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Master's Thesis

Exploring representations of gender roles in

Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone and

Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief

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MGBEN550 English 3, module 4 – Master's Thesis

Faculty of Education, Arts and Sports

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Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to explore the representations of gender roles in popular young adult fantasy literature and how this may be used to portray stereotypically feminine and masculine gender roles. By looking at how gender roles are represented in fantasy literature, I investigate how these representations may contribute to challenge or reinforce gender stereotypes. Simultaneously, I look at how these representations may invite or restrict the promotion and development of the values, ideas, and competence aims in the Norwegian national curriculum (LK20). After introducing the necessary theoretical considerations needed for the analysis and discussion of this thesis, I look at how fantasy, gender, gender stereotypes, and discourses may contribute to the gender representation of the characters in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher' Stone* and *Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief*. Investigating the representation of gender roles in English fantasy literature may contribute to the aims of LK20 regarding personal and social development, along with health and life skills such as gender and identity. The discussion of the two novels and how they can apply to the national curriculum may imply that they contribute to sustain gender stereotypes. This may emphasise the importance of the awareness and critical thinking of teachers and educators regarding selection of teaching materials, and how they use these materials.

Sammendrag

Hensikten med denne masteroppgaven er å utforske representasjonene av kjønnsroller i populær fantastisk litteratur for ungdom, og hvordan dette kan bidra til å presentere stereotypiske feminine og maskuline kjønnsroller. Ved å se på hvordan kjønnsroller er representert i fantastisk litteratur, undersøker jeg hvordan disse representasjonene kan bidra til å utfordre eller forsterke kjønnsstereotypier. Samtidig ser jeg på hvordan disse representasjonene kan invitere til, eller begrense utviklingen av, og bidra til å fremme verdier, ideer og kompetansemål i Læreplanverket for Kunnskapsløftet (LK20). Etter å ha introdusert de nødvendige teoretiske betraktningene som brukes i analysen og diskusjonen av funnene i denne oppgaven, ser jeg på hvordan fantastisk litteratur, kjønn, kjønnsstereotypier og diskurser kan bidra til kjønnsrepresentasjoner av karakterene i *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* og *Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief*. Å undersøke representasjoner av kjønnsroller i engelsk fantastisk litteratur, kan knyttes til målene til LK20 som omfatter personlig og sosial utvikling, og i tillegg helse- og livsferdigheter om kjønn og identitet. Diskusjonen av de to bøkene, og hvordan de kan være knyttet til den norske læreplanen, kan indikere at de bidrar til å opprettholde kjønnsstereotypier. Dette kan understreke viktigheten av bevissthet og kritisk tenkning hos lærere og undervisere når det gjelder valg av undervisningsmateriell, og bruken av disse materialene i undervisningen.

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1.0 Introduction to the thesis

1.1 Background and relevance

Literature and reading are frequently used in the field of education. The impact that literature and well written stories can have on a reader's mind and their personal development is not to be underestimated. Mar, alongside Fong and Mullin (2013, p. 370), found that exposure to fiction was positively related to performance on measures of interpersonal sensitivity. The characters in a novel may become role models to their audience. Additionally, the reader may recognise themselves in the characters, and may relate to their challenges and obstacles.

The way characters are portrayed and represented in written text may influence how the readers view the characters, how they relate to the characters, and how they view interpersonal relationships and societal values. Through the written text one may discover how different textual representations may contribute to the way in which the characters are represented. Written text may additionally shape how the characters are portrayed based on their gender. Although there have been quite a few studies on how gender is represented in literature, there are not as many studies looking at the connection to Norwegian education, or the representation within the fantasy genre. The research problem investigated in this thesis therefore relates to possible connections between gender representation, fantasy literature, and the Norwegian education.

The Norwegian national curriculum (LK20) provides the guidelines for the education of pupils in Norwegian schools. LK20 also includes curriculums for every subject and the overarching values and principles stated in the core curriculum (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2017). These values and principles should be present in every subject and in the overall education. Among many other aspects, the core curriculum includes values and principles that are based on fundamental Christian and humanist values and traditions, such as respect for human dignity, intellectual freedom, and equality (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2017, p. 3). The core value of equality is discussed within what Sunderland (2012, p. 21) refers to as first and second wave of feminism. The latter is concerned with the cultural representation of women in different media, including fiction and language. These forms of cultural representations may be present in both the teaching materials and the social environments in schools. This may emphasise that teachers and educators need to critically reflect on what teaching material they use in their classroom, and their role and responsibility to provide an education which promotes the values and principles of the core curriculum.

This thesis explores the representations of gender roles in the two popular fantasy novels *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* and *Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief*. The *Harry Potter*-novels have sold over 600 million copies world-wide, including *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, making them the bestselling novels of all time (Scholastic Media Room, 2023). The popularity of the first novel in the series may have been due to its coming-of-age story arc – containing well written characters and exciting elements – which may appeal to both children and young adults. Similarly, *Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief* has since its release gained recognition and popularity within the fantasy genre. According to sales statistics of the Percy Jackson-novels, they have sold over 180 million copies (Curcic, 2021). The novels share many similar qualities, that make them both appealing to children and young adults, which teachers may draw an advantage from. Some of these qualities are the use of young main characters, typically around the same age as the target audience, a story of self-discovery and development, and the importance of friendship. These qualities are arguably easily relatable for a young learners own lived experiences. By using materials pupils are familiar with and interested in, teachers may encourage reading and learning about topics in a way that is catered towards young learners.

The aim of this thesis is to investigate how written text may be used to portray stereotypically feminine and masculine gender roles, and exploring the representations of gender roles in popular young adult fantasy literature. The analysis of these novels will look at whether the written text represents gender stereotypes or not, and how these representations may shape one's views of oneself and society. What is interesting to look at is how exactly these two popular fantasy novels possibly contribute to represent gender roles in the fantasy genre, and whether they represent stereotypical gender roles. In addition, the thesis looks at how these novels may challenge or reinforce existing gender norms in modern society. Although our society may be more tolerant and diversified than ever before, there are still unfortunate representations and discourses about gender and identity that may suggest the need to further discuss these topics.

1.1.1   J. K. Rowling controversy

As this thesis explores gender roles in one of Rowling's most successful works, it is impossible to ignore one of the recent controversial events surrounding her transphobic remarks. On June 6th, 2020, in a response to the op-ed piece by Sommer et al. (2020, as cited in Gulley, 2022, p. 35), Rowling retweeted, commenting "'People who menstruate.' I'm sure

there used to be a word for those people. Someone help me out. Wumben? Wimpund? Woomund? Woomud?". On the same day as the retweet was posted, Rowling received backlash, in which she immediately responded:

> If sex isn't real, there's no same-sex attraction. If sex isn't real, the lived reality of women globally is erased. I know and love trans people, but erasing the concept of sex removes the ability of many to meaningfully discuss their lives. It isn't hate to speak the truth. […] At the same time, my life has been shaped by being female. I do not believe it's hateful to say so. (Rowling, 2020, as cited in Gulley, 2022, p. 36)

Rowling (2007a, as cited in Gulley, 2022, p. 37) herself claims she invites the reader to identify her with her works, claiming the *Harry Potter*-novels are in general "a prolonged argument for tolerance, a prolonged plea for an end to bigotry". In addition, Gulley (2022, p. 37) claims that Rowling has proved that she inhabits the values she locates in her works, as she has engaged in charitable work to promote and fight for these values. Despite these efforts, Rowling's remarks regarding gender identity and sexuality were deemed questionable and transphobic by many, which created a wedge in the fanbase of her popular novels, according to Gulley (2022, p. 32). She further claims that the conflicts arising due to these remarks made people question whether one can separate one's love for the *Harry Potter*-novels without providing an implied endorsement of Rowling's controversial remarks. Although an interesting topic to discuss, this thesis only explores the written text and contents of the novel *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, and not Rowling remarks. However, such controversial events in popular media aimed towards children and young adults, may emphasise the importance of teachers and educators to have awareness and insight to such events, considering Rowling's novels have made a powerful impact in culture and society. According to the core curriculum (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2017, p. 6), the schools must encourage and support each pupil's development and present common values needed to participate in society. Therefore, it may be important for teachers and educators to have the ability to address and discuss this, as pupils may be shaped by such events in popular culture. This may emphasise the importance of addressing topics such as equality, identity, and gender through the subjects in primary and secondary school, to encourage personal and social development of the pupils.

1.2   Research questions

The main area of interest in this thesis lies in exploring gender roles in popular fantasy novels written for young adults. The following research question will guide this research:

How are gender roles represented through written text in fantasy literature?

To investigate the overarching research question, I have formulated two sub-questions to further guide this research:

a. How do verbs, adverbs, and adjectives play a role in the representations of gender roles in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* and *Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief*?

b. To what extent do Rowling and Riordan challenge and/or reinforce stereotypical gender roles in these novels, and in which ways may be relevant to the Norwegian primary education?

1.3   Structure of the thesis

The first section of this thesis is the introduction. The two sub-sections prior to this, explained the background and relevance of this project, as well as presented the research questions. This sub-section explains how the thesis is structured and the contents of the different sections.

The second section of this thesis presents the theoretical considerations needed to proceed with the analysis and discussion. The first two sub-sections in this section, present the contents of LK20 and the core curriculum, and how they are related to gender, literature, and fantasy in the English subject. The next sub-section presents the fantasy genre, what it is, followed by the term "young adult fiction". Afterwards, it discusses the relation between the genre and English Language Teaching. The next sub-section presents the concept of gender and gender stereotypes. Within this sub-section, several additional sub-sections explain gender stereotypes, female and male stereotypes, children and gender stereotypes, gender stereotypes in educational context, and gender representation in literature. The next two sub-sections explain discourses and gender discourses, followed by the last sub-section about previous research on the topic.

The third section in this thesis presents the methodological considerations. The first sub-section provides the origins of critical discourse analysis (CDA), followed by an introduction to the method of CDA. The next sub-section provides the reasoning behind the data selection,

in terms of why these two novels were selected and the selection of data material to analyse. Finally, this section presents a synopsis of each novel.

The fourth section presents the analysis of the selected data. The analysis is conducted by critically analysing excerpts from the novels. This section is divided into two main sub-sections, and two additional sub-sections for each novel. The first sub-section analyses written excerpts from the novels including verbs, adjectives, and adverbs, and how they may contribute to the gender representation of the characters. The second sub-section analyses excerpts that may imply social constructs and stereotypical gender representations in discourses.

The fifth section in this thesis presents the discussion. This section discusses the findings from the analysis in relation to the theoretical considerations presented in the second section of this thesis and connects this to the research questions. Each research question is discussed in a separate sub-section for each novel. The second section is divided into two parts, the first one focusing on how Rowling and Riordan challenge or reinforce stereotypical gender roles; and the second section explores the possibility of personal and social development of pupils in the EFL classroom.

The sixth and final section of this thesis summarises the main ideas of the thesis. This section additionally presents the concluding remarks related to the topic and research of this thesis. In addition, this section discusses how this thesis may promote critical thinking and evaluation of teaching materials, what messages they may imply, and possibilities for future research on similar topics. This section is followed by a list of primary and secondary references.

2.0 Theoretical considerations

2.1   The Norwegian national curriculum

The following sub-sections present the possible relation between fantasy literature and the Norwegian national curriculum (LK20). Within LK20, the first sub-section looks at how the values and principles of the core curriculum (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2017), may be connected to fantasy literature. In addition to the core curriculum, this sub-section also addresses the possible relation between fantasy literature and the subject curriculum in English (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020), and how using literature in language learning may contribute to personal and social development.

2.1.1   The curriculum and gender

The education that the Norwegian schools provide their pupils is arguably an important arena for personal and social development. Additionally, it may an arena where pupils can express and explore their identity and sexuality. Schools are one of the arenas where all pupils receive similar education based on the similar values and principles. Therefore, the importance of teachers and educators teaching the same values and principles are implied by the guidelines in LK20, which is based on the values and principles that are reflected in the Norwegian society. Teachers and educators must facilitate personal and social development based on shared social values for all pupils. In addition, they must allow all pupils to develop their own identity and values to become fully able to participate in society. These responsibilities are stated in the core curriculum (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2017), which describes how schools must provide an education that will teach and promote these overarching values and principles to prepare the pupils to participate in society. These values and principles must be present in every subject, as well as present in the overall education of the pupils in terms of social development and democracy.

One of the many overarching values and principles that are presented in the core curriculum, is equality, which is a central aspect to the motivation behind this thesis. The core curriculum states that the education and training should promote, among other things, democracy and equality (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2017, p. 3). The curriculum further claims that through their education, the pupils must develop knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to master their lives and to participate in society. The pupils shall also be given the opportunity to be creative, committed, and inquisitive (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2017, p. 3), meaning there

needs to be room for the pupils to express themselves and their interests. This may include how the pupils express themselves in terms of their identity and gender. The core curriculum further emphasises the importance of equality and equal rights by stating that these values have been fought for throughout history and need protection and reinforcement (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2017, p. 5). This emphasises the importance of teaching values that may promote and protect these values. In addition, the curriculum expresses the importance of treating all pupils equally and make sure they are not discriminated against. This may also include oppression of marginalised group based on gender or race. Pupils also have the right to be given equal opportunities to make independent choices, and the school must consider the pupils' diversity and provide each pupil a sense of belonging, both in school and in society (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2017, p. 5).

Another fundamental value for the Norwegian education and society, as stated in the core curriculum, is human dignity. Human dignity builds on human rights which are important for the foundation of the Norwegian constitutional state (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2017, p. 5). The curriculum further claims that human rights are based on universal values that apply to everyone. Therefore, pupils' education must align with these rights and provide pupils with this knowledge. Principles regarded as part of human dignity and human rights, such as forgiveness, charity, and solidarity, are necessary aspects to encourage growth and development (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2017, p. 5). This may indicate that schools have a responsibility to provide the pupils with knowledge and room to express themselves and develop an understanding of each other – which includes a knowledge and understanding of gender and gender representation. The core curriculum further presents how encounters with different cultural expressions and traditions provide pupils with experiences that aid them to form their identity – including gender identity –, and to solidify ideals of inclusivity and diversity in society (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2017, p. 6). Some of these cultural expressions may be encountered through language learning and literature.

For the pupils to develop their skills and abilities to participate in society, the core curriculum emphasises that these developmental processes occur when pupils acquire knowledge of and insight to certain aspects through their education. These aspects may be for example language, society, culture, and worldviews (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2017, pp. 10-11). The core curriculum further claims that the pupils' social learning and development grow in interactions with others (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2017, p. 11). These interactions develop aspects including identity, self-image, opinions, and attitudes, which indicates that social

learning takes place in all aspects of pupils' education. Social learning includes learning about gender representations and stereotypes; and the interactions with others may be found in interacting with characters in literature.

The core curriculum emphasises the importance of dialogue in social learning. Dialogue shall provide pupils with the abilities to express their own opinions, and to have awareness of and to understand other people's point of view, and it may also encourage the pupils to be engaged and speak up on other issues including their own (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2017, p. 11). Therefore, it is important that teachers and educators facilitate communication and collaboration between pupils that promote these aspects. The pupils must also develop the competence to achieve awareness of their own attitudes, which may include understanding and having the ability to critically reflect, according to the core curriculum (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2017, p. 13).

The curriculum further adds that reflection and critical thinking are part of developing attitudes and ethical judgment. This may not only apply to the pupils, but also to teachers and educators. As stated in the core curriculum (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2017, p. 13), they must regularly reflect on the connection between the teaching in the subjects to the overarching goals, values, and principles of LK20. This may emphasise the importance of teachers and educators critically reflecting on the teaching materials they use, including how gender is represented.

The core curriculum stresses the importance of developing a positive self-image and confidence in one's identity, especially during the childhood and adolescent years (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2017, p. 15). Some of the areas that may contribute to this development, is found in the topic of health and life skills. Within this topic, there is the aspect of sexuality and gender, which is especially relevant to this thesis. Other aspects related to health and life skills include the ability to draw and respect others' boundaries, the importance of interpersonal relationships, and the ability to deal with thoughts, feelings, and emotions (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2017, p. 15).

Language learning is emphasised as an important aspect of pupils' education, according to the core curriculum (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2017, p. 6). Learning a foreign language, such as English, may contribute to the overall education of the pupils. Teaching and promoting the development of language proficiency and language identity, are important aspects in pupils' abilities to think, create meaning, and communicate through language. Language may be

viewed as a connecting factor between oneself and others. This is relevant for this thesis as it may be a contributing factor in social learning, which includes knowledge related to gender representations and stereotypes. The subject curriculum in English (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020) additionally presents several aspects of the English subject that may be applied to the aims of the core curriculum and the overall education of the pupils. In addition to the core curriculum, the subject curriculum states topics that should be included in the English subject, as they are relevant to the pupils' lives in general. Some of these topics are health and life skills, and democracy and citizenship (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020, p. 3). The curriculum further adds that the topic of health and life skills in the English subject, refers to the development of the pupils' ability to express themselves both in writing and orally (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020, p. 3). The topic shall also provide pupils with the abilities to understand and express the thoughts, feelings, experiences, and opinions, of themselves and others. To handle such aspects with linguistic and cultural competence may provide the pupils with a feeling of achievement, which may encourage and develop a positive self-image and identity, including gender identity (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020, p. 3). Democracy and citizenship refer to helping the pupils to develop their understanding of how their view of the world is dependent on culture (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020, p. 3). The curriculum states that the topic of democracy and citizenship within the English subject, emphasises how pupils may experience different cultures and societies on a global level when learning and communicating in English (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020, p. 3). These experiences facilitate new ways to interpret the world, promote curiosity and engagement, and contribute to prevent prejudices.

2.1.2   *The curriculum and literature*

The core curriculum states that language is an important aspect of belonging and cultural awareness (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2017, p. 6). The subject curriculum in English states that language learning takes place in the encounter with texts in English (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020, p. 3). This indicates that language learning may take place in numerous contexts and through a variety of ways, including fantasy and other fictional literature.

Language learning may contribute to the pupils' development of their understanding of the world and provide them with the necessary tools to express themselves and their attitudes, and to communicate with others. Language is an important aspect of identity and cultural

awareness, according to the core curriculum (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2017, p. 6). Therefore, teachers and educators must support the development of pupils' language proficiency and confidence in their identity. This may help them gain knowledge and understanding of common values needed to participate in a diverse society (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2017, p. 6).

Learning a foreign language may provide pupils the knowledge and skills to understand other cultures and languages. Therefore, English is an important subject when it comes to cultural understanding, communication, all-round education, and the development of the pupils' identity, according to the subject curriculum (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020, p. 2). In this, fantasy literature for children and young adults may be a contributing factor in expanding the pupils' cultural and social knowledge. It may additionally allow the pupils to explore aspects of their own identity in a safe manner. Nikolajeva (2006) claims that this exploration is one of the positive qualities of – and possibilities in – fantasy literature. In addition, fantasy literature for children and young adults presents them with an opportunity to explore and experience social situations and contexts that may not be available to them in their own lives. This may indicate the importance of becoming proficient readers, as this allows the pupils to explore such literature.

The subject curriculum further emphasises the importance of reading, writing, and oral skills, as they are important aspects to learn, communicate, and connect with others (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020, p. 2). The knowledge of and an exploratory approach to language, communication patterns, and social conditions may provide pupils with new perspectives of themselves and the world around them and help prevent prejudice. A way in which pupils may be presented these aspects, is through literature. This may be due to literature's ability to provide pupils with such insight through written text. Working with texts in English is included as one of the core elements in the subject curriculum, emphasising that literature may contribute to pupils' language learning. The curriculum emphasises the importance of experiencing, using, and exploring the language from the very beginning of the pupil's education, as it may provide them with a greater understanding of authentic language use. English literature may be an example of authentic language use, and how one may convey meanings and attitudes through language and communication patterns. Additionally, the subject curriculum refers to language learning as the development of language awareness and knowledge of the system of the English language (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020, pp. 2-3).

Learning how the English language is structured, may provide pupils with several options and possibilities of communication within the English language.

Working with texts in literature through reading, writing, and oral skills may contribute to develop pupils' knowledge of language and communication patterns. The skill of reading emphasises the ability to understand and reflect on various types of texts, according to the subject curriculum (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020, p. 4). Additionally, reading must contribute to reading pleasure and language acquisition, and encourage the use of reading strategies to understand implicit and explicit information. In addition, reading shall help develop pupils' abilities to critically reflect on and assess different types of texts (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020, p. 4). The skill of writing involves the ability to adapt the language to the purpose, receiver, and situations (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020, p. 4). This may indicate that becoming proficient writers in English may contribute to the pupils' abilities to critically reflect on the writing skills of others, including authors of fictional literature. Patterns of oral communication may be learned or developed through observing language and dialogue patterns in literature. The English subject additionally claims how oral skills may contribute to create meaning through listening, talking, and engaging in conversation (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020, p. 4). This may indicate the importance of talking about literature and topics, as well as read literature for the pupils, to encourage the development of these skills.

2.2   Fantasy literature

2.2.1   What is fantasy literature?

The term "fantasy" may be described as a creation of the imaginative faculty, whether expressed or simply envisaged. This may be expressed as imaginative fiction featuring especially strange settings and grotesque characters, which is also called fantasy fiction (Merriam-Webster, n.d.a). When used in a literary context, the word fiction simply implies that the written text, for example short stories and novels, is invented by the writers' imagination (Merriam-Webster, n.d.b). Sunderland (2012, p. 2) claims that the word "fiction" may include works of fantasy as well as works of realistic fiction, which can make it challenging to find a clear distinction between different types of fiction. However, Sunderland (2012, p. 2) points out that fantasy allows for additional dimensions to be used, compared to realistic fiction which is restrained by dimensions of reality. She further states that the ability

to add more dimensions to their stories allows the fantasy author to extend and broaden the female and male characters' identities and actions. Works of fiction typically have elements of humour and irony in them, which prohibits the reader from regarding or understanding an ironical or humorous text in a literal sense, according to Sunderland (2012, p. 2). Nikolajeva (2006) claims that the term fantasy in relation to literature is commonly used to indicate anything that is not related to realistic prose. The genre is considered one of the most ambiguous concepts in literary criticism, as it has been regarded as a genre, style, mode, or narrative technique. She further claims that the genre is sometimes regarded as "formulaic fiction" (Nikolajeva, 2006), meaning the fiction follows a specific formula or a set of rules. However, she claims there has not yet been established a completely satisfactory or comprehensive definition of the term fantasy to describe the range of texts encompassed by this term.

Nikolajeva (2006) claims that fantasy presents a specific relationship between the text and the reader in terms of belief. For instance, in fairy tales the reader is aware that the magical world and the events that take place there are fictional and impossible for ordinary human beings to endure or accomplish. In contrast, fantasy revolves around ordinary characters, where the author ensures the reader that the protagonist is alike themselves (Nikolajeva, 2006). This gives the reader the ability to envision themselves as the protagonist, imagining taking their place, and experiencing the events unfolding in the story.

Todorov's (1973, as cited in Nikolajeva, 2006) theory of the fantastic provides what Nikolajeva (2006) describes as a convenient approach to defining fantasy. The theory draws a clear distinction between the marvellous, the fantastic, and the uncanny. The fantastic relies on the hesitation of the protagonist, and the reader, when they are confronted with anything supernatural, according to Todorov (1973, as cited in Nikolajeva, 2006). The term supernatural, which is used in this theory, refers to anything that defies natural laws. For the fantasy protagonist, there is a dilemma that occurs when they are presented with the supernatural, whether it appears in our own world or if they travel to the magical world. According to Todorov's (1973, as cited in Nikolajeva, 2006) theory, this dilemma revolves around the protagonist's acceptance or denial of the existence of the supernatural. This distinguishes the fantasy genre from the fairy tale genre, as the protagonists in fairy tales have an understanding and acceptance of the supernatural, which, according to Todorov (1973, as cited in Nikolajeva, 2006) is emphasised by how the fairy tale hero will not interrogate or question its existence.

The plot of fantasy literature is easily recognisable, according to Nikolajeva (2006). The hero leaves home, meets their helpers and opponents, faces trials and challenges, and returns home having gained some form of wealth. The fundamental conflicts and patterns of fantasy, such as the combat between the good and evil, are present in other genres as well, and does not exclusive belong to the fantasy genre (Nikolajeva, 2006). She claims that a recognisable characteristic of fantasy literature is the presence of magic, or any form of the supernatural, in an otherwise recognisable and realistic world. This presence may take the form of magical beings, objects, or events, that may unfold into an entire universe or become reduced to a small magical part. Nikolajeva (2006) claims that the element of magic may make fantasy indistinguishable from fairy tales. However, the connection to reality is what differentiates fantasy from fairy tales. Fairy tales typically take place in an imaginative fantasy world, whereas the initial setting of fantasy is the real world. The characters in fantasy stories are transported from reality to a magical universe, and are often, but not always, brought back safely to reality. Another possibility may be for the magical universe itself to enter reality, in the form of magical beings, transformations, or objects (Nikolajeva, 2006). One of the more common ways magic is presented in fantasy, is through the concept of the Secondary world, according to Nikolajeva (2006). She further claims that fantasy can be roughly described as the narrative combining of the Primary and Secondary world. Here, the Primary world is considered as the real world, whereas the Secondary world is the imaginative, fantastical, or magical world.

According to Nikolajeva (2006), there are two ways to interpret the events taking place in a fantasy novel. The first interpretation is where the events may be accepted as real, where the reader accepts magic as part of the world created by the author. The second interpretation is where the magical events or circumstances can be explained in a rational way. Nikolajeva (2006) describes some of these rational explanations as being the protagonist's dreams, visions, hallucinations, or imaginations, for instance caused by fever or mental or emotional disturbance. Tolkien (1964, as cited in Nikolajeva, 2006) claims how well written and genuine fantasy creates Secondary belief (as opposed to Primary belief, such as myth and religion), allowing the reader to perceive the fantasy as real, which puts the reader in a temporary state of enchantment. The essence of fantasy lies in the confrontation between the ordinary and the extraordinary (Nikolajeva, 2006). Many authors therefore encourage their readers to maintain their belief and imagination, as they act as essential parts of spiritual growth, according to Nikolajeva (2006).

Although there are similarities between fairy tales and fantasy, such as the system of characters, Nikolajeva (2006) claims that even these similarities may distinguish the two genres. In fantasy, the hero may lack heroic features the fairy tale hero exhibits, such as fear or reluctance to perform their given task, and sometimes fail. The end goal for the protagonist in a fantasy story is rarely marriage or enthronement, but rather spiritual maturation, and the genre allows more freedom and experiments with gender transgression (Nikolajeva, 2006), or challenging gender norms, than fairy tales. She mentions that the fantasy genre has inherited superficial attributes of fairy tales, such as sorcerers, magical entities, magic objects, and magic food and drinks. However, due to the author's imagination, the fantasy genre transforms and modernises these elements. Although modernised, Nikolajeva (2006) claims that the function of these elements is essentially the same in both fantasy and fairy tales.

Nikolajeva (2006) mentions that an important issue when discussing the fantasy genre is whether the genre should be treated as escapist literature, where the reader is taken away from everyday problems into the realms of dreams and illusions. She further states that although much of contemporary fantasy can be viewed simply as entertainment, the best examples of fantasy for children use the fantastic form as a narrative device to create a metaphor for reality (Nikolajeva, 2006). The Secondary world creates a wide range of possibilities of being interpreted as the protagonists' mind or inner landscape. Fantasy allows the authors to discuss important existential, psychological, and ethical issues in a slightly more detached manner, which is deemed more effective for young learners rather than "straightforward realism", according to Nikolajeva (2006). She claims that an example of this is how the battle between good and evil may be less disturbing yet more persuasive when described within an imaginary world, rather than within the direct surroundings of the reader (Nikolajeva, 2006). She further elaborates that the spiritual growth of the protagonist can become more tangible when presented through a struggle with an external magic force, rather than the inner tension. Fantasy empowers the young protagonist in a way that cannot be achieved in realistic prose, according to Nikolajeva (2006). This is evident in the way the protagonist can be empowered to challenge existing power relations, without disrupting the real order of the world (Nikolajeva, 2006).

2.2.2   *Young adult fiction*
Sunderland (2012, p. 3) introduces the concept of children's fiction by simply questioning whether children's fiction should be regarded as a separate category, and if so, what the

category includes and/or excludes. The clear distinction between children's fiction and adult fiction remains somewhat ambiguous, as many children may read novels intended for adults, and adults may enthusiastically read novels intended for children (Sunderland, 2012, p. 3). Reynolds (2005, as cited in Sunderland, 2012, p. 3) argues that the subject of children's literature includes everything from the earliest literature such as myths, legends, folk, and fairy tales, to the latest work for teenage readers. He claims that the age range of the children's literature audience may be anywhere from new-borns to those preparing to leave school (Reynolds, 2005, as cited in Sunderland, 2012, p. 3), including anything from children to teenagers in this definition. Knowles and Malmkjaer (1996, as cited in Sunderland, 2012, p. 3) simply puts that children's literature is any narrative written and published for children. Young adult fiction may therefore be fiction aimed towards readers aged 13 years and upwards (Belbin, 2011, pp. 140-141).

For the sake of continuity, this thesis uses the term young adult fiction when discussing the chosen literature for the analysis of this thesis. Due to the ambiguity and broad aspects of the terms children's fiction and young adult fiction, there is reason to believe that young adult fiction falls under the category of children's fiction. However, according to Belbin (2011), there is a somewhat universal understanding that young adult fiction is written for the upper primary school, as it typically is aimed at "tweens" or young teenagers, up until adult age. As both main characters in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* and *Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief* are approximately this age, and that the novels are written in a way that may be too advanced for lower primary school pupils to read on their own, these novels may be more suitable for upper primary school pupils.

2.2.3   *Fantasy literature and English language teaching*

The importance of reading literature as an educational tool is not only emphasised in LK20, but it has also been pointed out by several authors and researchers. According to Belbin (2011, p. 134), reading is a crucial skill in our society. He additionally claims that reading imaginative works, where the reader is allowed to see the world from other people's point of view, is a crucial part of the journey from adolescence into adulthood (Belbin, 2011, p. 134). Fantasy literature may be read in different ways based on several factors. According to Hunt (1991, as cited in Sunderland, 2012, p. 6), some of these factors may include what the reader brings to that text. For example, young children, who are typically less socially schooled than adults, can create numerous meanings from a given work of fiction, including those

unpredictable by adults. For the authors of young adult fiction, their purpose is to intentionally try to keep young readers reading, both the reluctant readers and those who enjoy reading, according to Belbin (2011, p. 134). When attempting to provide a fresh, rewritten spinoff from an older crime novel, Belbin (2011, p. 135) discovered that one of the most exciting aspects of young adult fiction is that the audience you are writing for experience these rewritten versions as something entirely new and fresh. This may be a reason why many novels written for young adults contain many similar structural elements and contents, but in a different setting and with different characters.

Nikolajeva (2006) claims the fantasy genre boosted in popularity after Rowling's release of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*. However, despite being a dominant genre within young adult fiction in the English-speaking world, the genre did not seem to be a continuous tradition elsewhere. According to Belbin (2011, p. 140), young adult fiction is the least economically significant area of books written for children and young adults, as the audience predominantly rent these books as opposed to buying them. This makes it difficult for authors to earn a living from this genre of writing, and many authors feel as if they are working in the dark or doing important work with little recognition. This may cause the genre to become an unattractive one for many authors, where some authors even choose not to restrict their work into categories simply for children or adults, according to Sunderland (2012, p. 4). However, for the sake of marketing they are forced to do so. Watson (2001, as cited in Sunderland, 2012, p. 4), states that the survival of children's literature in the market-led world relies solely on the enthusiasm of their readers, and that this enthusiasm may stem from both the loyalty of young readers, but also the affectionate allegiance of adult readers. According to Belbin (2011, p. 138), the market for young adult books is largely, however not exclusively, educational. Some young adult authors may believe their books are being read in schools coincidently. However, these authors must acknowledge that in addition to being artists and authors for young adults, they are also educators. He also raises the argument that all young adult novels arguably are aimed at emerging readers, and that this is one of the qualities takes makes them young adult novels. The educational impulse is the heart of young adult fiction, according to Belbin (2011, p. 138).

Belbin (2011, pp. 140-141) states that young adult fiction has its own specific concerns, providing a vital place for reflection and escape during adolescence, the most difficult phase of many people's lives. According to Belbin (2011, p. 138), the responsibility of fiction is not to provide answers, but to ask the right questions. This is to ensure both reluctant and

enthusiastic readers to enjoy reading and to provide them with the motivational tools to continue reading into adulthood. Belbin (2011, p. 141) addresses the ambiguity of what exactly young adult fiction is, by providing a metaphor to describe the transition from children's fiction to adult fiction. In this metaphor, young adult fiction is a bridge, or an abundance of bridges, that carries the reader across the deep river that separates children's fiction, which many grow out of in early adolescence, from adult fiction (Belbin, 2011, p. 143). He further claims that some readers may independently swim cross this metaphorical river of adolescence with confidence. However, for many other readers, there is a need for a bridge to take them to the other side. For educators, the most pressing concern should be to aid the readers who may need the support of this bridge, according to Belbin (2011, p. 143). He further claims how many readers are not able to evaluate how wide or deep this river may be, and that depending on the reader, they may require a long, short, high, or low bridge. Some readers may fall or jump off this bridge, but young adult authors must attempt to keep these readers on the bridge through entertainment (Belbin, 2011, p. 143).

According to Belbin (2011, p. 143), young adult authors, such as himself, are aware that their audience require a plot which grabs their attention from the beginning, and a fast delivery of traditional delights of storytelling, to pay attention to the story. He further adds that whilst entertaining their audience, young adult authors use this opportunity to address areas that concern the target readers. These areas may be relationships, risk task, and the meaning of life (Belbin, 2011, p. 143).

2.3   Gender and gender stereotypes

When analysing and talking about gender in written discourse, one needs a wide understanding of the term itself and how it may have different interpretations. Defining the term gender is not an easy task. This emphasises the importance of exploring the complexity of this term, and to gain the necessary knowledge and understanding to use it. These knowledges and understandings are important to maintain a foundation when analysing gender roles in the two chosen novels for this thesis, as it seeks to explore gender roles. Therefore, this section presents aspects and understandings of the term gender.

2.3.1   What is gender?

According to Sunderland (2012, p. 22), gender may refer to both grammatical gender and social gender, the latter being the focus of this thesis. She claims that social gender can be understood in different ways and proposes two models of understanding the term. The first model is "people-based", and the second model is what she describes as "ideas-based" (Sunderland, 2012, p. 22). In the first model, people are seen as socially shaped, which includes literacy practices, such as what adults write for children. Additionally, it includes what females and males read and write, and any differential tendencies in the way women, men, girls, and boys talk (Sunderland, 2012, pp. 22-23). This model has often looked at differences concerning female and male humans, the question of "who" we are talking about in terms of gender (Sunderland, 2012, p. 23).

Sunderland (2012, p. 23) emphasises the importance of mentioning several cautions regarding the people-based model, the first caution being that the term "difference" is not absolute, and that gender is a matter of tendencies rather than differences. Women and men are not two separate groups, but the differences between women and men are greater than those among women and among men, according to Sunderland (2012, p. 23). The second caution is that gender-differential tendencies vary with culture, context, and community of practice (a collection of people who come together through mutual engagement in some common endeavour), according to Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992, as cited in Sunderland, 2012, p. 24). The latter means these tendencies are conditional or dependent on certain circumstances to take place. A study by Milroy (1980, as cited in Sunderland, 2012, p. 24) found that in one Belfast community, the young women had in some respects more vernacular pronunciation than the young men. The women in the community had jobs and worked together, therefore socialised together, whereas the men were unemployed at the time. This study suggested that social network was a more relevant sociolinguistic variable as opposed to gender, according to Sunderland (2012, p. 24).

The third caution is that gender (identity) is not "fixed", but rather something that fluctuates and changes throughout the course of a lifetime (Sunderland, 2012, p. 25). This entails a view of identity as going beyond the "role" to a "sense of self", according to Sunderland (2012, p. 25). She further claims that this view of identity arguably derives from what we associate ourselves with, in terms of both ideas and the important social roles in our lives, but it may also come from characteristics that are "assigned" to us by others (Sunderland, 2012, p. 25). She claims that this assigning of characteristics may be seen as construction or positioning.

Positioning means that the person in question is positioned as "something", which attributes them as a certain identity rather than a different identity (Sunderland, 2012, p. 25). She claims that positioning is considered more of a longitudinal, long-term, diachronic change, but that our identities will fluctuate from context to context, and that we may also experience more than one identity at the same time. In fiction, this becomes apparent as the narrator may position the reader a certain way, the author may position the characters through the narrator, and the characters themselves may construe themselves and position each other in their words in certain ways (Sunderland, 2012, p. 26).

The fourth caution is agency, meaning that despite socialisation, identity attribution, and positioning by others, there is still room for opposing and refusing such attributions, according to Sunderland (2012, p. 26). She claims that because of this agency, one may "perform" what one sees as one's gender, one's sense of femininity and masculinity. This is likely context dependent. For example, a man may perform as a "new man" in his home and perform more "macho" in the company of less reconstructed men (Sunderland, 2012, pp. 26-27). The fifth caution, which according to Sunderland (2012, p. 27) is arguably the most important theoretical one, is the constructing of gender. This caution turns away from seeing language use as a reflection of gender, for example the idea than women and men speak in a certain way because they are women and men, to seeing language as constructing gender (Sunderland, 2012, p. 27). Construction here includes one's own spoken language functioning to construct oneself, and one may 'construct' gender in talk or writing in an obvious way. This can be by positioning oneself by saying "as a woman…" or "my daughter…" which positions oneself as a woman and a mother (Sunderland, 2012, p. 27).

According to Sunderland (2012, p. 28), model 1, the people-based model, of gender is still drawn on in many gender and language studies. To summarise this model, she claims that gender is primarily associated with female and male human beings. She further claims that this association may potentially make gender omni-relevant. Ultimately, what model 1 seeks to communicate, is that one should not ignore gender, but be vigilant regarding disadvantages related to gender. She further elaborates how this may be true in social contexts where women appear to be as empowered as men in many aspects of their lives, but where there is still evidence of what she describes as 'subtle' or 'indirect' sexism. She claims that the main concern of model 1 lies in "which" sex is written about, not "what" is written. Therefore, this model cannot properly address the question of the construction of gender in a spoken or

written text in a way where the sex of the speaker or author is of no concern (Sunderland, 2012, p. 29).

The second model of gender Sunderland (2012, p. 29) presents is the ideas-based model. She claims this model is influenced by post-structuralist thinking, where gender is regarded as an idea or a set of ideas about women/men, girls/boys, and gender relations. Gender as an idea, or set of ideas, draws on the concepts of agency and language as constructive, which is presented in her fourth and fifth cautions. Sunderland (2012, p. 29) claims that constructive language use may include language about gender itself, gender differences, gender relations, women, men, or a single individual, who is linguistically constructed in a way in which gender appears important. She claims how this may appear either directly, as in the example "Tim's so unlike a boy", or indirectly, such as "I'm a bit worried – Tim wants to learn ballet" (Sunderland, 2012, p. 29). She claims that the second model of gender typically shifts the focus from biological females and males, to what is being said – not who says it – which enables one to see language as a discourse (Sunderland, 2012, p. 29). Discourses may express ideas of gender in both talk and written text. Additionally, ideas of gender, including sexist ones, may be articulated similarly through the language of women, men, girls, and boys, according to Sunderland (2012, p. 29). She further claims that model 2 is not concerned with gender in the sense of biological gender (female/male). This indicates that gender may not always be relevant in every context or encounter, according to Sunderland (2012, p. 32), as evident in the third caution of her first model of gender. She further expresses that in some contexts and encounters there are other aspects of one's identity that may be more relevant than their biological gender, such as ethnicity (Sunderland, 2012, p. 32). However, one may experience that gender is relevant in some contexts, such as being the only woman in the room. Sunderland (2012, p. 32) claims that if a man were to be the only man in the room, one may not regard gender as equally relevant. Historically speaking, this may be due to women being oppressed or considered a marginalised group, as opposed to men, similar to how ethnicity may be more relevant than one's gender in certain contexts.

Butler (1993, as cited in Guanio-Uluru, 2016, p. 210) has influentially argued that gender has a performative aspect. She claims that this aspect both compels one to act a certain part, and that through such "performative acts" one assimilates and thus eventually "become", in one's sense of self, the gender they perform:

> To claim that gender is a norm is not quite the same as saying that there are normative
> views of femininity and masculinity, even though there clearly are such normative

views. Gender is not exactly what one "is" nor is it precisely what one "has." Gender

is the apparatus by which the production and normalization of masculine and feminine

take place along with the interstitial forms of hormonal, chromosomal, psychic, and

performative that gender assumes. (Butler, 2004, p. 42)

Sunderland (2000, p. 150) claims that understandings of gender are now more sophisticated, focusing variously on gender identity, a sense of oneself as 'masculine' or 'feminine', and as performance (Butler, 1990, as cited in Sunderland, 2000, p. 150). These understandings do not see gender as determined. She stresses that it necessary to see gender in language education in new, non-deterministic ways too (Sunderland, 2000, p. 150).

2.3.2   *What are gender stereotypes?*

Kollmayer et al. (2018, p. 366) claim that gender stereotypes are a structured set of beliefs about personal attributes. According to Ashmore and Del Boca (1979, as cited in Kollmayer et al., 2018, p. 366), these attributes may include interests, competences, and roles of women and men. Prentice and Carranza (2003, as cited in Kollmayer et al., 2018, p. 366) add that these socially shared beliefs have persisted over time. The notion that women and men are different from each other is evident in how they are perceived in terms of achievement-oriented traits, social-oriented traits, and service-oriented traits (Kollmayer et al., 2018, p. 366). Kollmayer et al. (2018, p. 366) claim that men are often characterised as aggressive, forceful, independent, and decisive, whereas women are often characterised as being kind, helpful, beautiful, and concerned and caring towards others. These gender stereotypes are violated every day, as both the roles and activities of women and men have changed with time. However, Prentice and Carranza (2003, as cited in Kollmayer et al., 2018, p. 366) claim that the content of these gender stereotypes remain through both descriptive and prescriptive components. The descriptive components present beliefs of which characteristics women and men "do" possess, whereas the prescriptive components present beliefs of which characteristics women and men "should" possess (Burgess & Borgida, 1999, as cited in Kollmayer et al., 2018, p. 366). Phrased differently, gender stereotypes include information about attributes that are likely to characterise women and men (Prentice & Carranza, 2003, as cited in Kollmayer et al., 2018, p. 366).

2.3.3 Female and male stereotypes

Kollmayer et al. (2018, p. 366) claim that the descriptive and prescriptive components of gender stereotypes, which was mentioned in the previous sub-section, tend to overlap. However, the disadvantages these stereotypes lead to are very different for women and girls, as opposed to those of men and boys. Burgess and Borgida (1999, as cited in Kollmayer et al., 2018, p. 366) describe how the descriptive component of gender stereotypes may lead to disadvantages for women or men who seemingly lack the necessary attributes to succeed in fields dominated by the opposite gender. The prescriptive component may lead to disadvantages for women or men who violate these shared beliefs about how they should behave according to their gender identity. They further claim that although gender stereotypes are false, the expectations connected to these stereotypes are often confirmed. This may lead to self-fulfilling prophecies and to perceptual biases.

Sunderland (2012, pp. 42-43) claims that the function of women in fiction is often concerned with emotion. This may often be in the form of the hetero-normative question of popularity with the opposite sex. She continues, claiming there is a tendency that female characters who do not necessarily inhabit attributes or behaviours deemed stereotypical for their gender, often conform to female stereotypes, such as kindness, helpfulness, and beauty – typically towards the end of the story – due to social pressure (Sunderland, 2012, p. 42). These tendencies may stunt the development of the characters all together, as well as distort the logical development of the characters for the sake of conformity.

Male characters, in addition to being overrepresented in literature, are presented as performing a greater range of interesting factors, as opposed to female characters, according to Bradley and Mortimer (1972, as cited in Sunderland, 2012, p. 43). They claim that boys may be punished for their activities, as they sometimes involve danger and disobedience, but they are often able to escape from these activities both unscathed and unpunished (Bradley & Mortimer, 1972, as cited in Sunderland, 2012, p. 43). Romøren and Stephens (2009, as cited in Guanio-Uluru, 2016, p. 212) have argued that within media images of global popular culture, masculinity is often grounded in domination, physical assertiveness, and egocentric individualism. This form of masculinity represents "hegemonic masculinity", meaning it is the form of masculinity considered normative within a particular society's expressions of masculinity. Nodelman (2009, as cited in Guanio-Uluru, 2016, p. 215) argues that for boys and men to appear desirable, they must suggest aggression, strength, and danger. He further notes that society's expectations of the male sex rest on contradictory demands. To be

appropriately male, you must be triumphantly animal-like and express your true animal nature, but by doing so, you will have to be punished for defying civilised values.

2.3.4 *Children and gender stereotypes*

According to Kollmayer et al. (2018, p. 365), children begin to show gender-typical interests and behaviours at an early age. Already in pre-schoolers, there has been made observations of children associating toys, clothes, domestic appliances, occupations, and colours with one gender or another, which is also reflected in their behaviour, preferences, and personality attributes (Kollmayer et al., 2018, p. 365). They express that there is a tendency for children to behave in ways deemed as appropriate for their gender. This acquisition of gender-appropriate preferences, skills, personality attributes, behaviours, and self-concepts, are referred to as the process of gender typing within psychology. Bem (1981; 1983, as cited in Kollmayer et al., 2018, p. 365) claims that children observe their environment and learn the various associations with masculinity and femininity already from an early point in their lives. These associations may include the physical differences between women and men, their societal roles, the characteristics of gender, and how society treats each gender. As a result, Kollmayer et al. (2018, p. 365) claim that children adjust their behaviour to align with the gender norms of their culture, where parenting, schools, and the media are influential aspects to these alignments. Their patterns of communication are learnt during socialisation or emerge as a result of gender-segregated play during childhood, according to Speer (2005, p. 5). Therefore, as social development theory highlights how gender-appropriate behaviour is explicitly reinforced by important people in children's lives, parents and teachers may work towards social development and learning indirectly through observation and modelling, according to Kollmayer et al. (2018, p. 365).

The descriptive and prescriptive components of gender stereotypes, which Kollmayer et al. explored – and which were discussed in the previous section – may lead to different expectations of women and men, or boys and girls, regarding their skills, personality attributes, and self-concepts (Kollmayer et al., 2018, p. 366). Kollmayer et al. (2018, p. 366) claim that these expectations are transmitted to children already at the beginning of their lives by their parents, teachers, peers, and the media, as well as other aspects of socialisation. This may consequently affect children's self-concepts of the available repertoires of behaviours and actions, and which behaviours and actions are deemed appropriate for their gender, according to Kollmayer et al. (2018, p. 366).

Nodelman (2009, as cited in Guanio-Uluru, 2016, p. 217) further claims there are numerous features of children's fiction which are commonly associated with normative masculinity, and which may imply and reinforce ideas about such masculinity. Books specifically aimed towards boys, often portray a solitary male facing danger, and places value on separation, detachment and the hunter's power to dominate others from a distance. These books may represent masculinity as a force in opposition to the law, manners, and the social fabric. Books that seek to transcend the formulas of popular fiction, feature boys that see through the conventional constructions of masculinity, learning to be more sensitive and loving, according to Nodelman (2009, as cited in Guanio-Uluru, 2016, p. 217).

2.3.5   *Gender stereotypes in educational contexts*

As Kollmayer et al. (2018, p. 366) claim, gender stereotyped expectations in an educational context are particularly evident in the interests, abilities, and vocational aptitudes attributed to girls and boys. This may have strong impacts on the children's educational, and career, path. Kollmayer et al. (2018, p. 370) additionally claim that schools may impact the perpetuation of gender. In addition to girls often being praised for their efforts, whereas boys are praised for their abilities, gender stereotypes may also be evident in teaching materials. They further elaborate by looking at a study conducted by Finsterwald and Ziegler (2007, as cited in Kollmayer et al., 2018, p. 370) on implicit communication of gender stereotypes in textbooks. The results of this study indicated that adult female characters in textbooks are represented less frequently than adult male characters. In addition, they found differences of female and male characters in the fields of action. Here, they found that men were more often represented at their job and women were more represented in a family situation or household context during leisure time. Regarding the adult characters' personal attributes, men were represented as more individualistic, more competitive, and more willing to take a risk, as opposed to women. Regarding the child characters' personal attributes, the girls were depicted as more submissive than boys. These observations indicate that teaching materials not only support the pupils' learning, but also convey socially shared cultural knowledge, according to Finsterwald and Ziegler (2007, as cited in Kollmayer et al., 2018, p. 370). They claim that some of this knowledge may be gender stereotypes, especially when teachers use them without reflection beforehand.

2.3.6 *Gender representation in literature*

In her book *Language, Gender and Children's Fiction*, Sunderland (2012) explores the relationship between children's fiction and the language used in this fiction. She uses the term fiction to describe fictional literature aimed towards children, thus implying fiction applies to fantasy as well, as the genre itself is a work of fiction.

Sunderland (2012, p. 5) claims that the language of fiction, and thereby fantasy, refers to the words of the narrator and the words of the characters, even though the words of the characters are narrated, and the narrator may act as a character themselves. She claims that the interesting part about looking at these words lie in "what" is written and "how" (Sunderland, 2012, p. 5). She further presents a few examples of different ways one may look more closely at how the words are written. This can be how characters are referred to in terms of descriptors, how the characters' actions are referred to, how the characters' speech and thoughts are presented, and how point of view is achieved (Sunderland, 2012, p. 5). She further claims the topic of gender in children's fiction has been relevant since the creation of the genre itself, which, according to Knowles and Malmkjaer (1996, as cited in Sunderland, 2012, p. 5), has had a distinctly masculine orientation. However, she claims that modern studies of gender in fiction cannot be separated from the feminist work on fiction in general, which started in the late 1960s. This work started with the critique of the mostly male literary canon, along with the examination of the absence of female authors, and sexist assumptions in such fiction (Sunderland, 2012, p. 5). Theoretical approaches towards gender and fiction in the late 20th century have been focused on the marginalisation of female characters in children's texts, and authors such as Adler (1993, as cited in Sunderland, 2012, p. 6) and Moss (2007, as cited in Sunderland, 2012, p. 6) have written about the importance of children's books which detail female experience.

Sunderland (2012, pp. 67-68) refers to characterisation as how an author "construes" the characters, meaning which textual cues give the reader information about the character. This understanding of characterisation includes "gender representation" and extends to the language used by the characters, the narrator, and to the characters' points of view (Sunderland, 2012, pp. 67-68). She further claims that actors on a stage may indirectly present themselves through numerous non-linguistic ways, whereas characters in a book can only do so linguistically. According to Hunt (1991, as cited in Sunderland, 2012, p. 68), dialogue is particularly important in fiction, and there are few novels with no dialogue, and in children's texts, there may be a relatively large amount of dialogue. Stephens (1992, as cited in

Sunderland, 2012, p. 68) claims that dialogue is very important for characterisation, as it gives the reader access to characters in conversation, which is considered less mediated than presenting the characters in narrative or descriptive modes. In addition to dialogue, Hunt (1991, as cited in Sunderland, 2012, p. 69), claims that the narrator of children' novels use a relatively high frequency of "reporting clauses". Such "reporting clauses" may be shouted, whispered, and asked, which may indicate the narrator's attitude. According to Stephens (1992, as cited in Sunderland, 2012, p. 69), one may try to compare reporting clauses, such as "he asserted" with "she demanded" and investigate how this may reflect or change the narrator's view.

Gendered talk, according to Sunderland (2012, p. 63), has been considered in relation to notions of speaker agency, gender as a performance, and communities of practice. However, she claims that naturally occurring talk is very different from how speech is represented in fictional literature. She further claims that in fiction, the author selects which words to be spoken by a character from a variety of suitable options, which is often expressed in dialogue. Thus, talk in fiction cannot be analysed in the same way as naturally occurring talk, and more importantly it cannot be used as evidence for naturally occurring gendered talk, according to Sunderland (2012, p. 63). She further claims that one must therefore address gender issues in fiction in relation to the context of fiction and representation. Sunderland (2012, p. 63) claims that previous research on gender in children's fiction, mainly focuses on the content of these books. She further claims that although the content is an important aspect to look at, this focus on women and girls' appearance, or lack of appearance, in literature may exclude fiction-related language issues. These issues may be related to dialogue, humour, irony, and point of view (Sunderland, 2012, p. 63).

Representations are a result of choices, according to Sunderland (2012, p. 7). This may for example mean how an author chooses to use one adverb to describe the actions of a character, as opposed to a different available and allowable adverb. However, she claims that these choices may not be conscious choices or intent from the author's or illustrator's side, but the representational language of texts merits systematic study. Sunderland (2012, p. 7) adds that consideration of these choices may sharpen powers of observation and critique. Representation may also be viewed as construct, as the words of a fictional text are not only representing something, but also constructing that something anew (Sunderland, 2012, p. 7). This "new" construction may be in the text itself but may also be in the memory or mind of

the reader, shaping the readers' point of view on the world or even changing their practices, according to Sunderland (2012, p. 7).

Talbot (1995, as cited in Sunderland, 2012, p. 65) discusses how choice of transitive and intransitive verbs may affect how the characters in a novel are represented, claiming that transitive verbs require a direct object, whereas intransitive verbs do not. The distribution of transitive and intransitive verbs may establish one person rather than the other person as making something happen in a gendered way (Talbot, 1995, as cited in Sunderland, 2012, p. 65). She further addresses that this may be evident in fiction as the hero's action may be construed by the narrator's use of transitive verbs, such as reach, grab, shield, take. The female character's actions, on the other hand, are often construed by the narrator's use of intransitive verbs, such as stand, lean back, watch (Talbot, 1995, as cited in Sunderland, 2012, p. 65). This may indicate that the female character is more passive as opposed to the male hero. An analysis conducted by Levorato (2003, as cited in Sunderland, 2012, pp. 65-66) looked at the representation of female characters in twelve different versions of *Red Riding Hood*. She found that in the traditional versions, the female characters were represented through the same grammatical choices. This was causing them to appear more passive, with less action verbs and more as the end goal of other characters, as opposed to the female characters in the more modern and radical versions.

According to Sunderland (2012, p. 6) different gendered discourses may be provisionally identified in texts through the written words of the narrators or characters. Representation of gender is not about what female and male characters tend to be like, but rather gender in the sense of ideas about female and male characters, as well as gender relations, and femininity and masculinity more generally (Sunderland, 2012, p. 6). Representations of gender may be highly stereotypical, and there may be a wide difference between representation and reality, according to Sunderland (2012, p. 7). She further claims that what a book is about, and what a book is "also" or even "really" about, can potentially draw attention to gender relations, as the relation between fiction and reality is not a straightforward one. According to Talbot (1995, as cited in Sunderland, 2012, p. 7), the not so straightforward relation between fiction and reality has a "a peculiar way" of mixing together these relations. Sunderland (2012, p. 7) further claims that in fiction, and thereby fantasy, there may be no intention of social groupings of characters being alike real-life counterparts, human or non-human, but the authors may somehow draw on human social experiences and practices, which are very often gendered (Sunderland, 2012, p. 7).

2.4   Discourses

2.4.1   What are discourses?

Discourse is essentially language in real contexts of use (Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 20). Put differently, discourse operates above the level of grammar and semantics. This way of operating, according to Simpson and Mayr (2010, as cited in Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 20), is to capture what happens when these language forms are placed in different social, political, and cultural fields. According to Sunderland (2012, p. 34), discourses are realized in part by "choices" and by "absences". According to Van Leeuwen (2005, as cited in Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 18) social semiotic theory assumes that one must understand that all processes of communication is to some extent rule-based, although the nature of these rules can vary immensely. He further claims there is acceptance that one may only communicate through language once they have mastered the rules of the language. In a social semiotic approach, the interest lies within the underlying available options of signs and how they are used in contexts to communicate wider ideas, opinions, attitudes, and identities. The interest lies in understanding the choice of these specific signs to communicate these (Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 19). Machin and Mayr (2012, p. 20) claim how authors and designers may encourage the readers to place events and ideas into broader frameworks of interpretation through individual semiotic choices. These frameworks of interpretation are referred to as "discourses" (Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 20). They further elaborate that when these frameworks are initialised, they may evoke certain associations and shape how we are encouraged to think about events (Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 20).

According to Wodak (1997, as cited in Sunderland, 2012, p. 33), discourses constitute situations, objects of knowledge, and the social identities of and relationships between people or groups of people. Discourses may sustain and reproduce the status quo and contribute to transforming it. Discourse is sometimes used "in an unreflecting way", which may verge on vagueness (Wodak, 1997, as cited in Sunderland, 2004, p. 6). Regarding vagueness, Popper (1966, as cited in Sunderland, 2004, p. 6) claims that one is always conscious that terms may be a little vague, considering they are learned through a practical manner. One does not reach precision by reducing the vagueness of the term but rather by staying within it, according to Popper (1966, as cited in Sunderland, 2012, p. 6). This is done by carefully phrasing our sentences in such a way that the possible shades of meaning of our terms do not matter, and that this is how we avoid quarrelling about words (Popper, l966, as cited in Sunderland, 2004, p. 6). According to Sunderland (2004, p. 5) there is no shortage of discourses to analyse.

Discourses are fluid and constantly expand, which is apparent in the constant development and expansion of different modes of communication (Sunderland, 2004, p. 5).

The two American linguists behind the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, argued that humans do not live in an objective world but rather that this world is shaped for them by the language that has become the medium of expression in their society (Machin & Mayr, 2012, 16). Therefore, language is not just a way in which one describes the world but rather comes to comprise what one may think of as "the real world". According to Leach (1964, as cited in Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 16), this world is a representation of our language categories, and not vice versa. He further claims how it seems evident that bushes and trees are separate things, because of his obtained knowledge of these language categories. He claims this would not be evident unless he was taught that this was the case. According to Machin and Mayr (2012, p. 16), this, in its extreme form, is what we would call linguistic determinism, where one's thinking is determined by language. They claim that few linguists hold this view, which is why a weaker form of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis may be more plausible today, where one may call it "linguistic relativity", as opposed to "determinism". Rather than language being determined by thinking, the world is influenced by the language one chooses to use, according to Machin and Mayr (2012, p. 16). They further claim linguists tend to focus on the importance of social context in language use, and how we use certain types of language in certain contexts due to social pressures. This is an opposition to using linguistic determination to decide language choices. They continue by claiming that what is considered appropriate language is present in both everyday events and life, as well as formal situations.

Linguist Michael A. K. Halliday (1978; 1985, as cited in Machin & Mayr, 2012, pp. 17-18) claim the social uses of language is important, including the linguistic coding of events involving possibilities of available options in grammar. Kress (1985, as cited in Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 18) claims these possibilities may be socially significant in that they may represent different ideologies. For example, the difference between using the word "bloke" as opposed to "man" may indicate a more personal relationship between the author and the receiver. This may be due to the former choice of word being less formal than the latter word. He further claims that women are often described as "mothers" and "wives" whereas men are simply described as "men", and not "husbands" and "fathers". This may contribute to reinforce social pressures and stereotypes (Kress, 1985, as cited in Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 18). The works of Halliday were the inspiration for numerous critical linguistics in the 70s and 80s, according to Machin and Mayr (2012, p. 18). Critical linguistics sought to explore

how language may be used to not just represent the world, but to constitute it. Considering language shapes and maintains the ideas and values of a society, it may also create, maintain and legitimise certain kinds of social practices (Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 18).

Jäger and Maier (2009, as cited in Sunderland, 2012, p. 35) claim that a single text has minimal effects on contents of for example culture and socially accepted ideologies. Because these effects are minimal, it may be challenging to provide evidence that these effects have taken place. However, a discourse may contain recurring contents, symbols, and strategies, which may lead to the emergence and solidification of "knowledge", thus providing sustained effects (Jäger & Maier, 2009, as cited in Sunderland, 2012, p. 35). They further claim that the importance lies not with a single text, but rather the constant repetition of statements. Discourses may also need to be identified looking beyond linguistic choices. An analyst must look at a wide understanding of the context in a text to other similar texts to gain knowledge and a wider understanding of the social practices and historical considerations they may convey (Wodak & Meyer, 2009; Wodak, 2008, as cited in Sunderland, 2012, p. 35). Sunderland (2012, p. 35) additionally discusses the importance of intertextuality. Some terms may be interpreted as derogatory against a backdrop of gender-related stereotypes and linguistic usages across several spoken and written genres, according to Sunderland (2012, p. 35). She also claims that it may be possible to view discourses as "subject positioning". Leech and Short (2007, as cited in Sunderland, 2012, p. 35) further emphasise that fictional texts may be seen as particularly subject positioning their "implied reader", meaning the reader's subjectivity is being produced. They claim that the number of different positions offered by a work of fiction will vary hugely with the text. Depending in part on narrative strategies, such as focalisation, some fictional texts may offer a greater range of, and less restricted, subject positions than others (Leech & Short, 2007, as cited in Sunderland, 2012, p. 35). All the above may therefore either reinforce or challenge gender stereotypes in literature.

Van Leeuwen and Wodak (1999, as cited in Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 21) suggest that one may think of discourses as including or being comprised of varieties of participants, behaviours, goals, values, and locations. Fairclough (2000, as cited in Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 21) claims that discourses may project certain social values and ideas whilst contributing to the production and reproduction of social life. He further simplifies this explanation by stating that how one talks about the world influences how society is created, the knowledge that is both celebrated and despised within this society, and the institutions they build. Machin and Mayr (2012, p. 24) emphasise that because language may produce and reproduce social life, it

is important to reflect on what kind of world is created through texts, as well as what kinds of inequalities and interests these texts may seek to perpetuate, generate, or legitimate. They further emphasise that language is not simply a vehicle of communication or persuasion, but a means of social construction and domination. Therefore, discourse does not only reflect social processes and structures, but contributes to the production and reproduction of these processes and structures itself (Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 24).

Sunderland (2012, p. 2) points out that most fiction is dialogic, meaning the characters talk to each other, allowing a range of "voices", or discourses and points of view, to be heard without others present. In addition, the author may also address the reader via a narrator, who talks about the characters.

2.4.2   *Gender discourses*

In the previous sub-section, the term "discourse" was presented to provide a more complete understanding of the term "gender discourses", which will be discussed in this sub-section. This sub-section will provide insights to gender as a matter of discoursal theory through a post-structuralist approach to gender. This approach looks at previous structures of gender where the goal is to challenge what is accepted as "truth" or accepted as "knowledge" in society. As mentioned in the works cited in this section, gender stereotypes may be a result of discourses about gender roles.

According to Cameron, gender and sexism is "best analysed at the level of discourse" (1998, as cited in Speer, 2005, p. 6), rather than individual words, which constitutes the key site for the reproduction and resignification of gendered meanings. Speer (2005, p. 1) claims that there is agreement among most feminists that discourse is often gendered, and that it produces and reproduces oppressive norms, social practices, and help sustain patriarchy. According to Speer (2005, p. 1), the awareness that discourse has a fundamentally political nature, is increasing within the feminist movement. When using discourse to communicate, one may naturalise and perpetuate oppressive understandings of gender and gender role behaviour by presenting them as timeless, rational and natural, according to Speer (2005, p. 1). She additionally claims that these understandings will then become deeply ingrained in one's view of the world, and therefore these understandings may be regarded as normative and expectable.

Speer (2005, p. 1) claims that discourse may be used to expose and denaturalise common understandings of gender, for example by using humour and irony. She claims that discourses may also challenge the ideas which create and sustain sexist and heterosexist social practices. She further claims that through studying both gender and discourse and exploring how dominant or prejudicial ideas about gender are created or resisted in discourse, one may acquire knowledge needed to inform social change for the better (Speer, 2005, p. 1). Speer (2005, p. 3) claims that some sexist language may include, but are not limited to, the asymmetry of address terms for women and men. By this, she highlights how men are often addressed as "Mr", whereas women are often addressed to as "Miss" or "Mrs". How women are defined may not typically be in relation to their own right, but rather in their relationship to a man (Speer, 2005, p. 3).

According to Speer (2005, p. 4), many feminists, discourse analysts, and sociolinguists are not under the impression that the meaning of words are fixed, but rather fluid. She further claims that linguistic meanings are socially constructed, contextually variable, and continually subject to negotiation and modification in interaction. Some researchers have claimed that the precise meaning of what is said can only be established by exploring what utterances are doing in specific contexts (Speer, 2005, p. 4).

2.5   Results from previous research

In the research field, there is numerous existing research on the topic of gender roles and discourses, and the topic of literature and its role in the EFL classroom. In addition, there has been conducted much research on these topics in relation to popular young adult fiction, such as Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*. However, this thesis seeks to explore these topics in other popular young adult fiction, such as Riordan's *Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief*, to investigate whether the fantasy genre may be a medium for challenging or reinforcing gender stereotypes in discourses. In addition, this thesis seeks to explore the possible relation between gender roles, gender roles in literature, and gender representation in written discourses to the Norwegian national curriculum (LK20), which was implemented in 2020.

Much of the previous research on gender in fictional literature and gender in discourses, have mainly been concerned with whether the literature is deemed "traditional" or "progressive", according to Sunderland (2012, p. 9). This type of research has mainly been associated with

the interests of feminist analysts, where the feminist perspective of "progressive" may be viewed as broadly as "making things better for women, girls and gender relations all across the world" (Sunderland, 2012, p. 9). She further claims that the modern Women's Movement, which appeared in the 1970's, has been active in identifying and documenting gender representation, and representational inequalities. The movement has also had considerable influence on publishers' guidelines, representations in mainstream publications, and in children's TV shows. Gender representation in children's books became an increasingly more interesting topic of discussion within this movement. By observing children's books in libraries and shops, Fisher (1970, as cited in Sunderland, 2012, pp. 9-10) anticipated the findings of many future studies: that women and girls were represented poorly in quantitative terms in both books and in relation to their actual representation in society. Fisher (1970, as cited in Sunderland, 2012, p. 10) claims that in terms of the qualitative representations, the achievement drive of boys was encouraged, but the achievement drive of girls was not. Boys were taught to express themselves, but girls were taught to please others. Fisher (1970, as cited in Sunderland, 2012, p. 10) claims that the general image of the female ranges from dull, to degrading, to invisible.

Nightingale (1974, as cited in Sunderland, 2012, p. 11) critically commented on a range of female protagonists in books for older children, where the protagonists eventually overcame and transformed from their rebellious and adventurous behaviour to acceptable feminine qualities. This demonstrates that there is no guarantee that a female protagonist will not end up reproducing predictable female stereotypes, simply because she is female. The number of female protagonists who do not transform in the way Nightingale (1974, as cited in Sunderland, 2012, p. 11) critiqued, are outnumbered by the female protagonists that do, which makes them the exceptions to the rule, according to Sunderland (2012, p. 11). Additionally, Nightingale (1974, as cited in Sunderland, 2012, pp. 11-12) mentions how the female characters who challenge gender stereotypes by being portrayed as tomboys, do not necessarily benefit the female characters that are portrayed as more feminine. The former essentially treat the latter characters the same ways that boys do.

In previous studies, Maynard et al. (1997; 2005, as cited in Sunderland, 2012, pp. 14-15), completed several questionnaires with children aged from 5-16 years about their preferred gender of protagonists in children's books by Roald Dahl. The results from these questionnaires indicated that girls and boys prefer to read books where the protagonist is of the same gender as the reader. However, one of the studies by Maynard et al. (2005, as cited

in Sunderland, 2012, pp. 14-15) discovered that a large percentage of the female readers who answered the questionnaire were happy with a boy as the main character, while only a small percentage of boys wanted to read books where a girl is the main character. This finding, however, is not a new phenomenon. According to a large survey on American junior and senior high school students, Norvell (1950, as cited in Sunderland, 2012, p. 15) discovered that regarding the preferred gender of the characters, girls show the same interest as boys when reading books about the doings of boys and men. However, boys show a less interest in reading material where female characters play the dominant roles. These findings are challenged by Nilsen (1977, as cited in Sunderland, 2012, p. 15) through asking whether the gender of the characters is of importance for the readers, or if the books about boys simply are more interesting to both genders. Nilsen (1977, as cited in Sunderland, 2012, p. 15) further claims that the cultural limitations placed on women by the society, make it unlikely that stories of "dainty little girls" will have the same appeal as stories about "tough boys", and thus the preferred gender of the stories have less to do with the gender and more about the story itself. With this in mind, Sunderland, (2012, p. 15) proposes that only changing the name, not the content of the story, from "Harry Potter" to "Harriet Potter" in Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, may further prove what Nilsen (1977, as cited in Sunderland, 2012, p. 15) established. However, Sunderland (2012, p. 15) suggests it may have been too much of a risk for Rowling to prove this theory in her work.

According to Sunderland (2012, p. 13) the drive of many of the earlier studies on gender representation in children's fiction, has been to reveal negative representations and to not only look for, but to commend and recommend "positive role models" for female and male characters. "Positive role models" in this context refers to gender equality and equal opportunities, inside and outside the home, both socially and professionally. Sunderland (2012, pp. 13-14) claims that in these early studies there was little consideration of the possibility that "negative role models" may be of value to the feminist project through characterisation, including speech and/or thought representation, where there is little consideration of characterisation in fiction, as namely fiction.

Sunderland (2012, p. 16) claims that research on children's fiction is not as "easily" done as one may think. Much like adult fiction, research on children's fiction is a reminder that "knowledge of periods, genres, literary criticism, key figures, audiences, markets and so on is required – all complicated by the fact that there are effectively no borders or boundaries around the subject" (Kimberly, 2005, as cited in Sunderland, 2012, p. 16). Zipes (2002, as

cited in Sunderland, 2012, p. 17) relates the misconception of research on children's fiction as an easy field to gender issues more widely. He claims how the research field on children's literature is mainly dominated by female researchers, and that the genre has been (and arguably still is) looked down on. This point of view on children's literature may reveal attitudes of ignorance and arrogance in many male researchers, who have rarely studied children's literature (Zipes, 2002, as cited in Sunderland, 2012, p. 17).

3.0 Methodological considerations

This section of the thesis presents the method of analysis chosen to carry out the research for this thesis, as well as the reasons behind the choice of data selection. The data selected for the analysis are excerpts depicting gender representations in written text in the two novels *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* and *Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief*. The passages from each novel contain descriptions of characters in terms of verbs, adverbs, and adjectives. These passages will be analysed through a critical discourse analysis (CDA), which will look for representations of gender through the word classes and look for explicit and implicit meanings in the text. The first sub-section in this section includes two additional sub-sections present the origins of CDA and explain the method. The next sub-section includes the reasoning behind the data selection, and lastly a plot synopsis of each novel.

3.1 Critical discourse analysis

3.1.1 Critical linguistics

The term discourse - which was described earlier - is integrated into the name of the method used in this thesis: critical discourse analysis (CDA). As discourse is essentially language use in real contexts, the inclusion of the term in the name of the method itself indicates its significance.

According to Machin and Mayr (2012, p. 2), CDA arguably has its origins in "critical linguistics". The purpose of critical linguistics is to show how language and grammar may be used as ideological instruments. One may study texts for the way they categorise people, events, places, and actions. Analysts may look for what kind of events and people are foregrounded, backgrounded, or excluded altogether. They further claim that different kinds of choices may influence the meaning of the texts. Close analysis of texts may therefore reveal the underlying ideology of the texts. The key for critical linguistics here is that these ideologies are never communicated directly in the text but may be revealed by looking for absences (Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 2).

According to Hodge and Kress (1988, as cited in Machin & Mayr, 2012, pp. 2-3), language is a form of social practice. It is intertwined with our behaviours and how we regulate and maintain our societies. Language is part of the way people seek to promote certain views of the world and to naturalise them, meaning making these views appear natural and sensible.

Certain kinds of practices, ideas, values, and identities are promoted and naturalised through languages, and institutions such as schools become an arena where such knowledge becomes disseminated and regulated. They claim that what one considers to be one' culture is inseparable from language (Hodge & Kress, 1988, as cited in Machin & Mayr, 2012, pp. 2-3). An example which may illustrate how to best think of these ideas, is Conservative Party leader David Cameron's critique towards the opposition party in the time leading up to the general election in Britain in 2010. In this example, Machin and Mayr (2012, p. 3) claim that Cameron's critique aimed towards the opposition party's failure to protect "family values", emphasising how young girls are maturing too early and becoming sexualised due to their exposure to popular culture. In his speech, Cameron stated: "Premature sexualisation is like pollution. It's in the air that our children breathe. All the time. Every day" (Cameron, 2010, as cited in Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 3). They further claim that in his speech, Cameron does not speak about the specifics, nor does he identify what exactly "premature sexualisation" entails or at which point it may be deemed as "premature". Instead of speaking about specifics, Cameron makes a comparison to environmental pollution, creating a great sense of menace and easily attribute blame to the society created by the existing New Labour government without stating what exactly he accuses them of doing. Machin and Mayr (2012, p. 3) claim how general listeners may realise the vagueness of what is being communicated, but that critical linguistics would want to identify some of the specific language choices that allow combinations of ambiguity and strong commitment. It would want to identify what kinds of definitions of events are being promoted and what kinds of ideas, values, and identities (Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 3).

Critical linguistics points out that language is inseparable from the way we build our societies and the way that we act in them (Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 3). In addition to looking for absences from the text, critical linguistics are looking for assumptions and concepts that may be taken for granted, Machin and Mayr (2012, p. 4). They wish to provide their readers with a sense of the aims critical linguists worked towards, which were later taken up and modified by CDA. According to Fairclough (1992, as cited in Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 4), one of the main criticisms of critical linguistics has been its lack of development of the nature of the link between language, power and ideology. According to Fairclough and Wodak (1997, as cited in Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 4), critical discourse analysts sought to develop methods and theory to better capture the interrelationship between language, power, and ideology. In addition, analysts sought to draw out and describe the practices and conventions in and behind

texts that reveal political and ideological investment. They claim that CDA is openly committed to political intervention and social change (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997, as cited in Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 4).

3.1.2   *What is critical discourse analysis?*

Critical discourse analysts, according to Machin and Mayr (2012, p. 4), conform to the idea that there is no single, homogenous version of CDA. Instead, there is a range of critical approaches which may be classified as CDA, and there is a need for analysis to draw on a range of (linguistic) methods to research things such as the production and reception of texts (Wodak & Meyer, 2001; Richardson, 2007, as cited in Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 4). What these authors have in common, according to Machin and Mayr (2012, p. 4), is the view of language as a means of social construction, meaning language both shapes and is shaped by society. They further claim that CDA is not so much interested in the language use itself, but rather the linguistic character of social and cultural processes and structures. In CDA, the broader ideas which are communicated by a text are referred to as "discourses" (Van Dijk, 1993; Fairclough, 2000; Wodak, 2001, as cited in Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 20).

Machin and Mayr (2012, p. 30) claim that several authors have described the significance of CDA, as it shows how different lexical choices may signify different discourses or set up different "lexical fields". They further claim that these discourses signify certain identities, values, and sequences of activities that may not be explicit in a text. Van Dijk (2001, as cited in Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 30) describes CDA as the study of implicit or indirect meanings in texts, meaning that they are alluded to without being explicitly expressed. Implicit meanings are related to underlying beliefs, but are not openly, directly, completely, or precisely asserted, according to Van Dijk (2001, as cited in Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 30).

CDA assumes that power relations are discursive, meaning the power is transmitted and practised through discourse. Fairclough and Wodak (1997, as cited in Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 4) claim that power relations may be studied through discourse by how they are exercised and negotiated. As with critical linguistics, the word "critical" is central to CDA, according to Machin and Mayr (2012, p. 5). Where descriptive goals of linguistics and discourse analysis has mainly focused on describing and detailing linguistic features – rather than exploring the how and why these features are produced and possible ideological goals they may serve – CDA points to a departure from these goals. CDA typically analyses news texts, political

speeches, advertisements, textbooks, and so on. CDA seeks to analyse strategies that may seem neutral or normal on a surface level but may in fact be ideological with the intent to shape the representation of events or people for certain ends. Therefore, the word "critical" means "denaturalising" the language to reveal the kinds of ideas, absences, and assumptions one may take for granted in texts, allowing the reveal of the kinds of power interests implicitly expressed in these texts (Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 5). Fairclough (1989, as cited in Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 5) summarises the idea of "critical" language study as the processes of analysing linguistic elements to reveal hidden or implicit connections between language, power, and ideology.

Machin and Mayr (2012, p. 20) claim that the process of doing CDA involves looking at the choices of words and grammar in the texts to discover the underlying discourse(s) and ideologies. They claim that because discourses include the linguistic structures and functions of a text, they may use these aspects to emphasise certain ideologies or conceal other ideologies. Therefore, the aim in CDA is to reveal what kinds of social relations of power are present in the texts, both explicitly and implicitly, according to Van Dijk (1993, as cited in Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 24). Another central concept to CDA, according to Machin and Mayr (2012, pp. 24-25), is the term "ideology", which similarly to "discourse" is used to capture how one may share broader ideas of the world. In relation to CDA, ideology is used to describe the way in which the ideas and values that these ideologies are comprised of, reflect on their interests. They further claim that the aim of CDA is to uncover where these ideologies may be hidden in the text (Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 25).

According to Machin and Mayr (2012, p. 29), one should think of all communication – whether it is conveyed through language, images, or sounds – as being accomplished through a set of semiotic resources, options, and choices. They further claim that these choices provide the ability to convey wider sets of associations which may not be overtly specified. Certain choices of certain words may suggest different kinds of identities, values, and activities. When analysing such semiotic choices, one must ask oneself why the communicator have made these choices, and what implications these choices may have for the meaning they are trying to convey.

3.2 Data selection

The purpose of this thesis is to explore the representations of gender roles in popular young adult fantasy literature. The analysis of this thesis will be conducted through analysing the data selected from the two novels *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* and *Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief*. The novels will be read from start to finish, and the analysis will be conducted by selecting passages including descriptions of the characters, as well as their behaviours. These passages will include verbs, adverbs, and adjectives used by the authors to describe the characters and their actions in relation to their gender, and whether these choices of words may challenge or reinforce gender stereotypes.

The choice of these two novels, as previously stated in the introductory section of this thesis, heavily relies on their popularity within the fantasy genre. Despite the first *Harry Potter*-novel being released over 20 years ago, and the first *Percy Jackson*-novel being released well over a decade ago, they are still popular within their genre to this day. It is highly likely that one may find a copy of both these novels in most school libraries. This may be due to how they are written. They are aimed at young adult readers who are approximately the same age as the main characters of the novels. Although both novels contain fantasy elements, they still address aspects of real life that may be relatable to the experiences of their target audience.

The data in this thesis is selected manually. The chosen passages are discourses related to gender representation in the form of verbs, adverbs, and adjectives. As the data selection will be selected manually, the chosen data will not be analysed quantitatively through computer programs, but rather qualitatively. The goal of analysing these passages is not to count the occurrence of verbs, adverbs, and adjectives, but rather critically analyse the written discourse these linguistic features appear in, and to evaluate whether they contribute to challenging or reinforcing stereotypical gender roles. Because the data is selected manually, personal values and opinions may become visible in the way the results of the analysis are presented, which may affect the outcome of the research, though I, as the researcher, try to maintain objectiveness throughout. The selected passages will be gathered from the entire book and are chosen based on their ability to represent similar passages throughout the entire book. This is to avoid a repetitive analysis, where similar passages are analysed in the same way.

3.2.1   Synopsis of the novels

Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone is the first of seven novels in J. K. Rowling's series about *Harry Potter*. The novel tells the story of a young, orphaned wizard named Harry Potter, who lives with his aunt, uncle, and cousin in the non-magic world. However, even though he has been a wizard his whole life, he is unaware of his own magical abilities as his aunt and uncle do not want him to know. On his eleventh birthday, he is invited to begin his education at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry to master his magical abilities. Whilst attending Hogwarts, Harry faces different challenges and hardships – as well as experience friendships and loyalty – where he must fight against evil to save the wizarding world. The book introduces the young wizard to an evil entity he is destined to face further on in the series.

Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief is the first book in Rick Riordan's series about *Percy Jackson*, with continuous releases of new additions to the series. The novel introduces us to young Percy Jackson, a twelve-year-old boy with ADHD and dyslexia, who struggles to find his place in school and otherwise in his life. Percy lives with his mother and her abusive husband. His father has been absent throughout Percy's life. Percy has a sense that it is not only his learning disabilities that causes him hardships and a feeling of not belonging anywhere. As the story progresses, Percy endures many hardships, in addition to experiencing both friendships and love, and he eventually discovers that he is a half-god, the son of the sea god – Poseidon. With the help of his friends and his mentors, Percy must retrieve the lightning bolt stolen from Zeus to prevent a war between the gods that will affect the fate of the entire world.

4.0 Analysis

This section of the thesis presents the analysis of the selected data material. The data selected from the passages in the two fantasy novels will be analysed by using CDA. Later in this thesis, the analysed data is discussed in relation to the theoretical considerations and research questions. The passages are presented as direct quotes or excerpts from the novels, and analysed based on how gender is represented in the written text. The first sub-section in the analysis of each respective novel, looks at how the characters are represented through written text through the use of verbs, adverbs, and adjectives. Additionally, this sub-section looks at dialogues between the characters and their behaviours. The second sub-section in the analysis looks at how these passages may convey social constructs – either implicitly or explicitly – and how they may be challenging or reinforcing gender stereotypes.

4.1   Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone

The first sub-section of the analysis presents the analysis of passages in the novel *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*. The passages analysed in this section seek to answer the research questions presented earlier in the introductory section of this thesis. The first sub-section in this section looks at how verbs, adverbs, and adjectives may present gender roles in the book, whereas the second sub-section looks at how these words may play a role in the social constructs of gender and whether they challenge or reinforce gender stereotypes. The novel is written in a third-person point-of-view, meaning that someone outside the story is the narrator; however, they have the ability to see and present Harry's inner cognitive and emotional representations.

4.1.1   Verbs, adverbs, and adjectives

The first excerpt follows the aftermath of Draco Malfoy (hereby referred to as Malfoy), asking Harry Potter (hereby referred to as Harry) if he is up for a fight, to which Harry responds with a threat: "'Unless you get out now,' said Harry, more bravely than he felt, because Crabbe and Goyle were a lot bigger than him or Ron." (Rowling, 1997/2014, p. 116). Here, the adverb "bravely", along with "more", may be used to indicate that Harry's threat may not reflect how he feels. When facing Malfoy, Crabbe, and Goyle, Harry may feel the need to appear braver and tougher than he truly feels as a way of asserting his dominance and respect. In addition, this excerpt presents that Harry feels a need to appear brave as both

Crabbe and Goyle are "a lot bigger" than himself and Ron Weasley (hereby referred to as Ron). This may indicate that Harry views himself as more submissive due to his smaller physical appearance.

Another excerpt where Harry may use verbal threats to assert his dominance and respect, is when Malfoy steals Neville's Remembrall: "He turned his broomstick sharply to face Malfoy in mid-air. Malfoy looked stunned. 'Give it here,' Harry called, 'or I'll knock you off that broom!' 'Oh, yeah?' said Malfoy, trying to sneer, but looking worried." (Rowling, 1997/2014, p. 159). In this excerpt, we see that Harry threatens Malfoy with knocking him off his broomstick. Malfoy responds with what may be interpreted as a tone of disbelief of Harry's threat, as indicated be the verb "sneer". However, in the other half of this sentence, the narrator indicates that Malfoy looks worried about Harry's threat, despite his effort to express confidence and dominance. This may indicate that Malfoy does not appear as confident as he may want to. Another excerpt which may indicate this, is when he asks Hagrid a question in the Forbidden Forest: "'And what if whatever hurt the unicorn finds us first?' said Malfoy, unable to keep the fear out of his voice." (Rowling, 1997/2014, p. 269). Here, the adjective "unable" may indicate that Malfoy is attempting to maintain a tough façade. This may be due to his desire to appear more masculine or dominant, as personal attributes such as bravery, courage, and confidence are often associated with masculinity. These attributes seem to be wanted among most of the male characters in the book, including Harry and Ron.

The next few excerpts both depict Ron's anger towards Malfoy, and his inability to contain his anger: "Ron dived at Malfoy just as Snape came up the stairs. 'WEASLEY!' Ron let go of the front of Malfoy's robes. 'He was provoked, Professor Snape,' said Hagrid, […] 'Malfoy was insultin' his family.'" (Rowling, 1997/2014, p. 210). In this excerpt, Malfoy insulted Ron's family, which developed into a physical altercation between the two. Ron's aggression is also present in another excerpt when Malfoy compares Neville's lack of knowledge to Ron's lack of wealth: "'I'm warning you, Malfoy – one more word –' […] Ron snapped. Before Malfoy knew what was happening, Ron was on top of him, wrestling him to the ground." (Rowling, 1997/2014, p. 240). Verbs such as "dived" from the first excerpt, alongside "snapped" and "wrestling" from the other excerpt, may indicate that Ron is easily provoked. These excerpts may also indicate that Ron's default emotional reaction is to be aggressive when his feelings are hurt. Aggression and physical strength are often associated with stereotypical representations of the male sex, which may indicate that Ron's behaviour can be viewed as stereotypical.

The next excerpt depicts Harry and Ron trying to save Hermione Granger (hereby referred to as Hermione) from a mountain troll that has entered the bathroom stalls: "Harry then did something that was both very brave and very stupid: he took a great running jump and managed to fasten his arms around the troll's neck from behind." (Rowling, 1997/2014, p. 188). In this excerpt, Harry is seen taking a life-threatening risk to save Hermione. Such heroic actions and taking risks are typically associated with stereotypical masculine gender roles. However, as the next excerpt presents, Hermione's actions and behaviour in the same situation may be viewed as passive: "Hermione was shrinking against the wall opposite, looking as if she was about to faint." (Rowling, 1997/2014, p. 188). The verb "shrinking" in this excerpt may indicate that Hermione is becoming smaller, less intimidating, and unable to defend herself from the mountain troll, thus implying that she needs Harry and Ron's help. Although Hermione inhabits the magical abilities and theoretical knowledge to protect herself from this attack, she may have become paralysed with fear when faced with a real physical threat. The way in which Harry steps up and saves Hermione may be a way for Harry – a male – to appear more capable of reacting in such situations. In addition, it may indicate that Hermione may need a saviour, or that she is a "damsel in distress" that needs a hero to save her. This may be associated with or viewed in comparison to the typical structure of fairy tales, that Nikolajeva (2006) mentions, which may also indicate stereotypical gender roles.

The next excerpt presents when Harry and Ron meet Hermione for the first time in their carriage on the Hogwarts Express: "She had a bossy sort of voice, lots of bushy brown hair and rather large front teeth." (Rowling, 1997/2014, p. 112). The adjective "bossy" in this excerpt may indicate that Hermione tone of voice is direct and assertive. The way Hermione addresses the boys may indicate that she appears confident and direct, which may not be positively received by Harry and Ron. The choice of the negatively charged adjective of "bossy", as opposed to a more positively charged synonym, may cause the reader to interpret Hermione's assertiveness as a negative personal attribute. The negative view on Hermione's tone of voice may be due to her appearing more stereotypically masculine, which may oppose stereotypical feminine attributes, such as niceness. In addition, the excerpt continues by describing Hermione's physical appearance, where adjectives such as "bushy" and "large" in relation to descriptions of her hair and teeth, may indicate that she is not considered beautiful, as these types of physical characterisations do not conform to stereotyped feminine beauty. The adjectives regarding her physical appearance, as well as her tone of voice, may indicate that Hermione generally does not conform to stereotypical feminine attributes. The following

excerpt takes place after Harry, Ron, and Hermione's first interaction on the train: "'All right – I only came in here because people outside are behaving very childishly, racing up and down the corridors,' said Hermione in a sniffy voice. 'And you've got something on your nose, by the way, did you know?'" (Rowling, 1997/2014, p. 118). Again, the choice of adjective to describe Hermione's tone of voice (sniffy), may indicate that she is viewed by Harry and Ron in a negative way. Hermione additionally explains that she only approached their carriage because the people on the outside were behaving "very childishly". This remark may indicate that Hermione is viewed as someone who is "stuck up"; she views herself as more mature than other people her age; or that she may lack humour or playfulness. The narrator's choice of words may provide the reader with a negative view of Hermione.

The next excerpt describes the events that take place at breakfast before Harry' first Quidditch game: "At breakfast on Thursday, she bored them all with stupid flying tips she'd got out of a library book called *Quidditch Through the Ages*. […] everybody else was very pleased when Hermione's lecture was interrupted by the arrival of the post." (Rowling, 1997/2014, p. 154). Here, Hermione explains the tips she read about in a book on Quidditch. However, words such as the adverb "bored" and the adjective "stupid" may indicate that her tips were not well received by the group. In addition, the phrase "very pleased" in relation to her "lecture" being interrupted, may indicate that the receivers of these tips were mainly annoyed with Hermione sharing her knowledge with the group. In the aftermath of Professor Flitwick's class, where Hermione teaches Ron how to perform a magic spell, this next excerpt depicts how her tips were received by Ron:

> 'It's no wonder why no one can stand her,' he said to Harry as they pushed their way into the crowded corridor. 'She's a nightmare, honestly.' Someone knocked into Harry as they hurried past him. It was Hermione. Harry got a glimpse of her face – and was startled to see that she was in tears. 'I think she heard you.' 'So?' said Ron, but he looked a bit uncomfortable. 'She must've noticed she's got no friends.' (Rowling, 1997/2014, p. 184)

The way Ron describes Hermione may be an indication of how she may have made him feel less superior or belittled with her presentation of her knowledge. This excerpt may also indicate that Hermione's attempt at being helpful or to share her knowledge may be received by others as annoying rather than useful. Ron explains that it is obvious why she is disliked, and calls her a "nightmare", which may indicate that girls with similar characteristics as

Hermione may not be considered likeable because of their assertive and dominant attributes, which may not conform to stereotypical feminine attributes.

The following excerpt describes the event of Malfoy casting a Leg-Locker spell on Neville as he made his way to Gryffindor's common room: "Everyone was laughing except Hermione, who leapt up and performed a counter-curse." (Rowling, 1997/2014, p. 234). In this excerpt, it is evident that Hermione does not find Neville's embarrassment and discomfort humorous as the others in the Gryffindor common room. Instead of laughing at him like the others, she comes to his aid and removes the spell. This may be an indication that Hermione is more empathetic and caring. Hermione being helpful and caring towards Neville may illustrate that she inhabits stereotypical feminine attributes. Such as in the next excerpt, Hermione is rewarded fifty points in the House Cup and Harry observes her reaction: "Hermione buried her face in her arms; Harry strongly suspected she had burst into tears." (Rowling, 1997/2014, p. 329). The adverb "strongly" may indicate that Harry has certain expectations to Hermione reacting emotionally to this reward. This expectation may be a result of Hermione exhibiting other similar emotional reactions throughout the book. These reactions may indicate that Hermione's behaviour may be considered stereotypically feminine, as the female sex is often associated with a wider variety of emotional responses, as opposed to stereotypical masculine emotions of aggression and anger.

In the following excerpt, the results of the exams for the students at Hogwarts are shared: "To their great surprise, both he and Ron had passed with good marks; Hermione, of course, came top of the year." (Rowling, 1997/2014, p. 330). In this excerpt, the adjective "great" to describe Harry and Ron's surprise in passing the exams with decent grades may be an indication that they passed their exams based on pure luck and talent. The adverb "of course" used to explain how Hermione came top of their class this year, may undermine or diminish her hard work. The narrator's choice of words may indicate that Hermione's efforts are less significant than the boys' talent, which may illustrate that they should be praised for their efforts, but not Hermione.

The next excerpt is from the very beginning of the novel, where Hagrid delivers Harry to the Dursleys. In this excerpt, Hagrid says goodbye to Harry:

> 'Could I – could I say goodbye to him, sir?' asked Hagrid. He bent his great, shaggy
> head over Harry and gave him what must have been a very scratchy, whiskery kiss.
> Then, suddenly, Hagrid let out a howl like a wounded dog. […] 'S-s-sorry,' sobbed

Hagrid, taking out a large spotted handkerchief and burying his face in it. 'But I c-c-can't stand it – Lily an' James dead – an' poor little Harry off ter live with Muggles –'

'Yes, yes, it's all very sad, but get a grip on yourself, Hagrid, or we'll be found,' Professor McGonagall whispered, […]. (Rowling, 1997/2014, p. 16)

Although he has not known Harry very long, it is evident that saying goodbye to him is an emotional event for Hagrid. This is evident in how his emotions are expressed through verbs such as "howl" and "sobbed". Despite Hagrid being described as the large and tough gamekeeper at Hogwarts, he may portray more stereotypical feminine attributes than what the reader may expect. It is apparent in other excerpts that Hagrid may exhibit more stereotypically feminine attributes. In this next excerpt, Hagrid is saying goodbye to his baby dragon as Harry and Hermione send him away to Ron's brother in Romania: "'Bye, bye, Norbert!' Hagrid sobbed, as Harry and Hermione covered the crate with the Invisibility Cloak and stepped underneath it themselves. 'Mummy will never forget you!'" (Rowling, 1997/2014, p. 258). The choice of using the verb "sobbed" as opposed to synonyms like "cried" may be an indication of the narrator's wish to exaggerate Hagrid's emotions to highlight his emotional response. The verb "sobbed" is again used in the following excerpt:

He sat down next to Harry, took one look at him and burst into tears. 'It's – all – my – ruddy – fault!' he sobbed, his face in his hands. 'I told the evil git how to ter get past Fluffy! I told him! Yeh could've died! All fer a dragon egg! I'll never drink again! I should be chucked out an' made ter live as a Muggle!' 'Hagrid!' said Harry, shocked to see Hagrid shaking with grief and remorse, great tears leaking down into his beard. (Rowling, 1997/2014, p. 326)

In this excerpt, Hagrid is seen expressing his grief and remorse towards Harry, as he believes that it is his fault that Harry was injured. Hagrid additionally expresses that feels guilty that Harry went through all this trouble simply because he wanted a dragon egg. This may indicate that Hagrid is ashamed for pursuing his own wishes and desires, and that he expresses regret and remorse when the consequences of his actions are presented to him. Harry, on the other hand, is "shocked" to see that Hagrid is expressing these emotions, as it is evident that this is not Hagrid's fault alone that these events took place. Regardless, Harry's response to Hagrid's emotions may indicate that he may not expect a large man like Hagrid to react this way. In a way, one may interpret that Hagrid's emotional representations, as well as his personal attributes, does not match his exterior and how he is perceived by others.

The following excerpt depicts Aunt Petunia waking up Harry on Dudley's birthday in an unpleasant way: "His Aunt Petunia was awake and it was her shrill voice which made the first noise of the day. 'Up! Get up! Now!' Harry woke with a start. His aunt rapped on the door again. 'Up!' she screeched." (Rowling, 1997/2014, p. 20). Here, the narrator uses the adjective "shrill" to describe Aunt Petunia's voice to indicate to the reader that being woken up this way may not be very pleasant. In addition, the way Aunt Petunia uses direct and aggressive utterances may indicate that she may not be a very pleasant person. It may also indicate that she does not inhabit personal attributes typically associated with the female sex, such as niceness and caring for others.

4.1.2   Social constructs and stereotypes

Harry's family, the Dursley's, are not very kind to him. As Harry seems to hold negative feelings and opinions about them, there is a higher chance that the reader may adopt these opinions. To convey that the Dursley's are not liked by Harry, the family is represented in a way that makes them appear undesirable and unkind. The excerpts in this – and the following paragraph – describe how Vernon Dursley (hereby referred to as Uncle Vernon) and Petunia Dursley (hereby referred to as Aunt Petunia) are presented to the reader. The first excerpt depicts a morning at Uncle Vernon's workplace, prior to gaining the custody of Harry: "Mr Dursley, however, had a perfectly normal, owl-free morning. He yelled at five different people. He made several important telephone calls and shouted a bit more." (Rowling, 1997/2014, p. 4). Uncle Vernon's "perfectly normal" morning is depicted as him yelling at people, making important calls, and yelling some more. This excerpt may indicate that Uncle Vernon is a rather aggressive man by nature, which are emotions often associated with stereotypical masculinity.

The personal attributes and family dynamic of the Dursley family are further expressed in the following excerpts. This next excerpt depicts the aftermath of the Dursley's trip to the zoo. Uncle Vernon is enraged with Harry, as he believes he is to blame for the events that took place at the zoo: "He was so angry he could hardly speak. He managed to say, 'Go – cupboard – stay – no meals,' before he collapsed into a chair and Aunt Petunia had to run and get him a large brandy." (Rowling, 1997/2014, pp. 30-31). In this excerpt, Uncle Vernon is seemingly so upset and angry that Aunt Petunia knows that the only way to calm him down is to provide with a drink. In this excerpt, the narrator writes that Aunt Petunia "had" to get Uncle Vernon a large brandy to calm down his rage towards Harry. This may position Aunt Petunia as

someone who's responsibility it is to deescalate her husband's rage. Regarding stereotypical feminine attributes, this may be a way the narrator implicitly conveys stereotypical gender roles of femininity and females in Aunt Petunia. Additionally, Uncle Vernon's aggression may also be considered stereotypically masculine.

The next excerpt follows the aftermath of the mountain troll attack in the bathroom stalls, where Harry, Ron, and Hermione are now confronted by Professor McGonagall:

> 'Miss Granger, you foolish girl, how could you think of tackling a mountain troll on your own?' […] 'Miss Granger, five points will be taken from Gryffindor for this,' said Professor McGonagall. 'I'm very disappointed in you. If you're not hurt at all, you'd better get off to Gryffindor Tower. Students are finishing their feast in their houses.' […] 'Well, I still say that you were lucky, but not many first-years could have taken on a full-grown mountain troll. You each win Gryffindor five points. Professor Dumbledore will be informed of this. You may go.' (Rowling, 1997/2014, p. 191)

In this excerpt, Hermione is being lectured by Professor McGonagall for pursuing the troll by herself. However, this was a lie fabricated by Hermione so that she can take the punishment instead of Harry and Ron. As the excerpt shows, Hermione is punished for her actions by taking five points from Gryffindor's score for the House Cup. After Hermione has received her punishment, Professor McGonagall rewards Harry and Ron for their luck and heroic actions by giving them five points each. Although Hermione takes the blame for the actions of all three of them, she is the only one receiving punishment. The boys, on the other hand, are seemingly rewarded for their risk-taking, as well as their talents and luck. This distribution of punishment and reward may be an indicator that Hermione's receives punishment because she is female and therefore may not receive praise or rewards for her actions.

Towards the end of the novel, Harry, Hermione, and Ron are all rewarded for facing Voldemort and protecting Hogwarts. This next excerpt is part of Professor Dumbledore's speech to the three students, where he addresses Harry last to hand out points for their bravery: "'Third – to Mr Harry Potter…' said Dumbledore. The room went deadly quiet. '… for pure nerve and outstanding courage, I award Gryffindor house sixty points.'" (Rowling, 1997/2014, p. 329). In this excerpt, Harry is rewarded ten points more than what Ron and Hermione received each. The reason to why he is rewarded these extra points may be due to what Professor Dumbledore explains as "pure nerve" and "outstanding courage". Again, this may imply that Harry receives more praise than the others based on his talents and luck. As

Harry, a male, is the protagonist of this novel, may receive rewards for his actions mainly because of his gender, as male stereotypes imply that boys tend to evade punishment for their troublesome actions.

The next excerpt details how Hermione is helping Harry with his homework so that he can attend Quidditch practice:

> It was really lucky that Harry had Hermione as a friend, He didn't know how he'd have got through all his homework without her, what with all the Quidditch practice Wood was making them do. She had also lent him Quidditch Through the Ages, which turned out to be an interesting read. (Rowling, 1997/2014, p. 194)

In this excerpt, Harry explains that it is lucky that he has Hermione as a friend and that he does not know what he would do without her. This excerpt may indicate that Harry may view his friendship to Hermione primarily as her being resourceful to him. Additionally, the way Harry expresses how the book he borrowed from Hermione "turned out" to be an interesting read, may indicate that he did not have a positive attitude to the book to begin with. When she talked about the book at breakfast, Harry alongside the others, were seemingly not interested in the contents of the book. This may be due to Hermione's behaviour and tone of voice, possibly making Harry and the others reluctant to listen to her. However, as this excerpt may suggest, when Harry and Ron became Hermione's friend, they may have viewed her as more of a resource. Hermione becoming a resource to Harry and Ron may be evident in other excerpts as well. This next excerpt describes Hermione as becoming more relaxed about breaking rules: "Hermione had become a bit more relaxed about breaking rules since Harry and Ron had saved her from the mountain troll and she was much nicer for it." (Rowling, 1997/2014, p. 194). This excerpt may suggest that due to Harry and Ron saving Hermione from the troll, she has become more relaxed about breaking rules, and is also nicer to them than before. This may suggest that Hermione may conform to the stereotypical attribution of niceness, which is a feminine gender stereotype.

The following excerpt presents how Hermione is not any good at playing chess: "Chess was the only thing Hermione ever lost at, something Harry and Ron thought was very good for her." (Rowling, 1997/2014, p. 233). Here it may seem as if Harry and Ron are intimidated by Hermione's abilities and knowledge. However, one thing she is not great at is chess. Harry and Ron thinking it is very good for her to not be best in something may indicate that they think she should lower her confidence. Another excerpt that may suggest that Hermione's

confidence may be too intimidating and strong, is Ron suggesting that Hermione should be the one to keep an eye on Snape:

> 'One of us has got to keep an eye on Snape – wait outside the staff room and follow him if he leaves it. Hermione, you'd better do that.' 'Why me?' 'It's obvious,' said Ron. 'You can pretend to be waiting for Professor Flitwick, you know.' He put on a high voice, 'Oh Professor Flitwick, I'm so worried, I think I got question fourteen b wrong…' (Rowling, 1997/2014, p. 289)

Here, Ron elects Hermione to keep an eye on Snape, as the excuse of waiting for one of the professors to ask a question is something Hermione may do. However, in addition to delegating tasks, Ron seemingly taunts Hermione for being the kind of student to ask questions about a test. He also "put on a high voice", possibly to taunt her further. This may indicate that Ron is attempting to make Hermione more aware of her behaviour by exaggerating it, with the possible intention of her becoming less confident and thereby more feminine, and him feeling more masculine.

In the following excerpt towards the end of the novel, Harry explains to Hermione that he does not believe he has what it takes to take on Voldemort by himself: "'I'm not as good as you,' said Harry, very embarrassed, as she let go of him. 'Me!' said Hermione. 'Books! And cleverness! There are more important things – friendship and bravery and – oh, Harry, be *careful*!'" (Rowling, 1997/2014, p. 308). In this excerpt, Hermione explains to Harry that there are more important things than cleverness and books, such as friendship and bravery. This excerpt may suggest that Hermione does not view her own knowledge and personal attributes as important, compared to friendship and bravery. This may indicate that she is diminishing her own hard work and efforts, simply because they may not be deemed desirable.

The last two excerpts in this section depicts the events surrounding Hagrid and his baby dragon, Norbert: "'I've decided to call him Norbert,' said Hagrid, looking at the dragon with misty eyes. 'He really knows me now, watch. Norbert! Norbert! Where's Mummy?' 'He's lost his marbles,' Ron muttered in Harry's ear." (Rowling, 1997/2014, p. 253). Firstly, Hagrid explicitly calls himself "mummy" as opposed to for example "daddy" when talking to his dragon. The way that Hagrid, a large and physically strong man, is showing signs of being a motherly figure with "misty eyes", may be an indication that he is concerned with being mistaken for having feminine features, such as love and care, for his dragon. Ron, on the other

hand, is muttering to Harry that the way Hagrid is talking to Norbert makes it seem like he has "lost his marbles". This may indicate that Ron does not view Hagrid's behaviour as appropriate. Secondly, when Hagrid has to say goodbye to Norbert, he again shows that he may exhibit stereotypical feminine attributes: "Hagrid had Norbert packed and ready in a large crate. 'He's got lots o' rats an' some brandy fer the journey,' said Hagrid in a muffled voice. 'An' I've packed his teddy bear in case he gets lonely.'" (Rowling, 1997/2014, p. 257). Here, Hagrid is making sure Norbert has everything he needs for his journey, such as his teddy bear "in case he gets lonely". The way Hagrid is taking care of his dragon until their very last interaction, may show that Hagrid exhibits stereotypical feminine traits associated with a motherly figure.

4.2   Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief

This sub-section analyses the passages from the novel *Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief*. Similar to the analysis of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* in the previous section, the passages analysed in this section seek to answer the research questions presented in the introductory section of this thesis. The first sub-section in this section looks at how verbs, adverbs, and adjectives may present gender roles in the book, whereas the second sub-section looks at how these words may play a role in the social constructs of gender, and whether they challenge or reinforce gender stereotypes. The analysis uncovers and explains possible explicit or implicit meanings or ways of interpreting the language used in the passages, which will be discussed later in the thesis. Unlike the previous book in this analysis, this book is written in a first-person point-of-view, where the narrator is Percy himself. As Percy is a twelve-year-old boy, this may affect the language he uses about himself and others.

4.2.1   Verbs, adverbs, and adjectives

The first excerpt from *Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief* depicts the inner monologue of Percy after following the events of an interaction where Grover is bullied by Nancy Bobofit: "I tried to stay cool. The school counsellor had told me a million times, 'Count to ten, get control of your temper.' But I was so mad my mind went blank. A wave roared in my ears." (Riordan, 2005, p. 9). In this excerpt, Percy struggles with issues related to controlling his anger. This is evident from the adjective "mad", as well as the phrases "stay cool" and "get control of your temper". According to Kollmayer et al. (2018, p. 366), emotions such as

aggression, are often used to describe stereotypical masculinity and the male sex. By using these emotions in Percy's thought process, Riordan may reinforce this claim, representing Percy in a stereotypically masculine way. Another example of this is Percy's response to Gabe's demand towards his mother – "I gritted my teeth." (Riordan, 2005, p. 33) – may indicate that he is supressing his anger towards Gabe. The verb "gritted" in this phrase, may often be used in relation to emotions such as anger and aggression.

In a response to receiving Grover's summer address, Percy states the following: "'So, like, if I want to come visit your mansion.' He nodded. 'Or… or if you need me.' 'Why would I need you?' It came out harsher than I meant it to." (Riordan, 2005, p. 24). In this excerpt, Grover's response to leaving Percy on his own, is to express his concern and reassure Percy that he may contact him if he needs him. Percy's response to this suggestion is to defend his independence by asking why he would need Grover. The choice of using the verb "would" instead of "should" affects how the question may sound to the receiver. The verb "would" may sound more aggressive and assertive as opposed to "should" in this question. This is something Percy reflects on in his inner monologue. However, he does not provide Grover with an apology to this. Another verb in this excerpt, used by both Percy and Grover, "need". Grover's use of the verb is to indicate that he is offering his help to Percy. Percy, however, repeats the verb back to Grover in a question to indicate that he does not need his help. Percy's response may be a way for him to express his independence and his ability to protect himself. Independence and decisiveness are attributes often associated with stereotypical masculinity, according to Kollmayer et al. (2018, p. 366). Grover, on the other hand, expresses his concerns for Percy. In this excerpt, Grover seemingly expresses personal attributes that may be deemed feminine, such as caring towards others (Kollmayer et al., 2018, p. 366). In another excerpt, it is evident that Percy may also return the favour of being protective of Grover: "All year long, I'd gotten in fights keeping bullies away from him. I'd lost sleep worrying that he'd get beaten up next year without me. And here he was acting like he was the one who defended me." (Riordan, 2005, pp. 24-25). Here, Percy is seen fighting for his friend, as he seemingly is unable to do so himself. The phrase "I'd lost sleep worrying", may indicate that Percy experiences a sense of responsibility and care for Grover.

In the next excerpt, Percy expresses his relief when Grover confirms he will join Percy on his quest: "I felt so relieved I wanted to cry, though I didn't think that would be very heroic." (Riordan, 2005, p. 146). Here, Percy reveals that he is in fact terrified to begin the quest to retrieve Zeus lightning bolt. However, these excerpt of Percy's inner monologue is only

expressed to the reader and not to the other characters. Although Grover may sense that Percy may be anxious to start this quest, he is never told this by Percy himself. In his inner monologue, Percy seemingly supresses a natural emotional reaction that may occur with the sense of relief. As he expresses in his thoughts, this may be due to Percy's perception of what heroic qualities are. He expresses an emotional need when he uses verbs such as "wanted" and "to cry". However, he may not view an emotional reaction as heroic, as his inner monologue may provide the reader with an insight into Percy's perception of a hero. Here, the adjective "very" as in "very heroic" may emphasise that Percy believes he needs to act a certain way to be deemed heroic and strong.

Several other excerpts depict how Percy may supress his emotions. One example is the following excerpt: "'Percy…' Annabeth said. 'I'm sorry about your mother. I'm so sorry….' I pretended not to hear her. If I talked about my mother, I was going to cry like a little kid." (Riordan, 2005, p. 321). Here, Annabeth is comforting Percy for having to leave his mother behind in Hades' realm. The way Annabeth is comforting Percy indicates that she understands that he is upset about his mother, and that he may need comforting. Percy, on the other hand, ignores her words of comfort. Percy explains that if they were to talk about his mother, he was going to "cry like a little kid". This may indicate that he is supressing feelings of sadness and grief, as he may not view these emotions as heroic, as described in the previous excerpt. Another example is when Percy is reunited with his mother: "She crushed the air right out of me. We stood in the hallway as she cried and ran her hands through my hair. 'I'll admit it – my eyes were a little misty, too." (Riordan, 2005, p. 347). Similar to the excerpt where Percy admits he may cry of relief, he admits in this excerpt that his eyes were a "little misty". This may indicate that he is acknowledging that he is feeling these emotions to the reader, but may still be reluctant to express them fully, unlike his mother. Related to gender representation, it may seem as if Percy wants to hide his more feminine characteristics, as outwardly feeling emotions is often seen as a characteristic of women. By hiding his emotions from Annabeth, he only shows her his more masculine side. The reader may also get the impression that Percy is hiding his true emotions because he is male. This can reinforce gender stereotypes, as males are stereotyped as less emotional and are "supposed" to hide their feelings from the outside world.

As this novel is written in a first-person narrative from Percy's point-of-view, it may impact the author's choice of words. This is evident in how Percy describes some of the other characters. One of the characters Percy describes is the bully, Nancy Bobofit. In the next

excerpt, Percy describes the trip on their way to the museum and introduces the reader to the character of Nancy: "All the way into the city, I put up with Nancy Bobofit, the freckly red-headed kleptomaniac girl, hitting my best friend, Grover, in the back of the head with chunks of peanut butter-and-ketchup sandwich." (Riordan, 2005, p. 3). Here, Percy uses phrases such as "put up with" and "the freckly red-headed kleptomaniac girl" to indicate to the reader how he feels about this character. Although Nancy is a smaller and less important character, the way Percy describes her may indicate that she is not a nice person. In addition, the way Percy points out her appearance may be a way for Percy to imply that she does not conform to stereotypical feminine beauty. Another excerpt may also indicate that she is unfriendly, and not stereotypically beautiful: "'Shut up,' Nancy hissed, her face even brighter red than her hair." (Riordan, 2005, p. 6). In this excerpt, the word "hissed" may be used to indicate that she is aggressive and unfriendly in Percy's opinion, and his remark about how her face became as red as her hair may indicate that Nancy is embarrassed. Nancy's response to this embarrassment may be due to her pride being hurt.

In another excerpt, Percy, Annabeth, and Grover are about to confront Hades in his realm. Percy states that he wishes Hades' wife was there with them: "I wished Queen Persephone were here. I recalled something in the myths about how she could calm her husband's moods." (Riordan, 2005, p. 310). Although Percy wishes for Queen Persephone's presence, the way he expresses this may indicate that he primarily views her role as someone to "calm" Hades' moods. This excerpt may indicate that Queen Persephone may only be seen as helpful or as someone who calms down Hades' emotions. Her role, as it is indicated in this excerpt, may only be to help make interactions with Hades himself more pleasant and controlled. In relation to gender, Persephone's personal attributes, compared to Hades' aggression and lack of kindness, may indicate that they both exhibit stereotypical feminine and masculine gender roles.

The next excerpt describes an interaction between Percy and Annabeth, where Annabeth delegates tasks to Percy in the game of "capture the flag": "'It's easy. Stand by the creek, keep the reds away. Leave the rest to me. Athena always has a plan.' She pushed ahead, leaving me in the dust. 'Okay,' I mumbled. 'Glad you wanted me on your team.'" (Riordan, 2005, p. 119). In this excerpt, Annabeth shows leadership and her ability to take charge in the contest. She provides Percy with short, direct, and passive tasks, so that she may proceed to win the contest. The phrases "pushed ahead" and "leaving me in the dust" may indicate that Annabeth is more concerned with winning the contest than to ensure that Percy is included. It

may also indicate that Annabeth may be decisive, agentic, and goal-oriented, which are personal attributes more commonly associated with masculinity and the male sex. Percy, however, is not pleased with being dismissed by Annabeth the way he is in this excerpt. Following this interaction, he mumbles to himself a sarcastic comment towards Annabeth for wanting him on the team. Percy's roles in the game are to "stand by the creek" and "keep the reds away". Through his passive aggressive remark, Percy seems displeased to be pushed around by Annabeth, and to have his abilities stunted. In another excerpt, Percy responds passive aggressively to Annabeth's reason for joining his and Grover's quest: "[…] but if you're going to save the world, I'm the best person to keep you from messing up.' […]'I suppose you have a plan, Wise Girl?' Her cheeks coloured. 'Do you want my help or not?' The truth was, I did." (Riordan, 2005, p. 148). Percy admits to the reader that he does in fact need Annabeth's help on this quest, however, he may be reluctant to admit it to her. Therefore, by responding with "Wise Girl" to Annabeth's remark, it may indicate that Percy is trying to assert his dominance and knowledge, which is a stereotype typically associated with males.

The next excerpt follows the events at a car wash: "'Give Percy the nozzle and come on!' she ordered. Grover muttered something about girls being harder to understand than the Oracle at Delphi, then he handed me the spray gun and followed Annabeth." (Riordan, 2005, p. 222). Here, the verb "ordered" indicates that Annabeth is taking the lead in the group. Grover's response to being ordered to hand over the spray gun to Percy, may indicate that he is displeased with Annabeth ordering him around. He mutters to himself that he thinks girls are hard to understand; which may indicate that he thinks Annabeth is hard to understand, despite her addressing him in a direct way. Related to gender representation, Grover may be embarrassed that he does not understand Annabeth. Consequently, he blames all girls for his shortcomings, which represents all females as difficult to understand.

In the following excerpt, Annabeth and Percy are being attacked by a swarm of metal spiders as they are trying to retrieve Ares' shield:

> Annabeth screamed. […] 'Spiders!' Annabeth said. 'Sp – sp – aaaah!' I'd never seen her like this before. She fell backwards in terror and almost got overwhelmed by the spider robots before I pulled her up and dragged her back towards the boat. (Riordan, 2005, p. 236)

In contrast to other descriptions of Annabeth in the novel she is described as helpless and frightened. Percy additionally states that he has never seen Annabeth "like this before", indicating that she may not express emotions of fear and inability to react very often. Here, Percy must take action to save them both, which may show that Annabeth needs Percy's help to be saved. Percy exhibits decisive traits and takes action to save both himself and Annabeth. In addition, phrases such as "pulled her up" and "dragged her back" may indicate that Percy is forceful and independent. Another excerpt may show how Percy is the one taking charge in this scene: "Annabeth and I climbed into the boat. I started kicking away the spiders as they swarmed aboard. I yelled at Annabeth to help me, but she was too paralysed to do much more than scream." (Riordan, 2005, pp. 236-237). Here, the verb "yelled" may indicate frustration or annoyance in Percy towards Annabeth for not helping him.

The next excerpt presents Annabeth as being forced to test one of Crusty's mattrasses: "He looked at Annabeth. 'Do me a favour and try this one over here, honey. Might fit.' Annabeth said, 'But what –' He patted her reassuringly on the shoulder and led her over to the Safari Deluxe model […]. When Annabeth didn't want to lie down, Crusty pushed her." (Riordan, 2005, p. 278). In this scene, neither Percy nor Grover are given any nicknames by Crusty. However, Annabeth is called "honey", which may indicate that Crusty is trying to assert his dominance over her. When Annabeth does not comply with Crusty's request, he pushes her regardless. Crusty ignores Annabeth opposing herself to his demands, though he uses physical power, possibly to assert his dominance, which is a stereotypically masculine attribute.

4.2.2   Social constructs and stereotypes

The first excerpt in this sub-section describes the interaction between Mr Brunner and Grover, which Percy secretly listens to:

> 'We would only make matters worse by rushing him,' Mr Brunner said. 'We need the boy to mature more.' 'But he may not have time. The summer solstice deadline –' 'Will have to be resolved without him, Grover. Let him enjoy his ignorance while he still can.' (Riordan, 2005, p. 19)

Here, Mr Brunner is telling Grover that Percy must mature more before he can begin his quest, and he should be allowed to enjoy his ignorance while he can. This ignorance is a luxury Annabeth did not experience, as she has been raised at camp Half Blood since the age of seven. What is evident in this excerpt, is that both Grover and Mr Brunner may be

concerned with withholding information about the quest from Percy to prevent him from experiencing something he may not be ready for. By implying that Percy needs to mature more, it may indicate that Percy is not physically or emotionally equipped to begin his quest. This may also be related to Percy's issues managing his anger – a stereotypical masculine trait – as prior events have shown that Percy struggles to control this emotion. However, his anger, alongside bravery, may be the attributes Mr Brunner imagines Percy needs to proceed on his quest.

The next excerpt from the novel introduces Percy's mother, Sally Jackson. In this excerpt, Percy explains her background and her hardships as a way for the reader to gain information about how she became the person she is today:

> A word about my mother before you meet her. Her name is Sally Jackson and she's the best person in the world, which just proves my theory that the best people have the rottenest luck. Her own parents died in a plane crash when she was five, and she was raised by an uncle who didn't care much about her. She wanted to be a novelist, so she spent high school working to save enough money for a college with a good creative-writing programme. Then her uncle got cancer, and she had to quit school in her senior year to take care of him. After he died, she was left with no money, no family and no diploma. (Riordan, 2005, pp. 29-30)

In this excerpt, it is evident that Sally has experienced life-altering circumstances throughout her childhood and young adulthood. Percy praises his mother for working through all these circumstances whilst still becoming what he refers to as "the best person in the world". According to Kollmayer et al. (2018, p. 370), the circumstances for which women and men receive praise, may be different based on their gender. Sally is praised for her efforts to work hard to achieve her goals, despite all odds being against her. Further, Percy talks about his mother and his father, and their relationship: "The only good break she ever got was meeting my dad. […] My mom doesn't like to talk about him because it makes her sad." (Riordan, 2005, p. 30). This excerpt illustrates that the way in which he talks about his parents' relationship, his understanding is that his father provided his mother with a break from the hardships and sadness in her life. However, by stating that his father was "the only good break" she ever received, there is an indication of Percy's perception of Sally's life prior to meeting his father, being that the only joyful moments of her life was those spent with a man. This may reinforce gender stereotypes of men being saviours of women in distress. This may also be evident in how Percy states that Sally becomes sad whenever she talks about his

father. Sally's reluctancy to speak about Percy's father may not be rooted in sadness, but rather as a way for her to protect her son. This indicates the stereotypically female characteristics of being kind and caring towards others.

In another excerpt about Percy's mother, he explains how she has had to work very hard to take care of herself and her child: "She worked odd jobs, took night classes to get her high school diploma, and raised me on my own. She never complained or got mad. Not even once." (Riordan, 2005, p. 30). The last sentence of this excerpt may indicate that the circumstances in which Sally had to work through, may have made anyone else complain or become angry. However, the way in which Percy describes her in some of the previous excerpts, may indicate that she is "too nice" to express these emotions which conforms to stereotypically female characteristics where women must present themselves as nice and unproblematic. Complaining, being angry, or even mad, may therefore not be deemed appropriate attributes to Sally. In another excerpt, Percy introduces how his stepfather, Gabe Ugliano, entered his and Sally's life: "Finally, she married Gabe Ugliano, who was nice the first thirty seconds we knew him, then showed his true colours as a world-class jerk." (Riordan, 2005, p. 30). The word "finally" here may be used to indicate that Sally's life was somehow "incomplete" before she married Gabe, as she was left by Percy's father. This, however, may position Sally only as the role of wife and mother, not as her own person.

The next few excerpts address Percy's father, Poseidon, and his relationship to both Percy and Sally. In the first excerpt, Percy explains why his mother and father were never married: "See, they weren't married. She told me he was rich and important, and their relationship was a secret. Then one day, he set sail across the Atlantic on some important journey, and he never came back." (Riordan, 2005, p. 30). The way Percy describes his father, it appears as if he was too "rich" and "important" to marry his mother, thus it had to be kept secret. This may indicate how his father's goals and ambitions may have been prioritised as opposed to taking care of Sally and Percy. This is often seen as represented in media and literature where men's priorities are centered around their professional role rather than their family life. In addition, Percy states that after his father went on his important journey, he never came back. His father's decision to leave and never return, may, again, indicate that his own ambitions were more important than his family life. The lack of emotional support from Percy's father is something that is seemingly troubling him throughout the novel: "'If my father is so interested in me,' I said, 'why isn't he here? Why doesn't he speak to me?'" (Riordan, 2005, p. 272). In this excerpt, Percy is riddled as to why his father does not contact him, even though he seems

interested in him. The next excerpt presents the interaction between Poseidon and Zeus: "'You still claim him then?' Zeus asked menacingly. 'You claim this child whom you sired against your sacred oath?' 'I have admitted my wrongdoing,' Poseidon said." (Riordan, 2005, p. 341). In this excerpt, Poseidon calls Percy his "wrongdoing", which upsets Percy. The way Poseidon is described in all three excerpts, may indicate that he is an absent and emotionally unavailable parent to Percy. These excerpts may also indicate that Poseidon does not inhabit personal attributes associated with family life, as opposed to Percy's mother. Poseidon seemingly inhabits stereotypical male attributes, such as egocentric individualism.

The next excerpt follows the events of Percy, Annabeth, and Grover's discovery of Ares' and Aphrodite's secret meeting spot:

> 'If Ares brings his girlfriend here for a date,' I said, staring up at the barbed wire, 'I'd hate to see what she looks like.' 'Percy,' Annabeth warned. 'Be more respectful.' 'Why? I thought you hated Ares.' 'He's still a god. And his girlfriend is very temperamental.' 'You don't want to insult her looks,' Grover added. (Riordan, 2005, p. 230)

In this excerpt, Grover and Annabeth explain to Percy that he needs to be respectful about Ares' girlfriend in a response to his comment regarding her looks. This may signify that Percy does not think Ares' girlfriend is beautiful or attractive. Therefore, his comment may imply that he thinks she is undesirable or ugly, as his remark implies that someone beautiful would not meet in this area. However, it is brought to Percy's attention that Ares' girlfriend is Aphrodite, the goddess of love and beauty, thus contradicting Percy's assumptions. When asking whether Aphrodite's husband, Hephaestus, is aware of her infidelity, Annabeth explains to Percy why Aphrodite's infidelity may be "understandable":

> 'Well, you know,' she said. 'Hephaestus, the blacksmith. He was crippled when he was a baby, thrown off Mount Olympus by Zeus. So he isn't exactly handsome. Clever with his hands and all, but Aphrodite isn't into brains and talent, you know?' 'She likes bikers.' (Riordan, 2005, p. 232)

In this excerpt, Annabeth explains how Hephaestus may not be considered conventionally handsome. This may be in part due to his disabilities. However, Annabeth adds how Aphrodite is not into brains and talent, to which Percy responds that she prefers bikers. This excerpt may indicate that for Hephaestus to be considered handsome, he may need to have the

physical and personal attributes typically associated with stereotypical, hegemonic masculinity.

In last excerpt of this analysis, Grover says goodbye to Annabeth and Percy, as he is leaving for his new job, Annabeth is making sure he is all settled for the journey:

> Annabeth gave him a hug. She told him to keep his fake feet on. […] 'You got enough tin cans for the trip?' 'Yeah.' 'And you remembered your reed pipes?' 'Jeez, Annabeth,' he grumbled. 'You're like an old mama goat.' (Riordan, 2005, p. 357)

In this excerpt, Annabeth hugs Grover goodbye whilst she makes sure he has brought along enough tin cans and his reed pipes for the trip. In a response to Annabeth's concerns and care, he says she is acting like "an old mama goat". This response to Annabeth's concern may be an indication that Grover thinks she is acting like a mother, which may be out of character for her. However, the attributes Annabeth display in this excerpt may indicate that she is acting stereotypically feminine in the way she shows love and care towards Grover.

5.0 Discussion

The purpose of this thesis is to explore and investigate the representation of gender roles in popular fantasy literature aimed towards young adults, and how written text and discourses may contribute to portray stereotypically feminine and masculine gender roles. This section of the thesis discusses the findings from the analysis of the passages in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* and *Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief*, which was conducted in the previous section. The findings are discussed in relation to the research questions presented in the introductory section of this thesis. The findings are also discussed in relation to the theoretical considerations, previous research on the topic, and how these findings may provide new insights. In addition, this section discusses how these novels may reinforce or challenge gender stereotypes, and how they may invite or restrict the development of the identity of the pupils in the EFL classroom.

The first sub-section discusses the first sub-question of the two research questions. This research question is concerned with how verbs, adverbs, and adjectives may impact how the characters in the novels are represented in terms of their gender roles. The second sub-section discusses the second sub-question. This research question is concerned with whether the authors reinforce or challenge gender stereotypes, and how this may invite or restrict personal and social development for the pupils in the EFL classroom.

5.1   *Verbs, adverbs, and adjectives*

Sunderland (2012, p. 7) claims that representations are a result of choices. Choosing certain available verbs, adverbs, and adjectives – as opposed to other available options to describe the characters and their actions – may influence the representation of the characters' gender and characteristics. However, Sunderland (2012, p. 7) claims that these choices may not always be conscious choices, or even written with certain intent from the author's side. She further adds that consideration of these choices may sharpen the reader's powers of observation and critique. For example, one of the passages from *Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief* (Riordan, 2005, p. 222) the narrator uses the verb "ordered" to describe Annabeth's utterance. This may be a conscious choice by the author to emphasise the tone of her actions, which may not be viewed as stereotypically feminine. Although Sunderland (2012, p. 7) emphasises that some choices may not always be conscious, implying that this may be the case for this excerpt, the effect it may have on gender representation may be significant. Intended or not,

the word choices the authors make will affect the representation of gender characteristics, and influence how the reader perceives the characters and their genders.

Representation may additionally be viewed as construct, where the words of the fictional text may not only explicitly represent these constructs through written text; it may be constructed in the mind of the reader (Sunderland, 2012, p. 7). By this, Sunderland means that these constructs may shape the reader's point of view of the world, or cause changes in their practice. Sunderland (2012, pp. 67-68) refers to characterisation as how an author "construes" the characters, meaning which textual cues give the reader information about the character. This understanding of characterisation includes "gender representation" and extends to the verbs, adverbs, and adjectives used by the characters, the narrator, and to the characters' points-of-view (Sunderland, 2012, pp. 67-68). The process of doing CDA involves looking at these textual cues and choices of words to uncover the possible underlying discourses and ideologies, according to Machin and Mayr (2012, p. 20). Through looking at verbs, adjectives, and adverbs in this thesis, one may explore how these representations in relation to gender may indicate gender ideologies. It is clear from the analysis that both novels use verbs, adjectives, and adverbs that conform to stereotypically male characteristics. However, through Hermione and Annabeth, Rowling and Riordan represent the females as non-typical. The other characters' responses to the non-typical female, however, is often represented with negatively charged verbs, adverbs, or adjectives. Along with presenting Sally Jackson as typically feminine and using words such as "mummy" in relation to Hagrid's feminine characteristics, both authors seem to reinforce the feminine stereotype through their representations of the female gender.

Talbot (1995, cited in Sunderland, 2012, p. 65) claims how choice of words may affect how the characters in a book are represented. She further elaborates on this by stating that the choice and distribution of transitive and intransitive verbs may establish how one character, as opposed another character, may be represented as making something happen, often in a gendered way. By this, she means that female character's actions are often described as intransitive, indicating a passiveness. In the analysis of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, this is evident in the choice of words used to describe how Hermione responds to the mountain troll attack. In this excerpt, Hermione is described as "shrinking against the wall" (Rowling, 1997/2014, p. 188), whereas Harry's actions are described as "a great running jump" and with "fasten his arms" (Rowling, 1997/2014, p. 188). Hermione may be seen as more passive than Harry in this scene, causing them both to be represented stereotypically

through the choice of verbs. The use of transitive and intransitive verbs may also be evident in the analysis of *Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief*. For example, in the game of "capture the flag", this scene indicates that Annabeth may be represented more assertive and agentic, as opposed to Percy. In this excerpt, Annabeth delegates tasks to Percy, instructing him to "stand by the creek" and "leave the rest to me", meanwhile Annabeth "pushed ahead", "leaving" Percy behind (Riordan, 2005, p. 119). Here, verbs such as "stand", "keep", and "leave" are used to indicate the tasks Annabeth has assigned to Percy. Verbs such as "pushed" are used to describe Annabeth's actions in the game. These verbs may indicate that Annabeth is instructing Percy to not get in the way so that she may proceed to lead their team to victory. The verbs used to describe Annabeth may represent her in a more stereotypical masculine way. Although this may challenge gender stereotypes, Percy's point-of-view can make it apparent to the reader that this behaviour may not be well received by the other characters, thereby indicating a wish for Annabeth to become more stereotypically female.

The novel *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* is written in a third person point-of-view. The point-of-view is therefore told from an objective perspective, as opposed to the more personal perspective of the protagonist, such as in *Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief*. The choice of words used by the narrator may indicate that the narrator wishes to convey certain messages and shape the reader's point of view of an event. Compared to the excerpts in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* from the previous paragraph, the excerpt from *Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief* (also found in the previous paragraph), may indicate that the way Annabeth is represented in a less stereotypically feminine way, compared to Hermione. However, Hermione is generally represented as not being stereotypically feminine, although she conforms more the stereotype than Annabeth. In *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* the reader's perception of Hermione, as well as her representation in the written text, may indicate that her behaviour may be seen as somewhat stereotypical due to the narrator's choice of words, such as "shrinking". Here, the narrator is not Harry himself, but rather someone who is looking at the situation from the outside. This can make the gender representation more objective and may indicate the gender ideology of the author. In *Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief*, however, the narrator is Percy himself, and Annabeth is represented through how Percy views her. Percy's response to how Annabeth is treating him in this excerpt may indicate he is not pleased with her being so direct and assertive. Because Percy is the one who narrates the story, he may be able to convey his opinion of Annabeth and

her gender characteristics in this situation to the reader, which may cause them to view Annabeth the same way as Percy.

In *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, Hermione, who is intelligent and caring, do not always conform to stereotypical feminine attributes. This may be evident when Harry and Ron first meet Hermione. Here, her voice is described with the adjective "bossy" in "bossy sort of voice", and her physical appearance with adjectives such as "bushy hair" and "rather large front teeth" (Rowling, 1997/2014, p. 112). According to Rudman and Glick (2001, cited in Kollmayer et al., 2018, p. 366), personal attributes that are often associated with stereotypical femininity may indicate that Hermione does not conform to these stereotypes. However, the choice of words used to describe her may indicate that the attributes she does exhibit – which may be more stereotypically masculine – are not well received by the other characters. This is evident in the ways Ron speaks to Hermione throughout several excerpts in the novel. Hermione's knowledge and abilities may be seen as a threat to Ron, causing him to attempt to assert his dominance in other ways by speaking poorly of her and to her, which is represented through words and phrases such as "she's a nightmare" and "she must've noticed she's got no friends". In addition to Hermione, descriptions of Aunt Petunia may also indicate that she does not conform to stereotypical feminine attributes. This may be evident when for example Aunt Petunia waking up Harry on Dudley's birthday, and her voice is described as "shrill", and that she is "screeching" and "rapping" on his door.

In other excerpts from the novel, Percy's choice of words to describe Annabeth may indicate how he feels about her to the reader. For example, when Percy and Grover are leaving for their quest, Percy is told Annabeth will join them. To this, Percy speaks to Annabeth in an annoyed and sarcastic way, whilst he, in his inner monologue, admits that he wants her help. By not expressing his emotions to Annabeth, it may indicate that he does not want to act submissive in her presence. This may be an indication that Percy does not respond well to Annabeth's dominant and assertive actions; characteristics which become clear through the verbs, adverbs, and adjectives used in representing her characteristics and actions. Percy's unwillingness to show emotions may be due to an imbalance of dominance and independence between Percy and Annabeth, which may indicate that Percy wishes to establish his independence and decisiveness. According to Kollmayer et al. (2018, p. 366), these attributes are often associated with stereotypical masculinity, which reinforces that choice of words and word classes may influence gender representation.

Hunt (1991, as cited in Sunderland, 2012, p. 69) claims that authors of fictional literature often tend to use a high frequency of reporting clauses. These reporting clauses are used by the narrator and may indicate the narrator's attitude. Some examples of such reporting clauses may be "hissed", "sobbed", and "dived", which one sees in the novels. Drawing on this theory, Stephens (1992, as cited in Sunderland, 2012, p. 69), invites the reader to replace the genders of the characters, especially the main characters, in dialogues containing such reporting clauses. This may be trough changing personal pronouns in an utterance from "he sobbed" to "she sobbed", or vice versa. These verbs may be used to emphasise how a character is portrayed. By this, he may suggest that one variety of this reporting clause may be more suitable for the sex of the person who says it, as opposed to the other variety, due to gender stereotypes. By changing the genders of the characters, he implies that this can change the representation and perception of the character's gender roles.

In the analysis of the two novels, a way the verbs, adverbs, and adjectives may play a role on the representation of gender roles, are through verbal threats in the dialogues between the characters. In the analysis of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* this is evident in the way some of the male characters respond to other characters in arguments and confrontations, for example in the way Harry and Ron respond to Malfoy's remarks; when Harry threatens Malfoy, the narrator uses the adverb "bravely" in "more bravely than he felt" (Rowling, 1997/2014, p. 116) to give the reader a sense of how he attempts to appear more threatening than he feels. In another example, Malfoy feels threatened by Harry, but he is attempting to conceal his worry. Here, the narrator uses adjectives and adverbs "trying to sneer" and "looking worried" (Rowling, 1997/2014, p. 159) to make the reader aware that he may not appear as confident as he wants to. These threats may indicate that the character is attempting to assert their dominance, which may be a way in which masculinity is represented. Kollmayer et al. (2018, p. 366) claim that men are often characterised as aggressive and forceful. Therefore, verbal threats may represent the male gender in a way that conforms to stereotypically masculine attributes.

All in all, one may say that verbs, adverbs, and adjectives play a role in representing gender roles in the novels through their positive or negative connotations. This, together with the descriptions, actions, and dialogue, may affect how the gender of the characters are represented and perceived.

5.2   Social constructs, stereotypes, and the Norwegian national curriculum

5.2.1   Stereotypical gender roles

Both Rowling and Riordan may challenge some aspects of gender stereotypes in the way they have chosen to represent some of the male characters. Although some of the male characters from both novels may challenge the representation of stereotypical gender roles, the representations of the female characters are still not favourable towards their gender. The female characters are represented in a way that may position them as less desirable, less friendly, and less inviting. In addition, characters such as Hermione and Annabeth, are developing along with the events in the stories. However, their development starts with them exhibiting more masculine traits, such as assertiveness, then gradually develops towards more feminine traits, such as kindness, being helpful, and caring for others. Therefore, one may presume that these representations are still viewed as stereotypical. This may reinforce gender stereotypes towards a more marginalised group.

In *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, some of the female characters, such as Aunt Petunia and Hermione, may be described as having less stereotypically feminine attributes in some contexts. For Aunt Petunia, this may be evident in the excerpt where she wakes up Harry on Dudley's birthday. The description of her voice as well as her actions in this excerpt, may indicate that she does not conform to stereotypical femininity. Although Aunt Petunia may be seen as assertive and aggressive in some contexts, she may conform to opposite gender stereotypes in other contexts. For example, Aunt Petunia may conform to stereotypically feminine traits, such as kindness and caring towards others (Kollmayer et al., 2018, p. 366), when she must calm down both Uncle Vernon and her son Dudley. This is evident in the excerpt from the trip to the zoo (Rowling, 1997/2014, pp. 30-31). Although the Dursley's are not necessarily important to the rest of the story, their presence may implicitly reinforce stereotypical gender roles in family dynamics. Their roles in the novel may be shaped to make the reader view them in relation to the context. However, the female and male characters are represented poorly. This may impact the development of the reader's descriptive and prescriptive views on gender roles, and how they view themselves and their identity in relation to these. In addition, the discourses in these novels may be influential to the reader and their views on gender.

For Hermione, the way that she addresses Ron and Harry when they first meet on the train, may indicate that she inhabits stereotypically masculine traits, such as assertiveness, confidence, and dominance (Kollmayer et al., 2018, p. 366). However – as it is implied in the

excerpt where the narrator explains how Hermione has changed since she was saved by Harry and Ron from the troll – she is "much nicer for it" (Rowling, 1997/2014, p. 194). As Bradley and Mortimer (1972, cited in Sunderland, 2012, p. 43) claim, a concerning remark about consequences of girls' and boys' behaviour in literature, may indicate that girls are less fortunate than boys. They further claim that where girls are more often punished for their actions, boys are praised or often rewarded for their actions. This may be evident in how Hermione receives punishment for their interaction with the troll, whereas Harry and Ron receive rewards. This reinforces gender stereotypes.

A female character who may be represented as stereotypically feminine – as opposed to Hermione and Annabeth – is Sally Jackson, Percy's mother. The way she is described by Percy in many of the excerpts may indicate that Percy primarily positions her as a mother and a wife, which conforms to Sunderland's claims (2012, p. 27). In addition, he characterises her as the "best person" there is, and that some of the many reasons she is described this way, is that she never complains or becomes angry at either Percy or his stepfather. This may indicate that Sally conforms to stereotypical feminine attributes, such as being kind, beautiful, and that she cares about others, which Kollmayer et al. (2018, p. 366) claim are feminine stereotypes. In addition, the way Percy talks about both his parents, may indicate that he views his father as stereotypically masculine, in the way that his mother is the one who has been there for Percy his entire life. Another way Percy may position his mother is through his descriptions of her relationships. Here, Percy talks about her relationship to his father as the "only break" she had, and that marrying Gabe was something that "finally" happened (Riordan, 2005, p. 30). Through these descriptions, Percy may position Sally as someone's wife, indicating that she must marry to fulfil her gender roles.

The third caution of Sunderland's (2012, p. 25) model 1 of gender presents how one's (gender) identity may derive from what one associates oneself with, both in one's ideas and social roles, but it may also derive from what characteristics are assigned to one by others. In literature, this may occur often as the author and the narrator of a story are the ones who provide the characters with their characteristics, and therefore decides how they should be represented. Sunderland (2012, p. 25) further claims that positioning may also contribute to form one's identity, or even assign them a certain identity as something by others. The excerpt about how lucky Harry is to have Hermione as a friend (Rowling, 1997/2014, p. 194) in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, shows that Hermione's role in the friendship between her and Harry may primarily be as a resource to Harry. Kollmayer et al. (2018, p.

366) claim that being helpful and nice are some of the personal attributes mostly associated with the female sex. This may imply that Hermione is being positioned in a way to become resourceful and helpful towards Harry and Ron, which may– in addition to holding non-stereotypically female characteristics - cause her to conform to stereotypical feminine gender roles.

Some of the male characters in both *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* and *Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief* may challenge stereotypical gender roles. This may be evident in for example the portrayal of Hagrid from the former book, and Grover from the latter. Hagrid, for example, calls himself Norbert's "Mummy" (Rowling, 1997/2014, p. 253), and positions himself as a mother figure to his baby dragon. Ron's remark to Hagrid's behaviour in the same excerpt, may indicate that he does not consider Hagrid's behaviour as appropriate, suggesting he has "lost his marbles". In another excerpt, Harry is shocked that Hagrid's reacts with tears and remorse to Harry's return. The way in which this excerpt is written may indicate that a large man like Hagrid, sobbing with his face in his hands, may not be seen as appropriate behaviour. Being emotional and caring for others, Hagrid may not conform to stereotypical masculine ideals. The other male character mentioned earlier in this paragraph, was Grover. The way Grover expresses his concern, comfort, and help to Percy in several excerpts, may indicate that he is not represented in the same way as Percy. For example, in the excerpt where Grover hands out his contact information to Percy (Riordan, 2005, p. 24), Grover explains that he is available if Percy needs him. Here, it may be evident Grover only wishes to be helpful and resourceful, which are attributes more commonly associated with the female sex. Therefore, this may imply that Grover is represented as more feminine.

5.2.2 *Personal and social development in the EFL classroom*

As Fairclough (2000, cited in Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 21) claims, discourses may project certain social values and ideas. He claims that discourses may also contribute to the production and reproduction of social life. This may for example be how one may talk about genders and gender roles, and how this may contribute to form their expectations towards these roles. Speer (2005, p. 1) also emphasises that using discourses to communicate may naturalise and perpetuate oppressive understandings of gender and gender role behaviour by being presented as timeless, rational, and natural. She further claims that these understandings will then become deeply ingrained in one's view of the world, and therefore these

understandings may be regarded as normative and expectable. This may also imply the importance of pupils' encounters with authentic written and spoken dialogue in English literature. Their encounters may be influential to develop the attitudes and knowledge for the pupils to be able to participate in society, as emphasised in the subject curriculum in English (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020). The popularity of the fantasy genre within young adult literature, in addition to the genre's ability to allow the reader to relate to the characters, may emphasise the importance of having a critical view of the discourses in these novels.

As it is emphasised in the core curriculum, schools need to support the development of each pupil's identity and give them confidence in who they are (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2017, p. 6). It further claims that schools must also present common values and principles that one needs to participate in our society, such as equality. Regarding equality, one should critically evaluate literature aimed towards children and young adults before they elect to use it in the EFL classroom. Some of this literature may present gender inequality or unfortunate stereotypes in a way that may contribute to reinforce attitudes that help sustain oppression and sexism against genders.

According to the core curriculum (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2017, p. 15), the development of a positive self-image and confidence in one's identity is very important in the childhood and adolescent years. One example of the health and skills required to facilitate this development, is the area of sexuality and gender. Here, the importance of how schools facilitate this development is important. According to Kollmayer et al. (2018, p. 365), different social development theories highlight how gender stereotypes may be reinforced from an early age. This may emphasise the importance of the roles teachers and schools have in the children's social and personal development. They claim that these reinforcements may occur through observations and modelling. Speer (2005, p. 5) claims that children may develop patterns of communication through socialisation or by gender-segregated play during childhood. In *Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief*, this may show in the way Annabeth is described, which makes her not conform to stereotypical gender roles. This may result from having to attend camp Half Blood at an earlier age than for example Percy, which may have caused her to become tougher and more masculine in certain ways.

The core curriculum claims that encounters with cultural expressions may aid the pupils to form their identity. This may indicate the importance of the English subject to explore different cultures through language and authentic dialogue, for example through fantasy literature. The ability to critically think and reflect are important aspects in the development

of one's attitudes and ethical judgements, according to the core curriculum (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2017, p. 13), which can be connected to gender stereotypes. It further states that this additionally applies to teachers and schools, which emphasises the importance of reflecting critically on the connections between the teaching materials, the subject curriculums, and the core curriculum. This may emphasise how the literature used in the EFL classroom should be evaluated and critically assessed, regardless of its popularity, as this literature may present the pupils with gender representations and stereotypes that go against the values of the curriculum.

As stated in the subject curriculum in English (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020, p. 2), the English subject shall contribute to make the pupils proficient and confident English language users. By doing so, the pupils may gain the ability to use the language to learn, communicate, and connect with others. In addition, the curriculum claims that through an exploratory approach to language learning, lifestyles, attitudes, and social conditions, the pupils may gain new perspectives of themselves and the world. This may promote curiosity and engagement and help prevent prejudice. Here, prejudice may include preconceived opinions of people based on their gender. Regarding attitudes, social conditions, and new perspectives, the pupils may gain insights to already existing perspectives and social constructs by working with literature in the English subject. By learning English, pupils can develop their knowledge of the language as a system and how the language is structured, which may provide them numerous ways of communicating and interacting, according to the curriculum (Utdanningsdirektoratet, pp. 2-3). The development of one's understanding of how the English language is structured may additionally develop a more critical view on the choice of words used in communication patterns in for example fantasy literature.

Regarding language learning, the curriculum claims that this takes place in the encounter with English texts (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020, p. 3). It further adds that examples of such texts may be written, spoken, and fictional texts. This indicates that language learning may take place in numerous contexts and through a variety of ways, including fantasy literature. The curriculum further claims how working with texts in English through reflecting, interpreting, and critically assessing different varieties of texts, may increase the pupils' knowledge of culture and society (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020, p. 3). This implies that reading fantasy literature can be a way in which the pupils gain knowledge of language use, culture, and society. In addition to providing the pupils with knowledge of culture and society, the core curriculum states that they shall also gain knowledge to protect and reinforce equality and

equal rights (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2017, p. 5). This may include equal gender rights and preventing sexism. This emphasises the importance of the schools' facilitation of personal and social development in the pupils, as evident in the core curriculum (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2017, p. 6), as this may contribute to challenging gender stereotypes.

The subject curriculum in English (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020, p. 3) claims that through working with texts in English, such as facilitating and encouraging the reading of texts, the pupils may gain the ability to understand different ways of living, thinking, and communication patterns. The curriculum also claims that this will ensure a solid foundation to view their own identity and the identities of others. The fantasy genre, in relation to English language teaching, may be a suitable genre to achieve learning goals in the subject curriculum, whilst teaching core values and principles from the core curriculum. For example, Nikolajeva (2006) claims that fantasy may empower the reader in a way that cannot be achieved through realistic prose. This may be evident in how the protagonist can be empowered to challenge existing power relations, without disrupting the real order of the world. Belbin (2011, p. 138) claims that the fantasy genre may be written in a way to encourage reading, even amongst reluctant readers. The fantasy genre may additionally be written in a way which introduces old concepts and stories in a different format, designed to engage young readers, who are possibly encountering these concepts for the first time. Sunderland (2012, p. 2) points out that fantasy allows the use of additional dimensions, as opposed to realistic fiction which is restrained by dimensions of reality. This may provide the authors with the ability to add more dimensions to their stories, such as extending and broadening the identities and actions of both female and male characters. Belbin (2011, p. 138) additionally claims that the market for these young adult novels is largely, but not exclusively, aimed towards educational purposes. Therefore, authors of young adult fiction must consider their work as influential to young learners, and that they are in some way also educators. All the above indicate that fantasy is a genre where readers may feel safe to explore their gender identity, which includes the two primary novels of this thesis. This also shows that exploring their identities through fantasy conforms to the aims and values of LK20.

All the above may invite personal and social development in pupils – through using fantasy literature – by challenging stereotypes. This may be to challenge stereotypes through males being emotional and exploring their feminine characteristics - such as Hagrid and Grover - and females exploring their stereotypically masculine characteristics such as confidence and straight forwardness - such as Annabeth and Hermione. At the same time, Rowling and

Riordan may reinforce stereotypes through characteristics such as aggression, ambition, and not showing emotions in the male characters, and placing other peoples' needs above one's own - as well as intelligence and beauty - in some of their female characters. This may restrict pupils' personal and social growth, as they may conform and adapt to the stereotypes they are presented with in the novels.

6.0 Conclusion

In this thesis, I have explored and critically analysed the written text and discourses that represent the characters in the two popular fantasy novels *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* and *Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief*. The aim of this thesis was to further investigate how gender and gender roles may be represented in fantasy literature, and whether these representations contribute to challenge or reinforce stereotypical gender roles. With the theoretical considerations in mind, the first step in the analysis was to read the novels *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* and *Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief*. Then, I selected multiple excerpts that included verbs, adjectives, and adverbs, both in gendered talk and other written discourse. By using the method of CDA to analyse the excerpts, I looked at the choices of words and discourses to discover possible underlying meanings, and how they were possibly conveyed in implicit or explicit ways. The discussion led to the exploration of the possible meanings conveyed in how the characters are represented through written text, and how they are represented in dialogue.

When looking at the choice of words in relation to verbs, adjectives, and adverbs, there is evidence to believe that the two authors of the novels have chosen – consciously or unconsciously – words that may represent the female characters in ways that represent them with negative connotations, as opposed to the male characters. When looking at how these choices may contribute to the overall social constructs of gender roles, it may be evident that the female characters are not represented in a way that challenges gender stereotypes. These findings may suggest that both Rowling and Riordan do reinforce stereotypical gender roles in these novels.

An interesting aspect to consider regarding gender representations, is the investigation of whether gender stereotypes in fantasy novels may be challenged by changing the sex of characters. Although the novels presented in this thesis cannot speak for all novels within their genre, it is worth noting that these novels are still two of the more popular novels within their genre. Therefore, one may assume that they can be introduced to pupils in facilitating and encouraging reading. The novels may be exciting to read and may be claimed as great work from both authors. However, it is important to critically reflect on whether they reinforce or develop attitudes and values that may continue to sustain patterns of oppression in society, through the way they are written. Teachers and educators need to critically reflect on the literature they choose to include in their classroom, as they have both power and

authority to influence the pupils' learning and social development. In addition, they need to encourage the pupils to explore and discuss the social values – including gender ideologies – that are represented in these novels, as well as moral and ethical values, as well as their gender identity. This may encourage the pupils' development of their own moral and ethical values so that they can become fully engaged participants in society. Possible areas of further exploration and research may be to investigate gender roles in other novels besides the ones represented in the *Harry Potter* and *Percy Jackson* universes. Additionally, it may be interesting to investigate how gender roles are represented in other literature, textbooks, and other subjects outside of the EFL classroom.

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