wodak (1989) critical discourse analysts should not limit themselves to describing language; their real task should aim at uncovering subtle linguistic configurations of injustice, racism and inequality. Critical discourse analysts are rather social and political activists who should take sides with the powerless and the oppressed.

In the field of modern linguistics, many linguists have been criticized for keeping distant from social and political issues. Coulthard & Coulthard (1996) have criticized Chomsky when they say:

One of the paradoxes of modern linguistics is that its most distinguished practitioner, Noam Chomsky, although world-famous as a political activist and campaigner, professes no professional interest in language in use—neither in analyzing the speeches, committee meetings, letters, memos and books which he claims are subverting the democratic process, nor in reflecting on his own highly effective rhetoric.

(p.xi).

Coulthard & Coulthard (1996) point out that discourse could be well exploited when viewed as a major instrument of power and control. The critical discourse analysts, unlike Chomsky, should take part in the investigations related to society since their role is also to reveal and clarify how power and discriminatory values are inscribed in and mediated through the linguistic system. It is the responsibility of the researchers in such domains as Critical Discourse Analysis, sociology, anthropology and so on to “*help create a world where people are not discriminated against because of sex, color, creed, age or social class.*” Coulthard & Coulthard argue (1996, p. xi)

Nevertheless, narratives about the emergence and the development of CDA and about the efforts made by its pioneers to promote their approaches and tools of analysis, include a certain amount of criticism from many researchers. Schegloff (1997), for instance, admits that critical discourse analysts have a different project, and are addressed to different issues, and not to the local co-construction of interaction. However, the problem is to connect issues of power, domination, and the like with discursive material, “*it should be a serious rendering of that material... Otherwise the critical analysis will not ‘bind’ to the data, and risks ending up merely ideological.*” (Schegloff, p. 1997: 20).

In the area of gender and language studies, many researchers did not hesitate to make use of the theoretical frameworks proposed by the critical discourse analysts to conduct their own investigations. The word 'feminist' was even added before critical discourse analysis to give birth to a new label 'feminist critical discourse analysis'. Researchers started to deal with gender issues from new angles by problematizing various concepts and notions. The concept of gender itself started to be considered as cultural and social instead of biological. Ideas such as: gender has nothing to do with the biological organs, gender is not a property but rather built according to assumptions, attitudes, beliefs and the whole social order, gender is the result of people's way of thinking and perceiving the changing things around them, gender is an ongoing process, and so many other revolutionary ideas started to be perpetuated in the different academic narratives and even established within academic fields and institutions (Sunderland, Talbot, Butler) As Eckert McConnell & Ginet (2003) point out:

Gender continues to be transformed as we move into the market place- as we learn to act like secretaries, doctors, lawyers- and it continues to be transformed as our family status changes- as we learn to be wives and husbands, mothers and fathers. As we age we continue to learn new ways of being men and women. The 'learning' in this sense is not tacit but rather 'critical'

(p.9).

Research on the relationship between gender and language has resulted into the emergence of a range of theories, tools and methods of analysis. Each theorist treats the concept of 'gender' according to his/her own attitude toward the existing system of beliefs and ideologies. The study of language and gender was launched in a very clear way after the publication of Lakoff's '*Language and Woman's Place*' in 1972. The responses, to the book, translated a huge fuss, according to Eckert & McConnell-Ginet (2003) "*There were those who found the entire topic trivial -- yet another ridiculous manifestation of feminist 'paranoia.'*" And there were those --

*mostly women – who jumped in to engage with the arguments and issues that Lakoff had put forth.”(p.1).*

Lakoff (1972) claimed that women have a different way of speaking from men. Such a difference reflects and produces a subordinate position in society and makes women’s speech appear as tentative, powerless, and trivial. Lakoff (1972) argued that language, employed in such a way by women, has a very important part in all what women encounter both in the private and the public spheres. For instance, they have fewer opportunities in holding positions of power and authority. In this way, language is to be regarded as a means of oppression, especially if one considers this tacit way of learning language as part of learning how to be and act like a woman. In sum, societal norms are imposed on women to keep them in their place. Facing those norms was the most important part in the process of ‘change’. According to Wodak (1997):

The point of departure for gender studies is (or was) the critique of the assumption of binary sexuality, the presupposition that the differentiation between the two 'sexes' is a natural fact, 'evidently' represented in the body. The feminist movement criticized not this assumed biological, binary concept of sex but the frequently accepted biological determination of culturally conditioned traits as 'gender-typical qualities'.

(p. 2).

As a reaction, Feminist’s most urgent concern was to challenge those claims based on biological traits to justify the unjust treatment of women. Language started to be considered as a primary force for the production and reproduction of ideology- of belief systems that come to be accepted as *common sense*. The gender stereotypes started to be investigated through the analysis of larger corpora; through the analysis of the texts produced to encourage the acceptance of unequal arrangements of power and the acceptance a treatment of men and women based on a binary division.

The feminist approach to critical discourse analysis contributed to making some clarifications concerning certain concepts and notions. As issues of gender, power and ideology have become increasingly complex and subtle, new agendas have been set with the goals of social transformation and emancipation.

Current studies on gender and discourse focus on showing the complex and subtle ways in which taken-for-granted social assumptions and hegemonic power relations are discursively produced, perpetuated, negotiated and contested. These studies have in fact contributed to the global understanding of many controversial issues and have actual material and phenomenological consequences for groups of women and men in many domains. So, the feminist critical discourse analysts should also find ways to using the linguistic model offered by critical discourse analysts to resolve problems related to gender such as gender discrimination. Fowler (1996), describe the role of the proponents of the linguistic model when he says:

They occupy a variety of socialist positions, and are concerned to use linguistic analysis to expose misrepresentation and discrimination in a variety of modes of public discourse: they offer critical readings of newspapers, political propaganda, official documents, regulations, formal genres such as the interview, and so on.

(p.5)

So far, the investigations in the field of feminist critical discourse analysis have covered various domains such as politics, education, economics, media and forensics and different epistemological sites such as advertisements, newsreports, TV talk shows, books and so on.

For this dissertation I opted for a very resourceful site to investigate the stereotypical representation of gender. Indeed, children's fiction, and in the opinion

of many researchers, constitutes a very important source as it captures all sorts of assumptions, beliefs and attitudes (Sunderland, 2006).

Before embarking on the investigations of those connections between discourse gender, power and ideology, which constitute the core of not only this chapter but the whole study, I prefer to devote the first part of this chapter to a range of concepts and notions elaborated within the framework of CDA. The notion of discourse is in the leading position; it serves as an introduction to other notions such as gendered discourse, power in discourse, construction of gender identity in discourse, representation of gender in discourse and so on. The Second part of the chapter deals with gender issues from a feminist critical perspective.

## 1.2. The Notion of Discourse from a Critical Perspective

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the analysis of discourse was part of understanding and collecting data about various cultures, especially the cultures of the dying communities. For Malinowski, (Malinowski, 1923 in de Beaugrande, 2006) utterance and situation are bound up inextricably with each other and the context of situation is indispensable for the understanding of these utterances. Inspired by the ethnography of Malinowski, several functionalists came up with revolutionary theories and methodologies summed up in ‘systemic functional linguistics’. They rejected the dichotomy in ‘theoretical linguistics’ and insisted on the fact that text and discourse are systemic (Halliday, 1992). This shift in perspective marked the transition from language – system to discourse - system. Functional linguists worked on authentic discourse, with a great interest not only in the words or sentences but in the whole pattern which suggests cognitive or social attitudes.

Baxter (Baxter 2002a, 2002b, 2003) refers to post-structuralism as entailing a *“sense of scepticism towards all universal causes, its questioning of what “true” or “real” knowledge is, and . . . loss of certainty about all absolutes”*(2003, p. 6).

Post structuralism rejects the idea that a text can have one purpose, one meaning or one existence. Instead, meaning and purpose are constructed according to every single situation and to every individual involved. According to any situation where a subject perceives a sign, meaning (or the signified) is constructed by an individual from a signifier. In this sense knowledge is constructed rather than discovered. This new perspective implies a constant self-reflexivity on the part of the researcher.

Concerning the crucial role of language in post-structuralism, Weedon (1987) speaks about language as *“the place where actual and possible forms of social organisation and their likely social and political consequences are defined and contested. Yet it is also the place where our sense of selves, our subjectivity is constructed”* (p. 21). In this sense, it is very essential to work with the constitutive model of language that is discourse as viewed by social theorists such as Foucault, 1972 and Fairclough, 2003. Important post-structuralist work has been done by Weedon (1987, 1996), Davies (1989a, 1989b, 1993, 1997).

The word 'discourse' has long been envisaged within various traditions of sociolinguistic research and then discourse analysis and critical discourse analysis. It has been used with a number of different meanings by different researchers. Wodak (1997) points out that "*The term 'discourse' integrates a range of occasionally contradictory or exclusionary meanings in its daily and philosophical uses*".(p.4) According to Mills (1997), the term discourse has been used in a variety of disciplines such as critical theory, sociology, linguistics, philosophy, social psychology and many other fields. It has become a current currency and "*is frequently left undefined, as if its usage were simply common knowledge*." (1997, p.1) She adds that discourse "*is often employed to signal a certain theoretical sophistication in ways which are vague and sometimes obfuscatory*" (P,4).

At the most concrete level, Stubbs (1983) defined discourse as "*language above the sentence or above the clause*" (p,1). Brown and Yule (1983) wrote, "*The analysis of discourse is necessarily the analysis of language in use. As such, it cannot be restricted to the description of linguistic forms independent of the purposes or functions that these forms are designed to serve in human affairs*" (p.1). To consider the ways in which social grammars and "language bits" (to use Gee's term) interact and build identities, relationships, and narratives of the social world, we need an expanded account of discourse.

According to Kress (1989), discourse is everywhere; it reaches into all major areas of social life. It "*colonizes the social world imperialistically*" (p.7); as it organizes and gives structure to the manner in which a topic, object or process is to be talked about. "*It provides descriptions, rules, permissions and prohibitions of social and individual actions*" (p,7).

Those who are influenced by Foucault (1972, 1980) prefer dealing with 'discourses' as a count noun: 'discourses'. They believe that these discourses are both the result and the cause of the conventional ways of thinking. So by definition discourses are "*conventional ways of talking that both create and are created by conventional ways of thinking*" (Johnstone, 2008,p.3). In other words, those

connections between talking and thinking constitute ideologies and serve to perpetuate power in society.

In addition to the conventional and 'traditional' definition of discourse as 'a group of signs', Foucault (1972) provides other particularities; a group of signs but only because they are statements and only because they are assigned certain modalities of existence. This is to say, their function is to denote an attitude, a mood, a category, in short conventional ways of thinking and talking. "*Discourse is constituted by a group of sequences of signs, in so far as they are statements, that is, in so far as they can be assigned particular modalities of existence.*" (Foucault, 1972 in Coupland, Sarangi and Candlin, 2001, p.49). Foucault (1998) declares: "*My object is not language but the archive, that is to say the accumulated existence of discourse*" (p.25). Sharing Foucault's definition, Sarangi (2001) argues that it is in this sense that we can speak of different discourses such as clinical discourse, psychiatric discourse, educational discourse and so on. This same view is also shared by Jäger (2001).

Gee (1996) amplifies the sociolinguistic definition of discourse by including, not only the social parameters, but also cognitive and psychological ones. This concept, according to him, is:

An association of socially accepted ways of using language, other symbolic expressions and artifacts of thinking, feeling, believing, valuing, and acting that can be used to identify yourself as a member of a socially meaningful group.

(p.144).

According to Rogers (2004), critical discourse analysts deal with discourse by drawing on traditional trends such as: critical linguistics, cultural and media studies, neo-Marxist approaches to language, ethnographic approaches to language study, and social semiotics.

Fairclough (1992) recognizes how discourse functions to reproduce society, through its social structures, relationships, and value structures, but also through its

contribution to transforming society as people use discourses in creative and agentic ways. On this dialectic between individual agency and social structure. Fairclough (1992), insists on the importance of the relationships between discourse and social structure. Such a relationship should be viewed dialectically in order to avoid pitfalls of overemphasizing, on the one hand, the social determination of discourse, and on the other hand, the construction of the social in discourse. The former, he believes, turns discourse into a mere reflection of a deeper social reality, the latter idealistically represents discourse as the source of the social.

It is clear to see how Fairclough's understanding of the relationship between discourse and the social world is rather optimistic about the role of individuals in the construction of social, historical, and political discourses. People call on the resources they have for making meanings and, in doing so, enter into a struggle over representation with political and ideological practices.

Critical Discourse Analysis sees discourse - the use of language in speech and writing - as a form of 'social practice'. Describing discourse as social practice implies a dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and the situation, institution and social structure that frame it: the discursive event is shaped by them, but it also shapes them. That is to say, discourse is socially constructed, as well as socially conditioned. According to Wodak (1996), it constitutes experiences, realities, situations, knowledge, identities, and relationships between people and groups of people. *"It is constitutive both in the sense that it helps sustain and reproduce the social status quo, and in the sense that it contributes to transforming it."* (p. 17)

The orders of discourse concern the *"totality of discursive practices of an institution and relationship between them"* (Fairclough, 1993, p.138). They are usually associated with particular institutions or domains of social life. For example, there are particular orders of discourse associated with advertising, politics, and schools and so on. In describing orders of discourse, one is concerned with specifying what discourse types are used in the domain, and the relationships between each discursive practice. The investigation of the orders of discourse can be

very revealing in terms of patterns of perpetuation of ideologies, access to discourse and inclusion and exclusion of social actors and social actions

No better quote can serve to summarize the different views about discourse and the purposes of the discourse analysts than Bloor & Bloor's (2007) quote:

Critical discourse analysts see discourse both as a product of society and also as a dynamic and changing force that is constantly influencing and re-constructing social practices and values, either positively or negatively.

(p.12).

As regard the distinction between discourse and text, in many contexts and by many researchers the terms 'discourse' and 'text' are used interchangeably. In a definition provided by Salki (1995), both terms refer to the same thing when he says that text and discourse analysis is about how sentences combine to form texts. However, various arguments have been provided by critical discourse analysts to explain the distinction between the two terms. While discourse refers to the whole act of communication involving production and comprehension and which involves context, background information, knowledge shared and so on, 'text' is the product of discourse which refers to meaningful speech events. There are written texts (business letters), spoken (service exchanges) and visual and gestures (internet home page). The main unit of analysis for CDA is the 'text' but not in the conventional meaning of the term. Texts are taken to be social actions, meaningful and coherent instances of spoken and written language use.

Critical discourse analysts give importance not only to the study of texts, spoken or written, but they believe that a fully critical analysis of a discourse would require a theorization and description of both the social processes and structures, which give rise to the production of a text and of the social structures and processes within which individuals or groups as social-historical objects, create meanings in their interaction with texts (Fairclough, Kress, 1993)

Specific text types or ‘genres’ serve conventional social uses and functions. That is, texts that attempt to ‘do things’ in social institutions with predictable effects. They include functional written texts (e.g. business letters, textbooks, forms), spoken face-to-face interactions (e.g. clinical exchanges, service exchanges, classroom lessons), and multi visual electronic and gestural texts (e.g. internet home pages). According to Littoseliti & Sunderland (2002), “*in its ‘social practice’ sense, discourse is the broader term, defined by Van Dijk as “text in context.”*” (p.12)

Text is seen by Talbot as “*the fabric in which discourse is manifested*”. It can be seen as a process: of production and interpretation by given people in given contexts, and as “*interaction itself: a cultural activity*” (Talbot 1995a, p.25). Fairclough (1992) in his earlier work describes text as a physical object crucially existing in relation to discursive practices and social practices. Text, either written or spoken language, is according to Fairclough (1998), produced in a discursive event. That is to say, people make use of language in a particular way according to particular speech events such as talking on the telephone, writing a letter, delivering a speech and so on. Fairclough emphasizes the multi-semiotic character of texts and adds visual images and sound –using the example of television language – as other semiotic forms which may be simultaneously present in texts (Fairclough, 1995a).

In this study, I am concerned with the investigation of gender stereotypes in children’s literature. To this end, I will examine a range of texts from the feminist approach to critical discourse analysis. In the fourth chapter I will analyse nine short stories. I will consider these nine literary productions as “*the fabrics in which discourse is manifested*”, using Talbot’s quote, cited above (1995a, p. 24). I will make use of as many formal and conceptual features as possible to make as many connections as possible; connection between linguistic choices and the ideological assumptions, connections between the processes of discourse production and the processes of discourse consumption and their impact on power relations. In the fifth chapter I will also examine the content of a range of liberated children’s books, as

well as the readers' responses, to explore not only the impact of discourse on society but the impact of society on discourse as well.

### **1.3. The Notion of 'Critical'**

As previously pointed out, researchers working within the framework of CDA, believe that analysis of texts (spoken written or visual) should take into account all the historical, social and political factors. The term 'critical', added before discourse analysis, suggests that nothing should be taken for granted. While dealing with this term, many questions are worth asking: where does the word 'critical' come from? How did it start to be connected to discourse studies and feminism?

There is quite a consensus among the researchers and the scholars in the field of CDA that the use of 'critical', within critical discourse analysis, has been borrowed, like many other concepts, from the language of Marxism, especially critical theory, which emerged from the Frankfurt school of literary and cultural criticism. In this context, "*critical signifies a leftist (usually socialist) political stance on the part of the analyst; the goal of such research is to comment on society in order to change it*" (Bucholtz,2003,p.55). The word 'critical' in CDA, means that analysis may lead to positive outcomes.

According to Wodak & Meyer (2001) "*Basically, 'critical' is to be understood as having distance to the data, embedding the data in the social, taking a political stance explicitly, and a focus on self-reflection as scholars doing research.*" (P.9) Fairclough (1995b), argues that what makes CDA 'critical' is the aim to reveal what has been explicitly or implicitly hidden in discourse, to show the world behind the words.

My use of the term 'critical' (and the associated term 'critique) is linked on the one hand to a commitment to a dialectical theory and method' which grasps things...essentially in their interconnectedness, in their concatenation, their motion, their coming into and passing out of existence.

(p.36).

Grasping the connectedness of things is making it visible. This can be achieved by raising questions and explaining such issues as: how can it be that people are standardly unaware of how their ways of speaking are socially determined? What conception of the social subject does such a lack of awareness imply? How does the naturalization of ideologies come about? How is it sustained? What determines the degree of naturalization in a particular instance?

As mentioned above, the Frankfurt School, inspired the first pioneers in the field of CDA. It was also known as the Institute of Social Research which was founded in 1923 and was considered as the first institute for Marxist studies in the Western world. The Frankfurt School was, in turn, connected to the Critical Social Theory (CST) and such thinkers as Adorno, Horkheimer, Walter Benjamin, Erich Fromm, Herbert Marcuse, and currently Jürgen Habermas. According to Rogers (2004) as a way to see and describe the nature of power, Critical Social Theory (CST) provides a theoretical foundation for critical approaches to discourse analysis. CST is a transdisciplinary knowledge base structured by the dual agendas of critiquing and resisting domination and creating a society free of oppression. Critical social theory and research rests on the rejection of naturalism (that social practices, labels, and programs represent reality), rationality (the assumption that truth is a result of science and logic), neutrality (the assumption that truth does not reflect any particular interests), and individualism.

A great deal of critical social theory, at least in the Western tradition, has drawn, in various ways, on this reworking of Marxist theory to include a more complex understandings of, for example, ways in which the Marxist concept of ideology relates to psychoanalytic understandings of the subconscious, how aspects of popular culture are related to forms of political control, and how particular forms of positivism and rationalism have come to dominate other possible ways of thinking. Critical work in this sense has to engage with questions of inequality, injustice, rights, and wrongs. Critical here means taking social inequality and social transformation as central to one's work. Poster (1989) suggests that "*critical theory*

*springs from an assumption that we live amid a world of pain, that much can be done to alleviate that pain, and that theory has a crucial role to play in that process" (p. 3)*

According to Rogers (2004), CST's intellectual heritage draws on philosophy, literature, legal scholarship, cultural studies, critical race scholarship, political economy studies, ethnic studies, and feminist studies, and has been influenced by schools such as the Frankfurt School and the British Cultural Studies. Each critical tradition locates domination in a slightly different place— racism, capitalist structures, discourse itself, patriarchy—but they all share a common set of principles and assumptions. Critical social theory assumes that oppression and liberation are twin pillars of concern that include material, historical, and discursive dimensions and are enacted across time, people, and contexts. According to Rogers (2004, engaging in critique and building alternative realities are both central to CST.

The inspirational accounts derived from the Frankfurt School, the Critical Social Theory and Marxism have resulted into revolutionary outcomes. In CDA, researchers and scholars started to penetrate to the core of the social matrix and to the core of domination whether it is based in racism, classism, sexism, heterosexism or neo-colonialism, and currently terrorism.

Who could imagine the power of those ideas to shake existing political and social structures? Who could imagine the turn that social and linguistic studies have taken as a result to the involvement of thinkers and intellectuals in the political life. Indeed, the contributions of Hebermas, Bakhtin, Volsonov, Pecheux, Dominique, Reagon, Derrida, Fowler, Chomsky, Halliday, kress, wodak, Foucault, Bourdieux and so many others, have led to the emergence of transdisciplinary approaches and methods of analysis. These people's ideas and the criticism of their ideas have opened up new avenues for the investigation of domination, hegemony and power.

In an interview<sup>3</sup> conducted by Roger's (2011) with Fairclough in 2003, Fairclough speaks about his political engagement:

I started off doing that and teaching formal linguistics. I taught Chomskyan grammar and so on. Then I got quite involved politically in the 1970s and gradually became dissatisfied with the gross gap between my political interests and my academic ones. So I gradually moved first towards social linguistics and then came across the critical linguistics work of the late 1970s and...Voloshinov and the Marxist Philosophy of Language.<sup>4</sup>

Fairclough (1988, 1989, 1992a, 1991b, 2003) attempted to bridge the gap between his political commitments and his academic interests.

## **2.4. Discourse as a Locus of Ideologies**

Within the framework of CDA, connecting the social context to the linguistic context is to reveal any traces of ideologies embedded in discourse. Like context, discourse and many other concepts, the term ideology has always been subject to redefinition. There are many definitions and approaches to ideology, but it is commonly defined as a system of ideas and beliefs. According to Van Dijk (1989, 2000, 2004), this system of social groups and movements not only makes sense in order to understand the world (from the point of view of the group), but also as a basis for the social practices of group members. Thus, sexist or racist ideologies may be at the basis of discrimination, pacifist ideologies may be used to protest against nuclear weapons, and ecological ideologies will guide actions against pollution. Often, ideologies thus emerge from group conflict and struggle, and they thus typically pitch Us against Them.

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<sup>3</sup> [www.routledge.com/textbooks/9780415874298](http://www.routledge.com/textbooks/9780415874298)

<sup>4</sup> [www.routledge.com/textbooks/9780415874298](http://www.routledge.com/textbooks/9780415874298)

For Thompson (1990), ideology refers to social forms and processes within which and by means of which symbolic forms circulate in the social world. Investigation of the social context within which meaning is constructed and conveyed by symbolic forms of various kinds is very important. According to Wodak & Meyer (2001) “*Ideology, for CDA, is seen as an important aspect of establishing and maintaining unequal power relations. CL takes a particular interest in the ways in which language mediates ideology in a variety of social institutions.*” (p.10).

In CDA, the notion of ideology is central. It is a mechanism of power in modern society. Simpson (1993) defines the concept by saying:

From a critical linguistic perspective, the term normally describes the ways in which what we say and think interacts with society. An ideology therefore derives from the taken-for-granted assumptions, beliefs and value systems which are shared collectively by social groups.

(p.5).

In Wodak’s opinion (2001a) Language should be considered as crucial in the reproduction of ideologies which should also be seen as central in establishing and sustaining social identities and inequalities.

Various attempts have been made to define the term ‘ideology’ but also to explore how it functions in discourse. How does ideology operate in texts? Is it possible to recognize those instances where language is at the service of ideology? The identification of ideology, in the view of Knowles & Malmkjaer (1996) is possible, “*It is possible to identify typical strategies of symbolic construction through which the general modes of operation of ideology may be realised*” (p.46) However, the analyst should provide sufficient evidence to justify his/ her suggestions. Since in language no word or structure is ideological for itself. The context/ co-text take a major part in the identification process. In the view of Thompson (1990), the identification of the modes of operation of ideologies in discourse should be carried out in different stages:

It can be helpful in this respect to compare the representation of

social institutions in texts of similar genres produced in different eras, or, for that matter, in the same era, since writers often oppose relationships of domination. Such opposition may be stated more or less explicitly, and may be expressed through parody or satire. But to recognise the opposition, it is necessary to understand what it is opposed to, and to be familiar with the ideological function of those modes of expressions which are being satirised.

(p.68).

Thompson argues that for the analyst to be able to detect ideologies in discourse, they should conduct comparative studies of the representations, in the same texts of the same genre. In this way, the analysts will be able to discern the writer's intentions to oppose relationships of domination in the form of modes and strategies.

In order to eradicate social inequalities, racism, terrorism and even poverty and diseases, experts from various backgrounds and disciplines can join hands and make use of discourse to bring about changes. Researchers such as Reisigl and Wodak 2001; van Dijk 1987, 1991, 1993a; Wodak 1996,1999 have attempted to understand, expose and ultimately resist latent racist ideologies and arguments in texts with a view to achieving changes in the social structure. Van Dijk (2000, 2004) who has devoted himself to the operation of racism in society, believes that special attention should be paid to the discursive dimensions of ideologies if we want to know how ideologies may be expressed (or concealed) in discourse, and how ideologies may thus also be reproduced in society.

When an ideology is the ideology of a particularly powerful social group, it is said to be dominant. Thus, dominant ideologies are mediated through powerful political and social institutions like the government, the law and the medical profession. According to Simpson (1993) "*Our perception of these institutions, moreover, will be shaped in part by the specific linguistic practices of the social groups who comprise them.*" ( p.5). According to Kress (1989) any investigation of ideological assumptions, through analysis of discourse, implies exploration of the

social and historical contexts. “*Any linguistic form considered in isolation has no specifically determinate meaning as such, nor does it possess any ideological significance or function*”.(Kress, 1989). The linguistic forms studied in isolation are just useless when the purpose is more than describing particular instances of language use. For Fowler (1996) even the study of these formal structures within a context requires to be profound and deep enough to uncover the hidden. According to Fowler (1996) this is not enough to just count on the linguistic forms to deal with ideologies in texts. There must be a need to take a more inclusive view of what constitutes ideology in language, and in particular, give consideration to those implicit meanings which do not have direct surface structure representation.

## **2.5. Discourse and Power**

When an ideology is powerful, that is to say it is owned by a powerful social group, it serves either to change social orders or sustain them; depending on the nature of the ideology itself. The questions which are crucial here are: what is power? How can it be gained? Is power in unity as it is commonly believed? Is it negative or positive? The most significant questions in CDA are: how can discourse serve to exercise power? What are the outcomes of power? Which analytical tools are to be used to investigate the representation of power relations in discourse?

Power exists in various modalities, including the concrete modality of physical force. One of the crucial tasks of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is to account for the relationships between discourse and social power. For Kodak (2000), power is about relations of difference and particularly about the effects of differences in society. According to Rogers (2004), Power is a central concept in critical discourse studies. Within this framework, researchers tend to focus on the negative uses of power which is articulated through and within discourses and which result in domination and oppression. Blommaert (2005), writes: “*The deepest impact of power everywhere is inequality, as power differentiates and selects, includes and excludes*”(p.2). Blommaert (2005) adds that power is not always a bad thing, believing that those who are in power will confirm it. This same researcher (2005) suggests that critical discourse studies should offer an analysis of the effects of

power, the outcomes of power, of what power does to people, groups and societies and how this impact comes about.

In the Foucauldian vision (1977), discourse analysis may for example look at how figures in authority use language to express their dominance, and request obedience and respect from those subordinate to them. In a specific example, a study may look at the language used by teachers towards students, or military officers towards conscripts. This approach could also be used to study how language is used as a form of resistance to those in power. In this sense we can say that power and knowledge are connected; the teachers know more than the pupil and the doctor more than the patient. According to Foucault (1980) "*It is not possible for power to be exercised without knowledge, it is impossible for knowledge not to engender power.*" (p. 52). Jager (2001), on the other hand, stresses the importance of connecting power to society to explore the impact of one over the other. Jager (2001) says:

To further illustrate the problem of power/knowledge it is necessary to deal in more detail with the relationship between discourse and societal reality and second, to ask more precisely how power is anchored in this societal reality, who exercises it, over whom and by what means it is exercised, and so on.

(p.36).

Power may be connected to access to discourse. The patterns of access depend on social domains, institutions, professions, situations and genres. For instance, the teacher, in education, has a certain control over educational discourse. If we take mass media as another example, those who have access to journalists, those who are interviewed, quoted and described in news reports, are those whose opinions are more likely to influence the public opinion. Central to CDA is the understanding that discourse is an integral aspect of power and control. Power is held by both institutions and individuals in contemporary society and "*any challenge to the status quo, challenges those who hold power.*" (Bloor & Bloor, 2007, p.4).

According to Teubert (2010), in any society all the individuals should have a voice in the discourse, however in reality discourse is monopolized by certain categories of people. People are divided “*into those who are commissioned to produce texts for the media and the rest of us who consume them*” (p.1). It seems, as Teubert puts it, that whatever each of us may say carries less weight than what we are told by the discourse, by our authorities, instruction manuals and even those old-fashioned things called books. (Teubert, 2010)

According to Van Dijk (1996) “*A critical analysis of properties of access to public discourse and communication presupposes insight into more general political, sociocultural and economic aspects of dominance.*” (P.84) Van Dijk (1996), believes that the readers or listeners should have access to alternative information, or mental resources to oppose such persuasive messages. The manipulative nature of the messages, the readers and listeners receive perpetually, can contribute to the formation of preferred models of specific situations, such the race riots, which may in turn, be generalised to more general, preferred knowledge, attitudes or ideologies, such as, the ideology that connects the race riots to the blacks. According to Van Dijk (1996, 2008 ), one major element in the discursive reproduction of power and dominance is the very access to discourse and communicative events. The fact that certain discourses, such as the discourses of TV, religion, medicine and print media, are not accessible to everyone , may lead to the production of asymmetrical power relations. For Van Dijk (1996, 2008), there is a need to explore the implications of the complex questions, who may speak or write to whom, about what, when, and in what context, or who may participate in such communicative events in various recipient roles, for instance as addressees, audience, bystanders and overhearers.

Access to discourse may even be analysed in terms of the topics or referents of discourse, that is, who is written or spoken about. About access to discourse, Ridgeway (2011), refers to the social institutions as they hold more rights over discourse.

Because people in dominant groups hold relatively advantaged

Positions in organizations and institutions such as government, the Media, and educational establishments, the stereotypic representations that correspond to their own group experiences of gender tend to become culturally hegemonic in society.

(p.67-68).

In different words, the descriptions of women and men, that these stereotypes contain, become the ones that are institutionalized in media representations, government policies, and normative images of the family. It is these hegemonic stereotypic images of men and women that implicitly inform legislation, television shows, magazines, educational policies, and the design of public spaces. Van Dijk approaches power from a socio-cognitive approach. He argues that Power abuse not only involves the abuse of force, for example in police aggression against black youths, and may result not merely in limiting the freedom of action of a specific group, but also and more crucially may affect the minds of people. (1996; 2004; 2008)

Hegemony is another term connected to power. According to Ivis (2004), before Gramsci, the term 'hegemony' was used to refer to explain the predominance of one nation over others. In this sense, the term is used to mean that certain nations dominate other nations with which forms of alliances have been established. It is then domination by consent. Ivis (2004) believes that it is due to Gramsci's writings, that *"hegemony is now used to describe the intricacies of power relations in many different fields from literature, education, film and cultural studies to political science, history and international relations.* (p.14).

In the Marxist view, the notion of hegemony is best illustrated by Marx's account of the proletariat; the workers do not own the means of production and, thus, are dominated by those who own them, in order to survive. (Ivis, 2004)

The aim in CDA and all the other disciplines who borrowed from it, such as Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA), as we will see later, is to help increase consciousness of language and power. And particularly of how language contributes

to the domination of some people by others. Resistance and change are possible and should be encouraged if they lead to positive outcomes. Instead of just experiencing the feelings of domination and humiliation, people should long for the feelings of freedom and dignity.

The exploration of how power relations are represented in children's fiction is part of the critical discourse analysis, from a feminist perspective, of nine short stories. The purpose in the fifth chapter is to demonstrate how the power of the different institutions or even individuals (family, education, publishing houses, librarians, writers) may serve to challenge gender stereotypes instead of just sustaining them. The notion of hegemony, in this study, is illustrated by the legitimate domination of the writers, editors and publishers over children and their parents, since they own the means to access discourse and exercise power and at the same time they own the means to obtain people's consent.

## **2.6. Discourse and the Process of Naturalization**

In the field of critical studies it is very important to investigate how certain social conventions are so difficult to resist that they are taken for granted, especially those conventions which stem from ideological conceptualisations of social realities and whose role is to manipulate and dominate. Such investigations have resulted into several theories, however, the most plausible explanation was provided by the theory of naturalization, advocated by most of the researchers working under the umbrella of CDA. When a process of naturalization takes place, it suggests that people are often no longer aware of the hierarchies and systems which shape their social interactions. Fairclough (1989) offers the example of the interaction doctor-patient to illustrate *naturalization*. He argues that the conventions which govern the consultation between doctors and patients embody 'common sense' assumptions which consider authority and hierarchy as natural. According to Fairclough (1989), it is because the doctor knows more than the patient, about medicine, "*it is right (and 'natural')* that the doctor should make decisions and control the course of the consultation and of the treatment, and that the patient should comply and cooperate; and so on." (p.2).

We cannot discuss the process of naturalization without making reference to Gramsci's concepts of 'common sense'. In 1971, the Italian Marxist philosopher coined the concept. It is commonly referred to as the embedded spontaneous beliefs and assumptions that characterize the conformist thinking of the mass of people in a given social order. For many years, researchers working within the framework of critical studies have focused on those mechanisms that lead to the 'normalization' and 'naturalization' of those beliefs. That is to say "*people become so familiar with customs and beliefs which sometimes go without notice until they contrast them with customs and beliefs from other places and other times.*" (Bloor & Bloor, 2007,p.5).

Later, many critical feminist theorists concerned themselves with investigating gender issues according to 'common sense perspective'. Bryson (2007) argues that if this process of 'naturalization' is to be applied on gender equality we may pretend that "*women in many parts of the world now have equality with men, because we have the same rights and opportunities, enshrined in and protected by law.*" (p.40). According to 'common sense', Bryson (2007) believes that it is now possible, more than any other time, for women to progress and take up the opportunities to earn more money, or become engineers, plumbers or pilots rather than nursery nurses, hairdressers, teachers and social workers. From the 'common-sense' perspective, women and men can now expect to be judged and perceived equally on their individual qualifications and merits, and feminists can take a deep breath and focus on making sure that the rule 'the best is to win' is not to be violated.

However the truth is elsewhere. Such common sense, according to many critical feminists does not make any sense. They argue that assumptions about gender are very difficult to change because they are learned and internalised at an early age. They have become 'naturalized'. The involvement of women in many domains, especially those previously monopolized by men, has shown the extent to which, women are still powerless and out of place. Indeed there is a complex relationship between women and power. When they hold power, they are looked at in a very curious way. People often give importance to their sexuality, their private lives, and their external appearance (Salter, 2000). According to Lakoff (2003), "*Powerful women are variously sexualized, objectified, or ridiculed.*" (p.173). This may

generate other problems more difficult to resolve. “A *prominent woman who, by behaviour or appearance, does not function as a male sex fantasy is apt to be recast as a lesbian.*” (p.173)

Lakoff (2003) cites the examples of Attorney General Janet Reno and Hillary Rodham Clinton to illustrate the confusing and contradictory situations, in which powerful women find themselves.

Bryson (2007) goes further to say that if a woman adopts co-operative strategies in directing and managing, then she is criticized for owning less leadership qualities, but if she is more assertive, she is problematically unfeminine, and “*may trigger deep-seated insecurities about female authority figures – and anyway, the kind of person the selectors want is like that really excellent chap they had before and this woman is not like him at all.*” (p.42).

According to Zaslow (2009) people start by understanding the normative gender roles they encounter then they try to naturalize and reify socially constructed values as they perform their selves for public consumption. Runge (1997), on the other hand, points out that in the western humanist tradition; there is a tendency to spread the illusion of the autonomous self “*by privileging and universalizing the experience of the masculine elite through the exclusion and repression of alternative realities.*”(p.9). Eckert & McConnell-Ginet (2003) try to raise scholars and researchers’ awareness about the necessity to look beyond what appears to be common sense to find not simply what truth might be behind it, but how it came to be common sense. According to them, this may be due to the fact that gender seems natural, and beliefs about gender seem to be obvious truth, and for this reason researchers need to step back and examine gender from a new perspective.

## **1.7. Feminist Approach to CDA**

### **1.7.1. The Role of Feminism**

Feminist researchers and philosophers started to look at language from a constitutive perspective. In this sense, the study of discourse by relating it to social and political realities was the objective of feminism.

Feminism, according to Sunderland (2006) has inspired gender and language study since the late 1960s, but according to her, there have been different feminisms, with different natures and objectives, not only historically, over time, but also at the same point in time, and this continues to be so. The variety of feminism has added too much spice to the field of gender and language. Spender's (1980) approach, for instance can be seen as a radical feminist one, embracing the notion of patriarchy as primary in women's 'struggle' – rather than, class, which has been central in socialist feminists' views and struggle. Cameron (1997b) points out, what different feminisms have in common is not just an interest in women and men, girls and boys, and gender relations, but also a critical interest. This extends to social arrangements and power relations, although notions of power vary with different forms of feminism.

Feminism in general and feminist theory in particular also considered the 'dominance' and 'difference' theories as one approach since both of them share many notions and claims and both were based on a binary notion of gender. The first is associated with Spender, Fishman, Zimmerman and West, while the second is associated with Tannen. As it will be discussed later, the distinction between sex and gender has been one of the most significant theories connected to third wave feminism. While gender refers to cultural differences, sex refers to biological differences. Another assumption related to feminism is the idea that gender, as a category, intersects with, and is shot through by, other categories of social identity such as sexuality, ethnicity, social position and geography. This is indeed very recognizable in many cultural and institutional contexts, such as: educational contexts, news and advertising, media, workplaces, governments and so on.

With the emergence of critical approaches, mainly critical discourse analysis and the recognition of gender as very relevant and worth considering and also with the recognition of discourse as the locus of ideology and power, feminist' theorists moved their focus on more urgent issues such as gender and social roles, the involvement of women in politics, gender stereotypes and so on. Gender, started to be viewed as deeply embedded in every aspects of the social life, in all domains in politics, in education, in the world of business, in institutions, in the family, the school; they are embedded in people's actions and practices, their choices and decisions, their beliefs. Ideas about gender are everywhere, in songs, fairy tales, films, advertisements and so on. What is intriguing about all that is that these ideas are so common place that they are taken for granted that they are true. For feminist critical discourse analysts, any idea should not be taken for granted.

### **1.7.2. The Role of CDA**

As mentioned previously, the move from language – system to discourse – system, was considered as one of the greatest markers of post-structuralism. Concerning the crucial role of language in post-structuralism, Weedon (1987) speaks about language as the place where actual and possible forms of social organisation and their likely social and political consequences are defined and contested and also the place where people's sense of selves and their subjectivity is constructed'. In this sense, it is very essential to work with the constitutive model of language that is discourse.

Post-structuralism has largely contributed to turning the tide not only in linguistics but in many other disciplines. In the area of gender and language, gender started to be recognized as a very important component. According to Sunderland, (2006), post-structuralism has provided a major challenge to essentialist notions. It has led to the establishment of new notions which have in turn been crucial in the understanding of gender. Baxter (2003) refers to post-structuralism as entailing a *“sense of scepticism towards all universal causes, its questioning of what “true” or “real” knowledge is, and . . . loss of certainty about all absolutes”* (Baxter. 6). Current theories about gender illustrate the great shift from structuralist to post-structuralist views.

A large amount of research related to gender issues has been conducted within the framework of critical discourse analysis. Most of it seeks to identify, in some way, how discourse supports or creates gender discrimination. On the other hand, the feminists, concerned with language and gender, have combined much of their studies with those investigations, carried out within the CDA approach. They finished by proposing a new approach, that of “Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis”. Within this ‘new’ framework and, in addition to other Post-structuralist theories, the objective is to highlight the view of discourse as a site of struggle, where forces of social (re)production and contestation are played out. CDA and FCDA overlap in terms of social emancipatory goals. Indeed, unlike feminist approaches that apply descriptive discourse analytic methods, feminist CDA has the advantage of operating, at the outset, within a politically invested programme of discourse analysis. CDA offers a sophisticated theorization of the relationship between social practices and discourse structures. According to Lazar (2005), FCDA can offer feminist discourse scholars opportunities to learn about the interconnections as well as particularities of discursive strategies employed in various forms of social oppression that can, in turn, serve to elaborate strategies for social change. About the merger of the two critical approaches Lazar (2005) goes on by saying:

The marriage of feminism with CDA, in sum, can produce a rich and powerful political critique for action.” Among many objectives set in the new agenda of the feminist, the focus is on “critiquing discourses which sustain a patriarchal social order: that is, relations of power that systematically privilege men as a social group and disadvantage, exclude and disempower women as a social group.

(p.5).

One of the reasons that explain the need to work under the umbrella of FCDA, is the need to show that social practices on the whole, far from being

neutral, are in fact gendered in this way. The gendered nature of social practices can be described on two levels (Connell 1987; Flax 1990). First, 'gender' functions as an interpretative category that enables participants in a community to make sense of and structure their particular social practices. Second, gender is a social relation that enters into and partially constitutes all other social relations and activities. Based on the specific, asymmetric meanings of 'male' and 'female', and the consequences being assigned to one or the other within concrete social practices, such an allocation becomes a constraint on further practices.

Butler's (1990, 1999, 2004) contribution to gender theory is huge. Her major participation in the field of gender and language has given birth to queer theory. While Butler has been considered as the most important gender theorist of the past twenty years, most of her contributions are intellectual rather than empirical. Her work as a feminist is a constructive critique of different feminisms, with the objective of enhancing the area of gender study with broader definitions and notions.

In the area of gender and language studies many theories were provided by feminism. Sunderland (2006) argues that feminism has inspired gender and language study since the late 1960s. However, different feminists came up with different methods and theories. They acted upon their "*different natures and objectives, not only historically, over time, but also at the same point in time, and this continues to be so.*" The tools and the theories provided by CDA were very relevant to the understanding of the complexities of gender and to the challenge of the essentialist notions related to it. According to Lazar (2005), it is necessary within CDA to deal with gender issues explicitly by establishing a feminist politics of investigation. Researchers should also be concerned with the theorization and analysis, "*from a critical feminist perspective, of the particularly insidious and oppressive nature of gender as an omni-relevant category in most social practices.*" (p.3) Holmes (2005), in her article entitled "Power and Discourse at Work: Is Gender Relevant? Points out that the involvement of women in many domains, previously monopolized by men, and the move from the private to the public sphere has resulted into the assumption that gender is no longer an obstacle to the emancipation of women and therefore the

relevance of gender is questionable. Holmes (2005) believes that as women, are continually attempting to “*crash through the glass ceiling and reach the highest levels in politics, government institutions and corporate organizations, it is important to critically examine claims that gender is no longer an issue in the workplace*”(p. 31). Holmes keeps on wondering whether this is evidence that gender has finally become irrelevant to women’s progress up the professional ladder. So, has gender finally lost its salience? Is there any evidence that gender is no longer an issue? Holmes’s investigation of power and discourse at work shows that gender is still to be considered, not only in the context of work, but in various settings.

The different versions of feminism allowed deepening the understanding of the relationship between gender, power and society. Indeed, the study of many aspects of gender requires a heterogeneous vision. However, what different feminisms have in common, in the view of Cameron, (1997b) is not just an interest in women and men, girls and boys, and gender relations, but also a critical interest. This extends to social arrangements and power relations, although notions of power (who has it, can have it and how it is exerted) similarly vary with different forms of feminism.

The feminists working under the umbrella of CDA, concern themselves with the investigation of the interaction of language with the other social components such as ethnicity, gender, culture and so on. Holmes (2005) points out “*At the most global level, CDA increases awareness of the reciprocal influences of language and social structure*” (p, 31). According to Holmes, FCDA approach encourages the analyst to look beneath the surface of the discourse strategies

To look at gender from a critical perspective is to shed light on the involvement of the whole system of ideologies and values in setting a range of policies and practices. CDA contributes to show those links between local discourse practices and wider, complex social processes. In order to do so, researchers should call everything into question. They should, according to Martin Rojo (2008a), take a critical position which demands a problematizing process. (Martin Rojo, 2008a). This process implies according to Martin Rojo(2008), putting into question concepts

and representations and re-opening and transforming the answers into new questions. The process also implies breaking habits and ways of acting and thinking, retrieving the measurement of rules and institutions, showing the techniques of production of knowledge, the techniques of domination and the techniques of control of discourse. According to Martin Rojo (2008a) Problematization results in commitment. She argues that a critical perspective commits researchers to:

making analysis a social practice in itself, studying the social effects of discourses, monitoring the socio-discursive order, opening possibilities for new ways of thinking and of interpreting the social environment. A critical perspective also commits us to acting on the academic world in which we take part, and this means trying to change it – making it more plural and open and opposing exclusion for reasons of gender, social class or ethnicity.

(p.32).

Littolesiti & Sunderland (2002), stress the importance to deal with FCDA as a means to provide solutions and bring about changes when they say:

A critical (feminist) discourse analysis by definition then cannot remain descriptive and neutral, since the interests guiding it aim to uncover or make transparent those social processes and mechanisms that can perpetuate injustice, inequality, manipulation and (sex) discrimination in both overt and subtle, pernicious forms.

(p,21)

According to McElhinny(2003) instead of keeping asking questions about the gender differences, we should focus on the differences that gender can make. “*One needs to ask how and why gender differences are being constructed in that way, or what notion of gender is being normalized in such behaviour.*” (p.24).

FCDA then, proposes to investigate how categories such as "woman" are created and which political interests the creation and perpetuation of certain identities and

distinctions serve. According to Simpson (1993) “*Part of the concern of feminist critical linguistic analysis has been to uncover asymmetries and inconsistencies in the way language is used.*” (p.153)

A feminist perspective means that one should have a critical view about gender and about oneself. This critical stance orients and shapes the researcher’s objectives and theories. As Kress (1990) speaks of CDA by revealing that such an orientation entails making “*linguistics itself more accountable, more responsible, and more responsive to questions of social equity*”. (p. 88). Lather (1986) also believes that neutrality in theorization is not possible, in the sense that “*scholarship is likely to make its biases part of its argument*”. (p. 259). In the same context, Bloor & Bloor (2007) argue that not only discourse analysts but all social researchers, are themselves tied to the discourse group they are investigating, either as members of the same social group or as observers of it. The researcher belongs to a certain community, with which he holds similar beliefs and attitudes to the participants in the discourse that is under analysis. For this reason, researchers, according to Bloor & Bloor (2007), need to be prepared to make clear their own position with respect to the topic of research.

DeFrancisco (1997) wonders why we need a shift in focus on power. *She answers: “I have been a disappointed woman.”* (p. 37). She confesses that she came to the study of communication and gender as a result of her personal fascination and frustration in relations with others and owing to a conviction that gender inequalities played a central role in the dynamics of many of these relations. Despite the efforts made to move from the emphasis on sex differences in communication style toward the study of gender in context, she remains frustrated by the barriers still to face. DeFrancisco (1997) goes on arguing that most feminist researchers would concur, for example, that gender dynamics deal with more than mere surface differences in women's and men's speech; they are about power constructions of gender. So the need to transcend gender: to move research, theory, knowledge, and culture beyond a surface analysis of gender differences and eventually beyond a world organized by oppressive social categories is indispensable (Bern, 1993). DeFrancisco (1997)

points out “*We researchers have not completely failed to consider the underlying issue of power.*”(p.38). Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992), also believe that considering power has been the engine driving most research on language and gender.

## **1.8. FCDA: Goals and Perspectives**

Current trends in critical discourse studies have opened up new horizons in the field of feminist linguistics. Language and gender issues started to be approached from different angles.

### **1.8.1. Resisting Dichotomous Thinking**

A crucial step in the process of raising people’s awareness about gender was the rejection of assumptions about gender based on binary categorization.

According to DeFrancisco, (1997), there is a need to transcend gender and move research, theory, knowledge, and culture “*beyond a surface analysis of gender differences and eventually beyond a world organized by oppressive social categories*”. (DeFrancisco, 1997, p. 38).

So far, efforts have been made to influence people’s thinking about gender. The promotion of gender-neutral language was a very important step in the ongoing process of gender equality. Another important move was to put into question the theories which have long been established within academic institutions, to advocate and justify the differences between men and women in terms of intellectual and cognitive capacities.

### 1.8.2. Problematizing Identity

One of the most cited concepts in the social science and humanities is that of 'identity'. Many disciplines such as philosophy, sociology, social psychology, anthropology, and discourse studies have provided different approaches, definitions and research tools for the study of identity. According to Dolon & Todoli (2008) "*These approaches are diverse in the questions they address, in the aspects and levels of identity they focus on, in the view of the building processes of the identity, etc.*" (p. 4).

Current trends share the claim that human identity is, above all, socially constructed. In this regard, critical discourse analysis may join the circle and starts by problematizing identity. According to Foucault (1994), problematization is a matter of transforming assumptions into problems for which a number of solutions have been put forward. This problematization would help show the relationship between the construction of identity and social mechanisms of control, domination and conflict.

The debate on the concept of identity resulted into two versions or two definitions: a weak and a strong version. According to Brubaker and Cooper (2000), the 'strong' versions of identity take on a fundamental and durable sense of selfhood, while 'weak' versions stress the fluidity, impermanence, complexity and context sensitivity of identities rather than identity. Such a distinction between "strong" and "weak" conceptions of identity includes a great diversity of notions and questions: identity as the core of the self or the multiplicity and hybridity of identities, continuity or change and fluidity, structural determinism or creativity and agency in building identities, among others. This diversity is reflected in many discourse studies. Socio-constructivist approaches take into account the active process of the production of discourses and their potential production and transformation of social realities. As Potter, (1996) argues: "*the world "...is constituted in one way or another as people talk it, write it, and argue it.*" (p.98)

Many researchers go further to speak about the instability of self-identification, Bloor & Bloor (2007), for instance, argue that there is evidence that some people do not see their ethnic or racial origins as stable. A research paper on statistics, reports that people can identify themselves differently at different stages of their lives. (Bosveld et al. 2006)

Ivanic (1998) notes that an individual's multiple identities are unlikely to be equally salient at any particular moment in time: rather, one or more may be foregrounded at different times. It is quite possible for an individual not to be conscious of a particular identity until it becomes contextually salient. For example, a white woman may not experience a sense of 'whiteness', and indeed 'otherness', until she attends a women's meeting in which every other woman is black.

A more balanced view emphasizes the idea that discourse is constructed and discourses are socio-historically shaped, and their production is affected by many components and agents within the matrix. According to Dolon & Todoli (2008) *"Current conceptions of identity stress the fluidity, complexity and context sensitivity of identities. Individuals are thought to have multiple identities and even within one setting may appeal to a range of identities."* (P, 5).

Despite the arguments and pieces of evidence presented by those who advocate the constructionist view, a range of competing views regarding stability and fluidity still persist. Some theories maintain an individual core identity and others stress that identities are not something people 'have' or 'are' but just a resource that people 'use' or 'do'. Goffman (1961, 1969) stress that the meaning of social actions stems from the interactions in structured social scenarios. Identities are the outcome of the role-playing in these social interactions – where people negotiate and adopt roles and are treated as if these performances represented the "real" person.

According to Cooley (1902), our sense of self is derived from the image of our self that others reflect back to us in interaction. Our beliefs about ourselves are then affected by the reactions of others and identities are negotiated in these social

interactions. Goffman (1961, 1969) also shows that people are constantly giving off verbal and non-verbal messages about themselves as they try to manage a positive presentation of the self. Therefore, identity is more a situational performance than a stable trait or a sense of subjective continuity. As a consequence, the multiplicity of identity is due to the multiplicity of the social relationships and the social roles and different identities are negotiated in different situations.

Identity can thus be constructed in different ways according to different views; however one of the most realisations of these views is the discursive representation by means of positioning and representing. Critical Discourse analysts have shown how identities are shaped in social interactions, and how they are created, reproduced, negotiated, imposed, or even resisted through discourse. Much of the analyses done, from a critical perspective, focus on the discursive representation of people, and how these people enact or attribute identities in discourse. These analyses illustrate the extent to which most of the discursive constructions and attributions are imposed on people and affect their perception and evaluation and likewise, most of the stereotypical assumptions are constructed and validated through the same process .

For social constructionists, identities are produced as well as maintained through social interaction. They are thus always open to challenge and renegotiation in social interaction. Nevertheless, within the constructionist view the debate is still going on about whether individuals are aware of their identities as being like the others as members of social groups or as being themselves, different from the others. Many approaches in philosophy, social psychology, socio-linguistics, and discourse studies refer to the tension between 'assimilation' and 'differentiation' as a basis for identity construction. According to Dolon & Todoli (2008) People are aware of their individuality and, in this sense, attribute a set of idiosyncratic characteristics to define the content of being their-selves. This sense of what they are is defined also in relational terms through an awareness of what they are with reference to who or what is different from them. Identity therefore depends on

comparing one's identity to another identity. This leads people to construct their identity based on the 'us' and 'them' dichotomy.

In critical discourse analysis, much work has been done on the discursive construction of social representations and more specifically of social categorization. Thus, Van Leeuwen (1996) developed a 'socio-semantic inventory' of categories, focusing on how they are linguistically produced, and analyzing their social implications. The strategies studied by Van Leeuwen include: exclusion (by suppression and backgrounding); role allocation (activation and passivation); personalisation (determination through nomination and categorisation; the latter can be realised through functionalisation, identification, and appraisalment.

Other researchers within the framework of critical discourse analysis have drawn on the theories developed under the umbrella of other disciplines such as: linguistics, grammar, and stylistics to investigate the connections between the linguistic choices and the construction of ideologies. The frequent repetition of certain words or grammatical structures, for example, can lead to different representations which, in turn, can generate categorization (Fowler, 1990; Fowler et al., 1979; and Kress & Hodge, 1993). According to Van Dijk (1987, 1993, 1998) such categorization leads to 'us' versus 'them' polarization. Van Dijk, in his work on racism (1987, 1991, 1992, 1994, 2000) has focused mainly on the reproduction, perpetuation and maintenance of racism in western democracies. By revealing the racism in the news one should study the content of the news articles and also the wider social context in order to identify any encoded strategies. Van Dijk believes that people understand, interpret and reproduce or construct ideas and views about certain social characteristics (gender, class, age, roles, group membership, etc.), to represent social situations by relying on their own understanding and perception of the collective frames.

Besides these strategies of construction of categorization and otherness, researchers in discourse studies, have focused on how these representations are naturalized and legitimized in discourse (Martin Rojo & van Dijk, 1997) and most importantly on the consequences that the internalization of these representations have on the construction of identity.

To come back to this notion of problematization, which in Foucault's terms, occurs when "*citizens can take part in the formation of a political will*" (Foucault, 1994, p. 676–677), one of the most urgent goals in FCDA was the problematization of the concept of gender identity. The concept of 'identity' is still problematic especially when it is used to reflect existing realities. Every day we hear new stories about persons who decided to undergo sex change surgery, or about those who still cannot make up their mind about which category to integrate. There are cases of other persons who took time to know their sexual orientation and decided to make their coming out. There were even some celebrities who refused to tell people about their sexual orientation either because they did not want to ruin their careers or because they wanted to preserve their privacy. The famous TV presenter Ellen DeGeneres was the first female celebrity to reveal her sexual orientation publically<sup>5</sup>. She came out in 1997 on the cover of Time magazine. According to Time, being a gay star was not easy. Right after her coming out, her show started to face problems as ratings fell dramatically. The show was cancelled the following year. She had to wait for several years before she could reappear again as the most successful TV host and business woman. She even was selected, in 2014 to host the Oscar ceremony.

Some countries have responded to changes related to sexuality and gender issues by issuing official papers which identify 'third gender'. Australia was the first country to do so. In January 2003, Australians could use "X" as their gender. Alex MacFarlane is believed to be the first person in Australia to obtain a birth certificate

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<sup>5</sup> (<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-2262001/Jodie-Foster-comes-gay-impassioned-Golden-Globes-2013-speech-moving-audience-tears.html>)

recording sex as indeterminate, and the first Australian passport with an 'X' sex marker in 2003.<sup>6</sup>

Germany was the first European country to identify "indeterminate" sex on birth certificates, starting from November 2013. A report by the German Ethics Council stated that the law was passed because, "*Many people who were subjected to a 'normalizing' operation in their childhood have later felt it to have been a mutilation and would never have agreed to it as adults.*" (Deutsche Welle, 2013)

In India, the Hijra are said to be the most well known and populous third sex type in the modern world. According to Mumbai-based community health organization 'The Humsafar Trust' there are between 5 and 6 million hijras in India. The Indian photographer Dayanita Singh writes about her friendship with a Hijra, Mona Ahmed, and their two different societies' beliefs about gender. When she asked her if she would like to go to Singapore for a sex change operation, the Hijra told her, 'You really do not understand. I am the third sex, not a man trying to be a woman. It is your society's problem that you only recognise two sexes.'<sup>7</sup>

If we flip the coin, we can notice that in many parts of the world, people have responded in favor of traditional beliefs about gender identity as one's social identification as a boy or a girl, a man or a woman. In France for example, after making Same-sex marriage legal on 18 May 2013. According to The New York Times<sup>8</sup>, on 26 May 2013, thousands of French marched on Sunday, France's Mother's Day, to protest the recent legalization of gay marriage. Those who still take part in these demonstrations, aim at protecting the family values. They believe that every child has the right to have a father and a mother. The latest demonstration took place on 5 October 2014.

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<sup>6</sup> 'X marks the spot for intersex Alex', Western Australian newspaper, Perth 11 January 2003.

<sup>7</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Third\\_gender](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Third_gender)

<sup>8</sup> [http://www.nytimes.com/2013/05/27/world/europe/thousands-march-in-france-against-gay-marriage.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/05/27/world/europe/thousands-march-in-france-against-gay-marriage.html?_r=0)

As regard the construction of gender identity, Weatherall & Gallois (2003) believe that for the “*majority of people, a clear gender classification is given at (or with ultrasound technology, well before) birth. The reafter, all social interactions are influenced by gender assignment.*” (p. 487). However the opposite would also be true; social interactions also influence the construction of gender identity. The new data concerning people’s physical, mental and emotional attributes have contributed to the identification of other gender groups. The question which is worth asking is: are other gender groups still to be identified?

Researchers concerned with gender studies came up with different versions to the notion of gender identity. Essentialists for instance, believe that sex and gender are the same thing, or at any rate inseparable. Both arise from "nature" or are "God-given". Chromosomal characteristics, visible sex markers, and gender cannot be separated. Essentialists usually believe that there are only two genders; these are present at birth; remain unchanged for life; and there is no territory between. Behaviors or appearances that do not fit these assumptions are viewed as perversions.

Many feminists believe that gender is related to people’s daily activities. It is something that one does and not something that one has. In Goodwin’s examination of African American boys’ and girls’ speech activities, in terms of directives, argument, gossip, instigating, and stories and her examination of a range of play activities, she finds that boys and girls build ‘systematically different social organizations and gender identities through their use of talk. (In Holmes & Meyerhoff, 2003). A focus on activities suggests that individuals have access to different activities, and thus to different cultures and different social identities, including a range of different genders (Holmes&Meyerhoff, 2003). According to Goodwin (1990) stereotypes about women will not make too much sense while examining gender in context. “*In order to construct social personae appropriate to the events of the moment, the same individuals [will articulate] talk and gender differently as they move from one activity to another.*”(In Holmes & Meyerhoff, 2003, p.29).

Taking into account the context and the different activities individuals perform, researcher's focus should be on when, whether and how men and women's speech are done in similar and different ways instead on the differences between men's and women's speech; considering gender as a possession (Holmes & Meyerhoff, 2003, p. 29). Fairclough (1995b), on the other hand believes that to focus on gender in activities is to focus on gender of individuals and as a consequence, the gender of the institutions is not taken into consideration. For him joining the micro to the macro is very relevant, "*any 'micro action' or event, including verbal interaction, contributes to the production of 'macro' structures. 'Micro action' can in no sense be regarded as of merely 'local' significance to the situations in which they occur.*" (Fairclough, 1995b, p.35). According to Fairclough(1995b) investigations of linguistic practices should be carried out within larger social contexts. In his view, "*It makes little sense to study verbal interactions as if they were unconnected with social structures*" (p. 35). In the same contexts Tannen (1996) insists on the idea that the social and emotional investments of individuals should be taken into account, rejecting the idea that identity is performed strategically. According to her, speech styles are not, "*hats you can put on when you enter an office and take off when you leave*". (In Walsh, 2001, p. 9).

Those who work within Performance Theory believe that gender is performed like any theatre work, is independent of sex, and is best understood through performance studies. Following Foucault, who believes that identity is not a fixed thing within a person but rather a shifting, temporary construction and communicated to others through interactions, the feminist theorist, Butler (1990) comes up with the notion of performativity, to analyze gender development. The concept of 'performativity' is about the manners in which identity is brought to life through discourse. Butler (1990) sees gender not as an expression of what one is, rather as something that one does.

Current trends in feminist linguistics thus, take into account a number of contextual elements. For most of researchers, gender identities are multi-layered,

diverse, fluid, and actively produced. Instead of abstractions, they focus on situated interactions and show the need for dynamic and multidimensional analyses.

Cameron (1996) explains that gender has turned out to be an extraordinarily intricate and multi-layered phenomenon. Unstable, contested, intimately bound up with other social divisions.

The theory which is advocated throughout this dissertation is the constructionist theory. Gender is constructed by means of different practices. The most influential means is discourse. Children's identity is developed within the family, school and many other contexts through the different messages they get from their parents, teachers, the stories they read and the TV programmes they watch. Hennessy (1993) considers that the emergence of gender as a category of analysis has led to "the general concept '*identity*' being '*denaturalized*". (p.12).

### **1.8.3. Considering Gender as a Social Construct**

Some parents prefer to wait until the day of the delivery of the baby to know whether it is a boy or a girl. But other curious parents are eager to know every single detail about the pending child. In both cases clothes are bought and names are chosen depending on the sex of the baby. From the birth on, every decision is made contributes to the gender development of the baby, from the choice of the name, to the choice of the university.

In the context of language and gender research, a framing approach conceptualizes the creation of gendered identities as one component of the creation of social identities more generally. As Kendall (1992 in Holmes and Meyerhoff, (2003) notes:

women and men do not generally choose linguistic options for the purpose of creating masculine or feminine identities; instead they draw upon gendered linguistic strategies to perform pragmatic and interactional functions of language and, thus, constitute roles in a gendered way. It is the manner

in which people constitute their identities when acting within a social role that is linked with gender- that is, being a “good mother”, a “good manager.

(p.13).

There are many studies that have examined the discursive construction of identity. Often, the objective is to analyse the role of discourse in this process, to know what discursive strategies and moves are involved and to explore what identity configurations are related to them.

Consideration of gender as a social construct constitutes the core of my study. I will demonstrate, in the next chapters, how the production of gender stereotypes is the outcome of long years of internalization of ideas and assumptions about gender. I will also provide examples of both fictional and real stories about people struggling to cope with realities related to their gender identities.

#### **1.8.4. Considering the Discursive Construction of Gender**

According to many feminist critical discourse analysts, discourse studies have a great deal to contribute to our understanding of how gender is actually performed in the world. The study of discursive construction of identity from a critical perspective has been related to the task of analysing the role of discourse in the identity development process.

Feminist Critical discourse analysis, from this perspective, is used to show that the value of discourses varies according to the contexts from which they are derived. The exploitation of a multidimensional and dynamic conceptualisation of context is then very important to determine the value of discourse. Fairclough (1992, 1995) proposed the concept of hybridity to explain the need to insert history (society) into a text and to insert the text into history. Martin Rojo’s (2008) concept of the social order of discourse explains the implementation of the control mechanisms of the production, circulation, and reception of discourse. In the discursive market, not the same opportunities are offered to people to access to discourse. Everything is governed, as Martin Rojo (2008) explains by a hierarchical logic of distribution of

value. Within this discursive market, some discourses are authorised and legitimated while others are not. According to Martin Rojo (2008), this unequal value stems from the social position of the speakers, and affects the power of discourses to generate identities.

In this study I will consider children's fiction as a discursive market, in which writers, use their status as discourse producers to categorize people, describe them and legitimize ideas and beliefs about them.

### **1.8.5. Identifying the Relation between Gender, Ideology and Power**

Identifying the connections between gender, ideology and power is central to FCDA. According to Eckert & McConnell (2003) it is very important to consider the forms of structuring of gender within the different social contexts. They argue that one thing that is overwhelming in our narrative of development is the ubiquity of gender. Children get gender from everywhere. Gender consists in a pattern of relations that develops over time to define male and female, masculinity and femininity, simultaneously structuring and regulating people's relation to society. It is deeply embedded in every aspect of society -- in our institutions, in public spaces, in art, clothing, movement. Gender is embedded in experience, in all settings from government offices to street games. It is embedded in the family, the neighbourhood, school, the media, walking down the street, eating in a restaurant, going to the restroom. According to Eckert & McConnell (2003) these settings and situations are all linked to one other in a structured fashion.

From a critical view, ideologies are representations of practices, formed from particular perspectives in the interest of maintaining unequal power relations and dominance (Lazar 2005). Although such a view of ideology in Marxist accounts was developed specifically in terms of class relations, the concept now has wider currency and encompasses other relations of domination (Fairclough and Wodak 1997), including gender.

From a feminist perspective, the salience of gender is understood as an ideological structure that divides people into two classes, men and women, based on a hierarchical relation of domination and subordination. Based upon sexual difference, the gender structure imposes a social dichotomous thinking about women and men. This thinking changes according to time and place.

gender ideology is hegemonic in that it often does not appear as domination. It has been established and made acceptable to most people. In other words, it is a kind of domination by consent (Gramsci, 1971). This consent has largely been gained through discursive means, especially in the ways ideological assumptions are constantly re-enacted and circulated through discourse as commonsensical and natural.

A good example to explain the contract between gender, power and consent, is by looking at the workings of patriarchal gender ideology. It seems that this ideology is renewable; it has resisted time. Its establishment and enactment have been conducted via the society's institutions and social practices, which mediate between the individual and the social order. Connell (1987; 1995) argues that institutions are substantively structured in terms of gender ideology so that even though gender may not appear to be salient in a particular situation, it is so in the majority of cases.

In the process of tacit imposition of gender ideologies over societies, everyone is a complicit. In the case of children's fiction, many stories may be full of latent and harmful ideas about gender. However, the writer is not the only responsible; the other complices might be the reader himself/he, the parent, the teacher, the publisher, the librarian and so on.

### 1.8.6. Detecting Gender Representation in Discourse

Investigating the representative aspect of discourse has contributed to exploring the different aspects of the social life. Cumussi et al (2009), defines the theory of social representation as relating to:

every day practices and to the ‘real’ social, historical, political, and economic context in which they are negotiated. In this sense, the concept of social representations can help to capture both the duplicitous element of preservation and change in the representation of masculinity and femininity, and to find possible directions for change.

(p.150).

One of the methods used by feminist critical discourse analysts is the investigation of the representation of gender in the different texts. Sunderland (2006) defines the concept of representation as being the equivalent of construction “ *in the sense that words in fictional text are not only representing something, they are also constructing that something anew*” (p. 7).

According to Stephen (1992) “*it is through language that the subject and the world are represented in literature, and through language that literature seeks to define the relationship between child and culture*” (p.5).

In this study, I am concerned with the role of discursive practices in the production and perpetuation of gender stereotypes in children’s fiction in general and fairy tales in particular. The investigation of the representation of gender, through the roles assigned to the characters in the stories and the linguistic items employed, is central. What has motivated my interest in examining gender representations is the fact that in most cases, these texts demean women and stereotype them.

The way gender is represented in a stereotypical manner is, in indeed, worth examining since the factors that govern them are so numerous and difficult to discern. According to Bamburak & Isonovic (2006) those factors include feelings and emotions as well. They believe that stereotypical representations within the discourse, in fact stem from different sources, *“not only historical, political and cultural traditions or international and local institutions and subjects, but from our personal histories, most intimate thoughts, decisions and feelings as well”* (2006: 29). Eckert & Ginet (2003) stress such connectedness when they say that gender is deeply embedded in every aspect of society, in the institutions, in public spaces, in art, clothing and movement.

Pilcher & Wheleham (2004) point out that the way gender is represented and communicated has a great impact on one’s perception of his or her own gender *“the way women perceive themselves and were perceived was ineluctably shaped by the ways in which images of women were constructed and communicated to the population at large”* (p.135). According to Pilcher & Wheleham (2004), these images are influenced by dominant ideologies of gender differences and the qualities of ideal-types femininity. Those differences are still perpetuated and entrenched in the consciousness of subsequent generations. Cumusi et al (2009) insist on the importance of studying feminine and masculine stereotypes from a social representation perspective. According to them this implies an attempt to overcome the opposition between static and dynamic gender stereotypes.

### **1.8.7. Detecting Gender Stereotypes in Discourse**

The concept of stereotype was first introduced into social science in 1922 (Pilcher & Wheleham, 2004) when Lippman used it to describe the ‘typical picture’ that comes to mind when thinking about a particular social group. According to Pilcher & Wheleham (2004) it is a cognitive method or procedure, used by our mind in order to simplify the complex barrage of information it experiences. Gaborit (2009) argues that stereotypes are often considered as negative, *“as they take the form of a prejudice, something that the population sees as negative categories”*.

(p. 43). Gaborit (2009) believes that stereotypes have therefore a function of structuring the world surrounding the psychology of individuals but they also have repercussions on the behaviour and actions of groups.

Research within the field of gender studies has examined the existence of gender stereotyping in key agencies of socialisation (family, education system, media...). The focus is mainly on those stereotypes which tend to empower men and demean women by portraying them as weak, irresponsible and unable to perform public roles. According to Zaslow (2009), most of the stereotypes concerning men and women, describe the traits or attributes. *“They are descriptive in nature, providing a thumbnail sketch of what people take to be the way men and women behave on average.”* (p. 58). Zaslow (2009) reveals that these stereotypes are also more likely to be prescriptive.

One of the earliest programs of research to examine stereotypes was conducted by McKee and Sheriffs in California in the 1950s (McKee & Sheriffs, 1957). Using a list of 200 adjectives, they found that there were a large number of characteristics differentially ascribed to men in general and women in general. Men were described as frank, straightforward, rational, competent, bold, and effective. Women were emotionally warm and concerned with social customs. Their findings were consistent with those of Parsons and Bales (1955) who identified the traits associated with men as more adaptive–instrumental and those associated with females as integrative–expressive.

Another series of classic sex stereotype studies was conducted by the Brovermans, Rosenkrantz, Vogel and Clarkson in the 1970s. (Brovermans, Clarkson, Rosenkrantz, Vogel, 1970). In their studies, college students listed behaviours, attitudes, and personality characteristics that they thought differentiated men and women. Using these items, bipolar scales were constructed and other college students rated how characteristic each item is for the typical adult male, the typical adult female, and themselves. The sex stereotypes they found were similar to those identified by McKee and Sheriffs, suggesting agreement about the characteristics that college students generally ascribed to men and women.

Bem (1974, 1975) took a similar conceptual approach in developing the Bem sex role inventory. Masculinity and femininity are treated as separate dimensions, and persons can be characterized as masculine, feminine, androgynous, or undifferentiated. Items judged by students to be more desirable in American society for one sex or the other were included in the Bem sex role inventory. Stereotypes identified by Bem (1974, 1975) were similar to those identified by Brovermans and his associates in 1970.

Stereotypes are said to be culture sensitive. People are often typed and classified, in terms of their social positions and their physical and psychological traits, according to the classificatory norms in their culture.

According to Best (2003), cultures prescribe how babies are delivered, how they are dealt with, dressed, fed, taught and so on. According to Best, even the biological behaviours “*are governed by culture.*” (p.19).

An attempt to understand the development of gender differences across many cultures has led to several large cross-cultural studies of the development of social and gender-related behaviours. One such study (Whiting & Edwards, 1988) included children from 12 different communities in Kenya, Liberia, India, the Philippines, Okinawa, Mexico, and the United States who were studied to better understand the development of gender in various regions of the world. Some differences appeared in the treatment and subsequent behaviour of boys and girls, but many similarities also emerged in the types of interactions children experienced.

The analysis showed that age was more important than gender in predicting the experiences of children in these various cultures, but the definition of chores and the freedom to roam and be independent tended to show large gender differences that were common to many cultures.

Another cross-cultural investigation of gender stereotypes (Williams & Best, 1990) took place in 30 different countries in North America, South America, Europe, Asia, Africa, and Oceania. College students in these countries rated a list of 300

adjectives according to the extent to which each was more frequently associated with men or women. The goal was to study the associations that people, in different cultures, make about women and men and to look for female and male stereotypes.

In another cross-cultural study of sex stereotypes, Williams and Best (1990a) administered the sex stereotypes measure to 5-, 8-, and 11-year-olds in 25 countries and found that the percentage of stereotyped responses increased from around 60% at age 5 to around 70% at age 8. The attributives that the study collected were “*strong, aggressive, cruel, coarse, and adventurous were consistently associated with men at all age levels, and weak, appreciative, soft-hearted, gentle, and meek were consistently associated with women.*” (Williams and Best, 1990a, p.19).

Williams and Best’s study (1990a) shows that Germany was the only country where there was a clear tendency for the female stereotype to be better known than the male. The study reveals also that female stereotype items were learned earlier than male items in Latin/Catholic cultures (Brazil, Chile, Portugal, Venezuela). With regard the Muslim communities, Williams and Best’s study shows that in Muslim countries, children learn the stereotypes at an earlier age than in non-Muslim countries. (Best, 2003, p.20)

Besides connecting gender to culture, the examination of other facets of the contexts is also necessary. Gender should also be examined in relation to the history and economics of a society. Best (2003) notices that there is a problem which arises when a masculinity/ femininity scale developed in one country, often the United States, is translated into another language and administered to persons in other cultures.

The investigation of the existence of gender stereotypes in discourse is so indispensable because discourse can serve as a vehicle to produce, reproduce and perpetuate them. According to Lakoff (2003) “*Language reflects and contributes to the survival of the stereotype.*” (p.162). Gender stereotypes are closely linked with and support gender ideologies, which are, in turn perpetuated by means of discursive

means. A study of British adolescents' experience and expectations of talk in the classroom provides example. Stanworth (1983) found that boys were encouraged by teachers to be assertive in classroom interaction and that the girls admired most those boys who demonstrated most ability to do so. According to Hallawa (2003), in the Arab society and within the Arab family, "*The capacity of the men is glorified and the role of women is reduced. The socialisation of girl is given less attention than boys, in spite of the importance of women in the private and public spheres.*" (p. 195).<sup>9</sup>

Feminist critical discourse analysts' main concern is to investigate, through analyses of discourse, the hidden forms of oppressions against women. Among these forms is the establishment and naturalization of certain norms and expectations about behaviours of women through the stereotyping process. Talbot (2003, in Holmes and Meyerhoff, 2003) provides a concise account about the power of stereotypes to reduce people, when she says:

Stereotyping involves simplification, reduction, and naturalization. In order to make sense of the world- and the events, objects, and people in it- we need to impose schemes of classifications. We type people according to the complexes of classificatory schemes in our culture, in terms of the social positions they inhabit, their group membership, personality traits, and so on. Our understanding of who a particular person is built up from the accumulation of such classificatory detail. "Stereotyping involves a reductive tendency.

(p. 468).

With regard the impact of stereotypes, Ridgeway (2011) stresses the extent to which gender stereotypes actually do modify people's behaviour and judgments in a given situation, depending on gender's salience or relevance for them, given the nature of the situation. Ridgeway (2011) explains that the more salient gender is, the greater its effects on their behaviour. "*The salience of gender for actors probably*

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<sup>9</sup> (MOT)

*varies on a continuum from almost negligible in a situation that is rigidly scripted by a constraining institutional role to a central focus of attention in a highly gendered situation such as a date.” (p. 71).*

In my analysis of the production of gender stereotypes in children’s fiction, I will focus on the role that some institutions play. By integrating the micro (fairy tales) to the macro (the cultural and social context). As Fairclough (1995 b) makes it clear, the goals cannot be reached unless we integrate the ‘micro’ to the ‘macro’ research, and focus on social institutions as they own the means of imposing ideological and discursal constraints on people. (Fairclough, 1995b).

My intention thus, is to investigate the role that the characters, employed in the fairy tales, play in imposing ideas, constructing identities and blurring the perception of children of what is presented in the stories and the realities they are surrounded by.

I will focus on the idea that the existence of so many interpretations of one text and all the intentions that lie behind them can be misleading and dangerous for children. My intention is also to consider stereotypes as culture sensitive. I will illustrate, through the analysis of the content of a number of liberated children’s short stories and the reader’s responses, the theory that the nature of gender stereotypes varies according to cultural, moral and religious standards.

### **1.8.8. Not Giving Up**

Many activists, feminists, feminist critical discourse analysts admit that nothing can make them think that their battle against racism, gender inequalities and stereotyping is over. Despite the massive social, cultural and political progress that most of contemporary societies have witnessed, women, children and many other minorities, are still struggling and are still in search for justice, freedom and happiness.

According to McCabe et al. (2011), inequitable gender representations may have diminished over time in the United States, corresponding with women gaining rights at many levels and in many domains, such as politics and economy. *“However, it seems more likely that there will be periods of greater disparity and periods of greater parity, corresponding with upsurges in feminist activism and backlash against progressive gender reforms.”* (p.200). Ridgeway (2009) shares the same worries when she says that there is no doubt that gender inequality still persists, even in the United States, especially when it comes to inequality in employment. Far from working outside home, inequality can also be related to domestic work, as Bianchi (2006) clarifies, *“Gender inequality persists as well in who does the work at home. Whether or not women work in the paid labour force, they continue to do more work in the household than men”* (p. 2006).

Despite the efforts made by many feminists in general and feminist critical discourse analysts in particular, to raise people’s awareness about many gender issues and to empower women and narrow down the gap between the private and the public spheres, and despite the concrete measures taken by decision makers to fight gender stereotypes in many sites, gender equality is not yet reached. Bryson (2007) summarizes the efforts made by the feminists when she notes:

As a result of such feminist efforts, we now have plenty of evidence about the pay gap, the lack of women in senior positions and the numbers of women living in poverty throughout the world; there is also an increasing amount of information about the unequal division of unpaid work, particularly in subsistence agriculture and within the home. In addition to these measurable inequalities, feminists have also documented and drawn attention to other problems experienced by many women, particularly domestic violence ( which remains a serious problem in the Nordic countries), sexual exploitation and lack of reproductive rights.

(p.37).

Despite this legacy, the objectives are still far from being reached. However, many researchers seem optimistic. Brown (2007) asks the question: “*in the new age of globalization and contemporary injustice and inequality how can gender perceived and conceived in designing and setting new agendas with new political insights and objectives?*” (p.3). Many researcher seem rather optimistic with regard the outcomes. In the same context Bryson (2007) argues that too much work is still to be accomplished. In his opinion, what might be conceived as emancipatory and just may turn to be manipulative and unjust. Bryson (2007) notices that despite the fact that, women in many nations enjoy considerable legal rights, men and women, generally speaking, “*continue to play different roles and to receive different rewards– and in general this works to the disadvantage of women.*” (p. 37). The solution for Bryson is to document these differences and inequalities in many ways in order to combat them.

Researchers believe that combating inequalities and resolving problems is not that easy because they have to do with a whole system of beliefs and values and this is very difficult to pin down, particularly in contemporary societies. According to Bryson (2007), this could be possible. She justifies her opinion by referring to history; until recently our history, philosophy and public culture, in her opinion, have been almost exclusively man-made, and that despite the success of some individual women, men still dominate decision-making positions in educational and cultural establishments and in the media. Bryson goes further than this to declare that this could be a deliberate conspiracy-; that men has made history and decided what is important and what counts as knowledge; men have drawn on their own experiences, perceptions and priorities to produce a particular view of the world which they present as universal and objective.

In order to bring about changes, we have to make use of the resources. Such as school textbooks, children’s books, novels and so on. Kress (1996) sees in the curriculum made for children at schools, an important agent for change. According to kress (1996), the set of representational resources and the practices associated with each of these, that is, the (formal) means and practices by which

people represent themselves to themselves and to others, play an absolutely crucial role in the formation of the individual's habitus.

Children's fiction is also considered as a significant representational resource. It is a means by which practices and thoughts are transmitted, justified, naturalized and rendered fixed and resistant to change. A great deal of the individual or the collective habitus comes from the stories we read, the characters we admire or fear and the sensational adventures our favourite hero encounter.

## **1.9. Conclusion**

The emergence of critical discourse analysis since the 70s, has led to the re-definition and re-consideration of a range of concepts and notions. The term, 'discourse', started to be seen, not only, as a means of perpetuating ideologies and exercising power, but also as an instrument of achieving social goals such as, equality and justice. From a critical discourse perspective, discourse should be treated as a form of a social practice instead of just being seen as an individual realisation of linguistic knowledge. CDA takes particular interest in the role of the context

Investigations of the relationships between gender, discourse, ideology and power relations have resulted into the emergence of the feminist version of critical discourse analysis. Within the framework of FCDA, various studies have been conducted to demonstrate the part that discourse takes in the fight against gender inequalities.

The following chapter will be devoted to the investigation of the discourse of children's fiction. Many of the concepts, notions and theories, elaborated within the framework of FCDA, will be employed in the examination of the relationships between fiction, gender, socialization, representation, power, ideology and intertextuality.

## 1.10. Original Quotations

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1 "تغالي التنشئة الأسرية و الإجتماعية العربية في قدرة الرجل و تقلل من مكانة المرأة و تظهرها هذه التنشئة في صورة التابع الذي لا حول له ولا قوة" فقيمتها فيما يخلعه عليها زوجها و التنشئة الإجتماعية للبنات تعطيها عناية أقل من الولد؛ رغم أهمية المرأة في الحياة المنزلية و العامة"  
(Halawa, 2003:195)

## Chapter Two : Gender Stereotypes in Children's Fiction

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### 2.1. Introduction

Everything we read...constructs us,  
makes us who we are, by presenting  
our image of ourselves as girls and  
women, as boys and men

(Fox, 1993)

During the last few decades several analyses have been conducted, in the field of FCDA, to detect the impact of the discursive constructions on the perception and evaluation of individuals and groups, and to demonstrate, as in the case of stereotyping, the mechanisms responsible for the construction and the perpetuation of stereotypical views related to gender in discourse. To come back to the notion of *stereotype*, a good example was provided by Best (2003) to illustrate her ideas about stereotyping. She states that if one was a head of a human relations department in a large company and his/her job is to hire the administrative/managerial employees for his/her company. For one particularly important position, he/she has two finalists who have similar educational backgrounds and other qualifications. To help in making his/her choice, he/she gives the candidates a self-descriptive personality test to see how they might handle the job. Best (2003) adds that the results are: person A chose these items as self-descriptive: attractive, dependent, emotional, gentle, kind, talkative. Person B chose these items: active, ambitious, determined, inventive, self-confident, and serious. The important questions to ask, according to Best (2003) are: which person would this person hire? Why? Is it easier to imagine one of these individuals as a man? Which one? As a woman? In Best's (2003) opinion, if the employer managed to identify Person A as a woman and Person B as a man, then his/her views demonstrate the influence of gender stereotypes.

To summarize my purposes behind my choice of children's fiction for the investigation of gender stereotypes, I prefer to draw on Best's (2003) example: imagine that you are a writer and you are about to craft an adventure story. Two characters are involved: a girl and a boy. How will you write your story? Which

choices will you make? Which social roles will you assign to each of them? How will you describe them? How will you position them in the world? The way you represent these two characters might well be judged as stereotypical.

So, if we want to ask the question: what does gender have to do with children's fiction? Many answers can be provided, however the most interesting one is probably this: fiction offers views about gender. This sounds interesting in the sense that children are provided with one of the opportunities to know who they are as boys and girls and what to do with the fact of being or knowing who they are. Mallan (2009) puts it in this way:

In children's literature this often involves as a tortuous journey of becoming- becoming more mature, more sensitive, more empathetic, more-other regarding, more grown-up. For girls and boys gender serves as their organizing pedagogical tool for their becoming women and men.

(p.8).

So, childhood is worth considering as it represents the first and the most important stage in the process of human development. My choice of data is based on the fact that fairy tales are very essential for children; besides being a source of entertainment, they hide a wealth of insights just below the surface. (Young, 1997).

Researchers that concern themselves with investigating the production of stereotypes in children's fiction are wondering why writers and publishers still produce books that stereotype females or leave them out of stories altogether. In contemporary societies females are no longer limited by their gender or stuck to traditional roles due to a lack of options.

Recent studies on books written for children, however, have continued to show stereotypes that demean female characters (Anderson & Hamilton, 2005; Diekman & Murnen, 2004; Gooden & Gooden, 2001; Hamilton et al., 2006).

Although there is slight improvement in the representation of female characters, in terms of presence and characterization, it cannot be assumed that this problem is completely resolved. Gender discrimination in children's books is still worth fighting. It is almost impossible for young children, especially in early childhood, not to internalize stereotypes related to gender roles in these books. Female characters' representation, in active positions in work life, can provide reduction of misrepresentations. Producers should act with the gender perspective in mind if they want to help children believe in success and achievement.

It is worth noting that the study of gender stereotypes, in various forms of children's literature, is not a new research problem. The topic was studied extensively in the 1970s and 1980s and less so in the 1990s. It is important, however, to continue to examine gender issues in children's books.

Many of the investigations of gender stereotypes in children's literature are based on the gender schema theory framework which originated with Bem in the 1970s. This theory states that "*every society prescribes roles to men and women based on their sex, and adults, whether consciously or unconsciously, anticipate this allocation in the socialization of their children*" (Bem, 1981, p. 354).

The discourse of fiction is considered as a powerful vehicle for perpetuating gender stereotypes as it takes a major part in the socialization of individuals in general and children in particular or as explained by Edwards et al (2003) children's fiction contributes "*to the learning to function in a social setting.*"(p.34).

In the previous chapter, the notion of genre is discussed to show the importance, in CDA, to know whether the conventions related to the genre play a role in

determining the linguistic choices. In the domain of children's literature several genres or sub-genres can be recognized. However, when we think of children's literature we think immediately of fairy tales. Fairytales are normally considered as a sub-genre of the folktale, itself a sub-genre of folklore. But here we are dealing with fairy tales as a sub-genre of children's literature. The role of fairy tales, according to Knowles and Malmkjaer (1996), is to assume magic in the same way that the realistic novel assumes its absence. Is there any distinction between fairy tales and other subgenres in terms of the language used by the writer to speak about the characters or the language used by the characters? According to Knowles and Malmkjaer (1996) the language in fairy tales is characterised by the use of short explanatory passages, and the emphasis on physical description rather on mental characterization. Another feature is the flatness of the characters. The language is rather simple and the stories are easy to follow. One of the most important characteristics of fairy tales is the absence, Inexplicitness or distancing of spatiotemporal staging. This is in my view, very important to consider by critical discourse analysis; the fairy tales with their magical attributes, which seem to be lost in time and space, give the impression to the readers that what these characters do or say or how they are described or spoken about is unchangeable. The prince will always exist the way he existed hundreds years ago, brave, courageous and always in search, on horseback, for a beautiful women to marry.

The list of typical fairytale characters is well known: Kings, Queens, Princesses, Princes, Dragons, Witches, Fairies, Dwarfs, Giants, Beasts and so on. The language used in fairy tales, according to Knowles and Malmkjaer (1996), serves to bridge the natural and the magical fairy tales through the use of the similes "*which serve to link the magical world to the observable, everyday world*" (p.163). In fantasy fiction, the writers tend to incorporate magical elements to impress and entertain and sometimes to shock the reader. According to Irwin (1976) "*A fantasy is a story based on and controlled by an overt violation of what is generally accepted as a possibility*" (p.ix).

Irwin adds that the publication in 1865 of Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* confirmed Carroll preferences to send her characters into a fantastic world to gain absolute freedom.

Besides fairy tales and fantasy fiction, teen novels can also be part of children's fiction. When I first wanted to look for all sorts of genres available for children, I did not think for once to look for novels for two reasons. First, I thought that this sub genre is not for children but is rather written for adolescent readers. Second, because I thought that such books do not exist in Algeria. However, while doing research, I found out that many researchers, in the field of children's literature, do not exclude teen novels. Sunderland for instance, in her book on the relationship between language and gender in children literature devotes a whole chapter on the linguistic analysis of the popular young adult novel *Harry Potter*. Knowles and Malmkjaer (1996) includes teen novel in their book entitled 'Language and Control in Children's literature'

Nevertheless, many experts in the field of children's fiction admit that there has always been a problem with regard the availability of books which would suit the adult readers instead of always relating readership to children. Knowles & Malmkjaer (1996) argue:

The 1970s saw a recognition by authors and publishers that there was a gap in the market where there were readers too old for children's stories and not yet ready for 'adult' literature, a gap ripe for exploitation.

(p.141).

This chapter is devoted to the exploitation of a range of theories and notions, already discussed in the first chapter, for the understanding of the part that fiction takes in the life of children. It provides an explanation of how children's fiction could be connected to power, ideology and stereotyping. The investment of the concepts and notions such as: socialization, representation, intertextuality, ideology, power and stereotyping will help bridge the gap between considering fiction as a source of amusement and considering it as a source of harm.

## 2.2. Children's Fiction and the Notion of Genre

Genre is the term used for a specific product of a social practice. It is a form of discourse, which obeys socially agreed structures. Genres are text types that are socially constructed over time to fulfill certain social functions. According to Kress (1989), "*the meanings of texts are derived not only from the meanings of the discourse which gives rise to them and appear in particular texts, but also from the meanings of the genre of a particular text.*" (p.20). Kress (1989) argues that the meaning of discourses is derived from the larger social institutions, whereas the meanings of genres are derived from the conventionalized social occasions through which social life is carried on. A few examples of genres are: interview, essay, political speech, joke, instruction. Part of our socialization is to achieve familiarity with those genres. We learn the rules of recognition and production slowly, generally through education or sometimes by contact with the discourse community that uses them.

In the domain of critical discourse analysis, and many other disciplines such as stylistics, discourse analysis and pragmatics, genre is a key-concept. The analysts should recognize the genres or the sub genres associated to the texts under examination. The purpose could be to know which conventions related to genre govern or determine the writer's linguistic choices and the consequences of this on the production and consumption of discourse. According to Fairclough (1993), it is "*the use of language associated with a particular social activity*" (p.138). He considers that, "*different genres are different means of production of a specifically textual sort, different resources for texturing*" (Fairclough, 2000, p. 441).

In literature for instance, some conservative writers tend to stick to the same textual resources just to obey the structures that govern literary genres. However, genre, as a means of textual structuring and a set of relatively stable conventions, could be creative and conservative, relatively stable and at the same time open to change. In modern Literature for examples, many changes occurred at the level of form. According to Teigland (1999) "*The new children's literature does not operate*

*with a strict division between fantasy and realism.”*(p.6). This means that the writers are no longer confronted to those sharp lines while producing their texts. Genres can also be informative in terms of strategies as Fowler (1996) argues: “*No doubt the concept of genre of discourse (interview, sermon, etc.)..., will be instructive in establishing appropriate strategies.*”(p.8).

Many researchers, interested in the domain of literature, have come up with various definitions of what has been classified as children’s literature. Townsend (1980), for instance has claimed that it is up to the publisher to decide whether the book is really for children:

In the short run it appears that, for better or worse, the publisher decides. If he puts a book on the children’s list, it will be reviewed as a children’s book and will be read by children (or young people), if it is read at all. If he puts it on the adult list, it will not—or at least not immediately.

(p, 197)

Hunt (2005) considers that children’s books are different from adults’ books. They are written for a different audience, with different skills, different needs, and different ways of reading. Hunt (2005) believes that children experience texts in ways which are often unknowable, but which many of us strongly suspect to be very rich and complex.

### **2.3. Gender in the Discourse of Children’s Literature**

Consideration of the genre of texts is part of describing and explaining the nature of discourse as a social practice. Instead of just providing definitions of the different genres of the texts, by considering their socially shared and agreed features, one should consider the effects of such features on the construction and production of ideas and beliefs. When it comes to children’s fiction, Chambers (1980) believes that

what is needed is not really a definition but rather a “*critical method* ‘which will take account of the child as reader’” (p.250–1). Considering children’s literature from a critical approach implies that the rights of two minorities, children and women, are to be protected. Children’s books are controlled by adults in that they can determine what children read and which messages to transmit to children. As Briggs (1989) states:

Children’s books are written for a special readership but not, normally by members of that readership; both the writing and quite often the buying of them, is carried out by adult non-members on behalf of child members.

(p.4).

I find Chamber’s argument, cited above, really convincing because when I started to collect the definitions of fiction and then children’s fiction, I realised that this was not my intention at all. The definition is not an issue if we have to consider the urgent mission that the early feminists had to accomplish when they first dealt with issues of gender and language. The real issue is to adopt appropriate methods of investigation of the status of the child as a reader in contemporary societies.

According to Sunderland (2011)

The modern study of gender in children’s fiction cannot be separated from the feminist work on fiction in general which began in the late 1960s. This started with a critique of the (largely male) literary ‘canon’, along with an examination of the absence of women writers, and sexist assumptions in such fiction.

(p.5)

Over the previous decades researchers came up with astonishing conclusions as to the representation of gender in children’s books. Weitzman et al. (1972) found that none of the adult females in the children’s books in their study is depicted as having an occupation outside the home. Heintz (1987) found out that males were three times as likely to have an occupation as females.

As regard the depiction of the social roles, McDonald (1989) noticed that males were shown in a much wider variety of roles than women, and almost 90% of the roles for either gender were stereotyped. Allen et al. (1993) found that men had a wider variety of occupations and were less stereotyped in their occupations than females. In fact, 100% of the female occupations depicted in the books written between 1986-1988 included traditional female stereotypes. Gooden and Gooden (2001) noted that men were significantly more likely to be pictured alone than women. Male adults were described as being in almost twice as many occupational roles as females. The authors noted that although many of the female roles were still traditional, a few non-traditional roles, such as doctor and chef, had crept into the picture. Most adult males were not observed doing housework or childrearing activities, although a few male children performed non-stereotypical activities, such as doing the laundry. Hamilton et al. (2006) found that males were much more likely to be shown as having an occupation, and of the females with an occupation, only two were presented in non-stereotypical jobs, whereas males had a much broader spectrum of occupations.

The studies of the process of characterization in terms of personality traits also revealed asymmetries. Diekman and Murnen (2004) coded 20 children books that had been identified in previous studies as either sexist or non-sexist. They examined the characters in regard to personality characteristics, social roles, status, and gender segregation, the traditional female ideal and unequal representation. They argued that recent children's books were less sexist in the sense that they portrayed more women in non-traditional roles or as primary characters, but they have not portrayed men in non-traditional roles, such as nurturers or secretaries. The authors stated that it is often perceived as acceptable for girls to show masculine traits but not for boys to show feminine traits. Oskamp et al. (1996) demonstrated that 14 of 19 typical gender traits in their study were not noted as being unique to one gender or another (such as exhibiting aggression, performing service to others, or being persistent); however, four traits: dependency and submission (females), and independence and creativity (males) were significantly depicted along traditional gender lines.

Early studies, about the representation of gender in discourse, revealed that some books indirectly promoted stereotypes by endorsing tolerated sexism; that is, a woman was portrayed in a very positive way as a caring mother, excellent cook, or loving wife. Diekman and Murnen (2004) noted that even though well-meaning, such depictions still reinforce traditional gender concepts. However, with the development of tools of research and methods, researchers started to be more and more interested in decoding the hidden implications of representations in discourse. The studies which were more grounded in the contemporary theory of ideology have proved to be more efficient, in terms of uncovering hidden forms of asymmetrical relationships of power.

The move from the language- system to the discourse- system, has directed the studies of gender towards an indefinite number of texts, which while activated in context, could reveal an indefinite number of ideologies. Sexism is one of these ideologies and the discourse connected to it is said to be sexist.

Many studies have been conducted to examine the sexist nature of children's books. For a long time, sexist books were more likely to portray men in higher status positions and to have more male characters. They were also more likely to endorse the traditional feminine ideal. Weitzman et al. (1972) asserted that girls who wished to behave in ways that were not • passive or • nice were seen as tomboys or too masculine, and thus did not have a defined role to assume.

The examination of the representation of the characters in the home setting revealed a huge gap between the mother's relationship with her children and the father's, who were shown less involved as nurturers. Anderson and Hamilton (2005) studied 200 award-winning and bestselling picture books from 1995-2001 to assess the role of the father in children's literature. Mothers were 50% more likely to be present in books than fathers. They were twice as likely to be depicted nurturing their children. Hamilton et al. (2006) also found that females were more likely to be nurturing. Both Oskamp et al. (1996) and Williams et al. (1987) established that females were more likely than males to exhibit nurturing behaviour in books from the first half of the 1980s; the study did not reveal, however, any significant

difference in the aggression of boys or girls. Allen et al. (1993) noted that males were more likely to be pictured in outdoor locations than females. Oskamp et al. (1996) detected no differences between girls and boys as shown in indoor or outdoor locations. Hamilton et al. (2006) stated that females were more likely to be depicted indoors than males.

The association of characters with active and passive behaviour was also explored in many studies. The study of Heintz (1987), of Caldecott winners from the 1970s and 1980s noted that male characters outnumbered females in every activity, whether passive or active, although males were almost twice as likely to be depicted in 33 active roles as females. As compared to earlier studies, females were still shown as less adventurous than males, but not as often, and females were generally depicted as more clever and assertive than in earlier Caldecott books. Allen et al. (1993) found that males were shown as more active than females. Turner-Bowker (1996) established that males were more likely to be described as active and masculine, but females received more overall positive adjective descriptors. Hamilton et al. (2006) found that neither sex was portrayed overall as being more active or passive. Barnett (1986) posited that boys were more likely to be shown in helpful roles and that they were also more likely to be the recipients of help. This was consistent with other studies • findings that boys are more represented than girls in books in general. McDonald (1989) similarly observed that males were more likely to help others and receive help than females.

Researchers were also interested in the depiction of positive or negative behaviour of female and male characters. Oskamp et al. (1996) discovered that females were significantly more likely to help other characters, in books from the early 1980s, but there was no significant difference in the helping behaviour of either sex in books from the latter part of the decade. Williams et al. (1987) similarly reported more helpful behaviour from females and no significant difference in rescuing behaviour between the sexes from early 1980s picture books.

With regard the exhibition of emotions, Tepper and Cassidy's study (1999) is worth considering. They assessed the level and types of emotion exhibited by females and males in picture books as they wanted to know if girls exhibited more traditional emotions such as fear, shyness, and being in love, and if the boys were more likely to display feelings like anger, disgust and contempt. They analyzed almost 200 books that had been read in the past two weeks by approximately 3- to 6-year olds. They established that boys were much more likely to show emotions in general than girls; this was not surprising, given that they also found that females were underrepresented in titles, character roles, and pictures. The researchers, however, found no significant differences in the frequency of anger words, fear words, or love words spoken by female and male characters. Anderson and Hamilton (2005) observed that mothers were more likely to express emotion than fathers, including negative emotions, such as yelling at their children. Turner-Bowker (1996) theorized that girls may be described more positively when fulfilling traditional or stereotyped roles in books. Females were more likely to be described as frightened, beautiful, or good, whereas boys were more likely to be described by adjectives such as big, hungry, or horrible. Ly Kok and Findlay (2006) noted that while males and females frequently displayed stereotypical emotions in books from the 1970s, there was no statistically significant difference between the types and frequency of emotions displayed between males and females in books from the 2000s.

#### **2.4. The Role of Fiction in the Process of Childhood Socialization**

My choice of children's fiction as an important area in the investigation of gender stereotypes stems from my conviction that the stage of childhood is so closely connected to stories either oral or written. It is not an exaggeration to say that almost all children of the world have obtained many of the experiences and feelings, related to the world, from fairy tales. Many of the famous tales and the popular characters have travelled through space and time. Indeed, many popular tales have been

translated into several languages and now, we can hear of many versions of the same story.

Holmes (1997) demonstrates the major role that fiction plays in everyone's life. She points out that stories are used for many purposes: to instruct, to entertain, to illustrate arguments and to establish social connections. Stories then, are part of our social and inner life. As Holmes (1997) argues, they can be used in all kinds of social contexts from the most formal presentation to the most casual conversation, and they can generally be relied on to capture the audience's attention. Holmes (1997,p.264) adds that there are many different kinds of stories from artistically crafted cultural myths to conversational accounts of mundane everyday experiences. A good summary of the roles of children's fiction in developing the child mentally and emotionally is provided by Halawa (2003)<sup>10</sup> when he says:

The stories are considered as the best means by which we can offer to children what we want to offer. From moral and religious values to scientific truths and from historical and geographical knowledge to social and behavioural directives.

(p.15).

As regard the part that the discourse of stories takes in constructing identities in general and gender identity in particular, Crawford (1995) argues that stories provide one way in which women and men construct their gender identity. In this context, language is considered as a social construct, as a set of strategies for negotiating the social landscape. Crawford (1995) points out that "*language is the site of the cultural production of gender identity: subjectivity is discursively constituted.*"(p. 17). In other words, each person's subjectivity is constructed and gendered within the social, economic and political discourse to which they are exposed. (Weedon, 1987)

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<sup>10</sup> (MOT)

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the role of the feminist critical discourse analyst is to consider discourse as a vehicle by which people construct subject positions for themselves and for the others. As members of a society people are not the only responsible of the construction of their gender identities. The practices of the social institutions such as school, media, and family have a great influence upon individuals' options and visions. According to (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992) "*speakers are regarded as constantly 'doing gender', and the different ways in which women and men behave are accounted for by the gendered social contexts in which they operate.*"(p. 474).

Current trends then, assume that gender does not exist pre-discursively, but is produced and negotiated in discourse. Seeing gender as discursively constructed, feminist CDA has found Butler's (1990) performativity a useful concept. In the same context, Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2003) believe that people are all the time modulating their ideas according to the reactions of the others. In their view "*We position ourselves vis-à-vis the others with whom we are developing and elaborating a meaningful discourse*" (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, 2003, p.157). According to them, such discursive positions are bound to cultural contexts and social situations and they are never completely gender neutral.

Mallan (2009) investigates how New Zealand women and men , in their stories, actively construct their gender identities, reproducing and reinforcing societal gender divisions, and sometimes challenging and changing traditional patterns. She points out that women tend to construct relatively conservative gender identities for themselves within the social contexts they select for their narrative settings. Mallan (2009) investigates the possibility of rethinking gender by attending to its dilemmas within a context of change. The study has been carried out to examine how children's literature responds to new gender relations with narratives that either sustain or challenge existing gender orders and configurations. About the need to consider children's literature, Mallan (2009) confesses that "*Children's literature*

*will not change the world but it does make significant and often undervalued contributions to how its child readers see the world and their place in it.” (p.3).*

According to Halawa (2003)<sup>11</sup> *“The values contained in stories and fairy tales and which are tacitly absorbed and internalised by the child, contribute to shaping his/her behaviours in various domains.” (p.176).*

The role that literature plays in the life of children is demonstrated by the indefinite number of multidisciplinary studies carried out over the few last decades. In the view of Ulas et al (2011), *“Tales, stories, and dramas play an important role in the process of children’s attaining the literary and cultural back- ground of the society they are living in.”(p. 419).*

Many alarm calls have been addressed to people to catch their attention as to the impact of discourse addressed to children. The feminists, working from a critical perspective believe that the messages that children receive through stories must be thoroughly examined and reviewed. According to Poveda, et al (2009)

Written and verbal works addressing to the children are to be thoroughly examined by the experts of the subject matter. Discourse, even ideologies are to be carefully reviewed, especially those of story-tellers and writers.

(p. 245).

Poveda et al (2009) add that this alarm call is due to the fact that the works deriving from story narrators’ tongues or pens and are more to shake the world of children more than anything else. They create a strong and sensitive emotional world. Ulas et al (2011) even go further to declare that certain works addressed to children may be very misleading and manipulative.

Children’s worlds of dreams are quite colourful. This

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<sup>11</sup> (MOT)

condition may very well be converted into an opportunity in terms of children's literature. In this context, importance of any material to lead children to daydreaming, and to lead them verbally expressing these intellectual imaginations, is equally undeniable.

(p. 419).

Levorato (2003) stresses the importance of considering the issue of socialization because it is particularly relevant when well-known stories are in question, since through their wide diffusion they have affected, and still affect, generations of children. She adds that "*socializing power is even multiplied exponentially when the audience includes masses of children*" (p.150). The fact that writers keep going back to certain tales proves the moral and ideological weight that they see in them when it comes to educating our children. This power is often employed in legitimizing certain sociocultural standards which, once they are made acceptable and even desirable in the eyes of children, become the role and behaviour of a whole society.

How does socialization work? According to Zipes (1983), it starts with the reader's identification with a character. Zipes argues that such a process is particularly easy in traditional tales where the protagonist is usually the youngest, the most beautiful, the most oppressed and so on. If reading involves identification, identification for its part involves the internalization of values and standards which is where the process of socialization through reading begins. Zipes (1986) considers that the "*so-often invoked historicity of fairy tales is then a nonsensical idea: fairy tales, through their ingredients, have a specifically historic function within a socializing process*" (p.2). Zipes argues that the maintenance of the status quo, can lead us to understand how they might be rearranged to counter social values and norms we do not want to support. That fairy tales have usually served the purpose to acculturate women to subordinated social roles becomes obvious when we think of the elements of a story children are likely to absorb especially in terms of behavioural and associational patterns. Liebermann (1972) observes:

Not only do children find out what happens to the various princes and princesses, woodcutters, witches, and children of their favourite tales, but they also learn behavioural and associational patterns, value systems, and how to predict the consequences of specific acts or circumstances. Among other things, these tales present a picture of sexual roles, behaviour and psychology, and a way of predicting outcome or fate according to sex, which is important because of the intense interest that children take in 'endings'

(p.187).

The investigation of the representation and treatment of girls and women in fairy tales would be very revealing in terms of the frequency and the impact of certain patterns. The results could be used as materials to contribute to the forming of the gender role concept of children, and to suggesting to the young readers the limitations that are imposed by gender upon a person's chances of success in various endeavours. (Liebermann, 1972)

Edwards et al, (2003) provide another definition of the concept of socialization when they say:

Socialization is the general process by which the members of a cultural community or society pass on their language, rules, roles, and customary ways of thinking and behaving to the next generation. Sex role socialization is one important aspect of this general process. In common language, socialization means something like "learning to function in a social setting," as in "socialization of children in child care.

(p.34).

This usage implies that the young children acquire social competence through the concerted efforts of adults, who carefully train and mould them to behave appropriately. In the social sciences, however, the meaning of "*socialization*" is

*more complex and does not carry the implication that children are simply the passive recipients or objects of the socialization process.” (Edwards et al, 2003, p.34).*

In recent years, concepts of socialization in general and sex role socialization in particular, have been transformed along both theoretical and empirical dimensions. The theoretical aspect includes efforts to integrate social learning and cognitivist perspectives through a focus on self-socialization. Self-socialization can be defined as the process whereby children influence the direction and outcomes of their own development through selective attention, imitation, and participation in particular activities and modalities of interaction that function as key contexts of socialization. For example, many children prefer to observe and imitate same-gender models rather than the opposite gender, and to interact and participate in gender-typical activities.

The empirical aspect of the reconceptualization of socialization thus, involves a renewed focus on context. Whereas earlier studies of behavioural sex differences typically involved appraising individual behavioural dispositions across contexts, the new approach, according to Edwards et al (2003), seeks:

ways to understand behaviour within specific relational interactions and activity settings (e.g., the conversation of boys and girls in small or large groups) or in settings with children of mixed-age (e.g., in neighbourhood games) versus the same age group (e.g., classmates at school).

(p.34).

Edward et al (2003) explain that the goals of earlier work were to understand how, why, and at what age girls and boys begin to vary behaviourally to show such traits as nurturance, aggression, and dependency. They wanted to know how determinations of sex –related attributes and dispositions are influenced by cultural factors. Current approach seeks to identify how different kinds of gender-specific social behaviours are called out by different contexts of socialization. New trends in the sociology and psychology of children seek to explore how the gender differences are influenced by children’s relationship to their social companions, and how such

variables as: gender, age, status, and kinship relationship contribute to their development, in relation to different activities and settings.

The notion of the socialisation of children has been approached from different angles. The – role-learning theory (Hartley 1966, Parsons & Bales 1956, Weineich 1978) considers that boys and girls learn the appropriate behavioural roles for their sex during primary socialization, especially during their interaction with parents.

They learn which clothes to wear, which toys to play with, the appropriate colours, behaviours and so on. Children begin to internalise appropriate behavioural norms and characteristics. According to Pilcher&Wheleham (2004), *“Families are of paramount importance but education, mass media are also regarded as key agencies because of the stereotypical models of masculinity and femininity they encourage or convey.”*(p.161).

Children construct their identities in the same way the writers of the stories construct identities for their characters. As Grad & Rojo (2008) point out, *“The person is like a character always inserted in a plot”*. *Identity in this sense is “constructive as a coherent story where changes are part of the continuity and host of narratives of being in the past, present and future are interwoven.”* (p.10).

Another approach is that of assimilation and differentiation. In this sense, children’s identities are constructed by referring to who or what is different from them ( Gergen 1994, Tajfel 1978,a, 1982). Identity therefore is also a matter of comparison *“to something outside the self, namely another identity based on assimilation and differentiation”* (Grad & Martin Rojo, 2008, p. 12).

What is central to our study of the perpetuation of gender stereotypes in children’s fiction is the Critical Approach; the consideration of the potential of individuals to deal with gender critically. The goal is to offer suitable versions of

gender to boys and girls and help them to be reflexive about what they encounter in discourse. According to Giddens (1991) “*identity refers not to the possession of distinctive traits, but rather to the capacity to construct a reflexive narration of the self.*” (p.53). Gender identity is socially and culturally constructed. “*It is a never-lasting process of the making of a man or a woman*”, in the view of Eckert&Ginet (2003, p. 15).

Butler (1990a) argues that the *subject* is a process of becoming. This approach is closely connected to the feminist critical discourse approach to gender as Litosseliti& Sunderland (2002) “*A discourse approach to gender and language aims to accommodate ideas of individual agency, and of gender (identity) as multiple, and shaped in part by language.*” (p.6).

Though children’s fiction is said to be very powerful in shaping identity and behaviour, the reader can resist it by being critical. According to Knowles &Malmkjaer (1996), neither adults nor children are passive recipients of ideology; people are active interpreters of the social world around them and of its symbolic forms. They evaluate, judge and distance themselves from these symbolic forms. It is true that not all the readers, adults or children’ react to the same texts in the same way, but to put children into the category of adults is quite unreasonable. Children are different from adults at many levels.

In the fourth chapter, I will investigate the agencies of power and ideology in discourse. I will draw on Thompson’s list of modes of operation of ideology and strategies of construction to demonstrate that while the writers for children’s stories use language, they consciously and unconsciously, reproduce certain relationships of domination.

### **2.4.1. The Impact of the Surroundings**

From a psychological perspective, it is very important to explore how the readers of stories and fairy tales respond in terms of self-identification and imitation. Many

studies have been conducted by psychologist and sociologists to investigate the impact of the surroundings on the development of children. According to Yelland (1998), identification with a gender group is considered by many experts in the fields, cited above, as a fundamental social categorization in the life of a child (Yelland 1998). According to Bem (2003), there is a general agreement among psychologists that gender is the single most important social category in people's lives. However, despite this agreement, Weatherall and Gallois (2003) notice that *“there is little consensus about how best to conceptualize gender identity and its relationship to language.”* (p.487).

Children's companions are those individuals whom they watch, imitate, and interact with in natural settings of home, school, neighbourhood, and community. These social partners influence children's emerging gender expectations through face-to-face relationships in which children give and receive care, help, instruction, support, and cooperation, or where they engage in dominance struggles, conflicts, arguments, and fights. As they interact with different companions, children learn to discriminate the different categories of people in society, such as infants, elders, older versus younger siblings, extended family, household guests and visitors, and strangers.

To understand the different socialization experiences of boys and girls, it is important to know what factors possibly influence children's companionship. Children around the world have different opportunities with respect to social companions. Their cultural community, developmental age, gender, and kinship, highly determine the surrounding. Cultural community shapes children's companionship through such features as: the geographic location, settlement pattern, cooperative networks, household composition, and age/gender division of labours (Whiting & Edwards, 1988). For instance, in a community where the mother's primary responsibilities keep her in the vicinity of the house and adjacent garden areas, while the father's work takes him to a nearby town, the mother's companionship would necessarily be more salient to young children during the day than would the father's. In a community where families live in extended families with bilateral kinship, they will often have many houses where they can freely visit

and play and a wide variety of cousins from both sides of their family with whom to interact.

Children's age has a strong influence on their choice of companions, much more so than does their gender in the early years. Age-related changes in children's physical, social, and intellectual capacities are necessarily related to changes in their social settings and their companions. For example, infants and toddlers require constant supervision and show dependency behaviours such as seeking comfort, protection, and food from the primary caregiver or designated guardians. They are more likely to be in the company of mothers or other female adults (grandmothers, aunts, or hired caregivers) rather than male adults in almost all cultural communities. Preschool-age children expand their capabilities to do more things with more companions in a widening variety of settings (Garbarino & Gilliam, 1980). They can now have younger as well as older companions in their playgroup, and they begin to learn about their position in the "pecking order" of childhood. As they become aware of their gender identity, they begin to show preferences for same-sex playmates and their cross-gender interaction decreases in settings when they can choose their companions, as at preschool or childcare. During middle childhood, the experiences of children in different communities become even more divergent according to gender, as well as according to educational opportunities. In cultures where schooling is present for both girls and boys, children experience the very important transition of moving from a more home-centered to a more school-centered existence. School-age children interact frequently with same-age peers. At this age, children seem to seek interaction with companions who are not their family members but who are like them in other ways. They may show avoidant or exclusive behaviour toward children not of their gender, especially when they are playing in large groups (Whiting & Edwards, 1988). Research shows that children's play in these single-gender groups involves high proportions of both egoistic conflict and sociability/ play behaviours, as if the children are using the group as a laboratory for learning how to negotiate and get along with peers in the culturally approved masculine or feminine way. (Maccoby, 1998).

#### **2.4.2. The Impact of the Setting**

Just as the activities in which children engage contribute to gender socialization, where children work and play also has important implications. The settings in which children spend their time shape those behaviours they can observe, imitate, try, and master. The fact that children are always under the pressure of learning and following instruction, would eventually shape their prosocial tendencies. From toddlerhood on, children experience socialization pressure to learn the rudiments of prosocial behaviour (Whiting & Edwards, 1988). In cultures where children have more opportunities to interact with infants, they seem to acquire capacities for prosocial behaviour naturally and smoothly. Likewise, where they grow up in the company of elders who need their assistance, they learn prosocial values about respect and care of the very old. These cultural scripts vary from one society to another. According to various cultures, girls and boys are treated on different courses by exaggerating, reducing, or redirecting any emerging gender differences through the mechanisms of constraining the company that children keep, the activities they perform, and the locations in which they spend their time. However, children are not always passive; they are actively involved in their own gender socialization. They can, if they want, even make their own choices about whom they should admire, imitate, how, where, and with whom they should play and so on.

## **2.5. Intertextuality and the Discourse of Children's Fiction**

Intertextuality is a key-concept in this study. I will show in the fourth chapter, how in the domain of literature in general and children's literature in particular, the texts interact with prior texts either written by the same writer or by other writers. In the feminist critical discourse analysis of the nine stories, I will reveal, mainly, how the text interacts with conventions related to the genre itself or conventions related to the writer's schemata and the whole social cognition. So in this study I will deal with intertextuality from different angles. To explain the notion of intertextuality, Thibault (1994) points out that "*all texts, spoken and written, are constructed and*

*have the meanings which text-users assign to them in and through their relations with other texts in some social formation”*. (p.1751).

According to Levorato (2003), the concept of intertextuality is central to the investigation of gender stereotypes because the fact that the writers of contemporary books for children are still inspired by certain traditional and classic tales and even keep using them to generate similar stories, illustrates the extent to which these texts are ideologically loaded. The dialogues among the narratives seem so perpetual that the meanings they carry seem to be fixed and many of the messages they transmit seem to be legitimate, right and acceptable. Levorato (2003) insists on the fact that when it comes to the education of children, the power of intertextuality “*is often employed in legitimizing certain sociocultural standards which, once they are made acceptable and even desirable in the eyes of children, become the role and behaviour of a whole society.*” (p. 150).

## **2.6. Children’s Literature as a Locus of Ideology**

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the term ideology was coined by Destutt de Tracy (1754–1836) to refer to “*the radically empirical analysis of the human mind*” (cited in Aiken, 1956, p.16). In this study I use the notion of ideology in the linguistic analysis of fairy tales to reveal the author’s stance towards existing system of gender ideologies. According to Levorato (2003), “*the working of ideology will not necessarily be the result of a conscious choice on the part of the writer.*” Fairy tales “*can have an important role in the contemporary ideological landscape in either maintaining or countering a socially determined arrangement.*”(p.14). Seen in this light, the language of children’s literary and non-literary texts is a very powerful socialising instrument, as Halliday (1978) emphasizes: through language a child learns about customs, hierarchies and attitudes; therefore the language of literature can promote and reinforce the adoption of these customs, etc. Stephens (1992) maintains that every book has an implicit ideology, usually in the form of beliefs and values taken for granted in society. This taken-for-grantedness makes it difficult to reveal the underlying assumptions, because the analyst often entertains similar assumptions and values of which he is unaware. Despite its importance as an ideological instrument, children’s literature has mostly been neglected in critical

linguistic research. Stephens (1992) analyses narrative techniques and intertextuality from the ideological point of view, but does not take a linguistic approach to ideology. Knowles and Malmkjær (1996), on the other hand, carry out a linguistic analysis of ideology in children's books.

Ideology thus, is to be considered apart from a system of belief. It is obvious that different social groups, religious, ethnic, political and so on, do not necessarily share the same beliefs but if we look at those differences more critically we would go deeply below the surface to recognize the need of each social group, for not only survival but also for domination. In this sense, ideology is closely connected to the notions of power and domination. To study ideology, according to Thompson (1990) is to “*study the ways in which meaning serves to establish and sustain relations of domination.*”(p.56). According to Knowles and Malmkjær (1996) relations of domination are systematically asymmetrical relations of power. In any society relations of domination exist when certain individuals, for many reasons have more access to power than the others. According to Thompson (1990):

In studying ideology we may be concerned with the ways in which meaning sustains relations of class domination, but we may also be concerned with other kinds of domination, such as the structured social relations between men and women, between one ethnic group and another, or between hegemonic nation-states and those nation-states located on the margins of a global system.

(p.58).

According to Knowles & Malmkjær (1996) we can also evoke domination and ideology when we speak about the relationships between adults and children. This relationship is not an exception since the participants do not belong to the same social category.

In spite of the powerful emotional hold which children have over their parents and over many other adults, it is generally the case that adults, in virtue of their greater experience, strength,

access to the media and to the essentials and luxuries of life (via money and position), and as designers of educational systems, are more powerful than children socially, economically and physically.

(Knowles & Malmkjaer, 1996, p.43)

Can we claim that the child's world is dominated by adults? Knowles & Malmkjaer (1996) argue that adults see it as their task to socialise children, that is, to make them behave in ways that are generally acceptable to adults; in ways that will fit the children to take their proper place in society, as adults perceive it. Knowles & Malmkjaer (1996) conclude that adults have many means to them; they can simply use physical force to exercise their superior physical strength, or employ a regime of reward and punishment. *“However, they also inevitably influence children more subtly, often subconsciously, and, many would argue, most effectively, through language”*. (p.43-44).

The notion of ideology as being in the service of power, then, highlights the role language plays in establishing and sustaining sociohistorically situated relations of domination. It is important to stress that the mobilisation of meaning in the service of power, not only sustains relations of domination, but can also establish these relations. If you *‘get your meaning to stick’* says Thompson, (1984) *“you gain power, and a relationship of domination can be established.”*(p.132).

Interest in ideology in children's literature arises from a belief that children's literary texts are, according to Hunt (1990) very informative in terms of culture and morality. They can also be used as materials in educational settings. According to Hunt (1990) more than any other texts, they reflect society as it wishes to be, as it wishes to be seen, and as it unconsciously reveals itself to be. Clearly, literature is not the only socialising agent in the life of children, even among the media. It is possible to argue, for example, that, today; the influence of books is vastly reduced by that of television.

There is, however, a considerable degree of interaction between the two media. Many so-called children's literary classics are televised, and the resultant new book editions strongly suggest that viewing can encourage subsequent reading. Such claims find degree of support in studies which demonstrate, for example, that "*the structure and narrative techniques displayed in stories written by children mirror those of literature to which the children have been exposed*" (Steedman, 1982, p.11).

When it comes to the investigation of the workings of ideology in discourse, Knowles and Malmkjaer (1996) believe that the linguistic choices the writers make may be very revealing:

It is clear that a writer's linguistic choices can aid the creation and maintenance of relations of power. This is so whether the writer intends his/her linguistic choices to function ideologically or whether they merely reflect implicit ideology. Furthermore, linguistic choices have to be made whether or not the writer gives vent to intended, surface ideology.

(p. 68).

However, the problem with regard to ideology in discourse, is how to provide evidence for its existence. Fowler (1996) explains the difficulty when he says that demonstrating the general principle that ideology is omnipresent in texts is the easiest part, however "*doing the analyses remains quite difficult, and those analyses that have been published are not as substantial as Kress implies.*" ( p.8).

## **2.7. The Production of Gender Stereotypes in Children's Fiction**

In the first chapter we have dealt with the attempts of the feminists to interpret discourse from a critical analytical perspective. Their aim is to uncover those hidden and legitimized assumptions about gender. The existence or not of gender stereotypes has always constituted the core of the studies of the researchers working within the framework of feminist critical discourse analysis. The question that is worth asking is whether it is still possible and urgent to carry out such investigations after all the ideological, political, cultural and social changes and transformations

that the world has experienced? Many researchers have committed themselves to investigating how these changes are discursively reflected. For example, in the area of gender studies, many studies have been conducted to demonstrate whether gender representations in fiction correlate, to a certain extent, with reality. That is to say whether social change is apparent in the fairy tales produced for children in the twenty-first century. Tepper (2000) takes America as an example to say:

The previous ideology of separate spheres may no longer exist in America, however, its legacy might still influence how Americans today come to view certain activities and behaviours as more or less appropriate for men and women-and as a result, socialize their children in ways which are consistent with these notions.

(p. 257).

In spite of the various political and cultural measures to mainstream gender at all levels, and promote gender equality and freedom, much of the traditional practices based on binary thinking still prevail. The difficulties that the human organizations and academics encounter are much more massive in under-developed countries.

Before investigating how gender can be stereotypically represented in children's fiction, I would prefer to begin this section with a detailed account of gender stereotypes.

According to Best (2003), "*Gender stereotypes refer to the psychological traits and behaviours that are believed to occur with differential frequency in the two gender groups.*"(p.11). Stereotypes are often used as reference to traditional sex roles (e.g., women are teachers, men are engineers) and may be used as models for teaching children.

The categorization based on gender has been dealt with from different aspects and dimensions. Gender differences as language users have long been investigated. Many of the findings revolve around the assertion that women, as users of language have been depicted in a very negative way. Talbot in Holmes and Meyerhoff, (2003)

points out “*Women’s verbal excess is treated as a legitimate source of laughter in television situation comedies, newspaper cartoons, and so on.*”(p.471). Spender (1985) suggests that women are perceived as too talkative because how much they talk is measured not against how much men talk, but against an ideal of female silence. Ideally women should be saying nothing at all.

Linguistic variation among men and women has then been considered as the result of social attitudes toward the behaviour of men and women and that of the attitudes men and women have toward themselves and the language they use. They speak the way they do because they feel that it is more appropriate to their gender, and it is what the others expect from them as a result of societal stereotypes usually transmitted in the process of socialization of individuals.

According to Best (2003), investigating gender stereotypes can be conducted by considering gender differences in the adjectives used by men and women to describe themselves and others. These differences, according to Best (2003) can be seen in two areas: adjectives may be ascribed differentially to other men and women, and adjectives may be endorsed differentially by men and women themselves. Ascription deals with sex-trait stereotypes, and endorsement concerns how these traits are incorporated into self and ideal-self descriptions, hence masculinity and femininity.

Categorizing females and males is also based on cultural and ideological assumptions. Many of people’s stereotypical assumptions reflect cognitive beliefs about differences between women and men. These beliefs are culturally and socially shared and reflected in discourse. Best (2003) believes that stereotypes are not necessarily pernicious and may contain some elements of truth. They help predict others’ behaviours, but they also fail to recognize individual differences and overlap between groups. Best illustrates with an example by saying that if one considers men to be more aggressive than women, this ignores individual differences and variation in aggression found in both gender groups. Some women are more aggressive than some men. “*Stereotypes make no allowance for variability and, when believed*

*uncritically, they justify treating all men as more aggressive than all women”*. (Best, 2003, p.11).

Gender stereotypes are (re)produced in a wide range of practices of representation, including scholarship, literature, television situation comedy, newspaper cartoons, animated cartoons and so many other practices. The investigation of gender stereotypes in children’s fiction have resulted into astonishing findings. Many studies have shown the idealized depictions of the female characters. They are generally associated with idealized qualities of beauty, innocence, humbleness, caring, love. For Van Den Abbeele (2000), such qualities are considered as suitable to a domestic existence. According to Welter (1978) *“Purity was as essential as piety to a young woman, its absence as unnatural and unfeminine. Without it she was, in fact no woman at all, but a member of some lower order.”* (p.315). As a response to existing beliefs and ideas about gender. Welters (1978) argues that *“The attributes of True Womanhood, by which a woman judged herself and was judged by her husband, her neighbours, and society could be divided into four cardinal virtues—piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity”* (p. 313). These representations reflect women in a patriarchal society where they are reduced to house wives functioning only within private spaces and not allowed to engage in public life. Whereas men’s activities are depicted as restricted to outdoor activities such fighting, hunting, trading, or ruling the country. Women are presented as passive characters, as victims who are unable to resist the actions or decisions of others, very submissive as they accept their destiny. They are voiceless and harmless (Henke et al, 1996). Stories such as Sleeping Beauty, Snow White give the impression that nothing could happen unless a man intervenes. The half-dead heroine needs a man’s kiss to awaken.

According to Netto (2000), men are active agents of the gaze and women are passive objects of the gaze. Furthermore, dolls are ‘mindless’, consequently women can be easily subjected to the male desire. The most known example is Snow White who is constantly considered as an object. When she first meets the seven dwarfs, she is asleep and therefore she becomes vulnerable to their gaze. When Snow White and Sleeping Beauty are supposedly dead, the glass coffin/bier highlights their

beauty, and again they become objects which are put on aesthetic display, as if their main occupations are being beautiful and inert, waiting for the 'active observing subject' to undo the spell. It is not the first time when the woman's body, by being constituted as an object for the male gaze, is sexualized and fetishized.

The cultural norms about physical appearance are well illustrated by presence of the character of the stepmother in most of the fairy tales. This person is generally depicted as jealous of the female protagonists. Do Rozario (2004) explains that the traditional fairy tales heroines were extremely passive and unchallenging. They were stuck to domestic chores, obeyed authority and never questioned what was expected of them. All future wives from traditional German, French and Romanian fairy tales perform naturally domestic chores as their daily activity. The cleaning, cooking and housekeeping help all heroines to attain satisfaction ; even when heroines escape from their homes and try to seek freedom, oppression, like in Snow White, Cinderella, Hänsel and Gretel, they find pleasure in domestic activities.

As already mentioned, women seem to lead a dull, meaningless, static existence before meeting their prince. 'Helpless' seems to be the attribute of most fairy tale heroines, as they are always dependent on men and in need of their protection. However, although the female protagonists follow the rules of the patriarchal order, they sometimes show emancipatory signs of rebellion and independence: when treated unfairly by their antagonists or accused of things they have not done. The heroines try to find a solution to their problems or ask for help: Cinderella addresses the magic hazel-tree to seek help.

Readers would notice this patterning, in the majority of fairy tales. love at first sight, the charming prince, the white horse and so on, are traditional messages transmitted by children's literature: man and woman meet, they instantly fall love and live undoubtedly happily ever after. Children are misled into believing that a happy marriage is the end of any good person, other details are considered irrelevant as long as illusions are created and maintained. Marriage is presented as the rightful reward offered to women for having endured different hardships, pressures and

constraints; this state would be the perfect chance for women to evade social isolation, as they have always been restricted to private spaces. The heroines seldom transcend the boundaries of the private sphere, and when they do, they have a specific purpose: the encounter with their future husband. Women are not allowed to show any other higher ambitions, they are rarely offered the chance to rule a community or fight with dragons.

Most fairy tales suggest that protagonists go on a quest, or pursue an objective; for women this quest does not require leaving home, but the fulfilment of their wish/dream. Marriage is defined as a dream particularly feminine, in contrast with the masculine yearning for adventure. These patternings in traditional stories are used to restrain female characters from pursuing ambitious plans. In these stories the money that the women can get, they get it only through inheritance or marriage instead of work or fight. Thus, marriage comes as a reward for women, who are victims of different abuses and behave like martyrs.

Although the female characters outnumber the male ones, most of them are of little importance and their function is not vital for the plot. While the mothers are absent or dead, the female protagonists are orphans as in the case of such heroines as Snow White, Cinderella and sleeping Beauty. The mother figure is the least developed character in fairy tales, and it reflects the woman's position in the patriarchal society, symbolizing her complete dependence on the husband; the motherly concern for the daughter merely represents an effort to sustain tradition and patriarchal order.

The female character that proves to be as important as the heroine is the stepmother, usually depicted as the villain of the fairy tale, who acts in a cruel manner towards the stepdaughter and who is generally jealous of her beauty and prospects.

Researchers are also concerned with investigating the persistence of gender stereotypes by resisting to social changes and modernity. The story of Cinderella is a

good example of the difficulty to resist and eradicate traditional beliefs and ideas. This popular story has survived all the changes and transformations. Thousands of variants are known throughout the world. Since its first publication by Perrault in 1697 and later by the Brothers Grimm in their folk tale collection, the story of Cinderella has formed the basis of many famous and even recent works from opera and ballet to theatre and films and from TV series to popular songs. Many elements have still survived in 'Cinderella' as well as many other tales. The Mother is always absent or dead, the girl is beautiful but weak, the stepmother is the devil, the rescuer is a handsome prince. The traditional story has stood the test of time and the traditional gender attributes and roles still prevail.

As an example of categorization based on gender role, Henneberg (2010) speaks about the role of grandmothers. *"In many of the most influential tales our children read, female elders, unlike the mothers, are granted the right to live but are cast in hopelessly stereotypical terms."* (p. 126).

Many researchers point out that gender bias is still prevalent in contemporary children's and young literature and *"continues to fuel hot debates"* ( Sunderland, 2006, p.77). Gender stereotypes still persist because some of the social practices tend to reproduce them. For instance, a great number of teachers tend to employ picture books, chapter books, and fairy tales because they think these teaching materials can help students get more familiar with the past narratives and experiences on the one hand and on the other hand this familiarity with the genre would help them create their own narratives. According to Francis (2000), children's literature needs to acknowledge in some way social change and challenges. Fox (1993) believes that the teachers should have a sense of responsibility. They need *"to be sensitive to their teaching materials or they will easily fall into a passive acceptance of everything literature presents to us"* (Fox, 1993, p. 86). They should: Rethink what and how they should teach in the 21<sup>st</sup> c classroom, promote critical thinking and literacy and empower children with a further understanding of gender notions in their lives.

The role of Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis is to show how language may be used as an instrument of power and dominance. Many investigations are carried out, under this approach, to explore how gender stereotypes are explicitly or implicitly established within powerful institutions and perpetuated through powerful channels.

### **2.7.1. The Negative Impact of Stereotyping on Children**

The use of the label *negative stereotypes* may imply that there are other stereotypes which may be considered as positive. In fact, human beings need stereotypes as a simple manner to approach the world (Poirier 1988). Moore (2001) considers that stereotyping is necessary because it is a means of simplification. *“Stereotypisation, as a process of categorisation, is an indispensable cognitive mechanism necessary for the processing of data for any human being”* (2001, p. 15). It gives sense by offering keys of interpretation of events. As Oesch-Serra and Py (1997) put it, *“[Stereotypes are] ready-made formulas, prefabricated semiotic elements, verbal catch-alls which circulate in a given community, and play the role of practical evidences, useful in a great number of situations”*.(p. 31).

In fact, those who study stereotyping as a cognitive process (Macrae & Bodenhausen, 2000) stress people’s need to simplify the way they interact with a complex world; forming simplified categories is a way to do so. The limits on children’s cognitive abilities make this need even more pressing during childhood. Taking this view, gender stereotyping is a normal cognitive process that allows children to form categories based on gender and to understand this important attribute, if in a simplified and distorted way (Martin & Halverson, 1981).

It is by no means here to claim that all stereotypes are negative and should be eradicated; my attempt, in my study, is to focus on the negative effects of gender stereotypes on the social development of children, especially when they become obstacles to experiencing new realities and knowing about other possibilities.

The focus, in this study, is rather on negative stereotypes. Hundreds of books and articles in various disciplines have demonstrated the bad impact of negative stereotypes. Hamilton et al. (2006) point out:

Stereotyped portrayals of the sexes and underrepresentation of female characters contribute negatively to children's development, limit their career aspirations, frame their attitudes about their future roles as parents, and even influence their personality characteristics.

(p.757).

When ideology is perpetuated in discourse as a mechanism of power, and when a particular discourse is owned by some powerful institutions, it is worth considering the effects of certain discursive practices on certain categories of people. According to Fairclough & Wodak (1997), discursive practices may have major ideological effects, in the sense that they can help produce and reproduce unequal power relations between, for instance, social classes, women and men, ethnic/ cultural majorities and minorities through the ways in which they represent things and position people. According to Witherall (2002) there is no more efficient way to know than the investigation of how men and women are seen, talked and written about. In short, how they are represented. "*A context where sexist discourse is rife is in linguistic representation of women in the media*" (Witherall, 2002, p. 76).

When it comes to children's fiction Mallan (2009) argues that what is worth considering is the fact that the fictional texts are full of blurring ideas about gender. Sunderland (2002) considers that children's literature can be seen as an important epistemological site for discourse analysis in relation to gender since books are part of many young children's lives.

Children are constantly developing and absorbing messages that society gives to them to better understand the world in which they are part of. Families, schools,

teachers, and friends all influence children, but books are another important factor that affects their way of thinking. They implicitly or explicitly give children messages of what their gender roles are and give limitations to what they are capable of. Not knowing their full potential, these messages can affect the growth of young people's dreams and manipulate their minds to believe that they must act within system of norms in society.

Besides being an important resource for developing children's language skills, children's books play a significant part in transmitting a society's culture to children. Gender roles are an important part of this culture. How genders are portrayed in children's books thus contribute to the image children develop of their own role and that of their gender in society. Simpsons & Masland (1993) assert that a gender bias exists not only in the number of children's books that feature males as opposed to female characters, but in the language contents, and graphic elements of said literature.

The most common gender messages that children's books give are the emphasis of traditional roles of men and women. From early childhood we keep receiving gender messages. We are taught what is appropriate and what is not. Even at an age when a child is not able to talk, parents decide what toys to get him or her depending on his or her gender. According to Cherland (2006), it is very important to understand the messages that children's literature sends to them about the role expectations of females in order to understand how they view real life. Sunderland (2006) assumes that much of the twentieth century work on gender representation is "*motivated by the concern to investigate the "marginalization of female characters in children's texts."*" (p. 6). Stephens (1992) argues that since about 1960, there has appeared a variety of books for children which broadly share an "*impulse to create roles for child characters which interrogate the normal subject positions created for children within socially dominant ideological frames*" (1992, p. 120).

The call to take into importance the examination of children's stories was justified by the fact that these resources may contain factual errors. For example, Rice (2002) examined 50 popular children's trade books and documented numerous

errors. These included labelling a mushroom as a plant and describing snakes as slimy. In reality, mushrooms are fungi and snakeskin is dry. The critical question is: how does reading these errors affect the child?

According to Begley (2000), stereotypes present a trap into which many people can fall. In 1995, Steele and Aronson reported on a study that showed how the existence of negative stereotypes affects those who are part of the stereotyped groups. They proposed that people feel threatened in situations in which they believe that their performance will identify them as examples of their group's negative stereotype. Steele and Aronson (1995) labelled this situation '*stereotype threat*' because the presence of these negative stereotypes threatens performance and self-concept. Even if the person does not believe the stereotype or accept that it applies, the threat of being identified with a negative stereotype can be an ever-present factor that puts a person in the spotlight and creates tension and anxiety about performance.

### **2.7.2. Gender Stereotypes and the Process of Change**

Various studies have thus, revealed that gender stereotypes still persist, in spite of all calls launched here and there to reach a balanced view about language. "*How can we escape the hold of stereotypes?*" Asks Meunier, (2009, p. 332).

There is no doubt that the discourse of children's fiction plays a major part in bringing novelty, not only to the discourses for and about children but also to the discourse about the connections between language, gender, power and ideology. Malan (2009) points out that there are many examples of competing gender discourses which highlight the extent to which efforts are made to change things concerning gender issues. "*I believe that other discourses such as: political discourse, literary discourse, historical discourse, the discourse of consumerism and so on may as well contribute to the process of change.*" (Mallan, 2009, p. 2-3). Mallan (2009) adds that the problem is how to avoid perpetuating further contradictions by contributing to preserving and reproducing traditional gender relations and hegemonies. It seems that the solution is indeed, not in simply inverting hierarchical conventions and power relations. This would not be an equitable solution.

It seems that the real challenge is also how to keep the balance between the linguistic, the cultural and the ideological. The real challenge is also for a parent who, while reading a story, is interrupted by his/her child who wants to know why Dolly, the boy has two daddies or why Fulla, the girl, never plays outdoors. While doing my research I came across this comment posted by a parent "... My four year old son really liked the book. It gave us a good reason / excuse to talk about gender roles and respect."

In this particular situation we can say that ideas about gender are not only shaped by the writer's beliefs and points of view but also the parent's visions and attitudes. Change in discourse and attitude cannot be positive if certain parameters were not taken into account. Parameters such as: culture, ethnicity, social change diversity and so on. In the Arab world for instance, Abdelwaheb (2006, p. 105)<sup>12</sup> believes that children are facing a variety of challenges as a consequence of the changes that the Arab countries are witnessing. This obliges the writers for children to incorporate these changes into the narratives and present them to the Arab child in a way which enables him/her to cope with the social changes and at the same time preserve the Arab values and customs. The words that children read get their meanings from various social actions such as: reading stories in class, posting commentaries on the Internet, offering awards to writers and so on.

Each social action contributes in a way or another to the construction of the overall experience of reading. According to Halliday (1989) the words that are exchanged in these contexts get their meaning from activities in which they are embedded, which again are social activities with social agencies and goals.

So, the workings of various social actions, by various social actors, within various situations, let their print on discourse. Life evolves and discourse evolves too. The impact of change on discourse was revealed in Levorato's study (2003).

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Her investigation of gender representation in different versions of Little Red Riding Hood from the 17<sup>th</sup>c to the present has revealed how it is possible to uncover and compare the sexist agenda of the early versions and the more contemporary ones. According to Levorato (2003), readers may not necessarily enjoy or appreciate such changes, which “*are often upsetting; they may even resent them, especially if a traditional, conventional socialization process has influenced their social expectations.*” (p.150).

As a reaction to stereotypical representation of gender in children’s fiction many liberated publications have taken up the challenge to bring about social changes. Zipes (1983a) points out that the liberated fairy tales seek “*to interfere with the civilizing process in hope of creating change and a new awareness of social conditions*”. The aim of the writers is to create certain disturbances not only on the conscious level but also on the unconscious level.

In the view of Zipes (1983a) we cannot judge the quality of emancipatory fairy tales by considering the readers attitudes but by judging “*the unique ways they bring undesirable social relations into question and force readers to question themselves*”. (Zipes, 1983a, p.191). Levorato (2003) on the other hand, believes that the writer of liberated books tend to exploit the reader’s knowledge of the traditional version in order to produce liberated retellings.

Discourse can thus, be an effective means for change. According to Mallan (2009) change in discursive practices of speaking, writing, and behaving inevitably involves resisting existing assumptions and this eventually leads to reproducing and re-imagining new situations where prior ideas and beliefs are challenged. The process of change, according to Mallan (2009) will not only try to challenge, “*but they try also to comply with changes that impact on their sense of self and their view of the world.* «*This project of change begins with rethinking gender.*” (p. 3).

A very important step in the process of change is the detection of, not only, the visible modes of language use, but also, of the subtle configurations of linguistic choices.

## **2.8. Conclusion**

In the field of FCDA, researchers have been concerned with exploring how discourse affects the perception and evaluation of individuals and groups. The theory which has always been advocated within this framework is that people's ideas, beliefs and points of view about gender are socially and discursively constructed. Gender inequalities, gender stereotypes, and gender ideologies, can thus be seen as the results of a dialectic relationship between discourse and society.

As regard gender stereotyping, various epistemological sites have been investigated to understand the mechanisms responsible for the production and the perpetuation of stereotypical views related to gender in discourse.

Children's fiction is considered as one of the most interesting sites as it offers all kinds of assumptions about gender in terms of representation or characterization.

Children's fiction could be analysed to see how ideology is perpetuated and how power relations are represented. The notion of socialization could be connected to children's fiction to understand the impact of fiction on the development of gender identity and on the production of gender stereotypes and prejudices. The concept of intertextuality could also be exploited to study how the interaction among the texts contributes to the reinforcement of gender stereotypes.

Besides consideration of the harmful effects of the use of certain linguistic features in children's fiction, feminist critical discourse analysts have paid particular attention to the part that this particular discourse takes in the process of change.

## **2.9. Original Quotations**

### **Page 81**

1. "و تعد القصص أفضل وسيلة تقدم عن طريقها ما تريد ان تقديمه للأطفال، سواء كان ذلك قيما دينية و اخلاقية من معلومات علمية، او تاريخية او جغرافي إلى، توجيهات سلوكية او اجتماعية"

(Halawa, 2003 :15)

### **Page 83**

2. "القصص التي يقرأها الطفل و التي تحتوي على قيم قد يمتصها الطفل بدون إدراك منه. تأثر على تطور سلوكيات الطفل في مجالات عدة"

(Halawa, 2003 :176)

### **Page 106**

3. " تعدد المثيرات التي يتعرض لها الطفل العربي اقليميا و عالميا ، نتيجة لتفاعله و تأثره بالتغيرات المتلاحقة التي يمر بها المجتمع المحلي و العالمي و التي تفرض على كتاب ادب الاطفال تناول هذه المثيرات و تقديمها للطفل العربي بشكل يساعده على مواجهة هذه التغيرات و التكيف مع المستجدات الحياتية ن مع المحافظة على قيمه و تقاليده العربية الوطنية"

(Abdelwaheb, 2006 :105)

## Chapter Three ; Methodology

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### 3.1. Introduction

For a lucid account of the discursive construction of social inequality, a model is needed in which the link between text and society is mediated by cognition.

( Hart, 2010, p.15).

The interest in analyzing sexism in children's fiction has been shown in the many studies on children's literature conducted within various disciplines. However, the focus was mainly on the content analysis of texts in which overt and apparent markers of sexism were counted (Eisenberg, 2002; Rosa, 1999; Goodroe, 1998; Turner-Bowker, 1996; Crabb and Bielawski, 1994). These overt markers included for instance, the frequency with which female characters appeared as main characters in texts compared to male characters, or the frequency with which female characters appeared in the accompanying illustrations in comparison to male characters. These studies were influenced by liberal feminism, a subfield of feminist studies whose goal is to achieve gender equity by investigating social issues. The feminists, working from this perspective, believe in change and in the power of language to change the status of women by rewriting existing laws and re-arranging existing parameters. Liberal feminism is grounded in the theoretical assumption of a male-dominant society and seeks ways to open up more avenues for women to prove themselves as equal to the opposite sex and create a better place in society for both women and men (Yeaman et al., 1996).

In addition to liberal feminism, another field emerged, it is called poststructuralism. Unlike the former approach, the aims of the researchers, within this new approach, have widened. Besides the social changes, they seek political and economic changes. Such changes can only be realised by understanding the varied social mechanisms that convince people to adopt and act from particular points of

view (Yeaman et al., 1996). Paying attention to the issues of knowledge, power, difference, and discourse is central to poststructuralist feminism. The theories and methods provided by critical discourse analysis have been served to critically investigate gender issues. Mills (2004) describes CDA as an approach that views language as "*a central vehicle*" through which "*people are constituted as individuals and as social subjects*". (p.118).

In the domain of children's literature, experts with different forms of expertise have joined hands to reveal the workings of ideologies in the narratives addressed to children. Clark (2002) insisted on the importance of language in considering gender representation in children's fiction. Clark believes that researchers of children's texts should pay greater attention to 'nuances of expression' and 'a variety of voices' when reading gender in children's literature. Indeed, besides the investigation of overt markers of sexism, the focus should rather be on covert connections that can be identified through analysis of the use of language. According to Levorato (2003) "*The syntactic organization of a text can itself code an entire world-view, a perspective in which language is bound to prove both an instrument of maintenance as well as change.*"(p.xi).

Several studies have approached the notion of gender construction particularly in children's fiction from a poststructuralist approach. Bradford (1998) adopted poststructural feminism when she examined encoded gender ideologies in children's stories of family relationships. Hubler (2000) examined a selection of children's texts and used this approach to demonstrate the subtle ways in which fiction allows readers to identify social structures. Knowles and Malmkjaer (1996: 69) focused on the role of language in children's literature and insisted particularly on the role of 'collocation' to maintain and legitimize certain assumptions. Levorato (2003) in her study of the role of language in the fairy tale tradition, attempted to reveal reciprocal relationship tying any text to the social reality that produces it. Sunderland (2011) conducted a linguistic analysis of certain texts for children to investigate gender representation.

These researchers share the common idea that the frequent use of certain lexical and grammatical structures may contribute to the maintenance of certain identity chains and eventually, these linguistic habits will contribute to the maintenance and perpetuation of negative gender stereotypes. A proper understanding of the representation of gender in children's fiction requires a better understanding of the relationship between gender and language. The investigation of the linguistic choices has constituted the core of most of the studies influenced by the body of theory provided by critical discourse studies. Researchers started by problematizing the use of certain linguistic features which have previously been taken for granted. For Malan (2009), even the use of 'we' could be very problematic when she says:

I do not insist upon nor do I accept a taken for granted 'we' with respect to shared interpretations and ideological positions and positioning...any attempt to speak on behalf of everyone (or someone) is not only foolish but obscures or conceals the differential context (social, political, historical, cultural)

(p. 5).

Within the area of language and gender studies researchers have always been interested in the process of writing at the cognitive level. Several questions have been raised such as: What happen at the level of the mind of the producers of texts for children? Do the producers of those texts take into account the context? How do they make the linguistic choices? Many researchers agree on the point that the writers are not always aware of the connectedness that may result from the use of language in a certain way. Here, I am referring to Fairclough's '(1989) notion of connectedness to mean connections between language, gender and power. According to Levorato (2003) "*The selection of certain linguistic expressions account to a great extent for the impression readers get from a text, although the working of ideology will not necessarily be the result of a conscious choice on the part of the writer.*"(p.14).

Many researchers suggested investigating the representation of gender in children's fiction by combining theories from different fields. Sunderland (2011) for instance, believes that the best way to look at gender, in fiction from a broadly feminist perspective, is to integrate both stylistics and critical discourse analysis. According to Sunderland (2011) "*CDA is more usually concerned with non-fiction (for example, newspaper reports), but there is every reason why fiction should also be of interest to CDA.*" (p.63).

Recent studies have mainly been concerned with the exploration of whether the new books produced for children still perpetuate the previous gender ideologies, legitimise and naturalize them for a long time. Indeed, the new books are normally expected to provide the reader with new configurations in which women and girls are assigned different and interesting social roles and are allowed enough space and so on. What is expected from the writers of contemporary short stories for children is to reflect the social change.

Sunderland (2011) makes clear that the purpose behind the feminists' investigations has never been to take sides or to privilege women over men. It is not about all women being oppressed by all men, in a sort of global patriarchy. The purpose is to look at "*how both overt and covert practices in different societies and groups within those societies function to empower many men rather than many women in a range of ways, economically, legally, educationally, socially and linguistically*"(Sunderland,2011,p.8).

This chapter is devoted to the introduction of the toolkit of analysis of gender stereotypes in children's fiction, including analysis of the lexical and grammatical environment, intertextuality, Halliday's systems of transitivity and mood, Van Leeuwen's patterns of inclusion and exclusion, Thompson's modes of operation of ideology and Van Dijk's social cognition theory.

My purpose is to look at those overt and covert linguistic practices that contribute to the (re)production of gender stereotypes. The study covers a range of texts. I will approach the issue from diverse but complementary theoretical perspectives. My main descriptive and analytical tools are Halliday's functional grammar (1985, 1994), Van Leeuwen's theory of social actor (1995, 1996) and a

range of theories developed within the framework of FCDA, such as the theory of power relations, the theory of representation, and the theory of socialization.

## **3.2. Tracking Gender Stereotypes in Discourse**

### **3.2.1. The Issue of Selection**

Before the conduction of any type of analysis, the analyst is faced with the issue of selection and starts by finding answers to a series of questions such as: which texts should be selected? How many texts should the study include? What are the criteria of selection? I believe that the selection of the text depends on the aims of the analysts; whether he/she wants to carry out a quantitative survey or a comparative analysis or rather a qualitative analysis. The most important issue is what the analysts are going to do with the findings; is he/she going to make generalizations? Are the results reliable only if related to certain contexts?

In my case, I will deal with nine short stories written by the same author. I will consider the nine stories as a whole and at the same time I will choose certain examples and extracts from each story for linguistic, qualitative and comparative analysis. I will exploit the theories, concepts and notions that have already been presented in the previous chapters. A 'toolkit' will be constituted progressively throughout this chapter.

So, the data source for this study is a compilation of fairy tales that children are actually exposed to rather than those evaluated by experts to be popular. The stories selected are for children ages 3 to 12, and published in 2006.

### **3.2.2. Method**

Besides making the right decision as the selection of the texts to be analysed, I was faced with the issue of the adoption of the appropriate methodology.

Many researchers have chosen to analyse gender representations in children's fiction by referring to famous or award-winning books which attract the widest readership.

(Gooden and Gooden, 2001; Goodroe, 1998; Dougherty and Engel, 1987). To cite a recent study, there is no better example than the study of Sunderland (2011) in which she carries out a linguistic analysis on one of the most popular book worldwide; Rowling's 'Harry Potter'.

For the present study, selecting award – winning books is not possible for the only reason that in Algeria there is not such a tradition as giving awards for children's books.

Rather than working over a huge quantity of texts, I have chosen to concentrate on nine written short stories, written by the same writer and presently available at the Algerian bookstores. I have made this choice, partly because concentrating on one writer will offer me an opportunity to track the writer's line of thought and eventually, to detect his stance through analysis of the repetitive use of certain linguistic features, and partly because my purpose is to use the texts as a corpus for the application of tools provided by FCDA and discussed in the previous chapter. That is to say that the same tools can be used on any other texts from different genres and related to different sites, to detect gender representations, gender stereotypes or modes of operation of ideologies. The text selection for this study was governed by the following guidelines:

- The texts should be written by the same writer
- The texts should be written by an Algerian.
- The texts should reflect an Algerian setting in terms of characters and location.
- The study includes only the tales with a clear female or male protagonist.

I will conduct both content and linguistic analyses to cover the following points

- The representation of the characters or the social actors.
- The representation of the characters' actions or social practices.
- The representation of the characters thoughts or points of view.
- The representation of the writer's thoughts or points of view.
- The representation of gender within social institutions such as family and marriage.
- The representation of the character's psychological and social needs.
- The workings of ideologies.

- The subtle intertextual connections.
- Power relations.

### **3.2.3. Association of Linguistic Analysis to Content Analysis**

According to Hallawa (2003)<sup>13</sup> the importance of the content analysis of stories lies in the necessity to recognize which behavioural patterns, children are encouraged to adopt and which other behaviours they are encouraged to reject. The analysts make inferences about both the writer and reader according to a set of classificatory principles and an objective description that could be turned into a quantitative analysis about the content of the text which could be a story, a play, an article, a movie, a radio talk show or animated cartoons.

For the analysis of the nine stories, I will draw on Vandijk's notion of semantic macrostructures (Van Dijk and Kintsch, 1983) which are the global meanings, themes and topics that can be derived from the text by inference. I had to read the stories for many times before I could manage to make all the possible inferences. Thus, I managed, to a certain extent, to derive a range of themes (marriage, family relationships, outdoor and indoor activities, courtship, and exile). I will also draw on Murray's system of psychological needs (1938) to discern the macrostructures from a psychological perspective, to describe personality in terms of needs, so as to detect how these needs are connected to the gender of characters' actions, attributes and the settings related to them as part of the characterization process. The psychological needs and desires to be included are: the desire for wealth, beauty, adventure, protection and so on. The purpose is to link them to the production of gender stereotypes.

I will join content analysis to linguistic analysis to consider, not only the degree of frequency of the distribution of certain social roles and social actions within

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<sup>13</sup> (MOT)

certain social institutions such as, the family, marriage and related to certain behavioural patterns, but I will also investigate, from a socio-cognitive approach, the impact of the social cognition on both the writer and the reader, at the level of interpretation and production. I will study the macrostructures from a socio-semiotic approach to demonstrate the relationship between language, ideology and power.

Instead of literary criticism, linguistic patterning started to prevail especially after the emergence of CDA. Much of the work done is grounded in the work of Halliday. As Rogers (2004) points out “*From a linguistic point of view, systemic functional linguistics (Halliday & Hasan, 1976; Halliday, 1978) is the representational system—the theory of language—that is perhaps the most embedded in critical discourse studies.*”(p.5). Before Sunderland (2011), Knowles & Malmkjaer (1996) recognize the insufficient data resulting from linguistic analysis of children’s literature, when they say that children’s literature has received little serious linguistic analysis despite its widely acknowledged influence on the development and socialisation of young people.

According to Knowles & Malmkjaer (1996), it is necessary also to provide some reasoned argument and pieces of evidence to support any suggestion that such a form, in its surrounding co-text, serves the ideological purpose in its given socio-historical context. If this kind of investigation is worth the effort, Knowles & Malmkjaer (1996) point out:

Neither adults nor children are passive recipients of ideology; people are active interpreters of the social world around them and of its symbolic forms. They evaluate, judge and distance themselves from these symbolic forms. Our project is merely to make more explicit the linguistic means writers employ in their efforts to support, undermine or simply comment on particular relationships of domination, including those which obtain between children and their adult mentors.

(p.46).

As mentioned previously, I will draw on a range of theories within the framework of feminist critical discourse analysis. For this reason I will associate linguistic analysis to content analysis as I believe that it is not sufficient to know the number of female or male characters present in the text of the social roles associated with them. What counts more than this is to know how language is used and the impact of this use on the child reader's gender development. According to Sunderland (2011): "*Content analysis always needs to be done, as background to linguistic analysis*" (p.82) and as Mills (1995) points out, "*language analysis alone cannot help us to make the link between language and ideology, because if we focus on individual language items we risk . . . excluding the context of the text*".(p.197). Linguistic analysis is also important because there are many examples in which we find that the story revolves around one male and one female who have the same age, social roles and so on, but the language used to describe them or by them reveals asymmetries.

In terms of methodology, I will focus on the multidisciplinary nature of feminist critical discourse analysis by incorporating a range of theories from different domains such as gender studies, gender and language studies, systemic functional linguistics, psychology, children's fiction, sociology and education.

#### **3.2.4. Quantitative analysis**

My use of the quantitative model of analysis is restricted to the investigation of the distribution of the roles allocated to the characters and the lexical items and grammatical structures associated with them. This type of analysis according to Levorato (2003) would certainly highlight those words and the appearance of words together to convey meaning in association. According to her, the repetition of words can be responsible for the ways of thinking. Leverato (2003) believes that this quantitative method highlights the relationship between language and ideology. Collocations are said to be significant indicators of such relationships. Levorato (2003) stresses the importance of studying the words meanings, the way they are expected and the way they are realized in the texts through the different choices of grammatical and lexical patterns. According to Halliday, (1994) language evolves under the pressure of the particular functions that the language system has to serve.

Words are used in this or that way to perform particular functions which, according to Halliday (1994) have left their mark on the structure and organisation of language at all levels. In this sense Levorato (2003) believes that for words, the dictionary definitions do not fully capture the implications of the meaning given to the words in phrases and constructions. The words are assigned certain modalities of existence under the pressure of a particular ideology. A comparative analysis according to Levorato (2003), would help investigate the words frequently cited and the collocations in which they appear. “ *Examination of the most frequent adjectival collocates of words ‘ which are or can be ideologically loaded, such as ‘girl’ or ‘child’, with the identification of the syntactic context in which they are used.*” (p.15).

### **3.2.5. The Issue of Translation**

Most of the analytical tools, introduced in the previous chapter, have been applied on texts written in English, to investigate the textual choices responsible for the explicit and implicit perpetuation of ideologies in discourse.

For the present study I opted for nine texts written in Arabic to be analysed from a feminist critical discourse approach. My intention was not to focus on linguistic features specific for Arabic only but common to all human languages, to investigate the language potential (lexical and grammatical structures) which serves to reflect social realities and experiences.

While translating from Arabic to English, I did not try to create new linguistic or semantic effects, which may affect the representations of gender by creating new ideas and beliefs. I conducted the translation by selecting the nearest equivalent for a language unit in the source language, in the target language, to reproduce the same effect of the source text. My familiarity with the source language, Arabic and the target language English, in addition to the simplicity of the children’s stories language, contributed to the preservation, to a certain degree, of the same meaning in the source language.

### 3.3. Stereotypes Detection Toolkit

#### 3.3.1. The Process of Characterization/Positioning

Within FCDA, the study of the positioning or the representation of the female and male characters in the various narratives addressed to children is very crucial in tracking gender stereotypes. The process of characterization can be closely tied up with the processes of production and interpretation of discourse.

Characterization can simply be defined as the process of building characters. According to Van Leeuwen (1996, 2008) characterization includes building both social actors and social actions. According to Sunderland (2011) Characterization can refer either to how a reader makes sense of characters in a novel, or how a writer ‘construes’ them. Sunderland (2011) in her linguistic analysis of gender representations prefers considering characterization to make use of the textual features to get information about the characters. In this sense characterization can be used to mean, according to Culpeper (2001) "*the textual cues that give rise to information about character*" (p.163). In this sense, characterization not only includes, according to Sunderland, (2011) gender representation but also extends to the language used by the characters and of them, by the narrator, and to the characters’ represented points of view. Characterization can be explored in relation to the notions of transitivity, and mood, lexicalization and so on.

According to Sunderland (2011) Characterization is made through direct definition and indirect presentation. To consider direct definition is to consider what the reader is told directly about a character, by the narrator or to what one character tells another, about a third. In the linguistic analysis, there is a focus on direct descriptions, mainly, through the use of adjectives. According to Sunderland (2011) what is worth considering is the fact that "*when it comes to positioning, or representing point of view and opinion, authors do not generally construe the speech/thought of male characters and, female characters in the same way.*" (p.70).

Many questions arise while dealing with characterization: How does the author depict female and male characters? Which verbs, adjective and clauses are associated with male and female characters? Which psychological and social needs are associated with which characters? Which settings are the characters related to?

For the purpose of investigating, from a socio-semiotic approach, how the characters are portrayed in the selected stories for analysis, I will rely on the textual features that provide information, to see how the characters are built. I will also analyse the short stories from a socio-cognitive to explore how the gender representations in the texts affect the social cognition. I will draw on a range of theories and make use of a set of tools to conduct both content and a linguistic analysis in the following chapter.

### **3.3.2 The Character's Psychological Needs**

As mentioned previously, FCDA is a transdisciplinary analytical framework. Within this methodology, I will incorporate some psychological insights to understand the psychological representation of the characters in the short stories. The 30s and the 40s witnessed a revolution in psychology; in 1938, Murray introduced his theory of the psychological needs. Five years later, Maslow proposed a theory of the hierarchy of needs. Theories derived from developmental psychology have also contributed to guiding feminist critical discourse analysts to understand the psychological development of human beings. So, drawing on the theories, on the study of needs and changes that occur in human beings over the course of their life, various studies have been conducted to explore the representation of female and male characters in terms of needs and psychological characteristics. For Murray (1938), human nature involves a set of universal basic needs, with individual differences on these needs leading to the uniqueness of personality through varying dispositional tendencies for each need. In other words, specific needs are more important to some than to others. Frustration of these psychogenic (or psychological) needs plays a central role in the origin of psychological pain. (Shneidman, 1996) . I will make use

of some of the insights in the following list (Murray, 1938) to investigate the process of characterization in terms of psychological needs.

\* A need related to ambition and achievement: when one wants to accomplish difficult tasks, overcoming obstacles and becoming expert.

\* A need related to ambition and exhibition: when one wants to impress others through one's actions and words, even if these are shocking.

\* A need related to materialism and acquisition: to obtain things.

\* A need related to materialism and construction: to build something.

\* A need related to defence: to defend oneself against attack or blame, hiding any failure of the self. Explain or excuse.

\* A need related to the defence of status: to make up for failure by trying again, seeking to overcome obstacles.

\* A need related human power and dominance: to control one's environment, controlling other people through command or persuasion.

\* A need related to human power and autonomy: to break free from constraints, resisting coercion and dominating authority. To be irresponsible and independent.

\* A need related to human power: to be oppositional.

\* A need related to human power (aggression): to forcefully overcome an opponent, controlling, taking revenge or punishing them.

\* A need related to human power (harm avoidance): to escape or avoid pain, injury and death.

\* A need related to affection between people (Nurturance): to help the helpless, feeding them and keeping them from danger.

### **3.3.3 Van Dijk's Socio-cognitive Approach to CDA**

While exploring the representation of certain social practices such as courtship, invitation, love and so on, within certain social institutions such as the family, and marriage, I noticed that the writer could never have made certain linguistic choices without referring to a set of beliefs and ideas stored in his social memory and which could be used as a system of framing, while producing the texts. It is this adaptation of discourse which will allow the reader to make sense of it and interpret it. I decided

to draw on the theory of Van Dijk (1985, 1988b, 2008, 2009), to explain the part that social cognition takes in the processes of production and interpretation.

According to Hart (2010) “*For a lucid account of the discursive construction of social inequality, a model is needed in which the link between text and society is mediated by cognition.*”( 2010, p.15). This model has been elaborated by Dijk (1985, 1988b, 2008, 2009).

Van Dijk is interested in the fascinating sociocognitive interface of discourse, that is, the relations between mind, discursive interaction and society. (Van Dijk, 1984, 1987, 1991, 1993a, 1998, 2005, 2007b, 2008a, 2009). The socio-cognitive approach developed by Van Dijk presents a model, connecting textual, cognitive and social structures. For van Dijk (1985, 1988b, 2008, 2009), textual structures and social structures are mediated by social cognition. Social cognition is defined as the system of mental representations and processes of group members. Indeed, to explain how texts can be socially constructive presupposes an account that relates textual structures to social cognition, and social cognition to social structures

Cognition is a notion defined by all the disciplines, currently integrated under the label 'cognitive science', such as psychology, linguistics, philosophy and logic as well as the brain sciences. For the term 'cognition', Van Dijk (2002) provides this definition “*a set of functions of the mind, such as thought, perception and representation.*” (P.207). For van Dijk, cognitive processes and representations are defined relative to an abstract mental structure called memory, which is broken down into short-term memory and long-term memory. Actual processing of information (discourse) occurs in short-term memory against information stored in long-term memory (discourses). Long-term memory, in turn, is further broken down into episodic memory and semantic memory. On the one hand episodic memory stores information based on personal experiences. On the other hand, semantic memory stores more general, abstract and socially shared information, such as our knowledge of the language or knowledge of the world. (Van Dijk 2002). Van Dijk (2002) uses social memory to refer to semantic memory given the contrast between the socially shared nature of semantic memory and the idiosyncratic nature of episodic memory.

Social cognitions are socially shared mental structures and representations. “*Although embodied in the minds of individuals, social cognitions are social ‘because they are shared and presupposed by group members’*” (Van Dijk, 1993b, p. 257).

For the analysis of the presence of gender stereotypes, I will incorporate cognitive and social analysis. I will investigate the shared mental representations generated by the writer’s propositions and the reader’s interpretation, as the consequences of the shared knowledge, and I will connect these processes of production and consumption of texts to the (re)production of gender ideologies. I will focus on the semantic macrostructures, (Van Dijk and Kintsch, 1983) which refer to the global meanings, topics or themes related to the texts.

I will discuss issues such as beauty, desire, exile, and family relationships as represented in the short stories, from a sociocognitive perspective to illustrate the relations between discourse, society and the mind. According to Van Dijk (Van Dijk 2002, 2008), human beings as language users and as members of groups and communities, as well as their mental representations and discourses, are obviously an inherent part of society. It is also within social structure that language users interpret, represent, reproduce or change social structures such as social inequality and injustice.

#### **3.3.4. Halliday’s Systemic Grammar**

As mentioned previously, much of the theories developed within CDA and adopted by feminist CDA are grounded in the work of Halliday (1985, 1994). Halliday believes in the potential of language. For him language is a network of choices; “*a resource for making meaning by choosing’* (Halliday, 1985P.xxvii)

Starting from this assertion the analysts of the texts want to now “*Why writers make certain choices among all the syntactic and vocabulary possibilities available, and the consequences these may have on the meaning-making process’*” (Levorato, 2003,p.3).

Levorato (2003) argues that:

The grammar itself is to be interpreted as a set of options, meaning potential rather than a set of rules to be obeyed, a view which makes his functional grammar an invaluable tool for the investigation of the relationship between a text and the wider sociocultural context around it, including the ideological standpoint of the writer.

(p.3).

Systemic-Functional grammar is associated with ideology, in that different linguistic representations may serve different ideological purposes, including construing/constructing, maintaining and contesting particular power structures. Fowler (1996) recognizes the necessity to make use of Halliday's approach in CDA when he says :

My observation is that progress in the linguistic analysis of ideology has been greatest in those two areas where Halliday's ideational function has given the clearest methodological inspiration, namely lexical classification and transitivity.

(p.11).

The clause embodies three so-called linguistic systems: the mood system, the system of Theme and Rheme, and the transitivity system, which means that the grammatical system can serve to express points of view. According to Simpson (1993) "*what a text says is not an issue here; rather, it is the 'angle of telling' adopted in a text.*"(p.2).

Halliday's contribution to the development of CL is worth mentioning. He stressed on the relationship between the grammatical system and the social and personal needs that language is required to serve (Halliday, 1987). Halliday's (1994) systemic functional grammar would appear to offer a multidimensional model of the relationship between language and context. Halliday (1994) notes: "*There are rarely any sharp lines in language, since it is an evolved system and not a designed one*" (p.xxv). Halliday (1978) considers that language performs three important

functions: ideational, interpersonal and textual. The ideational function refers to the fact that language is concerned with building and maintaining a theory of experience. It includes the experiential function which refers to the grammatical choices that enable speakers to make meanings about the world. The logical function, as described by Halliday (1985, 1994), refers to the systems that set up logical–semantic relationships between one clausal unit and another. When two clauses are combined, a speaker chooses whether to give both clauses equal status, or to make one dependent on the other. He chooses the meaning while joining the clauses. Halliday points out that the meanings we create are closely related to the experiential function.

The pressure under which language evolves is explained by Halliday (1985) when he says that while watching small children interacting with the objects around them we can see that they are using language to construe a theoretical model of their experience. This refers to the experiential function; of language; the patterns of meaning which are closely related to the choice of the clauses, are installed in the brain and continue to evolve and expand on a vast scale as each child, in competitions with all those around, builds up, reality that provides the framework of day-to-day existency and is manifested in every moment of discourse, spoken or listened to. For Halliday, the grammar is not merely annotating experience; it is construing experience. So, it is thanks to this process of making meaning from experience that language evolved. In order to make sense of the complex world, we tend to classify and group events. So these groups are not given to us, they are rather constructed (Halliday, 1985, 1994).

The interpersonal function refers to the grammatical choices that enable speakers to enact their complex and diverse interpersonal relations. A speaker not only talks about something, but is always talking to and with others. Language acts out the interpersonal relationships that are essential to our existence. (Halliday, 1985, 1994) According to him, these relationships moves from the rapidly changing micro-encounters of daily life to the more permanent institutionalized relationships that collectively constitute the social bond. It is through the textual function that language creates a semiotic world of its own: a parallel universe. (Halliday, 1985, 1994)

Fairclough (1995) considers the ideational function as being the experience and the knowledge the speaker has about the world, the interpersonal function as the speakers' interference and assessment about a particular phenomenon including relationship between the speaker and the hearer, while the textual function as the texts that the speaker produces so that to be well interpreted by the listener. The last function is deeply interrelated to the context in which discourse is used.

According to Levorato (2003) Halliday's functional grammar helps to understand why writers make certain choices among all the syntactic and vocabulary possibilities available, and more than this, to understand the consequences these may have on the meaning-making process. In the words of Halliday (1985), language creates meaning. Language is "*a resource for making meaning by choosing*" (p. xxvii). Levorato (2003) points out that grammar is not to be considered as a set of rules to be obeyed, but it should be interpreted as a set of options, meaning potential. It is, indeed, a 'tool' for the investigation the relationship between the text and the wider sociocultural context (including the writer's ideological standpoint) "*The syntactic structure of a text codes the authors' idiosyncratic vision of the world, and it is from there that an analysis of the text must start*" (Levorato,2003, p. 3). Fairclough in *Discourse and Social Change* (1992b) broadens the perspective by Halliday.

Fairclough (1992b) Comes up with a view that deals with a text as both a discursive practice and a social practice. The purpose is "*to combine social relevance and textual specify in doing discourse analysis and to come to grips with change*" (1992b:100). Johnstone (2008) believes that discourses "*involve patterns of belief and habitual action as well as patterns of language*". (p.3).

There is, thus, in such framework a constant tension between treating language as an object of description and a stated commitment to developing a more dynamic model that accounts for the way language functions in specific contexts of use. It is more productive to view texts in terms of lexicogrammatical networks of relations, whose meanings are determined in specific contexts of use, rather than as comprising

discrete and autonomous levels. *“This shift in perspective, which contests the linguistic/semiotic boundary, leads to a view of language as multilayered meshing of texts, contexts and histories.”* (Walsh, 2001,p.34).

The textual is extended to include any elements in the context that contribute to texture. In the case of spoken interaction, paralinguistic features such as facial expressions and body language are compromised. Such cues are often used by addressees to establish the validity, or otherwise, of given speech acts. Kress (1997) sees language *“as one representational element in a text which is always multimodal, and [which] has to be read in conjunction with all the other semiotic modes of those texts”*. (p.257).

Fairclough’s grammatical tools are related to Halliday’s systemic functional linguistics, as well as to conversational analysis. He (1989) sets out the social theories underpinning CDA and a variety of textual examples are analyses to illustrate the field, its aims and methods of analysis. Later, Fairclough (1992, 1995) and Chouliarki/ Fairclough(1999) explain and elaborate some advances in CDA, showing not only how the analytical framework for researching on language in relation to power and ideology developed, but also how CDA is useful in disclosing the discursive nature of much contemporary social and cultural change. CDA is then, an alternative orientation to language study. It would place a broad conception of the social study of language at the core of language study. It would also favour certain emphases within the various branches of study: for instance, in the study of grammar it would find (functionalist’ approaches (such as that of the systemic linguistics associated particularly with Halliday) more helpful than ‘formalist’ approaches (such as that of Chomsky and his followers).

### 3.3.4.1 The Mood System

The concept of ‘mood’, introduced in systemic functional grammar, was exploited by feminist critical discourse analysts to explore the social roles and relations between the interactants in fiction through formality degree, pronouns, clausal mood (whether declarative, imperative or interrogative). Knowles and Malmkjaer (1996) note that individuals try to affect each other in part through mood choice, but that roles are often distributed in such a way that certain persons have, or claim for themselves, the right, duty or need to issue commands or encouragements to action, to ask questions .

As part of the investigation of gender stereotypes, I will make use of the concept of mood to explore the process of characterization. In order to know who orders, who persuades who invites and so on, the analysis of the clauses should be conducted. I will draw on Halliday’s system of mood to reveal the representation of social actors in relation to certain social practices such as, marriage and within certain social institutions such as, the family.

### 3.3.4.2.The System of Transitivity

As previously pointed out, In CDA, researchers are mainly concerned with how people’s experiences of the world are encoded in discourse. This role of language is referred to as the ideational metafunction in SFG. For Simpson (1993) *“transitivity has been a popular part of the analytic toolkit of work within the critical linguistics tradition.”*(96). It has been employed to uncover how certain meanings are foregrounded, Simpson (1993) argues, while others are suppressed or obfuscated. In this way, the transitivity model provides one means of investigating how a reader’s or listener’s perception of the meaning of a text is pushed in a particular direction and how the linguistic structure of a text effectively encodes a particular ‘worldview’. This world-view will, of course, be that of the producer(s) of the text. Fowler (1986) provides a useful summary of this feature of textual meaning, when he says, *“linguistic codes do not reflect reality neutrally; they interpret, organize, and*

*classify the subjects of discourse. They embody theories of how the world is arranged: world-views or ideologies.”* (p.27).

The exploration of the division of power between the two genders in fairy tales has always been the concern of feminist critical discourse analyst. Who speaks first, who says what? Who does what? Who is given the leading role? Who is dependent and who is reliable? The answers of these questions, and many others, can reveal, to a great extent, the writer's intention of empowering or disempowering his characters. Power is exercised by means of a network of ideologies which are, in turn, perpetuated by means of linguistic choices. Are the writers innocent, writing for innocent readers? Hunts (1991) answers the question by saying that “*(in relation to children's fiction), 'the child may be innocent . . . but if we, the adults, are to talk usefully about children's literature, we cannot afford the pretence that we are similarly innocent'*” (p.154). Stephens observes that power is frequently encoded through conversations (1992: 263).

It is very important to detect the author's stance; the fact of writing for children does not mean that the stories are not shaped by the author's own prejudices and opinions. According to Hollindale (1988), “*A large part of any book is written not by its author but by the world its author lives in*” (p. 15).

Stephens (1992) observes that most recent fiction tends only to “*introduce the argumentative mode – the most overt agent of ideology in the text – by locating it within conversations carried out by various fictional characters inside the narrative.*” (p. 20). While in most of the investigations of male protagonists in fiction, there is a tendency to focus on the frequent use of males as protagonists; a few analysts were interested in the linguistic analysis of the representation of males as protagonists.

Halliday's transitivity theory provides a useful linguistic framework for uncovering the main linguistic features of a (hidden assumptions about gender) certain literary discourse. The ideational function of the clause is concerned with the

transmission of ideas (Halliday, 1994). Its function is that of representing ‘processes’ or ‘experiences’: actions, events, processes of consciousness and relations. The term “process” is used in an...extended sense, “*to cover all phenomena...and anything that can be expressed by a verb: event, whether physical or not, state, or relation*”. Halliday (1994, P. 106- 362) further notes that the “processes” expressed through language are the product of our conception of the world or point of view. He notes that our most powerful conception of reality is that it consists of “*goings-on*”: of doing, happening, feeling, being. These goings-on are sorted out in the semantic system of the language, and expressed through the grammar of the clause in the system of transitivity. Transitivity specifies the different types of process that are recognized in the language, and the structures by which they are expressed.

The investigation of the ‘clause’ is a way to look at, not only the functioning of grammar, but at the way such functioning relates to representations. A clause is the product of three simultaneous semantic processes. It is the presentation of experience (ideational), an interactive exchange (interpersonal), and a message (textual) (Halliday, 1985). According to this functioning of the clause, Knowles and Malmkjaer (1996) characterize transitivity in a “*three-part way as the ‘processes which take place in the (fictional) world, the participants in them and the circumstances attendant on them*” (p. 77). According to Sunderland (2011) “*The ‘participants’ in a work of fiction are the narrator and the characters (adult, child, human, animal, female, male, protagonist, subordinate. Grammatically, they may be subjects, direct objects or indirect objects.*”(65).

Processes could be material, mental, relational or verbal or relational. Material processes refer to ‘doing’; physical actions in the real world and the participants are: the actor (the one who does the action), the goal (the one who is affected by the action), the recipient (the one who receives something) and the beneficiary (the one for whom something is done).

The mental processes are processes of perception, cognition and affection; the senser is the one who does the mental action, the phenomenon is the thing that is perceived, thought, or appreciated.

The relational processes express possession, equivalence, attributes...and the process of saying expresses the relationship between ideas constructed in human consciousness and the ideas enacted in the form of language. It includes the sayer (the participant who is speaking), the target (addressee to whom the process is directed) and the verbiage (what is said).

Many researchers interested in the study of gender representation in fiction pay particular attention to material processes. Sunderland (2011) notices that the passive girl has constantly been represented, especially in traditional narratives, through the same grammatical choices: few action verbs, few goal-directed actions, frequent role as a goal and/or phenomenon of other people's doing. *“Opposite choices would represent girl as a strong and self-reliant personality in radical versions. (2011, p. 198–9)*

I will draw on the grammatical notions of transitivity introduced in Halliday's (1985,1994) Systemic-Functional Grammar to focus on the clause as a representational unit. I will focus on the different processes related to a female and a male character to see how the writer represents the characters' experiences of the world through his linguistic choices.

I will, for instance investigate the frequent use of transitive and intransitive verbs and their association with the characters to show that female and male characters do not have the same impact on the world. The frequent association of characters with transitive or intransitive verbs is, indeed very revealing, in terms of the representation of power relations. According to Van Leeuwen (2008), representations can provide social actors with either active or passive roles. *“Activation occurs when social actors are represented as the active, dynamic forces in an activity, passivation when they are represented as “undergoing” the activity, or as being “at the receiving end of it.” (2008, p.46).* This may be realized through grammatical choices to activate social actors who are then *“coded as actors in material processes, behavers in behavioral processes, sensers in mental processes,*

*sayers in verbal processes, or assigners in relational processes.*” (Halliday, 1985, P. 5).

According to Van Leeuwen (1996) “Agency, for instance, as a sociological concept, is of major and classic importance in Critical Discourse Analysis: in which contexts are which social actors represented as ‘agents’ and which as ‘patients’

### **3.3.5. Characterization and the Use of Lexical Items**

The investigation of the lexical choices is considered as indispensable by many feminist critical discourse analysts while dealing with gender stereotypes.

The study of the lexical environment can, in fact, be very revealing in terms of gender asymmetries. According to Levorato (2003), the lexical environment supports a largely traditional view of female figures with words that typically “*belong to home life and gender roles, such as: ‘bread’, ‘doted’, ‘butter’, ‘baked’, ‘biscuits’, ‘but also ‘promised’, ‘obedient’ and ‘forbidden’, perpetuating sexist stereotypes.*” (p.23). Levorato (2003) adds that words are very powerful in the sense that they are used to or, in her words, exploited to ideological ends, implicitly or explicitly, to control the reader.

The focus in this study is on the choice of the lexical items which create both cohesion and coherence in the texts and lead the readers to create mental representations, assumptions and identify connections. The relationship between the words and the world can be identified or interpreted by using the world knowledge besides the literal interpretation. In this process lexical cohesion contributes to the meaning potential. According to Levorato (2003) cohesive devices are not just ‘there’; they were put there by the writer who apparently wanted her/his reader to be able to make certain connections. In this respect they can reveal much about ideological choices, whether they are forms of grammatical, lexical or structural cohesion. When it comes to lexical cohesion, collocations are of great significance. They are consciously or unconsciously implemented within texts and are directly or indirectly employed to create meaning.

### 3.3.5.1. Collocation in Characterization

A feminist critical discourse analyst can also be concerned with the process of associating, frequently, characters with lexicalizations of particular gender stereotypical practices. The analysts may well identify the most commonly used adjectives for male and for female characters, compare them and draw certain conclusions.

The investigation of the frequent use of certain collocations can be very indispensable in terms of stereotyping analysis. Knowles and Malmkjaer (1996) focus on the concept of collocation their studies. They define it as "*the tendency of certain words, in spoken and written texts, to appear in the vicinity of certain other words*" (p.69). The aim is to understand the creation of coherence in discourse. Inspired by a poststructural approach, these authors suggested that when certain words are seen and heard frequently enough, members of a common linguistic community begin to associate these words with certain meanings. As mentioned previously, it is through lexical cohesion that the writer, consciously or unconsciously, perpetuates stereotypes, depending on the way the characters' identities are construed, since the repetition of the same lexical and grammatical items can create collocational bonds and eventually create different implications.

Knowles & Malmkjaer (1996) explain that these collocational relationships are firmly established, but others are less restricted. They illustrate their idea with the example of 'pretty'; this adjective can occur in the vicinity of very many terms and expressions. "*Nevertheless, its use tends to be restricted to females and small phenomena, and this tendency of use begins to affect what we might refer to as the meaning of the term pretty.*" (1996, p.69).

According to Knowles & Malmkjaer (1996) the members of any linguistic community have in common a huge amount of tacit or implicit knowledge about collocational relationships. This knowledge enables them to receive ideas from the texts they encounter and to deal with collocational bonds and the semantic prosodies of terms and expressions. Knowles & Malmkjaer (1996) explain that "*the writers, including, of course, writers of literature, as well as members of various pressure*

*groups, may exploit this knowledge implicitly or explicitly.*" (p.70). Knowles & Malmkjaer (1996) illustrate with an example to explain that the semantic prosody of black is negative, because it has the tendency to occur in expressions like black magic, black Wednesday, the black sheep of the family and so on.

The phenomenon of collocation, then, allows writers, without explicit recognition on their part, to encourage certain reader reactions to characters and phenomena in the fictional worlds of realistic novels, and it allows them, further, to encourage associations between phenomena in the fictional world and those of the readers' extra-literary experience.

According to Levorato (2003) lexical cohesion can help create atmosphere and perpetuate stereotypes, depending on the way identity chains are used, since the balance between the number of lexical and grammatical items and the extent to which repetition is used and collocational bonds established, can create different implications. Levorato (2003) found out that in the different versions of the popular fairy tale 'Little Girl Riding Hood' the same identity chains referring to grandmother are maintained thanks to lexical cohesion which is, in turn, established through the collocational bonds such as the bond between grandmother and kindness.

Stubbs (1996a) defines 'collocation' as "*the habitual co-occurrence of two (or more) word.*" (p.176). The focused word is called (node word) and the collocates are either on the right or on the left. In his article 'Collocations and Cultural Connotations of Common Words' (1995a), he shows, in detail, how the ideological message of many children's elementary reading books is actually conveyed by the frequent association of the adjective 'little' with the word 'girl'. Stubbs (1995a) argues that "*If frequent associations are made between words, then this repetition makes some features of the world conceptually salient.*" (p.383).

The associations are not always explicit; in many cases they are difficult to discuss and negotiate. They are presented as constant, shared, and natural feature of the world. According to Levorato (2003), in the books where such collocations as

'little girl', are frequently used, the readers may receive the message that girls are always little, frail and weak. Such ideas ( girls are smaller and cuter than boys) are acquired implicitly along with the recurrent collocations. Other collocates according to Levorato (2003), may include: shy, quiet, alone, shy and other words with the same semantic prosody.

Stubbs (1991a) argues that "*meaning is seldom, if ever, fixed or independent of its use in texts, which, by changing the way words are used, can determine changes in their meaning as well.*"(p.89). Meaning is changeable because the people, while using language are always under the pressure to fulfil their needs, such as the need to impress, persuade, threaten, manipulate and so on.

Leverato, in her investigation of gender stereotypes, refers to collocations as indicators of ideologies. In 'Little Girl Riding Hood', the writers of the different versions, while referring to the 'girl' use a wide range of expressions giving the readers much scope for elaboration. Levorato (2003) argues that if in certain cases of associations are not surprising; in others they are apparently meant to shock the reader. Levorato ( 2003) points out that "*collocations in a text are likely to be in harmony with society and ideologically loaded because they support an ideological construction.*"(p.117).

### **3.3.5.2. The Use of Adjectives**

A good example of asymmetries, according to Levorato (2003), is the adjective 'little' which occurs for 45 times in the five versions of 'Little Girl Riding Hood'. According to Levorato (2003) the use of adjectives is a good indicator of the writer's attitudes towards the 'person' 'thing' described. For example, the use of the adjective 'little' with 'girl' indicates the writer's attitudes towards the girl. According to Levorato (2003) in order to detect the degree of asymmetry, the analysts should compare between what the adjectives should literally mean and how they are used in the texts. The aim is also to explore whether the meaning that the reader gets, supports the writer's intended meaning or not. Levorato (2003) takes the adjective 'little' as an example and wonders why it is more often used with the word 'girl(s)' than 'boy(s)' (2003). She believes that this has certainly something to do with the writers' attitudes towards girls and boys. As regard the analysis of the concept of

‘littleness’ and its implicature, Levorato (2003) compares the dictionary’s definition and the writer’s intended meaning to find out that the writer’s attitudes towards the girl is conveyed through his lexical choices.

In the linguistic analysis of gender stereotypes in the short stories, in the following chapter, I will consider the use of adjective in the description of the female and male adjective to detect any asymmetries.

### **3.3.6. Van Leeuwen ‘s Patterns of Exclusion and Inclusion**

As mentioned previously, the linguistic choices made by the writer may lead to the creation of certain asymmetries concerning the inclusion or exclusion of the social actors from discourse. Investigating the patterns of exclusion and inclusion, as part of the investigation of the process of characterization, could in turn be part of the exploration of the existence of gender stereotypes in children’s fiction.

Concerning the social action Van Leeuwen (1996, 2008) proposes a range of dichotomies. The terms ‘Exclusion’ and ‘Inclusion’ are used to evaluate the representation of characters. when the character is not mentioned we can use the term ‘suppression’ and when the character is not emphasized we can use the term ‘backgrounding’.

Van Leeuwen (1996) attempts to investigate what language can offer to its users, to represent the social actors and the social practices. *“What are the ways in which social actors can be represented in English discourse? Which choices does the English language give us for referring to people?”* (p.32). Just like Halliday (1984, 1990) Van Leeuwen, considers grammar to be a ‘meaning potential’ (‘what can be said’) rather than a set of rules (‘what must be said’). Van Leeuwen (1996) argues that his procedure to deal with language is quite different from that used by Halliday :

I shall not start out from linguistic operations such as nominalisation and passive agent deletion, or from linguistic categories such as the categories of transitivity, but instead seek to draw up a socio-semantic inventory of the ways in which social actors can be presented, and to establish the sociological and critical relevance of my categories before I turn to the question of how they are realised linguistically.

(p. 32).

Agency is important to investigate certain forms of representation, but according to Van Leeuwen (1996) “*sociological agency is not always realised by linguistic agency, by the grammatical role of ‘Agent’*” (p.32). It can also be realised in many other ways, for instance by possessive pronouns, such ‘our’ to denote domination and ownership. Van Leeuwen’s (1996) argument is also based on the assumption that meaning belongs to culture rather than to language and cannot be tied to any specific semiotic.

According to Van Leeuwen (1996), the suppression of characters or the social doers or practices can be realized in different ways. Besides the classic realization, i.e. through passive agent deletion, there exist other ways such as nominalisation or the use of non finite clauses or through the deletion of “beneficiaries”, the social actors who benefit from an action. Backgrounding can result from simple ellipses in non-finite clauses with -ing and -ed participles, in infinitival clauses with to, and in paratactic clauses. For example instead of saying: x killed y, the writer says: the killing of y.

I will exploit the concepts of exclusion and inclusion, though in a quite different way, to demonstrate the writer’s power to make the characters either visible and thus, significant or absent and thus, worthless. Blommaert (2005) believes that power differentiates and selects, includes and excludes.

According to Levorato (2003) the analyst can deal with the characters present or included in the texts and those who are absent or who have been implicitly or explicitly excluded, in order to investigate the ideological reasons behind those acts of inclusion or exclusion. Van Leeuwen (1996) highlights the power of representations, to exclude and include, when he says:

Representations include or exclude social actors to suit their interests and purposes in relation to the readers for whom they are intended. Some of the exclusions may be ‘innocent’, details which readers are assumed to know already, or which are deemed irrelevant to them, others tie in close to the propaganda strategy of creating fear, and of setting up immigrants as enemies of ‘our’ interests.

(p.38).

Van Leeuwen (1996) illustrate with Trew's (1979) example to explain the pattern of exclusion. In *The Times* and the *Rhodesian Herald*, the police were excluded in the accounts of the 'riots' during which they had killed demonstrators. The suppression of the social actors (police) and the social practices (killing) was in the interest of newspapers and their readers to attempt to obscure the public opinion.

According to Trew (1979:106), nominalisations also allow the exclusion of social actors. Van Leeuwen terminology includes suppression (the actor is absent) or backgrounding, (the actor is present but de-emphasized)

My attempt, in the following chapter, is to demonstrate that the fact of not associating the female characters with outdoor activities and settings and the fact of making them invisible by not giving them names, or the fact of making them look frustrated by not offering them the opportunity to dream, and desire, reflects the writer's intention to exclude them.

### **3.3.7. Thompson's Modes of Operation of Ideology**

Tracking gender stereotypes by investigating the modes of operation of gender ideologies should be considered as central in FCDA. In this study, I will consider it as an important tool in my toolkit. Gender stereotypes are in fact closely tied up with the gender ideological system. As it has already been pointed out above, the difficulties that researchers have faced, while investigating about ideology in discourse, were mainly related to the methods of analysis. Some researchers have elaborated checklists on the realisations of ideologies in texts. Thompson (1990) came up with an inventory of modes of operation of ideology. Thompson (1990) suggests five strategies adopted to use language as a tool of domination: legitimization, dissimulation, unification, fragmentation and reification.

One of the tools used by feminist critical discourse analysts is to investigate how ideologies are constructed in discourse, and the impact of this on the construction of gender identities. My aim behind drawing on Thompson's inventory is to investigate the existence of gender stereotypes by exploring the agencies of power present in the texts. In the fourth chapter, I will investigate some of these

modes to see whether the ideologies detected, reflect a stereotypical representation of gender. I will illustrate each strategy with examples from the short stories, under examination. My intention is to provide evidence that ideologies are subtle and are perpetuated by means of linguistic features.

### **3.3.7.1. Legitimization**

This mode of operation, as Knowles & Malmkjaer (1996) argue, refers to the representation of relations of domination as legitimate. As Thompson (1990) points out, narratives provide “*particularly fertile ground for the portrayal of social relations and the unfolding of consequences of actions ‘in ways that may establish and sustain relations of power.’*” (p.62). The first strategy related to legitimization is rationalisation. It refers to the “*chain of reasoning*” which the producer of discourse employs in order to “*persuade*” others that existing social relations and practices are justified.” (p. 61). As explained by Thompson (1990) children’s fiction is full of dialogues between characters and narrator. The discourse of fiction is well suited to carry rationalisation or, in other words, the presentation of relations of domination as justifiable on rational grounds. The example provided by Knowles & Malmkjaer (1996, p. 48) to illustrate this strategy is taken from *The Railway Children* (1906; Sainsbury edition 1992) by Edith Nesbit.

- ‘Well,’ said the doctor, ‘you know men have to do the work of the world and not be afraid of anything—so they have to be hardy and brave. But women have to take care of their babies and cuddle them and nurse them and be very patient and gentle.’

‘Yes,’ said Peter, wondering what was coming next.

‘Well then, you see. Boys and girls are only little men and women. And we are much harder and harder than they are...and much stronger, and things that hurt them don’t hurt us. You know you mustn’t hit a girl—’.

Knowles & Malmkjaer (1996) explain that the ideology of weakness of women and their need for men to protect them is carefully transmitted to Peter by Doctor Forrest through a chain of reasoning.

According to Knowles & Malmkjaer (1996) the psychological interaction between character and reader is promoted in texts to encourage readers to make

inferences about what the characters like, feel, need, fear and so on. These information are not explicitly mentioned, but “*are suggested by the behaviour, speech and thought of the characters.*” (p.61). Another strategy associated to legitimization is universalisation. This strategy is realised in relation to the assumption that universal benefit will accrue by supporting, recognizing the “*institutional arrangements which serve the interests of some individuals ... as serving the interests of all*” (Thompson, 1990, p.61).

### **3.3.7.2. Dissimulation**

It is the mode of operation of ideology in which relations of domination are hidden, denied or obscured. Thompson (1990) identifies three typical strategies within this mode. Firstly, “displacement” occurs when a term which is normally employed to “*refer to one object or individual*” is used “*to refer to another*” (p.62). According to Knowles & Malmkjaer (1996), the strategy of displacement is also employed frequently in stories in which, the intention is to show that it is better to be poor than rich, and to discourage over indulgence of children.

The second strategy related to dissimulation is “euphemization”, whereby social relations are described in a way which denotes positive connotations. It is frequent in abounds in literature for children (Knowles & Malmkjaer, 1996).

The third strategy associated with dissimulation is that of “trope”. It refers to the figurative use of language, and may include the use of synecdoche, metonymy and metaphor.

### **3.3.7.3. Fragmentation**

This strategy illustrates the policy of ‘divide and rule’. It may serve ideology by “*orientating forces of opposition towards a target which is projected as evil, harmful or threatening*” (Thompson, 1990, p.65). It is also described by Thompson (1990) as the “*expurgation of the other*”. This involves the “*construction of an enemy*” towards which “*individuals are called upon collectively to resist or expurgate.*” (p.65). Fragmentation can be promoted by differentiation which occurs while emphasising the differences between groups. According to Thompson (1990)

differentiation in literature for children, often takes the form of an exaggeration of the difference in size between different groups, especially in stories involving giants and fairies. Knowles & Malmkjaer (1996) argue that in fiction, 'the other' can take many forms, from school bullies to witches, and tends, of course, to have those characteristics which the writer deems undesirable. It is common, particularly in fairy tales, to superimpose 'the other' upon a main character by magic, but this phenomenon can also be used more naturalistically in novels which begin by alienating the reader from the central character whose development towards reform is then traced. This serves the ideological purpose in so far as it unites reader and writer against the undesirable characteristics of 'the other' and enables the writer to demonstrate the beneficial effects of those modes of behaviour which the writer, and often the adult characters in the story, advocate. In other words, it unifies the 'good' child with 'good' adults against the common enemy, the 'bad' child and the 'bad' adult.

#### **3.3.7.4. Unification**

It refers to the construction of, "*at the symbolic level, a form of unity which embraces individuals in a collective identity, irrespective of the divisions that may separate them*" (Thompson, 1990, p.64).

Two strategies fall under this mode of ideology; the first is "standardization" which refers to those instances where "*symbolic forms are adopted to a standard framework which is promoted as the shared and acceptable basis of symbolic exchange*" (Thompson, 1990, p.64). Thompson (1990) provides the example of the establishment of a national language, which generates a sense of national identity as well as a hierarchy among the dialects within a country. The second strategy associated with the "unification" mode of ideology is that of "symbolization of unity". According to Thompson (1990), this strategy involves the construction of a "*collective identity and identification, which are diffused throughout a group or plurality of groups*" (Thompson, 1990, p.64). This may include the construction of "*symbols of national unity, such as flags, national anthems, emblems and inscriptions of various kinds*" (Thompson, 1990, p.64).

### 3.3.7.5.Reification

The final mode of operation of ideology proposed by Thompson (1990) is reification. Relations of domination which are in effect transitory, historical states are presented as though they were timeless, natural and permanent. Eternalisation (Thompson, 1990) is a strategy associated to reification. It is realised to obscure the evolution of institutions, customs and tradition. Another strategy related to reification is naturalisation. According to Thompson (1990) this strategy serves to give people the impression that it is natural that things have always been like this, or have always happened this way. History repeats itself and the events repeat themselves because they are natural. For Thompson (1990), such an ideology of ‘naturalization’ is rather institutionalized. *“The institutionalization of the division of labour between men and women is often portrayed as the outcome of physiological differences,”* (Thompson, 1990, p. 66) is an example of the mode of naturalization of ideology.

### 3.3. 8.The Study of the Context

In CDA researchers are concerned with the processes of interpretation and (re)production of discourse. In both processes, context plays a major role. The concept of context has always been subject to constant revision. I personally faced some difficulties while trying to connect the content of the texts, and the linguistic features present in the text to the wider societal context. Which elements of the context are worth considering? Should I be limited to the social and cultural context? What about the historical context? Since discourse is historically embedded. I believe that the analyst should rely on his/her intuition to recognize what he/she really needs from the context to reach a full description of the selected aspects of context.

Fowler (1996) insists on the importance of relying not just on the context known to both the analyst and the reader but he/she should go beyond. Bloor & Bloor (2007) argue that the analysis should keep distance from his/her object of study, in order to see more clearly:

If we try to think critically about how we use the language we know,

either in intimate social events or in larger structures, it is useful to have training in what some scholars have called ‘making strange’. That is to say, in being able to observe what is going on in a way that an alien studying our planet might do.

(p. 5).

In the same way, Fowler (1996) stresses the importance of considering the context fully and really and examines its implications for beliefs and relationships. Fowler (1996) points out that it is not enough to relate to a social context well known to both the analyst and to her or his readers; in this case, the plausibility of the ideological ascriptions will have to rest on intersubjective intuitions supposedly shared by writer and reader in a common discursive competence, backed up by informal accounts of relevant contexts and institutions. According to Huckin (1997) context is not represented only by: *“the immediate environment in which a text is produced and interpreted but also the larger societal context including its relevant cultural, political, social and other facets.”* (1997, p.79).

In CDA, the context-dependent view of language is extremely advocated. According to Fairclough (1989) the wider societal context (the macro) should be taken into consideration to conduct any critical analysis of discourse. He stresses that the neglect of language practice result in an idealized view of language, which isolates it from the social and historical matrix outside of which it cannot actually exist. This same view is shared by Mills (1995a) who considers that, without context, words are meaningless. *“Some words do indeed have a history of usage which leads the hearer to interpret them in particular ways; however, words make sense only in relation to their context.”* (Mills,1995a, p.98). According to Toolan (1996) *“language in all its diversity and contextual embeddedness cannot reasonably be characterized as a closed system of endlessly interminable fixed signs.”*(p.132). Rogers (2004) points out that meanings are always embedded within social, historical, political, and ideological contexts.

Critical discourse analysts believe that meaning is created when a sign occurs in a specific context. The relationship of sign to meaning is known as semiosis, and the study of signs as semiotics. In this sense, an integrational approach has come to

focus on meaning in context. Language is considered then as a language of signs. It can construct meaning only when it is part of a wider social event. "*It both needs context and helps create context at the same time*" (Bloor & Bloor, 2007, p.17). Mutual knowledge also is needed in interactions. The move that language studies have made since structural linguistics is explained by Lee (1992):

The structuralist orientation in language studies derives from Saussure's segmental metaphor where linguistic elements are treated as discrete homogeneous categories. Such an approach assumes that meaning resides in individual lexical and grammatical components, whereas an integrational approach stresses that meaning is negotiated in context.

(p.26).

There is thus, a consensus among the analysts as regard the importance of the sociocultural and political context surrounding the text, and the circumstances of its production are extremely necessary. However, they do not often agree on such points as the limits of context.

Many models of context have attempted to identify all the necessary elements of the context that govern the process of interaction. The context of culture for instance, includes the traditions, the institutions, the discourse communities, the historical context and the knowledge of the participants. The context of situations focuses on the various elements involved in the direct production of meanings in a particular situation.

Within the CDA approach, analysts seek to identify "*those features of the context that govern or reinforce the interactional process that take place through language, such as the use of language to control other people either by direction or persuasion*" (Bloor & Bloor, 2007, p.27). This may require complex interpretations of the discursal factors and an involvement of all the people engaged in the communicative event. The study of the nature of the discourse also includes the

study of the nature of institutions as they are very influential when it comes to the process of the interaction. They are of great importance because of “*their disproportionate power to produce and circulate discourse and because they promote dominant interests over those of politically marginalized groups such as racial and ethnic minorities the lower classes, children, and women.*” (Bucholtz, 2003, p.57).

CDA then offers a practical approach to context. The analysts, while dealing with texts for the identification of a context, they, according to Bloor & Bloor (2007, p.29), seek the following:

- the setting (or place/s) of the event;
- time or times and aspect of the event;
- mode and medium of the event  
(face to face; one speaker to many listeners; written to be read; television, for example)
- participants and their roles in the events;
- topics, themes (including distance of participants from the topics);
- purpose of the discourse event and purposes of the participants;
- attitude of the participants;
- the dynamics of the situations (How do events, participants, topics, attitudes, and so on, change during the course of the discourse event?)
- the genre (where applicable).

### **3.3.9. The Investigation of the Intertextual Connections**

It was Kristeva who first coined the term intertextuality, drawing on the work of Bakhtin (Kristeva, 1986). Bakhtin (1986) argues that every text (or utterance) is dialogical, in the sense that it gains its meaning in relation to other texts. Kristeva (1981) points out that a given text is “*a permutation of texts, an intertextuality: in the space of a given text, several utterances, taken from other texts, intersect and neutralize one other.*” (p.36).

Intertextuality is seen by many researchers as not only a form through which texts are interrelated, but also as a social practice that involves particular socially

regulated ways of producing and interpreting discourse (Fairclough, 1992a, b, c, 1995b). According to Fairclough (1992a, b, c, 1995b), intertextuality “*points to how texts can transform prior texts and restructure existing conventions (genres, discourses) to generate new ones.*” (1992b, p. 270). Fairclough further argues that intertextual analysis is an interpretative activity, which depends highly on the researcher’s personal judgement and experience (Fairclough, 1995b). Fairclough’s main interest is in analysing intertextual relations as power relations, suggesting that intertextuality can become a locus of contestation and struggle ( Fairclough, 1992a, b).

In the domain of media, for example, the analysis of intertextuality is conducted to see which parts of specific texts are incorporated into a text and are usually, but not always, explicitly marked with devices such as quotation marks and reporting clauses. Fairclough (1992b, p. 85), distinguishes between, on the one hand, manifest intertextuality, where specific other texts are overtly drawn upon within a text, which includes discourse representation, presuppositions, negation, irony, interdiscursivity, and on the other hand, constitutive intertextuality, the heterogeneous constitution of texts out of elements (types of conventions) of orders of discourse , such as genres, styles, discourses, registers.

One of the reasons that stand behind my choice of a single writer is the need to identify the chains that connect one story to another, within the same book and other connections that may exist between the stories and other popular fairy tales. The similarities between ‘Tears and Joy’ for instance, and Cinderella are very apparent. Tracking the ‘intertextuality’ in narratives is very important to test the writer’s degree of willingness concerning the perpetuation of gender stereotypes.

Levorato (2003) believes that if the sociocultural view of intertextuality is always important, it is certainly all the more relevant for children’s books. Intertextuality is often relied on by writers to introduce new ideas about gender by inserting them in traditional books. As an answer for those who believe that the incorporation of liberated thoughts in the retellings of traditional stories would be more beneficial, Zipes, (1983a) believes that gender arrangements cannot be modified by simply reformulating traditional tales, the process of change can be achieved by including new types of characters and actions.

### 3.3.10. The Study of the Role of Institutions

The study of the role of institutions, which are closely tied up to the production and interpretation of discourse, is part of studying the context. Indeed, an important principle for critical discourse analysts is that analysis of text should not be isolated from analysis of institutional and discursive practices that are included in texts.

Analysts should take into consideration the way in which texts are interpreted and responded to and the properties of the text itself as well. Fairclough (1995b) stresses the importance of considering the role of the institutions:

CDA sees discourse – language use in speech and writing-as a form of social practice and describing discourse as such implies a dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and the situation(s), institution(s) and social structure(s) which frame it.

(p,39).

Such goals can be reached by integrating the ‘micro’ to the ‘macro’ research, and *“by focusing on social institutions as they own the means of imposing ideological and discursive constraints on people.”* (Fairclough, 1995b, p.39). Language use, discourse, verbal interaction, and communication belong to the micro-level of the social order. Power, dominance, and inequality between social groups are typically terms that belong to a macro level of analysis. This means that CDA has to theoretically bridge the well-known "gap" between micro and macro approaches. In everyday interaction and experience, the macro-and micro level form one unified whole. For instance, a racist speech in parliament is a discourse at the micro level of social interaction in the specific situation of a debate, but at the same time may enact or be a constituent part of legislation or the reproduction of racism at the macro level. (Fairclough,1995b)

While Schegloff (1998) assumes that one must do either close micro-analysis or broader political analysis, Lakoff (2003) argues that “*A complete analysis requires both, and each level will inform and deepen the other. There is no reason...to insist on purity without proof that the mixing of levels necessarily vitiates the analysis*” (p.166).

In this study I will make reference to a number of institutions which, if considered superficially, do not seem to own the same potential to exercise power. However I will demonstrate that any institution, even those considered as powerless, can make a difference. I will include institutions such as: the family, the school, the publishing houses and the market, not only in the investigations of gender stereotyping in children’s literatures but also in the project of eradicating stereotyping.

### 3.4. Conclusion

A toolkit has been presented, in this chapter, to deal with gender stereotypes in children's fiction. I believe that an adequate investigation of the part that discourse takes in the perpetuation and eradication of negative ideas about gender should be carried out from different angles. The analysis should thus, cover the lexical and grammatical environment, intertextuality, the systems of transitivity and mood, the patterns of inclusion and exclusion, the modes of operation of ideology and social cognition.

The methodology, adopted in the study, reflects the need to make use of a range of theories, developed within the framework of feminist critical discourse analysis, to examine the representation of gender in children fiction, both linguistically and conceptually.

The use of the quantitative model of analysis is concerned with the investigation of the distribution of the roles allocated to the characters and the lexical items and grammatical structures associated with them

The multidisciplinary nature of the analytical approach serves to highlight as many facets as possible. Indeed, the incorporation of a number of theories and notions from different domains such as gender studies, gender and language studies, systemic functional linguistics, psychology, children's fiction, sociology and education, helps back up the discursive investigation.

### 3.5. Original Quotations

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1. " حيث تكمن أهمية تحليل مضمون القصص في التعرف على الأنماط السلوكية التي يشجع عليها الأطفال و الأنماط الأخرى التي يصرفون عنها و ذلك من خلال الإطار الاجتماعي للأطفال بما يحوي من قيم و معايير تنعكس على القصص التي تقدم لهم"

(Halawa, 2003 :215)

## Chapter Four : Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis

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### 4.1. Introduction

Analysis for the sake of analysis is not sufficient; instead, the analyst makes a committed effort to engage with the discourse with a view to changing it. In other words, by highlighting insidious discursive practices in language, these practices themselves can be challenged.

(Simpson, 2005, p.5)

This study combines feminist theories and poststructuralist theories to investigate the existence of gender stereotypes in Algerian children's literature. The study focuses mainly on the linguistic features of the texts by relating them to the wider societal context. The purpose is to make use of the tools provided by feminist critical discourse analysis to discern all possible types of connections between the micro or the textual structures and the macro or the social structures. The analysis is thus, conducted at various levels; the linguistic, the social and the historical. According to Levorato (2003) fairy tales, for instance “*can have an important role in the contemporary ideological landscape in either maintaining or countering a socially determined arrangement.*”(p. x).

I will illustrate, with examples from the stories, to demonstrate how linguistic choices construct stereotypical notions of what it means to be female or male and how the writing process could be shaped by existing ideological notions about femininity and masculinity. The various texts, written for children, can indeed be the

locus of ideologies and serve either to change or to maintain certain social configurations.

In this analysis, I will focus not only on the overt markers of sexism but also on the covert stance taken by the writer through the subtle use of linguistic means. According to Michel (1986) it is not an easy task to detect sexism in a children's book. However, a few years after Michel' (1986) declaration, the detection of gender stereotypes started to seem easier thanks to the elaboration of checklists of identification such as Thompson's checklist (1990). With the emergence of CDA as an analytical type of inquiry, things started to look seem less complicated.

My aim is to evaluate the writer's insertion of the variable of gender within his network of linguistic choices, and investigate whether such a process has led to the creation of any gender asymmetries. The main purpose is to shed light on those instances where language can be used differently to ensure a better configuration of gender in the discourse for children.

Suggestions as to a better use of language to produce texts for children will be introduced in the next chapter. I agree with Malan (2009 ) when she says that by dealing with certain gender issues in children's fiction, she is not claiming that all the writers of the world should unify their ways of writing since "*the readers are diverse in their ways of being in the world*" (p. 3). The subject of gender should rather be considered from different angles by examining how the narrative practices of contemporary children's literature generate stereotyping.

The analysis will go through the following stages:

-The socio-semiotic investigation of the positioning, or the representation of the female and male characters in the nine stories, will be achieved through the study of the lexical and grammatical choices in relation to the social context. The concepts of mood and transitivity will be employed to explore the ways the characters reflect their experiences of the world and interact with one another through, verbal processes, formality degree, pronouns and clausal mood.

-The analysis of the psychological representation of the characters in the short stories will be conducted through the incorporation of Murray's (1938) revolutionary theory of the psychological needs. A theory which will guide my understanding of the psychological representation of characters in terms of needs, ambitions and wishes.

-The theory of the social cognition of Van Dijk (1985, 1988b, 2008, 2009) will be exploited, to explain the role of the collective social memory in the production and interpretation of discourse. The exploration of the representation of certain social practices and issues such as courtship, beauty, love, and so on, within certain social institutions such as the family and marriage will be related to connecting the linguistic choices to a set of beliefs and ideas stored in the social memory.

-Van Leeuwen's patterns of 'exclusion' and 'inclusion' will also be invested in the study of the process of characterization to detect the representation of the social actors and the social practices.

-Thompson's (1990) modes of operation of ideology will be used to explore the gender ideological system. A reduced checklist of these modes will serve as a piece of evidence to prove the close relationship between language, gender and ideology and stereotyping.

-The Investigation of the intertextual connections will also offer another piece of evidence that the interaction of texts with one another, and with the real world outside, allows the reader to make different connections and leads to the reinforcement of gender stereotypes, especially if the different texts share a common ground.

Throughout the investigation of gender stereotypes, elements, from both the social and the cultural contexts, will be incorporated in the form of facts and opinions so as to explain the connections between discourse, society, gender, power and ideology.

The book<sup>14</sup>, from which the nine stories have been taken, was written by the Algerian Wahid Sekkouti, and published in 2006. In the preface, the writer informs his audience that the stories are both realistic and fanciful. All the stories are accompanied by colourful illustrations, designed by Bechkit Karim.

The nine texts appear in the following order:

- \*The Blue Mountain (P10)
- \*The Lost Family (P50)
- \*The Price of Silence (86)
- \*Tears and Joy (P148)
- \*The Challenge (P186)
- \*The Deadly Lie (P210)
- \*The Unfaithful Woman (P236)
- \*The Curse of Destiny (258)
- \*The Price of Loyalty (P284)

## **4.2. Analysis of the Production of Gender Stereotypes**

### **4.2.1. The Structuring of the Institution of the Family**

As family members struggle to accomplish the necessary tasks of family life such as cooking, cleaning, shopping, laundry, child care, home maintenance, paying the bills, they may face some organizational problems of which responsibilities are specific to which members and which are to be shared. Most of the time they just, tacitly, refer to the taken-for granted gender beliefs and use them as rules for solving their problems and facing social realities.

People's cultural beliefs about the social institution of the family define it as an essentially gendered context where the members play different roles depending on their gender expectations of the self and the others. They make use of the generic,

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<sup>14</sup> وحيد سكوتي، (2006)، قصص عجائب و عبر، الجزائر، دار المعرفة

hegemonic stereotypes about men and women to frame their understandings of self and other in the home.

Exploring how the writer is using language to promote certain family concepts and values constitutes a major part of this study. The question that is worth addressing is: Is the writer's representation of the typical Algerian family based on stereotyping?

The exploration of the lexicalization of physical and emotional contact among the characters is very important in this case. The purpose is to identify the thoughts, values and notions related to gender in the family institution. The purpose is also to explore the writer's linguistic choices to portray family members and structure family relationships such as husband- wife, father-son, mother-son, father-daughter, mother-daughter, mother – daughter-in-law. Another objective is to demonstrate how such representations reflect, not only the writer's beliefs about gender, but the whole societal ideological system to bridge the textual structure and the social structure via the social cognition. Both the writer and the reader make use of the system of mental representations and processes to produce and interpret, by referring not only to the personal memory, but also to the social memory. Adapting thus, discourse to the social environment so that it is situationally appropriate (Van Dijk(1985, 1988b, 2008, 2009). In order to make the notion of family recognizable to the reader, the writer incorporates a set of socially shared beliefs and habits and even names of persons, meals and so on.

The writer of the nine stories, in order to adjust his discourse to the sociocultural environment and to moral and religious values, chooses to incorporate certain context models. The family is thus, represented as heterosexual, and the man, and the woman should be religiously and legally married. If the father is absent, the woman is either represented as a widow or divorced. While much of these details are not explicitly mentioned, the reader would probably take them for granted. While processing the text the reader activates his previous knowledge to understand and

interpret the texts. When the writer draws on the social's system of beliefs, stereotypical assumptions are likely more to be absorbed easily.

The absorption of the gender stereotypes is likely to be more accelerated by the presence of ideas which seem rather familiar to the reader. As Van Dijk (1985, 1988b, 2008, 2009), argues that the incorporation of a set of shared beliefs would make the text more interpretable. In his structuring of the family, the writer consciously or unconsciously refers to the conventional framing of the Algerian Muslim family by making some linguistic choices such as the choice of the names of the characters. Indeed, all the names could be easily recognizable to the readers. With the exception of two or three names, such as El Badie El Salih, Zahret El Noudjoun and Manou, most of the other names are very common. The choice of the names of the meals is also to be considered to explore the framing of discourse from a socio-cognitive perspective. The word 'Kouscous' which is one of the most popular traditional meals in Algeria is mentioned for many times. The other cognitive markers which might affect the reader's understanding of the texts are related to the inclusion of such words and practices as : muezzin, prayer, Imam, mosque and so on. The writer has drawn on the social memory and on his own one to produce the texts. The reader will also process the texts using his/her own knowledge and the knowledge he/ she shares with the writer and the other readers.

The size of the family is not the same in all the nine stories. The writer moves from the traditional and extended family, which is known for the huge number of its members, to modern and reduced family. According to Kouidri and Khaldoun (1999)<sup>15</sup>, "*the Algerian family has in fact decreased, and undergone a series of changes in a very short period of time... these changes have resulted into the creation, today, of a contradictory and conflicting situation.*"(p.9). Kouidri and khaldoun (1999) argue that the family code which has been conceived under these conditions does not satisfy all the traditionalists who consider it as unsuitable and the modernists who find it retrograde.

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<sup>15</sup> (MOT)

All the families, represented in the nine stories, have at least one male child. Reinforcing thus, the stereotypical account of a typical Algerian family. According to Kouidri and Khaldoun (1999)<sup>16</sup>, “*The child, especially of a masculine gender was considered as the continuity of the descendance and perennity of the family*”(p.27). The presence of so many male children in the stories, may reflect the writer’s stance towards the privileged status of sons over daughters. Kouidri and Khaldoun (1999)<sup>17</sup> believe that “*the birth of a child has always preserved its symbolic and valuable status, especially if the child were a boy.*” (p.29).

In ‘The Lost Family’, the description of the family demonstrates the writer’s stance towards the structure of the Algerian family when he says that El Badie El Salih, his wife Zahra, their five sons and their daughter, constitute a family model that arouses the envy of everyone in the village. According to Kouidri&Khaldoun (1999)<sup>18</sup> “*The economic, social and moral strength of the family used to depend on the number of the member of the family.*” (p. 27).

In all the nine stories, the male and female family members are allocated different roles, based on different power relations and ideological assumptions. In the context of family, women are specifically pious and devoted care givers and mothers, and men are portrayed as providers. According to the Sociologist Mary Blair-Loy (2003 ) certain cultural beliefs about gender still persist even in developed countries such as U.S. Many of the hegemonic cultural schemas of the tie between women and the family, that she calls family devotion, are widely shared. A good woman should be, as a deep moral obligation, intensively committed to her family and to the care of those in it, especially children, and this commitment should take precedence over all others.

These hegemonic cultural schemata essentialize women’s role in the family by suggesting that women are uniquely and innately able to care for children so that even a father’s care is not fully equal to that of a mother. Either at home, or outside

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<sup>16</sup> (MOT)

<sup>17</sup> (MOT)

<sup>18</sup> (MOT)

it, people cannot do without sex categorizing one another by relying on cultural beliefs about gender.

The assumption that the writer's representation of the family, of fatherhood, motherhood, brotherhood, sisterhood and of other types of family relationships, is rather based on binary division, will be examined later, while dealing with the representation of female and male characters.

#### **4.2.3. The Representation of the Institution of Marriage**

While analysing the nine texts, I realized that the theme of 'marriage' is omnipresent. Indeed, marriage is a very frequent element of fairy tales. What I decided to do is to explore the stance taken by the writer towards marriage, and how this standpoint would affect the distribution of roles for male and female characters.

In 2011, The British writer for young adult, Bali Rai published a book entitled '(un)arranged marriage'. The story in the book is set partly in the UK and partly in the Punjab region of India. The story is about a young man who, torn between his British culture and the Hindu traditions, tries to free himself from family expectations. The reason why I make reference here to this writer and his book is to

say that the writer can always make a choice between sustaining existing traditions or between resisting them and even changing them.

My purpose in the analysis of the restructuring of marriage, in the nine stories, is to explore whether or not the writer's point view about marriage, and the linguistic choices he makes to transmit his ideas to the reader, adhere to the social system of gender ideologies.

In Algeria, like in the other Arab countries, marriage practices are subject to religious, cultural and generational influences. In contemporary Algeria, women still have fewer opportunities to negotiate issues related to marriage. Who proposes? Who makes the arrangements? Who makes the decisions?

In the story 'The Blue Mountain' "Zachary sees three girls swimming in the sea, but the moment they put their feet on the sand and put on their clothes, they turn into doves and fly high in the sky" (P31). The narrator reveals gendered expectations of men when he says "he was seduced by the youngest and the most beautiful". One of the ideas perpetuated about marriage, in Arab and Muslim regions, is that when a woman is asked for marriage she is supposed to keep silent and blush. Another idea, is that in general, it is the man who proposes. In 'The Blue Mountain', Zachary represents the common traditional practices related to marriage norms in the Algerian society. It is Zachary who proposes " I will give you back your clothes if you accept to marry me and live with me" (P 31). Unsurprisingly, the writer mentions that the girl blushes and nods her head yes. The girl is not supposed to speak in such a situation, and this is the stereotypical image that the writer is trying to perpetuate. "After a moment of hesitation she murmurs that she accepts to marry him if he promises to ask her for marriage officially" (P33). He proposes and she accepts and the author does not provide further details. There is no reference to courtship as a step before the official relationship of marriage. According to Hendrix (2003) "*Courtship can be thought of as shopping for a spouse. In some cultures, potential spouses do the shopping, while in others cultures, parents and other kin make the selection.*" (p.71).

In 'The Lost Family' the author approaches the theme of marriage in a very classical way. It is the happy ending which counts for the writer. The hero of the story 'El Badie El Salih', after saving a tribe from the intruders, was rewarded by marrying his daughter to the son of the wise and the head of the tribe, and his son to the daughter of the same wise man. In this sense, marriage is considered as an official contract in which feelings and emotions are not involved. In the same story 'Mehieddine', one of the five sons, while apologizing to the prince for having eaten an apple from one of the trees in his garden, the prince refuses to forgive him, unless he accepts to marry his only daughter, who is very thin, crippled, deaf, blind and thumb. What the reader does not probably expect is that the girl is, in fact, "very beautiful, self-confident; blue eyed with fair skin, and golden hair. Her voice is so sweet like an angel's. (P75). What is really astonishing here, is the fact that when the prince says to Mehieddine: "she is your wife, she is my only daughter, and she is your reward for your honesty", the girl does not pronounce a single word; the author says that her voice is sweet but just to describe how beautiful she is.

In 'The Price of Silence' the author introduces 'marriage' at the end of each adventure. The 'brave' male characters are rewarded with 'beautiful wives' to end the story happily. "After a few years, the prince asked Adlan to marry one of the princesses of the castle" (P106). Marriage is repeatedly used by the writer to reward his heroes.

The story 'Tears and Joy' is a typical account of the relationship between a beautiful and poor woman and the charming prince. The prince finds a golden hair in the river, and decides to look for the golden haired woman. It appears right from the beginning, that the story is a retelling of Cinderella. The prince finds the girl and asks her for marriage. The prince promises to protect her and her brother, who has turned into a deer by some magic spells. Here again, it is the man who proposes and the girl who accepts unconditionally.

In the 'Challenge' the theme of marriage is represented in the same way. The writer's point of view is quite the same; marriage is reserved for the ending, to conclude the story happily. And thus satisfy the reader emotionally. " After undergoing

a series of challenges and adventures, Samir and the girl came back home married and loaded with boxes full of gold and silver. They lived happily ever after” (P207)

In ‘The Unfaithful’, Hakim seeks the help of his mother when he wants to ask his beloved for marriage. Though the reader is slightly informed about Hakim’s feelings and his mother’s reaction, nothing is said about the girl’s response. When it comes to marriage issues, most of the female characters are silenced and marginalized.

‘The Price of Loyalty’ is about an arranged marriage between Manou and Zahrat El Noudjourn’ ( p 285). In this story, the writer makes an exception and includes some details to describe the phase of courtship. This is probably due to the fact that the protagonist is not offered the chance to marry the girl he loves. When another man asks Zahrat El Noudjourn for marriage, the girl finds herself obliged to make a difficult choice: who should she marry? The reader is, indirectly, asked to take it for granted that all girls must get married when they are physically ready. The writer’s view point about marriage is that this social practice is part and parcel of human beings lives in general and of women’s destiny, in particular.

In ‘The Lost Family’, the reader is told that Nossaiiba married the governor’s son and Samaan married the governor’s daughter. In fact, the prince offered his daughter for marriage because he knew that Meheidinne was a good man. Here again the writer is perpetuating one of the most traditional ideas about marriage; the idea that the father or the mother should intervene to look for good matches for their children. In ‘The Unfaithful’, the same idea is transmitted to the reader when the writer describes Aicha’s attempts to persuade her son not to marry the woman he managed to choose by himself. The writer stresses the importance of the parents’ opinion when he tells the reader, in the end of the story, that the son should never have married such a mean woman.

In all the texts analyzed, the writer prefers to stick to the traditional marriage norms and rituals. It is the man who chooses the woman to marry, and it is the man who proposes. The father and the mother give their consent, and if they were wise enough, they should make the choices for their children. The girl gives her consent by shaking her head, smiling or blushing.

The analysis reveals that the writer represents elements of both free choice and marriage arrangement. Among the perpetuated stereotypes is that females are chosen according to features associated with reproductivity and fertility, such as youth and beauty, while males are chosen, in the case of arranged marriages, according to characteristics related to virility. From courtship to marriage, the writer, apparently views marriage as a heterosexual institution. Because same-sex marriage, in Algeria and all the Arab and Muslim countries, is religiously and legally forbidden.

The reader may recognise that the characters come from quite similar backgrounds and more or less, share similar attitudes towards marital relationships. The writer seems to give importance to the parental consent and even associate it to

marital success. More than this, the writer seems to adhere to stereotypical gendered assumptions about marriage, by giving more opportunities to male characters to negotiate, choose and propose.

#### 4.2.4. Characterization of the Social Actor

##### 4.2.4.1. The Male Social Actor

Surprisingly, in eight stories, out of nine, the protagonist is always a male character. The following table demonstrates that in 8 out of the nine short stories, the names of the male main characters are mentioned.

**Table 4.1. The Male Protagonist**

|                      |                              |
|----------------------|------------------------------|
| The Blue Mountain    | Zachary                      |
| The Lost Family      | The father and his five sons |
| The Price of Silence | Adlan                        |
| The Challenge        | Samir                        |
| The deadly Lie       | Borhan                       |
| The Unfaithful Woman | Rabeh                        |
| The Curse of Destiny | Ali                          |
| The Price of Loyalty | Manou                        |

According to Halawa (2003) “*It is a mistake to make the story revolve around one hero.*”<sup>19</sup> (p.46). The reason is that this may create asymmetries since the opposite gender is certainly going to be backgrounded. The choice of the hero is also a form of representation of the social actor, in terms of patterns of inclusion and exclusion.

##### 4.2.4.1.1. The Son

In the ‘The Blue Mountain’, the name of the protagonist is mentioned for 38 times. The writer uses many forms of address to refer to Zachary when the proper name is not mentioned: the young man (19) the young (29) and unique son (2), the

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<sup>19</sup> (MOT)

son (10). So, this male character is mentioned for 98 times. The only time when the writer describes Zachary explicitly is when he uses the adjective 'well educated'. However the other adjectives are implied by the series of actions connected to him. The other adjectives that can be identified through the analysis of lexical characterization, might be curious, brave, courageous, responsible, loving and smart. The items that are frequently associated with this character are : defeated (5), run (6), returned (4), came (4), courage (6), run (7), trick (4), was seduced (5) liked (8), adventure (7).

In 'The Challenge' , the same pattern can be identified. Just like Zachary, Samir lives with his mother and has a great sense of adventure. He has to face a great challenge in order to win the treasure. In 'The Lost Family' the writer represents a family with five sons. The way, he crafts his story is characterized by the depiction of the courage and the bravery of three of them ; Hasan's name is mentioned for 13 times, Mehieddine, 8 times and Mahmoud's name is mentioned for 7 times. The three 'heroes' are linguistically portrayed very positively through literal and implied use of adjectives and verbs such as: courageous (4) run away(5), left (5), defeated (5), came back (4) , gold and silver (6) , adventure (5)

In 'The Price of Silence' the identity of the protagonist is difficult to discern. It could be either the father or the son. Adlan, the son is depicted as brave and mature. The narrator describes him very positively : "Though he is very young, he is very mature. He is as audacious as the lion, as fast as the tiger and as attentive as the falcon. (P94). The father, after being arrested by the governor's soldiers, asks his son Adlan to take care of his mother. The boy, on the other hand, insists to be imprisoned instead of his father. In terms lexical representation, the following table contains the most frequent items associated with the male protagonists.

**Table 4.2. Lexical Items Frequently Associated with Male Characters.**

|   |
|---|
| arrest (5); brave (4); soldier (7); loyal (6); killed (5); keep silence (4); buried (7); In love (4); hate (5); get rid (5); hurt (4); revenge (4); Serious (3); hide ( 3); give up (3 ); kill (3); Hunter(2); brilliant; (4) strong (5); beat(4) courageous ( 4); manhood (3); got angry (5) |
|---|

While considering the use of adjectives in the short stories I found out that the writer uses more adjectives with males than with females. The reason that stands behind the association of such a huge number of adjectives with male characters is the fact that the male characters outnumber the female characters. The writer's description of male characters by means of direct references of implied transitivity will impact the reader's mental processes, as he/she will have more opportunities to know, or to admire, to love or to imitate the male characters. Children reading these texts would automatically associate maleness with strength, bravery and toughness. It is apparent from the table that the writer's lexical choices serve to perpetuate gender stereotypes.

#### **4.2.4.1.2. The Father**

This social actor is completely suppressed in 'The Blue Mountain'. However the patriarchal presence is achieved by the son Zachary who is, right from the beginning of the story, assigned the role of the protector « I am sure that one day I will make my mother happy and proud of me. She has suffered so much" (p12) In 'The Lost Family' the father is emphasized in the first section of the story. He is described as 'proud and noble'. He is the decision maker; he even makes the most important decision when he asks his sons to leave the village, each one on his own. His name is mentioned for nine times, and for two times, he is referred to as the 'owner of the house', a very common idiom in Algeria to refer to the father or the husband. In 'Tears and Joy' the father is depicted as tough, aggressive and dominant

but at the same time he is portrayed as a hard working person and a brilliant hunter. In the 'Price of Silence', the writer uses the adjective 'poor' to describe the father, "poor father" (P100), however, this adjective does not create the same atmosphere of weakness as is the case, when it is used with female characters. It is used here to call for the reader's empathy toward the character that has to go through a hard time.

#### **4.2.4.1.3. Relationship Father-Children**

The syndrome of the invisible father clearly characterizes the writer's story line. The father is absent in most of the stories. The most plausible reason that stands behind the writer's choice is the need to make the stories adventurous by making them revolve around a young character, the son. The analysis of the texts demonstrates that the relationship father-daughter is not represented in the stories selected. The only exceptions are presented in two stories. In 'The Lost Family', father and daughter are shown together in two scenes only. In the scene where he asks his daughter to help him trap the gangsters (P62), and the other scene where the king offers his daughter's hand for marriage. In 'Tears and Joy' the father is portrayed as rough, rude, and distant. All what he does is ordering his children to do this or that. "He calls his children with a rough and sharp voice" (p149)

As regard father- son relationship, there is only one occurrence. In 'The Price of Silence' the writer evokes a kind of intimate relationship between father and son but only to prepare the reader for the absence of the former. "The son looked at his father with hope and pain; he wished he could take him away" (P94). 'The curse of Destiny', is the only story in which the writer shows a kind of affection among the members of the family.

The representation of the relationship father –children translates the writer's choice to make use of the social cognition as a mediator between discourse and society. In other words, the writer uses his knowledge about his society, in terms of relationships and interactions between fathers and their children, to produce the texts in a way that would even lead to the reinforcement of gender stereotypes in society.

The readers are more likely to absorb much of these stereotypes, since they share much of writer's knowledge, as they are members of the same community. The fact of not recognizing the important role fathers play in the development and welfare of their children, is a strong marker of the writer's unawareness of the part that children's fiction take in the emotional and psychological development of children.

#### **4.2.4.1.4. Relationship Brother-Sister**

In the Blue Mountain this relationship is depicted very negatively. The following passage demonstrates the extent to which the writer's linguistic choices sustain existing gender stereotypes. The sister is expected to be obedient and powerless where as the brother is depicted as superior and dominant

“They (the brothers) accepted to refuge him in their village but provided that she (their sister) continues to serve them like usual’, they all agreed and everybody seemed relieved’ the girl was finally relieved.” (P43).

In ‘Tears and Joy’, the sister replaces the mother. Instead of portraying her as more intelligent than her brother, since she is older than him, the girl is associated more with emotional description than with cognitive capacities.

No physical or emotional contact is shown between brother and sister. The only story where the sister is offered three opportunities to hug her brother is in ‘Tears and Joy’, but this is because the sister plays the role of the mother.

#### 4.2.4.2. The Female Social Actor

##### 4.2.4.2.1. The Female Protagonist

‘Tears and Joy’ is the only story in which the protagonist is a female character. However what is worth considering in this particular case, is the writer’s linguistic choices. Indeed, the writer prefers to depict the heroine in a very stereotypical way through the use of certain grammatical and lexical items.

The following table demonstrates the frequency of the use of certain lexical items with the female characters.

**Table.4.3. Lexical Items Frequently Associated with Female Characters.**

|   |
|---|
| poor (9), upset (9), Cried (3), Beautiful (9) fortune teller (6), worried (4), cried (13)   |
| Hair (4), betrayal(4) Unfaithful (5), anger (4) missed (4), disappointed (3), hugged (3) Lie (4), stole (5), grief (4), death (2) hatred (3) curse (4), Prepared (3), |

The frequent use of the same lexical items such as ‘cried’, ‘poor’, ‘upset’, ‘fortune teller’ with the female characters strengthens the identity chains. Such as the identity chain of the mother as being always poor, and superstitious, and the identity chain of the girl as being frail, and emotional. There is no doubt that most of the items cited in the table above, explicitly or implicitly, denote negative assumptions about women and girls. The young readers being exposed to these texts do not see any association between being female and being brave. This would certainly affect negatively the young girls’ development.

##### 4.2.4.2.2. The Girl

The writer chooses to perpetuate the image of a young girl. In ‘The Blue Mountain’ this character does not show up until the middle section of the story on page 31. The writer chooses to describe her indirectly by transmitting certain messages through the narrator who starts by telling the reader about male character’s admiration for her beauty. So right from the beginning, the female character is associated with two traditionally and frequently used adjectives: ‘young’ and ‘beautiful’, which are considered by feminists as stereotypical when put in certain clauses. The reader is told that the girl’s voice is so sweet and her face is so good-

looking. The other adjectives implied are prudish. “A cloud of prude appeared on her face”. (P33)

What is also worth mentioning is the fact that in most of the stories the girl is nameless. As it has been mentioned so far, the fact of not naming the characters is considered as a type of suppression or backgrounding. In ‘The Lost Family’, the female character ‘Nossaiba’ is almost suppressed. Though she is given a name, it is mentioned only for two times. In ‘Tears and Joy’ this character is depicted in a very negative way. Though Maria is polite and obedient, her father is very tough with her. In the story she is given the leading role but a very traditional one indeed. When she leaves home with her little brother, she plays the role of the protective mother. Surprisingly the female protagonist is backgrounded in the middle section of the story when the prince appears on the scene as the rescuer

#### **4.2.4.2.3. The Mother**

From time to time, the writer allows this character some space but she is never referred to as a specific social actor and she is never referred to individually. She is never represented in terms of physical characteristics. She is always connected to the main characters such as the son or the husband.

When the father is dead, it is the mother who is exclusively in charge of the family. Except in “The Lost Family’ and ‘The Unfaithful Woman’, this character is never given a proper name or an autonomous life; she is always represented in terms of her kinship relation to the other characters present in the stories. Surprisingly the writer uses ‘his mother’ for 13 times, even in the clauses where the mother is the doer of the action. “His mother cried and sobbed so painfully...” (p16). According to Levorato (2003), this type of categorization where a character can be categorized through relational identity only, is to show that the character is socially less significant and when another character is categorized through functionalization, it is to show what the character is capable of doing. In most of the stories analysed, the mother appears only at the beginning of the story, and then she is completely backgrounded.

The lexical environment, to which this character is connected, supports traditional views of female figures. In 'The Blue Mountain' most of the words used are connected to mental processes, where verbs such as 'felt' 'sent', 'hugged' are used. The two adjectives used explicitly to describe the mother are 'poor' and 'affectionate'. The frequent use of such adjectives maintains certain ideologies concerning female characters. In 'The Lost Family', the mother is associated mainly with words that belong to home life and stereotypical gender roles such as, 'prepared', 'meal', 'food', 'baked', 'home', but also 'promised', 'obedient' and 'forbidden', perpetuating sexist stereotypes. In 'The Blue Mountain' the mother stays at home and it is her son who leaves home, in search of adventure and wealth. In fact, she is backgrounded whenever her son is away.

The mother is never represented in terms of physical characteristics which identify her as unique. The reader is never told anything about her physical aspect, or about her age or her personality. In 'The Blue Mountain' the focus is rather on the emotional side and the words used in this case are numerous: 'felt' 'was astonished', 'got confused', 'begged' 'cried' 'screamed'. The following extract from 'The Blue Mountain' illustrates the writer's intention to depict this character in the most fragile image possible 'She had never been happier in her life than she was when Zachary and his little family came back home "She almost fainted with happiness" (p 35). In 'The Price of Silence', in addition to the adjectives 'poor, kind and obedient', the two other stereotypical attributes mentioned explicitly and implicitly are 'patient' and 'superstitious'. The latter can be identified through the frequent connection of the mother to the fortune teller (6times). "The mother knew that her son's bravery made everyone in the village envious. She decided to see a fortune teller to protect him from the evil eye."(P88)

#### 4.2.4.2.4. Relationship Mother-Son

The relationship mother-son is the most exposed relationship. Concerning this representation, the writer chooses to respond to stereotypical assumptions. When the father is deceased or absent, the son is expected to take the place of his father. The reader will probably internalize the idea that such a relationship is a form of domination when the son is assigned the task to look after his mother. Such a relationship is emphasized in 'The Blue Mountain' in which Zachary's life is reduced, for so many years, to keeping his mother company. In spite of Zachary's young age, the writer gives him the chance to leave home. Zachary is motivated by the need to help his mother. "I will make my mother happy... she has always lived in poverty..." (P12).

For the description of physical contact 'hugging' and 'kissing' are the only items that represent family relationship at the physical aspect. The mothers are the only characters who are associated with affectionate types of interactions such as hugging and kissing. In 'The Blue Mountain', as part of portraying Zachary's mother as affectionate, tender and caring, several instances of kissing and hugging are provided.

#### **4.2.4.2.5. The Mother- stepdaughter Relationship**

This relationship is one of the most salient relationships in terms of gender stereotypes. The writer's representation of the interactions between the mothers and their daughters-in-law translates his pessimistic view about this relationship.

The mother- in- law, in all the stories where this characters is mentioned, is depicted as mean, jealous and manipulative, where as the daughter-in law is always shown, in search for plans to get rid of her mother-in-law. In 'the Unfaithful', the daughter-in-law is depicted in the most horrible image. She even dares to insult her mother-in-law. In 'Tears and Joy', the step mother is so mean that she manages to persuade her husband to expel his own mother.

The perpetual representation of the relationship in this way will serve to convey false ideas that the mother and her daughter- in- law can never manage to live with each other in peace and harmony.

#### **4.2.4.2.6. The Wife**

The wife, in the nine texts, is depicted as dependent. She is generally nameless. The phrase 'his wife' is mentioned for 13 times in 'The Blue Mountain', is in addition to other items, 'the wife', 'the poor wife', 'the kind wife' as an exclusive address form.

The wife is backgrounded when her husband, or son are away. That is to say that this character is considered only in relation to the other characters. In 'The Lost Family', the wife is mentioned whenever her husband asks her to prepare the meals. What is worth mentioning is the fact that the writer is never interested in the physical side of the wife. In 'The Lost Family' this character is given a name but unlike her husband, whose name is mentioned for several times, her name is mentioned only for one time. The writer allows her a limited space and refers to her as 'the wife'. And the only adjectives used to describe her are: kind and obedient. "The father, named El Badi El Saleh, was a noble man...He formed with his obedient and kind wife one of the most enviable and respectful families in the village" (p50). The same pattern is present in 'The Curse of Destiny' where the wife is described as kind and obedient.

Just like the mother, the wife is also associated with superstition. In ‘The Unfaithful Woman’, the wife decides to see the fortune teller of the village to get rid of her mother in law. In ‘The Deadly Lie’, the wife decides to get rid of her brother -in law, with the help of the fortune- teller of the village.

The relationship husband-wife, presented in the stories, shows that the writer seems faithful to one version of what his experience of the world has provided him with. There is indeed, a total submission, on his part, to the gender ideological system which shapes the wife as always kind, submissive, dependent and insignificant. Consideration of the system of transitivity, which will be discussed later, demonstrates the writer’s desire to involve her more emotionally than physically. In the ‘Lost Family’ the relationship between El Badie El Salih and his wife Zahra is represented in a very morose way. The only instances of verbal communication are when he gives her orders or instructions. There is a total absence of any physical contact between any husband and any wife in the stories.

According to Hallawa (2003) “*The marital relationship should be inculcated to children from early childhood. Children should learn to look at this relationship as a relationship based on stability and security instead of experiencing it as being conflictual and disastrous.*”<sup>20</sup> (p.199). So, the absence of physical affection, between the wife and her husband, may lead to the reinforcement of children’s feelings of frustration and despair.

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<sup>20</sup> (MOT)

#### **4.2. 5. The Structuring of Desires and Needs**

While reading a fairy tale, the child expresses the desire to live an adventure, to be rich, to love and be loved, to defeat the monster and to marry the prince or the princess. The writers construct desire in a way that seduces the reader. According to Mallan (2009) “*desire is the structuring principle of literature in that it derives a narrative and seduces readers by working on their own expectations, anticipations, and need for fulfilment of desires*” (p.28). From a feminist critical approach it is very important to investigate how the construction of desire in children’s literature is affected by existing gender stereotypes. According to Malan (2009), it is the task of the researcher to explore how various narratives for children construct desire and how it is played out as part of uneasy gender relations.

In this study, I will investigate how the characters’ desire for adventure, for love, for wealth, and for power is constructed in the nine stories. I will draw on Murray’s inventory of psychological needs and wishes, to explore the part discourse takes in the production of gender asymmetries

##### **4.2.5.1. The Desire for Beauty**

Many researchers attempted to investigate how texts, written for children, engage with matters of beauty and the beauty standards. How are males and females associated with the theme of beauty? In fairy tales, the writers often use beauty and ugliness to sustain or change dominant gender norms.

Has the ideal of beauty changed? In contemporary societies, ‘beauty’ is still used as a means of attraction. It is quite true that beauty is context bound and it can be interpreted in many different ways, across time and cultures, but the image that persists is always ideal and what is ideal is inaccessible. Most of the time women are shown struggling, insecure about their bodies and in movies, they are used as victims. The American series “Ugly Betty” is a good example. The media has

influenced people's perception of beauty through magazines, tabloid newspapers and television. According to Mallan (2009) "*In many ways, youth and beauty have become the holy grail of modern consumer societies.*" (p.60).

The writers of children's stories have always associated the desire for beauty with their female characters. No woman escapes 'beauty', Pacteau (1994) points out that from childhood to adulthood, beauty will be either attributed or denied to her. If she does not have it, she may hope to gain it. If she possesses it, she will certainly lose it. According to Levorato (2003), this greater emphasis on feminine beauty, in texts, helps establish the importance of physical beauty for females, especially, when these texts are accompanied by illustrations. Levorato (2003) explains that the perpetuation of concepts of beauty in narratives gives the ideal standards of beauty a fixed and stable meaning.

Researchers working on gender in children's fiction from a feminist critical perspective have been concerned with the investigation of the representation of characters, in terms of the physical appearance. According to Sunderland (2011) "*Fairy tales are replete with binaries. The most obvious is between the female and male protagonist.*" (p.94).

In the 'The Blue Mountain', the adjective 'beautiful' is recurrent "Zachary was seduced by the youngest and the most beautiful" (p 31). In fact, the adjective is used for three times as an adjective, and one time as a noun. The following examples illustrate the writer's emphasis on the theme of beauty: "The young beautiful fell in the trap" (P 32). "You the beautiful girl, I will give you your clothes back if you promise to marry me" (P33) 'After a few days he found himself in the village of the beautiful" (P34). "When it started to get cold, the beautiful got out quickly from water"( P32)

In 'The Lost Family', mainly in the last part of the story, two categories of females can clearly be distinguished as the writer uses a series of adjectives, when the father proposes to marry his daughter. He first describes her as 'thin, crippled, deaf, thumb, blind. "The wise man said: my daughter is thin, crippled, deaf, thumb

and blind, do you accept to marry her?” Mehieddine was chocked and said to himself “ a wife who is blind, thumb and deaf!! Is this my reward for my honesty and loyalty?” (P75). Then the opposite of the image, that of a beautiful woman, is provided, through a detailed physical description by the narrator “A very beautiful girl came along, self-confident and elegant. Her eyes were blue, her face was so cute, her hair was shiny and blond and her skin was so soft and fair, her voice was as sweet s the voice of an angel” (P75).

In “Tears and Joy”, the word ‘hair’ is used for four times when the girl is described, her blond hair is always what the writer prefers to mention. “As the old women looked up, her eyes fell on a beautiful blond haired women” (P169). In the ‘Price of Loyalty’, beauty is omnipresent when the author describes zahrat el Noudjoun “ ... beautiful, well dressed. She looks like an angel” (P 290).

It appears, from the examples selected that the writer’s standards of beauty are rather ideal, especially if the context is taken into consideration. In Algeria, such physical features are not common among the Algerian women especially the colour of the hair and eyes. What is also worth mentioning is the fact that the writer is interested in the physical side, only when the female character is young and unmarried. For the writer virginity, youth and beauty are interconnected. Once the girl gets married the word ‘wife’ replaces’ the word ‘beautiful’.

#### 4.2.5.2. The Desire for Adventure

The understanding of the psychological representation of the characters in the short stories is important to explore the representation of female and male characters in terms of needs, and psychological characteristics. Among the needs cited in Murray's checklist (1938) are the need to be ambitious and the need to seek achievements. While these needs are part of the human nature, not all people exhibit the same psychological ability and readiness.

Most of the male characters in the nine stories are characterized by their eagerness to search for experiences and feelings, that are sensational, different, novel, complex and intense. They are depicted as ready to take risks for the sake of such experiences.

In 'The Blue Mountain' Zachary decides to leave his mother alone for search of adventure. His journey lasts for many years. When he finally decides to come back home, he is already a husband and a father. In 'The Challenge' Samir is depicted as being fond of hunting. He lives in an isolated village on the border of a small valley. "The images of adventure surrounded from all directions. His love of danger burnt in his chest. One night his imagination pictured the life of luxury richness. If only he could get what was impossible for the others to get. (P189)

While the male characters are exhibiting the need to lead an adventurous life, the female protagonist are depicted as completely passive and even fatalists, thinking that they are too powerless to do anything other than what they actually do. Most of the mothers, in the nine stories, try to hold their sons back. In 'The Blue Mountain' the mother tries to persuade her son to stay at home, but Zachary would not listen.

#### **4.2.5.3. The Desire for Wealth**

The need to obtain things and be rich and wealthy is generally associated with the male characters. In ‘The Blue Mountain’ Zachary’s eagerness for the search of wealth goes beyond limit. He even accepts to sell his soul to the greedy old man. In ‘The Lost Family’, Mahmoud is rewarded for his kindness with gold, silver and diamonds. In ‘The Challenge’ Samir is ready to take risks and leave his village in search for wealth. He keeps hearing stories that on the top of a mountain, there lives a giant monster that is willing to share his wealth with the one who dares to climb the mountain. In ‘The Deadly Lie’ Bourhan always counts his money after he finishes his work, puts it in a wooden box and puts it in his closet. He likes saving money for emergencies. In ‘The Curse of Destiny’, the desire for wealth overtakes the sense of reason. Ali, the kind, brave and honest man suddenly turns into a different person after he finds a big jar full of jewels. The greedy Ali does not even hesitate to kill to protect his treasure.

#### **4.2.6. The Representation of the Social Practice**

The exploration of the description of the social actors is very important since the words used to make them known to the reader, contribute to their categorization as passive or active, beautiful or ugly, strong or fragile, important or insignificant. The investigation of the representation of the social practices is also significant. According to Van Leeuwen (1995), exploring the ways in which social actions are represented is important because they “*represent a choice among various possibilities available and may therefore be revealing of different attitudes to the social action that is being represented.*” (p. 81).

As part of the linguistic analysis, I attempted to explore whether the series of actions and reactions, in the stories, are equally attributed to the female and male characters. My purpose was to demonstrate the ideological signification of certain representational choices. I wanted to see, for example, whether or not the male and the female protagonists are endowed with the same active/passive roles, in relation to activities they engage in and the settings they are associated with. Such an

investigation was carried out by using Halliday's (1994) transitivity system as an analytical tool and method.

#### **4.2.6.1. The Transitivity System**

As has already been pointed out, transitivity has been used, among the tools used by critical discourse analysts, to uncover the subtle connections between linguistic items and meanings. The objective is to seek to interpret the linguistic structure of the text in order to reveal the extent to which, the construction of clauses in particular ways, and the ordering of words in each clause in a certain way, has an impact on the construction of meanings which, in turn, lead to the creation of different ideologies.

In order to back up the theory, advocated throughout this dissertation, that the linguistic choices lead also to the creation of gender stereotypes, I will use the model of transitivity. To this end, I have selected 'Tears and Joys' and 'The Blue Mountain' to conduct my analysis. The main reason that stands behind my choice of the two texts for comparison is the presence of a female protagonist in one of the stories and a male protagonist in the other. I will analyze the stories according to the different processes included in the transitivity system. The types of processes will be classified in tables and then interpreted. The lines related to female character 'Maria' and the male character 'Zachary' are numbered to show the appearance frequency and distribution of both characters within the stories.

##### **4.2.6.1.1. A Comparison between Maria and Zachary**

###### **4.2.6.1.1.1. The Mental Processes Related to Maria**

Line 58 : She does not see him.

Line 97 : She tried to carry him on her shoulder.

Line 106 : She contemplated the surroundings.

Line 110 : She was looking at the prince who was riding a white horse.

Line 111 : She knew he was the prince.

Line 112 : In order not to risk her life and her brother's, she preferred to stay hidden by the tree branches.

Line 116 : She knew for sure that there was a secret. She quickly found out that the horse was the symbol of power and pride for the prince.

Line 118 : She was impressed. She decided to come down from the tree.

Line 129 : She then regretted her decision.

Line 132 : She preferred not to come down in order to avoid what happened to her brother.

Line 142 : The prince told her to come down /She refused/ He begged her.

Line 143 : She refused/ He swore that he will marry her if she accepts to come down/ She wanted to be sure he was honest.

Line 144 : She accepted to come down /She suddenly remembered her brother.

Line 146 : She refused to marry the prince.

Line 192 : She suddenly found herself face to face with the mean witch.

Line 197 : When Maria woke up /She found herself inside the man's house.

Line 198 : She thanked god/ She told the family the whole story.

Line 206 : While Maria was enjoying herself,

Line 213 : The mother grabbed her son/She recognized him by touching the three birthmarks on his face.

Line 226 : His wife told him that she had forgiven him.

The initial part of the text is full of mental processes related to both Maria and her brother, however the processes, related directly to her, starts from line 58. The distribution is not regular. ; except a few instances (lines 10, 11, 12) the writer tells the reader about what Maria knows, feels or thinks and then several lines are written before he connects her to mental processes again.

**Table.4.4. The Mental Processes Related to Maria**

| <b>Senser</b> | <b>Process</b> | <b>Phenomenon</b>                         | <b>Circumstance</b>         |
|---------------|----------------|---|-----------------------------|
| She           | Does not see   | Him                                       |                             |
| She           | was looking    | at the prince                             |                             |
| she           | contemplated   | the surroundings                          |                             |
| She           | knew           | he was the prince                         | riding a white horse        |
| she           | preferred      | to stay                                   | hidden by the tree branches |
| she           | knew           | there was a secret                        |                             |
| she           | found out      | the horse was a symbol of pride and power | quickly                     |
| she           | decided        | to come down from the tree                |                             |
| she           | regretted      | her decision                              |                             |
| she           | preferred      | not to come down                          |                             |
| she           | refused        | to come down                              |                             |
| she           | refused        | to come down                              |                             |
| she           | wanted         | to be sure                                | Suddenly                    |
| she           | accepted       | to come down                              |                             |
| she           | remembered     | her brother                               |                             |
| she           | refused        | to marry the prince                       | Suddenly                    |
| she           | found          | herself                                   | Inside the man' house       |
| she           | found          | herself                                   |                             |
| She           | thanked        | god                                       |                             |
| Maria         | was enjoying   | herself                                   |                             |
| She           | recognized     | him                                       |                             |
| She           | had forgiven   | him                                       |                             |

There are more desiderative verbs such as (prefer, want, decide, refuse, accept) and cognitive verbs (know, remember, find out, recognize) than, perceptive and emotive verbs. The examples of the verbs listed in the table do not really make the reader excited about knowing Maria or seeking to imitate her. Most her experiences of the world are mental and emotional and not of great significance. Other perceptive verbs such as (feel, taste, hear, smell...) could have made Maria's inner world more interesting. It seems that the writer himself is not interested or excited about what Maria is experiencing. The processes suggest that Maria is fragile and innocent. There are not verbs such as 'hate', 'despise' and other verbs related to hatred or anger. The frequent use of the verbs 'refuse' and 'accept' reflect Maria's shaky world.

#### **4.2.6.1.1.2. The Material Processes Related to Maria**

Line 24 : She run towards the place.

Line 32 : Maria pushed her brother behind a hill.

Line 36 : The girl was obliged to surrender.

Line 37 : The witch took her stick and hit Maria on the head and knocked her unconscious. She then put her in a bag and took her to her place.

Line 40 : The witch came back home. She seemed very happy while she was carrying the girl on her skinny shoulder.

Line 56 : Nazim jumped over the bag and helped his sister get out.

Line 60 : She waited for a sign from him.

Line 77 : Maria taught the dwarf girls how to cook and sew.

Line 96 : She hugged him gently and tenderly.

Line 97 : She hugged him strongly.

Line 101 : She burst into tears while hugging her brother .

Line 104 : She sat as far as she could

Line 106 : She drank from its water and took off her shoes and fell them with water for her brother.

Line : 107: She climbed a tree putting her brother on her shoulder.

Line 108 : She slept deeply.

Line 109 : Early in the morning, she woke up to a loud noise.  
Line 152 : Maria came down from the tree and accompanied the prince to his castle.  
Line 154 : The prince married the girl.  
Line 156 : Maria got pregnant.  
Line 182 : The wife came near the prince.  
Line 183 : She begged him ...he refused and pushed her away.  
Line 185 : The prince ordered his soldiers to expulse the girl from his castle.  
Line 186 : The mother-in-law took her precious clothes and jewels.  
Line 187 :The soldiers took her outside the village.  
Line 191 :Maria was walking.  
Line 193 : She fainted.  
Line 194 : The witch dragged her from her hair.  
Line 197 : when Maria woke up  
Line 201 : One day Maria went outside with the old kind man.  
Line 207 : She pointed at a boy.  
Line 213 : The mother grabbed her son...she recognized him by touching the three birthmarks on his face.  
Line 217: the poor mother spent several months with the old man's family.  
Line 220: the kind man accompanied her.  
Line 232: the poor girl almost fainted from happiness.

We can notice that there are many lines related to Maria's material processes. This remark gives rise to an important question: Does this mean that the female character is depicted as having a great impact on the world? Classifying the processes according to the position of Maria in the clause would clarify things as regard the writer's depiction of Maria's experience of the world.

**Table.4.5. The Material Processes Related to Maria**

| <b>Actor</b> | <b>Process</b> | <b>Goal</b>                 |
|--------------|----------------|-----------------------------|
| Maria        | Pushed         | Her brother                 |
| She          | Climbed        | A tree                      |
| (She)        | Put            | Her brother on her shoulder |
| She          | Accompanied    | The prince                  |
| She          | Begged         | Him                         |
| She          | Pointed        | At the boy                  |
| The mother   | Grabbed        | Her son                     |
| she          | spent          | Several months              |

Maria appears as the doer for seven times only. The verbs selected to describe her actions do not denote any physical or intellectual capacities. These processes translate her powerlessness and lack of involvement in other people’s lives and activities. The things she manages to do, most of the time, result from her maternal needs to protect her brother first and her son later.

**Table. 4.6. The Presence of Maria as the ‘Goal’**

| <b>Actor</b>      | <b>Process</b> | <b>Goal</b>             |
|-------------------|----------------|-------------------------|
| The witch         | Beat           | Maria                   |
| She (witch)       | Put            | Her in a bag            |
| She(witch)        | Took           | Her to her place        |
| The prince        | Married        | The girl                |
| He                | Pushed         | Her away                |
| The mother-in-law | took           | Her precious jewels     |
| The soldiers      | Took           | Her outside the village |
| The witch         | Dragged        | Her                     |
| The old man       | Accompanied    | her                     |

Maria is present, as the goal, in nine clauses. In many lines, she is badly treated, by either the mean witch or her husband. Even as a goal, Maria is not allowed too much space. Here again we can connect this to the writer's lack of enthusiasm towards this character. Maria does not find herself concerned with other people's experiences. The others do not do things to her. Her brother, who has turned into a deer, is helpless, and her son is too young. Even her husband is not offered the opportunity to affect Maria's life positively.

**Table.4.7. The Goal is Absent**

| <b>Actor</b>  | <b>Process</b>       |
|---------------|----------------------|
| She           | Run                  |
| She           | Sat                  |
| She           | Drank                |
| She           | Waited               |
| She           | Slept                |
| She           | Woke up              |
| Maria         | Came down            |
| Maria         | Got pregnant         |
| The wife      | Came near the prince |
| Maria         | Was walking          |
| She           | Fainted              |
| Maria         | Woke up              |
| Maria         | Went outside         |
| The poor girl | Fainted              |

These processes explain once again why Maria does not appear as the doer or the goal frequently. In 12 clauses she seems to be the only participant. Maria is depicted as passive, lonely and helpless. She does not seem to be in harmony with the world. The fact that Maria is associated with so many intransitive verbs means that she is incapable of taking actions and initiatives.

#### 4.2.6.1.1.3. The Lines Related to Relational Processes

Line 5: Maria was older than her brother Nazim.

Line 6: She is polite and obedient and her beauty is beyond any description.

Line 58: Maria was so happy with what her brother has just done

Line 127: Maria was so confused about what the prince has done.

**Table.4.8. The Lines Related to Relational Processes**

| Carrier    | Process | Attribute              |
|------------|---------|------------------------|
| Maria      | Was     | Older than her brother |
| She        | Is      | Polite and obedient    |
| Her beauty | Was     | Beyond any description |
| Maria      | Was     | So happy               |
| Maria      | Was     | So confused            |

Here we only have attributive processes. The writer does not give many details about Maria's personality or even her physical appearance except, one thing or two, about her beauty and her confusion. The character is portrayed rather as superficial.

#### 4.2.6.1.1.4. The Lines Related to Verbal Processes

Line 95: Maria said warning her brother “ do not come close to the river as told us the wise dwarf”

Line 102: She told him that she would never abandon him.

Line 142: The prince told her to come down but she refused/He begged her.

Line 145: She told the prince that she would jump from the tree if they did not let her alone.

Line 147: He told her that he would respect her wish.

Line 148: he begged her to tell him why she refused to marry him.

Line 149: the girl suddenly told him gently that she was ready to come down.

Line 151: she told him about herself and her brother. /He promised her to treat her well.

Line 183: She begged him.

Line 198: She thanked god /and told the family the whole story.

Line 199: They told her that she was safe with them.

Line 225: The prince confessed to his wife that what he had done was wrong.

Line 226: His wife told him that she had forgiven him.

Line 227: He told his wife that her brother was still alive.

Line 230: He told her that her brother was no longer a deer.

Line 232: He told her that he had spent months looking for her.

**Table.4.9. The Lines Related to Verbal Processes**

| Sayer           | Process   | Receiver               | Verbiage                            |
|-----------------|-----------|------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Maria           | Said      | To her brother         | Do not come close to the river      |
| She             | Told      | Him(her brother)       | She would never abandon him         |
| The prince      | Told      | Her                    | To come down                        |
| She             | Told      | The prince             | She would jump from the tree        |
| He (the prince) | Told      | Her (Maria)            | He would respect her wish           |
| The girl        | Told      | Him(the prince) 2times | She was ready to come down          |
| She             | told      | him                    | About herself and her brother       |
| She             | Told      | The family             | The whole story                     |
| They            | Told      | Her                    | She was safe with them              |
| The prince      | confessed | To his wife            | What he had done was wrong          |
| His wife        | Told      | Him                    | She had forgiven him                |
| He              | Told      | His wife               | her brother is still alive          |
| He              | Told      | Her                    | her brother is no longer a deer     |
| He              | Told      | Her                    | he had spent months looking for her |

When the writer reports Maria's speech he uses short sentences. When Maria speaks, she just responds to the interlocutor's questions or commands like when she says that she will jump from the tree. There is no space for explanations, arguments, or protests. The sentence, 'She told him the whole story', cuts the way for the reader to know what is really going on in the mind of Maria. The ending of the story holds another surprise; the writer does not allow Maria to defend herself or to blame the

prince about what he has done to her or to her brother. After all the difficulties she has been through, she simply tells her husband that she has forgiven him’

Nothing is special about Maria being the receiver of the speech; she is either informed that her brother is still alive or that the prince has forgiven her.

The story at the level of the verbal processes is very disappointing. The female character is not given a voice.

#### **4.2.6.1.1.5. The Lines Related to Behavioural Processes**

Line 99: She screamed in pain.

Line 101: She burst into tears while hugging her brother.

Line 193: She fainted.

Line 232: The poor girl almost fainted from happiness.

#### **Table.4.10.The Lines Related to Behavioural Processes**

| <b>Behavior</b> | <b>Process</b>      |
|-----------------|---------------------|
| She             | Screamed            |
| She             | Burst into tears    |
| She             | Fainted (two times) |

The lines related to Maria’s behavioural processes demonstrate the extent to which this character is portrayed as weak and emotional. There is absolutely no trace of a behaviour which would describe her as happy or at least satisfied such as laughing or smiling.

#### **4.2.6.1.1.6. The Mental Processes Used by Zachary**

Line 13 : He started to observe and contemplate the traders’ activities.

Line 15 : In one of the market’s corner, Zachary saw an old man.

Line 18 Zachary heard this speech.

Line 37 : The poor felt so happy.

Line 42 : Zachary recognised him.

Line 55 : He looked at the old man.

Line 92 : Zachary remained in the dark and scary cave for several hours.

Line 93 : He felt asleep.

Line 94 : He saw something shining in one of the corners.

Line 114 : He saw a light which was shining.  
Line 121 : Zachary felt hot and suffocated.  
Line 126 : The boy stayed with the giant for a while.  
Line 137 : He listened to the beautiful and charming sounds.  
Line 142 : He enjoyed the sight of a of herd of wild animals.  
Line 145 : He saw a squadron of strange birds.  
Line 152 : After a moment of hesitation he decided to open the door.  
Line 154 : He saw a charming view.  
Line 183 : He remembered the giant's recommendation.  
Line 195 : After a few days the boy found himself in the beautiful girl's village.  
Line 200 : As time passed Zachary remembered his poor mother.  
Line 201 : He decided to go and see her.  
Line 222 : He remembered that he had promised his wife not to leave her.  
Line 224 : He found everyone asleep.  
Line 224 : He knew.  
Line 224 : He found a letter .  
Line 230 : He saw two boys fighting aggressively.

The distribution of the lines related to Zachary's mental processes suggests that the writer does not miss any opportunity to tell the reader about the protagonist's emotions, feelings or inner thoughts.

**Table.4.11.The Mental Processes Used by Zachary**

| <b>Senser</b> | <b>Process</b>      | <b>Phenomenon</b>                    | <b>Circumstance</b>             |
|---------------|---------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| He            | Observe/Contemplate | The traders' activities              |                                 |
| Zachary       | Saw                 | An old man                           | In one of the market corners    |
| Zachary       | Heard               | This speech                          |                                 |
| The poor      | Felt                | So happy                             |                                 |
| Zachary       | recognized          | Him                                  |                                 |
| He            | Looked              | At the old man                       |                                 |
| He            | Felt                | Asleep                               |                                 |
| He            | Saw                 | Something shining                    |                                 |
| He            | Felt                | Hot/ suffocated                      |                                 |
| He            | Stayed              |                                      | In one of the corners           |
| He            | Listened            | To the beautiful and charming sounds |                                 |
| He            | Enjoyed             | The sight of a herd of wild animals  |                                 |
| He            | Saw                 | A squadron of strange birds          |                                 |
| He            | Decided             | To open the door                     |                                 |
| He            | Saw                 | A charming view                      |                                 |
| He            | remembered          | The giant's recommendations          |                                 |
| He            | Found               | Himself                              | In the beautiful girl's village |
| Zachary       | remembered          | His poor mother                      |                                 |
| He            | Decided             | To go/see her                        |                                 |
| He            | remembered          | He had promised his wife             |                                 |
| He            | Found               | Everyone asleep                      |                                 |
| He            | Knew                |                                      |                                 |
| He            | Found               | A letter                             |                                 |
| He            | Saw                 | Two boys fighting                    | Agressively                     |

The mental processes related to Zachary outnumber the mental processes related to Maria. Most of Zachary's activities are outdoors. His experience of the world is richer and more exciting. The verbs used to describe the cognitive, the perceptive, the desiderative and the emotive processes are indeed numerous. This frequent use of mental processes translates the writer's interest in Zachary's inner thoughts. The repetition of verbs such as: see, remember, feel and find denotes the writer's eagerness to follow every single reaction Zachary makes.

#### **4.2.6.1.1.7. The Material Processes Related to Zachary**

Line 3: She sent him to the village.

Line 4: It was the first time the young man went out to the market.

Line 12 : The young man entered the market .

Line 16 :The young man approached him (old man)

Line 19: He put his hand on his forehead

Line 23: The boy made a deal with the old man./ Zachary received a big amount of money.

Line 25: The young man started to buy all the goods offered in greediness and excitement.

Line 28: When he came back home.

Line 36: He built a big house.

Line 36-37: He bought clothes and furniture

Line 50: The son kissed his mother and hugged her.

Line 72 : The young man jumped on the rock.

Line 73 : He cut his hand with a sharp knife and put the blood on the rock.

Line 77: He hugged the old man.

Line 94: When he woke up/ he came closer to it.

Line 96: He came nearer to the thing.

Line 101: He started to run left and right.

Line 104: He hid behind a rock near him

Line 108: He started to run in the opposite direction.

Line 110: Zachary run very fast.

Line 113: He started to walk toward the right side of the tunnel./ he run for a long time.

Line 118: The giant held the young man with his fingers.

Line 123: He (giant) got him out of his pocket and put him on his chest.

128 One night the giant gave seven keys to Zachary.

Line 132 : The young man slept next to him.

Line 133: The young man opened the doors

137: When he opened the second door

Line 140: When he opened the fourth door

Line 142: When he opened the fifth door  
 Line 145: Zachary hurried to open the( sixth) door.  
 Line 152: He opened the seventh door.  
 Line 159: He continued to enter the room.  
 Line 163: What increased Zachary's anger was the girl's image.  
 Line 172: In the morning Zachary went towards the place (beach) and hid.  
 Line 189: Zachary came back to the giant  
 Line 195: The giant put Zachary on his back and flew.  
 line 215: The young man went out to receive the guests.  
 Line 223: He run quickly home  
 Line 229: He kissed his mother goodbye. he prepared his luggage / he prepared his food  
 Line 231: He came closer to them (the two fighting boys)

**Table.4.12. When Zachary is the Doer**

| Actor         | Process                 | Goal                  |
|---------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| the young man | Approached              | Him                   |
| he            | Put                     | His hand              |
| The young man | entered                 | The market            |
| the boy       | Made                    | A deal                |
| Zachary       | Received                | A big amount of money |
| The young man | Bought                  | All the goods         |
| He            | built                   | A big house           |
| He            | bought                  | Clothes and furniture |
| The son       | kissed (2times)/ hugged | His mother            |
| He            | cut                     | His hand              |
| He            | put                     | The blood             |
| He            | hugged                  | The old man           |
| The young man | opened                  | The doors             |
| He            | opened                  | The second door       |
| He            | opened                  | The fourth door       |
| He            | opened                  | The fifth door        |
| He            | hurried to open         | The sixth door        |

|    |          |                   |
|----|----------|-------------------|
| He | opened   | The seventh door  |
| He | entered  | The room          |
| He | prepared | His food/ luggage |

Zachary appears as the doer of the action in 17 clauses. Most of the actions reveal the character's ability to affect the world. The frequent distribution of the processes within the story clearly shows that Zachary is involved mainly as an initiator or an agent, who affects and takes control of what is happening. The difficulties he encounters oblige him to respond.

The verb (approach) denotes the character's courage. The verb (open) is repeated for five times, to reflect Zachary's curiosity, courage and love for adventure. The verbs (buy and build) translate his psychological needs to construct, possess and own things. While Maria does things to protect her brother or to please her husband, Zachary does things to satisfy his curiosity and his needs and to escape the danger.

**Table.4.13. Zachary is the Goal**

| <b>Actor</b>     | <b>Process</b> | <b>Goal</b>         |
|------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| She (mother)     | Sent           | him                 |
| The giant        | Held           | the young man       |
| He (giant)       | Got out        | him                 |
| He               | Put            | him on his chest    |
| The girl's image | Increased      | Zachary's anger     |
| The giant        | Put            | Zachary on his back |

Zachary appears as the patient in seven clauses only. This is due to his appearance in different settings with different persons. Unlike Maria who is portrayed either accompanied by her brother or her husband, Zachary is rather independent ; he does not need someone to do things to him. He even leaves his mother, the only person who cares for him, to explore the world.

**Table.4.14. The Goal is Absent**

| <b>Actor</b>  | <b>Process</b> |
|---------------|----------------|
| The young man | jumped         |
| The young man | Went out       |
| He            | Came back      |
| He            | Woke up        |
| He            | Came closer    |
| He            | Came nearer    |
| He            | Run (5 times)  |
| The young man | slept          |
| He            | Hid            |
| He            | Walked         |
| He            | Hurried        |
| Zachary       | Went/hid       |
| The young man | Went out       |

These processes highlight Zachary’s hectic life. The frequent repetition of the verb of movement (run) is to accelerate the rhythm of the story. While Maria seeks refuge on a tree and refuses to take any risks- when the prince orders her to come down- Zachary chooses to face the danger; he runs and hides but he never gives up.

**Table.4.15. Zachary is the Beneficiary**

| <b>Actor</b> | <b>Process</b> | <b>Beneficiary</b> | <b>Goal</b> |
|--------------|----------------|--------------------|-------------|
| The giant    | Gave           | Zachary            | Seven keys  |

Zachary appears as the beneficiary in only one clause; when the giant gives him the seven keys. It is indeed worth a million favours. Unlike Zachary, Maria is not connected to any material process where she has the status of the beneficiary.

#### **4.2.6.1.1.8.The Verbal Processes**

Line 5 : The kind mother asked the people to be gentle with her only child.

Line 6 : She asked them to keep an eye on him.

Line 20 : He murmured “I will sell myself...I’ll be rich...”

Line 23-24 : He promised the old man that he was at his disposal.

Line 29 : The son told his mother about all what had happened in the market.

Line 31 : She asked him to give back the money to the old man.

Line 33 : He told her that there was nothing to worry about.

Line 34 : The mother ordered her son not to go back to the market.

Line 51 : He asked her to take care of herself.

Line 60 : The old man told the boy that they arrived at the right place.

Line 62-63 : He said « it is quite simple... let us kill one of the horses... »

Line 72 : The young man jumped on the rock.

Line 73 : He cut his hand with a sharp knife and put the blood on the rock.

Line 77 : He told him that he was his best companion and that they would live the life of kings and princes.

Line 124 : Zachary told the strange creature the whole story.

Line 128 : The giant told him « you can open all the doors except the seventh... »

Line 168 : He (giant) told him to go to the same place and to observe the three doves.

Line 181 : He told her that what he did what he did because he wanted to marry her.

Line 183-184 : He said to her smiling “beautiful young girl, I will give you back your clothes if you promise to marry me”

Line 189 : He told him what happened./ the kind giant informed the young man that the place in which the girl lived was too far.

Line 204 : He (giant) told him that he could never come back again.

Line 205 : He advised him to discuss the matter with his wife.

Line 222 : He had promised his wife not to leave her.

Line 223 : He apologised to the guests.

Line 227 : He told his mother about what had happened/ and told her that he had decided to go and look for his wife and his children.

Line 232 : They told him that both of them wanted to have the magical hat.

**Table4.16.The Verbal Processes**

| <b>Sayer</b>   | <b>Process</b> | <b>Receiver</b>      | <b>Verbiage</b>                                      |
|----------------|----------------|----------------------|--|
| He             | Murmured       |                      | “I will sell myself/ I will be rich”                 |
| The son        | Told           | His mother           | About all what had happened                          |
| She (mother)   | Asked          | Him                  | To give back the money to the old man                |
| He             | Told           | Her (mother)         | There was nothing to worry about                     |
| The mother     | Ordered        | Her son              | Not to go back to the market                         |
| He             | Asked          | her (mother)         | To take care of herself                              |
| The old man    | Told           | The boy              | They arrived at the right place                      |
| He             | Said           |                      | “ it is quite simple, let us kill one of the horses” |
| He             | Told           | Him                  | He was his best companion                            |
| Zachary        | Told           | The strange creature | The whole story                                      |
| The giant      | Told           | Him                  | “you can open all the doors except the seventh one”  |
| He (giant)     | Told           | Him                  | To go to the same place                              |
| He             | Told           | Her                  | He did what he did because he wanted to marry her.   |
| He             | Said           | To her               | “ Beautiful young girl, I will give you...           |
| He (Zachary)   | Told           | Him                  | What happened  |
| The kind giant | Informed       | The young man        | That the place...                                    |
| He (giant)     | Told           | Him                  | He could never come back again.                      |
| He             | Told           | His mother           | About what had happened                              |
| He             | Told           | Her                  | He had decided to go and look for...                 |
| They           | Told           | Him                  | They both wanted to have the magical hat.            |

Zachary takes part in most of the dialogues. The verbal processes with which he is connected, either as the sayer or the receiver, reflect the interest that the writer gives to this character. Zachary is the receiver in most of the lines. The identity of the sayer changes according to the different settings and the different activities he engages in.

#### 4.2.6.1.1.9. The Relational Processes

Line 1: Zachary is a young man with good qualities.

Line 18: He was impressed.

Line 62: The young man was impressed by the old man's speech.

Line 111: He was not sure which way to go.

Line 121: The young man was in the giant's pocket.

Line 134: He was impressed by the beautiful views.

Line 138: He was impressed by the sight of beautiful gardens.

Line 140: He was pleased by seeing so beautiful views.

Line 158: He was impressed by the view.

Line 160: He was impressed by the youngest (girl)

Line 160: He was so nervous.

Line 172: Zachary was happy.

Line 192: The boy was so affected by the speech of the giant.

Line 224: He was sure that it was his wife who had done it.

**Table.4.17.The Relational Processes**

| Carrier | Process | Attribute             |
|---------|---------|-----------------------|
| Zachary | Is      | A young man           |
| He      | Was     | Impressed (6 times)   |
| He      | Was     | Not sure              |
| He      | Was     | In the giant's pocket |
| He      | Was     | Pleased               |
| He      | Was     | So nervous            |
| Zachary | Was     | Happy                 |
| The boy | Was     | So affected           |
| He      | Was     | Sure                  |

While Maria is associated with 5 relational processes, Zachary appears in 9 clauses as the carrier of an attribute. The relational processes help deconstruct the view Zachary has of himself in relation to the situations he faces. Zachary is connected to attributive relational processes. Most of them are used to describe his psychological state.

#### 4.2.6.1.1.10. Behavioural Processes

Line 95: He was shaking.

Line 122: He started to scream.

**Table.4.18. Behavioural Processes**

| <b>Behavior</b> | <b>Process</b> |
|-----------------|----------------|
| He              | Was shaking    |
| He              | Screamed       |

Surprisingly, Zachary, as a behavior, appears in two clauses only, one is physiological and the other is psychological. According to Halliday, behavioural processes “*represent outer manifestations of inner workings, the acting out of processes of consciousness and physiological states*” (1994:107). This lack is justified by the presence of numerous material and mental processes.

#### 4.2.7. Intertextual Analysis

The notion of intertextuality is exploited in this study to explore the connections that could be identified within the texts and between the texts and the world outside. My main purpose is to explore whether such connectedness could contribute to the reinforcement of gender stereotypes. As it has been explained in the previous chapter, intertextuality refers to the relationships between a given text and other relevant texts that the reader has already processed (de Beaugrande, 1980; Kristeva, 1980). The readers can make sense of the texts when they manage to link them to other similar texts by activating their own knowledge of the world with their own.

According to Bull and Letcher (2009) the identification of the intertextual connections “*in meaningful and personal ways enables readers to develop interest and comprehend at deeper levels*” (p.115). That is to say that the identification of intertextual links depends on every reader’s capacity to deal with the complexities of the relationships that exist in the texts. Each type of connection is going to push the reader to either adhere to existing beliefs or rather resist them. The nine stories afford the readers opportunities to get familiarized more with existing gender stereotypes

by making intertextual connections. The reader will notice that the nine texts share the same themes, conflicts and features of characterization.

In the 'The Blue Mountain' there is allusion to 'making a deal with the Devil' when the protagonist 'Zachary' decides to sell his soul to the greedy old man. The idea of making a deal with the devil has already appeared many times in popular works ; in fiction, movies, music and television. The reader is also likely to refer to his/her own knowledge about bargaining with mean souls and creatures and will probably connect the image of the old man to the image of evil he/ she has already internalized. In the same story there is reference to shape shifting, or metamorphosis, which is the ability to transform or be transformed into another being or form. In 'The Blue Mountain' this phenomenon is illustrated with the example of the beautiful girls who have the ability to turn into beautiful doves. While the writer does not provide any explanation of such a metamorphosis, the reader will probably connect girls to the world of beautiful creatures such as birds. In 'Tears and Joy', the transformation is achieved through a magical spell when Maria's brother turns into a deer after drinking from the river.

While some of the changes are permanent like the example of the 'woman doves', others are temporary and are imposed, in the form of a punishment as in 'Tears and Joy'. In the second case the reader is likely to make a connection between the nature of the changes, the actions for which they occurred and the gender of the person who is under the spell. While Nazeem has been transformed into a deer because he had drunk the forbidden water, the girls' transformation into doves is not justified. All the reader knows about their metamorphosis is that it is due to their contact with sea sand.

The intertextual connections can also be identified through the presence of a range of mystical and mythical creatures such as ogres, witches, fairies, giants and so on. These creatures have always been part of various cultures and traditions.

In “ The Price of Loyalty’ the presence of a spiritual being in the form of an angel is likely to offer the readers the opportunity to make some connections such as considering the angel’s help as a reward for the hero’s bravery and loyalty.

The presence of the giant and the snake with seven heads in ‘ The Blue Mountain’ and the half frog- half woman, in ‘The Challenge’ illustrate the supernatural powers that the male protagonists encounter. The female characters have, most of the time, to deal with witches, fortune tellers and malevolent stepmothers.

The notion of exile evoked, indirectly, in most of the stories can also be considered as a common theme among different literary and historical texts. The reader may draw on the writer’s representation of the characters’ experiences of exile, and on his previous knowledge to create meaning. In ‘The Lost Family’ the father and his seven children, threatened by the thieves are obliged to leave their village. In “The Price of Loyalty’ Manou decides to leave his village after his beloved refuses to marry him. In ‘Tears and Joy’ the prince gives orders to expel his wife Maria. While most of the male protagonists (Zachary, Samir, Manou) are connected to self-exile to depict their willingness to live a better life. The female characters (Maria, Zachary’s wife, Aicha) are connected to forced exile to depict their weakness and dependency.

The intertextual dialogue between the nine stories and other children’s stories can also be performed through retellings. In “ Tears and Joy’ the writer draws on Hansel and Gretel to describe Maria and her brother’s encounter with the wicked witch. In the same story, a scene is taken from the popular story Cinderella; the prince summons everyone in the kingdom in order to find out who the golden hair belongs to. In ‘ The Price of Loyalty’, the writer draws on Sleeping Beauty to describe the scene where the protagonist’s beloved girl falls into a sleep which lasts for many years.

#### **4.2.8. Analysis of Modes of Operation of Ideologies**

There is no better quote to introduce the analysis of the operation of ideology in discourse than this one: *“If you ‘get your meaning to stick’ you gain power, and a relationship of domination can be established.* (Thompson, 1984, p.132).

Meanings are changeable. They evolve under the social and historical pressure. They may also remain permanent and even fixed to serve certain ideologies and intentions. Within the social networks, everything seems to revolve around power, and access to power means access to discourse. In the case of children’s fictions, apparently, the writers, and perhaps those invisible contributors, have access to discourse, and eventually access to the people’s minds. I will focus in this analysis on certain modes of operation of ideology, already discussed and illustrated in the previous chapter, to investigate how the choices offered by discourse serve to realise these modes and the strategies associated with them. My objective is to explore the power of ideologies to make meanings, about gender, fixed and permanent.

##### **4.2.8.1. Legitimization**

The two strategies associated to the process of legitimization are rationalisation and universalisation. In ‘The Unfaithful Woman’ the narrator’s discourse carries rationalisation; the presentation of relations of domination as justifiable on rational grounds. The reader is told that the male protagonist kills his wife, his children and himself. “At this moment the image of his mother begging him to leave his wife, the real criminal crossed his mind. Without thinking he came back home and started by killing his children, wife and then he put an end to his life” (P254). The writer does not comment on the acts because he has already provided the reader with some facts which would help him/her to rationalize, justify and legitimize the character’s acts.

In ‘The Deadly Lie’ the male protagonist kills his wife only because she has lied to him. But the facts are narrated in a way that makes his resolution sound justifiable to the reader. In ‘The Price of Silence’ the narrator does not put the fortune teller’s prophecy into question as if what she had told the mother about her son was rational, and all what would happen later would confirm it (P88). The writer does not forget to

remind the reader that what the fortune teller has predicted really happened (P92).  
“She remembered what the fortune teller had told her » (P105)

In all the stories in which the husband kills his wife (three stories), the act is rendered justifiable and legitimate’ In ‘The Curse of Destiny’ Ali kills his wife because the band of gangsters convinced him that she was the source of evil. The operation of ideology in this sense involves the production of a chain of reasoning which explains why certain acts should be considered as legitimate. In ‘The Curse of Destiny’ the following dialogue illustrates this chain of reasoning: “the criminals looked at one another, then one of them (the chief) said « Aren’t we a band of criminals ? They said: yes. He said “Did any of us do what this man did to his mother? They said : ‘ No. The chief then nodded his head and ordered the man ( Ali) to take them to his place where his mean wife was waiting for him. ... The chief took his knife, gave it to Ali and asked him to stab his wife just the way he did to his mother. ...without any hesitation Ali grapped the knife and with much anger he stabbed his wife in the chest. (P280)

In ‘The Lost Family’ a series of acts are included, in one of the scenes, to make it easier for the reader to rationalize the death of the youngest son. “El Badie El Salih ordered his family (mainly his wife and daughter) to stop crying and to be courageous and patient. He then told them to stay in the room. He went out to bury his son”(P57). When the reaction to the same incident (death) is not the same, the writer’s strategy changes as well; the reader moves from rationalizing to accepting the death of the child. There is a kind of fragmentation in actions and even feelings. In the same page it is written that the father ordered his children and their mother to fill seven buckets with water.”

Another strategy, related to legitimization, is the fact of associating the characters, their acts and movements with indefinite time and place. The fact of not mentioning the names places and the time might lead the reader to have the impression that the characters have always existed as such; the witches, the giants,

the women and men with their mental and physical descriptions are universal and thus legitimate.

#### **4.2.8.2. Dissimulation**

Another mode of operation of ideology is dissimulation and the strategy associated to it is displacement. In 'The Lost Family', the writer says that the couple with their five boys and one girl constitute a model of a family which has always deserved the respect of everyone in the village, the rich and the poor. The strategy of dissimulation in such an example, serves to make the reader believe that the size of the family and the number of male children are markers of strength and pride. The displacement occurs when the writer says something but means something else.

In 'The Price of Loyalty', an angel is mentioned to add an atmosphere of spirituality to the scene of the sleeping heroine. The inclusion of the act of resurrection of the girl by the angel can lead the reader to think that only strong love can be rewarded and only beautiful women can be awakened by some magical and spiritual force. In 'The Price of Silence' the father asks his son who is only twelve to take care of his mother (P94), the dissimulated truth here is that mothers are incapable of taking care of themselves when their husbands are away. In this case, the son, regardless of his age, can replace his father. In 'The Blue Mountain' (p46) the roles are reversed « the young man came back to his wife and told her the whole truth and asked her not to tell her brothers. He asked her to pretend not to want to live with them anymore and if ever they refused, then she could stay with them on one condition that he could stay with them too.” The writer mentions then that the brothers accept but provided that she continues to take care of them and obey them unconditionally. “The girl told her husband that her brothers had accepted. (P46). The reader is more likely to think and accept the idea that obeying one's brother comes before obeying one's husband. The writer seems to make the easiest choice to resolve the issue of obedience.

In 'The Lost Family' (P76), another instance of displacement and dissimulation exists when the writer describes a scene in which the prince rewards a man by offering him his daughter's hand. “The prince smiled and said: this is your

wife, my only daughter; she is your reward for your good education and the nobility of your feelings ...and for your honesty. There is no doubt, here that the woman is used as an object. The hidden message is that the father has every right over his daughter.

#### **4.2.8.3.Unification**

In terms of the unification as a mode of ideology, Thompson (1990) refers to artefacts which have been adapted to a “*standard framework*” and are “*promoted as the shared and acceptable basis of symbolic exchange*”. *Different aspects of unification are apparent in the nine stories. More specifically, the strategy of creating a collective identity, or “symbolization of unity”*. ( p.64). This strategy is employed when the writer provides the reader with a set of beliefs, and characteristics with the intention to promote and diffuse them. The male characters such as Zachary, Samir, Manou and Mahmoud create a collective male identity which symbolizes bravery, adventure, courage, and strength. Whereas, female characters like: Zachary’s mother, Aicha, Zahra and Maria unify to represent the female identity; the symbol of obedience, kindness, devotion, and virtue.

The characters that are shown within the framework of superstition, evil, greed, and jealousy such as the fortune teller, the greed old man, the witch, the giant and so on are also symbols of unification. They belong to the same category because they share the same traits and actions.

#### **4.2.8.4. Fragmentation.**

The strategies associated with fragmentation are differentiation and expurgation of the other. As it has been explained in the previous chapter, Thompson (1990) considers “fragmentation” as the opposite of “unification”; instead of appealing to a collective identity, fragmentation emphasises difference from the ‘other’ and this may include emphasising distinctions and differences, or by presenting the ‘other’ as evil or harmful (Thompson, 1990).

In the nine stories there is a number of occasions where distinctions are emphasised; in particular, between male and female characters. While most of the male characters

are associated with jobs and outdoor activities, the female characters are shown passive and reluctant. Therefore, the reader is to assume that women and men can never belong to the same category.

#### **4.2.8.5. Reification**

One strategy of the “reification” mode of ideology is to present “*a state of affairs which is a social and historical creation... as a natural event or as the inevitable outcome of natural characteristics*” (Thompson, 1990, p.66). The strategies connected to reification are naturalisation and eternalization

An apparent example of eternalization in ‘The Blue Mountain’ is when the writer employs certain tenses and adverbs, like ‘used to’ and ‘usual’, which make the actions sound rather eternal and natural to the reader. “And finally he could enjoy the same smell of food he has been used to since his marriage” (P41). “One of the brothers blaming his sister said to her: where is the food? Why didn’t you prepare it as usual?” (p42). Another example of eternalization is in ‘The Unfaithful Woman’ “When Aicha saw the old woman, she invited her to share with her ‘kouskous’, the traditional meal she usually prepares for her son” (P243). The reader is told that cooking is one of the activities that will accompany women eternally.

For the illustration of the strategy of naturalization a very good example is in ‘The Blue Mountain’. The reader finds out that the brothers accept that their brother-in-law lives with them but provided that their sister continues to serve them as usual, but unexpectedly the reader will be told that they all accepted the deal. The writer even goes further to say that “they were all satisfied”. The reader may well assume that it is natural and normal that the sister does whatever it takes to satisfy everybody.

Naturalization is also employed in ‘Tears and Joy’; the prince can do whatever he wants: “I will marry the woman whom this golden hair belongs to’. When the prince asks Maria to marry him, the writer does not allow her any space to think or negotiate, she is rather shown astonished and confused because she is not suitable

for the prince. ‘Will he really marry her in spite of her poverty? Will he sacrifice his nobility and rank for her?’ (P168). The reader will assume that it is natural that Maria accepts to marry the prince. Who is she to say no?

The strategy of eternalization is reinforced through the writer’s reproduction of some of the story schemes already dealt with for many years, such as, looking for the rare medicines or plants, to rescue the ill girl, wife or princess, facing the difficulties, killing the dragon or climbing the high mountain.

Other aspects of naturalization are related to the structuring of the social institutions such as the family institution. According to Hallawa (2003)<sup>21</sup>, within this institution, the domination of the father is regarded as something sacred and natural at the same time. The father is usually rough and tough towards his children. This image has been perpetuated for a long time and even seems to be unchangeable. The fact that children must obey these hegemonic values, without putting them into question, impact negatively on children’s self confidence, independence and creativity. Instead of creating their own values, they just re-use what has already been offered to them.

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<sup>21</sup> (MOT)

#### 4.2.9. Conclusion

The analysis reveals that children's literature is really an important source of all sorts of information when we want to deal with language and gender issues.

The linguistic analysis of the nine stories demonstrates that the syntactic and lexical selection deeply affects meaning. The writer's linguistic choices indicate stereotypical attitudes towards femininity and masculinity.

The writer seems to adhere to the gender norms which affect the distribution of wealth and power. The norms of femininity seem to correlate with the norms of success and power and the norms of femininity seems to put clear limits on how powerful and assertive a woman can be.

What is also worth mentioning is the fact that the stories do not reflect the social changes that the Algerian society has undergone. In the nine stories, the writer structures certain social institutions such as family and marriage, and many social practices and psychological needs in a very stereotypical way.

The analysis of the samples in terms of transitivity shows that the choices made by the author can justify the overall impression the reader gets of the girl as a passive character, who does not take initiatives by being always dependent and can never manage to escape from danger without help. In this case linguistic choices aid the creation of unequal relations of power. The distribution of transitive/intransitive verbs is unequal and not in favour of the female characters.

Another fact observed in the investigation of gender through the material process is the frequency of the distribution of the actions. Such a choice of allocating assignments to the characters is very significant. Indeed, it is the frequency with which a certain syntactic option is selected that contributes to conveying "*a particular way of looking at experience*" (Halliday, 1971, p.347)

Most of the time it is the male character who does things and most of the processes that he initiates are material. The majority of them are transitive even in the texts

where it is a girl who is the main character like Maria in 'Joy and Tears'. It is always the male character who initiates more clauses while the number of clauses initiated by the female character is always low.

The female character is portrayed as highly emotional, as more relational and mental processes are associated with her. Her emotional side is especially apparent when she is represented in mother-son relationships. The correlation between transitivity choices and the representation of the female character as a passive victim, object of other people's desires or actions, is then apparent.

The stereotype is further reinforced through the representation of home which is shown as a place for females only, with 'feminine' occupations going on, and generally little action of other kind. The female characters are never associated with jobs. This distribution of the social roles either reflects the existing social realities or those social realities which exist only in the collective social memory. They still persist because they have been stored for a long time. According to Ridgeway (2011) some of the studies undergone by Diekman and Eagly 2000 ; Eagly 1987 ; Eagly, Wood, and Diekman 2000, have revealed that the content of gender stereotypes in a given society and at a given period of time reflects the gendered division of labour in that society and time. According to Ridgeway (2011) *"People form their stereotypes from observations of the typical behaviour of women and men around them in society."* (p.63). However, evidence has shown that people also form their assumptions from their memories and previous experiences.

In many situations the writer addresses the reader as if that person were self-evidently male. Such a positioning may affect the gender development of both female and male readers negatively. The socio-cognitive analysis has shown that when the writer draws on the shared cultural codes (such as women being superstitious) reinforces the perpetuation of gender stereotypes and forces the reader to accept gendered information as natural or commonsense.

The analysis of the stories in terms of intertextuality, provide another piece of evidence that the readers are more likely to interpret certain connections in a way that would privilege male characters over female characters. Examples of these are the connections between male characters and adventurous life, wealth, power and bravery, on the one hand, and on the other hand, the connections between being female and being submissive, fatalist, weak and dependent.

The analysis of the modes of operation of ideologies in the texts, demonstrates subtle connections between linguistic choices and stereotyping. The analysis provides an importance piece of evidence to the question why stereotypes tend to persist. While producing texts, the writers consciously or sub-consciously choose to make use of their knowledge of their society to adapt their discourse and make it recognizable to the reader. In other words, discourse is produced and interpreted according to the writer and reader's habitus. Within the framework of FCDA, many researchers have been inspired by **Bourdieu's** (1971) notion of **habitus** or, as defined by Foucault himself "*a set of deeply interiorized master-patterns...(which) may govern and regulate mental processes without being consciously apprehended or controlled*" (1971, p. 192-3)

So it is the cultural framework within which and by which habitual thought and social action occur, which govern the processes of production and interpretation of discourse. The habitus allows individuals to recognize some possibilities but not others, to generate practices and perceptions, but also to limit them. Bourdieu (1971) argues that the power of the dominant groups in society ensures that it is their habitus that is dominant over others, and gives the example of how education is a process whereby the power of a dominant group will legitimate the outcomes that are considered valuable and also construct features of the habitus of subordinate groups as examples of failure.

According to Abdelwaheb (2006) "*The issue of preserving the identity is very important in educating children and inculcating them the responsibility to transmit the customs from one generation to another.*"<sup>22</sup>. (p.323). This problematic need to preserve cultural beliefs has pushed some writers of children's fiction to perpetuate

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<sup>22</sup> MOT

the oldest generation vision without taking into consideration children's current and changeable conditions. Abdelwaheb (2006)<sup>23</sup> also points out that in the Arab world, not many options are offered to children; there are not enough books that deal with children's realities and daily life.

As a conclusion, the analysis has proved the efficiency of the tools elaborated within FCDA to detect existence of gender stereotypes. There is a strong correlation between the representation of the female protagonist as a passive victim, and the male character as a strong character, and the linguistics choices that have been made to position those characters and the readers in the world. The analysis has also highlighted the consistency between the different tools in terms of results.

In the next chapter I will deal with the measures to be taken to eliminate negative gender stereotyping. I will provide some suggestions and alternatives as to a better investment of language to ensure gender equity in children's fiction. The role of the social institutions, including school, family and the publishing house will also be dealt with.

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<sup>23</sup> (MOT)

### 4.3. Original Quotations

#### Page 156

1. « La famille Algérienne « en très peu de temps, celle –ci a connu des mutations profondes- qu'ils s'agissent des transformations des rapports qui régressent la quotidienneté de la famille, de son environnement sociétal, ou de son rôle économique, sociale et culturel, les changements ont été très rapides et concernent la base même de l'édifice familial ancestral »

( Koudri&KHaldoun, 1999 :9)

#### Page 157

2. « l'enfant, notamment lorsqu'il était de sexe masculin, était d'abord la continuité de la lignée, la pérennité de la famille »

( Koudri&KHaldoun, 1999 :27)

3. « la naissance d'un enfant garde encore son caractère symbolique valorisant « béni » pour la famille, surtout lorsqu'il s'agit d'un garçon »

( Koudri&KHaldoun, 1999 :29)

4. « la puissance économique, social et morale d'une famille dépendait du nombre de ses membres »

( Koudri&KHaldoun, 1999 :27)

#### Page162

5. " من الخطأ جعل قصص الأطفال قائمة على بطل مركزي واحد"

(Halawa, 2003 :46)

#### Page172

6. " كما أن الحياة الزوجية يجب أن يلقن مفهومها للأبناء و الأطفال منذ الصغر بأنها حياة تقوم على السكن و الأمن و الإطمئنان و الاستقرار و أن تكون مهمة هذه الحياة المودة و الرحمة لا التباعد و التناحر و الكيد و الإساءة و الضيق بهذه الحياة" فإن تفهم الأبناء و الأطفال منذ الصغر أن العش العائلي الذي يعيشون فيه يجب أن يحاط بالحماية و الرعاية"

(Halaw, 2003 :199)

## **Page205**

7. " تقوم الاسرة عادة على تقديس تسلط الاب او ولي الامر الذي يتصف بالسلطة و القسوة تجاه الاطفال. حيث يتم صهرهم داخل قوالب جامدة تلزم الاطفال بان يكونوا صورة من الاباء و لذلك تتجه التربية الاسرية هنا الى اساليب تاديبية كثيرة من اجل اخضاع الطفل و سلبيته هذه القيم الاستبدادية تؤثر على ثقة الطفل بنفسه و على استقلالته و تحويله الى بغاء يكرر ما يسمع و لا يناقش و تتعطل طاقاته الابداعية و يستخدم قوالب فكرية جاهدة".

(Halawa, 2003 :193)

## **Page208**

8. " تحتل قضية الحفاظ على الهوية مكانة بارزة في تربية النشء؛ و في تحميلهم مسؤولية نقل الثرات من جيل إلى جيل؛ و لقد إنعكست هذه الإشكالية على أدب الأطفال و ثقافتهم؛ فظهرت محاولة المزوجة بين الأصالة و المعاصرة في كثير من الأعمال الأدبية؛ و جاء غالبيتها ليعكس رؤية الراشدين و يهمل أهمية الظروف المتغيرة التي يعيشها أطفال اليوم"

(Abdelwaheb, 2006 :323)

## **Page 209**

9. " إذ يلاحظ ندرة الأعمال الأدبية المقدمة للأطفال في المجتمع العربي؛ و التي تتعامل مع واقع الطفل؛ و تحاور حياته اليومية"

(Abdelwaheb, 2006 :)

### 5.1. Introduction

How these dilemmas are resolved or transformed will depend on how individuals and groups are able to resignify or adapt conventions in new ways. such resignifications and adaptations rely on innovative and creative approaches if change is to be effective.

(Malan, 2009, p.3)

In the previous chapter, I attempted to depict the existence of gender stereotypes using a simple random sample. By means of linguistic analysis, I showed that the perpetual and the frequent use of certain lexical and grammatical items might sustain certain identity chains and eventually consolidate certain gender stereotypes. It is true that various studies have emphasised the negative impact of children's fiction on children's gender development, however, only few researchers have joined linguistics to literature to demonstrate the connection between linguistic choices and ideological assumptions. Most of the researchers in the domain of gender studies agree on the fact that the process of eradicating gender stereotypes from children's fiction is still ongoing. Since Weitzman et al.'s (1972) study more than 35 years ago, recent works in the domain of children's fiction show a relative improvement. However some of the toughest gender stereotypes persist. Many of the writers of contemporary fiction continue to adhere to traditional ways of thinking and living. "*Gender stereotypes have not lost their vitality, despite their inadequacy to adapt to modernity*" (Meunier, 2009, p. 332).

The ambition of female empowerment, through discourse, is not recent; it emerged many years ago. Many measures have been taken, at all levels, to emancipate women and make them active agents in the process of social and cultural evolution. In the field of FCDA, many studies have focussed on the importance of using discourse to perpetuate positive ideas about gender. Researchers believe that exposure to egalitarian literature and other forms of media decreases stereotypical

thinking among children and increases children's potential vocational choices. Scott (1986) for example, showed that children, adolescents, and youth decreased their stereotypic attitudes after listening to gender-equitable stories.

As regard the eradication of gender stereotypes from children's fiction, a very important question arises: Can we really eradicate stereotypes? The only plausible answer, in my opinion, is that experts from different disciplines and domains could, by joining efforts, contribute to eliminating gender stereotyping by providing the parents and teachers with criteria of selection, by imposing guidelines on the writers and publishers and most importantly by raising people's critical thinking about gender issues. Trepanier-Street and Romatowski (1999) found out that when the selection of books to be used in kindergarten, for example, were based on careful attention to the presentation of gender roles, the result was a decrease in the stereotypic gender attitudes of the preschoolers exposed to the books.

What is worth considering is the fact that eradicating negative ideas, prejudices and stereotypes, related to gender, is an ongoing process throughout which various epistemological sites should be investigated and different tools should be employed. According to Malan (2009), "*Children's literature will not change the world but it does make significant and often undervalued contributions to how its child readers see the world and their place in it.*"(p.3).

Throughout my research, I came across many suggestions as to the production of narratives for children, which would challenge traditional and stereotypical attitudes, beliefs and gendered expectation. I have drawn on those suggestions and recommendations to elaborate a set of guidelines.

In this chapter, I will attempt to look at the other side of the coin, the brighter one. I will highlight the role of not only the writer of children's book, but also the role of the publisher, the librarian, the teacher and the parents, in the process of eradication of wrongful gender stereotypes.

The writer of children's fiction is one of the most important agents in the process of eradication of prejudices and stereotypes. In this chapter, I will deal, again, with the nine short stories that I have already analysed in the fourth chapter. My task, here, is to reproduce some of the writer's linguistic and conceptual structures, with attention to the representation of gender. My objective is to highlight, again, the significance of discourse, in terms of the promotion of positive assumptions about gender.

I will also introduce, in this chapter, a template of some of the most challenging and controversial books, in terms of the fight against gender stereotypes. I will not limit myself to presenting the content of some liberated books for children, but I will provide explanations and clarifications by referring to the context of production and interpretation. What motivated me to include the investigation of some liberated books in my study was an article that I read on the Internet<sup>24</sup> about the American librarians' attitudes towards the publication and the sale of a book.

This article made me realise the force of discourse in affecting people and raising their critical awareness. It is about a controversial children's book, entitled *Bridge to Terabithia* and written by Katherine Paterson. Though the book was written in 1977, it is still popular in the U.S. and many parts of the world. The striking fact about it is that it has always been target of censorship. In fact, it occupied the eighth position in the American Library Association's list of the 100 most banned and challenged books for 1990-2000 and the 28th position for 2001-2009. The censors criticized the inclusion of death as part of the plot and considered Jess' use of the word "lord", outside of prayer, as offensive language. They claim that the book promotes secular humanism, new age religions, the occult, and Satanism. Other critics also proclaim that Leslie is not a good role model simply because she does not attend church.<sup>25</sup> In 2002, two residents of Cromwell, Connecticut wanted the book banned from middle school classrooms because they claimed that it promoted witchcraft and violence. They even filled a petition

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<sup>24</sup> <http://bannedbooks.world.edu/2012/11/04/banned-books-awareness-bridge-to-terabithia/>

<sup>25</sup> <http://bannedbooks.world.edu/2012/11/04/banned-books-awareness-bridge-to-terabithia/>

requesting that school officials remove the book along with *The Witch of Blackbird Pond*, by Elizabeth George Speare, for similar reasons.

The article pushed me to look for other examples of liberated books to explore such issues as social change, language use, attitudes, intentions, cultural and religious interference, and censorship.

In addition to the exploration of the role of the writer, I will highlight the power of certain institution such as family, school, publishing house and library, to affect the readers' views about the world.

## **5.2. The Agents of Change**

### **5.2.1. The Writer**

#### **5.2.1.1. Writing with the Gender Perspective in Mind**

If we want to protect children by offering them healthy ways to experience the world, we should start by reconsidering the power of certain social activities and actions which give words meanings and which eventually contribute to the (re)production of the social order. The writers of books for children own the means to help children experience the world positively.

Many feminist critical discourse analysts have attempted to investigate the stance taken by the producer of the text towards sexism and stereotyping to know whether it is conscious or unconscious, over or cover. Indeed, after reading a book one should ask the question: what would the writer say if he/she had written with the gender perspective in mind? This question reminds me of Fillmore's (1977) question *"I find that whenever I notice some sentence in context, I immediately find myself asking what the effect would have been if the context had been slightly different"* (p. 119).

So, with this question in mind I attempted to read the nine stories again and imagine what the writer could have written if he had considered the gender variable.

##### **5.2.1.1.1. The Blue Mountain**

In 'The Blue Mountain', right from the first page the mother is depicted as subordinate; she could not convince her son not to leave the village.

-*"In spite of the doubts and the fears, she could not hold him back. He was her only child. She was so proud of him »* (p10).

The writer could have chosen to put it differently by, for instance, putting some more pressure on Zachary. It would be really interesting if the mother could persuade her son not to leave. The writer could have offered her an opportunity to reason her child. Zachary was still young and not ready for adventurous life. Even if the mother grants her permission, after a chain of reasoning, the whole scene would suggest to

the reader that it is the mother who has made the final decision. The inclusion of a sentence like this one would certainly make a difference.

-“Please mother! I would never leave without your permission. You know how much I love you and respect you ».

Instead of showing only the emotional side of the mother, the writer could have portrayed a more rational person; a mother who is responsible for the security of her children, especially if she were a single mother like in ‘The Blue Mountain’. Instead of such an expressions:

- “The affectionate mother “

- “She felt that something very bad would happen to her son” (p10), different expressions could have been used.

- “The mother knew that he was so young and not ready to face the difficulties of life.

-“She would never accept to put her son’s life in danger”.

The use of the adjectives to describe the mother is another issue, especially if we consider the frequency of their appearance. The adjective poor, for instance, has been criticized in the previous chapter, for giving the reader the impression that the character is pathetic and helpless.

- “The poor mother begged the old man to let her son but he refused” (P11)

The use of the adjective ‘poor’ and the verb ‘begged’ are not appropriate especially in this particular situation; the mother has all the right to be authoritative in order to protect her child. She should have been depicted more aggressive and daring than that. The sentence could be replaced by this one:

- “The mother affronted the mother very strongly asking him in a very tough voice to leave her son alone.”

Another alternative would be this one:

- “She picked up a stone and hit the old man shouting very loudly”.

The over description of the mother’s emotional state is also apparent, especially when the writer confronts her to difficult situations... The following example points out the exaggeration used by the writer to disrobe the reaction of the mother when her son was taken from her.

- “The mother cried so bitterly until her eyes burned and until her heart was broken... she screamed with anguish....” (P16)

The alternatives that I suggest for this sentence is:

- “She dried her tears and decided to do everything she could to find her son.”

- ‘ I swear that I will do everything I could to save my son! Only death can separate me from my son.’

Another important detail about the representation of the social actors is when the writer chooses to foreground the son and background the mother. Not only the female character is nameless but she is not present in most of the pages. The reader will certainly forget about her existence if she is not mentioned from page 16 to 35.

A better representation of the mother would make the reader proud of this character instead of always seeking the reader’s solidarity and empathy. For instance while Zachary was away, it would be more convenient to tell the reader that the mother decided to go and look for him instead of telling that she just stayed at home sobbing and waiting for a miracle to happen. A good alternative would be:

-“She was so worried; something bad might have happened to her son. She decided that the best thing to do was to go in search of her son”

When the writer introduces the female character, the form of address he uses is ‘the ‘beautiful’.

-“She begged him to give her clothes back and told him that she would do anything he asked her to do” (p33).

The reader can notice, right from the beginning, how submissive and obedient she is. She could have been depicted as more resistant:

- “Who are you? Why did you take my clothes?”

- “If you do not give me my clothes back, something terrible will happen to you.”

The dialogue might be more interesting if she could add:

-“As you can see, I can turn into a dove and fly, and I can also turn into a fish and run away.”

Zachary seems rather more confident, especially when he tells her that he will not give her clothes back unless she accepts to marry him.

- “you beautiful girl, I will give you your clothes back if you accept me as your husband” (p33).

The alternative that I suggest for this reply is:

-“I am so sorry for what I did. I will be very happy if you accept my apology and I will be happier if you accept to marry me »

Instead of showing the girl nodding her head as a sign of acceptance;

-“The girl nodded as a sign of acceptance” (p33)

The writer could have opted for another choice;

-“The girl answered that she would think about it, though she was not sure, especially after what he had done to her.”

In the middle of the story, the writer inserts a sentence in which the mother is mentioned;

-“As time passes by, Zachary remembers his mother, so he decides to come back home to see her” (p35).

This sentence suggests that Zachary is not the only one who forgot about his mother, the write also suddenly remembers the mother, who has been excluded for no apparent reason. Writing with the gender perspective in mind would probably result into the following:

-“Zachary has never forgotten his mother, he was sure that she had done all she could to protect him “

-“He met someone from his village and told him that his mother had left the village to look for him”

- “The news really shocked him. He took the decision to comeback home... »

When finally the mother reappeared on the scene, it was to welcome her son.

- “When Zachary camelback home with his wife and children his mother welcomed them very warmly. She was so happy, her heart almost exploded” (p35).

The mother is portrayed as careless and irresponsible; instead of scolding her son for being away for so many years, she hugs him and welcomes him. I suggest the following alternative:

- “when Zachary came back home, his mother was so angry with him that he hurried to beg her forgiveness. He even went to see the Wiseman of the village to convince his mother to forgive him.”

As it has already been mentioned in the previous chapter, the verbal exchanges between mother and son are not amplified. The reader can barely imagine what the mother really thinks of her son.

-“When his mother woke up, he told her that he would go to look for his wife and children. He kissed her goodbye and promised to come back soon” (p37)

-“His mother was so angry with him because he did not keep his promise for his wife.”

The writer should have allowed the character more space to interact with her son and with the reader as well. At least, the writer should have seized the opportunity to teach children certain values like for example, keeping promises. So, the mother should have been shown saying:

- “How could you do that? You must go and look for her and do not come back unless you bring them with you”

In the story, the mother is not the only character who is kept invisible; Zachary’s wife is portrayed even more negatively. The following example illustrates the underrepresentation of this character; the husband remembers his wife thanks to the smell of cooking.

-“After several days looking for his wife, he felt so tired and decided to stop walking for a while he sat on a stone, the view was breathtaking... the smell of food caught his attention... the same smell he was used to when his wife used to cook for him. He followed the smell and suddenly he found himself face to face with his wife...”  
(P41)

The suggested alternative is:

- “... while he was walking amidst the flowers, the beautiful scent reminded him of how happy he was amidst the people he loved more than anything in the world. He could not believe how lucky he was to have a family. He would never give up on them.”

As to the reaction of the brothers when they see their brother-in-law, the writer seems happy with their rude behavior; he does not comment negatively. The implied message is that it is normal for brothers to behave in this way with their sisters; they have the right to yell at them and give them orders and even scold them for not preparing the meal in time.

- “The brothers entered the house and started to smell ... what is this new and strange smell at home? One of them said in a rough voice “where is the food? Why didn’t you serve it as usual?” (p42)

While the writer describes the rude brothers, he uses positive adjectives such as ‘brave’ ‘courageous’ ‘hardworking’ but when it comes to the way they treat the sister, he prefers to keep silent. He could have seized the opportunity to say:

- “The brothers were not polite and were very aggressive...”

The choice made by the writer to tell the reader about the deal between the brothers and their sister is very revealing in terms of intention and point of view.

- “They accepted to give their brother-in-law refuge in their village but on one condition, that their sister should stay at home to serve them as usual... they all agreed » (p43)

The writer could have responded to the brothers’ abuse of their sister by writing:

- “Zachary and his wife refused to stay with them under such condition.”

“Though the condition was not fair, the sister accepted to live with her brothers temporarily until they figured out a solution. »

### 5.2.1.1.2. The Lost Family

The story starts with the introduction of the family of El Badie El Salih:

-“The husband El Badie El Salih was a brave man. He was very strong and very honest. With his kind and obedient wife Zahra, they formed one of the most solid families in the village.” (p50)

Both adjectives ‘kind’ and ‘obedient’ contribute to making Zahra look very submissive and subordinate. I really wonder why the writer has used the adjective ‘kind’ to describe only the wife. Is ‘kindness’ exclusive to female characters? The alternative that I suggest for this description is:

- “ El Badie El Salih and his wife Zahra were very kind and honest, together with their six children; they formed one of the most solid families in the village.”

The writer has chosen to include five boys and just one girl. This is may not be a coincidence; the writer, by associating ‘strength’ with ‘five sons’, represents his view of a strong family as the one which should contain more boys than girls. A more egalitarian view of gender would probably have resulted into a different choice on the part of the writer.

In ‘The Lost family’ there is a problem of communication between the husband and his wife. It is the husband who makes most of the decisions. In the scene where the criminals break into the house and order El Badie El Salih to give them food, the wife does not take part in the negotiations with the thieves. She is even not shown interacting with her husband or her children. Her husband, on the other hand is shown yelling at her and blaming her for not preparing the meal quickly.

Though the writer gives her a name; it is used only for one time, in the first page. Instead of the name ‘Zahra’ other forms of address are used such as: ‘his wife’ ‘the wife’ and ‘the mother’. Any reader could ask this question; did the writer forget to use the name again? Did he prefer to concentrate on the male character? Did he choose to conform to the social norm? The wives’ first names are generally not mentioned, in public, by their husbands.

In the beginning of 'The Lost Family', the father El Badie El Salih is the only character who is shown as active and courageous. The one, who thinks, makes plans and gives orders. The mother is completely passive. The writer could have involved the mother by associating her with more verbal and material processes. From time to time she can make a suggestion, she can give advice and she can even make a decision. Maybe a woman is not physically as strong as a man but nothing can prevent her from using her brain.

The following exchange between El Badie El Salih and Zahra would seem more appropriate.

-El Badie El Salih: Let's prepare the meal as fast as we could! They seem so dangerous to me! I have no idea why this is happening to us!

Zahra: The best way to get rid of them is by staying calm! They will certainly leave as soon as they finish eating!

El Badie El Salih: Did you hear that! It must be a gunshot sound!

Zahra: Let's serve the dinner! They are going crazy!

The daughter's name is also mentioned for two times. The first time when the writer introduces the family for the first time, and then when the girl is shown helping her father set the gang up. It would have been very interesting if the writer had used the characters names equally.

Throughout the story, every son becomes the hero of his own story. The reader will certainly wonder why the girl has been excluded. Though the writer does not mention her age, we have the impression that she must be the youngest. Is it the writer's intention to perpetuate the idea that only boys can achieve their goals?

The story would be different if the writer, at least, included Noussaiba within the plot. I can certainly imagine the girl fighting the enemies with her father or her brothers. She could be the heroine of her own story. In the middle of the story, the writer decides to marry her to the village ruler's son. In this case, she could very well be depicted as trying to take advantage from her new situation and preparing plans about how to reunite her family, by for example hiring some men to look for her scattered brothers.

#### **5.2.1.1.3. The Curse of Destiny**

Here again the writer, while introducing the family, around which the story revolves, he totally ignores the wife;

-“Ali is a humble man. Though he is poor, he feels that he is the happiest man on earth... he is a father of seven children. They all live out of his week revenue, with his mother and his kind wife.” (2P58)

It would be more convenient if he mentioned the husband and the wife at the same time.

- “Ali and his wife Aicha, though poor, feel they are the happiest couple on earth...with their seven children they live on ...

When Ali becomes rich, after finding a treasure, he decides to get married for the second time. Surprisingly, nothing is said about his wife’s reaction. She is depicted completely passive. If the writer had added a dialogue in which the wife is shown complaining and expressing her anger, the situation would have appeared more authentic.

-Ali: I am so sorry but I have to marry her! I love her!

Wife: What about me? What about the kids?

Ali’s mother, too, should have been given a voice to try to solve the problem and convince her son to stay with his family and take his responsibilities. Instead, the writer uses her just to inform the reader that Ali lives with his mother. What has surprised me more than that is the writer’s choice of the outcome;

-“He paid them for their silence” (P 272)

#### **5.2.1.1.4. Tears and Joy**

Though the story revolves around Maria, the writer prefers to focus on the brother as well, especially when he describes them in the beginning of the story. However what seems rather astonishing is the fact that the writer moves from describing Maria’s physical traits to describing her brother’s physical capacities.

-“The daughter Maria was extremely beautiful. Her beauty was beyond any description. She was polite and obedient. Her brother was active and fast though he was thin” (p148)

For this short description, I suggest the following:

-“Maria was very beautiful. She was also very clever and attentive. Her little brother Nazim was very active. He loved his sister so much... »

Though Maria is older than her brother, she is depicted as less confident and dependent.

- “Maria was so proud of her brother. He is no longer a child. He has turned into a young man, strong and courageous. Now she can certainly rely on him” (P155).

It seems that the writer wants to seize every opportunity to demonstrate the superiority of the boy over his sister, though it is Maria who is the main character in the story. A better way to praise Nazim’s capacities would be to say that:

- “Maria was so proud of her brother he will soon depend on himself”

The binary categorization, in terms of gender, is also realized through the allocation of the roles to Hazim and Maria, when they decided to teach the dwarfs.

-“Maria taught the girls how to cook and how to knit, where as her brother Nazim taught the boys how to knit fishing nets and how to shoot with arrows” (p 161)

Categorization could be avoided if the writer chose to confuse the reader about who did what.

- “Maria and her brother taught the children many things such as knitting fishing nets and clothes, cooking, shooting with arrows.”

In the middle of the story, the prince makes his appearance on his horse. He instantly falls in love with Maria and asks her to marry him. The love story begins when the prince finds a golden hair while trying to drink from the river.

- “Maria got confused... will he really marry her... she is so poor and humble to be asked for marriage by the prince” (p168)

When the prince found out that Maria was hiding from him, on a tree, he hurried to convince her to get down the tree and he even asked her to marry him. The reply that the writer chooses for Maria is:

-“I will marry you! I promise! Just get down!”

Maria does not protest, she just tells the prince that she believes him. She decides to come down the tree.

- “Maria was sure that the prince was honest, so she decided to get down the tree.” (P169).

A non conventional portrayal of the prince would be possible if the writer chose to say:

- “The prince asked Maria why she was hiding on the tree.”

-“Maria answered that she was just trying to protect her brother”

-“She then told him about what had happened to her brother and how he had turned into a deer because of a spell”.

The exchange between Maria and the prince, in this way, would add some novelty to discourse, in terms of conventional practices.

As the story evolves, Maria’s sufferings grow. She is first separated from her son and her brother and then she is ordered to leave the kingdom. The prince expels his wife out of the kingdom because he thinks that she and her brother have killed his son. After knowing the truth, the writer tells the reader the following:

- “He confessed to his wife that he was such a fool and stupid when he believed the old witch.”

What is striking about this is the fact that Maria’s response is so immediate and so passive; after all what she has endured not only as a wife and a mother but also as a human being, she just accepts his apology without any complains.

-“She told him that she forgave him... “(P183).

She does not blame her husband for the awful things he did to her, and her brother. The writer does not give Maria the opportunity to say something to defend herself or her brother. The situation would have been completely different and in favor for Maria if she had said:

-“How could you do this to us? How could you be so cruel? You have no idea how I spent the last two years far from my son! I cannot live with you anymore! How could I trust you again?”

The end of the sorry should have been pictured revolving around the prince trying to figure out how to convince Maria to forgive him.

#### **52.1.1.5. The Price of Silence**

The story starts with a detailed description of the character of the son ‘ Adlane’. The writer then moves on to describe the father. The least we can say about the mother is that she is completely excluded, except when the writer connects her to her son.

- “A mother who loves her son very much. She even prefers him over herself. She can never get tired of teasing him, playing with him and hugging him so many times » (P 86).

Whenever the writer mentions the mother, it is only another opportunity to speak about Adhlan.

-“The mother was so afraid that something bad would happen to her son » (P88).

She even used black magic to protect her son. She asked the help of a fortune teller. The writer could have allocated interesting roles to the mother by saying for instance: -“since Adhlan was no longer able to go to school, the mother thought of something to keep her son busy because she knew that idleness is the mother of all vice.”

-“She was so worried that something bad would happen to her son, she talked to her husband and they both decided to send him to the Imam of the mosque to learn Quran.”

The first turning point in the story is when the ruler of the town decides to send the father to prison. On his way to prison, the father asks his son to take care of his mother.

- “Promise me son to take care of your mother... do not ever think of leaving her” (p94)

The opposite would seem more convenient;

- “Promise me to take care of our son.”

The story then goes on with an account of the father’s torture by the ruler. However nothing is said about the mother, as if she has never existed before. She does not try to help her husband prove his innocence and she does not beseech the king to release her husband. In addition to this, nothing is said about the way she leads her life in the absence of her husband. To start with, the writer should give her a name and then a mission to accomplish. I suggest this:

- “Souad could not stand it anymore. She decided to go and see the Wiseman of the village.”

- “She told them that she did not hear from her husband since the day he was arrested.”

“She sold the rest of her jewels and hired a messenger to deliver a message to the ruler, in which she begged the ruler to release her husband.”

In the story, the mother reappears in the last page. The writer does not provide any details about her since the imprisonment of her husband. The story ends with a scene in which Adlan is the main character again.

-“Adham suddenly fainted and when he woke up he found his thin, poor, patient mother standing beside him... he smiled and tried to stand up to hug her but she was faster, she took him in her arms and cried”. (104)

The reader will probably notice that the same words which were used to describe her in the beginning of the story are employed again in these sentences. While reading ‘The Price of Silence’, I could not prevent myself from wondering why the writer has included the mother in the first place, since no particular role is assigned to her. In this particular story, where the father is absent, I think that it is the mother who should have played the role of the heroine.

#### **5.2.1.1.6. Unfaithful Woman**

The writer proudly declares that Aicha, the widow,

-“has sworn to devote her life to her unique son, what a precious legacy! She was proud of her son... whenever he called her name she hurried to serve him.” (p236)

Though the character is given a name, her personality is not depicted as special or independent; she is always the mother whose life should never be dissociated from her son. The Writer could have just said that:

- “Aicha did all she could to live in dignity.”

“When her husband died, Aicha decided to work hard so as not to be a burden on her family-in law. She found a new job in the local post office and hired a small flat not far from her son’s school”

When the writer evokes the problems between the mother and the daughter-in-law, he starts with the mother asking her son to grant her the permission to leave the house and look for another place.

- “One day, the mother asked her son to give her the permission to leave and live elsewhere.”(p239).

It is obvious that the mother should talk to her son before making such a decision, but the problem is with the choice of the right words. As an alternative I suggest:

-“The mother could not stand the situation anymore, so she decided that it would be better if she left home for a while or she could even look for another house not far from her family.” (239)

The reader then is told that the daughter-in-law reacts by asking a fortune teller to help her get rid of her mother-in-law.

- “The arrogant wife wanted to get rid of her mother-in-law. She could not find a better idea than asking the help of the fortune teller” (P241).

Instead of always portraying the terrified female characters seeking the help of fortune tellers, the writer could, for instance, substitute them by ‘malicious’ mothers or friends. The fortune teller sets a trap to the mother by asking her, in front of her son, about the man who had been dining with them;

- “The mother got astonished; she thought that the old woman was joking, but when the old woman insisted she got even more confused. She looked at her son and felt so ashamed. She was shaking of fear... “(P246).

Unfortunately the mother is not given a voice to defend herself; she just keeps silent. It would have been fair to her if the writer had used those words:

- “She could not believe it! The old woman was lying. She tried to explain to her son that his wife was trying to trap her with the help of the old woman, but her son was so angry that he did not want to hear her”.

The situation gets even worse for Aicha :

- “Suddenly and unconsciously the son spanked his mother on the face very aggressively. He blamed her and insulted her with very bad words...” (P246).

The reaction of the son is so exaggerated. The following sentences would have described the scene more properly.

- “The son could not stand it anymore; he suddenly opened the door and left without even looking at his mother.”

Instead of describing the mother’s agony by using humiliating words;

- “The mother was lying on the ground, she kept saying: I am innocent, I am innocent » (P247)

It would have been preferable to use:

-“ The mother felt so humiliated, she turned into her daughter-in- law and said: I will never forget what you did to me ! One day my son will know the truth and you will regret it so bitterly.”

The most humiliating scene was when the son started to drag his mother by her foot and he even threw her in the street. The words used by the son are very inappropriate

-“Hoer, damned, go to hell. I do not love you any more, how could you do this?”

The reaction of the mother, as described by the narrator, is not convenient neither:

-“Before he closed the door, she looked at him, she was so sad; her eyes were full of tears. She wanted to tell him how much she loved him. How he could accuse her of such a terrible thing? She has always been honest” (P247).

I would rather choose those words to describe the mother’s response:

-“She promised herself that she would do anything to prove her innocence, the unfaithful woman was rather his wife.”

The death of Aicha, in the middle of the story, is unexpected; any reader would expect that the son would, one day, know that his mother was innocent and that it was his wife who set the trap. Instead, the writer suddenly and without any transition, announces the death of Aicha.

- “ In that night and after the prayer, Aicha died, the pain was so intense that she could not stand it. She just surrendered to death in peace”.

Instead of depicting Aicha as a courageous woman, who makes plans and tries to prove her innocence, the writer prefers depicting the weaker side. The ending of the story is worse; when Rabeh discovers that his wife is not in fact the mother of his five children and after hearing from the doctor that he was born sterile, he turns,

suddenly, into a murderer. He kills his wife, the five children and puts an end to his life.

-“Without thinking or waiting, Rabeh camelback home, took the rifle and started by killing his children and wife before he killed himself.” (p 254).

The ending could even have been made different;

- “The mother collected enough evidence to condemn her daughter-in-law. It was Rabeh who denounced his wife to the police...”

#### **5.2.1.1.7. The Deadly Lie**

The story revolves around a conflict between husband and wife. The starting point was with the wife who stole her husband’s money and gave it to her brother.

-She could not refuse.”(P212).

The writer does not provide another explanation. That is to say, she was too weak to resist her brother. She did not even show the slightest sign of resistance. The writer could have chosen to say that she did not accept to do such an awful thing.

- “She was so astonished! How could he ask to do such a thing?”

-“She totally rejected the idea. Her brother told her that he was indebted and that he had two days to give the money back, otherwise they would kill him.”

- “He was about to undergo a medical surgery and she knew that her husband would never lend him the money. She decided to take it and give it back later.”

No doubt, the wife did something very bad by stealing the money and lying to her husband, but this does not give the right to her husband to kill her.

- “When Borhan came back home, he calmly asked his wife to prepare food. He then entered his room took his knife and without saying a word he stabbed her on her chest...” (P225).

In the story the woman is not given the chance to speak, to justify her action and to apologize. She is sentenced to death and then killed without even saying a word. This is obviously not fair.

#### 5.2.1.1.8. The Challenge

The writer begins the story with a description of a small village. He also speaks about the inhabitants:

- “The inhabitants of the village were known for their love for organizing special gatherings at night during which they exchange ideas and tell sensational stories” (P186).

The writer consciously or unconsciously divides the people of the village into two categories: the category of men and that of women and children when he says that: - “Even women and children could attend these gatherings” (P188).

The use of ‘even’ suggests that the fact of including women and children was an exception. This sentence could have just been deleted.

When samir, the main character, decides to go out for an adventure, he went to see his mother and convince her to grant him her blessing.

- “I will come back with a lot of money! We will no longer live in poverty” (P189).

The mother is indirectly described as materialistic. Her reply is not convincing when she says:

- “Are you getting bored by living with me after all these years” (P190). The writer could have mentioned that the mother rejected the idea completely.

- “Samir was so confident and assertive, he hugged his mother and left” (P190). The reader is then told that he mother kissed her son goodbye crying and moaning (P190).

The mother is shown completely passive. She cannot do anything to persuade her son not to leave. All she can do is crying.

- “The mother surrendered to her fate” (P192).

If the writer had written with gender in mind, he would have said:

- “I cannot understand why you have made such a silly decision! You are too young to leave your home.”

When the writer speaks about the adventures of Samir, he backgrounds the mother for several pages before he decides to include her again.

- “Suddenly Samir remembered everything... his mother prayer’s... » (P 199).

The writer chooses to end up the story by mentioning the achievements of samir and his success; however, nothing is said about the mother. After defeating the beast and taking all the money and the jewels, he marries the fairy, who has helped him. The writer does not mention the fact that it was thanks to the fairy that Samir could defeat the beast.

- “After a few days all the people of the village celebrated the return of Samir. Samir, his wife and his mother lived happily ever after.” (p207)

Samir became very rich, he defeated the beast but he knew that he had taken so many risks.

#### **5.2.1.1.9. The Curse of Destiny**

This story is another version of the popular fairy tale ‘Sleeping Beauty’. Zahrat El Noudjoun is described as very beautiful. Her illness cannot be cured unless she takes ten rare herbs. It is Manou, her future husband who will risk his life to save her.

-“Manou swore that he would risk his life to bring those herbs. He insisted to go and look for them even in the difficult places and the dangerous mountains.” (P285)

Writing with gender in mind, such an account could never have seen light. The female protagonist is depicted as poor, ill and helpless, where as the male protagonist is depicted as courageous, brave and adventurous within the same page, the reader is told that:

-“Few days before the wedding, Zahrat El Noudjoun suddenly got sick. Though she saw many doctors and took different medicines, her health got worse.”(284)

Instead of the fortune teller, a specialist in herbs gives them a list of ten rare herbs and asks them to look for them. While Zahret El Noudjoun is lying half dead-half alive, Manou heaves his village in search of the cure. There is no doubt here, that the writer is framing two parallel worlds; one for the weak, the helpless, and the ill, and one for the courageous, the strong and the cure provider. The writer, in this sense, is not just positioning the characters in the story, but the readers as well, by directing their thoughts, feelings and expectations towards these two versions of the world.

### **5.2.1.2. Writing to Challenge the Status Quo**

Part of eradicating gender stereotypes is resisting existing gender ideologies. Discourse can play a major role in breaking traditional norms by introducing novelty. In such a process, children's fiction can be used as a force for change. However, such a force has not been recognized through critical studies until recently. According to Hunt (1990), critical writing on literature written with children in mind is a young discipline. From a feminist critical discourse perspective, several studies have been conducted to investigate the impact of the social changes on the production of literary texts and the reader's attitudes towards the resistance nature of discourse.

For the sake of exploring the ability of the writer to resist the status quo, I decided to include an analysis of the patterning of certain social and textual structures in a number of so-called 'liberated children's books'. I will not limit myself to presenting and describing the content of these narratives, I will provide explanations and clarifications by referring to the context of production and consumption.

I classified the books and categorised them according to a set of common criteria. I also selected a number of readers' comments for each book. As I have already mentioned, right from the beginning I decided to select the first 30 comments for evaluations. My plan was to avoid cherry picking. Each comment is preceded by the pseudo of the reader and date of post, to incorporate some contextual elements.

My selection of children's books was not random since I deliberately conducted a research online to look for those books, which are openly declared 'gender stereotypes breakers'. I have to admit that throughout my research of the specialized websites, which took 1 month, I never came across an Arabic website neither did I find a book written for children which pretend to be gender stereotype free. Among the various French, American, British websites I decided to select an American

website<sup>26</sup> as it provides the most interesting services such as providing e-books. What attracted my attention, about the website was the community review section.

One of my objectives, in this part, is to evaluate the reviews to investigate not only the impact of such books on the readers (parents, young, old...) but also to assess the degree of the reader's involvement in issues related to gender. Another objective is to see whether the books are really gender stereotypes free as claimed by the editors, the literary critiques or the writers themselves.

#### **5.2.1.2.1. Strong and Intelligent Female Characters**

I selected 'The Paper Bag Princess' because it challenges some of the most prevalent stereotypes in children's fiction. One of the most frequent and perpetuated feature is the presence of the prince and his role as the rescuer of the female character. The book, written by Robert Munsch in 1992, provides a counterpart version of some of the most popular stories. The Princess Elizabeth is about to marry Prince Ronald when a dragon attacks the castle and kidnaps Ronald. 'Surprisingly the princess finds the dragon, outsmarts him, and rescues Ronald. The writer also, challenges the belief or the norm that the princess should look beautiful and wear fancy clothes. The writer chooses to use a paper bag instead of a glamorous dress.

It is hard to believe that in the 90s, some writers were also aware of the impact of fiction on the construction of gender identity. The text, with all those little details such as the princess's clothes and actions suggest that the writer's stance was rather conscious and overt.

By considering the readers responses we can deduce that the book was well received. Unsurprisingly, all of the 30 reviews take a positive standpoint towards the book. The following comments illustrate the readers' satisfaction.

**Review one** (Kathryn Jan 31, 2009) « ...I like that our heroine is plucky and resourceful... »

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<sup>26</sup> [http://www.goodreads.com/list/show/34011.Children\\_s\\_Books\\_that\\_Break\\_Gender\\_Stereotypes](http://www.goodreads.com/list/show/34011.Children_s_Books_that_Break_Gender_Stereotypes)

The use of the two adjectives 'plucky' and 'resourceful' demonstrates the reviewer's positive and overt stance towards representing female characters as intelligent.

**Review two** (Mar 25, 2009 January) « It is never too early to teach girls to not settle, and to save the prince! Even if Ronald is a pathetic prince. »

The expression 'It is never too early' suggests that the reader is aware that many of the traditional beliefs about gender persist. The expression 'teach girls' implies that things should be done officially and that girls should not give up and should not accept anything for granted.

**Review three** (Jun 07, 2012 Elys) « It is a fantastic text to use to challenge gender stereotypes for all children, and for a discussion about genre and story conventions for older ones. This was one of my favourite books as a child. I am pleased to see that it is still appreciated by children now, for whom gender politics may be less of an obvious issue, despite its continued relevance. My only criticism of this otherwise great book is the American use of the word "bum", which grates a little. However, even taking the British meaning of the word, it is still appropriately applied to the odious Ronald! »

The Reviewer's linguistic choices 'challenge' gender stereotypes' genre' and 'story conventions'... demonstrate that first, he/she has a certain knowledge about gender issues and second, he / she seems more or less aware of the necessity of introducing changes. What is worth mentioning is the interest that the reader gives to the writer's linguistic choices when he/she says that the American use of the word 'bum' grates a little. This, certainly, shows the extent to which certain persons read critically and give importance to every single detail.

**Review four** (May 29, 2011 Ann) « I love the idea of a strong female character - especially given when this was initially published. It kind of turns the classic "damsel in distress" on its head, where the princess saves the prince. I also liked that the princess had to out-smart the dragon - she succeeded by using her brain. That's what I liked.... »

Here again the reviewer's attitude towards the book is very positive. The writer has certainly flipped the coin when he successfully shifted roles. 'She succeeded by

using her brain' instead of 'using her body or beauty, as was/is the case in most of the narratives.

**Review five** (May 27, 2010) « Loved this book. What kind of princess do you want to be? If you want to be a Sleeping Beauty kind of princess, this book is not for you. If you want to be an empowered, capable princess, our paper bag Princess will speak volumes. »

It seems that the reviewer has deliberately selected 'Sleeping Beauty', one of the most popular and classical fairy tales, simply because it is the other side of the coin. There are no better words than 'sleeping' and 'beauty' to describe the negative and stereotypical representation of the heroine in fiction. Indeed, in 'Sleeping Beauty' It is the prince who rescues the girl by breaking the spell.

**Review six** (Jul 14, 2013 Becca Harper) « I remember reading this book over and over again as a child. I was fascinated by how this princess, not only outsmarted a dragon, but also rescued the prince. When every other fairy tale tells you the prince is the hero and the princess is the helpless female in need of rescuing, this was a refreshingly different and forward thinking for the time (80's). I guess that is why it will always be my favourite childhood story, the woman is the hero and not only that but she showed me I didn't need to change myself to fall in love. For whomever I loved would love me because of me not because of how I looked. She walked away from Prince Ronald, she realised she was better than him. Throw away Cinderella, dump Sleeping Beauty and shred Beauty and The Beast. Princess Elizabeth is the hero every girl and boy should read about, forever more »

The use of the expression 'when every other fairy tale' brings us back to the notion of 'intertextuality'; the readers, while processing and interpreting discourse they refer to previously processed texts to judge, choose and understand. The interviewer wants to say that people are fed up with receiving the same ideas repeatedly. This female reader declares that this story has taught her how to be herself and that beauty is not that important. 'throw away' demonstrates her 'exasperation' towards the perpetuation of the same mottos in classical fairy tales for so many years.

#### 5.2.1.2.2. Genderless Characters

Recently, some of the writers for children have shown interest in breaking certain well-established norms by representing their characters as genderless. A very good example is ‘Goblinheart’, a book written by Brett Axel and published in 2012. How would such representation affect the child’s gender development? The parents can certainly answer a great deal of the question, but in my opinion, only certain experts such as sociologists, psychologists, educators as well as critical discourse analysts can use their expertise to evaluate, assess and study the issue from different angles.

The exploration of the readers’ responses could be very necessary in terms of the detection of the stance taken towards transgenderism and gender pluralism.

**Review one** (Dec 10, 2012 Danny Wright) « I've never read a book before that didn't have gender pronouns in it. You can't apply your preconceived notions about gender to characters if you don't know what gender the characters are. »

The reviewer seems unsatisfied. The reason is that the writer, by trying to violate the stereotype of always referring to the characters either as a female or a male, has created a certain confusion. If the reader does not know the gender of the character then he/ she cannot activate his/her previous knowledge to construct a coherent mental representation.

**Review two** (Apr 18, 2012 David Bales) « A poignant and somewhat subversive look at transgenderism using "fairies" and "goblins" in place of male and female; cleverly arranged without any gender-specific pronouns, with a look at an interesting hidden world where goblins and fairies have "species-specific" tasks. Written for children but good for adults, as well.

Unlike the first reviewer, this one seems rather satisfied. The book introduces the notion of ‘transgenderism’ . Instead of ordinary people, the writer represents a different world with different creatures and different notions and norms.

**Review three** (Dec 27, 2013 Brian Mccoy) « Quite possibly my new favorite children's book. A story about a young elf named Julep who grew up feeling like he/she was meant to be a goblin, is great for teaching children to accept people for who they are, not who they "should" be. Highly recommended for any parent that

wants to raise empathetic children. I will be purchasing multiple copies of this book to distribute to friends and family. »

Here, the idea of acceptance is prevalent. Accept who you are, accept your sexual orientation. The reviewer openly announces his intention to contribute to the promotion of the writer's ideas.

**Review four** (Sep 05, 2013 Aurthur) « Best book I've ever seen for instilling good values at an early age: tolerance, acceptance of oneself and others, freedom to be who you are at heart regardless of what people expect of you. »

The reviewer sees in the book a good means to perpetuate good values such as tolerance and acceptance and a means to challenge gendered expectations.

**Review five** (Jun 28, 2012 Julie Suzanne) « Loved the story and appreciate the tolerance, acceptance, and encouragement that it will bring to people (all ages). Couldn't get over the fact that it hasn't been edited (I'm an English teacher, sorry) I do think it's an important book! »

The reviewer is a teacher. She considers the book as an important resource as it promotes tolerance and acceptance.

**Review six** (Feb 05, 2013 Ira) « I am so glad this book exists. I think every 6 year old should read it. »

Although the book promotes transgenderism, most of the comments cited above are rather in favour of such a promotion. The readers, consciously or unconsciously, justify their responses by referring to the value system of tolerance and freedom of choice. While transgenderism is acceptable for some recipients, as is the case of the book's writer and the reviewers, it can well be considered as unacceptable by others. Matzne's study (2001) of Thai Student Attitudes towards transgendered males, demonstrates the complexity and context-dependent nature of attitudes.

### 5.2.1.2.3. Untraditional Roles

Other writers have attempted to break gender stereotypes by associating female characters with untraditional roles, or roles that have previously been dominated by men.

An excellent example would be Cornelia Funke's book 'The Pirat Girl', published in 2005. The story is about the world of pirates. What is different in this account is the fact that the writer moves from speaking about Captain Firebeard and the crew of the "Horrible Haddock", who are all male and pirates and who think they govern the seas, to speaking about Molly, the girl they kidnapped, and her mother. Both of them are, surprisingly, pirates themselves.

There is no doubt that this book will contribute to raising female readers' self-esteem and raise their motivation to overcome obstacles. However, one negative aspect is that it goes too far by pushing women and girls to do things that they are physically or psychologically incapable of performing. The girl Molly is depicted as extremely defiant and her mother is shown as the true fiercest pirate on the seas.

The readers' responses are likely to be positive, especially on the part of the female readers.

**Review one** (Aug 26, 2011 Heather) « a cute story. Nice to see a girl pirate for a change, now that's something my little girl can relate to »

**Review two** (Aug 06, 2011 Jessica RiffeKincaid ) « I chose this book to read to my little girl, who is 4 yrs old, because she is in love with pirate movies and anything to read about them. However, there are hardly any books or movies that involve females as the main characters in a pirate type setting. This book was exactly what she needed to have read to her. »

Both reviewers react from a mother's point of view. The females are shown as having an impact on the world and this is what they want for their girls.

**Review three** (Nov 20, 2009 Kelly) « Rockin' book. My kids (aka - my students) love pirate tales and this has been a great one to share with them. Molly is a strong female character (and her family is AWESOME!). The book does great things to break down gender stereotypes and expectations -- about what women and girls can

do how they should behave, and their capacity to take care of and provide for themselves. »

The reviewer is overtly against gender stereotypes. She thinks that the book promotes a positive account of what women are capable of doing.

**Review four** (Feb 15, 2014 Lari) « This is a great book for the tom-boy girls who don't want to miss out on pirate fun. Also perfect for any pirate-loving boy. I'll definitely use this book as a read aloud for primary kids. »

For this reviewer the story is only for tomboys. It can even be used in primary schools.

**Review five** (Nov 27, 2013 Autumn Bumgarner ) « This was a really cute book the illustrations were very fitting for the story and really cute. I liked how this book shows a girl that is not afraid to stand up to the boy pirates. Girls need to know that it's ok to stand up to whoever you need to stand up to. I also liked how her mom was a pirate is shows that women can do the same thing that men can do and there is nothing wrong with that. »

Like in many reviews, in this section, the reader seems to attach great importance to the illustrations that accompany the written text. When the reviewer says that 'there is nothing wrong with that', we have this impression that what is expected from women can go beyond limits. According to the popular designer Stella McCartney, women are asked to do so many things at the same time. "Now we are expected to do everything, which probably isn't human, and we are in danger of burning out if we try to do everything."<sup>27</sup>

**Review six** (Nov 11, 2011 Kristine)

« An attempt at a cute story about a girl kidnapped by pirates on the way to visit her grandmother. Something just fell flat for me, though. There is reference to rum, which could upset some parents. In the end, it is discovered that Molly's mother is an even more feared pirate, which seemed kind of odd. Good for those who have exhausted other pirate-themed books »

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<sup>27</sup><http://fashion.telegraph.co.uk/news-features/TMG9646917/Stella-McCartney-women-are-expected-to-do-everything.html>

In this review, there is a little complaining on the part of the female reader. She finds that the word 'rum' is not appropriate. The reader's remark suggests that the writer's linguistic choices could be subject to criticism. The reader may consider what seems acceptable for the writer, for literary reasons, as inappropriate or even offensive. The parent's role will be discussed later.

#### **5.2.1.2.4. Portraying Homosexual Families**

The investigation of the representation of the family institution in a number of liberated books has revealed that writers of these books consider the permanent representation of the heterosexual family as stereotypical. According to them, the fact that women should marry men and that a child should have a mother or a father or one of them but not parents from the same sex, is no longer the only possibility. Such books have been subject to censorship in many countries.

'And Tango Makes Three' written by Justin Richardson is a good example of controversial books. It is based on a true story. Roy and Silo, two male penguins. Like all other chinstrap penguin couples in the Central Park Zoo, Roy and Silo play together, swim together, and even build a nest together. They watch as the other penguin couples lay eggs and have baby penguins. They even "adopt" a rock and sit on it, hoping for a baby. After observing this behaviour, their zookeeper, Rob, takes an extra egg from a male/female penguin couple (a couple who have proven in the past to be unable to care for two eggs at once) and gives it to Roy and Silo. They care for and love the egg, just as any other penguin couple, and soon it hatches and Tango joins their family. This family of penguins are still living in the Central Park Zoo today.

**Review one** (Feb 18, 2008 Marika Gillis) « ...After hearing about it, I just had to check out the book for myself at Barnes and Noble. Even though this is an account of a true animal story, there are school districts and parents around the country who are protesting this book and having it banned from school libraries due to the nature of the penguin's relationship in the book. I know this is a touchy subject for a lot of people, but I just have to ask.... Is it the repressed sexual energy of the penguins that

is causing them to behave this way? Could it be the result of feelings of inadequacy based on the rigid gender roles of chinstrap penguins? Is there possible abuse in these penguin's past? Is it a predisposition towards homosexuality caused by genetic make-up? Is it "just a phase"? OR... has the homosexual agenda finally infiltrated our beloved zoos? »

This somehow long review illustrates the reader's confusion. Indeed several questions are asked and not one answer is given, let alone a child reader.

**Review two** (Oct 02, 2008 Marie) « This is apparently the #1 banned book in the country! My husband sought it out at the library, and it has a big red tag on the cover that says "BANNED!" I love the fact that it is a true story! »

After repeating the word 'banned' for two times and even writing it in capital letters, the reviewer just says that she loves the fact that it is a true story.

I personally wonder if this gives the writer the right to draw on true stories to write for children. I wonder if it is really a good excuse to diffuse controversial ideas and then say that they are based on true stories.

**Review three** (Jun 26, 2010 Eastofoz) « What a very cute story this turned out to be. Two male penguins end up hatching an egg that was given to them by the zookeeper and they raise a baby penguin to become part of their happy family. The controversy surrounding this book seems excessive in my opinion. Sure it has two male penguins and not a male and a female (where's the "tragedy" there?) but the focus is the love that they have for each other so much so that they want to start a family and share that love with a baby. »

The reviewers consider that homosexuality is a matter of choice. Just like the reviewers of the books on transgenderism who justify their opinion by incorporating such values as tolerance and acceptance, this reviewer refers to the value of 'love' to cover the writer's intention to promote homosexuality. In this review, the words 'love' (repeated twice) and 'happy family' are used to justify the reviewer's attitude.

**Review four** (Dec 13, 2013 Alice) « As a librarian, I ordered this book because I don't believe in censorship. I believe in having materials available that families might need. I believe it shouldn't be locked away or on a high shelf or behind the desk. If people need to talk about this subject, it will be on our shelves as a resource. »

The line between censorship and freedom of speech is indeed very thin. The librarian's comment seems rather reasonable. Especially when she says that even the banned books can be used as materials for families. The parents can buy the books and make their own decisions. However not all the parents are able to make the right choices and decisions. Sometimes the parents are as confused as their children. In this case, I believe the parents should ask for help. When it comes to children safety, it would be more convenient to let experts do their job. Psychotherapists, for example, can help parents cope with their children's changing needs.

**Review five** (Mar 24, 2014 Courtney) « While this book is considered a banned and controversial book because of the homosexual penguins I do not think that young children will focus on that aspect of the picture book. Kids will focus on the penguins and how they live and might be sadder that the penguins did not have a chick to take care of »

The reader thinks that young children are not going to focus on the notion of 'homosexuality' in the book. How can she be so sure?

#### 5.2.1.2.5. Rebellious Characters

'10,000 Dresses' is the title of the story written by Marcus Ewert, Rex Ray and published in 2008. Who can think of breaking a gender stereotype by making a boy wear a dress? In this story, Bailey makes the same dream every night. Bailey dreams about magical dresses: dresses made of crystals and rainbows, dresses made of flowers, dresses made of windows...can his dream come true? Not when his parents yell at him every: "You're a BOY!" Mother and Father tell Bailey. "You shouldn't be thinking about dresses at all." Then Bailey meets Laurel, an older girl who is touched and inspired by Bailey's imagination and courage. In friendship, the two of them begin making dresses together. In addition, Bailey becomes the girl she always dreamed she'd be!

There is no doubt that this book promotes transgenderism in a very subtle way. The writer does not give a gender specific name to the main character. The selected reviews are as follows:

**Review one** (Dec 02, 2013 Crystal Bandel )

« ...Naturally, readers should be aware that this book has a positive and sympathetic portrayal of being transgender, but other than that there's nothing potentially objectionable about it »

The reviewer seems satisfied with the content. The adverb 'naturally' denotes the reviewer's intention to make the idea sound natural and normal.

**Review two** (Jul 25, 2011 Krista the Krazy Katalogue) « I think this book might be confusing for kids who don't understand that Bailey is transgender. Bailey's family all refer to him as a boy, and he looks like a boy. Yet the narrator of the story calls him a she. »

For the reviewer, this book is confusing. When the character is not given a specific gender, it will be difficult for children to identify themselves with the characters of the story.

**Review three** (Nov 07, 2011 Elizabeth)

« I really liked this book. I particularly liked the fact that Bailey referred to herself as a girl, while the family called her a boy. Bailey's new friend Laurel immediately

called her a girl. It was also interesting that the author used a name that is non-gender specific. That being said, I think that there are some weaknesses with the book. Just because someone wants to wear a dress, doesn't automatically mean that they want to be a girl. Additionally, my teenage girls were a bit confused by this story. They weren't sure if Bailey wanted to be a girl, or was gay, or just liked wearing dresses. If they were confused, would a 1st or 2nd grader be any less so? That being said, I did think that the message to accept everyone and be who you are did come across loud and clear. »

This mother declares that her girls were confused by the story. The writer does not reveal Bailey's intentions in an explicit way. Such subtle and confusing representation of gender is more than harmful because the child is not able to rely on his/her knowledge of the world to understand the different configurations of gender.

**Review four** (Oct 30, 2013 Lauren Ritcey) « I think that this book would also switch nicely into an anti bullying program for middle school. With everything the students say during the circle, can really open the eyes to the others on how each and every person feels about the situation. »

The reader is recommending the book for use in education. He thinks that the book will motivate people to exchange ideas about the issue of gender.

**Review five** (Oct 26, 2011 Andrea) « This book was confusing and hard for my kids to understand. It would have been better addressed by deciding if the child in the story was a boy who liked to wear dresses or a girl who liked to wear dresses. If the book is supposed to speak to children and teach them tolerance, having parents and a brother in the story who tells the child to "Go Away" is probably not sending the message that the author intended. I understand what the author was trying to accomplish but I think it will be lost on the target audience and that is too bad. »

Though the mother is aware of the messages implied in the story, she does not seem satisfied about the lack of details. She finds that it is rather difficult for her children to understand the writer's intentions as regard the representation of Baily's gender.

**Review six** (Jul 20, 2011 Leah) « I really wanted to like this book but then I read it. Say, young child, if you enjoy behaviour not in line with social norms, your family will reject you and you will be sad and misunderstood until you run away and find someone 'like you'. That's...uplifting...I guess... »

Subliminal messages can be found everywhere even in books for children. This is what the reviewer wants to clarify when she says that children can implicitly be encouraged to leave their homes if they feel that they are different from the others.

#### **5.2.1.2.6. Unconventional lifestyle**

Instead of a dress for a boy, here the writer suggests another idea: a doll for a boy. Will the story have the same effect as '10,000 Dresses'? 'William's Doll' Written by Charlotte Zolotow in 1985 but first published in 1972 .

More than anything, William wants a doll. "Don't be a creep," says his brother. "Sissy, sissy," chants the boy next door. Then one day someone really understands William's wish, and makes it easy for others to understand, too.

Can any reader understand William? Can the parents understand? The book was first published in the 70s. It is hard to believe the reaction of the readers' community at that time.

**Review one** (Dec 22, 2007 Emelda) « When I read this to my kids, I was a little uncomfortable with William being teased- I would have preferred a more positive storyline so the kids don't get any ideas, but it was written in an age where this was the norm. »

The reader is a mother who seems worried about the book's story line. She does not want her children to think that it is normal for boys to play with dolls.

**Review two** ( May 14, 2011 Kelly) « I appreciate the way that book stresses that having a doll and being nurturing doesn't supersede or replace other 'appropriately' gendered activities like playing basketball. A person can engage multiple activities, even as they cross-traditional gender lines, without dismissing others. »

The reader is rather happy with the content of the book. It challenges the idea that boys should not engage in inappropriate activities such as playing with dolls.

**Review three** (Jun 14, 2014 Amanda) « If an educator introduces to the students that all children can play with all toys; regardless of the children's gender then they will be more likely to accept their friends for who they are. »

Amanda's review implies that the book can be used by educators to teach children how to cope with diversity.

**Review four** (Jun 01, 2010 Ashley) « Any classroom would benefit from this book by teaching children that everyone is different and that it is okay to be different. William's Doll can also lead to discussions of loving yourself for who you are. The illustrations are done in soft pastel shades that make the story warm and comforting. »

The same stand is taken by this reviewer. The doll, in the book, symbolizes self-acceptance and love. The evaluation of the book's illustrations demonstrates the importance that readers give to the artistic side of the book.

**Review five** (May 01, 2014 Robert) « Quite a groundbreaking and forward looking book. More than 40 years after first being published in 1972, it is just as relevant today. It is a gentle story and I liked it. »

Though the book was written several decades ago, it is still interesting according to Robert.

**Review six** (Jul 15, 2014 Tamara) « excellent tool for teachers to teach about gender equity... ».

The book is recommended by Tamara to be used at school.

#### **5.2.1.2.7. Unusual Activities**

Books that are more controversial are those, which promote gender equality by associating their characters to unfamiliar activities, jobs and occupations. The following book is quite recent. 'Ballerino Nate' was written by Kimberly Brubaker Bradley and published in 2006. The story is about the world of ballerinas, a circle dominated by females for a long time.

After seeing a ballet performance, Nate decides he wants to learn ballet but he has doubts when his brother Ben tells him that only girls can be ballerinas. What would

the readers think of such a representation. The selected community reviews include the following:

**Review one** (Apr 11, 2011 Raven Grider) « This is an inspirational book! :) Since there are few books about going against male stereotypes, this book does a great job of showing that you should go after what you believe/what you want to do. »

The reader seems satisfied. The book motivates children to do the things they want to do.

**Review two** (Nov 18, 2012 S.N. Arly) « This book was a hit in our house. We're big on challenging gender roles and allowing people to do what is right for them. »

The reviewer seems excited about the book since conventional gender roles are being challenged.

**Review three** (Jun 05, 2014 Altivo Overo) « The book shows that stereotypes can be wrong, and offers encouragement to kids who want to do something different from what most of their peers might be doing. »

The book is appreciated by the reader. Stereotypes are wrong since they hinder children from being themselves.

**Review four** (Apr 20, 2013 Brittany) « This is a good book on gender roles and allowing children to do what is right for them. ».

The review reveals the same attitude as the previous one. However, the use of the adjective 'right' is rather confusing; what seems right for someone may be considered as wrong for someone else.

**Review five** (Feb 26, 2009 Mandy Hoffman) « I enjoyed the illustrations, but quite honestly the story line lacked. It was okay to read but the conversation between the two little brothers wasn't the best. »

This review is another piece of evidence that some readers are not passive recipients. The reader moves from praising the illustrations to criticising the storyline.

**Review six** (May 22, 2009 Sheri) « I loved how this book supported the idea of a boy wanted to be a dancer. Great message for young readers. »

The reviewer receives the book positively.

#### 5.2.1.2.8. Unconventional Jobs

Challenging gender roles is also the theme of Lesléa Newman's book 'A Fire Engine for Ruthie' published in 2004.

Ruthie and Nanale do not share the same preferences. While Nana loves dolls and dress-up clothes, Ruthie loves fire engines and motorcycles. Nana's neighbour, Brian, gets to play with fire engines and motorcycles. So why doesn't Ruthie?

If parents do not encourage their boys to play with dolls, they will certainly not prevent their girls to play with fire engines and cars if they like to. It is true that the story is sensitive but it is not as controversial as the previous stories. It is a good account of open possibilities and expectations.

**Review one** (Jan 29, 2008 Emelda) « GREAT read for a girl who feels different because she wants to play with so-called "boys' toys".

There is no better word than 'great' to describe the positiveness of the book.

**Review two** (Feb 01, 2012 Heather) « O really liked this book, not all little girls want to play dress up and tea party, some like cars and trains and that's ok. »

It is ok for girls to play with toys, traditionally reserved for boys according to Heather.

**Review three** (Feb 21, 2012 Chase) « I wanna be a fire when I grown up. »

Chase is more likely to be a female name. Instead of writing 'fire-fighter', she just puts 'fire', maybe because she did not want to write fireman. The reader seems to identify with Ruthie who loves fire engines.

**Review four** (Jul 30, 2012 Courtney) « I did like the message that girls can love fire trucks, trains, and motorcycles... »

The readers like the idea of promoting unconventional ideas.

**Review five** (Dec 31, 2009 Kathryn) « The illustrations are adorable and remind me a bit of Robin Preiss Glasser's work. I felt that the story itself is too long and detailed for the intended audience, but it could still be the perfect book for those who are feeling their interests are a bit mismatched with others! »

The reviewer is comparing the book's illustrations to the work of a famous female children's book illustrator. This comparison is a good illustration of how

certain readers can do more than just reading a story. They process the texts very actively by using their previous knowledge.

**Review six** (Feb 10, 2012 Kat) « What I love about this book is that it doesn't tell you it's showing you a girl with non-conforming gender, but it is. It doesn't say "it's okay for girls to like boys things," but that's what the story tells you. And best of all, there doesn't have to be any justification or reason for it. »

The reader seems to like the fact that the messages in the book are not conveyed directly. The reviewer declares that what she likes about the book is the fact that the writer takes it for granted that girls like playing with fire engines and other toys usually used for boys only.

#### **5.2.1.2.9. Sports Previously Dominated by Men**

The eight of March of each year, among the popular movies selected to celebrate women's emancipation is 'A League of Their Own'. The same true story inspired David A. Adler to write his book for children in 2003, 'Mama Played Baseball'

While Amy's dad is away, fighting in World War II, her mother must take a job. She became a professional baseball player. Amy cheers the team and secretly works on a project to surprise her father when he is finally back home.

This book provides a good example to illustrate a less risky way to promote new ideas as it draws on historical facts. Does the reproduction of the true story really do justice to women? While the men are away serving their country in the battlefields, the women replace them to play the game in the green field. What do the reviewers think of the book?

**Review one** (May 28, 2012 Dolly) « The story is heart-warming and shows that women were terrific professional ballplayers »

The reviewer, by using the word 'professional', attempts to promote the image of women as being competent and qualified. They are full-time players, not substitute players.

**Review two** (May 23, 2014 Ruth Ruiz) « This story tells about the first All American Women's League in 1943. The story focuses on a young girl named Amy and her

mother during World War II when the men were off at war. Women were responsible for providing for the family in the mean time »

For the readers, women were providers but only because their husbands were away at war. The use of 'in the mean time' suggests that their mission as baseball players was temporary.

**Review three** (Apr 24, 2010 Lisa) « How exciting it would be to play on one of the first all women travelling baseball teams. The 1940's were a time when women began to set out of their normal roles and venture out to new adventures. This would be a great book to read with the students and discuss how the roles of women have changed over the years. »

The reader goes back to the 1940s, a period when women had to work to support their families in the absence of men, who had to join the army.

**Review four** (Apr 08, 2014 Shelli) « This was a sweet read for elementary kids learning about one of the many jobs women took during World War II »

The reader is recommending the book for the teachers to use to inform their pupils about some historical facts about women's involvement in the workforce.

**Review five** (Mar 06, 2014 Mr. Awesome) « In "Mama Played Baseball", David A. Adler uses beautiful point of view of the characters. The story is told through limited and basic first person view with rarely some third person view in it. »

This review is one of the most recent interviews. The reader comments on the expression of the point of view. This means that in addition to the content of the story, the reader may well be interested in the style and methodology of narration.

**Review six** (Apr 11, 2011 Raven Grider) « This is an excellent story! The illustrations are vivid and engulfing. This would be a great book to read when teaching about WWII, true stories, and strong women roles. Overall, this is a great book that would be very easy to tie into Social Studies. »

This comment demonstrates the importance that some people give to children's books, especially if they were used as teaching materials.

My Mom Is a Fire fighter by Lois G. Grambling is another example of a liberated book. Every little boy has a hero. Billy's happens to be his mom. Billy has two families—his mom and dad, and his firehouse "uncles," who work with his mom. Having a firehouse family is lots of fun. But Billy also knows that fire-fighters have an important job to do, protecting people and putting out fires. To get the job done right, they all have to work as a team—even Billy can lend a hand! From award-winning author Lois G. Grambling and **New York Times** bestselling illustrator Jane Manning comes a heartfelt story of a little boy who wants to be just like his mom when he grows up

**Review one** (Mar 26, 2013 Kaylen Matherly) « This book switches up the gender roles teaching children that women can be fire-fighters too. »

The reader seems satisfied with the book. She even recommends it for teachers.

**Review two** (Jul 30, 2009 Jen) « This is a necessary book, and not because it skews gender roles. Nope, this is a necessary book because the main character, a boy of 8 or 9, is walking, exploring, and cooking independently. It's nice to see. I think it'd be a good book to talk about gender roles, and about fire prevention and safety, but it's also great to see a kid behaving responsibly by himself. »

The reader is happy with the portrayal of the boy as responsible. The stereotype of always representing children as dependent and troublemakers is being challenged.

**Review three** Apr 22, 2012 Sally Staples « This is a great book for kindergarten children to learn about the life of fire fighters while on duty. It is also a great book to promote females as fire fighters!! Cute story!! »

The reviewer's response is positive. The book will contribute to the promotion of a job which has been monopolized by men for a long time.

**Review four** Oct 15, 2011 Angela Record « This book is great to show children a gender role reversal. Also it's great to use to teach about fire safety. Also this book has good pictures. »

**Review five** (Apr 24, 2010 Lisa) « This would be a great book to read with the students and discuss how the roles of women have changed over the years. »

The readers recommend the book to teachers to start group discussions about gender.

The analysis of the content of the books and the readers responses, clearly reveal the intention of some writers to challenge the status quo. However, whether the impact of their narratives is positive or negative or whether their fight against gender stereotypes will, in turn, generate other forms of stereotyping, is another issue. According to Hallawa (2003)<sup>28</sup> *“Not all what is written for children is suitable for them. If the writer wants to achieve his goals through his writings he/she should be aware of the society’s goals, directions and values.”* (p.193). Halawa (2003) believes that the writer should know and understand the children’s development process and all what this process includes and requires. The writer should also be convinced by the importance of what is written for children and its impact on the behaviour of children.

In the process of eradication of gender stereotypes, the role of the writer is significant. The meanings he/she creates should be directed to more egalitarian views about gender. However, the writers of children’s fiction should be more cautious, especially, while trying to be defiant and resistant to the societal system of norms and values. According to Abd Elwaheb (2006)<sup>29</sup> *“Unlike, the narratives for adults, the writers of which enjoy too much freedom of expression, children’s fiction is related to a set of educational rules.”* (p.44). The producers of discourse, for a young and inexperienced audience, should take into consideration certain human and moral values. There should be guidelines to ensure a good quality of the content.

The content of the liberated books, examined before, translates a heterogeneous vision about gender identity. While some writers are interested in allocating different unusual social roles to women and girls, others are concerned with the promotion of homosexuality, transgenderism and other forms of sexual orientation. According to Munier (2009) women’s fight against social injustice has resulted into the emergence of Queer culture, which includes transgender, transexuality and other forms of sexual orientation. The question, which is worth asking, is should such culture be perpetuated in children’s fiction? Some experts see

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<sup>28</sup> (MOT)

<sup>29</sup> (MOT)

the imposition of queer culture on children as another form of domination and oppression. Abdelwaheb (2006) believes that culture varies across societies. When it comes to lifestyle, what is considered as virtue in a given society may be considered as a sin in another one.<sup>30</sup> The notion of the family, for instance, is very flexible; in western societies, it has broadened to include homosexuality and adultery, which are considered in Muslim countries as great sins<sup>31</sup>.

### **5.2.1.3. Imposing Guidelines on the Writer**

As it has been pointed out in this chapter, the resolution of the dilemma of stereotyping relies on the adaptation of new conventions especially in terms of production. While not all the writers might agree on the same conceptual, moral and religious framing of the fiction addressed to children, they can at least adopt the same Framing, in terms of distribution of roles, use of lexical and grammatical structures and other technical issues. In other words, the writers of children's fiction can join efforts to reach a common understanding of the needs and expectation of children. In this case, the imposition of a sum of guidelines on the writers would accelerate the process of elimination of gender stereotypes.

I have drawn on the previous analyses to elaborate the following checklist of guidelines.

#### **5.2.1.1. Equitable Ratio of Female and Male Characters**

The different studies conducted to explore the representation of gender in children's fiction have made it necessary to respect an equitable ratio of female and male characters. The inclusion and exclusion of characters have an impact on the distribution of power relations and on the construction of ideologies.

#### **5.2.1.2. Equitable Distribution of Roles**

A publication, which is said to challenge gender stereotypes, will show both males and females performing the same tasks. In the family, the fathers and the mothers should be portrayed as having the same responsibilities. The sisters and the

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brothers should be represented as sharing the same hobbies and preferences such as tree-climbing, knitting, playing with dolls and cars and so on. When it comes to working and earning money, the male characters should not be depicted as the only breadwinners; both women and men should be equally represented in domestic and vocational roles. The same jobs should be associated with male and female characters. For example, women can be represented as pilots, physicians, engineers, and intelligent and qualified workers. On the other hand, men can be represented as nurses, teachers and secretaries.

#### **5.2.1.3. Equitable Distribution of Good and Bad Qualities**

Male and female characters should be linked to the same negative or positive physical or psychological attributes. Both genders could be represented as obedient, kind, rebellious, brave, and courageous and so on.

#### **5.2.1.4. Physical Appearance and Clothing**

The tradition to show the female protagonist as always beautiful, irresistible and well dressed should be resisted.

#### **5.2.1.5. Intellectual Abilities and Disabilities**

The characteristics related to intellectual capacities such as intelligence, competence, creativity and so on, should be distributed equally to female and male characters.

#### **5.2.1.6. Emotional Virtues and Vices**

Emotional qualities such as kindness, tenderness, self-esteem, self-control, brutality and so on should be linked equally to male and female characters.

#### **5.2.1.7. Personality Characteristics**

Equal numbers of female and male characters should be described as active or passive, dependent or independent, self-confident or indecisive.

#### **5.2.1.8. Psychological Needs and Desires**

Both male and female characters should be associated with the same needs, dreams, desires, wishes and expectations. The psychological exhibition should not be gendered.

#### **5.2.1.9. Lexical and Grammatical Habits**

#### **5.2.1.9.1. Vocabulary**

It is true that many measures have been taken to eliminate certain words such as fireman, chairman and mankind to replace them by neutral terms such as fire-fighter, chairperson and humanity.

However, when we speak about vocabulary we should not limit ourselves to referring to the names of jobs or titles but we should take into account the frequent use of certain adjectives or verbs in the process of characterization.

#### **5.2.1.9.2. Grammar**

The task of replacing a sexist word by a neutral one seems less complicated if compared to the task of replacing a grammatical rule. The French language, for example, has been subject criticism with regard the grammatical representation of French. The French grammatical rule that adjectives and past participles take the masculine form when there are two or more subjects of different sexes is said to be a sexist rule and should be changed. The use of masculine plural pronouns in French and Spanish to designate persons of both the male and the female sex should also be revised. With regard Arabic, it is said that the masculine form is used when there are plural subjects of different sexes.

There are certainly many grammatical rules, which imply a sexist usage of language and should certainly be revised; however, it has been proved that the same grammatical rule can sometimes function to favour one gender over the other. The system of transitivity elaborated by Halliday (1985, 1994) has been used in this study to show how the fairy tale tradition, for instance, usually connect female characters more to mental processes than to material processes and show them more as patients than as doers. Such representation is certainly not in favour of the females who are either written about, or written to. Such a use of language may denote their incapacity to affect the world in which they live and experience.

#### **5.2.2. The Market**

The world of business can certainly affect either negatively or positively the discourse presented to children in the form of verbal, written or visual texts. According to the sociologist Schor (2004), children respond to the services and

products offered by the market at a very early age. The sociologist (2004) points out that children can recognize toys at a very early age. Before reaching two years, they can ask for products by their brand names. The expert (2004). Adds that “*one of the first identities children understand, they have and integrate deeply into their selves is that of consumer.*” (p.19).

Along with the family and school, the market is another significant agent of socialization. The discourse of consumerism has also reached children. New strategies are being adopted to increase the number of children consumers. The sociologist schor (2004) calls the process of turning children into consumers “*the commercialization of childhood.*” In the business of children’s fiction, the publisher and the librarian share, not only the same eagerness in promoting and selling books, but also the same worries related to controversies and decisions of censorship.

In the process of elimination of gender stereotypes, the market, represented by the publisher and the librarian, can take a significant part.

#### **5.2.2.1. The Publisher and the Librarian**

While doing my research, I came across an article published on New York Times<sup>32</sup> on February 18, 2007. I was surprised when I read about the reaction of some librarians in the United States, to the presence of one ‘offensive’ word in a book for children. According to the writer of the article, Julie Bosman, the book was published in 2006 and in 2007 and was awarded Newbery Medal, the most prestigious award in children’s literature.

The problem with the book, according to some angry librarians, is the presence of the word ‘scrotum’ in the book. The book written by Susan Patron tells the story of a scrappy 10-year-old orphan named Lucky Trimble. She hears the word through a hole in a wall when another character says he saw a rattlesnake bite his dog, Roy, on the scrotum.

The inclusion of the word has shocked some school librarians, who have pledged to keep the book away from elementary school students, and re-opened the debate over what constitutes acceptable content in children's books. Many bloggers,

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<sup>32</sup> [http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2007-02-18/news/0702180313\\_1\\_librarians-newbery-medal-howard-stern-type-shock](http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2007-02-18/news/0702180313_1_librarians-newbery-medal-howard-stern-type-shock)

teachers, authors and school librarians took sides over the book. "This book included what I call a Howard Stern type shock treatment just to see how far they could push the envelope, but they didn't have the children in mind," Dana Nilsson, a teacher and librarian in Durango, Colo., wrote on LM(underscore)Net, a mailing list that reaches more than 16,000 school librarians.

As a result, the book has been banned from school libraries in a some states and the librarians in other states have indicated on the online debate that they may well follow suit.

This account about the reaction of the librarians illustrates the part that this segment of society takes in the consumption of books. Indeed, a librarian is not a mere seller of a product; he /she should be aware of the impact of the book on the consumer, especially if the latter is a child. Nowadays many library associations use the internet to post and update lists of banned and challenged books. For instance, the ([www.ala.org](http://www.ala.org)) maintains lists of books that have been challenged and the reasons why. Alice's review of the book, examined before, also translates the significant role that the librarians play in the domain of children's fiction. Alice says: « As a librarian, I ordered this book because I don't believe in censorship. I believe in having materials available that families might need. I believe it shouldn't be locked away or on a high shelf or behind the desk. If people need to talk about this subject, it will be on our shelves as a resource. ». The comments show, clearly, the degree of professionalism that certain librarians may reach.

Just like the librarian, the publisher is not the only responsible for the editorial phase of the children's book creation; she/he should also contribute to the production phase by imposing guidelines on the authors and illustrators. In America, the feminists of the 1970s were the first to ask for an egalitarian representation of the sexes in the children's books. In 1972, in response to such initiatives, a major American publisher, McGraw-Hill, elaborated a set of guidelines for equal treatment of the sexes in school textbooks to be used by authors of children's books and textbooks published by that firm. In France, Fernand Nathan, a publisher of

children's literature and school textbooks, also made recommendations to be followed by authors and illustrators.

According to Abdelwaheb (2006)<sup>33</sup>, in the Arab world, there is not such an official institution to regulate the cultural values transmitted to children. In the Arab world, there is a need to create an institution, whose role is to represent the writers of children fiction. (Abdelwaheb, 2006)<sup>34</sup>. The role of the library is very limited in the Arab world according to Abdelwaheb (2006). Only a few people have access to libraries. Things seem worse when it comes to libraries specialised in children's literature.

### **5.2.3. The Family**

The family is an important agent of socialization. It is the first institution, which shapes children's vision of the world. The parents, more than any other individuals, play a major role in nurturing children's beliefs, values and opinions. They contribute to the making of their choices and decisions and to the building of their characters and personalities. When it comes to gender stereotypes, the parents can intentionally contribute to the perpetuation and the establishment of gender stereotypes. However, as parents always think of what is best for their children, they should believe in gender equality and find ways to instil such a value into the home. One way is the choice of books which promote gender equality and which challenge existing gender ideologies.

The family unit is the starting point, and possibly the most significant place for children to begin developing gender stereotypes. Parents have a powerful role in their children's career development through the opportunities they provide, the nature of the family relationships, and the family members' behaviours and beliefs. Indeed, parents and children tend to have very similar career goals and values. When parents have strong bonds with their children, they can easily transmit their values,

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<sup>33</sup> (MOT)

<sup>34</sup> (MOT)

beliefs, and interests to them, and this can contribute to their children's career choices and success.

Although both mothers and fathers have an impact on children's career development, mothers may be more influential than fathers, teachers, and even peers. Children who identify strongly with their mothers tend to put more value on school, have a higher self-concept, and have higher educational expectations. Children have more opportunities to interact with their mothers. They talk about friendship, food, TV. Programmes and they talk also about studies and career plans. The following exchange, for example, between a mother and her daughter, would be very interesting in terms of gender role expectations.

Parent: What do you want to be as a grown-up?

Girl: I want to be a pilot.

Parent: Excellent choice! I will be certainly proud of you.

The parents' beliefs affect the way they transmit to their children, their values of success, ambition and hard work, and the way they react emotionally to their children's achievements and choices. I believe that if the parents want to start their mission they have to do it very soon. As it is often said 'the sooner the better'. I have personally witnessed an exchange between my aunt and her daughter. When the mother asked her the same question, her daughter said she wanted to be an airhostess and when her mother asked why, she said, "Because I am beautiful"

The question, which arises here, is: how should the mother react in this situation?

No one can deny that the first words children hear from their parents about the world, come from picture books and fairy tales. According to McCabe et al (2011), "*through stories, children can understand what is expected of women and men and can recognize their place in the social structure.*" (p.199).

Parents tend to interact with their children in gender-stereotypic ways. Like when they help them with their school homework, the father may help with math

homework and the mother with language or literature homework. When they want to share games with them, dad may choose electronic games while mom may act out the role of the patient while her daughter plays the role of the nurse or the doctor. In the same way while selecting stories to read to their children, the parents tend to stick to existing norms. They generally buy for their daughters books with princes, fairies and witches as characters and for boys they buy books about adventures and mysteries.

Many studies have shown that parents who are open to egalitarian opportunities and beliefs have been found to be more supportive responsible and loving. Other studies have encouraged androgynous parenting; a vision, which implies that both parents do things that, are not gender normative especially around their children. Without pushing children to the extremes, from time to time, the mom, for instance, repairs the electronic equipments and the father prepares the meals. I will discuss later the attitudes of some parents towards certain gender issues tackled in some children's books.

To highlight the major part that the parents take in the life of their children, I have decided to report and discuss the content of two articles published in *Le Figaro*<sup>35</sup>, about the parents' responses to the introduction of a new subject related to what they (The parents) refer to as 'the gender theory.'

Coincidentally, as I was preparing the final draft of this chapter, I came across a newspaper article on pupils on strike. In France, the start of the school year (2013-2014) was marked by a series of events. Indeed hundreds of parents called to the boycott. On January 24th, 86 pupils of 240 subscribers had answered absentees. According to the French newspaper '*Le Figaro*' (2014/02/09),<sup>36</sup> the ministry of education has responded by providing explanations to the parents. According to *Le*

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<sup>35</sup> <http://www.lefigaro.fr/actualite-france/2014/01/28/01016-20140128ARTFIG00405-theorie-du-genre-des-eleves-absents-du-fait-d-une-etrange-rumeur.php>

<sup>36</sup> <http://www.lefigaro.fr/actualite-france/2014/02/09/01016-20140209ARTFIG00132-theorie-du-genre-nouvel-appel-au-boycott-de-l-ecole.php>

Figaro (2014/01/28), the worried parents wanted to know what was going on. For example, some mothers, mainly Turkish, and as reported in the French newspaper asked:

«Are gay and lesbian associations going to come to the school to speak about sexuality? What is the theory of gender? Are you going to show porn movies? Is it true that Jews are going to come to the school to know if our girls are not really girls and that our boys could turn into girls?

On January 3rd, 2014, the panic among parents reached its peak, especially in the city of Strasbourg. The following day, the principle in a school at Strasbourg said, in reference to the parents, « They came to show me the text messages they received from anonymous senders asking them to react to the introduction of the theory of gender in the school curriculum » He added, « the parents were asked to prevent their children from attending classes ». According to the same newspaper, out of 240 registered pupils, 86 were reported absent on January 4th. Most of the pupils were originally from Turkey and North Africa. On Tuesday 7th, Vincent Peillon, the minister of education attempted to reassure the parents by asking them not to believe the rumours. He said, « the intention of some individuals is to create disorder in the French schools and to perpetuate negative ideas about our educational system," he added « What we are doing, is promoting the values justice and equality and the equality between the men and women ", he declared to the National Assembly.

The role of the parents is very important, indeed. Their presence in the life of their children should exceed the home. They can supervise their studies, help them choose their friends, and they can help them experience the world positively.

As regard children's fiction, the examination of the readers' comments, on the liberated books, reveals three important points. First, for the promotion of gender equality, the parents can make use of the stories they read for their children to transmit their ideas about gender, femininity, masculinity and so on. The parents can even put the books themselves into question, instead of just accepting them blindly. Imelda's comment, cited before, illustrates the parents' involvement in matters

related to children's fiction. The mother says, "This book was confusing and hard for my kids to understand. It would have been better addressed by deciding if the child in the story was a boy who liked to wear dresses or a girl who liked to wear dresses." Second, the parents can use the books as a means to improve their children's skills such as reading, listening and inferring. Third, when parents spend time reading to their children, they will be more able to teach them how to express themselves in a healthy way.

#### **5.2.4. The School**

After the family, a very powerful institution is school. According to Gramsci (1994), school might be considered as one of the social institutions through which, hegemony is realized as "*it serves as an agent of the dissemination of hegemonic ideologies such as gender and patriarchy, which are embodied in the curricula in both the formal and hidden forms*" (Cited in Mutekwe & Modiba, 2012, p.366-67). On the other hand, Maluwa-Banda (2004) considers that education is generally viewed as an effective way to deal with gender issues in a society.

Indeed, education empowers women by enhancing their competencies and preparing them to participate actively in social or economic activities and in order to achieve such emancipator goals, educational materials such as textbooks should be selected and used carefully and ethically. It is, therefore, necessary "*that textbooks need to be reviewed with the gender perspective in mind in order to provide a balance and gender-sensitive education to all children.*" (Mutekwe & Modiba, 2012, p.365) Recommendations as to the design of schools textbooks and course have been suggested by various experts, and various guidebooks have been published at national and international levels.

In schooling, textbooks can be one of the major sources that influence people's values and attitudes "*what the students learn from other contexts will be "reinforced and / or transformed with what is conveyed in textbooks*" (Luk, 2004, p.3). Textbooks play a major role in gender's development of children. As McCabe et al (2011) argue, "*A consistently unequal pattern of males and females in children's*

*books thus contributes to and reinforces children's gender schemas and identities."* (p.200).

Many of the school textbooks are full of reduced or full versions of fairy tales. Sometimes it is the teachers who select the stories to read in class. Whether the choice of narratives is imposed on the teachers in the form of textbooks or selected by the teachers themselves, it can have either positive or negative effects on the children's development of gender identity.

According to Abdelwaheb (2006),<sup>37</sup> school can play a major role in promoting the writers works by using them as part of the teaching materials and at the same time they encourage, on the one hand, the writers to improve the quality of their writings and on the other hand, the children to read and write stories to express their ideas.<sup>38</sup>

It is very important for the teachers to select their teaching materials and most importantly to interact with their students with the notion of gender in mind. This perspective should be included in the formation and training of teachers. In class, the teacher should adopt strategies to raise children's critical awareness. Many researchers insist on looking at the activities of reading and writing in class as opportunities to speak about one's experience of the world and learn about the others' ways of dealing with the same world. According to Barone (2011), "*children require opportunities to explore books emotionally and intellectually, not just use them to learn to read.*"(p. 3).

One of the most important ways to teach students how to deal with literary texts is by offering them opportunities to discuss the ideas and messages, they think, are transmitted to them. Bull & Letcher (2009) believe that students should be encouraged to respond, connect, and reflect on the literature they are reading. Students should be guided in their analysis of style and intertextuality. Bull and Letcher argue that this,

can help readers engage with texts in multiple and varied ways. Examining characterization and imagery helps students to take a closer look at style in a focused study of a single text.

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<sup>37</sup> (MOT)

<sup>38</sup> (MOT)

Exploring ways in which readers can create intertextual connections while reading *Twilight* helps students understand how literature connects to their knowledge, experience, and reading history.

(p. 116).

The class setting can certainly be exploited to perpetuate positive ideas about gender. After reading a story the teacher, for example, can encourage the pupils to discuss the roles of the characters. He/ she can shift from traditional stories to modern settings without informing the readers in order to study their responses. The pupil's responses could be easily collected if the teachers adopted the right strategies. The following imaginary conversation might be considered as one of the strategies.

Teacher: What do you think of Jenny, the main character in the story?

Student 1: I like the fact that she can easily make her dreams come true!

Student 2: Jenny is very courageous; I want to be like her!

Student 3: Is it a good thing that a man is saved by women? This is a little bit weird!

Student 4: Jenny is not like any other girl! She behaves like a boy! She looks like a tomboy I guess!

Student 5: My sister speaks exactly in the same way! It is weird but Jenny reminds me of my sister Liz.

To conclude, we can say that the role of school as a social institution is to not only to educate individuals about how the world is, but also how the world can be experienced in better ways. School can be an effective agent of change in society. This change can be reflected in the narratives addressed to children. Positive ideas about beings and relations can be reflected in the 'educational discourse'. The educational setting can also represent a good epistemological site for conducting research about gender issues. What happened in the French schools in 2014, illustrates well the need to take issues, related to gender, seriously. Such incidents offer good opportunities to researchers to carry out investigations.

### 5.2.5. Conclusion

As it has been pointed out, the writers' choices, the publisher and librarian's decisions and the parents' responses, contribute to the perpetuation of positive ideas about gender. According to Barone (2011), nowadays, the opportunities to fight gender stereotypes are diverse. There are many groups of adults, parents, teachers, district administrators, librarians, the public, and publishers, who attempt to protect children from the perceived inappropriate content of some books.

If we look back in history, we can deduce that the librarians were the first to look for what was appropriate for children, simply by creating special spots for children's books in their libraries, separated from the books for adults. Later, other institutions started to assume this responsibility such as associations and media.

Nowadays children's books, more than any other publications, are subject to criticism and even censorship. They are written by adults and may be shaped by their beliefs and opinions. Ray (2004, in Barone, 2011) notes that children's books are written with the current view of childhood in mind and include topics that authors perceive as relevant to them. *"True representations of women and men improve healthy growth while nonrealistic stereotypical representations would cause negative effects on children viewers"* (Remafedi, 1990, p.60).

Entertaining children is no longer the only function of a picture's book or even a fairy tale. The industry of children's fiction has witnessed a growth of informational texts. A book is a source of entertainment but at the same time, it is used to teach children about countries and cultures. Among the challenges that the producers of books have to face is the cultural and racial diversity. Nowadays many authors tend to include, in their stories, characters from different backgrounds. Special awards are even offered to writers who write for minorities such as the Blacks. The Coretta Scott King Award, which was launched in 1974, is offered to African American writers and illustrators.

However, the real challenge for those whose task i.e. to scrutinize books, which are said to be harmful for children is the fact that many authors for children can publish their books by themselves. In fact, many books are published and sold directly via the internet.

Zipes (2009) focuses on the effects of digital technologies on today's market. The questions he asks are: with children being increasingly seen as consumers, will literature be produced solely to encourage their buying without regard for quality and Craft? With the new dominance of design, will images become more salient than words? Zipes (2009) notes that "*If children are being reconfigured to act primarily as savvy consumers and supporters of globalized capitalism, alphabetic literature, as we have understood it, is incidental to their major interests.*" (P.24–25).

A very efficient way of knowing about the children's points of view, towards certain gender stereotypes would be to study their responses to literary works. This can be done in class where the teacher can note the pupils' Responses to books, which focus on non- traditional gender roles, as well as on books, which perpetuate stereotypical assumptions. The teacher or the parents can discuss the content of the books with children. Asking questions such as: what do you think of the role of the female characters? If you were the writer, how would you represent them? might be very fruitful. In the view of Barone,(2011), "*Response is grounded in the belief that reading is an active process, with meaning being constructed continuously through intellectual and emotional connections.*" (p.39).

In class, this may be done collectively through quizzes or games. The teacher can read the story loudly and then asks her pupils to write anything about what she/he has read.

The types of questions may vary from one context to another. To illustrate with an example, the teacher can read the first part of the story, '10,000 Dresses' and asks the pupils whether William can wear a dress or not. Unlike the teachers, the parents are more comfortable to discuss gender issues with their children. It is not an easy task, but at least they know their children better than they know anyone else. Many of the comments, cited before, provide sufficient evidence that some parents do take

the gender issue very seriously. Not all parents are passive when it comes to the selection of the books for their children. Finally, the writers, the illustrators and the publishers should take into consideration children's responses directly, either by reading the children or their parents' comments on the blogs, or by referring to the various studies on children's attitudes.

According to El Inani (1999, p.113)<sup>39</sup> In the Arab world, most of the children's stories are translations, most of which do not suit the social realities and the national values in the Arab societies. They are just a reflection of societies, which are so different from our society, in terms of objectives and values. El Inani (1999) adds that people in the Arab world should be attentive to the danger these stories may contain; despite the fact that they are easy to read, attractive and full of suspense, they may serve to the perpetuation of violence. Such stories as Superman and Tarzan serve to "*perpetuate the supremacy of the white man.*"<sup>40</sup>(p.113).

The exploration of the part that certain social institutions take in the process of the elimination of wrongful and negative gender stereotypes, demonstrates that the writers of the short stories, of the fairy tales or of the picture books for children are not the only responsible for the production or the eradication of gender stereotypes. The different social instructions starting from the family should contribute as real agents of change. According to Teubert (2010) "*The world, our lives, the things we do or don't do, and what happens to us, have no meaning at all, in as much as we do not appropriate them through interpretation.*" (p.1-2). Indeed, the writers, the parents, the teacher, the publisher and all those who are for the eradication of gender inequalities should make use of discourse to perpetuate positive ideas about girls and boys, women and men regardless of their physical attributes and social roles. Teubert (2010) argues that people assign meaning to what they do and what others do. Indeed, people create realities and these realities are in texts. Discourse then, constructs meanings and points of view, positions the readers in the world and positions the world to the reader. The investigation of the readers' comments, for example, shows that the reader is not a passive recipient of fixed ideas

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<sup>39</sup> (MOT)

<sup>40</sup> (MOT)

and meanings. In spite of lack of experience, the child is also an active reader. According to Fowler's (1996), the reader is well equipped with a certain discursive potential. That is to say that the reader activates his/ her prior knowledge, constructed through the reading and processing of previous discourses in order to reconstruct the texts he/ she is exposed to and is likely to reproduce or resist, in the form of mental representations. This activation of the previous knowledge on the part of the reader is known as "*productive consumption*." (Fowler, 1996, p.7). Therefore, even if the writer chooses to resist or sustain the status quo, he/she cannot always manage to affect all the readers in the same way.

In contemporary societies, where every aspect of the social life is undergoing accelerating globalization, the writers of children's fiction, the producers as well as the distributors and consumers of texts are confronted with several fundamentally significant issues such as multiculturalism, and massive economic and technological growth. These forms of change have served to the destabilisation and problematization of several social constructs such as: family, identity, masculinity, femininity, sexuality, power and so on. Coulthard and Ledma (2008) explain the impact of the social changes on the stability of identity when they say, "*With the innumerable social and technological changes of recent times, our sense of a stable identity anchored in familiar social class hierarchies and cultural practice conventions has come under threat* (p.1). They argue that identity is constantly re-invented to "*suit the emerging complexity of social situations, needs and conditions.*" (Coulthard and Ledma, 2008, p. 2).

Most of the social conventions related to gender are at the mercy of the social circumstances. Man and women, boys and girls are no longer associated with the same attributes, actions, and values. The notion of the self has changed. Even the notion of the self has been problematized and if one wants to consider the roots of

change, he/she can go back in history. According to Sloterdijk (2005), Western notions of self began to change with the rise in sea-borne expansionism and trade in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The European people started to realise that the European continent was but a small component of a much larger world. This shift deeply affected and complicated European sensibilities about social positioning, personal identity, life trajectory, fate and opportunity. According to (Sloterdijk, 2005), the seas have moved people far from home and far from strict religious understandings, narrow cultural mores, rigid social structures and fixed positionings and identities.

Nowadays we can no longer speak about the impact of the seas, but we can speak about the impact of the internet and the social media, which is as huge as the impact of the sea-borne expansionism and trade in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in Europe. The story of Razia as narrated in Zaslow (2009) can be suitable for the illustration of the confusion and complexities experienced by many people in modern societies. Razia is a seventeen-year old Muslim girl from New York. For Razia, being a Muslim girl in the United States, where standards of beauty are made so ideal, is not that easy. To overcome her trouble and regain control over her body, she engaged in two projects. The first is a school project for her social science research class. For this, class Razia developed and conducted a survey on beauty and body issues. She hoped that through the project she would understand what compelled women to “follow the rules” as she herself felt compelled to do. Of her involvement in this project she says, “I hope I will have more understanding of where I should be and what really does matter and what I’ve been taught is the right thing versus what isn’t right.” The same confusion might be experienced by millions of men and women, all over the world.

The analysis of the different responses to the liberated children’s fiction reveals that what these attitudes have in common is the desire to live in a society where all people enjoy the same rights and advantages. According to Ridgeway (2011) “*One obvious source of alternative gender beliefs, of course, is people’s commitment to egalitarian rather than status-unequal gender relations.*” (p.134).

The investigation of the content of some of the so-called liberated fiction has also shown that the elimination of many of the gender stereotypes which, may be considered as negative or wrongful in certain societies, may be considered as unacceptable in other societies. The truth is that people do not all belong to the same racial or ethnic category that holds slightly different beliefs about who men and women are and how they should behave ( Kane 2000 ). Even for the minorities who exist in all parts of the globe, it is not an obligation to adopt the same standpoints. For example, African Americans tend to hold slightly less polarized, more moderate gender beliefs that see little contradiction between care work in the home and paid work ( Collins 1991 ; Dugger 1988 ).

The complexities related to contemporary societies are thus, the result of the existence of contradictory cultural, religious and political values, which are invested and perpetuated in discourse. The producers of texts, on the one hand, tend to struggle to get their values more prevalent, and on the other hand, the readers get more and more confused as they try to negotiate those values before they become part of their habitus. As mentioned previously, the notion of 'habitus' as advocated by Bourdieu (1971) refers to "*a set of deeply interiorized master-patterns...(which) may govern and regulate mental processes without being consciously apprehended or controlled*" (p. 192-3). When people, for instance, use such adverbs as 'normally', 'naturally', this is because they believe that their thoughts and actions are right and legitimate and should be generalized and adopted by the others. Bourdieu argues that the power of the dominant groups, in society, ensures that it is their habitus that is dominant over others.

As a conclusion, experts from different disciplines should join hands to raise people's awareness about the interactions between different social practices and language, and about the consequences of such interactions on the life of individuals and groups of people, especially children, who may be victims of manipulations on the part of the adults. Indeed, children absorb huge amounts of tacit knowledge about

appropriate gendered practices and gendered behaviour, which, because of the lack of experience they are just taken for granted.

### 5.3. Original Quotations

#### Page 254

1. " و ليس كل ما يكتب للأطفال يمكن ان يكون مناسباً لهم. فما لم يكن المؤلف على وعي بأهداف و اتجاهات و قيم المجتمع و ما لم يكن فاهماً و مدركاً لخصائص نمو الاطفال و مطالب هذا النمو و ما لم يكن مقتنعاً و مؤمناً بأهمية ما يكتب للأطفال و اثره في توجيههم و تشكيل سلوكهم فان كتابته لن تحقق الهدف المنشود"

(Halawa,2003 :193)

2. " ادب الكبار تبدعه القرائح، و ظل مطالب الحياة . تتم عملية الابداع دون شروط سابقة و توجهات خاصة اما ادب الاطفال ، فانه يصاغ في ظل شروط سابقة ينطوي على التوجيه. كما ان المبدع لا يعيش تجربة بشرية كاملة و انما يعيش موقفاً تربوياً و يتسلح برؤية انسانية اخلاقية و هذه الرؤية تحسن النظر لما حولها من اشياء"

(Abdelwaheb,44 : 2006 ).

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3. "الثقافة أسلوب حياة ، و تتفاوت الأساليب، و يتنوع المضمون باختلاف المجتمعات، و قد يحصل هذا التفاوت إلى درجة التناقض، فما ينظر إليه في مجتمع ما على أنه فضيلة، قد يعد رذيلة في مجتمع آخر"

4. " فمفهوم العائلة على سبيل المثال في المجتمع الغربي اتسع اليوم ليدخل فيه ' الشذوذ الجنسي' و ' الزنا' على حين يعد ذلك من كبائر الكبائر و أقيح الرذائل في مجتمعنا المسلم"

#### Page 260

5. " هذا الواقع الأليم الذي تتعدد ظواهره، من غياب وجود هيئة رسمية تشرف على ثقافة الطفل و تتمتع بصلاحيات تخطيطية و تنفيذية، و من عدم وجود رابطة تجمع بين كتاب أدب الطفل، و تتخذ إجراءات قانونية و رقابية للحفاظ على حقوقهم و على مستوى الإنتاج الأدبي و الترويج له"

(Abdelwaheb, 2006:327)

6. " و لذلك فان من العوامل المؤثرة سلبياً على ادب الطفل اشكالية التواصل بين المكتبات العامة و الجمهور ، فالمكتبات العامة في العالم العربي بشكل عام تؤدي دوراً متواضعاً في الحرية الثقافية و تبقى فعاليتها محدودة لتخدم فئات قليلة من افراد المجتمع ، اما الوضع بالنسبة لمكتبات الاطفال فهو أكثر قتامة و من حيث العدد فهي محدودة جداً و ان وجدت فان الدور الذي تقوم به غالباً لا يبرح عن كونه امتداداً للأسلوب المدرسي التقليدي و الذي يهمل الفكر و الابداع و يبقى هذا الدور خارج اطار الحياة اليومية للفرد العربي"

(Abdelwaheb, 2006 :332)

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7. " المدرسة من خلال إستقطابها لكثير من الأعمال الأدبية المتميزة للأدباء و كتاب مشهورين ، فتقدمها إلى التلاميذ كمادة دراسية" و هي بذلك تحفز الأدباء و الكتاب اللذين يكتبون للأطفال بتطوير كتاباتهم حتى تكون موضع اختيار و تقدير من القائمين على أمر المناهج المدرسية" إضافة إلى رصدها للجوائز المالية ، و شهادات للمبدعين من الكتاب و المؤلفين."

(Abdelwaheb, 2006:228)

8. " ان اكثر قصص الاطفال رواجها هي القصص المترجمة رغم ان العديد منها لا يتلاءم مع اوضاع مجتمعنا و قيمنا الوطنية و القومية و انما تعبير عن اوضاع مجتمعات تختلف كثيرا في اهدافها عن مجتمعنا "

(El Inani, 1999 :113)

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9. "و لا بد ان ننتبه لما تتضمنه هذه القصص من اخطار ، رغم ما فيها من سهولة و جاذبية و تشريف للأطفال"

(El Inani, 1999 :113)

10. " و من الامثلة على هذا النوع من القصص ، قصص العنف و الرجل الخارق للطبيعة كقصص سوبرمان و طرزان الذي يؤكد تفوق الجنس الابيض على الاجناس الاخرى و قصص المنافسة حتى الموت كل هذه القصص تقدم قيما لا تناسب مجتمعاتنا العربية التي تقوم على التعاون و المساواة و احترام الانسان مهما اختلف جنسه او لونه"

(El Inani, 1999 :113)

## GENERAL CONCLUSION

A critical investigation of language and gender issues can be conducted by analyzing discourse. Many examples of data sites have been proposed by researchers working within the framework of feminist critical discourse analysis, such as, media, TV, books and so on.

The early assessment of gender representation has revealed that females are generally shown as passive, dependent and emotional. They have fewer responsibilities and are often shown as silly and childish. However, males are depicted as responsible, strong and self-confident. On the other hand, the mothers are represented as working at home alone, pious and devoted to their families whereas the fathers are shown as the bread-winners and do not interfere with house work.

As far as literary texts are concerned, it is commonly understood that these texts are different. Widdowson (2000) believes that literary texts do not mediate between first and second person parties. The readers are free to possess, appreciate and inhabit them. Even for other texts from different genres, the writer might not be fully responsible for the choice of this or that word. His/ her linguistic choices may well be made in a subliminal way. Discourse in this sense is to be considered as a social construct. It is in discourse that meaning is negotiated, created and resisted.

So, within the framework of gender and critical discourse analysis, the researchers are not concerned with what the producer of discourse means but rather what discourse means or might mean to the reader. The move from the language system to the discourse system has been guided by a set of considerations, such as the consideration of the social and cultural factors. Fairclough (1992) argues that while society has an impact on discourse, discourse can also transform society. Drawing on Hallidayian linguistics and Marxist-inspired theories, Fairclough views discourse as a social action rather than an individual realisation of language that reflects certain variables related to the situation. Discourse is one form in which people may act

upon the world and especially upon each other, as well as a mode of representation. Discourse is a practice to represent as well as to signify the world by constructing meaning. In this sense discourse can be used as a powerful tool to reproduce society or to change it through its social structures, relationships and values. So there is a kind of dialectic between individual agency and social structure. Fairclough (1992) points out that it is important that the relationship between discourse and social structure should be seen dialectically if we are to avoid pitfalls of overemphasizing, on the one hand, the social determination of discourse, and on the other hand, the construction of the social in discourse. The former turns discourse into a mere reflection of a deeper social reality, the latter idealistically represents discourse as the source of the social.

Fairclough's understanding of the relationship between discourse and the social world carries a certain amount of optimism about the role of the individuals intervening in social, historical, and political discourses. People call on the resources they have for making meanings, and in doing so, enter into a struggle over representation with political and ideological practices. This is what I have attempted to demonstrate by including the responses of the readers of the children's books. This same perspective has been adopted by the feminists working with language and gender issues. Discourse can be used as a means for the empowerment of women all over the world. Considering discourse from a critical and Marxist perspective, researchers focused their efforts on those mechanisms that lead to the 'normalization' 'legitimization' and 'naturalization' of beliefs and ideas about gender. People believe in certain ideas and reproduce them because they look so familiar to them and they do not even try to compare them with other beliefs from other places and other times.

The process of socialization also contributes to the reinforcement of the system of gender ideologies. Part of our socialization is to achieve familiarity with the different discourse genres. We learn the rules of recognition and production slowly, generally through education or sometimes by contact with the discourse community that uses them. In the domain of critical discourse analysis and many other disciplines such as stylistics, discourse analysis and pragmatics, genre is a key-concept. The analysts should recognize the genres or the sub-genres associated to the texts under

examination. The purpose could be to know which conventions related to genre govern or determine the writer's linguistic choices and the consequences of this on the production and consumption of discourse.

My research has focused on the representation of gender stereotypes in children's fiction. The investigation was guided by the need to know why writers and publishers still produce books that stereotype gender, and under-represent females or leave them out of the stories despite the fact that in contemporary societies females are no longer limited by their gender or stuck to traditional roles due to a lack of options. The study was also guided by the necessity to apply some of the tools elaborated by the researchers under the umbrella of CDA to uncover the hidden beliefs and ideas about gender.

While conducting my research I faced a number of challenges, especially while dealing with the subtle connections between language and ideology. The first challenge was to be able to see through the children's eyes; to identify the subtle connections between the words in the texts and the world outside, the way children might be able to do so. The second one was related to the selection of the tools for the detection of gender stereotypes by looking at the subtle configurations of the language use. The third challenge was to provide alternatives as to a better exploitation of discourse. Literary texts in general and children's fiction in particular, are conventional texts; the writer consciously or unconsciously prefers to stick to certain norms related to literary genres. One piece of evidence presented in this study is that in terms of intertextuality, the analysis of the literary texts demonstrates how the text interacts with conventions related to the genre itself, or conventions related to the writer's schemata, which in turn, is derived from the whole social cognition. Widdowson (2009) argues that literature is an optional extra. It should not be confused with the real world. Literature represents an alternative reality in parallel, which co-exists with that of everyday world, corresponds with it in some degree, but does not combine with it. You do not have to act upon it, or incorporate it into the continuity of your social life, or make it coherent with conventional modes of thought. *"You do not have to worry about whether your interpretation corresponds*

*with the author's communicative intention...in this respect, the literary text is in limbo : there is authorship but no ownership*" (Widdowson, 2000, p. 162). This account about literature might be plausible in so far as the reader keeps a distance from the literary book and is aware of the writer's point of view, which is perpetuated in the text either implicitly or explicitly. In the case of children's fiction, the reader may not be able to make a distinction between the real world and the parallel one. Many studies have shown that children's innocence could be threatened by certain social practices.

The notion of intertextuality has been exploited in this study to explore the most salient and subtle connections among the texts, and between the texts and the world outside. The main purpose was to understand how such connectedness could lead to the construction of gender stereotypes. The analysis of the stories, in terms of intertextuality, provided, thus a strong piece of evidence that the readers, especially children, are more likely to interpret certain connections in a way that would privilege male characters over female characters. Examples of these subtle relationships could be discerned by looking at the frequent association of male characters with themes of exile, adventure and wealth and the association of female characters with traditional settings such as home and village.

According to Widdowson (2000) the writers of children's books design their materials in a way that would allow them to attract the reader. They pay attention to the book only to the extent that it makes a satisfactory indexical connection for the reader. The writers, in the view of Widdowson (2000), assume that they are writing for readers not analysts. "*They do not realise that they might have critical linguists to reckon with*" (p.159). This is to say that the producers of texts adapt discourse to the social environment so that it is situationally appropriate. This theory has been used, in this study, while analysing the structuring of marriage, the family relationships, the social roles, the psychological desires and needs, and the representation of love, beauty and courtship.

The heterogeneous approach adopted in this study has served to make the following findings:

-The socio-systemic analysis has allowed me to associate the linguistic choices to ideological implications. The power structures are maintained by means of ideology. Fowler (1996) recognizes the necessity to make use of Halliday's approach in CDA when he says : "*My observation is that progress in the linguistic analysis of ideology has been greatest in those two areas where Halliday's ideational function has given the clearest methodological inspirations, namely lexical classification and transitivity*".(p.511). The analysis from a socio-systemic perspective has allowed the investigation of a wide range of linguistic properties to know why writers make certain choices among all the syntactic and vocabulary possibilities available, and the consequences these may have on the meaning- making process.

- The analysis of the samples, in terms of transitivity, has shown that the choices made by the author can lead the reader to construct an overall impression which privileges the male characters over female characters. The reader could assume that the girl is rather passive. She does not take initiatives and she is so dependent that she can never learn how to deal with difficulties and danger. In this case linguistic choices serve to the production of unequal relations of power; the distribution of transitive/intransitive verbs being unequal and not in favour of the female characters.

- The quantitative analysis enabled me to make some claims as to the frequent allocation of social roles and actions and the description of the characters' physical appearance, behaviour, and names and so on, to identify patterns of exclusion and inclusion in texts.

-The study highlights the role of the context. The social and political institutions involved in the production and distribution of discourse are of great importance. One of the tenets in CDA is that the analysis of texts should not be isolated from analysis of institutional and discursal practices that are included in texts.

The exploration of the involvement of certain social institutions in the process of the eradication of wrongful and negative gender stereotypes has shown that the writer of the short stories, of the fairy tales, or of the picture books for children, are not the only agents of production and reproduction of gender stereotypes. The different social institutions such as: the family, the school, the publishing house, should also contribute as real agents of change.

- Analysts of discourse should take into consideration the way in which texts are interpreted and responded to in addition to the analysis of the properties of the texts itself as well. A very efficient way of knowing about the children's visions, opinions and attitudes towards certain gender stereotypes would be to study their responses to literary works. This can be done at home where parents should interact with their children openly and critically or in class where the teacher can include relevant activities within their teaching materials.

-This study has proved the efficiency of certain tools, used in FCDA, to track gender stereotypes in children's fiction. I have attempted to demonstrate how gender stereotypes are in fact closely tied up with the gender ideological system, in spite the difficulty to discern how ideologies operate in texts. I have drawn on Thompson's checklist (1990) of modes of operation of ideology. Thompson suggests five strategies adopted to use language as a tool of domination, dissimulation, unification, fragmentation and reification. I used some of these modes to demonstrate how gender stereotypes are constructed in discourse in a very subtle way. I also focused on the impact of such perpetuation of ideology on the construction of the reader's point of view about gender.

-The analysis provided an important answer to the question, why stereotypes tend to persist? While producing texts, the writers consciously or sub-consciously make certain linguistic choices and incorporate certain linguistic features that would lead to the production and reproduction of existing gender stereotypes. The process would be more accelerated if the writers draw on the knowledge they share with the reader. By referring to the 'common habitus', to make their discourse more accessible and

understandable, the writers reproduce the status quo. The analysis of the structuring of certain social institutions and practices such as: courtship, family, marriage, has demonstrated that the inclusion of a set of shared beliefs and values within discourse might lead to their production again.

-The study has revealed that the traditional types of roles, the personality characteristics and the feminine beauty ideal have remained common themes in popular children's literature. I have also looked at possible consequences for females rooting from these consistent common themes such as, self esteem issues, deterring females from pursuing further dreams, and sexist beliefs and behaviours. I have discussed the impact of social and cultural changes on discourse. I have shown how in liberated literature, writers have started to challenge some of the toughest gender stereotypes. Females started to be associated with a variety of roles previously dominated by men.

-Another revelation in this study is that the existence of a set of new norms besides the traditional ones may create real confusion, and the pressure to negotiate ideologically opposed gender expectations is the basis for gender conflict. Boys and girls, women and men feel depressed , confused and dissatisfied when they think that they have failed to meet, or are obliged to meet the gendered expectations.

-The analysis has allowed the identification and the description of the powerful socializing function of language. The analysis of the content of some of the liberated children's books, the readers' responses as well as the decision makers' responses, has revealed how these responses are based on different criteria. These differences highlight the significance of discourse as a means for negotiation. Texts become a site of "*struggle over meaning*" (Clark and Ivanic, 1997, p.173). Clark and Ivanic say that the readers have the opportunity to learn three different messages from a text: Firstly, they are developing a sense of the writer's identity- her/ his views, attitudes, writing and thinking style, intellectual abilities [...] Secondly, they are reading a message about themselves: what sort of person they are expected to be as a

reader of this text. Thirdly, they are reading a message about their relative power and status in relation to the writer. (Clark and Ivanic, 1997, p.163) In other words, they learn what values and beliefs the author has; what values and values she/he expects, the readers to have; but they also learn what they can do to resist values and beliefs that the writer has attributed to them but that they reject. This is what the authors call 'the *ideological dimension*' (Clark and Ivanic, 1997, p.164) of the dialogue taking place between the writer and the reader. The challenge represented by the prospect of resistance is no doubt intimidating but liberating at the same time.

-Gender norms also affect the distribution of wealth and power, because the norms for success in position of authority collide with norms of femininity. The social norms for position of authority include that one should show assertive behaviour and decisiveness; whereas norms of femininity put clear limits on how assertive a woman can be before she is considered aggressive and thus evaluated negatively. Identical behaviour in leadership or problem-solving situations is often judged very differently for women than for men, with women judged more negatively than men.

These conflicting norms put on women in a contradictory situation either they adhere to the social norms regulating leadership positions, and the professions, but then they are seen as too aggressive, and too masculine, or they conform to the social norms which stipulate how a woman should behave, but then they are seen as too passive, sweet, and insufficiently ambitious to be able to succeed in the hard male world.

-The investigation of the gender representation in some of the liberated children's books and the readers' responses has revealed the impact of the social and cultural changes. The writers attempt to exploit the social and cultural gains that have been made in the past twenty years. For instance, when the writers chooses to give the main character a gender-neutral first name ,or when he/she includes homosexual families, causing thus contradictions between traditional gendered subject positions and new gender relations. The changes that contemporary societies have witnessed over the previous few decades have certainly affected the discourse in general and the discourse of children's fiction in particular.

-The study of the short stories in the fourth chapter, in addition to the analysis of the children's books in the fifth chapter demonstrates various forms of gender variation:

- Gender is constructed so as to include two distinct categories, feminine and masculine.
- Gender is constructed so as to contain more than two categories, masculine, feminine and X.

Some of the alternatives for stereotypical representations of gender have been proposed in the fifth chapter. As Simpson (1993) argues, "*analysis for the sake of analysis is not sufficient; instead, the analyst makes a committed effort to engage with the discourse with the view of changing it.*" (p.5). Some guidelines related to the productions of children's fiction have been suggested. The checklist includes the following:

- The writers should keep a balance as to the inclusion of characters. The characters should come from different backgrounds.
- Stories should include people of different colour, race, religion and ethnicity, girls, children from poor families and children with disabilities.
- Different people should be depicted as decision makers or trouble makers. Boys and girls, women and men may collaborate to solve problems instead of always relying on one character.
- Different people should be portrayed as exhibiting the same psychological needs such as the need to impress, protect, love, build and dominate.
- The achievements of girls and women should be connected to their intellectual abilities instead of relating them to their physical appearances and their kinships.
- The writer should keep a balance as to the representation of power relations. The leading and supporting roles should be allocated equally to female and male characters.
- The writers should be aware of the power of discourse to impact people, either positively or negatively.

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## RESUME

Dans le domaine des études de langue et du genre, Les analystes critique et féministe du discours essaient de révéler les liens cachés comme ceux entre le genre, la langue, l'idéologie et le pouvoir. Leur accent est mis principalement sur les discours qui sont idéologiquement chargé et agissent contre les intérêts des femmes.

Equipé d'une théorie critique forte, les féministes travaillant sous l'égide de l'analyse critique du discours croient en la liberté des individus de faire des choix dans le discours et ils croient aussi à la possibilité de changer et de contester le statu quo.

Défier le statu quo conteste les stéréotypes qui impliquent des idéologies qui sont devenus «naturalisé» ou «acceptable» en dépit du fait qu'ils peuvent être très dangereux. Les hommes et les femmes sont tapés, classées et représentés selon les schémas de classification dans leurs cultures, en fonction de leurs positions sociales, de leur appartenance à un groupe, traits de personnalité, et ainsi de suite. Le pouvoir est clairement un facteur clé ici. Les stéréotypes ont tendance à être dirigé vers les groupes subordonnés (par exemple les minorités ethniques, les femmes) et ils jouent un rôle important dans la lutte hégémonique. Comme Fairclough (1995: 24) affirme, des moyens doivent être trouvés pour «dénaturaliser» certaines pratiques sociales les en augmentant la conscience critique.

Dans le domaine de la langue et études du genre, une grande partie de cette prise de conscience devrait tourner autour de la croyance que le sexe reste très saillant, non seulement en termes de l'identité qui est activement construite par les femmes et les hommes, mais aussi en termes de la façon dont ils sont perçus et jugés par les autres et représenté dans les textes. C'est dans le discours est, en effet, que les idéologies de genre sont (re) produites, négociées, soutenues et résistées.

Cette étude est consacrée à l'analyse des stéréotypes de genre dans la fiction des enfants. Elle est basée sur les théories et les outils développés dans cadre de l'analyse critique féministe du discours. Le corpus comprend des textes produits par un écrivain Algérien. La méthodologie adoptée est de relier les caractéristiques linguistiques textes (le micro) aux facteurs sociaux (macro).

L'analyse révèle que les outils utilisés pour détecter l'existence de stéréotypes de genre se sont révélés être très efficace dans la découverte des configurations subtiles de l'ancrage idéologique dans le discours. Le genre est toujours représenté d'une manière qui appuie le – statu quo. Les livres destinés aux enfants continuent de contribuer à la socialisation des enfants d'une manière très traditionnelle et stéréotypée et le processus de légitimation de l'illégitime est toujours en fonction.

L'étude révèle également que les auteurs des livres pour enfants ne sont pas les seules responsables de la production d'un tel discours ; de nombreuses institutions telles que l'école, la famille et les maisons d'édition sont des agents importants dans le processus de socialisation et du changement.

## ملخص

في مجال التحليل النقدي للخطاب ، يحاول الباحثون الكشف عن الروابط الخفية بين اللغة، السلطة والإيديولوجية .

أهمية الخطاب تكمن في كونه أداة للتأثير على الغير والخطورة تكمن في كونه أداة تستعمل من طرف بعض المؤسسات الاجتماعية القوية ، كالجحافة مثلا بنشر أفكارها للسيطرة على العقول .

قوة الخطاب تكمن أيضا في كونه أداة للتغيير وتحققي المساواة والعدالة الاجتماعية .

أكد الكثير من الباحثين على أن مسيرة التغيير تبدأ بمحاولة القضاء على الأفكار النمطية والمعتقدات الاجتماعية وخاصة تلك التي تكون سبب في نشر العنصرية واللامساواة.

التحليل النقدي للخطاب مكن العديد من المفكرين والباحثين المهتمين بقضايا المجتمع من المساهمة في إيجاد الحلول للكثير من المشاكل الاجتماعية. من بينها هي تلك التي تواجهها المرأة من تهيمش وهضم الحقوق في ظل التغييرات التي يشهدها العالم في كافة المجالات.

من بين الرهانات التي يعول عليها الباحثون هي التغلب على الصورة النمطية للرجل والمرأة في المجتمع .

الكثير من الأفكار السائدة عن دور وصفات وإمكانيات المرأة تجعلها في اقل رتبة من الرجل ، الأمر الذي تسبب في تخلفها عن الركب وجعلها بصفة عامة فاقدة للثقة بنفسها.

صناعة الأفكار النمطية وعملية تمريرها في كثير من الأحيان تكون بصفة سلسلة وخفية، عن طرق مثلا القصص التي نقرأها والمناهج الدراسية التي نجبر على تطبيقها والعمل بها.

هذا البحث هو محاولة للكشف عن عملية صنع الأفكار النمطية حول " الذكر " و " الأنثى " في خطاب أدب الأطفال . جانب آخر من الدراسة يهتم بعملية القضاء عليها باستعمال قوة اللغة في التأثير والتغيير .

الدراسة تركز على منهج علمي مبني على تحليل القصة مضمونا ولغة لتقصي البراهين والأدلة .

