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Gender Discourses and Identities in the Curriculum

and Classrooms of Hellenic Primary Schools

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To my parents Nikolaos and Vasiliki

Abstract

Gender equality issues in the Hellenic primary school system have not received adequate attention from government policy makers and educators. Although gender equality is mandated in the official curriculum, the pedagogical praxis continues to reinforce traditional gender discourses. This study aims to scrutinise the education system's role in challenging or reinforcing normative gender discourses and how pupils negotiate, reproduce or challenge normative and non-normative gender discourses in the curriculum material and children's literature. In addition, this research explores how pupils deploy these discourses in their quotidian gender performances on school playgrounds.

The research applies a qualitative methodological approach, grounded in a post-structuralist theoretical approach to gender (Butler, 1990) and Connell's (1987) theory of hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity. Observations were carried out in primary classrooms and school playgrounds, and a semi-structured interview format was employed in group interviews with students (40 boys and 40 girls). In parallel with this, individual teachers were interviewed (four males and one female), in two Athenian primary schools. Feminist critical discourse analysis (FCDA) was used to examine anthology textbooks, while the interview data and observation notes were analysed using thematic analysis.

The resulting qualitative data reveals the role played by Hellenic primary schools in reinforcing traditional gender discourses and makes clear the patterns of hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity in specific schools. The analysis also highlights how pupils negotiate, reproduce and challenge normative and non-normative gender discourses and how they use these in their quotidian gender performances on school playgrounds. This research makes a significant empirical contribution to knowledge in the field of study because this type of study has not been carried out before in Hellas. The paper concludes with

suggested future directions for research and recommends actions to be taken by the Hellenic government to achieve gender equality in primary education.

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Declaration

I hereby declare that, except where explicit attribution is made, the work presented in this thesis is entirely my own.

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Chapter 1

Prologue:

Gender Inequality in the Hellenic Society and Focus of the Study

"Is it possible, then," said I, "to employ any creature for the same ends as another if you do not assign it the same nurture and education?"
"It is not possible."
"If, then, we are to use the women for the same things as the men, we must also teach them the same things." (Plato, Republic, 451e-452a, 5, pp. 5-10).

Introduction

In every society and culture, the anatomical and reproductive differences between men and women have been used to justify larger social inequalities, which are often little related to the biological asymmetries from which they supposedly derive (Mead, 1950). In this process, men have acquired a hegemonic position in social systems, and women have been subordinated and marginalised in all aspects of social life (family, labour market and politics).

Although the intensity and forms of gender inequality has varied among societies and historical periods, women have occupied inferior positions across all social, economic and political systems (Horney, 1967). Feminist movements, however, have vehemently criticised the androcentrism which characterises patriarchal societies (Bennett, 2006). The first feminist calls for women's liberation and emancipation emerged in the late 18th century (Freedman, 2003). During the 19th century, feminists created the agenda for the women's rights movement and achieved critical political reforms. The second feminist movement, which peaked during the 1960s, proposed even more radical reforms (Duggan & Hunter, 1995; Freedman, 2003). Through a long and polymorphous struggle, the women's movement exposed crucial aspects of women's subordination in society, altered women's position in patriarchal social systems and strengthened gender equality through legal reforms. The most significant victory of the feminist movements was debunking simplistic myths that social inequalities are natural, biologically and genetically predetermined or established by divine

will. The collapse of traditional religious and patriarchal views of gender led to the conceptualisation of gender inequalities as socially constructed.

Certainly, the persistent demands of international organisations [e.g., United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and United Nations (UN)] for gender equity and constitutional and legal reforms at the national and international levels have mitigated gender inequality and considerably improved women's social status in recent decades (UN, 2010). However, women continue to experience inequalities and marginalisation in their daily lives in the structures of the family, the labour market, education and politics (Maragoudaki, 1993). Although many proclaim that societies have entered a post-feminist era, a look at the goals of the women's liberation movement in 1970s shows that gender equality has not been achieved. Despite feminists' calls for equal pay and the Equal Pay Act of 1973, the gender wage gap has not been eliminated or substantially reduced (Hausmann et al., 2012). It could be argued that a critical contradiction exists between the constitutional and legislative declarations of gender equality and women's actual position in society. Patriarchal beliefs deeply embedded in society create traditional discourses of gender that hinder progress towards equality for women. Normative gender discourses reinforced by family, popular culture, the media and education act as agents of socialisation, regulating individuals' performance of gender and perpetuating traditional social discourses, attitudes and behaviours concerning gender. The education system, in particular, plays an especially strong role in the reproduction of gender inequalities. The voluminous literature on this subject indicates that the practices of the education system reproduce and legitimise traditional gender stereotypes (Fragoudaki, 1979; Freiderikou & Folerou-Tserouli, 1991; Maragoudaki, 1993).

In Hellas, interest in the study of gender equality issues in education developed later than in the United Kingdom and United States of America. The emergence of the feminist movement

in Hellas in the mid-1970s, however, provided a crucial impetus for the study of gender asymmetries in the education system. Early feminist research on gender inequalities in the Hellenic education system focused on representations of masculinity and femininity in instructional material for primary education in order to uncover the ideological content of textbooks regarding gender roles. Interest soon shifted to teachers' classroom practices and perceptions of gender roles (Freiderikou & Folerou-Tserouli, 1991). Researchers determined that the content of textbooks was extremely stereotyped and that teachers' classroom practices perform a crucial role in reinforcing traditional views of gender. Training educators in issues of gender equality and rewriting instructional materials from a more inclusive perspective on gender emerged as an imperative need on which depended the future of the Hellenic education system and, more indirectly, that of Hellas itself.

Although issues of gender equality in the Hellenic education system have received increasing attention over the past four decades, some little studied aspects of gender require attention. Specifically, my engagement with the Hellenic literature on gender equality in primary education led me to realise that previous studies placed an overemphasis on gender representations in instructional material (i.e., reading schemes). Consequently, the influence of schools' social and physical structures on children's gender identity construction has been neglected. Symptomatic of this lack is the paucity of research in Hellas on children's play practices on school playgrounds where relations of power and gender are established and games of gender domination and subordination take place. Similarly, studies on classroom observations have not adequately explored the influence of classroom discursive practices on reinforcing traditional gender discourses. Although the quotidian classroom practices employed by teachers regulate and normalise children's performance of gender and 'contribute towards the construction of dominant modes of masculinity' (Skelton, 2002: 17),

Hellenic research has focused primarily on the quantitative characteristics of teacher-student interactions.

Hellenic studies on gender typically are limited by social learning approaches to gender, which tend to 'view children (and other targets of socialisation) as lumps of clay that are modelled by their environment' (Wharton, 2005: 32). This view of individuals as fixed, passive subjects of the socialisation process and the consequent depreciation of children's cognitive skills in moulding their gender identity explains the focus of Hellenic feminist research on education and the lack of scrutiny paid to children's responses to normative and non-traditional gender discourses.

My research attempts to fill the gap in research on gender asymmetries in Hellenic primary education by exploring those under-studied aspects of the education system. Specifically, I investigate five dimensions of the pedagogical praxes: a) discursive representations of masculinities and femininities in anthology textbooks, b) children's responses to traditional and non-traditional gender discourses, c) gender dynamics in classrooms (teacher-based and peer dynamics), d) formal curriculum and children's play activities on school playgrounds and e) teachers' training and role in eliminating the impact of gendered discourses on children's perceptions of gender.

I conducted a qualitative study involving individual and group interviews, textual analysis and field observations. My study of pupils' gender identity construction in the Hellenic primary education system is theoretically grounded in the post-structuralist paradigm and draws upon Butler's (1990) work on gender, Connell's (1985, 1987, 1995, 2000) theoretical approach to masculinities and prominent feminist poststructuralists researching education, including Davies (1989a,b) and Paechter (1998, 2000, 2003, 2006a,b).Within this theoretical framework, feminist critical discourse analysis was employed to analyse the stories and

iconography in textbooks while thematic analysis was used to analyse the interview data and observation notes. Non-participant observation was conducted in the classrooms and school playgrounds in order to minimise my presence with the subjects of my research, which could have an impact upon the data.

At this point, it is crucial to provide an overview of gender dynamics in the Hellenic social cosmos for readers less familiar with Hellenic society. This chapter briefly describes women's position in Hellenic society, which will be useful for understanding the data. I begin with a discussion of women's roles and responsibilities in the domestic sphere and then turn to institutional reforms to eliminate gender asymmetries and promote gender equality in the education system. Next, this chapter addresses the national policy framework concerning gender equality in the labour market and the gender dynamics operating in the Hellenic labour market. Then, I present the focus and purpose of the research and finally a brief outline of the thesis.

1.1 Women's Position in Hellenic Society: Gender Dynamics in the Domestic Sphere and Labour Market

In recent decades, the roles and responsibilities of women in Hellenic society have radically changed amid broader social and political upheaval. However, the organisational structure and hierarchy of the domestic sphere remain traditional. The division of familial responsibilities into masculine and feminine roles has contributed significantly to the preservation of a patriarchal Hellenic family structure, which was legislatively encouraged until 1983.

Since the early 1970s, feminist scholars and academics have postulated that the strictly patriarchal organisation of the Hellenic family has decreased; however, until two decades

ago, housewives accounted for two thirds of the total female population (Pantazis-Tzifa, 1984). In Hellenic society, housewives are entirely dependent on their husbands, who are responsible for providing shelter, food clothing and other needs (Kataki, 1984; Pantazis-Tzifa, 1984). Nevertheless, patriarchal structures have been disempowered in the Hellenic family in relation to male despotism and absolute power in the domestic sphere. Within the new family dynamics, the role of the father is less authoritarian and the mother is less subservient and dependent on her husband (Antonopoulou, 1999). This has empowered women's position in the family and they now play a more active role in its organisation (Safiliou-Rothchild, 1972; Antonopoulou, 1999).

Gender dynamics in the domestic sphere are significantly influenced by spouses' education level and socioeconomic status, and most importantly, by women's participation in the labour market. In particular, the higher the socioeconomic characteristics and education level of household members, the more equal the gender dynamics in the family (Stott, 1973; Chronaki-Papamichou, 1982; Kaklamanaki, 1984; Gizelis, 1984; Sinopoulos, 1986; Kousis, 1989; Alibranti-Maratou, 1999, 2001; Nova-Kaltsouni, 2000; Costa, 2005). In parallel with this, in families in which the women work and intend to continue working until retirement age, children's upbringing and household chores are the responsibilities of both parents[1] (Nicholaidou, 1983; Mousourou, 1985; Maratou-Alipranti, 1999; Coltrane 2000; Gotzfield, 2004). Lastly, factors such as the dowry and after-marriage dwelling exert a significant influence on family members' relationships and sometimes uphold male domination within the domestic sphere, while at other times such factors encourage more autonomous positioning for women in the family[2] (Dubisch, 1976; Hoffman, 1976; Vernier, 1984; Galani-

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[1] Women who actively participate in the labour market receive more help from their husbands and generally have 25% more free time than women who do not work (Alibranti-Maratou, 1999).
[2] For instance, in some 'matriarchal' societies in the Aegean Islands, women not only bear responsibility for the financial management of the household, but also become actively involved in financial decisions (Vernier, 1984, Galani-Moutafi, 1993, 1994). In contrast, in patriarchal societies, the father is the head of the family, and the

Moutafi, 1993, 1994; Symeonidou, 1998; Antonopoulou, 1999; Coltrane, 2000; Adam & Moutos, 2006).

The modern ideological, social and economic upheavals brought about significant changes in the organisation of the family, such as the development of a trend towards small or nuclear families, which significantly condensed the extensive family networks. Two completely new forms of family organisation emerged—cohabitation, which occurs primarily in people aged under 30 years old, and single families, which are derived from either single mothers or divorced parents[3] (Lampsa, 1994). According to Lampsa (1994), the patriarchal structures of the family show signs of decline today; the analysis of family structures indicates that the most considerable change in the Hellenic family is that the couple is no longer perceived as a union of two halves that complement each other, but rather as a union of two autonomous individuals.

Family structures exert a critical impact on female participation in the labour market. Despite the reforms, women continue to face discrimination in the Hellenic labour market. More specifically, since 1975, vital constitutional and structural reforms have occurred in the Hellenic society (General Secretariat for Equality, 1996). The constitutional fortification of equality between men and women, which officially took place in 1975, was the first step towards the gender equality reforms that followed. This was mainly the result of the political realignments that were taking place on the Hellenic political landscape, especially the country's preparations for entry into the European Union, rather than the achievement of the Hellenic feminist movement. In the early 1980s, when the socialist party came into power, gender equality received further political attention. The establishment of the Research Centre

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allocation of roles and responsibilities among members of the family seems to follow traditional patriarchal standards (Campbell, 1973, Kalpourtzi, 1987, Psihoyos, 1987).

[3] According to data from 1991, the number of households headed by women was 19.4%, which represents an evolution of the modern Italian family and has important social implications (General Secretariat for Equality, 1995).

for Equal Opportunities (RCEO) and the General Secretariat for Equality were critical steps towards gender egalitarianism in the Hellenic social cosmos. Most importantly, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was also established by the government. These reforms were followed by a series of action programmes that aimed to reduce female unemployment in the Hellenic labour market. Within this political climate, a plethora of seminars and conferences about gender equality were organised.

The 'anthesis' of gender awareness and the implementation of gender egalitarian policies between 1981 and 1983 contributed to an increase in women's participation in the labour market (Karantinos, 1987), which was reinforced by an increase in women's education (National Centre for Social Research & General Secretariat for Gender Equality, 1988). However, females were unable to access high-level posts, such as managerial positions (Maragoudaki, 1993), and their unemployment rate was twice as high as that of men[4] (Karantinos, 1989). In parallel with this, marriage was seen by many women as a solution to unemployment (National Centre for Social Research & General Secretariat for Gender Equality, 1988) as the percentage of married women in the labour market was significantly lower than that of single women (National Centre for Social Research & General Secretariat for Gender Equality, 1988; Kavounidi, 1989). Vast gender inequalities were also noted in relation to economic activities in all the sectors of the economy[5]. Hence, it could be argued that during this period (1981–1990), women were treated as cheap labour and market commodities (Chronaki, 1986; Karamanou, 1990). This treatment was also reflected in

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[4] More specifically, women constituted 31%−34% of the total labour force, whereas their unemployment rate was 52% (Karantinos, 1989; Petrinioti, 1989).
[5] In detail, 42% of women were employed as primary production labourers (especially in agriculture) and 40% were employed in the tertiary sector (services, especially tourism) (Pantazi-Tzifa, 1985). Although women's education level was higher than that of men, the percentage of women on the boards of their organisations was very low (only 0.2%) (Pantazi- Tzifa, 1985).

women's percentages in the labour market during the next decade (1991–2000)[6]. However, towards the end of the 1990s, there was a noticeable decrease in female participation in the primary sector and a consequent increase in their participation in the tertiary sector of the economy (Ioakimoglou & Kritikides, 1997).

In more recent decades, a numerical increase has been noted in relation to women's participation in the Hellenic labour market. Conversely, the statistical data indicate that men continue to dominate the labour market, despite the fact that the Hellenic constitutional and legislative directives and laws proclaim the equality of employment opportunities between men and women in terms of recruitment and remuneration. Women's participation in the Hellenic labour market steadily increased as the gender gap in employment rates narrowed by 3.6 percentage points during the 2000–2008 period (see Appendix I). The data indicate that the female employment rate increased more rapidly than the male employment rate during the eight-year period between 2000 and 2008. Another critical aspect of gender asymmetries in the labour market is related to unemployment rates among males and females. An examination of unemployment rates during the 2000–2008 period indicates that females experienced higher levels of unemployment than males (see Appendix II). During that same period, female employment increased more rapidly than male employment; consequently, the gender gap in unemployment rates was narrowed by 3.4 percentage points by the end of 2008. However, female unemployment for 2008 was two times higher than male unemployment. An interesting characteristic of female employment in the Hellenic labour market is that women tend to undertake part-time positions more than men. The gender gap between female and male part-time employment increased significantly during the 2000–2008 period since the rate of female part-time employment increased more rapidly than that

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[6]Although female participation in paid employment rose steadily to 35.7%, female unemployment reached 60%, which is two times higher than that of their male counterparts (Galata, 1995; General Secretariat for Gender Equality, 1999)

for males (see Appendix III). Men's rates for part-time employment are perhaps related to the gender-normative division of roles and responsibilities in the domestic sphere. The father's role as the breadwinner and the mother's household responsibilities could possibly provide the answer to why the percentage of women in part-time employment is higher than that of men. Additionally, throughout the eight-year period (2000–2008), the percentage of women who are self-employed is significantly lower than it is for men (see Appendix IV). The gap between self-employed men and women in the Hellenic labour market narrowed during the 2000–2008 period; the male rate decreased steadily, while the female rate was more stable, varying between 20% and 21%. On the other hand, the percentage of self employed men is higher than the percentage of women. The qualitative characteristic of the gender heterogeneity in the Hellenic labour market also indicate a male dominance in paid employment. Symptomatic of this is that the gender pay gap in 2007 was equal to 21%.

The Hellenic government makes noteworthy efforts to eliminate gender inequality in the labour market. Specifically, the government has set two targets for achieving higher gender equality in paid employment by 2015. The first relates to the increase of female employment to 52% (up from 47.9% in 2007), a policy in accordance with the Lisbon target for the female employment rate. The second aims to increase the number of women who benefit from measures promoting the reconciliation of work and family life to 15,700 (up from 8,300 in 2007).

The data presented here indicate that despite the increase of female participation in the labour force, gender asymmetries persist in the Hellenic labour market. Understanding the gender dynamics in the domestic sphere and the Hellenic labour market is crucial for the analysis of the discursive representations of femininity in anthology textbooks, for it will illuminate the extent to which textbooks promote anachronistic views of gender roles. The data will also

constitute the foundation for making sense of pupils' and teachers' views of gender discourses.

1.2 Gender Equality in the Hellenic Education System

In Hellas, compulsory education lasts for nine years and all Hellenes have equal rights to free education at all levels across the country. This gender equality was constitutionally and legislatively strengthened in the recent past; during the 1980s a dynamic educational reform was implemented across the country. Among the dramatic alterations were the elimination of single-sex schools, the ensuring of equal access to all levels of education, and the revision of textbooks from a gender perspective, for several studies had postulated that textbooks promoted traditional views of masculinity and femininity and might have deleterious impacts on children's gender socialisation (Fragoudaki, 1979; Makrinioti, 1986). The efficacy of these reforms resulted in a sizeable increase of female participation in the subsequent two decades, for there were no gender asymmetries in the access of male and female students to all levels of education (see Appendix V, VI, VII). Especially during the period 2006–2012, primary education participation rates of boys and girls were about the same (see Appendix V), ranging around 50% for each gender (Hellenic Statistical Authority, 2006–2012). Researchers have also postulated that since the early 1990s, boys and girls participation in primary education was equal (Ziogou & Deligianni-Kouimtzi, 1995). Hence, it could be argued that gender equality in participation in Hellenic primary education has been achieved to a great extent. The data for gender equality in participation in secondary education for the same period are analogous. Although the number of boys is slightly larger than the number of girls throughout the six-year period, the difference is very low (see Appendix VI). The roughly equal percentage distribution of male and female students in secondary education has not changed significantly over the last two decades (Ziogou & Deligianni-Kouimtzi, 1995).

It is in tertiary education that the number of female students has seen dramatic growth, with women's participation rates rising nearly twice as men's since the 1970s (Ziogou & Deligianni-Kouimtzi, 1995). As a result, more female students than males entered higher education during the period 2005-2009[7] (see Appendix VII). The data for male and female participation at all levels of education make clear that gender equality has been achieved at all levels of schooling in Hellas. Women's access to education has had a crucial impact on gender dynamics in the domestic sphere. Scholars and academics have postulated that the higher the educational level of the spouses, the more gender-egalitarian the family hierarchies are (Maratou-Alipranti, 1999; 2001).

Nevertheless, gender equality in participation in education is only one aspect of gender asymmetry in the education system. The qualitative data of boys' and girls' participation in secondary and tertiary education exhibit significant gender differences in school subjects. Girls tend to choose theoretical subjects and avoid technical and science subjects (General Secretariat for Equality, 1995). The observed gender differences in school subjects are reinforced by social values and norms in Hellenic society in terms of gender-appropriate occupations. This leads to male-dominated academic departments (such as physics and mathematics) and female-dominated faculties (such as pedagogical departments) in higher education (General Secretariat for Equality, 1995; 1996; OECD, 1986). Symptomatic of this trend is that in the mid-1990s, women in higher education were a large majority in humanities faculties (75-80%) and a small minority in the sciences (10-15%) (Deligianni-Kouimtzi & Ziogou, 1995). Thus, although equality in participation in education is a critical aspect of gender equality, it is only a necessary and hardly a sufficient element for combating the gender discrimination that contemporary girls face during their school years. Males' and females' subject choices, especially at the university level, reflect the different expectations

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[7] It should be noted here that the statistical data from the Hellenic Statistical Authority do not include vocational and ecclesiastical institutions.

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that Hellenic society still holds of women and men (Grodum, 1995). Scholars and academics have insisted that the most crucial aspect of gender asymmetries in the Hellenic education system is related to the role of schools in reinforcing traditional gender dichotomies, which encourage women to undertake traditional female occupational roles in their adult lives (Ziogou & Deligianni-Kouimtzi, 1995). Although women have strengthened their position in the Hellenic education system, they have not been able to liberate themselves fully from the traditional roles of mothers, nurturers, and wives (Ziogou & Deligianni- Kouimtzi, 1995).

Finally, with regards to the teaching staff, the national report of the General Secretariat for Equality (1995) indicates that women's participation at all levels of education is high. In particular, preschool and secondary education is dominated by female teachers, though in primary education the number of male and female teachers is about the same. Tertiary education is once again the outlier; the percentage of female teachers decreases drastically at that level (General Secretariat for Equality, 1995). The data show that women are concentrated in the lower teaching ranks, for they get promoted at a lower rate than their male colleagues. This disparity elucidates why women's presence in the higher levels of academic hierarchy is limited (9.94% of professors and 20.9% of associate professors are female) (Maratou-Alipranti, 2001).

In conclusion, the constitutional changes that took place throughout the 1980s were of pivotal social and political significance for gender equality in education and society in general. However, a legislative change alone is not adequate to shift people's views of gender roles and to render women genuinely equal citizens. The patriarchal structures operating in the Hellenic social order, from the domestic sphere to the labour market, constitute the central hindrance to achieving substantial gender equality (Maragoudaki, 1993). The results of gender equality policies in education are analogous. Provided that the patriarchal structures

still operate in educational practices, women's equal participation in education is not possible to be realised, for women are only equals in an unequal patriarchal institution that reinforces traditional views of gender roles in the domestic sphere, labour market, and the public and political terrain (Spender, 1981; Maragoudaki, 1993). Therefore, gender asymmetries in the education system continue to be an unsolved problem for feminist scholars and academics in Hellas.

The discussion of gender inequalities in the domestic sphere, education and labour market has demonstrated that despite the radical gender equality reforms that have taken place in Hellenic society over the past three decades, women continue to experience inequalities in their daily lives. The discussion of women's position in contemporary Hellas has acknowledged the genuine improvements that have been made in relation to gender equality issues and has provided the unfamiliar reader with a holistic view of women's current position in the Hellenic social cosmos, which will facilitate her understanding of the issues discussed in later chapters.

1.3 Focus and Purpose of the Study

The purpose of my study was to investigate the role of the Hellenic education system in both reinforcing and challenging gender-normative discourses through classroom practices and curriculum material. In addition, I explored how children negotiate gender discourses, whether normative or non-normative, and employ them in their everyday playground activities. The data were collected in two Athenian primary schools, one in the Pagrati area of central Athens and the other in suburban Ano Liosia.

My study was informed by my personal interests around gender equality issues in the educational terrain. My undergraduate studies in sociology and law as well as my post-graduate studies in comparative education and human rights played a crucial role in raising

my awareness of gender equality issues. In fact, my research topic is an attempt to further develop and examine the research subject of my MA thesis, which was on gender representations of maleness and femaleness in the primary education textbooks. Initially, I intended to limit my research in the study of anthology textbooks. However, my further engagement with theories relevant to my focus, especially Connell's (1987) theory on masculinities and Butler's (1990) theory of performativity, broaden my research scope. As a result, the main research questions that guided my study were as follows:

1. Does the Hellenic education system challenge or reinforce normative gender discourses through curriculum materials and classroom practices?
2. How do children negotiate, reproduce or challenge normative and non-normative gender discourses identified in school textbooks, and how do they deploy these discourses in their daily performances of gender on school playgrounds?

To address the above questions, the study utilised a qualitative methodology and a multi-method approach, which involved semi-structured individual and group interviews, observations, and textual analysis as methods of data production. More specifically, for understanding the education system's role in challenging or reinforcing gender-normative discourses I studied the discursive representations of masculinity and femininity in the anthology textbooks using a Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis. Additionally, observations were conducted in primary school classrooms in order to illuminate the gender discourses operating in them. I also deployed semi-structured interviews for analysing teachers' views of gender discourses. In relation to the second research question, I conducted observations on school playgrounds, which enabled me to explore how children deploy gender discourses in their quotidian play activities. Group interviews were also used to explore children's perceptions of gender and their sense-making of traditional and non-traditional gender

discourses promoted through the anthology textbooks and the feminist fairy tale of *Snow White.* In particular, I studied the latest two volumes of the anthology textbooks entitled *Anthologies,* a collection of literary works (poems, novels and short stories) written by various Hellene and European authors and chosen by a team of compilers. The first volume of the textbooks is for third-grade students (ages 8-9) and the second volume is for fourth-grade students (ages 9-10). The analysis of the gender discourses in the anthologies enabled me to unravel the processes by which beliefs and practices about gender were constructed in the two primary schools as well as illuminating the role of the instructional material (anthologies) in reinforcing traditional gender discourses.

The decision to analyse more than one aspect of the educational praxis was made upon the ideas that within the post-structuralist framework, children as readers are active producers of meanings, not merely passive recipients of pre-determined meanings in texts (Currie, 1999). In this context, texts are 'polysemous sites' (Lemish, 1998, 148), for children can give multiple meanings to a given text. Hence, the study of the anthology textbooks in isolation would not provide me with adequate information either on children's sense-making of the texts or the influence that textbooks have on students' perceptions vis-à-vis gender roles. Thus, it was considered important to investigate how children make sense of the gender discourses promoted though the anthologies and I took the analysis further by exploring their views of non-traditional gender discourses found in the feminist fairy tale of *Snow White.* Meanwhile, data from the observations on school playgrounds and primary classrooms illuminated to a certain extent how children make sense of the gender discourses and regulate their performance of gender.

Through this multi-layered analysis of the gender asymmetries in the educational terrain the thesis offers valuable insights into the gender discourses that operate in the two Athenian

primary schools and unravels the specific form of hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity. Additionally, the analysis illuminates the role of the Hellenic education system in reinforcing normative gender perceptions through its practices (textbooks and teachers' classroom practices) as well as children's sense-making of the gender discourses and the impact of these discourses on their everyday gender performances at school and particularly on school playgrounds.

1.4 Organisation of the Thesis

This thesis is organised into eight chapters. In particular, the structure and organisation of the thesis is presented below:

Chapter 2, Paradigms in Gender Research: Theoretical Context of the Study addresses the debate about gender and sex and provides a synoptic overview of the main theories of gender identity formation (psychoanalysis, social learning theory, developmental theory). It then discusses the post-structuralist view of gender with particular emphasis on Butler's (1990) theory of performativity. The post-structuralist paradigm is the lynch-pin of the theoretical and conceptual basis of this thesis. Next, it presents Connell's (1987, 1995) theory of hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity. These theoretical tools will enable me to explore the hierarchies of gender and unravel the form that normative masculinity and femininity acquire in the Hellenic primary schools.

Chapter 3, Review of the Literature: Masculinities and Femininities in the Hellenic Educational Terrain, critically reviews and discusses research literature on textbooks relevant to my study. It begins with a critical discussion of the preceding international research on gender representations in the instructional material of primary education and children's literature. It then discusses the previous studies on the Hellenic textbooks of primary education. Additionally, it presents the main findings of the foregoing studies on children's

responses to traditional and non-traditional gender discourses found in children's literature. Lastly, I reviewed the findings of previous research on gender dynamics in primary classrooms and school playgrounds. The discussion of the research provides the necessary foundation for situating my research within the international literature and offers some useful tools for analysing and comparing my own research data to previous studies in subsequent chapters.

Chapter 4, Methods and Methodology, introduces the methodologies drawn upon to conduct my research. It also discusses how this study set out to explore the role of the Hellenic education system in reinforcing traditional gender discourses through discussing some ethical dilemmas of researching gender, particularly with children. Lastly, I demonstrate how I attempted to solve these dilemmas through a post-structuralist epistemology and through a qualitative research methodology for data collection and analysis.

Chapter 5, Gender Discourses in the Curriculum material and Hellenic Primary Classrooms, synoptically discusses the findings of the analysis of the gender discourses in the anthology textbooks and pupils' sense-making of the gender discourses in the instructional materials. Next, it presents the data from the analysis of teachers' accounts of gender discourses and discusses the findings from observations in the classrooms. This chapter provides an overview of the role of the Hellenic education system in reinforcing gender normative discourses through its practices (curriculum material, teachers' views of gender discourses and their classroom practices).

Chapter 6, Hegemonic Masculinity and Emphasised Femininity: The Game of Masculinity and Femininity on School Playgrounds, draws upon the data from observations on school playgrounds to investigate children's performance of gender and explores the rigid gender zones on school playgrounds. At the same time, it illustrates the ways in which certain forms

of masculinity gain ascendancy over other forms of masculinities and femininities in playgrounds and become hegemonic. The analysis unravels the significant role of the physical space of the school in children's gender identity performance and illuminates the specific form that hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity have acquired in the school playgrounds. The data offer valuable insights into how children make sense of gender discourses and deploy them in their performances of gender.

Chapter 7, Snow White in Primary Classrooms: Children's Responses to Non-Traditional Gender Discourses, presents pupils' responses to the feminist fairy tale of *Snow White.* The findings offer valuable insights into how boys and girls negotiate gender discourses and highlight the importance of challenging the layering of polarised gender norms through alternative narratives.

Chapter 8, Epilogue: Conclusion and Implications, offers a synoptic summary of the main findings of the study and discusses its primary implications. It also reflects on the methodology and discusses the strengths and limitations of my study along with some suggestions for future research, policy and practice.

Chapter 2

Paradigms in Gender Research:

Theoretical Context of the Study

If the immutable character of sex is contested, perhaps this construct called 'sex' is as culturally constructed as gender; indeed, perhaps it was always already gender, with the consequence that the distinction between sex and gender turns out to be no distinction at all' (Butler,1990: 346).

Introduction

Across social systems and cultures men and boys and women and girls are often likely to follow diametrically antithetical behavioural patterns. These antitheses have been approached by scholars and academics in search of a theoretical model that would provide a scientific elucidation to what causes these observed patterns of interactive and behavioural asymmetries between males and females. The plethora of theoretical trajectories that have been developed are endowed with opposing elucidations of gender heterogeneity, which range from the post-structural approach to biological deterministic interpretations of gender. Some of the theorisations of gender identity formation and construction include: psychologically-oriented approaches, which focus on the psychological processes controlling gender development and identity configuration (see Freud, 1977; Lacan, 1977); sociological theories, which place emphasis on the socio-structural factors in explaining gender asymmetries (see Kohlberg, 1966, Bem, 1981); and, finally, biological oriented theories that perceive gender-role development as the product of the anatomical differences between males and females (see Simpson & Kenrick, 1997). The elucidations provided by some of these theories of gender heterogeneity and gender socialisation are presently of very limited sociological value and they have not been encompassed in the analysis. However, a synoptic reference is made in the interest of understanding the development of gender theories throughout the twentieth century.

This chapter sets out to provide a synopsis of the key debates and issues surrounding the ways that gender and gender identity are performed and constituted. As such, the chapter brings together different elements of the literature relating to gender and society. It begins by discussing synoptically the notion of gender, in an attempt to scrutinise the distinction between gender and sex. Next, it provides an overview of post-structuralism, placing particular emphasis on the work of Michel Foucault (1986) and Butler's (1990) theory of performativity. Then it critically reviews Connell's (1989) concepts of hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity and explores their practicality in understanding gender hierarchies in primary education. Lastly, I review the criticism that has been advanced of the concept of hegemonic masculinity, to demonstrate its strengths and limitations.

2.1 The Gender Debate: 'Nature VS Nurture'

The first feminist attempts to analyse sex differences were stringently bounded to the notion of 'sex', which was used as a variable in the analysis of the human demeanour. The category of sex for identifying and describing the observed asymmetries in human conduct was problematic and paradoxical, for not everyone falls into the categories of 'male' or 'female'. Scholars from Kessler and McKenna (1978) to Butler (1990) have promulgated that, for a variety of reasons, women and men behave similarly in some instances. As a result, the use of the term 'sex' was paradoxical. Ann Oakley's introduction of the term 'gender' in the early 1970s in order to 'describe and analyse the behaviours resulting from sex identification, from a social constructionist or social learning perspective' (Francis et al., 2006: 11) solved the problem. Hence, it could be argued that 'sex' denotes the anatomical and biological asymmetries between men and women whereas the term 'gender' describes the roles that men and women undertake, which are: 'socially and culturally defined prescriptions and beliefs about the behaviour and emotions of men and women' (Anselmi and Law, 1998: 195).

Following the distinction between 'gender' and 'sex', feminist discourse replaced the terms 'male' and 'female' with 'masculinity' and 'femininity' when debating human behavioural heterogeneity. According to Oakley (1972), femininity and masculinity are two concepts which emphasise the social characteristics attributed to males and females. Gender is by definition a social construct. Women's position in the society cannot therefore be explained purely by the anatomical asymmetries between women and men that comprise sex. The roles undertaken by males and females are the result of the culture, norms and values of a given society. Therefore, although men and women are in some ways heterogeneous, their asymmetries are only taken to signify superiority or inferiority within the framework of a culturally defined value system. These norms are reinforced by cultural institutions such as

schools and family, and this institutionalisation of prejudicial norms has allowed the subordination of women to be established and perpetuated (Oakley 1972; Rich 1977; Chodorow, 1978).

Sherry Ortner (1974) reworked Oakley's (1972) approach and postulated that the construction of gender is based not only on the culture, values and norms of the society but also on the broader categories of 'nature' and 'culture'. She argued that men were identified with 'culture' and women with 'nature'. This parallelism is not accidental. Women's bodies seem to destine them for the reproduction of life; motherhood is one of the most crucial characteristics of women's social roles. Men, on the other hand, assert their creativity through construction, invention and technology. Women's subordination and marginalisation within society are concomitantly established by the imposed superiority of culture to nature (Ortner, 1974).

Rosaldo's (1974) explanation of women's subordination in the social cosmos is similar. Her approach was based on the categories of 'private' and 'public' sphere. The 'private' or domestic sphere is associated with family and the 'public' sphere is the social cosmos within which social agents can interact and develop social networks. The identification of men with the 'public' sphere and women with the 'private', in light of the assumed superiority of the 'public' sphere to the 'private' sphere, acts to further subordinate women's position within society (Rosaldo, 1974). It could therefore be argued that women's subordination is a construction of culture rather than of nature: the biological and anatomical asymmetries between males and females are interpreted within a patriarchal system of values that position women as inferior in the social cosmos. From this perspective the gender heterogeneities observable in quotidian life are the result of patriarchal social norms, values and culture.

Women are neither closer to nature than men nor essentially domestic; these cultural significations are not the result of genetic determinism or biological fact.

To restate: gender is notional and socially constructed. It 'is determined socially; it is the societal meaning assigned to male and female', whereas sex refers to the anatomical and biological asymmetries between women and men (Hesse-Biber & Carger, 2000: 91). Such a conception of gender has been a valuable tool for feminist theory and research. However, the gender-sex dichotomy has been criticised by a number of scholars (Butler, 1990, McInnes, 1998; Francis, 2000). The main criticism is that, although gender is notional and socially constructed, masculinity is often performed by males and femininity by females; it is very rare for females to perform masculinity or for males to perform femininity (McInnes, 1998). For this reason, 'people's performance of "gender" appears intractably connected to their "sex"' (Francis, 2006: 13). Hood-Williams argued that there are two paradoxes with the terms of gender and sex: 'The first is that sex determines gender. It is for this reason that it is men and only men that are always masculine…' (Hood-Williams, 1999, cited in Francis, 2006: 13). But if the close relationship between sex and gender is deterministic, what value does the term gender have? The second is that 'if sex does not determine gender; gender is a social construction […But…] what would gender be "about" if it flew off and left sex behind? Where would be the maleness of masculinity? The paradox is that gender must be, and cannot be, determined by sex. Neither makes sense' (Hood-Williams, 1999, cited in Francis, 2006: 13).

Other criticisms of the categorisation of gender have emphasised that gender, because it is determined by the biological sex, does not really exist (McInnes, 1998). Judith Butler (1990) postulated that gender and sex should not be seen as two independent concepts. Her approach

is distinct from that of McInnes (1998) in that she continues to locate gender not in biological asymmetries but in social construction.

In conclusion, 'there is no firm consensus on the appropriate use of these two terms among gender scholars. Some reject the term "sex" altogether and refer only to "gender." Others use the terms almost interchangeably…' (Wharton, 2005: 18). Some believe that gender is socially constructed, thus leaving no room for its psychological interpretation, while others approach gender with some idea of biological determinism in mind (Wharton, 2005). Some biological theorisations of gender have attempted to solve the paradox of gender and sex by proposing that gender is social constructed within limits created by biological asymmetries. As will be discussed below, the paradox has also been resolved within a post-structuralist paradigm in which sex and gender are perceived as the result of discourse and law: this perception abolished the distinction between the two as autonomous categories. Through this philosophical prism the distinction between gender and sex is not a distinction at all but as Butler has argued simply a 'fictive production' (Butler, 1990: 24). In the following pages, I will critically review and discuss Butler's (1990) approach to gender identity construction and Connell's (1989) concept of hegemonic masculinity in order to provide a rationale for why they were chosen as a suitable methodology for this project.

2.2 Gender theory: From Psychoanalysis to Post-Structuralism.

A historical perspective tells us that evolutionary biology and Darwin's 'Descent of Man' in 1874 set the basis for a scientific elucidation to 'sex' and sex differences. Most notably, Darwin's contribution was that he took the issue of sex out of the hands of theologians and moralists. Scientific influence was intensified with the advent of psychologists who censured the notion of sex as naturally fixed. A central figure in this new movement of thought was undoubtedly Sigmund Freud (1856-1937), who proposed that individuals travel through

diverse psychosexual stages, and that 'introjection' and 'identification' mould their own 'ego' and configure their gender identity (Freud, 1977; Wharton, 2005). Within the Freudian paradigm, the 'Oedipus Complex' and 'Castration Complex,' as well as the 'Electra Complex' and 'Penis Envy,' emasculate the influence of social and cultural dynamics in the process of gender identity formation (Freud, 1977: 186). The biological determinism of Freud's theory has been heavily criticised by feminists (Friedan, 1965; Firestone, 1971; Millet, 1971).

Jack Lacan, (1901-1981) broke the syndesmosis of psychoanalysis with biology. He drew upon Saussure's structural linguistic theory and the work of structural anthropologist Levi-Strauss for exploring gender identity formation. Central to Lacan's (1977) theorisation was the 'Symbolic Order', which 'regulates society through the regulation of individuals; so as long as individuals speak the language of the Symbolic Order- internalizing its gender roles and class roles- society will reproduce itself in fairly constant form' (Tong, 1989: 220).

A more zealous negation of any sort of biological determinism was proposed by behavioural theories of gender (Social Learning and Cognitive Developmental theories). The elucidation of gender asymmetries by these theories could be synopsized in de Beauvoir's aphorism that: 'one is not born but rather becomes a woman' (de Beauvoir, 1988: 295). In this view, gender roles in society can be metamorphosed and women's position can be ameliorated by altering the content of gender socialisation. More specifically, proponents of social learning and cognitive developmental theories postulated that imitation, observation and the system of punishments and rewards (Sayers, 1987) are the catalysts of children's gender identity formation (Mitchel, 1966; Maccoby & Jacklin, 1974; Marcus & Overton, 1978; Emmerich &Shepard, 1984; Carter & Levy, 1988; Levy & Carter, 1989; Martin & Little, 1990; Lobel & Menashri, 1993; Burn, 1996; Stockard, 1999; Wharton, 2005). The view of the individuals as

fixed-ends and passive recipients of the socialisation process and the depreciation of children's cognitive skills in moulding their gender identity has been dynamically criticised by scholars and academics (Maccoby & Jacklin, 1974; Wharton, 2005).

Contrary to the view of gender as culturally constructed, biological theories explicate gender heterogeneity as the result of anatomical and biological asymmetries between males and females. In detail, biological theories elucidate gender asymmetries as ancestrally programmed (Smuts, 1992, 1995; Buss & Schmitt, 1993 Buss, 1995; Archer, 1996; Simpson & Kenrick, 1997) and serving a purpose of survival (Wright, 1994; Birkhead, 2001). Other biological approaches have placed emphasis on the hormonal variations between females and males (Bryden, 1988; Halpern, 1992; Gurian, 2002), which influence brain activity and subsequently lead to the development of different cognitive skills. These biological deterministic explanations are anathema to feminists and have been zealously criticised by feminist scholars (Latour & Strum, 1986; Fausto-Sterling, 1997; Rose, 2001) for undervaluing the influence of the social environment in the development of cognitive skills (Inoff-Germain et al., 1988; Dabbs, & Morris, 1990; Fausto-Sterling, 1992; Buchanan et al., 1992).

The invisibility of the subject and the emphasis on social structures are antithetical to the approach to gender adopted in my research. More specifically, my study draws on Butler's (1990) theory of performativity, which emphasises the fluid and performative nature of gender and epitomises the discursive construction of gender identity through reiterated performances. In short, through the prism of post-structuralism one cannot simply be a man and masculinity cannot simply be defined in a certain way, since structures do not underlie a male identity and since masculinity is inherently unstable. In the following section I discuss Butler's (1990) theory of performativity as it applies to this study.

2.3 Post-Structuralism: Discourses and Gender Identity Construction

Foucault's work has been critical in challenging the notion of natural and normal sexuality and gender. His theory on discourses and classification of sexuality over historical periods prepared the ground for the 'anthesis' of the post-structuralist theorisation of gender. For Foucault (1986), gender is a structure of subjectivity that acquires polysemous meanings within various social contexts. According to this theorisation of gender, the construction of gender identity is not a role but a process (Barrett, 1992), which is highly influenced by language and the cultural system within which it takes place. The understanding of gender identity construction as a process enables the analysis of how the meaning of gender is negotiated and perpetuated (Alsop et al., 2002), which is also at the centre of my research. This prism offers valuable insights into children's sense making of gender discourses and highlights pupils' ability to challenge and subvert anachronistic gender discourses (Wetherell, 1998).

Foucault (1978) postulated that there are two critical elements in the process of gender identity construction. First, individuals construct their gender identity by disciplining their bodies in relation to gender discourses, according to which their subjectivity is formed (Alsop et al., 2002). This process was described by Foucault with the term 'subjectification', which has been useful in my study for scrutinising how pupils negotiate gender discourses and discipline their bodies in relation to the predominant gender discourses reinforced by the Hellenic education system. Failure to comply with the normative gender discourses gives rise to alternative expressions of masculinity and femininity, which can contribute positively to gender egalitarianism in education.

The second crucial element in the process of gender identity construction is that of discourse (Foucault, 1986). Discourse is anything that conveys meaning such as narratives and

iconography. As Foucault (1978: 101) postulated, 'discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines it and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it.' The power that is transmitted through discourses intersects with body and sexuality: this idea is central in Foucault's theorisation of gender. The idea of the intersection of discourses with body and sexuality challenged the monolithic elucidations of gender inequality, which were centred around domination and victimization. Through the Foucauldian prism, power was understood as exercised and productive, not as repressive and possessed (Sawicki, 1998). Foucault was interested in gender power relations at the micro-political level and illustrating how diffuse power related to macrostructures through proliferating discourse. Similarly, influential has been his idea of the body as the principal site of power within the social cosmos, for it sparked the interest of feminist academics, leading them to explore the dynamics of women's suppression in society as in relation to their bodies and sexuality. Foucault (1978) also placed emphasis on the micro-political levels of power relations and the outcomes that they have on individuals' quotidian praxes, which also led feminist scholars to the analysis of women's experience in various spheres of the social life, such as 'in the institutions of marriage, motherhood and compulsory heterosexuality, in the 'private' relations between the sexes and in the everyday rituals and regimens that govern women's relationships to themselves and their bodies' (Sawicki 1998: 93).

Foucault's post-structuralist paradigm gained increased acceptance by feminist scholars. The influence of social control on body and sexuality constitutes the fundamental core of his theory, which sees the body as a site where power is exercised in material ways (Grosz, 1994); he also insisted on the historical specificity of the body. Against an essentialist approach, Foucault argued that the subject is not a rational, unified being, but 'nothing in man – not even his body – is sufficiently stable to serve as a basis for self-recognition or for understanding other men' (Foucault, 1991: 87-8). There is no 'natural' body or pre-

discursive, essential human subject who is 'amputated, repressed, altered by our social order, it is rather that the individual is carefully fabricated in it, according to a whole technique of forces and bodies' (Foucault, 1977: 217).

Exactly as the body is culturally constructed, sexuality is not a 'natural given' or 'furtive reality', but a historical construct. In particular, he argued that: 'the notion of sex brought about a fundamental reversal; it made it possible to invert the representation of the relationships of power to sexuality, causing the latter to appear, not in its essential and positive relation to power, but as being rooted in a specific and irreducible urgency which power tries as best it can to dominate' (Foucault, 1978: 155). This interpretation of sexuality as historically constructed has challenged the binary 'sex'-'gender' and has led scholars such as Butler – whose ideas will be discussed in the following pages – to reject the dichotomy between gender and sex.

Synoptically, it could be argued that the relevant strand of Foucault's thinking was to show: 'how deployments of power are directly connected to the body... functions, physiological processes, sensations, and pleasures...' (1978: 151-2). In parallel with this, he proclaimed that 'the biological and the historical are not consecutive to one another but are bound together in an increasingly complex fashion in accordance with the development of the modern technologies of power that take life as their objective' (Foucault, 1978: 151-2). The intersection between power, body and sexuality, which is central in Foucault's theorisation of gender, has influenced feminist thinking, especially that of Judith Butler (1990). Foucault's work led feminist scholars to the development of a less epidermic approach to women's subjugation in the social cosmos.

Notwithstanding the influential impact of Foucault's work on feminist thought, some of his ideas have been strongly criticised. Fraser (1989) negates his assertion that subjectivity is

constituted by power, as such an interpretation presupposes that resistance to power is not possible, and thus criticises Foucault's position that power itself always generates resistance. The individual's limited ability to resist power in Foucauldian theory has been pointed out by Nancy Hartsock (1990), who has also doubted Foucault's questioning of the categories of subjectivity. She specifically asks: 'why is it that just at the moment when so many of us who have been silenced begin to demand the right to name ourselves, to act as subjects rather than objects of history, that just then the concept of subjecthood becomes problematic?' (Hartsock, 1990: 164). Foucault has also been criticised for undervaluing the significance of gender in the 'game' of power. Gender heterogeneity is not taken into consideration and bodies are treated as gender neutral (Diamond & Quinby, 1988; McNay, 1992) or as if '...the bodily experiences of men and women did not differ and as if men and women bore the same relationships to the characteristic institutions of modern life' (Bartky, 1988: 63). Sandra Lee Bartky points out: 'women, like men, are subject to many of the same disciplinary practices Foucault describes. But he is blind to those disciplines that produce a modality of embodiment that is peculiarly feminine' (Bartky, 1988: 63-4).

Even though Foucault failed to encompass gender heterogeneity in his theoretical/philosophical approach, his work has been influential for the development of feminist thought, for he ended the long-lasting debate about body and culture by foregrounding the corporeal reality of the body as affected by social and historical power (Grosz, 1994). Lastly, Foucault's history of sexuality 'exposes the contingent and socially determined nature of sexuality and, thereby, frees the body from the regulatory fiction of heterosexuality and opens up new realms in which bodily pleasures can be explored' (McNay, 1992: 30). This Foucauldian philosophical quest for the relationship between body, power and sexuality opened new horizons for the theorisation of gender and gender identity construction in feminist research. In particular, Judith Butler (1990) drew upon Foucault's

philosophical principles and interpreted his ideas through Nietzsche's genealogy, Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis and Derridean discourse.

Symptomatic of the influence of psychoanalysis on Butler's (1990) approach to gender and gender identity construction is her view that the primary object cathexis is with the parent of the same sex. Unlike Freud, who explained the ego formation as a melancholic structure, for the infant is enforced to abandon his/her desire for the parent of the opposite sex, under the sway of the incest taboo, Butler (1990) argued that the homosexual desire is a fundamental forbidden cathexis, which leads to identity formation as both sex and gender identities are formed in response to prohibition. However, based on Freud, Butler argues that 'if the heterosexual denial of homosexuality results in melancholia and if melancholia operates through incorporation, then the disavowed homosexual love is preserved through the cultivation of an oppositionally defined gender identity' (Butler, 1990: 69). Through this subconscious process it is understood that infants' primary object-cathexis for the same sex parent must be given up, for this desire is prohibited by the homosexual taboo. Analogously to the melancholic that takes the lost object into him/her and thereby preserves it, the ego 'introjects' the lost object (the desired parent) and preserves it as identification. Thus, the heterosexual gender identity is melancholic for it is constituted in response to the loss of the desired (same sex) parent (Butler, 1990).

Butler's (1990) theoretical insights offer a new dimension for understanding the construction of gender identity. Through the prism of Butler's (1990) theorisation, gender identity is performative. 'Performativity conceptualises the paradox of identity as apparently fixed but inherently unstable, revealing (gender) norms requiring continual maintenance' (Hey, 2006: 439). Through performativity, Butler (1990) negates all previous theoretical approaches to gender identity, which viewed gender as the product of socialisation and theorises gender 'as

the consequence of the performative (i.e. recurring) 'citations' of gender thought as actions that institute 'girling', for example' (Hey, 2006: 439). More specifically, 'gender is not a noun [but it] proves to be performative, that is, constituting the identity it is purported to be. In this sense, gender is always a doing, though not a doing by a subject who might be said pre-exist the deed' (Butler, 1990: 25). It is not 'something singularly possessed, but something continually created and recreated through everyday social and cultural practices' (Renold, 2006a: 492). Hence, gender is 'actualised through (and thus an effect of) a series of repetitive performances that constitute the illusion of a 'proper', 'natural' or 'fixed' gender...' (Renold, 2006a: 492).

The theorisation of gender as performative in nature sets the question; if gender is indeed performative who is the doer? Butler's theory of performativity refers to a doing without a doer; it's a performance without a performer. 'Performativity' should not be confused with 'performance'. Although, performance presupposes a subject or a doer who acts -and as Butler would say 'a pre-existing subject'- 'performativity contests the very notion of the subject' (Butler, 1990: 33). The notion of 'performativity' should be understood in terms of Nietzsche's philosophical approach that 'there is no being behind the doing, acting, becoming; the doer is merely a fiction imposed on the doing-the doing itself is everything' (Nietzsche, 1887: 29, cited in Butler, 1990: 25). Departing from Nietzsche's reasoning Butler argues that: 'there is no gender identity behind the expression of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very expressions that are said to be its results' (Butler, 1990: 25). Butler concludes that gender (and sexuality) is performative in acts, gestures and enactments. As she explained: 'that the gendered body is performative suggests that it has no ontological status apart from the various acts which constitute its reality' (Butler, 1990: 336). Gender does not exist as a category outside of enacting gender. The idea of gender as performative is central in my research for making sense of the qualitative data gathered in

two Athenian primary schools in relation to the performative effects of masculinity and femininity. Through this theoretical prism I explored children's sense making of the gender discourses reinforced by the instructional material and classroom practices. Moreover, I analysed how children are discursively positioned as masculine or feminine and how they ascertain certain gender performances through their play activities on school playgrounds.

In the process of gender identity performance/construction, Butler (1990) recognises the influential impact of social and cultural forces that crystallize into femininity and masculinity as norms on the body and the psyche. Under the sway of linguistic theories, especially John Searle's theory, she postulated that social reality is not given but it is created as an illusion through 'language, gesture, and all manner of symbolic social sign' (Butler, 1990: 270). She explored the ways that linguistic constructions create our reality through the speech acts/discourses that we participate in our quotidian life. The notion of discourse occupied a prominent place in Butler's (1990) theory of performativity, for through discourses subjects incorporate the reality by enacting it with their bodies, but that reality remains a social construction. Hence, discourses are of pivotal significance for the performance of gender. Influenced by Foucault, Butler (1990: 145) argues that discourses are: 'historically specific organisations of language' or in more detail it could be argued that they are 'discursive fields which consist of competing ways of giving meaning to the world and of organizing social institutions and processes... [and] they offer the individual a range of modes of subjectivity' (Weedon, 1987: 35). Discourses do not always serve the same purposes within a discursive field neither 'carry equal weight or power', for often they can question a given authority or the 'status quo' while other times can be acquiesce/ and support the perpetuation of the 'status quo' (Weedon, 1987). This is symptomatic of the inherent instability of discourses that is related to the fact that they are constructed through dogmatic practices always antithetical to a marginalised other. However, a critical characteristic of discourses is that

they must be habitually performed in order to appear natural. Through this perpetual performance they are inscribed onto bodies and perpetuate the social order (Butler, 1990).

Individuals have access to myriad discursive practices and there are many potential ways of positioning themselves and being positioned within these practices. Thus, the various discourses provide individuals with the opportunity to position themselves in various ways. However, we can argue that there is a 'relative freedom' in relation to the discourses that individuals take on for performing their gender identity, for individuals' choices are constrained by the power structure within which are located. Hence, culture and socio-economic background/status play a critical role in subjects' selection of discourses. This can be better understood by thinking the process of 'choosing' a discourse as an activity that resembles selecting an outfit from a wardrobe. The outfits/discourses that exist in the wardrobe/social cosmos of the individual are determined by the individuals' income, job and social status (Butler, 1990). In parallel with the socio-economic status that limits the subjects' 'freedom' of choice, a crucial limitation is also imposed by the 'social and emotional cost' that individuals face for not complying with social values that dictate them to take on certain discourses (Renold, 2004: 249).Taking up discourses that are not gender appropriate can lead to marginalisation or any other form of social punishment.

Consequently, if we accept that an individual is not a passive recipient of the socialisation process and that he/she is able to reject certain discourses then the production of our own sense, of who we are, involves the following processes: first all, to categorise people into groups (i.e. mother/son, man/woman) and then to 'participate in the various discursive practices through which meanings are allocated to those categories' (Davies, 1989a: 128). In addition, having allocated meaning to those categories one must place himself/herself in one of those categories and become aware of the category in which he/she belongs. Through this

process one becomes aware of who he/she is and come to the 'development of personal identity' (Davies, 1989a: 128).

In other words, social entities create their gender identities through learning and understanding in their subjective ways the discursive categories that exist within their social environment (Youdell, 2005). These categories are not universal and differentiate across the social systems as they are related to culture and social norms and set limits for 'who' one can be (Youdell, 2005: 253). They acquire the social meaning that the individuals, in their subjective way, give to them through their participation in the various discursive practices. Having crystallized the categories the individuals will position not only themselves but also the others that they are around them in one of those categories. Through this process of categorisation social entities organise and make sense of their social cosmos and themselves (Davies, 1989a).

Scholars, in particular, have postulated that boys/men, by positioning themselves in the category of male, behave in accordance with the social values/norms of maleness and are coerced to take themselves up as strong and dominant. In a binary structure of gender girls/women are forced to take themselves up as passive, docile and dependent (Youdell, 2005). Thus, social beings on the basis of their gender dichotomy, take up different discursive practices, in accordance with the social values of masculinity and femininity.

The theorisation of the discursive construction of gender through discourse has enabled researchers to observe how children in primary school playgrounds perform gender in ways that either reinforce or challenge non-gender egalitarian positionings between boys and girls (see Weedon, 1987; Davies, 1993; Thorne, 1993; Benjamin, 2002). The role of discourses in the construction of gender identity has influenced my research methodologically and theoretically, for it implied the power of the individuals to negotiate the discourses they are

presented with in their subjective ways. Based on this, the instructional material in my research perceived as polysemous sites that acquire the meaning that each individual assigns to them. In this context, the impact of the discourses on the readers cannot be presumed, for readers relate to gender discourses in their subjective ways and have the power to reproduce or challenge the gender discourses they are presented with. This realisation has had an immense impact on the research design, for it dictated the analysis of children's accounts of gender discourses in the curriculum material. Moreover, the view of gender as being discursively constructed led my research to investigate how students negotiate their individual gender identities while disregarding their lived realities within a socio-cultural context. However, discourses do not simply reflect social realities about gender dynamics but they shape the way that individuals perceive the world and position themselves in it. Hence, by exploring the discourses promoted through the Hellenic education system I unravelled the role of schooling in reinforcing normative gender discourses and further to this, I explored, to a certain extent, the meanings that the individuals gave to these discourses, and how they positioned themselves in the social cosmos and performed gender in their quotidian playground activities, in relation to these discourses.

In *Gender Trouble*, Butler (1990) departed from the commonly accepted hypothesis that gender, sex and sexuality are interconnected or that they exist in relation to each other. She argued that gender is a process that has no origin or end and it is not something that we are but rather something that we do. She zealously negated the social learning and cognitive developmental elucidations of gender identity formation, which perceived gender as monolithic and static. In her view, gender is constituted and reconstituted through 'relations of social and cultural coherence between sex, gender, sexuality, desire, of which pivotal practice is the Otherisation of those performances which raptures gender coherence' (Ringrose &Renold, 2010: 582). Contrary to the structuralist and psychoanalytic theories,

which proposed that gender and sex are stable and coherent categories, Butler (1990) postulated that sex and gender are the result of discourse and law and thus, she abolished the distinction between sex and gender as two autonomous categories. Through this philosophical prism the distinction between gender and sex is not a distinction at all and as Butler would say it is simply a 'fictive production' (Butler, 1990: 24).

On the other hand, the fact that 'gender reality is performative which means, quite simply, that it is real only to the extent that it is performed' (Butler, 1990: 278) is symptomatic of the actuality that gender is not connected to material body but is entirely a social construction, 'because there is neither an 'essence' that gender expresses or externalizes, nor an objective ideal to which gender aspires; because gender is not a fact, the various acts of gender create the idea of gender, and without those acts, there would be no gender at all. Gender, is, thus, a construction that regularly conceals its genesis' (Butler, 1990: 273).

By demonstrating the illusionary and historical nature of gender, Butler (1990) criticised normative heterosexuality, which describes the normative forces which drift subjects towards a hegemonic heterosexual matrix. The term heterosexual matrix designates 'the grid of cultural intelligibility through which bodies, genders, and desires are naturalised... a hegemonic discursive/epistemological model of gender intelligibility that assumes that for bodies to cohere and make sense there must be a stable sex expressed through a stable gender (masculine expresses male, feminine expresses female) that is oppositionally and hierarchically defined through the compulsory practice of heterosexuality' (Butler, 1990: 151).

This means that gender is habitually constituted and reconstituted through the heterosexual matrix, which reinforces the view of heterosexuality as the norm through which everything else acquires meaning and materialises. In praxis, the heterosexual matrix reinforces the idea

that a real boy or a real girl must desire the opposite sex (Renold, 2006a). The empirical exploration of children's positioning within dominant heterosexual scripts has designated that: 'heterosexuality is continually constructed in the children's talk as they separate and heighten the asymmetries between themselves as male and female' (Davies, 1993: 125). Gender and heterosexuality are so dynamically interrelated that by not performing normative masculinity and femininity, subjects' heterosexual identity is easily questioned (Renold, 2006a). The 'hegemonic heterosexual performances are maintained through the shaming and policing (or "othering") of "abnormal" or other (i.e., "unintelligible") sexual/gender practices' (Renold, 2006a: 493).

The controlling power of hegemonic heterosexuality was crucial for my research. The term 'heterosexual matrix', in particular, was a valuable tool for analysing the discursive representations of masculinity and femininity in the instructional material. In parallel with this, the regulative power of the heterosexual matrix manifested itself on school playgrounds and regulated boys and girls performance of gender and controlled their play practices. I observed that under the sway of the heterosexual matrix emerged hierarchical normative gender relations that constituted the basis for the ascendancy of a specific form of masculinity (hegemonic masculinity) over femininities. The data from the interviews confirm Davies' (1989a: 235) view that 'doing 'gender' and 'sexuality' in non-normative ways is not simply a matter of choice, 'but involves grappling with both subjective constraints and the constraints of accepted discursive practices'.

It could be argued, at this point, that Judith Butler's theorisation of gender and gender identity construction sets an end to the debate about the binaries of gender and sex, as she postulated that such a distinction does not exist as there is not sex that is not always gender (Butler, 1990). All bodies are gendered from the beginning of their social existence. Her

theorisation of gender encompasses three essential elements or dimensions. First of all, gender and sexuality are performative which means that gender is a performance and not biological inherent property of the individuals. Thus, gender is what we do at particular times rather than a universal who we are. Secondly, Butler refers to compulsory heterosexualised gender, which means that gender 'is a compulsory performance in the sense that acting out of line with heterosexual norms brings with it ostracism, punishment, and violence, not to mention the transgressive pleasures produced by those very prohibitions' (Butler 1991: 24). Lastly, Butler points out the naturalizing effect of gender performance which 'individualizes gender identity making it seem a surface representation of an identifiable and essential psychological core. This psychological core appears as if it emerges to represent itself in interaction, discourse and ultimately in political and institutional arrangements' (Butler, 1991: 24).

Butler's theoretical and philosophical quests of gender and gender identity has been subject to strong criticism as it does not take into account the influence of other parameters in the construction of gender identity, such as race, social class and ethnicity. Intersectionality theorists postulate that gender should not be conceived as an independent category above and beyond race, ethnicity and social class. Although my study does not deny the intersection of gender with social class, race and ethnicity, intersectionality theory will not discussed here, for the data collected do not allow me to investigate this relationship. The participants in my research were homogenous in respect to social class, race and ethnicity.

Butler's approach to gender was instrumental in deconstructing gendered discourses and subjectivity in my research. More specifically, the concept of 'performativity' and the 'heterosexual matrix' were critical for unravelling the role of the Hellenic primary schooling in reinforcing traditional gender discourses through its practices. Nevertheless, my thesis

attempted to unravel the hierarchies that are formed through the quotidian performances of gender in primary education and tried to articulate the relationship between masculinities and femininities in the two Athenian primary schools. For this purpose Connell's (1987, 1989) theory of hegemonic masculinity was deployed, which describes how the nature of gender itself results in the formation of gender hierarchies; for certain forms of masculinity gain ascendancy over other masculinities and femininities and become hegemonic.

In the following pages, I will discuss how I have overcome the danger of misusing the concept of hegemonic masculinity and deploying a reductionist perspective in the analysis of children's gender identity construction. Additionally, I will review the criticism that has been raised against the concept of hegemonic masculinity and I will demonstrate its applicability for my research and the way in which it is linked to post-structuralism and Butler's (1990) theory.

2.4 Hegemony and Hegemonic Masculinity

Gender hegemony is a concept associated with the Italian Marxist thinker Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937), who developed the term of hegemony in order to describe the preponderance of one social class over the others. In Gramsci's terms hegemony encompasses not only economic and political predominance but also the ability of the hegemon class to project its own ideology so that those who are subordinated by it accept it as a 'common sense' and 'natural'. As Geoffrey Nowell-Smith (cited in Alvarado &Boyd-Barrett, 1992: 51) postulated that 'common sense' is 'the way a subordinate class lives its subordination'. Gramsci placed particular emphasis on the element of 'struggle', which plays a crucial role in understanding hegemony and 'common sense'. 'Common sense' is characterised by flexibility, mobility and it is persistently and 'continuously transforming itself' (Gramsci, cited in Hall, 1982: 73). As Fiske explained: 'consent must be constantly won and rewon, for people's material social

experience constantly reminds them of the disadvantages of subordination…', which threatens the dominant social class (Fiske, 1992: 291).

'Hegemony…posits a constant contradiction between ideology and the social experience of the subordinated that makes this interface into an inevitable site of ideological struggle' (Fiske 1992: 291). Hence, some of the main features of hegemony are: '… the winning and holding of power and the formation (and destruction) of social groups that processes. It is about the way in which the ruling class establishes and maintains its domination' (Donaldson, 1993: 645). Additionally, the concept of hegemony refers to the ability of the hegemon to persuade the greater part of the populace through the use of the media 'and the organisation of social institutions in ways that appear 'natural', 'ordinary' and 'normal'. The state, through punishment for non-conformity, is crucially involved in this negotiation and enforcement' (Donaldson, 1993: 645). To recapitulate, hegemony describes the liaisons of power and ideology and refers to and reinforces what Bocock (1986: 318) called 'fundamental outlook of society'.

The concept of hegemony has been a central feature of the recent gender research and debates on men and masculinities. There have been a number of ways the notion of hegemony has been used in studying masculinity, for example, in 'hegemonic heterosexual masculinity' (Frank, 1987), 'male hegemony' (Cockburn, 1991), 'the hegemonic male' (Vale De Almeida, 1996), 'hegemonic men' (Lorber, 2002), and 'hegemonic masculinity'. Of these, this last use, that of hegemonic masculinity, has been by far the most popular and influential over the last two decades or more.

The concept of hegemonic masculinity was originally developed by Connell in her paper 'Men's Bodies' and was further discussed in her later work 'Which Way is Up?' (1983). According to Connell (1990: 83) hegemonic masculinity 'is the culturally idealised form of

masculine character', which refers to the relationship/identification of masculinity with 'toughness and competitiveness' as well as legitimates women's subordinate position in the society and the 'marginalisation' of homosexual men. This form of masculinity is not by nature hegemonic. It acquires this position within a given social system once it is idealised and it is widely accepted. Thus, it is understood that hegemonic masculinity can acquire many forms depending on the cultural norms that characterise any given social system. According to Hanke (1990: 232) 'hegemonic masculinity refers to the social ascendancy of a particular version or model of masculinity that, operating on the terrain of 'common sense' and conventional morality defines 'what it means to be a man'. Hegemonic masculinity gains its superior place towards other forms of masculinity and femininity through physical force and control. Connell (1983: 28) postulated that 'force and competence are…translations into language of the body of the social relations, which define men as holders of power, women as subordinate [and] this is one of the main ways in which the superiority of men becomes naturalised'. Although hegemony could be supported by strength it doesn't mean violence. It mainly describes the 'ascendancy achieved through culture, institutions and persuasion' (Connell &Messerschmidt, 2005: 832).

Connell is reticent in providing a detailed account of the components of hegemonic masculinity. However, academics who have explored the notion of hegemonic masculinity have postulated that it is centred on disparaging effeminate masculinity and femininity (Connell, 1987) and upon a range of practices. In particular, in the western societies hegemonic masculinity revolves around economic success, heterosexuality (McDowell, 2003), sexual domination, aggression, determination and potency (Seidler, 2006). In primary education, which is the focus of my research, hegemonic masculinity is characterised by aggression, toughness, resistance to authority (Mac An Ghaill, 1996; Sewell, 1999; Frosh et al 2002) and sport competiveness, manifested especially through football (Connell, 1996;

Skelton, 1997a, 2000, 2001; Swain, 2000a, b, 2001). Furthermore, 'masculinities have become performative often as a way of concealing inner emotional turmoil from others...vulnerabilities are often hidden as men can feel they should somehow be able to handle their own emotions as not to be more shamed' (Seidler, 2006: 13).

Another expression of hegemonic masculinity is related to professional success in the labour market (Ochberg, 1987). Hegemony is related to the gender division of labour, which results in the 'social definition of tasks into as either 'men's work' or 'women's work' and the definition of some kinds of work as more masculine than others' (Carrigan,et al. 1987: 94). Moreover, hegemonic masculinity is reinforced and perpetuated through the family structures, in the form of patriarchy. Especially, masculinity becomes hegemonic through 'the manifestations and institutionalization of male dominance over women and children in the family and the extension of male dominance over women in society in general' (Lerner, 1986: 239). In the domestic sphere hegemonic masculinity is manifested through the identification of men as breadwinners and patriarchal father figures. This, often results in women's subordination, for they are identified as housewives, sexual objects and nurturing mothers. These particular expressions of hegemonic masculinity in the labour market and the domestic sphere were very useful in the analysis of the discursive representations of masculinity in the anthology textbooks, for they enabled me to identify the specific form that hegemonic masculinity acquires in the textbooks (see chapter 5).

Hegemonic masculinity is strongly identified with heterosexuality and is related to what Butler (1990, 1993) called 'hegemonic heterosexual matrix', which describes a discursive formation by which 'children's normative gender identities are inextricably embedded and produced within hegemonic (normative and dominant) representations of heterosexuality' (Renold, 2006a: 491). Rubin promulgated that the association of hegemonic masculinity with

heterosexuality is presented as 'good', 'normal' and 'natural' (Rubin, 1985: 280). Thus, hegemonic male sexuality 'embodies personal characteristics', which are manifested by 'adult males through exclusive social relationships with men and primarily sexual relationships with women' (Herek, 1987: 72-3). As well, 'it requires not being effeminate in physical appearance or mannerisms; not having relationships with men that are sexually or overly intimate and not failing in sexual relationships with women' (Herek, 1987: 72-3). This is also significant for it implies the association of hegemonic masculinity with heterosexuality and demonstrates the performative nature of gender identity and sexuality where certain gender discourses are intelligible whilst others are not (Butler, 1990).

Despite the predominant position of hegemonic masculinity in the social systems, Connell (1995: 7) has argued that men in their majority are 'complicit' towards the principles of hegemonic masculinity, mainly because their behaviours reflect what is considered 'normal' for men. Connell (1995: 79) refers to this type of masculinities as 'complicit masculinities', which 'are constructed in ways that realise that patriarchal dividend, without the tensions or risks of being the front line troops of patriarchy...' (Connell, 1995: 79).

Connell recognises individuals' power to refuse to go along with the ideals of hegemonic masculinity, however, resistance could 'incur high social and emotional costs and [men can] be subjected to a number of othering practices in which their deviation from hegemonic norms are subordinated and pathologised' (Renold, 2004: 249). Symptomatic of this, is the subordination of gayness by heterosexual men. Gay men embody what Connell referred to as 'subordinate masculinities', which are perceived as the inferior 'other' by men who embody hegemonic masculinity. To apply these ideas to school, for instance, it could be argued that in those schools where physical prowess in sports e.g. football is a signifier of successful masculinity, subordinate masculinity is performed by non-footballing boys who experience

exclusion and subordination by their classmates due to their lack of interest or skills of football (Swain, 2000b; Skelton, 2000; Clark &Paechter, 2007; Paechter &Clark, 2007). Not only is hegemonic masculinity enacted by a minority of men but it is conflated with whiteness and middle-classness. These characteristics of hegemonic masculinity are crucial for they lead to marginalisation of masculinities of subordinated class or racial/ethnic groups (marginalised masculinities). As in my research social class or ethnic background were not taken into consideration, this type of masculinity will not be discussed any further here.

In synopsis, hegemonic masculinity maintains its leading dominant position status through the subordination of femininity as well as through the marginalisation and subordination of other masculinities (subordinate and marginalised masculinities). Also, hegemonic masculinity is contingent, which means that 'the form it takes is particular to any situation or social group, and it can be open to challenge or change over time' (Paechter, 2012: 231). This is very important as it is perhaps possible that less oppressive forms of masculinity could become hegemonic (Connell, 1985). Hegemonic masculinity is also relational, for it is constituted in relation to femininity and subordinated forms of masculinity (Paechter, 2012). In my study, this concept of hegemonic masculinity in all the iterations I have explored was used to analyse my data including observations of children's play activities on school playgrounds, for sports are the 'embodiment' of hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1995: 204).

Through sport activities, in particular, the superiority of males' physical strength over females contributes towards the legitimization of female subjugation as well as the subordination of other forms of masculinities that do not encompass the characteristics of hegemonic masculinity (Dempster, 2009). This is encouraged by the media, which overemphasise male sport achievements to the detriment of female athletes and sporting activities (Miller, 1998). Professional male athletes are presented as 'exemplars' of

hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1995: 81) and their power and authority are considered paragons of hegemonic masculinity. Furthermore, demonstrations of physical strength, stamina and achievement by athletes are encouraged and remunerated (Whitson 1990; Swain 2000b, 2001). Specifically at schools, sports are 'masculinising processes' (Salisbury &Jackson 1996: 205) through which boys learn to be men. Sporting ability is a signifier of 'successful masculinity' (Skelton, 2001: 136), which is most commonly manifested in the football fields (Whitson, 1990; Swain, 2000b). Commonly, the football field is the 'providing ground' (Whitson, 1990: 24) of masculinity as boys with high footballing skills are often among the most popular students at school. In contrast, those students with little or no skills are labelled as effeminate and they are subordinated and marginalised (Edley &Wetherell 1997; Martino 1999; Swain 2000a, b; Frosh et al., 2002; Jackson 2003).

The use of language plays a key role in encouraging boys to take up hegemonic masculinity discourses, for it often promotes misogynistic and homophobic discourses (Connell, 1987, 1989; Schacht, 1996; Swain, 2000b). Hegemonic masculinity discourses are also reinforced by a number of sport-related activities, such as male bonding in the changing rooms (Rutherford, 1988), initiation rituals (Skelton, 1993) and heavy drinking (Coates 2003; Wellard 2002). These activities serve the purpose of reinforcing the associations of hegemonic masculinity with power and strength and assert hegemonic masculinity's superiority over femininity and other forms of masculinity (Rutherford, 1988) that are not hegemonic. The strong connection between hegemonic masculinity and football was evident in the analysis of children's play practices as I will demonstrate in chapter 6 where I explored the relation between football and successful masculinity/hegemonic masculinity as well as the extent to which exclusion from the game is interpreted as an absence of an overt subscription to hegemonic forms of masculinity.

Connell's (1987) theory has offered valuable insights into the study of hegemonic masculinity in the two Athenian primary schools. More specifically, hegemonic masculinity enabled me to explore the discursive representations of masculinity and femininity in the anthology textbooks in relation to gender roles in the domestic sphere and labour market. The data also allowed me to scrutinise the gender hierarchies formed in the two Athenian primary schools and explored the characteristics that hegemonic masculinity had acquired in the specific socio-cultural context.

2.5 Emphasised Femininity

According to Connell, 'all forms of femininity in this society are constructed in the context of the overall subordination of women to men. For this reason, there is no femininity that holds among women the position held by hegemonic masculinity among men' (Connell, 1987: 187). Thus, it could be argued that there are no femininities that are hegemonic (Connell, 1987) because 'being in a hegemonic position is also about being in a position of power; it is about being able to construct the world for oneself and others so that one's power is unchallenged and taken (more or less) for granted as part of the order of things' (Paechter, 2006b: 256). According to Paechter (2006) femininity never holds this form of power as it is constructed relationally, in relation to the hegemon group in a dualistic relation. 'A dualistic relation is one in which the subordinate term is negated, rather than the two sides being in equal balance' (Paechter, 2006b: 256). This means that 'femininities are not constructed in the ways masculinities are; they do not confer cultural power, nor are they able to guarantee patriarchy. They are, instead, constructed as a variety of negations of the masculine...' (Paechter, 2006b: 256). In parallel with this, social power is accumulated in the hands of men, leaving no scope for women to establish 'institutionalised power relationships over other women' (Connell, 1987: 187). Similarly, the social construction of femininity is not

characterised by a hegemonic form around dominance over the other sex (Connell, 1987) and it does not negate or subordinate other forms of femininity in the way hegemonic masculinity repudiates other forms of masculinity.

Although femininity cannot be hegemonic, multiple femininities exist in societies (Connell, 1987). 'One form is defined around compliance with this subordination and is oriented to accommodating the interests and desires of men' which she called 'emphasised femininity' (Connell, 1987: 184-5). 'Others are defined centrally by strategies of resistance and forms of non-compliance. Others again are defined by complex strategic combinations of compliance, resistance and co-operation' (Connell, 1987: 184-5). Although multiple femininities exist in societies Connell places emphasis on the relationship among masculinities and she does not elaborate any further.

Similarly to hegemonic masculinity, emphasised femininity is culturally and socially constructed. Although it 'is very public...its content is specifically linked with the private realm of the home and the bedroom' (Connell, 1987: 187). 'Emphasised femininity it is promoted and idealised in mass media and 'most of this promotion, it might be noted, is organised, financed and supervised by men' (Connell, 1987: 188). Scholars have postulated that emphasised femininity is constituted through the negation or the absence of what is considered as masculine characteristics (Kessler &McKenna, 1978, Blaise, 2005a, b, Paechter, 2010). More specifically, 'what is feminine is entirely what is repudiated by masculinity' (Paechter, 2012: 236). Femininity is constructed sexually, 'to accommodating the interests and desires of men' (Connell, 1987: 83) especially, 'men's desire for titillation' (Connell, 1987: 187). Through the negation of any masculine attributes, emphasised femininity is legitimated by the hegemon (hegemonic masculinity). As such, emphasised femininity epitomises women's sociability, lack of technical competence and compliance

whereas matrimony and motherhood, fertility and sexual accommodation are idealised (Connell, 1987).

'Central to the maintenance of emphasised femininity is practice that prevents other models of femininity gaining cultural articulation' (Connell, 1987: 188). As discussed, a significant element of emphasised femininity is its identification with hegemonic heterosexuality, which describes the heterosexual orientation of women as 'natural' and serves the purpose of supporting women's nutrient role in the family and their marginalisation from the labour market. This cultivates and perpetuates women's subordination in the society and assures the preponderance of the hegemon group/hegemonic masculinity in the social system.

The concept of emphasised femininity can function as a mechanism which describes the subordination of femininity in the society, in the sense that its purpose is to ensure that 'females' (as subordinated group) remain subordinated to the hegemon group/hegemonic masculinity. In addition, it epitomises the relationship between masculinity and femininity, demanded by gender hegemony, as it refers to all these attributes that women and girls should enact in order to be considered feminine in a specific cultural, socio-economic and political system. It could be argued then that emphasised femininity is contingent and its form is specific to any situation or social group, which presupposes that its characteristics can be open to challenge or change over time. The specific content that it acquires in any given socio-cultural milieu is discursively constructed for it is located in discourses and it is constituted and reconstituted through discourses. Hence, by taking up the emphasised femininity discourses children construct their gender identity and perform this normative form of femininity, which empowers men's exclusive embodiment of hegemonic masculinity characteristics.

The performance of emphasised femininity begins from the very early years of gender development. Within the family girls will be encouraged to take up emphasised femininity discourses and later, during formal schooling, these discourses will be reinforced. Especially, 'how children's bodies are used and positioned within school and other spaces, and how they are treated and understood by adults and children, are important factors in the development of their identities' (Paechter &Clark, 2007: 319). Thus, girls from a very young age are discouraged from participating in non-gender-appropriate activities by their parents and later by their teachers and the curriculum. Their gender identity is regulated through disciplinary practices within the domestic sphere, education system and other institutions that manage individuals' performance of gender (Butler, 1990, 2004).

As discussed, emphasised femininity is constructed in relation to the dominant discourses that subsist in the social systems/societies. Its discursive content perpetuates docility, dependence, sensitivity and pathologises qualities that do not conform to these ideals (Ringrose &Walkerdine, 2006). By assigning these attributes, the hegemon asserts its own power over the subordinated groups and ensures its dominant/hegemonic social position. The concept of emphasised femininity, however, does not negate the power of the individual to challenge certain discourses, for girls often distance themselves from emphasised femininity in an attempt to 'reject the disempowerment that comes with it' (Paechter, 2006b: 257). A typical example are young girls who develop a tomboy identity (Reay, 2001, Renold 2005) through which they will claim power. Although their decision comes at cost, the consequences for non-compliance with the ideals of emphasised femininity are lesser than they are for boys who don't comply with hegemonic masculinity. Specifically, boys who don't comply with hegemonic masculinity are identified as 'girly' or effeminate. This is corroborated by the empirical data gathered at two schools in Hellas, for it was observed that boys were in constant 'fight' for maintaining their masculine identity by avoiding any activities that were

considered as feminine. However, girls were not as afraid as boys of participating in football matches. This is because girls by distancing themselves from emphasised femininity they empower themselves. Although their participation was often discouraged or even mocked by the boys, it did not seem to threaten their feminine identity.

In my research, I was interested in exploring how girls negotiate emphasised femininity discourses. Girls' strategies in navigating gendered norms pertaining to standards regarding feminine performance of gender are considered in chapters 5, 6 and 7. Girls' accounts of gender were analysed in relation to the discursive representations of femininity in the anthology textbooks, their playground play practices and teachers' classroom practices. The concept of emphasised femininity offered valuable insights into how the school contributes to the construction of gendered subjects by encouraging the 'dichotomy of rationality/pathology'. This dichotomy 'underpins the production of self-regulating subjects in schools' where 'girls and women teachers are positioned through a constellation of discourses, including discourses of femininity, passivity and irrationality' (Youdell, 2005: 252).

2.6 Critiques to Connell's Theory of Masculinities and 'Syndesmosis' of Post-Structuralism with Hegemonic Masculinity.

In this section I explore some critiques of Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity. Next, I enter into a discussion of how the post-structuralist approaches to gender, and in particular Butler's (1990) theory of performativity, can be rendered compatible with the concept of hegemonic masculinity.

As discussed, Connell's term hegemonic masculinity constitutes a frame of reference for drawing attention to the diversity within masculinities and emphasizing that all masculinities

are not constructed equally (Kimmel, 1997). The concept of hegemonic masculinity transposed the debate on patriarchy forward at a time when much of feminist theory was placing emphasis on ideas of patriarchy (Whitehead, 2002). In detail, it highlighted the 'multiple, contested character of male practices in the context of larger formations of gender structure' (Featherstone et al. 2007: 17). Thus, it provided feminists with a theoretical tool for exploring men's practices in various settings (Whitehead, 2002). However, despite the popularity of Connell's theory of multiple masculinities, the concept of hegemonic masculinity has received several critiques. Since the early 1990s, when the debate about the concept of hegemonic masculinity was initiated, they have been advanced five major criticisms outlined below (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005).

The first set of criticism has to do with the underlying concept of masculinity. The concept of masculinity has been perceived as flawed by both a realistic and post-structuralist perspective. From a post-structuralist viewpoint, the concept of masculinity is inadequate to capture the fluidity of gender (Petersen, 1998, 2003, Collier, 1998, MacInnes, 1998). Some versions of this argument placed emphasis on the lack of any post-structuralist tools in gender research, which would enable researchers to unravel the discursive construction of gender identities (Whitehead, 2002). Within this prism the concept of hegemonic masculinity has been vehemently criticised for adopting a heteronormative conception of gender that epitomises the asymmetries between males and females while it takes no notice of the divergence and 'exclusion within the gender categories' (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005: 836). As such, the concept of hegemonic masculinity is based on the binary of gender (cultural) and sex (biological) and marginalises the body. On the other hand, Collinson and Hearn (1994) (see also Hearn, 1996, 2004) have postulated that the concept of multiple masculinities produces a static typology and as a consequence of that, it deemphasises issues of power and domination.

Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) rejected the criticism that the concept of hegemonic masculinity produces a static typology, for they argued that the theory of multiple masculinities has enabled scholars and academics to investigate myriad social constructions, including masculinities performed by people with female bodies. Masculinities are not fixed entities embedded in the body they are 'configurations of practice that are accomplished in social action and, therefore, can differ according to gender relations in a particular social setting' (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005: 836). Conversely, Connell and Messerschmidt have postulated that although several academics proclaimed that the concept of gender is framed within heteronormativity, this view does not apply to 'relational models of gender' or to 'historical approaches where the construction of gender categories is the object of inquiry' (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005: 837). Lastly, they contested the view that hegemonic masculinity rests on the gender-sex dichotomy and thus, it marginalises the body, for the impact of social processes on the body have been well documented by researchers and theoretical discussions have explored 'the relevance of the new sociology of the body to the construction of masculinity' (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005: 837). However, they did not deny that current social research on masculinities does not take a relational approach to gender, for it tends to place overemphasis on masculinities when they analyse men, without exploring the relation between masculinities and femininities. My research has taken a relational approach to gender, avoiding the dichotomization of boys' and girls' experiences. This has led my study to look at masculinity in relation to femininity, which enabled me to demonstrate how hegemonic masculinity is constructed in relation to femininity in primary education (see chapters 5, 6, 7).

The second set of criticism refers to the ambiguity and overlap of the concept of hegemonic masculinity. More specifically, questions have been raised regarding to who actually represents hegemonic masculinity. For instance, many men with great social power do not

perform hegemonic masculinity. On the other hand, men who are identified as exemplars of hegemonic masculinity by researchers often lack any masculine substance (Donaldson, 1993). Symptomatic of this it is the case of an Australian surfer champion who according to Connell (1990) is a typical exemplar of hegemonic masculinity. 'But the young man's regional hegemonic status actually prevents him doing the things his local peer group defines as masculine-going wild, showing off, driving drunk, getting into fights and defending his own prestige' (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005: 838). Further to that, Martin (1998) criticised the concept of hegemonic masculinity for its inconsistency, for sometimes the analysis of the characteristics of hegemonic masculinity led to a rigid type of masculinity whereas on other occasions it generally described any dominant masculinity type. Similar criticisms have pointed out that the concept of hegemonic masculinity fails to demonstrate what the hegemonic masculine man looks like in real life (Wetherell and Edley, 1999, Whitehead, 2002). Some versions of this argument criticised Connell's own use of the term hegemonic masculinity which has acquired multiple meanings. First of all, is identified as a political mechanism 'referring to cultural/moral leadership to ensure popular or mass consent to particular forms of rule' (Flood, 2002 in Beasley, 2008: 88). This produces a significant problem, for it presumes that the most prevalent characteristics of masculinity are those that necessarily guarantee men's dominance over women (Beasley, 2008: 88). Lastly, hegemonic masculinity is perceived 'as a descriptive word referring to dominant versions of manhood' or 'as an empirical reference specifically to *actual groups of men*' (Flood, 2002 in Beasley, 2008: 88). This allows an understanding of hegemonic masculinity as '*actual* particular groups of men' despite the fact that actual men do not always conform to social values of masculinity (Beasley, 2008).

Connell has argued that hegemonic masculinity may in fact describe the position of a minority of men or can only loosely correspond to the lives of actual men (Connell 2000,

Connell and Messerschmidt 2005, Beasley 2008, Martin 1998). She has recently reemphasised that the term should not be defined by its political strategic function in legitimating patriarchy. On the other hand, there are several examples of men with social power who do not perform/embody a hegemonic type of masculinity, for hegemonic masculinity sometimes does not correspond to the actual lives of men but describes 'widespread ideals, fantasies and desires' and provides 'models of relations with women and solutions to problems of gender relations' (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005: 838). Nevertheless, the authors do not deny that hegemonic masculinity can overlap with complicit masculinities in some cases. Social researchers should avoid using the concept of hegemonic masculinity as fixed, for such usage it is against the 'historicity of gender and ignores the massive evidence of change in social definition of masculinity' (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005: 838). In my research I attempted to overcome this slippage in the usage of the concept of hegemonic masculinity by extricating purely dominant types from hegemonic traits of masculinity. For instance, the most popular boys at school do not necessarily perform hegemonic masculinity although their performance of masculinity can be dominant.

The third set of criticism argues that a serious problem of the concept of hegemonic masculinity is its reification. Specifically, Holter (1997, 2003) has argued that the 'concept constructs masculine power from the direct experience of women rather than from the structural basis of women's subordination' (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005: 839). Holter (1997, 2003) has postulated that a clear distinction should be made between 'patriarchy' and 'gender'. Patriarchy is perceived as the structural source of women's subordination in society whereas gender describes the 'a specific system of exchange' that develops in relation to the capitalistic values of the modern social systems (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005: 839). He further argues that the hierarchy of masculinities constructed within gender relations should not be seen as 'logically continuous with the patriarchal subordination of women' (Connell

and Messerschmidt, 2005: 839). In response to the negative characteristics that are often associated with the concept of hegemonic masculinity, Collier (1998) has promulgated that hegemonic masculinity refers to men as unemotional, violent, autonomous, and non-nurturing without recognising positive behaviours such as supporting financially their families or being a father.

Pertaining to Collier's assertion that hegemonic masculinity tends to identify masculinity with negative personality traits, Connell and Messerschmidt (2005: 840) have argued that 'because the concept of hegemonic masculinity is based on practice that permits men's collective dominance over women to continue, it is not surprising that in some contexts, hegemonic masculinity actually does refer to men's engaging in toxic practices'. On the other hand, the critiques that have been advanced against the concept for constructing masculine power from the direct experience of women, Connell has argued that it would be 'a mistake to deduce relations among masculinities from the direct exercise of personal power by men over women' (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005: 839). Instead researchers should take into account the role of the specific cultural context and the intersection of gender with race, class and topography. In my study, gender hierarchies in primary education and particularly the specific content that hegemonic masculinity has acquired in the cultural context of the schools in relation to social class, race and topography was taken into consideration in making sense of the data. As discussed in chapter 4, participants were white middle class students from two diverse areas in the Athenian suburbs.

The fourth set of criticism focuses on the masculine subject. Several scholars and academics have postulated that the concept of hegemonic masculinity is based on a frail theory of the subject because it does not rely enough upon discourses of masculinity. Wetherell and Edley (1999: 337) have questioned 'how men conform to an ideal and turn themselves into

complicit or resistant types, without anyone ever managing to exactly embody that ideal'. According to Wetherell and Edley (1999) hegemonic masculinity should be viewed as a subject position that men take on depending on the circumstances. For instance, depending on whether it is desirable or not men can taken on hegemonic masculinity or distance themselves from it at other moments. In this sense, hegemonic masculinity refers to the way that men position themselves through discursive practices rather than a type of man. Within this prism Whitehead (2002: 93) has argued that the concept of hegemonic masculinity 'sees only structure, making the subject invisible' and 'the individual is lost within, or, in Althusserian terms, subjected to, an ideological apparatus and an innate drive for power'. Hence, the concept results 'in obfuscation, in the conflation of fluid masculinities with overarching structure and, ultimately, in abstract structural dynamics' (Whitehead, 2002: 93-4).

Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) have argued against discursive perspectives which place emphasis on the symbolic dimension, maintaining that the concept of hegemonic masculinity emerges from a multidimensional understanding of gender. Hegemonic masculinity should not be viewed as a cultural norm, although it is inextricably connected with the cultural ideals. This is because gender is constituted also through non-discursive practices with affective, material and psychosocial implications. Although the concept of hegemonic masculinity is theoretically grounded on 'psychoanalytic arguments about the layered and contradictory character of personality, the everyday contestations in social life, and the mixture of strategies necessary in any attempt to sustain hegemony' (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005: 843). Thus, the concept of hegemonic masculinity does not oversimplify the subject although in several instances the concept has been used in simplistic ways (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005).

However, the question that needs to be answered is: does the concept of hegemonic masculinity erase the subject as Whitehead (2002) has argued? Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) denied such a claim since the concept of hegemonic masculinity 'embeds a historically dynamic view of gender in which it is impossible to erase the subject' (Connell and Messerschmidt (2005: 843). The emphasis that is placed on the multidimensionality of gender relations underline that the subject which is constituted within these relations is not regarded as unitary.

Lastly, the fifth set of criticisms focuses on the patterns of gender relations. Scholars and academics have promulgated that the concept of hegemonic masculinity is not a self-reproducing form. Demetriou (2001) suggested that this is because a kind of simplification has occurred. In particular, he has argued that there are two forms of hegemony (internal and external). The external form of hegemony refers to the establishment of men's domination over women in culture and societies whereas the internal form describes the dominance of one group of men over all the other men. According to Demetriou (2001) the relationship between the internal and external form of hegemony is not clearly spelled out. In parallel with this, Connell's original theorisation depreciated the role of marginalised or subordinated masculinities in maintaining hegemonic masculinity. 'Such a conceptualisation misses the 'dialectical pragmatism' of internal hegemony, by which hegemonic masculinity appropriates from other masculinities whatever appears to be pragmatically useful for continued domination' (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005: 844). This means that hegemonic masculinity could change by incorporating elements from other masculinities.

According to Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) hegemonic masculinity is not self-reproducing but it requires men who perform a certain form of hegemonic masculinity to continuously policing men and positioning women in a subordinated place in societies. On

the other hand, Demetriou's notion of dialectical pragmatism highlighted the influence of subordinated and marginalised masculinities on hegemonic masculinity, for hegemonic masculinity is in a dialectical relationship with the others and can broaden its boundaries by incorporating elements from the others. Hence, researchers need to develop 'a more holistic understanding of gender hierarchy, recognizing the agency of subordinated groups as much as the power of dominant groups and the mutual conditioning of gender dynamics and other social dynamics' (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005: 848).

Despite the critiques that have been advanced over the past decades, gender research has empirically confirmed the existence of multiple patterns of masculinity as well as a hierarchy of masculinities, in which certain forms of masculinity gain ascent over other masculinities and become socially dominant at a regional or global level (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005).

As discussed, in this study Connell's theory of masculinities has been deployed in order to explore the diverse patterns of masculinity as well as the gender hierarchies that have been established in the specific schools. Moving away from the critiques to Connell's theory of masculinities, my aim was to join up concepts from Butler's (1990) theory of performativity with Connell's theory of masculinities. First of all, in Connell's theory of masculinities, structures are not conceived in a monolithic way for they are in a dialectical relationship with the social subjects. Connell negated 'both macro structural determinism and its opposite – micro level agency by voluntarist subjects' (Beasley, 2012: 754). According to her theoretical framework, gender is the product of the interaction between social subjects and structures. Although her approach did not negate the significant role of structures of power, she rejected the strong structuralist ideas and proposed a more elastic and weak structuralism (Beasley, 2012). Thus, she provided a less deterministic account of gender (Connell and Messerschmidt

2005: 843; Connell 1987: 184), for she is 'also at pains to retain the complex detail of subjects. Her account of gendered power as oppression – that is, patriarchy – imposes upon the micro-level of subjects to produce gendered identities/beings, which in turn respond to, resist and reconstitute structure' (Beasley, 2012: 754). This means that gender is influenced by structures but also by the subjects who are perceived as doers. This view of subjects as doers allows subjects to resist structures and limit the impact of the structures on the social subjects.

This view is not antithetical to postmodern theorists and especially Judith Butler's (1990) view of gender as a matter of competing discourses that subjectivate but which –are negotiated. Despite the apparent asymmetries between Connell's theory of masculinities and Butler's theory of performativity, the two theories might be rendered compatible. Several studies have attempted to explore gender through a post-structuralist prism and Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity (see Hudson, 2011, Cooper, 2009, Lay, 2000, Paechter, 2003, Brooks, 2006). As Beasley (2012) has postulated, combining Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity with Butler's theory of performativity 'requires some serious re-thinking' of the concepts/terms such as 'structure, patriarchy, oppression, hegemony, gender identity/ies, men/ masculinities, hegemonic masculinity, marginalised masculinities, subordinated masculinities, as well as associated conceptions of social change', for they 'cannot simply be combined with postmodern theoretical tools' (Beasley, 2012: 760). However, the post-structural view of gender and gender identity does not contradict the notion of hierarchical masculinities that is proposed by Connell (1987) or the discursive forces that normalise certain performances of gender through which all other expression of masculinities and femininities (masculine and feminine subject positions) are marginalised, pathologised and subordinated.

As discussed, the intention of my study is to explore the role of the Hellenic education system in reinforcing traditional gender discourses through its quotidian practices (curriculum material and teachers' classroom practices) as well to investigate how children negotiate or challenge normative and non-normative gender discourses in their daily schooling experiences. In this study gender identity is viewed as complex, contradictory and contingent (see Connell, 1989; Carrigan et al, 1987). Within this theoretical prism, the subjects (boys and girls) are located not as passive recipients of pre-determined meanings but as a subject who use strategies to navigate discourses in complex ways (Davies, 1993). The approach to gender in this study then proposes that gender identities are something that individuals learn through doing in relational, multiple and diverse ways. Children actively construct and negotiate their gender identities in a social realm. This is the view of post-structuralism that sees gender as something that is constantly created through a series of performances and repetitive acts that create the illusion of a proper, natural or fixed gender (Butler 1990). However, this post-structural view of gender and gender identity does not contradict the notion of hierarchical masculinities that is proposed by Connell (1987). The discursive forces that normalise certain performances of gender through which all other expression of masculinities and femininities (masculine and feminine subject positions) are marginalised, pathologised and subordinated is in fact supported through the idea of gender as performative. This perspective offers concepts to see how these processes work in practice.

Thus, the use of post-structuralist approach to gender and Connell's (1989) theory of hegemonic masculinity offered an understanding of the contradictions that characterise the ostensibly stable and coherent masculine and feminine subject positions. The empirical data demonstrated how boys and girls experience, manage and negotiate performative practices of doing gender at school environments. Through the post-structuralist theorisation of gender and gender identities as multiple, changing and contradictory, the study made a significant

contribution to the existing knowledge about the extent to which hegemonic masculinity can

be contested and replaced.

Synopsis

In this chapter, I addressed the main theoretical approaches of gender and gender identity formation. Since the development of psychoanalytic theory, the concept of gender and gender identity has been subject to various theorisations, which were synoptically reviewed in this chapter in an attempt to further the understanding of Butler's (1990) post-structuralist approach to gender as performative in nature. Through this prism, gender is constituted and reconstituted through discourses. The role of the 'subjects' in the construction of their gender is also emphasised, for they actively participate in discourses in idiosyncratic ways and have the power to negate certain discourses. In parallel with the discursive construction of gender identities, I explored the hierarchies of masculinities and femininities by drawing on Connell's (1989) concept of hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity. The chapter also provided an overview of the use of post-structuralism, hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity in the context of my research and discussed how the amalgamation of Butler's (1990) performativity and Connell's (1987) theory of hegemonic masculinity provided the necessary theoretical grounds for understanding the role of the Hellenic educational system in reproducing gender normative discourses as well as how pupils negotiate and make sense of these gender discourses in their quotidian school experiences.

Chapter 3

Review of the Literature

'Schools 'develop and reinforce sex segregations, stereotypes and even discriminations which exaggerate the negative aspects of sex roles in the outside world, when they could be trying to alleviate them' (Delamont,1980a: 2)

Introduction

Feminist research is primarily 'connected in principle to feminist struggle' (Sprague & Zimmerman, 1993: 226) and aims to emancipate women from all oppressive socially constructed fetters, promoting at the same time social change and social justice for women and men. Feminist scholars defied basic social structures and ideologies that tyrannize women by disinterring women's subjugated knowledge and illuminating gender-based stereotypes and biases. Second-wave feminism (1960s–1970s) addressed a wide range of issues (legal inequalities, sexuality, family, the workplace and schooling) and raised debates about gender discrimination and the nature of equality. Feminists proposed that gender inequalities were indissolubly related to social, political and cultural norms and invigorated women to realise that their positioning in the social cosmos was determined by gendered power structures. During second-wave feminism a range of feminist perspectives were developed (Liberal Feminism, Radical Feminism, Marxist-socialist Feminism and later Black Feminism) to elucidate gender inequalities (Acker, 1987; Arnot &Weiner, 1987). Each new wave of feminism had an influential impact on gender research, for it raised new issues of gender equality that required analysis.

In the educational terrain, feminist scholars in the early 1960s were primarily concerned with the history of education, educational policy, schools' administration and organisation whereas they placed emphasis on the 'Hidden Curriculum' and school textbooks. Feminist researchers were the first to promulgate that the school system was inherently tied to patriarchy and as a

result, educational practices perpetuated gender asymmetries. The idea of the educational system as a reproductive mechanism of a range of gender stereotypes or discourses fuelled a dynamic research agenda, which placed emphasis on many aspects of gender asymmetries in education (Freedman, 2003).

Initially, feminists placed emphasis on gender representations in school manuals. Studies on school textbooks occupied a large part of the feminist research in education, due to the fact that the instructional materials form the foundation for most classroom activities. Scholars have postulated that textbooks are '...important influences that shape us by reflecting the politics and values of our society' (Fox, 1993a: 656). The stories open 'a map of possible roles and of possible worlds in which action, thought and self-definition are permissible (or desirable)' (Bruner, 1986: 66). As such, books can reinforce predominant social gender norms or challenge and foster potential change (Jordan et al., 2005). More specifically, the discursive representations of femininity and masculinity can play a crucial role in perpetuating gender normative perceptions vis-à-vis gender-appropriate roles and behaviours in society (Fox, 1993b). A plethora of studies have postulated the traditional discursive representations of masculinity and femininity in the books not only predispose children not to question the existing social relationships, but also entail solemn constrains on the individuals' freedom, which encourage them to behave in gender normative ways (Briere &Lanktree 1983; Crawford &English 1984; Schau &Scott 1984; Peterson &Lach 1990; Fox, 1993b; Rudman, 1995; Whiteley 1996, Harrison et al, 2004).

Moving beyond gender representations in the instructional materials and children's literature, feminist research in education placed emphasis on classroom interactions. The analysis of classroom interaction has taken several turns and forms in various countries during the 20th century. Symptomatic of this is that 'from early in the century through about 1970 criticism

was usually focused on the treatment of boys, especially at the elementary level' (Brothy, 1985: 115). Feminists were focused on the fact that: '…boys received lower grades in all subjects and lower achievement test scores in reading and language arts. They insisted that these sex differences occurred because the schools were "too feminine" or because the "overwhelmingly female" teachers were unable to meet boys' learning needs effectively' (Brophy, 1985: 115-6). The 1970s marked a profound turnabout in the perception of classroom interactions and in the body of gender-related research in the USA. Scholars identified the female students as the primary at risk students of the quotidian educational praxis. Although girls received higher grades, especially for conforming to classroom norms, boys received more active instruction and developed higher career aspirations than girls. This realisation subsequently led to the development of a new research interest, which placed emphasis on the nature and frequency of classroom interactions. Researchers during the 1970s and 1980s postulated the significance of direct instruction (Good, 1979) and male-female classroom interactions as they became more aware of the role of teachers-students interactions in children's gender identity construction.

Through the post-structuralist prism, classrooms were once again at the epicentre of feminist research in education. Researchers have postulated that primary classrooms constitute sites where myriad discourses operate and regulate multiple positionings for both teachers and students. Hence, classroom practices play a critical role in reinforcing normative gender discourses for they provide valuable insights into how positionality within gendered discourses limits and defines certain gender-appropriate behaviours for boys and girls (Davies, 1989a; Walkerdine, 1990). The post-structuralist paradigm has had a significant influence on feminist research in education. Researchers working within the post-structuralist paradigm placed emphasis on the relationship between school spaces and children's gender identity construction. In detail, gender performance was perceived as embedded and

performed through and within school spaces (Paechter &Clark, 2007) and especially school playgrounds, for they constitute a field where masculinities and femininities are performed and constructed through discourses. In addition, on school playgrounds one can observe how certain forms of masculinity gain ascendancy over other forms of masculinity/femininity and become hegemonic (Swain, 2000b).

These aspects of gender asymmetries in education (textbooks, classroom interactions and school playgrounds) are of particular relevance to my research. This chapter begins with a synoptic discussion of the findings of international studies (conducted in the UK, USA, Australia and New Zealand) on gender representations in children's literature and school textbooks. Next, a synopsis of the previous research on the Hellenic textbooks of primary education is presented, in an attempt to bring the attention to the gap in the existing Hellenic literature on this subject. Additionally, I explore literature that goes beyond an idea of representational change through textbooks and looks at children's responses to textbooks as complex processes, as shown in feminist post-structural research. However, there is more at stake than simply changing representations of gender, since change and social transformation have a more complex discursive context, involving multiple sites of interaction including those of pedagogical process at school, in the family and more. It is for this reason that I review the international and Hellenic literature on classroom interactions, which illuminates the gender asymmetries that characterise classroom practices. Lastly, I critically discuss the international literature on children play practices on school playgrounds, which highlights the importance of the physical space of the school in understanding male and female actions, behaviours and attitudes in primary schools.

3.1 Discursive Representations of Masculinity and Femininity in School Textbooks: A Review of the International Literature.

The erstwhile international studies on gender representations in children's literature and curriculum materials have placed emphasis on various aspects of gender asymmetries i.e. gender of the authors, male and female protagonists etc. A body of feminist research on textbooks has moved beyond the text itself, to the study of gender representations in the iconography, as illustrations are visual symbols that convey both meaning and content. Hence, 'pictorial texts can extend meaning beyond the written text or the reader's imagination or they can even recast the story' (Wason-Ellam, 1997: 6). It could be argued that pictorial representations produce broader social/gender discourses (Edley &Wetherell, 1998).

The findings of the international literature on gender representations in the curriculum materials have yielded that that schoolbooks are male dominated and reinforce traditional gender dichotomies in relation to male and female characters personality traits and activities in the domestic sphere and the labour market (see Graebner, 1972; Moon, 1974; Lobban, 1974; Britton &Lumpkin, 1977; Kortnehaus &Demarest, 1993; Crabb &Bielawski, 1994; Skelton, 1997b; Gooden &Gooden, 2001). More specifically, in the USA a plethora of studies postulated that the American Basal Readers (reading schemes) published in the 1970s were male dominated (Graebner, 1972, Weitzman et al., 1972, Frasher &Walker, 1972; Marten &Matlin, 1976, Rupley et al., 1981; Kortnehaus &Demarest, 1993).

The androcentrism in children's books and curriculum materials was not altered significantly in the books that were published before and after the announcement of gender equity publication guidelines by major publishing houses between the years 1972-1976 (Britton & Lumpkin, 1977). Male and female characters' activities in the textbooks were also extremely

stereotyped. More specifically, Weitzman &Rizzo[8] (1974) postulated that in the American textbooks women were portrayed mainly as housewives and mothers whereas male characters were depicted in a wide range of activities/roles (Women on Words and Images, 1972, 1975). In the atypical occasion that females actively participated in the labour market they were portrayed in traditional female occupations, such as teachers or nurses (DeCrow, 1972). Significant gender asymmetries were also observed with reference to males' and females' personality traits. Typically, women were depicted as emotional, affectionate, passive, dependant, apprehensive, incompetent and concerned about their physical appearance. In contrast to females, male characters were portrayed as inventive, imaginative, heroic and capable of solving problems (Women On Words, 1972, 1975).

As the awareness of sexist issues increased during the 1980s and 1990s in the USA, the portrayal of male and female characters in the Basal Readers, published in 1985-1986, became more gender egalitarian. Consequently, the two genders were more equally distributed in the stories (Hitchcock &Tompkins, 1987). Boys and girls were also represented in the textbooks in more equal numbers and engaged in a wider range of activities (Purcell &Stewart, 1990). Despite the positive developments female characters in the American Basal Readers remained underrepresented throughout the 1990s (Ernst, 1995). Analogous were the findings of the analysis of the iconography. Researchers have postulated that the representations of male and female characters in the Caldecott Award children's books published between 1937 and 1989 in the USA were overall highly stereotyped (Crabb &Bielawski, 1994). Symptomatic of this were the portrayals of male characters using tools related to work outside the domestic sphere, whereas female characters were depicted using household objects. Nonetheless, pictorial representations of femininity and masculinity in the

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[8] Weitzman &Rizzo (1974) analysed the gender representations in the science, mathematics and social studies books of elementary schools, published between 1967 and 1972 in the USA.

1980s were to some extent less gender normative compared with the illustrations in the books of the previous decade (Collins et al., 1984). A further decrease in the number of stereotyped images in children's books was noted in the 1990s. However, Gooden &Gooden (2001) who analysed 83 children's books published from 1995 to 1999 postulated that although the number of gendered images had decreased, female characters in the illustrations continued to be portrayed in stereotyped ways. Analogous were the findings of the qualitative aspects of gender heterogeneity in the American Basal readers. In textbooks published in the 1980s females' personality traits, occupational roles and activities were gender normative (Powell &Garcia, 1985; Hitchcock &Tompkins, 1987; Purcell &Stewart, 1990). A plethora of other studies have found that the textbooks published in the 1990s were highly stereotyped (Jett-Simpson &Masland, 1993; Ernst, 1995). In particular, female characters portrayed as passive (Fox, 1993b), sweet, naive, conforming and dependant, whereas males appeared strong, adventurous, independent, skilled and talented (Jett-Simpson &Masland, 1993; Ernst, 1995). Moreover, male characters in the stories were often portrayed in dynamic and adventurous roles such as fighters and rescuers, whereas females were either caretakers and mothers or Princesses in need of rescuing (Temple, 1993). Even in the very few stories where females were represented as assertive and dynamic, their positive attributes were vanished by the end of the story as they turned passive and dependant. Female protagonists rarely managed to maintain a non-normative personality throughout the story (Rudman, 1995).

The findings of the studies on gender heterogeneity in the British textbooks during this period (1970-1990) were similar. Researchers have argued that textbooks were male dominated (Moon, 1974; Lobban, 1974; Skelton, 1997b), and female characters were typically represented in nurturing role whereas male protagonists were positioned outside the demarcated domestic sphere, free of any household responsibilities (such as cooking, cleaning or nurturing their offspring). According to Lobban (1975: 207) this was: 'a

profoundly unrealistic representation of ... reality where many men and women share[d] household chores'. Pupils were 'likely to glean two messages from these activities [...]: that females' main role is nurturance and that they are not only inferior at every other activity, they are also often evil to boot' (Lobban, 1975: 207). Furthrmore, 'the view of the world of work was...more male dominated than...in...reality and could scarcely be likely to suggest many new adult goals for female children' (Lobban, 1975: 208).

The textbooks published in the subsequent two decades (1980s-1990s) also reinforced a traditional gender division of household activities. Femininity was often identified with activities such as cooking, playing tennis, fashion modelling and buying domestic goods, whereas 'males were rarely, if ever, identified with such activities' (Abraham, 1989: 40). Contrary to females, male characters actively participated in the labour market and were employed as doctors, teachers or fire officers. The most extreme example of sexism in the books was that the occupation 'mathematician' was defined to be male (Abraham, 1986). In the 1990s, according to Skelton[9] (1997b), gender portrayals in the instructional material did not significantly alter, as females were 'located firmly in the home/caring role situation' (Skelton, 1997b: 42). Although they had more 'confidence' and sometimes they possessed 'male skills' they were still supporting and servicing men and 'their desires [were] focused on satisfying others' needs through love' (Skelton, 1997b: 42).

The androcentrism in the instructional materials is a global phenomenon that encumbers gender equality. A study on the curriculum materials (mathematics, language, history and literacy textbooks) conducted in 13 countries [France, Peru, Zambia and seven Arab States (Egypt, Kuwait, Lebanon, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia and Democratic Yemen)] showed that

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[9] Skelton (1997) compared the new reading schemes (published in 1994) to the older manuals from the 1960s and 1970s.

not only were female characters outnumbered, but also gender portrayals in the iconography were normative (Michel, 1996).

Analogous were the findings of the studies in the Australian and New Zealand instructional materials. In detail, Lee and Collin (2009) explored the distribution of male and female characters in the Australian textbooks. Their findings yielded that male characters were over represented (ratio 3:1) and portrayed in paid employment nearly twice more often than women. Crucial gender asymmetries were also observed in relation to masculine and feminine personality characteristics. Male characters were portrayed as heroic, dynamic, athletic[10] and energetic, whereas female characters were presented as victims or carers (Lee &Collins, 2009). The researchers argued that although more women than men portrayed to engage in household chores, the number of female characters carrying out household chores (cleaning, cooking etc.) had decreased (Lee &Collins, 2009). In parallel with this, girls' activities were also less traditional, as more girls than boys were depicted studying and receiving formal education, a portrayal which reflected the social reality of Australia (Lee &Collins, 2009).

In New Zealand, Jackson &Gee (2005) explored male and female characters' clothing in over 100 textbooks used in primary education over the past five decades. Female characters' clothing is symptomatic of gender stereotyping, as the wearing of the dress acquires a significant meaning mainly because it 'is an essential part of the process through which girls learn the meaning of being girls' (Davies, 1989b: 15). Jackson &Gee (2005) found that in the textbooks published throughout the 1950s and 1960s female characters appeared wearing exclusively dresses, a portrayal that was not altered drastically during the following decade (1970s), as only a small number of illustrations depicted girls wearing trousers. By the 1980s

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[10]Particularly, female characters were portrayed in play activities five times less often than male characters.

and 1990s women's clothing in the iconography was less normative, as a larger number of female characters were wearing trousers. In contrast, men and boys portrayed mainly in trousers and occasionally in shorts (Jackson &Gee, 2005).

The traditional gender dichotomies that regulate female characters' activities and occupational roles persist even in most recent publications. Lee and Collin (2009) postulated that the representation of masculinity and femininity in the Australian textbooks reinforced anachronistic views of gender hierarchies in the social cosmos, mainly because they promoted a gender normative division of labour[11]. In addition, in the domestic sphere female characters represented as mothers and housewives whereas male protagonists were identified as breadwinners and head of the family. These representations emphasised a traditional division of roles and activities into masculine and feminine and promoted traditional views of masculinity according to which men perform physically demanding jobs and participate in activities such as rugby and football (Lee &Collins, 2009).

In synopsis, the international literature on gender representations in the curriculum material and children's literature, published from the early 1970s to the late 2000s in various countries, postulated that textbooks were male dominated and the representations of masculinity and femininity were normative. More specifically, female characters were positioned in the domestic sphere as mothers or housewives. Female characters were also portrayed as passive, docile and dependant. In contrast, male characters depicted in the public domain and endowed with certain personality characteristics such as leadership skills, achievement, responsibility, power and independence.

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[11] Women are represented as fashion designers, pensioner and salesperson and on very few occasions women appeared as astronaut, boxer, weightlifter, film maker and manager. Men portrayed in stereotyped male roles such as farmers, soldiers, firemen, postmen, pilots and politicians. In fact, female characters appear in a wider range of occupational roles compared with previous decades but still the portrayal of women is gendered (Lee &Collins, 2008).

3.2 The 'Anthesis' of Feminist Research Methodologies in Hellas and the Analysis of Gender Asymmetries in the Hellenic Textbooks of Primary Education.

In Hellas the interest for the analysis of gender asymmetries in the educational terrain was developed with a delay (compared with the USA and UK) in the early 1970s. Since then, a plethora of studies have been carried out exploring gender heterogeneity in education (e.g. Makrinioti, 1986, Lalagianni, 1999). The studies of the reading schemes fall into three categories: a) research which focused on the textbooks of the early period (1834-1919), b) research of the 'second wave school books', which placed emphasis on the school manuals used from 1954 to 1979 and c) the studies of the revised school books that cover a period of nearly 30 years, from 1983 to the present. In this section I synoptically discuss the findings of the studies on textbooks of the early two periods and I review the findings of the literature on the textbooks of the period 1983 to the present.

The reading schemes of the early period (1843-1919) were extremely stereotyped, from a current perspective for maternity and mothering were presented as females' primary social roles. However, the discursive content of the reading schemes was harmonious with the social, political and cultural norms of the Hellenic society of that period (Makrynioti, 1986). The political and economic conditions that characterised the Hellenic social cosmos during the 19th and the first half of the 20th centuries had been ameliorated in the dawn of the second half of the 20th century. A new social reality emerged in the early 1950s as women's position in the social cosmos was drastically altered. The increasing numbers of women in higher education[12] (Belogiannis et al., 2005) facilitated them to make inroads to professional careers and encouraged their exodus from the domestic sphere. Nonetheless, the textbooks of the period 1954-1979 continued to promote normative gender discourses in relation to gender

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[12]In the 1950s it was approximately 50% (Belogiannis et al., 2005).

roles. A relatively recent study led by Lalagianni (1999)[13] focused on the anthology books of that period (published in 1974). Lalagianni (1999) analysed women's representations in the textbooks, female characters' socio-economic status and level of education as well as females' roles in the family and their employment status. The outcomes of her research designated that the anthologies were male dominated and female characters were positioned predominantly in the domestic sphere, as mothers and housewives. The analysis of women's socio-economic status showed that female characters were placed in the middle or lower social ranks. A traditional division of labour was also observed, for men appeared to be practicing various professions whereas women portrayed as caregivers or housewives. The discursive representations of males' and females' personality characteristics were also traditional. Male figures portrayed as hard workers, logical, unemotional, energetic and dominant. Contrary to men, female characters were passive, silent, patient and sensible.

Analogous were the discursive representations of masculinity and femininity in the reading schemes of that period, for students were presented with strictly patriarchal family structures and women portrayed exclusively as housewives (Fragoudaki, 1979, Makrinioti, 1980). In contrast, male characters were portrayed in the public domain and worked hard outside the home (Makrinioti, 1980). The restoration of democracy in 1974 triggered a process of institutional and political change that led to educational reforms and democratization of schooling. Among the most influential reforms that took place was the elimination of single sex schooling, which is considered as a crucial step towards gender equality (Law, 309/1976, F.E.K A' 100). However, gender representations in the reading schemes that were published towards the end of the 1970s remained gender normative, for female characters presented as inert, passive and dependant. On the other hand, male characters appeared in the public domain and endowed with certain personality traits such as leadership skills, achievement,

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[13]Lalagianni's (1999) study is the only research that has examined gender representations in the anthology textbooks of 1974.

responsibility, power and independence (Georgiou-Nilsen, 1980, Ziogou-Karastergiou &Deligianni-Kouimtzi, 1981). To a certain extent the reading schemes of that period encapsulated some of the social changes that were taking place in the Hellenic society at that time, such as female participation in the labour market. Nevertheless, the few gender egalitarian depictions in the books were not adequate to deconstruct patriarchy. This is because the representations of motherhood in the reading schemes were so powerful that overshadowed women who actively participated in paid employment. This was because employed women in the literature practiced professions with low social status (Kantartzi, 1991).

Women's changing position in the Hellenic society and their participation in the labour market did not significantly shift the gender ideological axes of the textbooks of the third period (1983-to the present). Gender representations in the reading schemes published in 1982-1983 remained extremely normative (Anthogalidou, 1989; Kantartzi, 1991; Anagnostopoulou, 1995) and female characters continued to be underrepresented (Kanatsouli, 1997). Furthermore, men's participation in the production sphere was exceedingly valued, for through their work men produced goods and services whereas women were employed mainly in education and health system, which are less valued, (according to the societal norms and conventions of that period or even in the changing context of the 21st century) (Anagnostopoulou, 1997). These representations cultivated traditional views of gender roles according to which motherhood is more valued than participation in paid employment. The only positive development was that men were less restricted to traditional roles such as breadwinners, and on a number of occasions they executed domestic chores and prepared food (Anagnostopoulou, 1997, Deligianni-Kouimtzi, 1987). Children's portrayals in the textbooks were more gender egalitarian. Mixed gender play activities were promoted and in some instances boys represented as emotional towards

animals. Girls' play activities were more diverse than before, for on some occasions they were portrayed playing football. In the adult world, a very positive representation was that men and women discussed and solved together the family problems. Nevertheless, in the labour market adults' occupational roles did not reflect the social reality of the Hellenic social cosmos, for 87.6% of males participated in the labour market whereas only 12.6% of female characters represented in paid employment (often in traditional female professions such as teachers) (Deligianni-Kouimtzi, 1987). Lastly, another significant aspect of gender asymmetries in the textbooks of primary education was pointed out by Freiderikou (1995) who analysed 12 volumes of the reading schemes published between 1983 and 1986. Freiderikou (1995) postulated that no women had collaborated in the compilation of the schoolbooks and that 86% of all texts had been produced by men. To a certain degree this elucidated the abundance of gender stereotypes in the school manuals of that period (Freiderikou, 1995). It could be argued that the textbooks failed in meeting their declared purpose, which was the development of students' abilities regardless of their gender and social class.

In the 1990s was noted an 'anthesis' of the feminist research on the Hellenic textbooks of primary education. Researchers postulated that gender dynamics in the instructional materials of this period had shifted and the discursive content of the books was more gender egalitarian. A comparative study between the textbooks published before and after 1983 was carried out by Louvrou (1994). Her findings designated that albeit in the new books gender representations of masculinity and femininity were traditional, some crucial developments had taken place such as women's participation in the labour market and a decrease in androcentrism.

Feminist research in the Hellenic education took a critical methodological turn in the middle of the 1990s. Politis (1994) was the first to deploy the concept of deconstruction in analysing gender asymmetries in the reading schemes of primary education. Using a content analysis methodology he scrutinised gender roles in the textbooks published in 1993-1994. His findings yielded that women portrayed as dependent, unassertive, timid and ineffectual. As well, female characters were most often described for their beauty. Lastly, Politis (1994) pointed out that although the term 'working mother' was used with high frequency in the books the lack of an equivalent term such as 'working father' was indicative of the traditional father role, which finds its roots in the patriarchal values.

Lastly, one of the most recent studies on gender representations in the textbooks of primary education was conducted by Kotsalidou (2003) who analysed the 4 volumes of the reading schemes using a symbolic and ideological/Marxist analysis with some influences of discourse analysis. Kotsalidou (2003) postulated that the ideological axes of the instructional material were highly gendered, as male characters outnumbered female characters and males' and females' personality traits, occupational roles, activities and capabilities were in line patriarchal perceptions of masculinity and femininity. She concluded that: 'it seems that the word child it still means a boy…in many texts the narrator or the main character is a boy…' (Kotsalidou, 2003: 33) and she added: '…the female student learns embroidery, sewing, cooking and how to execute the household chores. She will have to work only if everything goes wrong. And again, she will have to choose a job that will not keep her away from the home. If she wants to study she will need courage that nothing can dismay in order to follow one of the traditionally female professions such as teacher or dentist…' (Kotsalidou, 2003: 38).

In synopsis, school manuals in spite of the several revisions that they had undergone over the past fifty years reinforced traditional gender dichotomies. In the textbooks, femininity was positioned as frail and incompetent whereas masculinity was identified with aggressiveness and independence. There is a consensus among scholars that such portrayals fail to encompass the current positionings of femininity and masculinity and changing gender norms in the Hellenic social cosmos. Further questions this thesis poses in relation to the previous studies, is how in their majority they were strictly bounded to gender stereotypes approaches, which offered an unsophisticated explication of the potential impact of the textbooks on students' perceptions. This is because through that theoretical prism readers were perceived as passive recipients of pre-determined meanings whereas this thesis takes a different view. Moreover, feminist research on the Hellenic textbooks of primary education has not placed enough emphasis on the anthology textbooks, for only one study has attempted to scrutinise the gender dynamics in the books.

3.3 Children's Responses to Traditional and non-Traditional Gender Discourses: A review of the International Literature

In my theory chapter I have reviewed the post-structural view of subjectivity, which positions readers as active producers of meanings. This view has had an immense impact on gender research in education. The idea of children's sense making of the texts as variable and paradoxical (both individually and collectively) fuelled a plethora of studies, which placed emphasis on children's responses to non-traditional gender discourses. Many scholars were interested in scrutinising the potential impact of children's exposure to feminist fairy tales on their gender identity construction.

Researchers have been particularly concerned with the influential impact of the discursive representation of masculinity and femininity in the literature on children's gender identity

construction and their perceptions towards gender roles. Traditional folk tales such as Cinderella, Snow White and Sleeping Beauty were at the epicentre of the analysis, for researchers postulated that these stories promoted gendered views of masculinity and femininity. In the tales, women often identified with docility whereas emphasis was also placed on their beauty and dependency on men. A male hero/Prince would rescue them from their 'miserable' lives and through marriage would position them at the centre of the domestic sphere (Lieberman, 1972; Rowe, 1979; Stone, 1975). The feminist response to the traditional folktales was to provide alternative stories with female protagonists who portrayed as physically powerful, dynamic and independent (Phelps, 1978; Barchers, 1990). These stories were either the remnants of matriarchy, which have been handed down in the oral tradition, or they were produced by feminists. Already from the late 19th century Victorian writers such as Mary De Morgan and Evelyn Scharp 'conceived tales with strong heroines who rebel against convention ridden societies' (Zipes, 1986: 13). Since then, a range of feminist fairy tales has been produced (e.g. Nesbit, 1985; Baum, 2005; Storr, 2007). Most often 'the aesthetics of these tales are ideological, for the structural reformation depends upon a non-sexist...world view that calls for a dramatic change in social practice' (Zipes, 1986: 13). This was achieved by feminism through a reversed storyline 'which provoked readers to rethink conservative views of gender and power' (Zipes, 1986: 13).

One of the most significant studies for the purposes of my research was conducted by Davies (1989b) who analysed pre-school pupils' responses to a feminist fairy tale, '*The Paper Bag Princess*'. In the fairy tale, traditional gender dynamics are shifted and the '*Paper Bag Princess*' breaks away from the norms of the fragile and dependent Princess. In the reversed storyline '*Paper Bag Princess*' is portrayed as heroic and dynamic, a girl who fights with strength and sheer will power malevolent creatures in order to rescue her Prince. At the end of the story the Princess refuses to marry the Prince and seeks new epic adventures. Davies

(1989b) noted that in spite of the apparent intention of the author to construct a heroine, many of the students to whom she read the story were unable to perceive the Princess as a heroine. The strong identification of femininity with docility in pupils' perceptions precluded a feminist hearing of the tale. Davies' (1989b) findings showed that pre-school pupils had strong preconceived meanings about the categories of masculine-feminine and Prince-Princess. Pupils had expected the Princess to be less dynamic and more dependent on the Prince. The heroic female protagonist in the feminist tale challenged the gendered discourses that pupils widely accepted, and through which they gave meaning to the categories of male-female (Davies, 1989b).

In an analogous study, Wason-Ellam's (1997) scrutinised boys' and girls' responses to the feminist fairy tale of 'Tatterhood', a parody of the 'Little Red Riding Hood'. 'Tatterhood' is a modern heroine that combines raucousness and beauty and fights against evil witches to rescue Belinda, her demure and fragile sister. In spite of 'Tatterhood's' dynamic personality and heroic demeanour, pupils were unable to perceive her as a heroine. However, in students' perceptions 'Tatterhood's' heroism was associated with her beauty and her marriage to the Prince. 'Not surprisingly, beauty was defined as a vision of the ideal female' (Wason-Ellam, 1997: 433). Hence, it could be argued that although feminist stories provide an 'alternative to the sexist world' they are not always 'powerful enough to disrupt it' (Wason-Ellam, 1997: 436).

The explanation to Davies' (1989b) and Wason-Ellam's (1997) findings lies perhaps in participants' age and their lack of prior exposure to non-traditional gender discourses, for age plays a crucial role in children's ability to challenge/reproduce gender discourses (Flerx et al., 1976). More specifically, scholars have postulated that children are active readers and have the power to challenge normative gender representations, providing that the necessary

discourses through which they will be able to resist/repudiate the gendered texts are available to them. In parallel with this, according to Parsons (2004) upper elementary pupils (aged 8-14) have reached a sufficient level of maturity to challenge gendered discourses and particularly girls are more prepared than boys to participate 'in this disruption of discourse' (Parsons, 2004: 143).

Previous studies on children's responses to non-traditional gender narratives have found that pupils' gender plays a crucial role in their ability to challenge traditional gender discourses. In particular, Westland (1993) postulated that in her study boys were less prepared than girls to challenge gendered discourses 'because they had more to lose than gain from the changes' (Westland, 1993: 244). Westland (1993) analysed British pupils' (aged 9-11 year old) responses to the traditional fairy tale of Cinderella. Her findings yielded that girls were able to challenge the Cinderella storyline, as they were almost unanimous that they wouldn't like to be Princesses, whom they thought lived restricted lives. The majority of girls preferred fairy-tale scenarios that gave their heroines autonomy. In contrast to girls, boys identified with the Prince and in general accepted the traditional gender narratives. The boys '... had little incentive to alter the standard fairy-tale structure...' because 'independent Princesses might be a risk, even a threat, and get in the way of the hero continuing to do as he liked (Westland, 1993: 244).

Analogous were Rice's (2000) findings, who analysed American sixth-grade boys' and girls' responses to the Japanese folktale '*Three Strong Women*'. In the tale, Forever Mountain on his way to wrestle before the Emperor meets Maru-me, a girl with astonishing physical strength who together with her mother and grandmother (women of extraordinary strength as well) train him for three months. As a result of the training that he received by the 'Three Strong Women', Forever Mountain easily wins the wrestling competition. At the end,

Forever Mountain gets married to Maru-me and becomes a farmer (Rice, 2000). Rice (2000) observed that children who had the discursive history to challenge the gendered discourses did so. Boys and girls who participated in her study were not able to resist to gendered discourses to the same extent. Unlike boys who had taken up traditional gendered positions, 'a small shift from stereotypical positioning was signified by the girls, suggesting that the discourses available to the girls [had] enabled them to broaden their cultural definitions of gender' (Rice, 2000: 230).

Children's ability to reproduce non-gendered discursive practices has also been examined by Yeoman (1999). In her study, a post-structuralist methodology was deployed in analysing Canadian fourth-and fifth-grade pupils' perceptions of non-traditional gender roles as well as their ability to produce their own gender egalitarian stories. Her findings yielded that children's prior exposure to non-traditional gender narratives[14] influenced their ability to understand gender egalitarian texts. A strong linkage between lack of previous exposure to non-gendered discourses and resistance to non-traditional gender narratives has also been proposed by Trousdale (1995). The researcher explored girl's responses to gender discourses in three feminist stories ('Tatterhood', 'The Twelve Huntsmen' and 'The Three Strong Women') and a 'patriarchal' tale (Grimm's 'Briar Rose'). Her findings postulated that Cindy, the participant, gave meaning and understood the strong female characters of the stories based on patriarchal discourses. Although Cindy admired the strong female protagonists she did not identify with them (Trousdale, 1995). In spite of the fact that Cindy placed emphasis on the female heroines' demeanour, she also felt that she 'would rather be normal', for her future aspirations were gender normative. Moreover, Trousdale (1995) argued that in the retelling of the story Cindy tended to change the characters' roles into more gender normative. For example, in the retelling of 'Three strong women' she ended the story by

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[14]Children had been exposed to similar texts in popular culture and in their classroom (Yeoman, 1999).

saying, 'and they lived together. Yeah. And I bet he did the ploughing instead of Grandma' (Trousdale, 1995: 175). When the participant was asked to explain, she answered, '...cause he was the man, cause he was the man of the house. Cause the man of the house did the ploughing, like, and he was probably strong. So she did it' (Trousdale, 1995: 175). However, there was a strong indication that women would continue to do the ploughing after Maru-me married Forever Mountain, as they did before the marriage.

Unlike Cindy, Nikki, a young girl in Trousdale's &McMillan's (2003) study, was able to challenge the gendered discourses and she accepted the female heroine. More specifically, Trousdale &McMillan (2003) conducted a case study of a girl's responses to gender roles in three feminist fairy tales ('Tatterhood', 'The Twelve Huntsmen' and the 'Three Strong Women') and one 'patriarchal' tale (Grimm's 'Briar Rose'). Using a grounded theory methodology, Trousdale &McMillan (2003) interviewed the participant at two stages of her life, at the age of 8 and 12. Their findings yielded that at the age of 8 the participant 'was remarkably forthcoming and sophisticated about gender constraints, but at 12 had obviously noted 'where and when women speak and are silent' (Trousdale &McMillan, 2003: 24). The analysis of the girl's answers at two different stages raised questions about how girls negotiate cultural scripts in a patriarchal society (Trousdale &MacMillan, 2003). Nikki was also unable to accept the passive female protagonists, like Cinderella, and suggested that had she been Cinderella she would have acted differently, for she identified with active heroines such as Tatterhood (Trousdale &MacMillan, 2003).

In summary, gender research on children's responses to traditional and non-traditional gender discourses in fairy tales has showed that children are active producers of meanings and not passive recipients of pre-determined meanings in texts (Currie, 1999). In this context, texts are 'polysemous sites' (Lemish, 1998: 148). Children's age (Parsons, 2004), gender

(Westland, 1993) and their previous exposure to non-traditional discursive practices play a crucial role in the production of meanings.

3.4 Pupils and Gender Power in Classroom Interactions

In the previous sections I illustrated how feminist research in education proposes that it is not adequate to measure gender asymmetries in the instructional material of the curriculum. Rather there is a necessity to study gender dynamics in the classroom and the gender discourses that are reinforced by teachers' pedagogical practices, for they can have a crucial impact on pupils' sense making of gender (Skelton et al, 2009). Classroom interactions gained momentum in the early 1960s and placed emphasis on classroom practices in terms of pupils' conduct, management and organisational policies as well as teachers' perceptions of gender roles (Sharp &Green, 1975; King, 1978; Hartley, 1985). These early studies perceived pupils as passive in the process of their gender socialisation and paid no attention to 'individual psychic and emotional subjectivities' (Skelton, 1997b). A crucial finding of these early studies was the establishment of the 'two-thirds rule' (Flander, 1970). According to this rule in all classroom interactions a) for about two-thirds of the time someone is talking, b) about two-thirds of this talk is the teacher's and c) about of two-thirds of the teachers' talk consists of teaching or asking questions (Flander, 1970). The central positioning of teachers in classroom interactions and their crucial role in shaping and directing pupils' gender demeanour and learning has been postulated by a plethora of studies (see Brophy& Good, 1969, 1970; Brophy, 1981; Berliner, 1984; Brophy, 1985; Gardner et al, 1989).

Teachers' expectations for boys and girls received a tremendous amount of research interest, as 'learning is enhanced when students understand what is expected of them, get recognition for their work, learn about their errors and receive guidance in improving their performance' (Goodlad, 1984: 111). A strong nexus was established between the attention that students

received in the classroom and teachers' expectations. In fact, teachers' higher expectations for boys than girls explained why boys received more attention in the classroom. Spaulding (1963) promulgated that in the 24 elementary classrooms that he observed teachers called on boys more often than girls and gave boys more feedback (both positive and negative) than their female classmates. Analogous were the findings of numerous studies conducted at all levels of schooling (see Brophy & Good, 1974; Etaugh& Hughes, 1975; Leinhardt et al., 1979; Mahoney, 1983; Lockheed & Harris, 1984; Sadker &Sadker, 1985; Jones, 1987; Jones, 1989). Boys monopolised teachers' attention, as they got rewarded for a correct answer or criticised for improper behaviour/an incorrect answer more often than girls (Becker, 1981; Evertson et al., 1984). More recent studies have also confirmed empirically that teachers responded differently to pupils on the basis of their gender and they were 'aware of and attentive to the gender of pupils in managing and organizing classroom interactions' (Skelton et al, 2009: 187).

Teachers' gender has also a momentous impact on the observed gender asymmetries in classroom practices. In particular, crucial discrepancies have been observed in male and female teachers' perceptions and evaluations of students' detrimental demeanour (McIntyre, 1988; Ritter, 1989; Borg &Falzon, 1993). This is a critical aspect of classroom interactions, for the Hellenic education system is characterised by a high percentage of male teachers, especially in primary education[15].

The quantitative aspects of gender heterogeneity in primary classrooms postulated that teachers' wait time after directing a question and before getting a response was significantly related to pupils' gender. This was because teachers had different expectations for boys and girls, for the observed asymmetries were higher in subjects that were traditionally considered

[15]In fact, Hellas has the lowest percentage of female teachers in primary education (49.3%) in comparison with all European Countries and USA (Schumer, 1992).

more appropriate for boys, such as mathematics. According to Gore &Roumagoux (1983: 273) 'most teachers expected boys to outperform girls in mathematics. These male-centred discourses in the classroom can have catastrophic results for girls learning. Walkerdine (1990) has postulated that girls are discouraged from entering for examinations in mathematics. This aspect of schooling is associated with hegemonic masculinity for boys learn to devalue or reject literacy because reading is associated with the female domain. The different expectations for girls and boys might result in differing wait-time for boys versus girls'. Gore &Roumagoux's (1983) outcomes derived from observations in five fourth-grade classes, consisted of 79 boys and 76 girls, taught by five female teachers of mathematics. In their study observations carried out twice in each class for approximately 20 minutes. Their overall finding suggested that teachers gave significantly more wait time (approximately 3 seconds) to boys than to girls. The researchers proclaimed that: 'this difference could possibly have a negative effect on girls' achievement in mathematics' (Gore &Roumagoux, 1983: 273). Hence, it could be argued that teachers' expectations and classroom practices may jeopardise girls' self-esteem and future career expectations. Indeed, the outcomes of a plethora of studies have found that boys appear to have higher expectations and self-confidence than girls in the classroom (Simon &Feather 1973; Dweck et al., 1980; Maccoby &Jacklin, 1974; Parsons &Ruble, 1977; Goetz, 1981). In addition, such practices reinforce discourses that encourage a traditional categorisation of school subjects as masculine and feminine. It has also been found that girls' lack of confidence (which elucidates their tendency to give up tasks more easily than boys) was influenced by teachers' expectations for them (Shephard& Hess, 1975; Dweck &Elliot, 1983; Felson, 1984; Stewart & Corbin, 1988).

In synopsis, gender asymmetries in classroom interactions at all levels of schooling related to the instructional time that boys and girls received as well as to praise and criticism (see Brophy &Good, 1970; Felsenthal, 1970; Berk &Lewis, 1977; Sadker &Sadker, 1984; Morse

&Handley, 1985; Baker, 1986; Jones, 1987, 1989). Teachers' classroom practices resulted in girls developing lower expectations and participating in the classroom with lower self-esteem (Maccoby &Jacklin, 1974; Weck et al., 1980; Goetz, 1981).

Over the last three decades, in spite of the increased gender awareness in education, no significant changes have been made and gender asymmetries in classroom interactions persist. Boys receive more attention and are encouraged by their teachers to participate in classroom activities at all levels of education (Howard &Henney, 1998; Crombie et al. 2003; Jones &Dindia, 2004). It can be argued that 'male teachers direct substantially less of their classroom interaction to girls than do female teachers. This was particularly true for feedback (praise and criticism), for 'male teachers virtually ignore their female pupils' (Kelly, 1988: 17).

Schooling appears to be gendered and sexualised (Walkerdine, 1990), for teachers treat boys and girls in the classroom as separate and different groups (Paechter, 2000, Skelton et al, 2009). Teachers often refer to gendered groups when they want to express approval or disapproval towards certain behaviours i.e. 'all girls are sitting nicely' or 'the boys are very noisy' (Paechter, 2000). This gender segregation is also reinforced by encouraging single sex group activities in the classroom. A very common 'punishment' for those boys who misbehave in the classroom is to work with girls, a practice that actually indicates that teachers treat boys and girls in the classroom as two extremely heterogeneous groups (Paechter, 2000). Furthermore, teachers expect students to behave in gender normative ways; always in accordance to traditional societal norms of masculinity and femininity (Paechter, 2000). Researchers have postulated that often in the classroom girls are 'praised for exhibiting conventionally feminine characteristics such as being tidy and neat' whereas boys are praised 'for showing masculine 'academic' attributes' (Skelton et al, 2009: 198).

Additionally, according to the traditional views of boyhood and girlhood, boys are perceived by their teachers as childish and self-centred whereas girls as reasonable, rational and altruistic (Paechter, 2000). It is evident that the dominant discursive practices position children not only as boys or girls but also position power as male power whereas female power is legitimated only in the domestic sphere (Davies, 1989b). Through the classroom practices 'femininity is constructed as sensible, selfless, mature and facilitating; and masculinity is constructed as silly, selfish, immature and demanding' (Francis, 1997: 181). These gender asymmetries in classroom behaviour have been empirically confirmed by numerous studies (see Belotti, 1975; Spender, 1982, Riddell, 1989; Walkerdine, 1990; Jordan, 1995). This is symptomatic of the influence of classroom discourses in reinforcing traditional gender dichotomies around which boys and girls are encouraged to make sense of being boy and being girl, perpetuating fixed gendered identities (Gilbert &Taylor, 1991). It can be argued that teachers through their classroom practices regulate children's performance of gender and encourage certain forms of masculinity to gain ascendancy over other masculinities and femininities and become hegemonic.

However, gender is only one of the parameters that affect teachers-students' interactions in the classroom. According to Gay (2000) race, ethnicity and social status influenced classroom participation and teachers-students interactions. Researchers have proclaimed that in the American elementary schools pupils from minority groups received less attention than majority students (Rubovits & Maehr, 1973; Brophy & Good, 1974; Sadker &Sadker, 1984). In particular, non-white students, especially those who came from low socio-economic backgrounds, received 'less total instructional attention; ...called on less frequently; ...encouraged to develop intellectual thinking less often; ...criticised more and praised less; received fewer direct responses to their questions and comments; and were reprimanded more often and disciplined more severely' (Gay, 2000: 63). This can be explained by the fact that

teachers have lower expectations of minority students compared with the majority culture pupils. Numerous studies in elementary education have showed that teachers' lower expectations originated from their beliefs that ethnic minority students did not have the ability to do as well as majority culture students (Woodworth &Salzer, 1971; Forehand et al. 1976; Weinberg, 1977; Williams &Muehl, 1978). Additionally, teachers treated differently students perceived as high achievers. They interacted more with them, demanded more, gave them more attention and praised them more often (Good, 1981; Emihouvich, 1983). Discrepancies have also been noticed in the wait-time students were given by their teachers in the classrooms. Symptomatic of this is that minority students were given less wait-time than majority students (Good, 1981).

3.5 Teachers and Gender Bias in the Hellenic Classroom

Unlike other countries (i.e. USA and UK) feminist research on gender dynamics in the Hellenic primary classrooms was developed with a delay. This is mainly because feminist research had placed overemphasis on gender representations in the instructional materials. The initial attempts to analyse gender heterogeneity in primary classrooms explored teachers' roles in reinforcing gender normative perceptions. Scholars have postulated that teachers through their classroom practices perpetuated the gender division of labour and power (Freiderikou &Folerou, 1991). The findings also suggested that teachers were unaware of the influence of their classroom practices on children's gender identity construction. Although educators proclaimed that they were sensitive about gender equality issues in education (Sidiropoulou-Dimakakou, 1990; Deligianni-Kouimtzi &Ziogou, 1998; Deligianni et. al., 2000) they were unable to point out the gender stereotyped representations of masculinity and femininity in the instructional materials (Kantartzi, 1996). This has significant implications, for it can be presumed that through their classroom practices teachers reinforce the normative

gender discourses promoted through the curriculum materials. Additionally, their views of gender roles were anachronistic, for they supported the male domination in political life (Deligianni-Kouimtzi &Ziogou, 1998) and domestic sphere (men as breadwinners and head of the family). In contrast to masculinity, teachers identified femininity with motherhood and they supported women's exclusion from the labour market (Savvidou, 1996; Kantartzi, 1996; Deligianni-Kouimtzi &Ziogou, 1998).

Educators' normative perceptions of gender roles can have major implications for pupils' learning. This is because teachers' perceptions metamorphose into educational practices and result in students being treated unequally. A plethora of studies have suggested that teachers treat boys and girls as two extremely diverse groups. Symptomatic of this is that teachers support gender normative views of boys' and girls' personality characteristics. More specifically, girls characterised by their teachers as attentive, obedient, sensitive, emotionally mature and cunning (Sidiropoulou-Dimakakou, 1990; Savvidou, 1996; Kantartzi, 1996; Natsiopoulou &Giannoula, 1996, Frosi, 2003). In contrast to girls, boys' were intelligent, emotional immature, aggressive and innocent (Frosi, 2003). Teachers' responses unravelled the strong gender binaries that regulated their views of masculinity and femininity. These gender binaries played a crucial role in understanding and explaining gender asymmetries in primary classrooms, for teachers often elucidated pupils' behaviour and academic performance within these binaries. Typical of this were teachers' accounts of boys' and girls' performance at school. Although teachers recognised that girls outperformed boys at school, they were unable to deconstruct the stereotypes about boys being cleverer than girls and girls being more hard-working than boys (Frosi, 2003). Based on this binary understanding of gender, they perceived girls' academic success as the result of the greater effort that they made compared with boys. Analogous were male students' accounts of girls' success at school, for they did not support the idea of the 'clever female'. Students were almost

unanimous that girls outperformed boys because, although, male students were cleverer than girls, they were lazier and they spent less time studying (Frosi &Deligianni-Kouimtzi, 2002).

Academics have argued that retraining educators is crucial in order to eradicate their gender normative perceptions. Indeed, teachers who had received training in gender equality issues held less gender normative views of gender (Kantartzi, 1996, Sidiropoulou-Dimakakou, 1990). Sidiropoulou-Dimakakou (1990) proclaimed that teachers who had received training in gender equality issues believed that girls were as competitive as boys and interested in a career as well as in motherhood. Nevertheless, the researcher noted that these views could not be considered as entirely positive, considering that some inconsistencies were recorded in their answers.

The strong gender binaries that regulated teachers' views of masculinity and femininity influenced their expectations for boys and girls in mathematics and linguistic classrooms (Chionidou-Moskofoglou, 1996). Although teachers did not support the idea that learning differences existed among boys and girls in natural sciences subjects, they held the opinion that boys were better than girls (Stavridou et. al., 1999). Additionally, male teachers of natural sciences considered themselves better than their female colleagues. Teachers' higher expectations for boys than girls in natural science classes can elucidate the observed unequal treatment of male and female students in science and mathematics classrooms (Solomonidou, 1998). Nevertheless, girls' lower achievement in these subjects, as well as their low self-esteem in the natural sciences classes, were principally caused by teachers' perceptions of gender roles and their classroom practices (Tressou-Mylona, 1997). In contrast to boys' 'natural' tendency towards science subjects, linguistic subjects were classified by teachers as more appropriate for girls. This had led to the categorisation of school subjects as masculine

and feminine. This division was reinforced by the education system and had been taken on by all pupils (Frosi &Deligianni- Kouimtzi, 2002).

The gender categorisation of school subjects has an influential impact on students' future professional aspirations, for it encourages the existing gender division of occupations (Sidiropoulou–Dimakakou, 1995, 1997; Deligianni-Kouimtzi et. al, 2000). This corroborates with the findings of Deligianni-Kouimtzi et al. (2000), who conducted a large-scale study with 1100 students from across Hellas. The researchers postulated that students held traditional views of gender-appropriate occupations. Symptomatic of this was that care and secretarial occupations were identified as feminine whereas technical oriented occupations were considered as more appropriate for men. However, the findings suggested that although girls supported the gendered division of occupations, they were ready to enter into male-dominated professions such as marketing, economics, business consultants etc. This antithesis was typical of the coexistence of egalitarian and normative discourses of gender roles in the changing context of the Hellenic society (Vitsilaki-Soroniati, 1997, Deligianni-Kouimtzi &Sakka 1998), which caused confusion to young girls.

Lastly, it should be noted that teachers' views of gender discourses and their classroom practices are influenced by their gender. Several studies have suggested that male teachers tend to hold more anachronistic views of gender compared with their female colleagues (Deligianni-Kouimtzi &Ziogou, 1998). In particular, Natsiopoulou &Giannoula (1996) postulated that female teachers reproduced less gendered discourses through their classroom practices compared with their male colleagues.

The review of the Hellenic feminist research on classroom practices has showed the teachers' practices reinforced traditional gender discourses. The implications of teachers' classroom practices for children's learning are extremely significant. A general retraining of educators is

required in order to promote more gender egalitarian discourses through classroom practices, as teachers' expectations for boys and girls are strictly bounded to pupils' gender and they tend to interact differently with boys and girls. The result of the unequal treatment that boys and girls receive in the classroom is that they develop different career expectations and phenomena like male-dominated and female-dominated university departments become a social reality, for boys and girls are encouraged to follow different paths in the adult society. In consequence, this causes a gender division in the labour market (such as male profession-high status- and female profession- low status).

Nevertheless, it is not only in the structured context of the classroom and pedagogical exchanges where gender inequality is found but also on school playgrounds (Paechter &Clark, 2007). School playgrounds constitute primary sites where one can observe the performance and construction of gender identities. It is for this reason that in the next section I critically discuss and address the findings of the previous studies on students' play activities, because children's behaviour on the school playgrounds illustrates crucial gender divides in children's play. This framing set the ground for my own observations in Hellas. The review of the erstwhile literature on children's play practices on school playgrounds will situate my research in the international literature and will enable me to discuss the outcomes of the preceding studies and outline the major gaps.

3.6 Children at Play: Performing Masculinity and Femininity on School Playgrounds

The significance of play in childhood has been emphasised since antiquity and the time of the classic Hellenes philosophers who considered play activities as crucial means of effective learning for children (Mayall, 2002; Fromberg &Bergen, 2006). Throughout the 20th century the role of children's play practices in their cognitive, emotional, social and socio-linguistic development as well as social competence and peer group affiliation was emphasised by

developmental psychologists (Erikson, 1963; Vygotsky, 1978; Giffin, 1984; Roskos &Christie, 2000). Perhaps, the most influential theorisation of play is attributed to Piaget (1962) who placed emphasis on four developmental stages of play, which are influenced by different levels of thinking and increased levels of knowledge. The crucial role of play in children's development has also been highlighted by Vygotsky (1978). Vygotsky's (1978: 123) socio-cultural theory postulated that play was 'the imaginary, illusory realisation of unrealisable desires' and that through play children learnt about and became engaged in the world. More specifically, children through their play activities take up roles and express their subliminal desires/needs. In parallel with this, Vygotsky (1978) promulgated the crucial role of play in children's gender identity configuration for through their play practices children learn their social roles. For instance, playing with dolls cultivates girls' interest in nurturing roles (mother, carer etc).

Through the prism of post-structuralism, children's play practices gained momentum in feminist research on gender and play activities. Children's play activities influence children's gender identity construction and maintenance of power relations between them (Thorne, 1993). Although various topographies of children's play have been explored, in this section I place emphasis on gender asymmetries on school playgrounds. Within the post-structuralist paradigm, school playgrounds constitute primary sites where the 'doing' of gender can be observed. Children through their participation in play activities constitute and reconstitute their gender identities (Paechter &Clark, 2007; Karsten, 2003). The gender discourses operating on school playgrounds regulate children's performance of gender as, empirical studies have contended that play practices impose strict boundaries on both boys' and girls' performance of masculinity and femininity (Best, 1983, Thorne, 1993, Kelly, 1994, Connolly, 1998, Skelton 2001). In this respect, school playgrounds are also dangerous arenas for within the limited playground area power gender relations are established and 'games' of gender

domination and subordination can take place (MacNaughton, 1999). In detail, overt male dominance has been observed and the exclusion of boys and girls from certain play activities can occur (Swain, 2000b, Skelton, 2000; Paechter &Clark, 2007). The analysis of gender dynamics on school playgrounds has also illuminated the role of playground practices in the discursive construction of hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity.

Symptomatic of the crucial influence of play practices on children's performance of gender are the rigorous gender dichotomies that can be observed on school playgrounds with reference to boys' and girls' play activities (Blatchford et al., 2003; Pellegrini et al., 2004). More specifically, on school playgrounds '….boys are supposed to do boy things and girls...they do all those girly things. That it's how it is! Boys play football (and) girls are cheerleaders…!' (Blaise, 2005b: 97). The 'boy things' typically involve rough and tumble play and ball games, mainly football, whereas the 'girly things' include more sedentary activities, such as skipping and verbal play. The physicality that characterises boys play practices is strongly associated with hegemonic masculinity. Several studies have also found that hegemonic masculinity in primary education is often associated with physical strength (Connell, 1995, 2000; Skelton, 1997a; Swain, 2000b, 2003). Swain (2003: 302) has argued that 'for much of the time the boys defined their masculinity through action, and the most esteemed and prevalent resource that the boys drew on...was physicality/athleticism, which was inextricably linked to the body in the form of strength, power, skill, fitness and speed'. This way one dominant form of masculinity gains ascendancy over other masculinities, thus creating hierarchical relations among boys. As a result, boys who lack physical strength are identified as weak or effeminate and marginalised. The role of football in the construction of hegemonic masculinity should also be emphasised, for it is often associated with successful masculinity on school playgrounds (Connell, 1995; Skelton, 1997a; Epstein, 1998; Swain, 2000b, 2003; Paechter &Clark, 2007).

On the other hand, according to emphasised femininity discourses girls engage in diametrically antithetical activities to boys, such as skipping and verbal play. The strong antitheses between boys and girls play practices serve the purpose of safeguarding boys' hegemonic masculinity (Renold, 1997; Skelton, 1997a; Connolly, 1998; Epstein, 1998; Francis, 1998a; Gilbert &Gilbert, 1998; Pattman, 1999; Swain 2000b). The observed gender heterogeneity in pupils' play practices is reinforced by normative gender discourses, which encourage boys to believe that girls are less capable than them of playing traditionally masculine games, such as football. These normative discourses naturalise girls' exclusion from 'masculine' activities (Renold, 2005) and create gender zones on school playgrounds. Thorne (1993) has postulated that children tend to be divided by gender, mostly on school playgrounds than in their neighborhood. This is because in their neighborhoods children do not have as many choices as in the crowded school settings. Also, on school playgrounds boys would often get teased by other children if they participated in gender-heterogeneous groups (Thorne, 1993).

Gender zones have a crucial impact on children's spatial distribution on school playgrounds, for boys tend to occupy the larger area of the playground whereas girls occupy a smaller area, usually the surrounding space of boys' area (see Thorne, 1993; Skelton, 1997a; Swain, 2000b; Thomson, 2005; MacNaughton, 2006; Clark &Paechter, 2007, Paechter &Clark, 2007). A crucial characteristic of these gender dichotomies on school playgrounds is that girls develop more intimate friendships with their peers than boys (Erwin, 1993). Blatchford's (2003: 500) findings yielded that 'for boys, the activity was the primary focus that brought them together, whereas girls seemed more likely to come together to socialise, independent of a game that might support their interaction'. For instance, boys formed large groups when they were allowed to play football, mainly because the mutual interest for football brought them together. However, when they were not allowed to play football they split into smaller

groups and engaged in a variety of activities. Unlike boys, girls participated in smaller groups and engaged in larger variety of activities than boys during recess (Blatchford et al., 2003) and more easily changed their activities and tended to avoid 'playgrounds with very few play objects or playgrounds in bad condition' (Karsten, 2003: 465). It could be argued that on school playgrounds 'boys engage in more social, and girls in more parallel and solitary, behaviour' (Blatchford et al., 2003: 498).

These crucial gender asymmetries in boys' and girls' play practices elucidate the high level of gender segregation of boys and girls on school playgrounds. Boys and girls most of the times engage in play activities with same-sex peers. In particular, Thorne (1993) examined the way boys and girls played and interacted with each other in the schoolyards[16]. The findings of her research showed that boys and girls preferred to play in gender-homogeneous groups. This was influenced by age, race, social class and ethnicity. Thorne's (1993) work on students' play activities on school playgrounds has had an influential impact on shaping my research questions in relation to students' play activities in the Hellenic primary schools, as discussed in the next chapter.

Children's tendency for same-gender playmates has also been observed by numerous studies. More specifically, Blatchford et al., (2003) scrutinised gender asymmetries in British school playgrounds and postulated that over 80% of the pupils engaged in gender-homogeneous groups during recess. According to the researcher, boys' participation in gender homogenous groups served the purpose of securing their masculine identity. Boys participated in girls' activities only when they were certain that their masculine identity was not threatened. Thus, boys who participated in girls' activities often secured their masculinity by invading girls' space and being sarcastic to girls. In addition, often they metamorphosed the game into more

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[16] Her study was carried out in 1976-1977 for a period of eight months in a public school on the coast of California. In the majority students who participated in her research were of white origin (75%), Chicano or Latino (12-14%), African American (5%) and a few Asian American and Native Americans.

masculine (i.e. more competitive or rough) or even hid their participation from the other boys. Boys' attitude towards girls during play time led girls to avoid playing with boys in the kindergarten because they often got teased and harassed by them (MacNaughton, 2006).

It can be argued that gender has a crucial influence on children's friendships and often leads to the formation of opposite and antagonistic groups (Thorne, 1993). Due to the fragile nature of hegemonic masculinity, boys on school playgrounds are in constant fight for maintaining their masculine identity. In contrast, femininity is less despotic, as girls negotiate their gender identity more freely. Symptomatic of this is that according to the ideals of hegemonic masculinity is more acceptable to be called a 'tomboy' rather than a 'sissy' (Aydt &Corsaro 2003) or a 'girl'. For example, boys avoid playing with the traditionally 'girly toys' and it is very offensive for them to be called 'girls' (Jordan, 1995), for 'being called a girl is considered by boys to be one of the most shameful, polluting and degrading insults of all' (Blaise, 2005b: 86). As a result, 'little boys adopt a definition of masculinity as avoiding whatever is done by girls' (Jordan, 1995: 69).

School system's role in perpetuating a traditional division of boys' and girls' play practices is critical. School curriculum, especially physical education reinforces gender heterogeneity in students' play activities. Paechter's (2000) study in the British secondary schools showed that boys were encouraged to engage in team activities/sports, such as football, while girls' physical education had become more individualised and girls tended to engage in activities, such as dancing or gymnastics. This resulted in girls being excluded from activities that were traditionally associated with masculinity (Paechter, 2000). This is crucial for peer interactions for pupils are encouraged to establish same-gender friendships, which shaped their in-group and out-group gender dynamics (Paechter, 1998). Paechter's (2000) research was very significant for my study, for her findings highlighted the education system's role in

reinforcing patriarchal values of gender-appropriate play activities for boys and girls. Children's play activities and the gender discourses that operate on school playgrounds are influential for their gender identity construction. Through their play activities children attempt to constitute and reconstitute their masculine identity (Paechter, 1998). Specifically, those students who will identify themselves with masculinity will become more dominant and dynamic, whereas those who will identify with femininity will position themselves as weak and subordinate. Empirical studies have postulated that from an early age children try to identify themselves with the correct gender. On starting school boys and girls try to ascertain their gender identity through play and sports (Davies, 1989b; Ashley, 2003). In detail, sports provide males with 'the quintessential manifestation of the masculine ethos' (Gilbert &Gilbert, 1998: 60). Athletic adroitness is a prerequisite of successful masculinity and enables boys to establish and maintain their position among peers in both secondary and primary schools (see, Connell, 1996; Skelton, 1997a, 2000, 2001; Gilbert &Gilbert, 1998; O'Donovan, 2003).

The role of adults (parents and teachers) in reinforcing students' gender normative play activities should also be highlighted. A plethora of studies have suggested that part of the process of maintaining hegemonic masculinity is positively reinforced by the intervention of adults (teachers/parents) who encouraged boys to engage in rough play activities, whereas they dissuade girls from participating in analogous activities (Reay, 2001, Chick et al., 2002). In addition, primary school teachers also seem to give girls less access to playgrounds and toys than boys (Evans, 1998). According to MacNaughton (2000), teachers should always encourage children to talk about issues of 'fairness' and 'unfairness' in their play, for it can encourage pupils to challenge the dominant gender discourses that regulate their play practices. In parallel with this, teachers should challenge notions about children's innocence

and incapacity of understanding gendered discourses and 'notice and appreciate the hard work of resistance that some children do in the classroom' (Blaise, 2005b: 105).

Post structuralist feminists encourage teachers to move beyond the male-female dualism. They have argued that children should feel that, multiple ways of expressing their gendered identities are acceptable in the classroom (Davies, 1989a). Finally, Blaise (2005b: 105) claimed that teachers should 'create opportunities in the curriculum to raise critical and important questions about gender for children themselves to negotiate and struggle with'.

In conclusion, the influence of children's play activities on their gender identity is undeniable. A plethora of studies have demonstrated that from the early primary school years children's play activities include many gender-specific characteristics. Researchers have postulated that adults (teachers and parents) should intervene in children's play in order to eradicate the influence of the traditional gender discourses on children's play activities (Evans, 1998, Skelton &Hall, 2001). Influential can be teachers' role in eliminating normative play activities. Teachers should reward children for engaging in non-gender-normative activities, 'for example boys should be encouraged to develop nurturing behaviours, while girls should be equally accepted and praised for engaging in traditionally masculine behaviours or activities' (Grossman, 1994; cited in Evans, 1998: 84). If girls are given appealing tasks they can be interested in toys such as building blocks, which are traditionally considered as more appropriate for boys (MacNaughton, 1997). Not only can adults play an influential role in breaking down gendered play, but also textbooks through more gender egalitarian portrayals could encourage children to engage in less gender normative play activities (Hyder &Kenway, 1995).

Synopsis

This chapter reviewed the literature on gender representations in primary school textbooks and children's responses to traditional and non-traditional gender discourses. The research on gender representations in the instructional materials illustrated that over the last four decades little has changed in the discursive representations of masculinity and femininity and that textbooks continue to reinforce anachronistic views of gender roles in Hellas and internationally. Additionally, the review of the literature on children's responses to non-traditional gender discourses showed how pupil made sense of gender discourses and gave meaning to being male and being female. Prior exposure to non-traditional gender discourses enabled children to challenge gender normative storylines and accepted gender egalitarian discourses. This chapter also reviewed the research literature that has found gender bias in behaviour of teachers and pupils in the classroom and on school playgrounds. The review of the Hellenic and international literature on classroom interactions highlighted the role of classroom practices in reinforcing gender normative discourses. Teachers through their classroom practices place boys at the epicentre of classroom interactions and marginalise girls' schooling experiences. Additionally, teachers perpetuate a gender division of school subjects, which has crucial implications for boys' and girls' future aspirations. Teachers' classroom practices reinforce traditional gender dichotomies, which produce normative gender discourses and regulate pupils' performance of gender. In addition, educators encourage children to take up hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity discourses for making sense of their own gender and constructing their gender identities. Lastly, school playgrounds also constitute arenas for the performance/doing of gender. Particular, the review of the literature illustrated how the gender discourses operating on school playgrounds regulated boys' and girls' play practices. Through their play practices, particularly football, a specific form of masculinity gained ascendancy over other forms of masculinities and

femininities and marginalised non-footballing/non-athletic boys and girls. The literature on gender discourses in classroom and school playgrounds highlighted education system's role, especially in the early years of schooling, in reinforcing normative gender discourses and encouraging children to take on certain discourses of masculinity and femininity. The findings of the previous studies offered valuable insights into how the education system through its practices reinforces traditional gender discourses and encourages students to perform gender in normative ways.

Chapter 4

Methods and Methodology

Introduction

The previous two chapters have laid out the theoretical and research background for the analysis. More specifically, chapter 2 critically discussed the main theoretical issues of gender and gender identity construction and indicated the sources of particular conceptualisations deployed in the study, which informed my approach to methodology. Chapters 3 offered a critical discussion of the literature on gender in education and served the purpose of situating my work in the context of gender in education. This chapter provides greater detail on the research itself and the methodological and epistemological challenges that I faced in designing and conducting my research under the sway of post-structuralism and Connell's (1989) theory of masculinities.

Drawing on Butler's theory of performative and Connell's theory of masculinities I explored the role of the education system, curriculum and pedagogical dynamics in producing and perpetuating hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity discourses. Emphasis was also placed on how children negotiate normative gender discourses in children's narratives and how they deploy these gender discourses in their quotidian performances of gender on school playgrounds. Based on Butler's (1990) theory of performativity a key hypothesis of this study is that primary schools are sites where pupils 'do' gender. Children's performance of gender is influenced by the educational practices. Therefore, any attempts to scrutinise the nature of gender should focus on participants' practices and the spectrum of gender discourses operating at the school level. In parallel with this, one must examine the influence of educators and educational practices, including instructional materials, in order to comprehend the multi-level processes through which the role of the school system in reinforcing traditional gender discourses will be analysed.

A key problem for any researcher who conducts a qualitative analysis on how participants perform gender is to meet certain credibility requirements and be reflexive about how his/her own views are shaping the production, analysis and discussion of data (McMillan &Schumacher, 2001). In the following pages, I demonstrate how the research design, epistemology, research methods and data analysis, enabled me to produce a robust and credible analysis.

This chapter begins with a synoptic discussion of my role in the research and my positioning in relation to participants. Next, I present the main research questions that guided this study. Data collection and data analysis methods are discussed in the following two sections. Lastly, a detailed account is provided on the ethical considerations as well as, a self-reflective account of my experience with exploring how children negotiate normative and non-normative gender discourses.

4.1 My Role in the Research

Social research and especially qualitative studies are extremely influenced by the researcher. Scholars and feminists have postulated that 'the politics of the researcher' have a crucial impact on the production of knowledge (Griffiths, 1998: 130-4). It is critical that the researcher is aware of his/her epistemological grounding in order to be able to unearth his/her influence on the data and research findings (Stanko &Lee, 2003). It is advisable for any social researcher to develop a dialectic research practice, which again implicates him/her as a subjective agent (Scott, 1996). In my study my own positioning, beliefs and values have been brought to this research project. Thus, reflecting on my positioning within the research process and in the ensuing analysis I suggest that my positioning was neither fully objective nor fully neutral. I was born and grew up in the same socio-cultural context with the stakeholders of my research, and I am a gendered subject, but I am also an adult researcher. Therefore, my personal political and social worries and my understanding that the education system ought to promote gender egalitarian views of the social cosmos have positioned me beyond the 'binary of insider/outsider polarity and familiarity and strangeness' (Atkinson &Hamersley, 1998: 110-1). Hence, I am aware that I, as a researcher, am positioned at the same time as an outsider and insider in my study. This double positioning allows me as an outsider to deploy a critical stance and at the same time, as an insider, I am in a position to comprehend the educational practices and the dynamics of gender in the Hellenic primary schooling. Although my own subjectivity may have come into play, my study was as 'objective' as possible for me to make it.

My undergraduate studies in sociology and law, as well as, my Master studies in Comparative Education and Human Rights have played a crucial role to my political proclivity about gender equality issues. This is what made me aware of gender inequalities in the Hellenic

education system, which can be found in the social, political, economical and structural power relations (Smith, 1990) of the Hellenic society. It is through this prism that gender inequalities are perceived in this study. During my doctoral studies I came to a greater understanding of Butler's (1990) theorisation of gender and Connell's (1987, 1995) theory of multiple masculinities. Based on these theoretical grounds I scrutinised the multifaceted gender dynamics operating within the Hellenic primary classrooms. Moreover, through an analysis of the discourses I tried to deconstruct pupils' gender subjectivities and I explored their sense making of gender discourses. The post-structuralist view of gender, which has been adopted in my research, places emphasis on the fluidity of gender as well as on individuals' power to challenge normative gender discourses. This approach to gender it is not in contrast with Connell's (1987, 1995) theory of hierarchical masculinities, which informed my study. My intention was to focus also on children's perceptions of gender discourses. It is for this reason that a qualitative methodology (observations, group interviews and textbook analysis) was employed in order to explore the education system's role in reinforcing traditional gender discourses and how children reproduce or challenge normative gender discourses. My own ontological and epistemological beliefs have informed the research design, methods and data analysis in this study. These issues are discussed in the following sections.

4.2 Research Design

A qualitative study design was deployed to scrutinise education system's role in perpetuating gender normative discourses and how children negotiate, reproduce or challenge these normative discourses. In my research the unit of analysis was the school, with a total of two primary schools. A qualitative research methodology (semi-structured group interviews, feminist CDA and observations) was deployed in order to explore the discursive

representations of masculinity and femininity in the anthology textbooks, teachers' perceptions of gender roles, students' views of gender discourses, gender dynamics in classrooms and school playgrounds, and lastly, children's responses to normative and non-normative gender discourses. The use of qualitative methods was dictated by the theoretical and conceptual framework of my research as well as the nature of my research questions. In particular, the use of qualitative methods enabled me to place emphasis on the stories of the individuals and explore the nuances such as positionality and local context. Hence, my study required a qualitative methodology, for unravelling the experiences of the individuals and understanding gender performativity.

My research was conducted in two primary schools in Athens, capital city of Hellas. The two schools (school A and school B)[17] were situated in two diverse areas of the city. School A is in the centre of Athens, (Pagrati area), whereas school B is located in the suburbs (Ano Liosia). This selection was made in order to explore the intersection of social class with gender, for an initial hypothesis that was made was that students at School B would be of lower socio-economic status than pupils at School A. However, the data collected showed very little or no asymmetries in terms of students' socio-economic background. Therefore, the social class factor was excluded from the analysis. A selection had been made, prior to entering into the fieldwork, to focus exclusively on the third and fourth grade primary classrooms of each school. According to Parsons (2004) upper elementary pupils (aged 8-14) have reached a sufficient level of maturity to challenge gendered discourses. Thus, focusing on pupils of this age group would serve the purposes of my research. In total, 5 classrooms were observed, two classrooms (one third-grade and one fourth-grade) at School A and three classrooms (two third-grade and one fourth-grade classes) at school B.

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[17]I was advised by the Ministry of Education not to use the names of the schools were my research took place in the interest of securing children's anonymity.

It is necessary to synoptically refer to the structure of the Hellenic primary education system, for this will enable readers less familiar with the Hellenic education system to acquire a better understanding of the schools where I conducted my fieldwork. In Hellas, a child's primary education spanning six years (grades 1-6). A normal school-day starts at 8.15 and finishes from 12.30 to 16.15, depending on the class and the school. The classes last between 30 and 80 minutes. The school year always starts in the second week of September and ends in the last week of June. The basic subjects taught in primary education include: Modern Greek Language (1 hour/day), Greek Literature (Anthologies) (2 hours/week), Mathematics (5 hours/week), Environmental Studies (2–4 hours/week), Physical Education (4 hours/week), Music (2 hours/week), Art (2 hours/week), Theatrical Studies (1 hour/week), Flexible Zone (3 hours/week) and English (2–4 hours/week). Additional subjects are also taught like Physics, Geography, History, Religious Education, Social and Political studies and second foreign language.

Unlike in the UK, the administration of primary education in Hellas is conducted hierarchically by (YPEPTH, 2000; Eurydice/CEDEFOP, 2002; Eurydice/Eurybase, 2003): 1) The Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs (YPEPTH), 2) The Regional Education Directorates (Law 2986/2002), 3) The Directorates of Education (Prefecture), 4) The Education Offices (District), and 5) The School Unit.

The Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs (YPEPTH) is responsible for national education policy. Its main responsibilities include: prescribing the national curriculum, creating the conditions for meeting educational needs, appointing staff, controlling funding, proposing legislation, implementing the laws and the related administrative decisions. Under the supervision of YPEPTH is the National Education Council (ESYP), an independent administrative authority, which offers advice on educational

policy matters, plans the education system, outlines the general policy and makes proposals on matters referred to it by the Minister for National Education and Religious Affairs. At regional level, Regional Education Directorates take important administrative decisions and monitor primary education in the region. At prefecture level administration is exercised by The Directorates of Primary Education, which are responsible for the management and supervision of all primary schools in the prefecture (Stamelos, 2002). In addition to the above, the Heads of the Education Directorates and Offices are the administrative and disciplinary superiors of all primary education teachers and Principals of the schools. Lastly, at school unit level, each primary school is run by the Principal, the Deputy Principal and the Teachers Association in the school. The principal that is appointed to school by the Head of the Directorate of Education is responsible for the smooth running of the school; coordination of all school activities; compliance with legal regulations; circulars and official orders; and implementation of the decisions of the Teachers Association. The Principal participates in the evaluation of teachers and cooperates with the School Advisors. The Teachers Association, chair of which is the Principal of the school, comprises of all teachers in a particular school and is the collective body for drawing up guidelines for improving the implementation of education policy and improving the running of the school (Eurydice/Eurybase, 2003; Eurydice/CEDEFOP, 2002).

In Hellas the curriculum had always had the form of a National Curriculum imposed on all teachers and schools across the country. The curriculum is prescribed by the Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs and the same textbooks are used in all regions across the country. On the other hand, the classroom pedagogy is more focused on answers, which means that teachers and pupils are more concerned in finding the 'facts' or 'right' answers to a topic/problem. Within this classroom pedagogy teachers have to satisfy the curriculum expectations. Hence, it could be argued that a more individualistic, lectured-styled

approach governs the classroom pedagogy in the Hellenic primary schooling, as it was noted in the schools that I visited for the purposes of my research.

According to the official curriculum the purpose of primary education is multifaceted and aims to contribute to the overall, harmonious and balanced development of students' intellectual potential, regardless of their gender and ethnicity so that they can ultimately evolve into integrated personalities and live creatively. More specifically, the elementary school should place emphasis on developing pupils' creativity, building the necessary mechanisms that support the assimilation of knowledge, developing students' physical skills, and improving their psychological and intellectual health. Furthermore, the elementary education must help students to learn the basic concepts and gradually develop their critical thinking, and their ability to speak and write. Educators are also responsible for making students familiar with the ethical, religious, national, humanitarian and other values and cultivate students' aesthetic criterion so that they become able to appreciate works of art and express their own creativity through their own artistic creations (Law 1566).

The two schools (school A and school B) were situated in two diverse areas of Athens. School A is in the centre of Athens, (Pagrati area), whereas school B is located in the suburbs (Ano Liosia). School A, a two storey building, was situated in a busy inner-city area amongst high-density housing area. The school consisted of 6 classes with a total of 141 students and 9 teachers. School B was larger for it was consisted of 8 classes with a total of 189 pupils and 11 teachers. It was situated in the suburbs of Athens in a low density housing area. Both Schools had a playground with a basketball court that pupils used to play football (see appendix VIII).

In tailoring my methodology I need to refer to the research questions that this study attempts to answer:

1. Does the Hellenic education system challenge or reinforce normative gender discourses through curriculum materials and classroom practices?

2. How do children negotiate, reproduce or challenge normative and non-normative gender discourses identified in school textbooks, and how do they deploy these discourses in their daily performances of gender on school playgrounds?

Therefore, my study explored six different aspects of the educational praxis vis-à-vis gender. The first related to gender representations in the anthology textbooks. More specifically, I studied the latest two volumes of the anthology textbooks entitled: *Anthologies*. The first volume is for the third-grade students (aged 8-9 years old) and the second volume is for the fourth-grade students (aged 9-10 years old). The second part of my analysis aimed to develop an understanding of children's social worlds and their quotidian schooling experiences. Alongside semi-structured interviews with the pupils and the teachers one of the main methods deployed to understand children's social worlds was through observations. The interviews with the teachers were based on a semi-structured interview format and scrutinised teachers' views of gender roles and their classroom practices (see Appendix IX). The group interviews with the students provided an insight into children's perceptions of gender asymmetries, their views of gender and their play activities (see Appendix X). In addition, the observations in classrooms (see Appendix XI) and school playgrounds (see Appendix XII) enabled me to explore the gender dynamics in students-teachers interactions and playground activities. Lastly, I analysed pupils' responses to the feminist fairy tale of Snow White (Zipes, 1986) (see Appendix XIII, XIV) in order to explore how students relate to and understand non-normative gender discourses.

4.3 Sample and Sampling Strategy

As it was not possible to study the entire school population a decision was made to focus only the third- and fourth-grade primary school students, for upper elementary children have reached a developmental stage that enables them to challenge gendered discourses (Parsons, 2004). This was a crucial requirement in my study. Additionally, the decision for selecting the third-and fourth-grade classrooms based on the fact that the anthology textbooks for these levels had recently been revised (2007). Hence, the analysis of the anthology textbooks showed to what extent gender equality issues had been taken into consideration by education policy makers.

At the two schools where I conducted my qualitative research third and fourth grades consisted in total of five classrooms. In my research, participants were 5 teachers and 120 students. More specifically, from school A, two female teachers (one from grade three and one from grade four) and 41 students (17 boys and 24 girls) participated in my study. Slightly larger was the sample from school B, for 3 teachers and 79 students (33 boys and 46 girls) took part in my research. All pupils (in total 120) participated in classroom and playground observations, as well as in the discussion of the feminist fairy tale. However, in the group interviews I asked the teachers to select 8 boys and 8 girls from each class based on their willingness to take part in the research and their friendship groups. Organizing group interviews into friendship groups provides significant advantages, for it was presumed that student would feel more comfortable expressing their views freely. Thus, in the group interviews participated in total 80 students (40 boys and 40 girls).With the help of the teachers groups were organised based on pupils' friendships. This way all participants would feel comfortable to express their views freely, for often in a group interview participants may feel they cannot give their true opinions if they are overly concerned as to what other

members of the group might think. On the other hand, other participants may feel that they have to give opinions that they feel will be respected by the group. As well, the presence of a dominant participant in a group can have a negative impact on the opinions of others, for some participants may not feel confident to express their opinion or they may even submit to the opinions of others in order to avoid conflict/argument.

In summary, a total of 120 students (41 boys and 79 girls) and five teachers (4 females and 1 male) participated in my study. However, due to the large number of participants and the limited time for conducting my research, from the total of 120 primary pupils 80 students (40 boys and 40 girls) were interviewed in a series of 5 mixed-gender group interviews.

4.4 Data Generation Procedures

This study draws upon a qualitative methodology in collecting and analysing the data related to how children reproduce and negotiate gender discourses and the role of the educational system in reinforcing gender normative discourses. Qualitative research enables the researcher to comprehend the meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols and descriptions of things (Denzin &Lincoln, 1998; Berg, 2001). The nature of the research problem and the theoretical ground of the study, which was built on the post-structuralist paradigm and Connell's (1987, 2000) theory of masculinities, dictated the use of qualitative methods (Strauss &Corbin, 1998; Silverman, 2001). In parallel with this, qualitative methods were considered more appropriate for scrutinising the complexities of gender, children's sense making of gender discourses and the form that hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity had acquired in the specific schools. Lastly, the decision for employing a qualitative methodology was based on participants' age (majority children). However, the most recent adaptations of qualitative methods informed by post-structural theory (see Silverman, 1997; Alvesson, 2002; Youdell, 2005) have been deployed

for studying the education system's role in reinforcing traditional gender discourses and understanding how children negotiate, reproduce or even challenge gender normative discourses.

In conclusion, this qualitative study 'was informed by methodological debates concerning the importance of understanding practice in context; the role and status of the researcher and the researched; and the potential for reflexivity to strengthen the insights offered' qualitative research methodologies (Youdell, 2005: 254). This methodological approach was in a dialectic relationship with the theoretical framework outlined in chapter 2 and accounts of qualitative methods informed by post-structuralist paradigm (see Silverman, 1997, Alvesson, 2002, Youdell, 2005). Through this methodological and theoretical prism the qualitative data are not collected but are generated. Moreover, the data should be understood as 'discursive monuments whose content and generation can be interrogated in order to identify the discursive practices embedded in them and the potential constitutive force of these' (Youdell, 2005: 254).

In the following sections, I discuss the effectiveness of the methods deployed in this study. The discussion provides a synoptic overview of the aspects of the education practices in which this study focuses on.

4.4.1 The Anthology Textbooks

The analysis of gender discourses in the anthology textbooks was important, for the anthology textbooks are a compulsory part of the Hellenic school curriculum and they are taught to all primary schools across the country. The books are collections of literary works such as poems, short stories and novels. The textbooks for the third and fourth grades contain texts that cover contemporary literature. The anthologies cover a wide range of texts and

topics, including texts on nature and ecology, family life, tradition, religion, history, health and sports, society, technology and science fiction. The main objective of the books is the cultivation of literary sensibility and a love of reading with pleasant and playful ways, gradually familiarising students with the national and global literature and more processed forms and expanded features of the language. Considering that the teaching of the anthology textbooks is compulsory, it can be argued that they cultivate attitudes. The texts are read either by the teachers or each student reads a short part of the text and a discussion follows based on the questions that accompany the texts. For homework children have to answer some of the questions in writing.

For the analysis of the gendered discourses in the anthology textbooks feminist critical discourse analysis (FCDA) was used (Lazar, 2005). As will be discussed further below using FCDA I explored the potential impact of gendered discourses promoted through the instructional material on children's perceptions of gender roles. However, I did not presume the impact of the gendered discourses on children's perceptions, for within the post-structuralist paradigm pupils are critical readers and active producers of meanings. This means that a text acquires polysemous meanings depending on pupils' understanding of it. The role of the educators should also be highlighted, for their approach has the power to metamorphose the gendered language/representations of a text into gender egalitarian and vice versa. It is for all these reasons that a further discussion with the students and an analysis of teachers' practices were considered necessary in order to understand how primary school girls and boys negotiate the gendered discourses in the anthology textbooks.

4.4.2 Interviews

'Interviewing is a research method that is widely used in the field, for it is thought to be a great instrument because of its practicality and the analytical and theoretical strength that it

possesses' (Robson, 2002: 270). More specifically, Bryne, (cited in Silverman, 2006: 114), has postulated that 'qualitative interviewing is particularly useful as a research method for accessing individuals' attitudes and values – things that cannot be observed or accommodated in a formal questionnaire'. Interviews were a very useful tool in my research, as they enabled me to observe participants' subjectivities and sense making of gender discourses in relation to the conceptual framework of my research. Additionally, I studied subjects' behaviour and explored their 'underlying motives' by getting closer to their social world and understanding what was hiding behind their ways of acting (Robson, 2002: 272). In my study I deployed two types of interview techniques: a) semi-structured individual interviews and b) semi-structured group interviews.

4.4.2.1 Semi-Structured Individual Interviews

For interviewing the teachers in my research, I deployed a semi-structured interview format. This was considered to be most appropriate for the purposes of my study, for semi-structured interviews enable respondents to answer the researcher's questions as freely as possible (Miller &Crabtree, 1999). This kind of interview also follows a loose structure technique that provides the researcher with the freedom to bring in new matters to the dialogue that he/she could not have thought of before. At the same time, it allows the interviewees to respond as they wish (Hitchcock &Hughes, 1995) and it enables the researcher to understand better the interviewees' opinions and beliefs on the subject matter (May, 2002, Honey, 1987). Additionally, semi-structured interviews offer the opportunity to the researcher to prepare some material concerning some important issues to be discussed beforehand (Hitchcock &Hughes, 1995) whereas interview guides can be amended over time to focus attention on areas of particular interest or to exclude questions that were found unproductive for the goals of the research (Lofland &Lofland, 1984). In summary, in semi-structured interviews 'the

researcher may follow the standard questions with one or individually tailored questions to get clarification or probe a person's reasoning' (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005: 184). The questions asked in the interviews were piloted prior to implementation to confirm clarity, validity and effectiveness as well as to test whether the interview structure was easy to conduct.

The semi-structured interviews were conducted individually with five primary school teachers (1 male and 4 female) who taught third- and fourth-grade students. The interviews were conducted in June 2011 and lasted approximately 90 minutes each. Interviews with the teachers were informal, for by the time that the interviews were conducted I had spent a considerable amount of time with them. Before each interview session, I sought participants' permission to keep notes. Although recording the interview offers great advantages for 'it allows you to keep a full view of the interview without having to be distracted by detailed note keeping' (Terre Blanche and Kelly, 1999: 129), I was not allowed by the Pedagogical Institute to make use of a tape recorder.

The semi-structured interview format that was adopted by this study was very useful for scrutinising the complexities of gender and the education system's role in reinforcing normative gender discourses (Measor, 1985; McCracken, 1988). The interview format was adapted from the book '*Down with stereotypes*' by Andree Michel (1986). However, my interview questions were not limited to it and a number of questions were added. The interviews were conducted in a variety of settings, from empty classrooms to the school principal's office, depending on where it was convenient for them. The data gathered brought to the fore the role of teachers' classroom practices in reinforcing traditional gender discourses.

4.4.2.2. Semi-Structured Group Interviews.

In this approach a small number of participants are brought together to discuss topics on the

research agenda. Group interviews can be used either in conjunction with other methods, especially for checking validity and triangulation purposes or as a method in their own right (Morgan, 1988). The role of the researcher during the interview is identified with that of the facilitator. Based on a semi-structured interview format the researcher is mainly responsible for leading the participants through the topics and ensuring that all participants express their views. The recommended number of participants per group is usually six to ten (Kreuger, 1993), but in some studies a considerable higher number of participants has been used (Goss and Leinbach 1996). Group interviews can last anything between one to two hours and researchers typically meet with each of the several groups only once (Burgess 1996).

In my research group interviews were conducted on two different occasions: a) for exploring pupils' sense making of normative gender discourses and the ways in which they deploy these discourses in their everyday performances of gender and b) for understanding how children negotiate or challenge the non-normative gender discourses promoted in the feminist fairy tale of Snow White. Prior to conducting my interviews, questions were piloted for clarity, relevance and to increase the validity of data gathered.

In the first occasion the interview questions (see Appendix X) aimed to unravel the complex, dynamic and fluid nature of the 'process of subjectification' (Davies, 1993), which in this case relates to children's sense making gender discourses and their gender performances. As discussed, the process of subjectification in my research was explored through the prism of the post-structuralist paradigm and Connell's theorisation of hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity.

In total 20 group interviews were held in both school. Each group consisted of four students (two boys and two girls). In detail, at School A, eight group interviews were held (four from the third grade and four from the fourth grade) and in total 32 students (16 boys and 16 girls)

were interviewed. Similarly, at school B, 12 group interviews were held, for as discussed third and fourth grade consisted of three classrooms. In total 48 pupils (24 boys and 24 girls) were interviewed. All participants were chosen by their teachers who had been instructed by me to select pupils based on their willingness to participate in the study. In addition, for allocating children to groups the teachers had been asked to take into consideration pupils' friendships. This way it was ensured that all children would feel comfortable with the other members of the group, which was very important for the participants and the quality of the data gathered. Teachers' contribution in the process of allocating children's to groups was invaluable, for they were aware of children's friendships.

The group interviews with students were conducted in the head teacher's office for approximately 90 minutes and were based in a semi-structured interview format. Because the head teacher's office is most likely associated with authority in children's perceptions I tried to minimise the influence that this could have had on pupils by paying attention to the preparation of the room for the interviews. More specifically, I tried to make the setting less formal by removing all chairs, for they were adult-proportioned (which were too high for the children) (Wilson &Powell, 2001) and would make them feel uncomfortable during the interview. Instead, I placed yoga mats on the floor and during the interviews the participants and I were sat on the floor. I thought that by sitting on the floor children would look at the interview process as an informal activity and would feel more comfortable. I deliberately avoided sitting behind the head teacher's desk, for this might have reminded them of authority figures. During the interview children were facing the wall, which was behind me. In both schools the wall was not decorated and in particular, at school A there was a picture of the school with all the teachers and at school B an icon of Holy Mary. I chose this setting because I wanted to avoid any visual distractions for the children (Thompson &Rudolph, 2000).

As I was concerned that parents or teachers may have given participants misleading information about the nature of the interviews (Thomson &Randolph, 2000) I explained to them the purpose of the interview and that there are not right or wrong answers to my questions. Although I used a very simple language that would be understandable by all students (De Jong &Berg, 2002), I explained to them that they could ask me for clarification if there was something they did not understand very well or were unsure about (Wilson &Powell, 2001). During the interviews, I encouraged children to talk by using gentle encouragers such as: 'mm', 'oh', 'really' etc (Wilson &Powell, 2001:51). As I was not allowed by the Hellenic Pedagogical institute to use a tape or video recorder I kept notes of children's responses during the interview, which at the end of each day were fully developed into transcripts. Prior to the interview I informed them that I had to keep notes of their responses, as it would have been impossible for me to remember everything that they had said. All participants gave their consent for me to keep notes during the interviews.

In the second occasion, the group interviews sought to explore how children negotiate or challenge non-normative gender discourses promoted in the feminist fairy tale of Snow White. For the purposes of my research five groups were held in the two participating schools. Two groups were held at school A and three at school B. All students from the third and fourth grade participated in the groups. In total 120 pupils (50 boys and 70 girls) participated in the five groups. The group interviews were based on a semi-structured interview format, which aimed to investigate how children negotiate non-normative gender discourses in the feminist fairy tale of Snow White. The interview questions were piloted first, using a sample of young people prior to implementation with the view to test their validity and reliability.

The feminist fairy tale of Snow White (Zipes, 1986) was a critical tool in my research, which

allowed me to explore children's responses to non-traditional gender discourses (see Appendix XIV). This was very significant for the purposes of my study, as within the post-structuralist paradigm texts are perceived as polysemous sites, allowing multiple readings and involving several possible positions for readers.

The reading of the fairy tale took place in the classrooms, for all teachers who participated in my research agreed to give up two classes. This was done on the last day of each observation period at each school and at a convenient time for the teachers. All teachers dedicated the last two hours of the school day for reading the feminist story to the pupils. Hence, at School A, the reading of the feminist story was completed over the last two days of the observations (two hours for the third grade on the first day and two hours of the second day for the fourth grade). At School B, considering that there were three classrooms the reading of the feminist story was completed over three days, dedicating the last two hours of each school day exactly as at school A. In all classrooms I read the story to the students. After reading the story, an informal conversation took place with me asking some questions about the story and the characters (see appendix XIII). The reading of the story took approximately 20-25 minutes. Then, for approximately 20 minutes until the break, we would discuss the story in the form of an informal conversation. I was very careful to clarify to all students that this was not a test/examination for which they would get a grade. Therefore, I emphasised that there were no right or wrong answers; and I was interested only in their views. That was mainly the reason why I did not want the teachers to get involved, for I was concerned that students would see the entire process as part of the lesson. Although teachers remained in the classroom for the entire time they were occupied with correcting students' homework and they did not participate in the conversation. This was very positive, for I believe it encouraged students to see the entire process as an informal conversation and not as an examination. As a result, pupils were able to express freely their views of the characters in the feminist fairy tale. After

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the break we continued the conversation for approximately another 40 minutes. During the conversations I was asking questions and children were taking turns in giving their opinion, ensuring that all participants had a chance to express their views. As I was not allowed to record pupils' answers during the conversation, I was keeping notes, and after each day all the notes were recorded with the greatest detail and filed.

In this study I used group interviews to look in detail at children's sense making of traditional and non-traditional gender discourses and the way in which they deploy these gender discourses in their quotidian schooling experiences. The decision to rely on group interviews was made for pragmatic reasons. First of all, they enabled me to collect a reasonably wide range of pupils' views in a time-efficient manner. Additionally, group interviews generated data that allowed me to understand the individual subjectivities as well as any contradictory accounts that the participants gave in relation to their experiences (Lankshear, 1993). Moreover, by arranging friendship group interviews I created a 'non-threatening, trusting and comfortable atmosphere' which enabled pupils to express their views as freely as possible (Renold, 2001: 372). Another significant advantage of group interviews is that they encourage interaction. Interaction constitutes a crucial element in group interviews for participants through interaction may reconsider their own views or their own understanding of their experiences (Kitzinger, 1994, 1995).

On the other hand, group interviews have some limitations that should be taken into account as results are considered. First of all, group interviews may not be ideal for all participants. Children who are shy may be intimidated whereas certain individuals may dominate the discussion (Morgan, 1988). To overcome these limitations I arranged friendship group interviews, which created a more relaxing atmosphere during the interview and all pupils were comfortable enough to express their views as free as possible (Renold, 2001). In

addition, group interviews in my study were used to encourage discussion and elicit pupils' thinking. At the same time, I ensured that students did not construe the interviews as an exam/test. Furthermore, group interviews raise some issues of confidentiality and anonymity, for the material is shared with the other pupils in the group. However, the nature of the question asked during the interview did not pose a threat to pupils' right to confidentiality and anonymity (Morgan, 1988).

Interviews alone cannot give an in depth understanding of the observed phenomena because they don't provide information about the context in which events occur. Therefore, it was necessary to conduct observations in classrooms and school playgrounds. Observation enables the researcher to understand the observed phenomena and comprehend the aspects of participants' experiences that participants themselves are not aware of or they are not willing to discuss (Patton, 1990).

4.4.3 Observations

Observation is a very useful technique that has the potential to give the researcher an insightful view of the social world, or as Robson has argued, it has the strength to get 'at real life in the real world' (Robinson, 2002: 310). According to Bryman (1988) the main aim of observation is to help the researcher understand the reality as the people that are studied perceive it, looking through the different realities of a situation or setting. In this study, observations enabled me to scrutinise the gender dynamics in classrooms and school playgrounds (two fields where masculinities and femininities are performed). The guidelines for classroom observations were adapted by UNESCO's classroom observation guide (see appendix XI). Since observations are less likely to reveal the research aim and more helpful for capturing the natural daily interactions- between teachers and students- I carried out the observations prior to interviews, which were conducted towards the end of my fieldwork. A

structured observation schedule was used, which requires the researcher to predetermine the target features of his observations so that the frequency of the event can be accurately monitored. A great advantage of the structured observation schedule is that enables the researcher to accurately monitor the frequency or order of events and encourages comparisons over time (Croll, 1986).

For observing the Hellenic primary classrooms and playgrounds, I tried to carry out 'unobtrusive observation' which are '...non-participatory in the interest of being non-reactive' (Robson, 2002: 310). As a result, my role in the observations was that of 'complete observer', as Gold (1958) places it, where the observer does not intentionally interact with the subjects at all. However, I do not accept an *a priori*, authentic or essential self who undertakes research, instead understanding the subject, including the researching subject, to be perpetually but provisionally constituted through discourse' (Youdell, 2005: 254). Thus, 'my own location within these discourses is undoubtedly visible and taken as immutable by the students in the research' (Youdell, 2005: 254). For instance, my presence in the classrooms, especially during the first day of the observations, may have had an influence on students' behaviours and attitudes, for I was a stranger that had 'intruded' into their environment. Although, I was a 'complete observer' in the classroom, the fact that students were aware of my presence probably altered slightly the dynamics of the classroom. Lesser, I believe, was the influence of my presence on data collected from the observations on school playgrounds, for pupils were not really aware that I was observing them. It is crucial though that my approach minimised the influence of my presence on the data.

My observations in the Hellenic primary classrooms placed emphasis on children's - teachers' interactions, and the value of these interactions in contributing to gender equality at schools. In this study, classroom interactions were perceived as significant arenas where

gender discourses are produced and thus, unravelling the content of the discourses would shed some light on the influence of teachers-students interactions in reinforcing hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity discourses. As discussed, these discourses may have an influential impact on children's performance of gender and their gender identity construction. A plethora of studies have postulated that gender dynamics in primary classrooms play a crucial role in children's gender identity construction (Brophy &Good, 1970; French &French, 1984; Walkerdine, 1990; Kleinfeld &Yerian, 1995; Younger et al., 1999; Paechter, 2000; Duffy, et al., 2002).

My observations were conducted in two primary schools in Athens for 152 hours, five times per week, over a 6-week period, for a total of five observations, in five classes. Data derived from my observations in six different school subjects (Hellenic language, Mathematics, History, Religious Education, Environmental Studies and Literature). Physical education was not included given the limited time of the observation period.

On the other hand, playground observations focused on children's play activities during recess. I was mainly interested in scrutinising the heterogeneities between boys' and girls' play activities, as well as the gender dynamics operating on school playgrounds. My observations of students' play practices were conducted on two primary school playgrounds. In particular, the total time of active observations was 22.5 hours. In each school I observed four episodes per day five times a week for a period of three weeks of children's free play. Within the post-structuralist paradigm playgrounds are sites where the performance of masculinity and femininity takes place. The analysis of children's interactions on school playgrounds intended to unravel the specific forms that hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity acquire through children's play activities and at the same time to shed some light on the interrelation between gender discourses and the hierarchies of masculinities

and femininities that emerge through children's interactions. Children's play activities constitute a crucial part of their performance of gender and during play time one can observe how boys and girls deploy gender discourses in their daily performances of gender on school playgrounds. In chapters 3 I reviewed numerous studies, which have suggested that boys and girls engage in diametrically antithetical activities on school playgrounds. A behaviour that is often encouraged by educators and parents (Fagot, 1978; Caldera et al., 1989; Fagot &Hagan, 1991; Thorne, 1993; Fisher-Thompson, 1993; Leaper et al., 1995; Paechter, 2000; Blaise, 2005; Renold, 2005).

In summary, the observations on school playgrounds examined five aspects of children's outdoor play: if they play, what they play, where they play, how they play and with whom they play. Throughout the observational period, both in classrooms and school playgrounds, I was writing down description of settings, people, activities, sounds, drawings and maps. As it is very difficult to keep extensive field notes during an observation, I kept short notes that served as a memory aid when full field notes were written, at the end of each day (Lofland &Lofland, 1984). The data from classroom and playground observations enabled me to scrutinise some of the gender discourses that are promoted through the quotidian school practices. Hence, the data provided a window into children's experiences of gender through which I was able to speculate the role of some of the school practices in reinforcing normative gender discourses.

4.5 Analysis Methods

The analysis of the data collected during the fieldwork was based on a systematic and reflexive process. The first level of the data analysis began before entering into the field with the analysis of gender discourses in anthology textbooks. The decision to analyse the anthology textbooks prior to conducting the fieldwork was based on the fact that the

discussion with the students and teachers required a basic knowledge of gender representation in the textbooks. Initially, the study of the instructional materials focused on the quantitative aspects of gender asymmetries. During this stage of textual analysis, I placed emphasis on the ratio of male and female characters in the textbooks. This was done by counting the number of male and female characters in the books. More specifically, the focus of my analysis was on:

➢ The number of male and female authors of the stories?

➢ The distribution of male and female characters in the titles of stories.

➢ The gender asymmetries in the number of male and female protagonists as well as minor characters in the stories.

The data gathered highlight one aspect of gender asymmetries in the instructional materials, which is related to the numerical predominance of male characters over females. The effect of the quantitative aspects of gender asymmetries on children's perceptions of gender roles is also discussed.

The second part of the analysis of the anthology textbooks was based on a post-structural conceptualisation in which gender and text have no fixed meaning. In parallel with this, the post-structural analysis of the anthology textbooks allowed me to theorise masculinity and femininity as socially constructed categories and guided the analysis towards a less a static view of masculinity and femininity 'than contested characters whose representations engage with competing discourses of' (Marshall, 2004: 259) masculinity and femininity. Within this theoretical prism, the representations of masculinity and femininity in the anthology textbooks were 'read not so much of mirror images of the real than as discursive constructions that shape the social categories of' masculinity and femininity (Marshall, 2004: 259).

The gender discourses promoted through the anthology textbooks were analysed using feminist critical discourse analysis (feminist CDA). Feminist CDA was developed recently under the broader branch of critical discourses analysis and it is theoretically informed by critical linguistics and poststructuralist theorisations of gender (Sunderland &Litosseliti 2002; Lazar, 2005). Through this prism, gender is perceived as fluid and discursively constructed through discourses. In this view of gender (and gender identities), feminist critical discourse analysis has found Butler's (1990) theory of performative a very useful tool.

For feminist CDA, discourses are defined in terms of linguistics -as language that communicates meaning- and in the Foucauldian sense -as language in the form of social practice that is used to construct identity, including gender, from a particular ideological perspective (Sunderland &Litosseliti, 2002). However, Foucault's (1972: 49) conceptualisation of discourses as 'practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak' (Lehtonen, 2007: 6) implies that individuals are passive recipients of predetermined meanings. Feminist CDA rejects this view and draws on Gramsci's (1971) theory of hegemony, 'which ascribes a degree of agency to all social groups in the production and negotiation of meaning' (Lehtonen, 2007: 6). Hence, feminist CDA recognises the power of the individuals to negate certain discourses (Sunderland &Litosseliti 2002; Lazar 2005). This is symptomatic of the special interest in feminist CDA not only in the 'forms of oppression but also in forms of empowerment through discourse' (Lehtonen, 2007: 6).

Feminist CDA does not aim to provide a holistic theory of gender. It places emphasis on empirical studies and the ways in which gender is discursively constructed in texts (Sunderland &Litosseliti 2002; Lazar 2005). Feminist CDA also focuses on gender representations and gender power relationships in specific texts and their specific contexts (Lazar 2005). Moreover, textual analysis in feminist CDA is not concerned with predicting

readers' responses, for texts are polysemous sites, allowing multiple readings and involving several possible positions for readers (Mills, 1994; Sunderland &Litosseliti, 2002). It could be argued, then, that feminist CDA enables the analyst to 'examine how power and dominance are discursively produced and/or resisted in a variety of ways through textual representations of gendered social practices, and through interactional strategies of talk (Lazar, 2005: 10). Indeed, 'the marriage of feminism with CDA...can produce a rich and powerful critique for action' (Lazar, 2005: 5). The theoretical foundations of this method of analysis illuminate the strong interrelation of the feminist CDA and the theory that informed my study. Through the post-structuralist prism and the use of feminist CDA I explored the gender discourses in the anthology textbooks and the specific form that hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity acquire in the textbooks.

In praxis, feminist CDA applies wide-ranging levels and foci of analysis for unravelling the 'sophisticated theorisation of the relationship between social practices and discourse structures' (Lazar, 2005: 4-5). Typically, it places emphasis on grammar, lexis, structures of arguments and interactions among discourses (Lazar, 2007). Additionally, Fairclough (1992, 1995) has suggested three elements of textual analysis, which include text, discursive practice and social practice. However, in textual analysis of gender discourses not everything in the text is essentially vital for the analyst, for various books deploy gendered discourses in various ways (Talbot 1995; Sunderland 2004). This means that the researcher will decide which features of the text present more interest for studying gendered discourses. Lastly, Thomas (2005) has proposed a three dimensional textual analysis focusing on identifying the features of the texts through which discourses can be found; indentifying the production and interpretation of the text in relation to the meaning that participants give to the text; analysing the relationship between discourse and society. Thomas' (2005) focus on social context rather than on linguistic aspects of the text is very useful for my analysis of the gender discourses in

the anthology textbooks, for I did not undertake a linguistic analysis, but, rather, I analysed the main themes that emerged.

The main themes that emerged in the study of gender discourses in the anthology textbook were:

- ➢ **Gender Discourses and Family Life**. The analysis of the gender discourses in the family focused on the discursive practices that produce certain ways of thinking about gender and allowed me to scrutinise how masculinities and femininities 'are presented with, and inserted into ideological and discursive positions by practices, which locate them in meaning and in regimes of truth' (Walkerdine, 1990: 87). Also, I placed emphasis on the gendered discourses that regulate sexuality to produce a hegemonic heterosexual matrix, as well as discourses that reinforce normative positionings of masculinity and femininity in the family (roles, responsibilities etc). Lastly, the analysis explored the gender hierarchies in the domestic sphere and illuminated how hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity are discursively constructed in the anthology textbooks.

- ➢ **Gender Discourses of young masculinities and femininities in the family.** This category aimed to illuminate how gendered discourses position boyhood and girlhood in the domestic sphere. In particular, the analysis showed how young masculinities and femininities are discursively constructed in the textbooks through discourses of gender-appropriate roles and responsibilities in the family. Furthermore, the analysis offered valuable insights into the role of the anthology textbooks in reinforcing hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity discourses and forcing young pupils into normative heterosexual femininity and masculinity (hegemonic heterosexual matrix).

➢ **Gender Discourses in the Labour Market**. This thematic category investigated the gendered discourses of masculinity and femininity in paid employment. More specifically, I critically analysed the discourses of women's and men's employment in the textbooks through the study of men's and women's occupational roles and social status in the labour market. The data highlighted textbooks' role in the discursive construction of hegemonic forms of masculinity and emphasised femininity.

➢ **The discursive construction of young masculinities and femininities through play.** The analysis of this theme aimed to illustrate how boys and girls are discursively positioned in the textbooks through the discourses of play in early childhood. Emphasis was placed on discourses of games and sports through which masculinity and femininity were constructed. Lastly, I explored the influence of these discourses in the construction of hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity.

The analysis of the discursive representations of masculinity and femininity in the anthology textbooks moved beyond the text itself to the study of the iconography. The visual illustrations in anthology textbooks were examined according to: a) the frequency in which the two genders are pictured and b) the dressing and presentation code of male and female characters. In investigating the frequency of male and female appearance in the illustrations, a measurement of frequency of appearance was put into practice, in addition to a classification of those in male-female categories. In relation to the dressing and presentation manner/code of the two genders in the iconography, the analysis mainly focused on the extent to which female figures were pictured dressed with clothing or accessories that coincide with the traditional way of dressing. In detail, I was interested in how the elements of the figures' dressing manner express normative views on typically accepted dress codes of men and women. Notably, male figures were excluded from the analysis, for it was not expected that men or boys would be projected with clothing attributed to the female gender, since any such

case does not reflect the social reality. In the case of women, however, it can be argued that nowadays a disintegration of the traditionally accepted way of female dressing is noted and often in the frame of everyday life/practices female clothing accommodates elements that are stereotypically considered as masculine, such as trousers, ties etc. Consequently, through the study of the dressing manner of the two genders I examined the degree to which literary texts depict the social changes regarding the female way of dressing.

Within the post-structuralist paradigm, males and females in the textbooks were theorised as characters whose representations interweave with larger cultural discourses about gender, sexuality, masculinity and femininity. The findings enabled me to scrutinise the extent to which the discursive representations in the anthology textbooks encourage children to think about gender in certain normative ways that produce gender normative performances and reinforce hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity discourses.

The data from the interview and the observations were analysed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a qualitative analytic method for 'identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within the data. It minimally organises and describes the data set in (rich) detail. However, frequently it goes further than this, and interprets various aspects of the research topic' (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 79). Thematic analysis involves six steps: becoming familiar with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes and producing the report.

In my research the thematic analysis of the data from the teacher interviews was based on the research question pertaining to the role of teachers' classroom practices in reinforcing traditional gender discourses. Particular, the analysis of the data from interview materials began every day after each school visit. Upon my return from fieldwork, I typed and translated the data that I gathered for the day. Several researchers recommend the use of

special software in the analysis of the data (Anderson, 1990). However, I was not interested in translating the data into frequency accounts and thus, I used only Nvivo 10, which facilitated the process of coding and categorisation of the data. The initial data coding was based on a sub-sample of one interview, which enabled me to develop a primary set of free nodes (themes). The coding of the data was based on key concepts and ideas in the text, which would later allow me to make sense of the data (Miles &Huberman, 1994). Coding consists of closely examining the data, then grouping information that is similar together creating a theme (Gibbs & Taylor, 2005). The codes that I created were then organised into meaningful categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1996). Then based on the coding, the thematic categories were created. More specifically, three themes were developed: 1) teachers' views of boys' and girls' personality characteristics, 2) teachers' views of gender-appropriate roles and 3) teachers' classroom practices. Once themes were created the data were divided into themes and analysed (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2000). Through this process of coding and categorisation a comparison of participants' responses was made possible and crucial findings emerged in relation to the role of the teachers' in reproducing and reinforcing normative gender discourses across the two schooling sites.

The process of analysing the data from the group interviews with the pupils was similar. The use of Nvivo 10 facilitated the identification of themes that emerged from the textual data. However, *a priori* thematic analysis was used based on the second research question which sought to explore how children negotiate or challenge gender normative and non-normative discourses identified in school textbooks, and how they deploy these discourses in their quotidian performances of gender. Pertaining to this specific research question the main themes that emerged from the interviews where: 1) Children's sense making of the traditional gender discourses promoted through the anthology textbooks, 2) Boys' and girls' play activities, 3) Pupils' views of gender roles and their future aspirations and 4) how children

negotiate, reproduce or challenge the non-normative gender discourses promoted in the feminist fairy tale of Snow White.

A priori thematic analysis (Strauss, 1987) was also used to scrutinise the data from the classroom and playground observations. In detail, the analysis of classroom observations was guided by the following themes: 1) the amount of interaction teachers have with boys and girls, 2) teachers' gender attitudes to students through the allotment of classroom tasks and discipline, and 3) teachers' treatment of the stories in the textbooks. Next the data from each classroom observation was coded using the themes listed above. These predetermined themes offered a framework for the analysis of the data from the classroom observations and enabled me to answer compare the findings with teachers' own accounts of their classroom practices.

Analogous was the process of the analysis of the observations from the school playgrounds. The *a priori* themes that were created related to: 1) boys' and girls' play practices on school playgrounds, 2) gender composition and dynamics of children's play groups and 3) boys' and girls' verbal and physical behaviour on school playgrounds. Next, based on these themes each observation was coded in order to identify instances of these critical themes. The data generated through this process enabled me to investigate how children deploy gender discourses in their quotidian play activities on school playgrounds.

The data from the teacher interviews, group interviews with the students and observations (in primary classrooms and school playgrounds) were examined as a means of triangulating data types. This enabled me to explore the education system's role in reinforcing traditional gender discourses through its everyday practices and children's sense making of normative and non-normative gender discourses as well as how they deploy these discourses in their play practices on school playgrounds.

4.6 Ethical Issues: Access to Schools and Participants Informed Consent

In this section I discuss the ethical considerations of my study. In particular, these include access and acceptance, informed consent, privacy and confidentiality. The term 'ethics' usually refers to the moral principles, guiding and conduct, which are held by a group or even a profession (Wellington, 2000: 54). 'Ethical concerns should be at the forefront of any research project and should continue through to the write-up and dissemination stages' (Wellington, 2000:3). Ethical standards must also be taken under consideration when the researcher starts to write his/her research (Babbie, 1998).

The Institute of Education, University of London, requires that researchers submit proposals for ethical clearance prior to entering into the fieldwork. In parallel with this, I had to submit a proposal for ethical clearance to the Greek Pedagogical Institute. Consent was provided in the form of an official letter (see appendix XV). Once permission to the schools of my preference was granted by the Greek Pedagogical Institute, I was advised to contact the local educational advisors who would allow me to carry out my research in the two primary schools that I had chosen. In the meeting with the educational advisors I explained to them the objectives of my thesis, the epistemological and methodological aspects of my study and the role of the students in my research. Lastly, I was advised by the educational advisors to contact the school principals in order to arrange to meet with them and inform them about my research. Next, I visited the schools and I spoke to the head masters about my research and the purpose of my visit to the schools. The school principals were happy to help me out with my research and, soon after our meeting, they introduced me to the teachers of the third and fourth grade, as I needed their consent, as well as their permission to carry out observations in their classrooms.

Participants' consent is obviously a crucial factor in any sociological research. The British

Sociological Association (BSA) (2002) states that informed consent should be freely given by participants and that the research should be explained and described in some detail. Furthermore, this detail needs to be meaningful to participants. The guidelines give five areas that participants need to be clear about: What is the research about? Who is doing the research? Who is financing the research? Why is it being carried out? How is the research going to be disseminated? Similar questions are posed by the British Education Research Association (BERA) (2011) guidelines. According to the BERA (2011) voluntary informed Consent is: 'the condition in which participants understand and agree to their participation without any duress, prior to research getting underway' (BERA, 2011: 5). The British Psychological Society's (BPS) (2010) guidelines state that all participants should be aware of the objectives of the research and should have all information that will affect their decision as to whether to participate. After explaining to teachers all the above aspects of my research accepted with pleasure to participate in my study.

The next step was to meet the students and get their consent. The BPS (2010) states that special consent needs to be obtained and safeguard procedures need to be put in place when the research includes children. When anyone under the age of 16 participates in research consent must be gained from parents. However, BERA (2011) advocates that children are fully and freely involved in giving consent and only seem to advocate seeking parental permission where due to age or intellectual capacity, the participants are unable to comprehend their role. Similar to the BPS (2010), BSA's (2002) guidelines suggest that research involving children requires a level of care and parents' consent should be sought. However, unlike the BPS (2010), the BSA (2002) does not specify a particular age.

Based on these guidelines, in my research I let participants know that they were free to decide not to participate in the study and they could withdraw at any point during the study,

reassuring them that this would not affect them in any negative way. After each presentation in each school, teachers received the letters of informed consent that they passed on to the students. The informed consent form described my study and children's involvement in it. The students passed the letters on to their parents who had to sign them indicating their willingness to allow their children to participate in my research. The teachers advised their students to return the forms to them, who then passed on to me. The consent forms consisted of two letters. The first one was requesting consent for the observations in the classroom and was given to all students (see Appendix XVI) and the second one for the group interviews, was given only to students who had been selected by their teachers to participate in the study, as not all students would participate in the group interviews (see Appendix XVII). All students returned the signed consent form. Once, I collected all the forms I started the observations and the interviews. Before the interview I explained participants the aims of my research and how the interview will be conducted in a clear succinct and honest way. Pupils were excited to take part in my study. Also, I reminded participants that if they felt uncomfortable or changed their minds they were free to withdraw from the study, and this would have no negative consequences for them. A full scale data collection and production began on the 2nd of May 2011.

All three sets of guidelines emphasise as paramount the participants' right to privacy and confidentiality. Privacy and confidentiality was taken very seriously in my research and no names were recorded during the interviews or observations. This is something that explicitly was stated to both students and teachers that participated in my research. Subjects' anonymity was respected. Personal information is subject to the Data Protection Act and all personal data were stored with identities disguised.

While the rights of research participants are paramount and researchers should take all the

necessary steps to protect research participants' rights, the dissemination of findings to participants is often overlooked, although it is equally significant. Failing to disseminate the research findings to participants is a serious breach in the researcher-collaborator relationship (Jackson, 2002). Upon completion of the data analysis, I compiled a report summarizing key findings and I emailed it to the headmasters of the schools and teaching staff that had taken part in my study. This was imperative for the development of sustainable interventions.

The final issue is of whether the research will harm or risk participants in any way. The BPS (2010) recognises that risk is an everyday occurrence, but suggests that by entering into the research process the participants should not 'be increasing the probability that they will come to any form of harm' (BPS, 2010: 11). BERA (2011) also proposes that if any potential risks arise during the course of the research the impact and consequences should be immediately brought to the attention of the participants. Furthermore BERA (2011) is particularly concerned with the harm that might come to children, vulnerable young people and vulnerable adults and states that the most important thing is the best interest of the children. In my research no potential harm to participants could be caused as by participating in my research the probability that they will come to any form of harm will not be increased.

4.7 Doing Research in Primary Schools: Some General Reflections

In this section I provide an overview of my experiences in the schools under study, where my ethnographic research took place. I believe that it is crucial to mention my personal experiences during fieldwork, for they outline the social context within which the data of this study were generated. Throughout the ethnographic study I was concerned about the effects of my presence on the nature of data that I collected. It is for this reason that this research project is the culmination of 'something contracted and contested, something presented and

re/presented in a process of translated, moulded and negotiated codes of understanding' (Bhana, 2002: 69).

When I started my research I was not thinking very much about the influence of my presence on the data (Thorne, 1993). Yet, I was also concerned about how, as a subjective gendered being, I would address my own subjectivities about undertaking the research processes of this nature. My main subjectivity in this project was a conviction to undertake a PhD fieldwork research. This assisted me to overcome my own anxieties about undertaking the ethnographic aspects of the study. Although I had read a lot about ethnographic studies and I had previous experience, the strict timetable for completing the observations and the interviews in each school was very stressful, for if anything went wrong I would have to wait until the next academic year as my ethnographic research would last until the final days of the school year.

My initial thoughts upon arrival to schools were that I had to make children feel comfortable in my presence so that they could talk freely during the interviews. It is for that reason that every time the children called me 'sir' I encouraged them to call me by my name. I explained to them that I was a student as well, and the reason that I was visiting their school was because I had some questions to ask them. Although, it was impossible to befriend all the students who participated in my research I think that the removal of the 'sir' barrier eased our communication and set the basis for the friendly discussions that followed during my ethnographic research. Building rapport with the subjects of my research was one of the most challenging aspects of my study. However, I believe that I managed to build rapport with the pupils, for after the first couple of days, many of the students would come to tell me their personal stories with girlfriends, school grades etc.

Building rapport with the teachers was a lot easier, for they were very welcoming from the first moment that I arrived in the schools they were trying to help me as much as possible.

However, their attitude made me think that they might try to be pleasing during the interviews or classroom observations. So I was extremely careful during the observations to try and spot any inconsistencies, which I would then openly discuss with them.

During the observation I was keeping notes throughout the day. However, the decision to keep notes was forced upon me, as the Greek Pedagogical Institute rejected my request for using a tape recorder. I have now come to realise that the written notes had a positive impact on the data collected, for I believe that had I used a tape recorder participants would have been more apprehensive. This is because the tape recorder would not allow the dynamics that were developed between me and participants to come into force, as the presence of the tape recorder would distract them from spontaneous talk. As a result, the atmosphere would have been less relaxing and might have had an immense impact on the data collected.

A very important issue that I was faced with on the first day of the fieldwork was that teachers were concerned that I was interested in exploring their teaching skills and students' knowledge. For instance, on the very first day, one teacher in the mathematics class told me: 'sorry but we did these equations yesterday but they haven't learned them very well yet'. As soon as I realised the deeper meaning of her words I made it clear that my study was not exploring teachers' skills or students' comprehension abilities and knowledge. This was made clear to all the other teachers when I visited their classrooms to conduct my observations.

A challenging aspect of the observations was that I did not know from the beginning what it would be interesting to record, so I had to keep notes of everything that was happening in the schools, especially during the first observations. In the notes that I kept during classroom and play ground observations I used the real names of the participants and, at a later stage, when full field notes were written, were replaced by pseudonyms. This was done because it was impossible for me to remember during the observations what pseudonym I had given to each

one of the pupils, which would increase the risk of ascribing a child's activities to a different person. However, in this final thesis, I refer to participants with their ascribed pseudonym in order to protect their anonymity.

I would also like to refer to the interviews and informal conversations that I had throughout the observation period with participants. As discussed, interviews and informal conversations with pupils aimed to encourage them to discuss their views of gender roles and their quotidian experiences of gender. The interviews with the students based on creating groups with equal number of male and female pupils (four boys and four girls formed each interview group). The informal conversations with the students that took place in the classroom or in the school playgrounds were unstructured and participants could be boys, girls or boys and girls together. During these casual conversations I asked children the same question that towards the end of the ethnographic observations would ask in the interviews. By doing so, I enhanced the validity of my findings as pupils' answers were cross checked.

On the other hand, the interviews and the conversations with the teachers offered me rich data related to their perceptions of gender discourses, as well as their classroom practices. The data offered some valuable insights into the potential impact of teachers' classroom practices on children's perceptions of gender roles. Often, during the casual conversations, teachers would ask about my views of certain problems related to gender equality issues. The first time I found myself in a difficult situation where I was not sure if it was right to answer their questions, fearing that my answer might be reflected upon the data gathered. However, I realised that sharing my views on issues that were not strictly related to my research subject would have a positive influence on my research, for this discussion would make teachers during the interviews feel more like taking part in a conversation rather than like being interrogated. The informal conversations with the teachers offered me the opportunity to

compare their views with those expressed during the interview. Specifically, I followed Ramazanoglu and Holland (2002: 159) suggestion that 'If you expect to be in a position of power, you can decide to attempt to subvert your own exercise of power by undertaking research as a collaborative interactional process, with reciprocal inputs from the researcher and the researched …'.

In conclusion, from my experience ethnographic research is a complex and often contradictory process that no matter how logical or coherent appears in the presentation all the aspects, dynamics of the processes that the researcher witnesses in the field cannot be captured and offer a holistic view of what really happened in the field. However, above all these, an immense challenge that I was faced with was making sense of the nature and meanings of ideas, experiences, practices and social categories of gender in order to answer the main research questions that led to my study.

Synopsis

In this chapter I reviewed the main methodological, epistemological, ethical challenges and concerns of my research on the Hellenic education system's role in reinforcing traditional gender discourses through its practices and children's sense making of gender discourses. The chapter discussed synoptically my main concern to evade imposing my views on the data and my positioning during the fieldwork. Additionally, I presented the research design and the objectives of the study along with the main sampling strategy that was deployed in choosing the participants. The fundamental issues of credibility and validity of my findings were discussed through the description of the data collection procedures and data analysis methods. This chapter concluded with the presentation of the main ethical consideration regarding access and acceptance, informed consent, privacy and confidentiality. Throughout the ethnographic study I was concerned about the effects of my presence on the nature of data that I collected. Thus, it was considered important to discuss in this chapter my personal experiences during fieldwork, as they outline the social context within which the data of this study were generated.

Chapter 5

Gender Discourses in the Curriculum Materials and

Hellenic Primary Classrooms

'Gender Identities are deeply embedded
within the structures of classroom
discursive practice' (Baxter, 2003: 98)

Introduction

Textbooks are significant conveyors and determinants of the official education content and policy. The discursive content of the instructional materials convey the most crucial ideals and norms aimed at attaining the objectives of every education system. Books also provide children with cultural representations of social identities and roles: 'images of what they can and should be like when they grow up' (Weitzman et al, 1972: 1126). Over the last four decades there has been a portentous inquiry into the relationship between the discursive content of books and the young readers who use them. Scholars placed emphasis on a number of substantive and theoretical areas, including gender and sex roles (Weitzman, 1972; Turner-Bowker, 1996; Clark et al, 1999). The findings yielded that the normative gender representations in the textbooks can have deleterious effects on pupils' perceptions of gender roles for they often reinforce gender as a social division (Fragoudaki, 1979; Makrinioti, 1986; Savvidou, 1996; Kantartzi, 1996; Deligianni-Kouimtzi & Ziogou, 1998; Lalagianni, 1999).

Since gender equality is declared in the official Hellenic curriculum one might expect that textbooks promote gender egalitarian views and reinforce a sense of equality to young learners regardless of their gender. Boys and girls should be taught that males and females are equally valued in society, and not that males have more social eminence than females. Nevertheless, researchers have postulated that textbooks, both in Hellas and internationally, perpetuate anachronistic views of gender roles and reinforce gender dichotomies and hierarchies in all aspects of social life (Moon, 1974; Lobban, 1974, 1975; Anthogalidou, 1989; Kantartzi, 1991; Anagnostopoulou, 1995; Skelton, 1997b).

A crucial characteristic of the Hellenic feminist research in education is that placed overemphasis on gender representations in school manuals. This, together with the limited resources for funded research in education in Hellas, can explicate the reasons for which other aspects of gender inequality (i.e. classrooms interactions, teachers' views of gender roles etc.) were put aside for a long period. Although in the UK issues of gender equality in classroom interactions gained momentum in the early 1980s (Delamont &Hamilton, 1976; Delamont, 1980a, b; Clarricoates, 1987; Skelton, 1989, 1996), in Hellas only recently have these issues come to the epicentre of feminist research in education. Symptomatic of this is that, until the 1990s, a limited number of studies have explored gender asymmetries in Hellenic primary classrooms and teachers' views of gender discourses (Kogidou, 1995). My research aims to fill this gap in the existing Hellenic literature on classroom interactions. Influenced both methodologically and theoretically by mainly Anglophone literature on gender (e.g. Sutherland, 1981; Kessler et al., 1985; Acker, 1988, 1994; Stanley &Wise, 1990; Skelton, 1996), due to the lack of analogous Hellenic literature, I undertook a qualitative research in two Athenian primary schools.

This chapter sets out to critically discuss the education system's role in reinforcing traditional gender discourses. Emphasis is placed on the discursive construction of masculinity and femininity in the Anthology textbooks and teachers' discursive classroom practices. More specifically, I discuss the findings of the analysis of gender discourses in the anthologies and critically review how children negotiate them. Next, I present the data from the teacher interviews, which highlight educators' views of gender, their sense making of gender discourses and their accounts of their classroom practices. In the third part of this chapter, I discuss the data collected through observations in five primary classrooms (third and fourth grade) in two Athenian primary schools. The findings yielded that classrooms are primary

sites where children learn the narratives available to them (Davies, 1993) and where the performance of gender unfolds.

5.1 Gender Discourses in the Anthology Textbooks

This section sets out to scrutinise the discursive representations of masculinity and femininity in the anthology textbooks of primary education and explores how children negotiate normative gender discourses. The analysis of the textbooks moved beyond the obvious limitations of the narratives by exploring other discursive trends besides the text itself, such as the gender of the authors of the texts in the anthologies and hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity discourses promoted through the iconography. The study of the quantitative characteristics of gender asymmetries in the textbooks postulated that the anthologies are male-dominated, for male protagonists and minor characters outnumbered the females three to one in the narratives[18] (see Appendix XVIII). The predominance of male authors indicates, to a certain extent, the dynamic presence of male figures in the anthologies, for as has been noted by numerous studies, the gender of the authors has a pivotal impact on the discursive content of the story (Ziogou Karastergiou &Kouimtzi Deligianni, 1981; Freiderikou, 1995).

The analysis of the gender discourses and power relations in the domestic sphere and labour market in the texts yielded similar results. It was observed that the family structures were strictly patriarchal and gender discourses of males' and females' roles and responsibilities in the domestic sphere were normative as women were portrayed in the domestic sphere. On the

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[18] More specifically, from the total of 192 characters, there were 136 males, 53 females and 3 non-gender specific characters of which two were animals. The male to female distribution in the narratives was 71% males and 27% females. The findings of the analysis of male and female protagonists in the textbooks are similar, for the majority of central characters are males. Particularly, male characters appeared almost twice more often than female characters, for 68% of all main characters were males and only 32% females.

other hand, in the complex network of the family relationships the father-husband embodies the patriarchal ideals and is identified as the economic supporter of the household. The father's arduous work outside the demarcated domestic sphere is emphasised in the narratives. As a result, in the textbooks, the father is stripped off such household responsibilities as nurturing, cooking, cleaning, etc. These hegemonic masculinity discourses reinforce traditional views of family organisation, for they place the husband-father at the epicentre of family (in other words, as the head of the family). As such, the father is an indisputable body of power with catholic acceptance, for all the family members comply with his will. The father is also the person who handles key decisions of the family and assigns tasks to other family members, but also castigates the children when they act against his will. He is also the fiscal patron of the family. His main responsibility is that of financially supporting the family, for he is accountable for ensuring the necessary means of household livelihoods. It can be argued that the gender discourses in the anthologies reinforce the discursive construction of a hegemonic form of masculinity, which is characterised by physical strength, emotional detachment and despotism. Furthermore, hegemonic masculinity takes the form of patriarchy, as the hegemonic male is positioned in the domestic sphere as breadwinner, head of the family and free from any household responsibilities.

In contrast to the positioning of the father, the role of the mother can be summarised in two key responsibilities: the care of the household (i.e. cooking, sewing and cleaning) and nurturing of the children. The demarcated domestic sphere is portrayed as a natural place for her, thus her positioning as a pariah in the labour market and her marginalisation from the broader social cosmos are presented as natural. The few instances in which she egresses the home are not for personal amusement but for reasons relating to her domestic role, such as shopping. In the anthology textbooks, mothers live for others and through others, primarily their children and husband. The subordinated positioning of women in the domestic sphere

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perpetuates a patriarchal organisation of the domestic life and reinforces emphasised femininity discourses. The gender roles in family life do not reflect the role of the mother-spouse in the modern Hellenic society. A plethora of studies have contended that since the early 1970s, the organisational structure of the patriarchal Hellenic family has been showing signs of decline (Safiliou-Rothchild, 1972; Teperoglou, 1982).

The discursive practices of the hierarchical scales formed within the domestic sphere in the textbooks are anachronistic and do not reflect women's current position in the Hellenic social cosmos. In detail, the data illustrate that textbooks reinforce hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity discourses, which normalise and legitimate women's subordination in the domestic sphere. In addition, the representations of the family reproduce the heterosexual matrix (Butler, 1990) as the family structures are strictly positioned within heteronormativity. Within the heterosexual matrix, which is the organizing principle of family life, marriage and motherhood are idealised and constitute the necessary requirements of a successful femininity. The gender discourses promoted through the anthology textbooks present children with outdated and unrealistic views of the family structures that do not depict the current social reality and women's changing roles in the Hellenic social cosmos. My findings corroborate those of earlier studies and highlight the minimal improvement made in relation to gender representations in the curriculum materials over the last three decades. Numerous studies over the last 30 years have postulated that the Hellenic textbooks of primary education systematically present children with strict patriarchal structures of family organisation (Deligianni-Kouimtzi, 1987; Anthogalidou, 1989; Kantartzi, 1991; Louvrou, 1994; Freiderikou, 1995, 1998).

Within the post-structuralist paradigm, children's sense making of these discourses cannot be presumed, for they are active readers who negotiate the discourses in their subjective ways

and they have varying degrees of agency and power to challenge them. Children's sense making of these normative gender discourses promoted through the anthology textbooks was explored during the group interviews. In detail, I read to children some short extracts[19], typical of the representations of males' and females' roles and activities in the family. The findings from the group interviews with children yielded that boys and girls negotiated differently these discourses. Most boys, from both grades, were almost unanimous that the discursive representations of motherhood and fatherhood in the narratives are 'natural'. Typical of this is the conversation that I had with Theodore.

> **Theodore:** '*I believe that these families are normal. The father is working and the mother is at home*'.
> **Researcher:** '*If the mother was working and the father stayed at home wouldn't it be normal?*'
> **Theodore:** '*No, because men are strong and must work*'.
> **Researcher:** '*Do you think that women cannot work?*'
> **Theodore:** '*They can work... sometimes they do but they don't make enough money....But even when they work, men work too. Men cannot stay at home*'.
> **Researcher:** '*Why they cannot stay at home?*'
> **Theodore:** '(laughs!) *because they don't like it... Women stay at home*'.

Theodore, as well as the majority of boys, did not challenge the traditional division of gender roles in the domestic sphere and reproduced this particular hegemonic masculinity discourse, which positions men as the financial conservators of the family. Unlike the majority of boys,

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[19]After briefly summarizing the story I asked children to comment on the following extracts from the story: 1. '... *aunt Kostaina is making pancakes, and Uncle Costas with children have taken a seat at the table and waiting...*'. 2. '...*made sweet bread covered it with a fully embroidered towel...and took it to church overnight in a basket*' and '...*she kneaded the dough for the bread herself…*' 3. '*…when she was not cooking, she was sewing festive dresses for herself and her daughter. Black skirts embroidered with geometric shapes-triangles, squares, beautifully blended with cypress, swords, birds, red and purple…*'

Achilles and Costas were two of the few boys who were able to challenge the normative positionings of women in the domestic sphere.

Achilles: '*Women work as well. My mother is working*'.

Achilles is a ten-year-old boy who -as I was told by his teacher- played only with girls. His parents are both employed (his mother is a cleaner and his father owns a bookstore) and they have completed compulsory education. Costas' parents have completed an elementary education and they are both in paid employment (his mother works as a cleaner and his father is a bricklayer). As Costas' teacher told me, his parents are very "open-minded" and on numerous occasions she was impressed by their views on religious and social equality matters. Unlike Costas' and Achilles' mothers, Theodore's mother was not in paid employment (it was observed that boys who were unable to challenge this normative gender discourse did not have mothers in paid employment). Hence, it can be argued that the discursive representations of gender roles in the domestic sphere reflected the reality of many boys in the specific schools. This can explicate the reasons for which the majority of boys reproduced the patriarchal representations of family organisation in the textbooks. It is also important to mention that Achilles and Costas performed a form of subordinated masculinity while Theodore performed hegemonic masculinity. The rest of the boys were identified with complicit masculinity. Thus, complicit and hegemonic boys were less capable than subordinated boys of challenging the normative discourses of motherhood and fatherhood in the narratives.

Contrary to the majority of boys who had accepted, to a great extent, a traditional gender division of male and female characters' roles, most third- and fourth-grade girls were able to challenge these normative gender discourses.

> **Maria:** '*I think that women do not stay only at home they work as well*'.
>
> **Researcher:** '*Do you think that the father can also look after the kids*'.
>
> **Maria:** '*Yes he can. When my mum is at work my father or my grandmother is looking after us, but most of the times it's my mum*'.

The findings provide a strong indication that children with both parents in paid employment are more likely to challenge normative gender discourses of gender roles in the labour market (Zuckerman &Sayre, 1982; Kessler et al., 1982, Davies, 1989b). In my study, most girls had mothers who participated actively in paid employment and their occupation role often gave them agency and in some instances even authority. For instance, Maria's mother was a journalist who had a high position in a Hellenic newspaper. Besides, most girls' parents' education level appeared to be higher than most boys' parents' education level, especially as far as the mothers' education level is concerned. This could partially elucidate the discrepancy in the findings with reference to most boys' and girls' ability to challenge the gendered discourses that regulated their views of gender roles within the family. Although children who have mothers engaged in paid work outside the home reproduced discourses of working women 'it would be a mistake to think of this relation as a causal one. If it were, the solution to all of our problems would simply be to have all women to go out to work' (Davies, 1989b: 63). Another possible explanation is that some boys were less prepared than girls to participate in the disruption of gendered discourses due to the fact that they had more to lose than gain from the change (Westland, 1993).

Moving beyond adults' roles and activities in the family, I explored the discursive representations of boyhood and girlhood in the domestic sphere in the textbook representations. The data yielded that textbooks reinforce traditional views of gender-

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appropriate activities/roles for children. More specifically, in the narratives, boys' involvement in manual work or occupations that require advanced technical skills and expertise are presented as the natural inclination. Also, the discourses of boyhood in the narratives reinforce the view that boys should be educated, for through education they will be able to undertake the role of the economic supporter of the household. In the narratives, boys have great career aspirations, which are strengthened through education and care of parents whereas girls are encouraged to accept the role of mother and wife, which limits their career aspirations. Furthermore, the complete absence of representations of boys carrying out household chores or nurturing their younger siblings empowers the traditional hegemonic masculinity discourses, according to which males are responsible solely for the financial support of the family. These discourses may play a significant role in regulating boys' views of gender, for they are presented as signifiers of successful masculinity. The discourses of boyhood largely retain a more traditional stance, which converges more closely with the representations of boys in the older textbooks (Fragoudaki, 1979; George-Nielsen, 1980; Ziogou-Karastergiou & Deligianni-Kouimtzi, 1981, Deligianni-Kouimtzi, 1987; Anthogalidou, 1989; Kantartzi, 1991; Louvrou, 1994; Freiderikou, 1995, 1998; Anagnostopoulou, 1995, 1997).

On the other hand, the discursive representations of girlhood in the anthologies aim to produce certain discourses that mould them into domesticated beings, such as playing with dolls[20] or looking after their younger siblings[21]. It can be argued that the narratives restrict femininity into roles in society as mothers and housewives. The emphasised femininity discourses in the narratives idealise motherhood and matrimony and reinforce the heterosexual matrix that regulates the performance of masculinity and femininity in a binary

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[20] Nondas Elatos, *A Walk in the City*, p. 90.
[21] A typical example is Harris' sisters who '...*with maternal affection will kiss him and bid farewell as he is going to school*' in Nondas Elatos, *A Walk in the City*, p. 90.

construction and with hierarchical roles in the private and public spheres. However, there were a few positive representations of girlhood in the narratives that are worth noting. For instance, the representation of a young girl working outside the domestic sphere, in a non-traditional female occupation[22] as well as the lack of any discursive representations of girls executing household chores are symptomatic of a significant change in the discursive content of the newly revised anthology textbooks compared with the previous books. A plethora of studies on gender representations in the previous textbooks have postulated that in the Hellenic curriculum materials of primary education, girls' portrayals in the domestic sphere were very often associated with household activities (Kouimtzi , 1987; Anthogalidou, 1989; Deligianni- Kantartzi, 1991; Maragoudaki, 1993; Louvrou, 1994; Freiderikou, 1995, 1998). However, these representations may not be adequate to deconstruct the emphasised femininity discourses, which idealise adult females' roles in the family as nurturers and homemakers.

Boys' and girls' positionings in the domestic sphere was discussed with the children during the group interviews. More specifically, I asked children to comment on boys' and girls' roles in the domestic sphere in one of the stories (*The Garden of Samich* by Litsa Psarafti, pp.154-157) that they had read recently in the class and they were all familiar with. In the story, Rasmigia, a little girl, and her brothers are helping their father in the garden, while their mother is cooking. The analysis of the interviews unravelled crucial gender asymmetries regarding the ways in which most boys and most girls negotiated these discourses. In detail, boys were almost unanimous that the girl was playing in the garden whereas the boys were working.

Researcher: '*Do you think that they can do this job?*'

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[22] Litsa Psarafti, *The Garden of Samich,* pp. 154-157.

Andreas: '*I think that boys can do it, but the girl will get tired*'.

Researcher: '*So, do you believe that girls cannot do the same things with boys?*

Andreas: '*No they cannot. Girls play with dolls they do not help with difficult stuff*'.

Researcher: '*So what do you think about Rasmigia?*'

Andreas: '*I think she is playing in the garden....my sister does the same...Sometimes, though, they can do it but they don't like it*'.

In contrast to the majority of boys, most girls were able to challenge the traditional gender discourses that position girlhood in the domestic sphere and supported the view that girls can do the things that Rasmigia did in the story.

Researcher: '*What do you think about Rasmigia and her brothers working in the garden?*'

Medea: '*It is ok*'.

Researcher: '*Would you do what Rasmigia does?*'

Medea: '*Yes, it's fun. Sometimes I help my grandmother in the garden*'.

Next, I explored pupils' views of boys' and girls' roles and responsibilities in the family. More specifically, I asked the pupils if boys and girls should help their mothers with household chores, such as cleaning. The analysis of boys' accounts revealed that most of them reproduced the traditional gender discourses promoted by the anthology textbooks. Most of the boys told me that boys are not supposed to work at home and perform household chores.

Tassos: '*Boys do not help with cleaning, girls do that only*'.

> **Nikolas:** '*No....boys do not clean at home... I don't.... my sister and my mum does the cleaning*'.

Nikolas' (hegemonic boy) and Tassos' (complicit boy) responses indicate that some boys drew on the gender division of their family for making sense of gender roles in the domestic sphere. Both boys did not perform household chores at home. In contrast, Achilles and Costas, who performed subordinated masculinity, were among the few boys who said that they did some household chores and expressed the opinion that boys should help their mothers at home.

> **Achilles:** '*Yes boys can help with cleaning.....I do help my mum. I don't have a sister and sometimes I help my mum*'.
> **Researcher:** '*Do you like it?*'
> **Achilles:** '*I don't mind... but I prefer to play rather than cleaning*'.

It can be argued that hegemonic/complicit boys reproduced to a great extent the traditional gender discourses in the family whereas boys, like Achilles or Costas who performed subordinated masculinity, challenged the traditional division of gender roles in the domestic sphere. This could be explained by the fact that hegemonic boys had more to lose than subordinated boys by challenging the traditional gender discourses. It also indicates that boys who perform hegemonic masculinity are in constant need to reaffirm their masculine identity, for by challenging normative gender discourses hegemonic boys set their hegemonic status/masculinity at risk.

On the other hand, the majority of girls held the opinion that boys and girls should help out at home with the household chores. Symptomatic of this is Sophia's response:

> **Sophia:** '*I think that boys and girls can help with cleaning. When my mum is at work we help our grandmother at home*'.

There were, however, a few girls who did not challenge the normative positioning of femininity in the domestic sphere. In particular, Nana and Danae they reproduced emphasised femininity discourses, for they held the view that men and boys do not help with household chores.

> **Nana:** '*Boys don't clean, only women do that...sometimes girls too*'.

Nana and Danae performed emphasised femininity and they had accepted a traditional positioning of femininity in the domestic sphere. To the contrary, the majority of girls were able to distance themselves from emphasised femininity regarding boys' and girls' responsibilities in the family and they reproduced more gender egalitarian discourses.

Moving beyond the demarcated domestic sphere, the analysis of gender dynamics in the labour market postulated that the anthologies reinforce anachronistic views of gender roles, which do not reflect the contemporary gender relations in the Hellenic labour market (Galata, 1995; Ioakimoglou & Kritikides, 1997; General Secretariat for Gender Equality, 1999). More specifically, the discursive representations of femininity in paid employment position females as pariahs in a male-dominated labour market. Male characters' dynamic presence in paid employment is manifested in their participation rates and the social status of their occupational roles. Male employment is characterised by a variety of manual professions and in some instances of occupations of intellectual and technical nature. The nature of father's occupational activities justifies his absence from the home. Most importantly, the nature of the occupations that he executes perpetuates the normative discourses of the physically strong or intellectually capable male, for a common characteristic of these professions is that many

of them involve a strong element of drudgery, physical fatigue or intellectual/technical skills[23]. A crucial demographic characteristic of men's participation in the labour market is that the majority of male characters are married. Unlike men, married women or mothers are marginalised and on the rare occasions that they participate in paid employment they perform manual occupations with low social prestige or occupational roles that are traditionally considered as appropriate for women, such as teachers[24]. These gender discourses of gender participation in the labour market undervalue women's role in the labour force, legitimate and validate women's marginalisation from the labour market and reinforce emphasised femininity discourses[25].

These traditional gender discourses of women's employment were discussed with the pupils during the group interviews. The analysis of children's accounts postulated that most boys and most girls reproduced almost to the same extent the gendered division of the labour market. However, many girls were able to challenge the traditional discourses of stay-at-home mothers. In particular, during the interviews I summarised three stories from the textbooks and placed emphasis on male and female characters' occupational roles. Then I discussed with the pupils whether these activities/professions are suitable for females and

[23]In detail, a total of 30 occupations were recorded, covering a wide spectrum of professions, from occupations of high social and professional status (like doctor, astronaut, etc.) to manual occupations (such as farmer and miller). The male occupations could be grouped into three broad categories: manual, intellectual and technical. In their majority men were practicing intellectual and technical-skilled occupations (54%) while only 23% of male characters executed manual occupations. Hence, it could argued that the analysis of men's participation in the labour market designated that men are employed in a large variety of occupations and in their majority they practice professions of high social standing or occupation that require advanced technical and mental skills.

[24] Not only women occupy the lowest share of the labour market, but also the few instances in which women portrayed to work outside the home, are single. Married women and mothers are completely marginalised from paid employment. To the contrary, 9.5% of working men were married and had children. Although the percentage of working fathers is very low, however, compared with the total absence of working mothers acquires a great significance and it could be argued that the anthologies promote a strictly patriarchal organisation of the labour market, which excludes women from it, especially the mothers.

[25] A crucial aspect of gender asymmetries in the labour market is related to the ratio of male to female participation. The quantitative data designate that although there are very few references to male and female characters' occupational status, labour market is male dominated in the narratives. In particular, of the total characters, only 46.3% of males and 7.2% of females actively participate in the labour market. However, the vast majority of the total employed characters refer to males, while a very small percentage of professionally employed characters are women. In detail, from the total of 67 employed characters in the textbooks 63 males (94.1%) and 4 females (5.9%) participated in paid employment.

males[26]. Boys were almost unanimous that mothers should stay at home whereas fathers should work outside the domestic sphere.

> **Researcher:** '*What do you think about the activities of the father and the mother in these stories that I read to you?*'
> **Manos:** '*They are OK*'.
> **Researcher:** '*Do you think that women should work or stay at home?*'
> **Manos:** '*Women stay at home, men work*'.
> **Researcher:** '*But there are many women that work*'.
> **Manos:** '*Some women work, but they don't like it because they get tired*'.
> **Researcher:** '*Men do not get tired?*'
> **Manos:** '*They do get tired, but not so easily as women do*'.

Manos, as well as the majority of boys who agreed with him performed complicit/hegemonic masculinity. In contrast, Achilles and Costas, who performed subordinated masculinity, held more gender egalitarian views, for they supported women's participation in paid employment.

> **Achilles:** '*I think that women should work...If they want they can do what men do*'.

This can also be explained by the fact that subordinated boys had also mothers who engaged in paid employment. The data yielded that having a mother who actively participates in paid employment might have a crucial impact on pupils' views of gender.

Conversely, although many girls had accepted women's role as nurturers they were able to challenge the traditional discourses which position females in the demarcated domestic

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[26] The discussion was based on the stories: *Nordin in the Church* by Elsa Chiou, p.72, *Prasinoskoufis* by Pipina Tsimikali, p.64, *The Garden of Samich* by Litsa Psarafti, p.154, *Katerina and the Invisible Man in the Dark,* by Maro Loizou, p.132.

sphere. The majority of girls positioned females both in the domestic sphere and the labour market.

> **Researcher:** '*What do you think about the activities of the father and the mother in these stories that I read to you?*'
> **Medea:** '*They are OK*'.
> **Researcher:** '*Do you think that women should work or stay at home?*'
> **Medea:** '*I believe that women can work and they can do all the things that they do at home when they come back from work*'.

Even though many girls supported women's participation in paid employment, they had accepted to the same extent as boys a gendered division of occupations, as their answers to the question name three professions that you think are appropriate for men and women reveal. In particular, girls named as male-appropriate jobs the following: '*builder, singer, policeman, engineer and craftsman*' whereas the appropriate occupations for females according to them are: '*lawyer, hairdresser, cleaning lady, singer, dancer and ballerina*'. Analogous were boys' responses, who told me that professions such as '*doctor, footballer, surgeon, basketball player and builder*' are more suitable for males whereas occupations such as '*singer, hairdresser, cook and pharmacist*' are more appropriate for females.

Thus, all boys from both schools reproduced normative gender discourses, which position women in less prestigious roles in the labour market. Most girls were also unable to challenge the traditional gender division of occupation as masculine and feminine. It is interesting that hegemonic/complicit boys held the same views of gender-appropriate occupations with the subordinated boys. Children's responses shed light on the highly polarised binaries that regulated their views of gender-appropriate occupational roles in paid employment. Although it was expected that hegemonic/complicit boys would support a traditional gender

organisation of the labour market, most girls' and subordinated boys' responses came as a surprise for they had mothers in paid employment, some of which practiced non-traditional occupations. This illuminates that the relationship between mother's employment status and children's ability to challenge normative gender discourses is not a causal one (Davies, 1989b). A range of factors shape children's perceptions of gender (such as a range of media, family etc.) and encourage them to take on these normative gender discourses.

Lastly, I explored the discursive representations of boys' and girls' individual and group play activities. The findings showed that the narratives reinforce a traditional gender division of children's activities/toys. The discursive representations of boys playing with weapons[27] and technologically advanced toys, such as robots[28], provide young readers a framework for performing successful masculinity (hegemonic masculinity). Unlike boys, girls in the textbooks are depicted as playing with dolls[29], drawing and painting[30] and they are encouraged to take on discourses of matrimony and motherhood, around which emphasised femininity is discursively constructed.

The analysis of gender discourses in the anthology textbooks postulated that the revised textbooks continue to reinforce traditional views of children's play activities. The only positive representation that did not reproduce the normative division of gender-appropriate toys in the narratives was that of Ernest, who was playing with a doll bear[31]. This discursive representation disrupts notions of hegemonic masculinity, which are dominant in the narratives. However, this single example may not be adequate to deconstruct the normative gender discourses that are abundant in the narratives.

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[27] Folk Song, *The Little Bandit* p.94
[28] Dedier Levy, *Angelman*, p.177
[29] Nondas Elatos, *A Walk in the City*, p.90
[30] Litsa Psarafti, *The Garden of Samich,* pp.154-157
[31] Mersa Kompania, *The Story of Ernest*, p.43

Analogous are the findings of the analysis of children's collective play activities. A central element of the discursive representations of boys' and girls' play practices is the idealisation and normalisation of gender homogenous groups. The complete absence of boys and girls playing in gender-heterogeneous groups divulges the degree to which textbooks reinforce gender normative discourses in relation to children's collective play practices. In the texts, boys are portrayed to participate in energetic football matches[32] whereas girls draw and paint quietly in small groups[33]. It is of pivotal significance to note that boys' collective games require intense physical effort whereas, by contrast, girls' artistic activities lack any intensity and physical effort.

These discourses, if they are taken on, might regulate young readers' performance of gender, for they are signifiers of normative masculinity and femininity. The data from the group interviews yielded that the majority of pupils reproduced these gender divides in representations of play. For instance, when I told students that I have read the anthology textbooks and I have noticed that boys were playing usually football (or when they played alone they played with toys such as robots) whereas girls were painting, drawing and playing with dolls, pupils were almost unanimous in articulating gender normative play practices and use of toys:

> **Nikolas:** '*Girls like to play these silly games and we play football and electronic games*'.
> **Nana:** '*Boys like to play football...they don't play anything else. Girls play these games, but we play other games too*'.

Nikolas and Nana were two typical examples of hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity performance in the specific schools. Their views provided a strong indication of

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[32] Pantelis Kaliotsos, *A Different Football Match*, p.144
[33] Litsa Psarafti, *The Garden of Samich,* p.154-157

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the play practices through which some boys and some girls reassured their masculine and feminine gender identity. However, a few boys and girls challenged these normative gender discourses in the narratives.

> **Medea:** '*Girls do not play only these games...I play football sometimes'*.
> **Achilles:** '*Not all boys play football....I don't like football. Some girls also play football*'

Medea, as well as the other girls who were able to challenge the normative gender discourses of children's play activities, distanced themselves from emphasised femininity (see chapter 6). Similarly, Achilles and Costas performed subordinated masculinity and they were marginalised by their male classmates for not participating in football matches and for playing with girls.

In conclusion, despite some improvements, patriarchal and anachronistic discursive representations of femininity and masculinity persist in the representations of gender in the textbooks. The discourses of masculinity and femininity in the labour market and the domestic sphere reinforce emphasised femininity discourses, which support women's subordinate position in relation to males in the heterosexual matrix of marriage and family. Women's marginalisation from the labour market is accompanied by their dominance in the domestic sphere. The discursive content of the anthology textbooks in relation to female employment poses a problem with critical social and political dimensions, for it is symptomatic of the minimal attention that gender equality issues have received by official educational policy makers in Hellas. Furthermore, the comparison of my findings with the outcomes of the literature on the Hellenic textbooks of primary education showed that the discursive representations of gender in the textbooks have changed very little over the last three decades. Very little improvement has been made in relation to the portrayals of gender

roles in the domestic sphere and labour market, for men and women were represented to a great extent the same way as they did three decades ago (see Ziogou-Karastergiou & Deligianni-Kouimtzi, 1981, Deligianni-Kouimtzi, 1987; Anthogalidou, 1989; Kantartzi, 1991; Louvrou, 1994; Freiderikou, 1995, 1998). The few positive discursive representations that were recorded (for example the lack of depictions of girls carrying out household chores and the representation of a boy playing with a non-gender normative toy) are not adequate to deconstruct hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity discourses, which are abundant in the narratives. This indicates that the institutional measures for gender equality have not been sufficiently absorbed by the official educational policy for printed teaching materials.

The analysis of children's accounts of gender discourses in the anthology textbooks indicates that gender play a crucial role in negotiating gender discourses, for it was observed that most boys were less capable than most girls of challenging the normative discourses of masculinity and femininity. The findings yielded that the majority of boys in my research were less prepared than most girls to participate in the disruption of gendered discourses 'because they had more to lose than gain from the changes' (Westland, 1993: 244). In parallel with this, boys who performed hegemonic/complicit masculinity retained a more traditional view of gender roles compared with boys who performed subordinated masculinity. Another crucial parameter that affected the way in which children negotiated and made sense of the gender discourses in the textbooks was mother's occupational status. More specifically, children who had mothers in paid employment were more able to challenge the traditional positionings of male and female characters' roles and responsibilities in the domestic sphere.

In the next section, I discuss the findings from classroom observations and teacher interviews. The analysis of the structures of classroom discursive practices, combined with

the data from the analysis of the anthology textbooks, illuminates the role of the educational system in reinforcing traditional gender discourses through its quotidian practices.

5.2 Gender Discourses in the Hellenic Primary Classrooms

Schools are sites where hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity are discursively constructed (Connell 1989; Mac an Ghaill 1996). Within the physical spaces of school, primary classrooms constitute arenas where the performance of gender and the construction of gender identities take place (Paechter &Clark, 2007). In particular, gender asymmetries are 'deeply embedded within the structures of classroom discursive practice' (Baxter, 2003: 98), for teachers through their quotidian classroom practices regulate and normalise children's performance of gender and 'contribute towards the construction of dominant modes of masculinity' (Skelton, 2002: 17).

This chapter sets out to scrutinise how teachers' classroom practices reinforce hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity discourses. The data collection involved semi-structured interviews with five third- and fourth-grade teachers in two Athenian primary schools (for more details see chapter 4). The findings postulated that primary teachers held anachronistic views of gender and reproduced hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity discourses. In addition, educators did not spend time discussing gender equality issues in the classroom and through their practices reinforced the normative gender discourses promoted by the anthology textbooks. The analysis of teachers' responses highlighted the myriad contradictions in how they talked about gender and in how they negotiated normative gender discourses. The data also suggest that the first step for achieving gender equity in primary classrooms involves providing training to educators on gender equality issues.

The interviews with the teachers commenced with an informal conversation about boys' and girls' personality characteristics. In detail, I provided teachers with a list of eleven personality traits and I asked them to categorise them into masculine and feminine by thinking what best describes boys' and girls' personality (see Appendix IX). Although, some can argue that this question encouraged teachers to stereotype, it offered valuable insights into teachers' ability to challenge stereotypes even when they are encouraged to do so. Symptomatic of this was Athena who was able to challenge the binaries that the question itself suggested. The analysis of teachers' accounts enabled me to deconstruct the dichotomous and polarised discourses around which the notions of masculinity and femininity were constructed. Teachers (three females and one male) unanimously believed that boys are characterised by self-assurance, independence, sloppy appearance, quality of leadership and sensitiveness. Conversely, girls are docile, dreamy, ambitious and sensitive. Typical of this is Costas' response:

> **Costas**[34]**: *Boys:* '*Independence, thoughtfulness, boldness, quality of leadership, competitiveness, ambition, sloppy appearance. **Girls:** Docility, dreamy nature, sensitiveness, ambition*'.

The findings corroborate previous studies on gender in education, noting that primary school teachers reproduced oppositional and dichotomous gender binaries, around which masculinity and femininity are traditionally constructed (Belotti, 1975; Spender, 1982; Riddell, 1989; Walkerdine, 1990; Jordan, 1995). As discussed, participants' perceptions of masculinity and femininity were analogous to the discursive representations of gender in the anthology textbooks. This allowed me to hypothesise that the teachers were unable to eliminate the influence of hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity discourses in the textbooks on children's perceptions. It was also expected that through their classroom practices

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[34] Costas is a 40 year-old male coming from a white working-class background. He grew up in Athens and has been working as a teacher for 23 years. As will be discussed later Costas had not received any training on gender equality issues, except from a few courses that he attended at the university as a student.

educators perpetuated normative gender discourses, which propagate dichotomous gender binaries.

In contrast to her colleagues, Athena believed that all the attributes could be ascribed to both females and males.

> **Athena:** *Boys:* '*Docility, independence, thoughtfulness, dreamy nature, boldness, sloppy appearance, self-confident, sensitiveness, quality of leadership, ambition, competitiveness*'. *Girls:* '*Docility, independence, thoughtfulness, dreamy nature, boldness, sloppy appearance, self-confident, sensitiveness, quality of leadership, ambition competitiveness*'.

Athena is a 37-year-old female teacher with an interest in gender equality issues. She comes from a working-class background and she grew up in a rural area of Hellas. She has been living in Athens for 16 years and has taught in several primary schools. She spent a considerable amount of her spare time reading and attending seminars and lectures on gender equality issues. This unofficial training that she had received may elucidate the reasons for holding more gender egalitarian views than her colleagues. Athena's colleagues, however, admitted that they had not received any training, for the Ministry of Education does not organise any seminars on gender equality for educators. The only training that educators had received in relation to gender equality was during their undergraduate studies. This antithesis between Athena's views and those of her colleagues highlights the significance of making educators aware of gender equality issues through continuing training.

During the interviews, I further explored participants' views of masculine and feminine personality characteristics through a discussion about boys' and girls' ability to handle pressure situations. Participants were almost unanimous that boys are better than girls at handling pressure situations. Their perceptions stemmed heavily from normative discourses of

masculinity and femininity, according to which girls are sensitive (Riddell, 1989; Walkerdine, 1990; Jordan, 1995) and boys are insensitive and frivolous (Francis, 2000; Baxter, 2003; Sunderland, 2004). Maria's response is symptomatic of teachers' views of masculinity:

> **Maria**[35]**:** '*I think that boys are better than girls at handling pressure situations because they are less emotional*'

Contrary to her colleagues, Athena challenged this traditional binary of emotional and unemotional around which hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity were constructed in these schools.

> **Athena:** '*No, I think it depends on the person…it is not gender related*'.

The data demonstrated that participants, except Athena, had identified masculinity with frivolousness and apathy. As discussed, this normative perception of masculinity is reinforced by the anthology textbooks. A further discussion with the teachers revealed that participants often deployed hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity discourses for giving meaning to the categories of male and female. Specifically, according to teachers' responses, boys are more active and outspoken than girls. As Costas told me:

> **Costas:** '*... boys are more active than girls. In the classroom and in the schoolyard you can see the difference between them*'.

This normative discourse that regulated Costas' perception of masculinity and femininity was widely reproduced by all participants who had not received any formal training in gender

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[35] Maria was the youngest teacher, only 26 years old and came from a white middle-class background. She grew up in a rural area and has been teaching for four years. Maria had not received any training on gender equality issues, except some lessons at the university as a student.

equality issues. Athena, however, challenged the traditional binaries that regulated her colleagues' views of gender, for she believed that both boys and girls can be active and candid.

> **Athena:** '*It depends on the circumstances. Both boys and girls can be active and outspoken. Sometimes in a different way though*'.

The analysis of participants' accounts showed how the binaries of apathy/sensitivity, outspokenness/taciturnity and activeness/compliance constitute central categories for 'organising' boys' and girls' conduct and giving meaning to being boy and being girl. These polarised and dichotomous discourses of masculinity and femininity are reinforced by the discursive representations of male and female characters in the anthology textbooks and constitute critical elements of hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity in the specific schools.

Although the majority of teachers reproduced polarised gender binaries in making sense of masculinity and femininity, they were all able to challenge the normative gender dichotomy of strong-weak. More specifically, participants challenged the identification of masculinity with strength and femininity with weakness. Symptomatic of this is Athena's response:

> **Athena:** '*No, definitely not….only in terms of physical strength, boys are stronger*'.

Teachers' ability to challenge this traditional binary around which normative masculinity and femininity are traditionally constructed was evaluated very positively. The discussion about males' and females' personality characteristics was concluded with a final question that aimed to explore teachers' views of the ideal characteristics of successful masculinity and femininity. The analysis of teachers' responses demonstrated that they deployed gender normative discourses for making sense of feminine and masculine personality. In particular,

teachers who had not received any training in gender equality issues were unanimous that successful femininity is characterised by sensitiveness, politeness and obedience. Unlike femininity, successful masculine performance is manifested by boys who are energetic, athletic and self-assertive. Typical of this is Costas' response:

>**Costas:** '*The ideal boy should be dynamic, active and sporty and the ideal girl….eh…girls should be sensitive, obedient and polite'*.

Athena, however, told me that both boys and girls should be docile, quiet, have critical thinking and self-assurance. Athena was able to challenge the hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity discourses that regulate and normalise a binaristic/ dichotomous construction of masculinity and femininity.

As discussed, teachers reproduced normative gender discourses, which were harmonious with the discursive representations of boyhood and girlhood in the anthology textbooks. In detail, educators had associated masculinity with sportiness and femininity with obedience and sensitivity (see section 5.1). Hence, participants' sense making and understanding of masculinity and femininity was based on oppositional and dichotomous binaries. My findings corroborate previous studies on teachers' views of masculinity and femininity and highlight that these polarised and dichotomous binaries, around which masculinity and femininity are constructed, have remained unchanged over the last two decades (Sidiropoulou-Dimakakou, 1990; Savvidou, 1996; Kantartzi, 1996; Natsiopoulou &Giannoula, 1996).

Next, the discussion with the teachers focused on their classroom practices because within the post-structuralist paradigm classrooms are perceived as arenas where the performance of gender takes place (Paechter &Clark, 2007). Teachers play a critical role in regulating pupils' gender identity construction, for through their classroom practices they might encourage pupils to perform hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity. A typical gender

asymmetry that characterises primary classrooms is related to the fact that teachers often respond differently to pupils on the basis of their gender. Consequently, boys and girls receive unequal treatment at school (Skelton et al. 2009). One aspect of teachers' quotidian classroom practices that I was interested in related to the gender of the students that they preferred to call for help if they needed assistance with class paperwork. Participants' responses showed that the gender of the students did not play a role in their choice. Costas, however, admitted that he preferred to call girls when he needed assistance because:

> **Costas:** 'G*irls are docile...do not cause any problems. For instance, a girl will hand out students' homework books quickly and effectively whereas boys will get some time to tease their classmates or chat with them before they get the job done'.*

Although teachers almost unanimously believed that they did not take into account pupils' gender when asking students to assist them with class paperwork, the data from the observations yielded that participants called on boys more often that they did call on girls when they needed help with class paperwork such as, handing out letters or students' homework books. Boys' received more attention in Athena's and Costas' classroom, despite the fact that Athena had received some unofficial training in gender equality issues and held more gender egalitarian views than her colleagues (see section 5.3).

I remember from my school days in Hellas that educators, especially in the early years of compulsory education, had a common response to cacophony that sometimes characterised classrooms. They reprimanded noisy boys by making them sit next to girls. Going back to a primary school after so many years I was interested in exploring whether that popular practice had survived over the years. Hence, I asked participants if they consider making a boy sit next to a girl as a punishment. Teachers unanimously believed that although it was still a common practice, it did not serve the purpose of disciplining boys. Typical of this is

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Catherine's response:

> **Catherine:** '*No. Students are free to choose whom they*
> *want to sit with. Sometimes if there is a noisy boy I may*
> *ask him to sit next to a girl….as that way they are quieter'*.

Although participants do not ask boys to sit next to girls for reprimanding them, they often ask them to sit next to a girl because they tend to be quieter. Through this practice girls are positioned as nurturers of boys and 'guardians of the moral order' in the classroom (Walkerdine, 1990: 7). Empirical studies have postulated that girls regularly serve and facilitate boys by providing them with school equipment or by helping them out with homework (Walkerdine, 1990; Thorne, 1993). However, it is critical that boys and girls are treated as two dichotomous groups in the classroom. One the one hand, the helpful, good and sensitive girl becomes the epitome of femininity (Walkerdine, 1985; Thorne, 1993; Francis, 1998b) whereas boys' tendency towards a vocal and physical presence in the classroom is often perceived as a characteristic of masculinity (Baxter, 2003). Teachers' classroom practices encourage boys to take a dominant role in the classroom and cast girls in supportive roles (Walkerdine, 1990; Thorne, 1993; Francis, 1998b; Baxter, 2003).

The effectiveness of this practice (making a boy sit next to a girl) for solving issues of cacophony in the classroom lies perhaps in the fact that boys and girls do not play together. The findings from observation on school playgrounds yielded that boys' and girls' activities on school playgrounds were extremely diverse and encouraged the development of gender-homogeneous friendships. It was observed that boys who participated in girls' activities set their masculinity at risk. Besides, the discursive representations of boys' and girls' friendships in the anthology textbooks do not encourage the formation of gender-heterogeneous friendships. This may explicate why boys are more attentive when they sit next to girls. In contrast, when boys sit next to boys, regardless of the time that they spend

together on school playgrounds or outside the school, are more talkative, as the data from the observation and participants' responses substantiate.

Athena, however, was the only teacher who applied this practice in order to eliminate gender-homogeneous friendships in the classroom. More specifically, she told me that:

> **Athena:** '*No. Certainly it's not a punishment. I have always made boys sit next to girls as I am trying to encourage boys and girls to spend some time together*'.

Her intervention is of great significance, for it might have a positive impact on diminishing gender segregation in the classroom. Indeed, the findings from observations postulated that Athena's students spent more time in mixed-gender groups. As Athena told me, she implemented this practice in order to diminish the gender fringes that regulated boys' and girls' friendships in primary education after attending a seminar on gender equity practices in primary education.

The findings from teacher interviews demonstrated the binaries that regulated participants' sense making and understanding of gender. The traditional discourses that regulated educators' understanding of gender normalised certain behaviours as masculine or feminine. As a result, teachers through their classroom practices often reinforced the discursive construction of hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity. Symptomatic of this is teachers' responses as to whether they would intervene if a student displayed a cross-gendered dressing or behaviour in the classroom. Teachers were almost unanimous that these matters should be discussed with the parents. More specifically, Vicky and Costas told me that:

> **Vicky:** '*There was in the past one student who did not want to play with boys and was acting strange. What I did was to discuss this matter with his parents*'.

> **Costas:** '*I think I would try to tell him that boys do not dress/behave like that*'.

This indicates teachers' role in reinforcing hegemonic masculinity, for when boys do not act out normative masculinity they intervene with the intention to rectify a behaviour that is 'strange' as Vicky said. Participants' accounts also highlight the role of the heterosexual matrix in regulating children's performance of masculinity and femininity in the specific primary schools. The notion of the heterosexual matrix has been very useful for understanding 'the ways in which children's normative gender identities are inextricably embedded and produced within hegemonic representations of heterosexuality' (Renold, 2006a: 89), and thus, heterosexuality becomes the identifier of what it means to be a real boy and a real girl (Butler, 1990, 1993).

In the particular primary schools ideal masculinity and femininity were constructed on the basis of the heterosexual matrix, which was idealised by the discursive representations of masculinity and femininity in the anthologies. Teachers' role in regulating pupils' performance of gender is symptomatic of how the education system through its practices can normalise children's performance of gender, based on the hegemonic heterosexual matrix. Athena's response in relation to this was very interesting, for she told me:

> **Athena:** '*I have got a student in my class who doesn't play with boys but only with girls. He never joined a football match... I spoke to his classmates and I told them that they should all play together. I did not say anything to him though*'.

Although Athena held gender egalitarian views of masculinity and femininity, she intervened because one of the boys in her classroom was not playing with boys (it should be noted that the other boys in her classroom played exclusively football). This underlines teachers' role in

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reinforcing gender-homogeneous friendships in the specific schools, for they intervened or they would intervene if a boy played only with girls. As well, the findings yielded how teachers often encouraged students to see football as a means of performing successful masculinity (see chapter 6). However, all teachers reported that homosexuality is a normal behaviour and agreed with Costas who believed that:

Costas: '*Everyone is free to do whatever he/she wants'*.

This is symptomatic of the contradictions between their views of gender discourses and their quotidian practices. Although, they accepted homosexuality they intervened to rectify pupils' behaviour when it did not comply with hegemonic understandings of normative masculinity. Nevertheless, educators would not intervene if a girl played exclusively with boys. This suggests that masculinity is fragile. To the contrary, for the specific age group (8-10 years old) femininity is more elastic. Scholars have postulated that girls can perform non-normative femininity without setting their feminine identity at risk (Renold, 2005, 2006b; Robinson &Davies, 2007; Davies, 2008). Nonetheless, if girls continue to perform non-normative femininity in their adolescence then adults get seriously concerned (Halberstam, 2005).

Next, the interviews focused on educators' views of gender-appropriate occupational roles. In particular, I asked participants to think of their four best students in the class (two boys and two girls) and tell me what job they think would be more suitable for them. Teachers were almost unanimous that teaching professions were more appropriate for their female students. On the other hand, professions of high social status (i.e. lawyer and doctor) and positive sciences orientated occupations (i.e. engineer and mathematician) were considered more appropriated for boys. The findings show the influence of hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity discourses -which position females in subservient occupational roles- on educators' views of gender-appropriate roles. As discussed, previous studies on Hellenic

primary teachers' views of gender roles have found that educators supported a normative division of occupation in the labour market (Freiderikou &Folerou 1991). Based on teachers' responses in relation to gender-appropriate occupations, a hypothesis was advanced in which it was suggested that educators were unable to deconstruct the normative gender discourses in the anthology textbooks. Most likely, teachers through their classroom practices reinforced the traditional discursive representations of masculinity and femininity in the anthologies. As discussed, most pupils reproduced these normative discourses (see section 5.1).

In spite of the fact that participants reproduced a normative division of occupations, they unanimously believed that girls should be encouraged to enter traditionally male occupations such as engineering, medicine, or architecture. Typical of this is Vicky's response:

> **Vicky:** '*Yes it is important and I try to encourage girls*'.

Participants' views were antithetical to hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity discourses and were evaluated positively. However, their answers contradicted their previous responses of pupils' future occupational roles. This is symptomatic of the contradictions noted in their responses, which emphasise the changing attitudes towards gender roles in the Hellenic society. Next, I explored teachers' views of the curriculum subjects. First of all, I was interested in examining their views of gender-appropriate school subjects. In particular, I asked them if they thought that some of the curriculum subjects were more appropriate for boys or girls.

> **Athena:** '*No, I think that in primary education all lessons are both for boys and girls. The only one that I can think of as more suitable for girls is home economics, which is taught in secondary schools. But again this is not true as my father cannot even make a cup of coffee! I think that men should learn to do a few things in the kitchen*'.

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> **Maria:** '*I have always thought that Hellenic literature was more suitable for girls but it seems that boys are better than girls at this subject*'.
>
> **Costas:** '*Mathematics is a subject that girls do not like very much*'.
>
> **Catherine:** '*I think that girls are more interested in theoretical subjects boys prefer maths, physics etc*'.
>
> **Vicky:** '*I think all subjects are appropriate for both boys and girls*'.

Costas and Catherine reproduced a traditional categorisation of school subjects as masculine and feminine, according to which boys excel in positive sciences, whereas girls outperform boys in theoretical and linguistic subjects at school. As discussed, analogous were the findings of the previous studies on teachers' views of gender-appropriate subjects (Chionidou-Moskofoglou, 1996; Stavridou et. al., 1999; Deligianni- Kouimtzi, 2002). This is symptomatic of the need for training primary school teachers in gender equality issues. Participants' normative views of gender-appropriate curriculum subjects might have a crucial impact on children's learning, for boys and girls might receive more/less attention in the classroom by their teachers, depending on the subject. Preceding studies have found that teachers' different expectations for boys and girls in specific school subjects influence significantly the attention that boys and girls receive in the classroom (Sidiropoulou – Dimakakou, 1995, 1997; Deligianni-Kouimtzi et. al. 2000). Unlike Costas and Catherine, Vicky and Athena were able to challenge the traditional categorisation of school subjects as masculine and feminine.

The discussion of gender-appropriate curriculum subjects was followed by a conversation on gender roles in the domestic sphere. More specifically, I asked participants what they thought was more important to prepare boys for a successful career or a successful family life? The analysis of their responses showed that teachers were able to challenge the normative

hegemonic masculinity discourses that position males in the public sphere free from any household responsibilities. They unanimously believed that both girls and boys should get prepared for a successful family life and career. Typical of this is Athena's response:

> **Athena:** '*I think it is very important for both boys and girls to be prepared for both a career and family life'*.

In addition, teachers were unanimous that the domestic sphere is not women's natural place and that women should actively participate in the labour market.

> **Catherine:** '*...I believe that women can work and should get help from their husbands with the household chores'*.
> **Vicky:** '*I do not think that this should be the case or at least with educated people. Most women nowadays are well educated and do not accept this'*.

It can be argued that participants were able to challenge hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity discourses which position males as breadwinners and exclude women from the labour market. The findings of my research highlight a positive development in relations to teachers' views of gender roles in the domestic sphere and labour market. As discussed, previous studies have postulated that primary teachers accepted a traditional positionings of males and females in the family (Savvidou, 1996; Kantartzi, 1996; Deligianni-Kouimtzi &Ziogou, 1998).

Teachers' egalitarian views of gender roles in the domestic sphere were not adequate to deconstruct boys' normative perceptions of gender. As discussed, the findings from interviews with the boys yielded that they were unable to challenge the traditional gender division of roles in the domestic sphere.

This is also related to the fact that gender equality issues were not adequately discussed in the

classroom, for the curriculum does not provide any guidelines to educators for discussing gender equality issues in the classroom. Symptomatic of this is teachers' response to the questions: a) 'do you discuss issues of gender equality in the classroom?' and b) 'do you think that your students hold anachronistic views of gender?' More specifically, all participants agreed with Athena and Costas who told me that:

> **Athena:** '*Sometimes yes, I do, but not really in depth... It is very important to discuss these matters as it can help children negotiate the views of gender roles that have acquired from their families. As far as my students' views of gender roles, I believe that they do not have stereotyped perceptions*'.
>
> **Costas:** '*Sometimes we do. It is important to discuss these issues but we don't always have time....I think that the majority of my students do not have gender stereotypes*'.

The little time that educators dedicated to addressing gender equality issues partially elucidates why children reproduced to a great extent the normative gender discourses promoted by the anthology textbooks, for 'how curriculum subjects are taught is as, if not more, significant than the content material' (Skelton, 2002: 19). The findings also yielded that educators were unaware that pupils' reproduced, to a great extent, emphasised femininity and hegemonic masculinity discourses, which is indicative of the little time that educators spent discussing gender equality issues in the classroom. The data provide a strong indication that teachers played a crucial role in reinforcing the normative gender discourses promoted by the anthology textbooks.

Next, the interviews with the teachers focused on how gender equitable is the language that they use in the classroom. Participants unanimously believed that they always used gender equitable language. In spite of the fact that the teachers believed that they used gender

equitable language in the classroom, the findings from observations showed that they often used non-gender equitable language (see section 5.3). These contradictions demonstrate that all teachers, to a certain extent, attempted to present themselves more aware of gender inequality issues than they actually were. This could partially explicate the antitheses that were noticed between their classroom practices and their responses in the interview.

One such contradiction was noticed when I asked them if they tried to discourage gender normative behaviours in the classroom. Although they did not spend enough time discussing gender equality issues in the classroom, teachers told me that when an opportunity arises they try to discourage pupils from displaying gender normative behaviours.

> **Maria:** '*I do not want my students to be disrespectful to one another and I always try to tell them that they should respect each other regardless of their ethnicity or gender*'.
> **Vicky:** '*When I notice something wrong, I always try to correct it. Once a boy said that girls are silly and I try to explain him that what he was saying was not right*'.

In summary, although teachers believed that gender equality issues are important and that their classroom practices promote gender egalitarian attitudes, they talked very little about these issues to their students. It is interesting that participants were almost unanimous that their pupils did not hold any normative views of gender roles. However, children's responses showed that they held normative views of masculinity and femininity (see also chapter 7). Teachers' lack of awareness of their pupils' views of gender roles is symptomatic of the inadequate emphasis that educators placed on discussing gender equality issues in the classroom. This is encouraged by government education policy makers, for there is a complete absence of any guidelines to teachers for addressing gender equality issues in the classroom. In addition, educators do not receive any training/guidance relating to gender

equality. Nevertheless, the majority of teachers agreed that schools and government were doing enough to create awareness about gender equality issues in Hellas. Athena, however, was the only one who raised the issue that teachers should receive official training/guidance about gender equality issues.

> **Athena:** '*Yes they are doing enough. As I said the school books are better now than they used to be. Although, I think that they should organise seminars for teachers on this matter. Personally, I attend seminars on gender issues in my spare time but there are many teachers that they have never attended any seminars regarding gender inequalities and teaching practices*'[36].

Conversely, participants held the opinion that teachers' education should foster awareness of gender equality issues. In particular, Vicky told me:

> **Vicky:** '*I think that it would of great help especially for young teachers to learn to identify and eliminate gender stereotypes*'.

Teachers' lack of training in gender equality issues prevented them from recognising the normative gender discourses in the anthology textbooks. This was evident when I asked them if they had noticed any significant changes in relation to gender in the newly-revised textbooks compared with the previous books, as well as if they thought that any improvements should be made to the representations of masculinity and femininity in the new textbooks. Teachers' responses suggest that they were unable to identify the normative gender representations in the curriculum materials. Previous studies have also postulated that teachers who had not received training in gender equality issues were not able to identify stereotyped representations of masculinity and femininity in the instructional materials (Kantartzi, 1996).

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[36] Athena here refers to Public Seminars that are available to everyone to attend.

Startlingly, Athena, although she had attended several seminars on gender equality and was more aware of gender issues in education, she was unable to recognise the normative gender representations that are reinforced by the anthology textbooks.

> **Athena:** '*The older textbooks expressed more traditional opinions with regards to gender roles as well as views on other social phenomena. The older books paid a lot of attention in the Greek culture and tradition. The new anthology textbooks express more modern opinions about these matters. As far as the gender roles are concerned I have not spotted any gender stereotypes*'.

Concluding, it can be argued that due to lack of training teachers most likely reinforced the normative gender discourses that are promoted by the anthology textbooks. In the following section, I discuss the data from the observation in the classrooms and highlight the role of teachers' classroom practices in reinforcing traditional gender discourses. In parallel with this, the analysis unravels the contradictions between teachers' accounts of their classroom practices and their actual classroom practices.

5.3 Gender Dynamics in Classroom Interactions: The Impact of Teachers' Practices on Pupils' Gender Identity Construction.

Gender plays a crucial role in classroom interactions, as students tend to behave differently on the basis of their gender heterogeneity and usually boys and girls sit separately in the classroom. On the other hand, teachers often treat differently male and female pupils at all levels of compulsory education (Heller &Parsons, 1981; Sadker &Sadker, 1986; Worrall &Tsarna, 1987; Omvig, 1989; Smith, 1991, 1992; Bailey, 1993; Holden, 1993; Hopf &Hatzichristou, 1999). Often, primary school boys receive more attention than girls by their educators (Brophy, 1985; Sadker &Sadker, 1986; Bailey, 1993) and dominate the classroom verbally. Undeniably, these asymmetries can be so conspicuous that some teachers fall into

the habit of using 'the girls' and 'the boys' as labels in order to direct interaction. Such a tactic, of course, reinforces the binaries that regulate the performance of gender and highlights the gender gap between boys' and girls' groups even further (Paechter, 2000).

The significance of classroom interactions in reinforcing normative gender discourses (Blaise 2005a, b; Renold 2005) and the crucial impact of teachers' classroom practices on young children's educational and social experiences guided my research to explore the gender dynamics in the Hellenic primary classrooms. My thesis took a post-structuralist view to classroom interactions. Through this theoretical prism, classrooms are perceived as fields where the doing of gender unfolds (Paechter &Clark, 2007). The findings from observations shed some light on teachers' role in reinforcing/challenging gender normative discourses through their quotidian classroom practices.

In the following pages, I present the findings from the analysis of various instructional behaviours of teachers towards male and female students in the classroom. Observations were conducted in two Athenian primary schools for 152 hours, five times per week, over a 6-week period, for a total of five observations, in five classes. Data derived from my observations in six different school subjects (Hellenic language, Mathematics, History, Religious Education, Environmental Studies and Literature). Physical education was not included given the limited time of the observation period. A total of 120 pupils (50 boys and 70 girls) and 5 teachers (four females and one male) participated in the research. Students - teacher interactions were measured by recording the number of questions and responses between teachers and pupils, teachers' feedback to pupils' responses, teachers' discipline of male and female students and social contact between the teachers and students.

The data provided valuable insights into gender dynamics in the Hellenic primary classrooms and illustrated that teachers treated boys and girls differently. That is, they directed more

questions, assigned more tasks and called more boys than girls to the whiteboard (see Appendix XIX). The questions that teachers asked were related to students' homework, their understanding of the lesson and other problems or issues throughout the lesson. Overall, no significant gender asymmetries were recorded in the questions or tasks that the teachers assigned to boys and girls in none of the five classrooms at the two Athenian primary schools where I conducted my observations.

Crucial gender asymmetries were recorded, however, in relation to praise and criticism that the teachers directed at boys and girls. Boys received significantly more praise and criticism than girls by their teachers for giving correct answers or misbehaving accordingly. A significant pattern was noted at both schools in relation to the criticism and praise that teachers directed towards boys. Boys who performed hegemonic masculinity received significantly more criticism for misbehaving and more praise for giving a correct answer than boys who performed complicit or subordinated masculinity. This finding illuminates a crucial characteristic of hegemonic masculinity in the specific schools, for hegemonic boys reassured their masculine identity by misbehaving. Typical of this Nikolas' response:

> **Nikolas**: '...*I am not a girl....girls do what they teacher says because they are scared*'.

On the other hand, girls who performed emphasised femininity received more praise and less criticism than girls who distanced themselves from emphasised femininity. These asymmetries highlight educators' role in reinforcing emphasised femininity and hegemonic masculinity in the specific schools. Besides, findings also yielded that boys and girls who performed normative masculinity and femininity received more attention in the classroom.

These observed discrepancies are not a recent phenomenon. A plethora of other studies have postulated that boys receive more praise and criticism in the classroom than girls. The

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elucidation lies perhaps in the fact that participants in my study, as well as in the preceding research, held higher expectations for boys than girls (Brophy &Good, 1974; Mahoney, 1983; Sadker &Sadker, 1985; Jones, 1987; Jones, 1989; Tressou-Mylona, 1995, 1997; Solomonidou, 1998; Stavridou et. al., 1999; Frosi 2000; Deligianni-Kouimtzi, 2002). As discussed, the teachers who participated in my study held higher expectations for boys in sciences, which partially elucidate why boys received more attention than girls in mathematics classes. Athena's classroom (third-grade primary teacher) was an exception, for she called on boys and girls equally in mathematics classes. In detail, from a total of 2,543 questions directed by the teachers throughout the observation period in all classes at both grades and schools, 1,451 were directed at boys (50 boys in total). Athena was significantly differentiated to other teachers due to the fact that she was calling on boys and girls in altering order. More specifically, she directed a total of 255 questions or tasks to girls (12 girls in total) and a total of 249 to boys (eight boys in total). Athena was calling on boys and girls in alternating order in a conscious attempt to avoid treating boys and girls unequally. As she told me:

> **Athena:** '*...this really works. I know how important it is to give boys and girls equal opportunities in the classroom*'.

The strongest gender asymmetries were observed in Costas' classroom. He directed questions and assigned tasks to girls (14 girls in total) a total of 150 times and to boys (9 boys in total) a total of 289 times, nearly three times more. Costas held different expectations for boys and girls, which may also partially explicate the observed asymmetries in classroom interactions. However, the observed asymmetries might be related to teachers' gender. Previous studies have postulated that teachers' gender shapes communications between teachers and pupils and it might influence the way teachers allocate their attention to boys and girls in primary classrooms. In particular, male teachers tend to interact more with boys (Duffy et al. 2002).

In the other classrooms, teachers directed more or less the same number of questions and assigned the same number of tasks. On average teachers directed questions and assigned tasks to 70 girls a total of 218 times and to 50 boys a total of 290 times. Maths and Hellenic language were the two subjects where the highest differences were recorded. In detail, during 45 hour observation of Hellenic language classes at both schools, teachers called on boys (50 boys in total) 623 times and on girls (70 girls in total) 515 times. In mathematics classes, during 20 hour observations, 70 girls were called on a total of 188 times and 50 boys 287 times. The observed asymmetries can be explained by the fact that teachers held gender normative perceptions of male and female students' abilities and capabilities, which marginalise female students in science and mathematics classes. As discussed, participants had widely accepted normative views of gender-appropriate subjects. However, the data from the interviews yielded that teachers were not aware of the unequal attention that male and female students received in their classrooms. Symptomatic of this are their responses to the question of whether 'boys and girls get the same chances to speak in the classroom'. Educators unanimously believed that children equally participated in the classroom, regardless of their gender. Typical of this is Costas' response:

> **Costas:** '…*of course I do not count how many times I asked a boy and how many times I ask a girl….but I think it is the same for both boys and girls*.'

The way teachers' attention was distributed in the classroom had an influential impact on children's positioning in the discourse of the classroom. Although teachers believed that they allocated their attention equally to boys and girls, the data from the observations yielded that boys received more attention especially, hegemonic boys. Teachers' gendered attitudes and beliefs were deeply rooted in their practices and have been naturalised, thus they were not aware of the gender asymmetries in their classrooms.

Another crucial aspect of gender asymmetries related to the number of conversations initiated by boys and girls. The data showed that boys were the protagonists of the classrooms, for they initiated the largest amount of conversations. In detail, from a total of 1389 conversations initiated by students 809 were initiated by boys (50 boys in total) and 580 initiated by girls (70 girls in total). Hellenic language and mathematics classes were once again the subjects during which the highest differences were recorded. In particular, during the Hellenic language classes 50 boys initiated a total of 364 conversations and 70 girls initiated 270 conversations. In the mathematics classes girls initiated a total of 160 conversations compared with 240 conversations initiated by boys. Analogous were the findings from observations in Athena's classrooms. Although by calling on boys and girls in alternating order she had achieved gender equality in the classroom, boys were initiating more conversations and dominated the classroom this way. Crucial asymmetries were also observed between hegemonic boys and complicit or subordinated boys, as well as girls who performed emphasised femininity and girls who distanced themselves from emphasised femininity. More specifically, hegemonic boys initiated more conversations than subordinated boys and received more attention in the classroom. On the other hand, girls who performed emphasised femininity initiated fewer conversations compared with the girls who distanced themselves from emphasised femininity. Hence, boys who performed subordinated masculinity and girls who performed emphasised femininity were quieter in the classroom.

Additionally, the analysis of verbal reprimands in the classroom contended that teachers directed more reprimands towards boys than girls. Primarily, students were reprimanded for the following reasons: their behaviour in the classroom, their performance, for talking to their classmates, for not being concentrated, for laughing or for being rude. It was observed that all participants reprimanded boys more than girls for disobeying and misbehaving, but Costas and Maria were the ones that admonished boys more often than girls. In all classrooms, boys

who performed subordinated masculinity were reprimanded less often than hegemonic boys whereas girls who distanced themselves from emphasised femininity reprimanded more often than girls who performed emphasised femininity. This highlights another characteristic of hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity in the specific schools. Moreover, it was noted that although boys were in general reprimanded more often than girls, the ratio of male to female reprimands was higher in mathematics, religious education and Hellenic language classes. In detail, in religious education classes 50 boys were reprimanded a total of 70 times, during a 10 hour observation. On the other hand, 70 girls were admonished a total of 30 times. The findings from 45 hours of observations in Hellenic language classes are similar. The number of reprimands that teachers directed towards boys was 360 times and for girls was 135 times. Lastly, in mathematics classes boys were reprimanded a total of 80 times and girls a total of 40 times, during a 20 hour observation. The significantly higher rate of reprimands directed towards boys in mathematics classes might be related to the fact that participants had higher expectations for boys in this subject.

Another aspect of gender asymmetries in the classrooms was related to conscious decisions made by the teachers to motivate pupils. Specifically, Costas and Maria explained to me how they dealt with boys who misbehaved in the classroom:

> **Maria:** '*...sometimes boys get bored. They don't like the lesson...so I try to teach in a way that it would make them more interested*'.
>
> **Costas:** '*...Sometimes I make references to football in order to get their attention...it is something you can easily do if you teach maths, not very easy when you teach language.... It helps when teach something and they are not listening...*'

The data show that schooling today is as gendered and sexualised as it was more than two decades ago (Walkerdine, 1990). Teachers who participated in my study treated boys and girls in the classroom as two different groups. Their teaching practices aimed to keep boys interested in the lesson. In this attempt, participants through their classroom practices encouraged the construction of traditional gender binaries (Davies, 1989a), positioned girls as marginal in the educational discourse and reinforced hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity discourses. Participants' classroom practices might have a crucial impact on girls' learning. The most critical implication of this practice is that teachers in their attempt to keep boys interested in the lesson turn parts of the lesson into less interesting for girls. As Skelton et al (2009) have postulated boys' underachievement has created the idea that teachers should look at the asymmetries between boys' and girls' learning behaviours. As a result of this, 'teachers amend their teaching practices to keep boys' interest alive and enhance their learning. These practices demonstrate the influential impact of teachers' classroom practices on the construction 'of dominant modes of masculinity in schools' (Skelton, 2002: 17).

Not only did teachers direct more reprimands towards boys than girls in the classroom, but they also praised boys more often than girls. More specifically, from a total of 545 praises 345 were directed by the teachers towards boys (50 boys in total) and a total of 200 towards girls (70 girls in total). The highest asymmetries between the number of boys and girls being praised by their educator was recorded in the mathematics and Hellenic language classes. In detail, in mathematics classrooms 50 boys were praised a total of 80 times and 70 girls a total of 40 times. In the Hellenic language classes the findings showed that boys were praised a total of 135 times and girls a total of 90 times. Hegemonic/complicit boys and girls who performed emphasised femininity were also praised a few times for exhibiting normative femininity or masculinity. For instance a girl would be praised for keeping her desk neat and tidy whereas boys would be praised for displaying masculine academic or non-academic

attributes such as helping the teacher to lift a heavy box, closing the door or solving difficult mathematical problems. Athena praised boys and girls almost equally, for she was asking boys and girls in altering order and praised pupils every time they gave her a correct answer. On the other hand, Costas praised his students less than his colleagues. This asymmetry could be related to Costas' gender, for previous studies have postulated that male teachers adopt pedagogical styles that assert their masculinity (Haywood &Mac an Ghaill, 1996). Commonly, male teachers assert their masculinity through discipline and control (Beynon, 1989). It is possible that Costas was using control and 'discipline to construct [his] own masculinity' (Francis &Skelton, 2001: 14) rather than praise. This is symptomatic of the influence of the hegemonic heterosexual matrix in classroom management and the amount of praise and criticism that children received in the classrooms by their male/female teachers, for 'giving praise and verbal disciplinary comments, draws on those discourses which enable ideological and structural domination of some groups over others' (Francis &Skelton, 2001: 14). However, the amount of praise that all teachers directed at their students was less than the number of reprimands. The attention that boys received in the classroom, although sometimes negative, it is self-fulfilling and self-assuring. In contrast, girls were marginalised in the classrooms. Girl's marginalisation might have crucial implications, for they might develop lower expectations than boys in certain subjects. These practices reinforce traditional gender discourses and encourage the construction of traditional binaries of male/female in the classroom in relation to educational achievement. For instance, participants through their classroom practices perpetuated the normative perception that mathematics is a male subject.

Lastly, significant gender asymmetries were observed in relation to the number of boys and girls that teachers called up to the whiteboard. Often, in mathematics and Hellenic language classes teachers would call up to the whiteboard students to solve mathematical problems or to do grammar exercises. This is a common practice and it is used as an informal examination

to test students understanding of the lesson. In detail, from a total 685 calls for students to go to the whiteboard, 405 calls were made for boys (50 boys in total) and 280 for girls (70 girls in total). In the Hellenic language classes boys were called to the whiteboard 225 times and girls were called 180 times whereas in the mathematics classroom the discrepancy was even higher with 180 calls for boys and 100 calls for girls. Athena by calling her students in alternating order had eliminated the gender heterogeneity in classroom interactions. The gender asymmetries that were observed in the other classrooms are influenced by traditional views of masculinity and femininity and the normative categorisation of school subjects as masculine and feminine which was widely accepted by the teachers.

In summary, it can be argued that participants had different expectations for girls and boys. This is the primary source of boys' and girls' unequal treatment in the classroom by their teachers. In detail, boys received more attention than girls and were the protagonists of the classes by answering more questions, initiating more conversations, getting more praise and criticism. This phenomenon is international and perennial, for several other studies conducted over the last three decades have reported that boys get more attention in the classroom (Kelly, 1986; Morgan &Dunn, 1990; Altani, 1992; Sikes, 1993; Grima &Smith, 1993; Younger et al, 1999; Frosi, 2000; Deligianni-Kouimtzi, 2002). The categorisation of school subjects as masculine and feminine was widely accepted by the teachers. This had a significant impact on the way boys and girls were treated in the classroom by their teachers. More specifically, in the traditional masculine subjects, such as mathematics classrooms, boys received more attention by their teachers. This aspect of gender asymmetry in the classrooms might have an influential impact on girls' learning and pupils' perceptions of gender roles. The strong male/female binaries that were reinforced by teachers' classroom practices perpetuated traditional gender discourses and marginalised girls in the classroom, whereas the same discourses positioned boys at the epicentre of classroom activities.

Discussion

In this chapter I explored the discursive construction of masculinity and femininity in the anthology textbooks and I discussed how pupils negotiate the traditional gender discourses in the instructional materials. Furthermore, I analysed teachers' views of gender and their classroom practices. The data offered valuable insights into the education system's role in reinforcing normative gender discourses through its practices.

As far as the curriculum materials are concerned, the data showed that textbooks reinforce anachronistic views of gender roles in the domestic sphere and labour market. Despite the few positive representations, such as girls performing manual work or boys playing with non-normative toys, the textbooks reinforce hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity discourses. This is symptomatic of the fact that institutional measures promoting gender equality have not been sufficiently incorporated into the official educational policies for printed teaching materials for primary schools. The analysis of children's responses to the traditional gender discourses in the textbooks postulated that boys and girls negotiated differently the discourses of hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity. Specifically, boys were less capable than girls of challenging the traditional discourses of masculinity and femininity. Nevertheless, significant differences were observed among boys who performed subordinated masculinity and hegemonic boys. Hegemonic/complicit boys reproduced to a great extent the normative perceptions of masculinity whereas subordinated boys were able to challenge hegemonic masculinity discourses. Similarly, girls who performed emphasised femininity were less capable of challenging the emphasised femininity discourses than girls who distanced themselves from it. Another important parameter that affects the ways in which children negotiated normative gender discourses was mother's occupational status, for children who had mothers in paid employment were more able to challenge the normative discourses of masculinity and femininity.

The findings from teacher interviews and classroom observations designated that the education system is gendered. It was observed that boys and girls were treated as separate and different groups by their teachers. The unequal treatment of boys and girls in the classroom reinforces the construction of binaries of male/female. As a result, gender normative discourses were perpetuated and students were encouraged to perform normative masculinity and femininity. More specifically, the analysis of teachers' responses found that educators held anachronistic views of masculinity and femininity and deployed traditional gender binaries while making sense of gender. Teachers' views of gender-appropriate occupations were also normative. Their accounts supported the normative categorisation of occupations as masculine and feminine, according to which women practice primarily teaching professions and men are employed in high social status occupations (lawyer, scientist etc). As a direct consequence of this, teachers supported a traditional categorisation of school subjects as masculine and feminine. According to this view, mathematics is a male domain; and linguistic subjects are viewed as more appropriate for females.

These traditional views of masculinity and femininity had an influential impact on their classroom practices. Although teachers were unanimous that gender equality issues are significant and should be discussed with the students in the classrooms, the observational data showed that educators did not discuss gender equality issues with their students. A very important finding of this study is that teachers were unable to underline the normative discursive representations of masculinity and femininity in the anthology textbooks. This allows the presumption that their teaching practices reinforced the traditional gender discourses promoted by the instructional materials. In parallel with this, the analysis of teachers' classroom practices postulated that educators had different expectations for girls and boys and treated them unequally in the classroom. Boys monopolised teachers' attention, especially boys who performed hegemonic masculinity were the protagonists of classrooms.

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In contrast to boys, girls were marginalised in the classroom, receiving little attention by their teachers and answering fewer questions than boys. Teachers also called boys more often to the whiteboard and allowed them to initiate more conversations. Significant asymmetries were observed between hegemonic/complicit boys and subordinated boys, as well as girls who performed emphasised femininity and girls who distanced themselves from it. The different treatment that boys and girls receive at school might have an influential impact on their experiences and performances of gender.

Overall the data yielded that participants' classroom practices reinforced traditional gender discourses and encouraged the construction of hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity. It is necessary that government educational policy makers place emphasis on teachers training in gender equality issues in education, for the findings showed critical differences in the views of gender held by teachers who had received such training and those who had not.

Chapter 6

The Game of Masculinities and Femininities on School

Playgrounds

'The geography and spatial organisation
of playgrounds speak gendered power
relations' (Epstein et al., 2001: 174).

Introduction

This chapter sets out to scrutinise how pupils deploy gender discourses in their quotidian play

practices on school playgrounds in Hellas. Emphasis is placed on the synergies between

gender relations, hegemonic masculinity/emphasised femininity and children's play practices.

As discussed, in my study children's gender identities are perceived as embedded and

performed through and within school spaces, for school 'playgrounds are the first arenas in

which girls and boys learn to negotiate their behaviour in public' (Karsten, 2003: 71). Hence,

children's construction of gender identities includes the use of 'social and physical structures

of the school' and the 'participation in specific activities' (Paechter &Clark, 2007: 319).

Based on this, school playgrounds are perceived as sites where the doing/performance of

gender is manifested, for children through their play activities 'collaboratively develop

relational understandings of what it is to be male or female' (Paechter &Clark, 2007: 319).

Through this prism, school playgrounds are also dangerous spaces for within the limited

playground area power gender relations are established and "games" of gender domination

and subordination can take place (MacNaughton, 1999). In particular, overt male dominance

has been observed and the exclusion of boys and girls from certain play activities can occur

(Swain, 2000b; Skelton, 2000; Paechter &Clark, 2007). In parallel with this, empirical

research has also explored how children's play practices restrict boys' and girls' performance

of masculinity and femininity (Best, 1983; Thorne, 1993; Kelly, 1994; Connolly, 1998;

Skelton 2001).

For understanding how children deploy the gender discourses in their play practices on

school playgrounds, I observed children's play and scrutinised their accounts of their play

experiences. The data collected from observations on school playgrounds and group interviews with pupils in two Athenian primary schools. This chapter begins with a discussion of the findings from student interviews. A total of 80 pupils (40 boys and 40 girls), aged 8-10 years old, were interviewed using a semi-structured interview format (see chapter 4). The findings showed how hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity discourses regulated children's play practices and the ways in which children deployed and reproduced these discourses in their quotidian play activities. Next, I present the data from the observations. Observations were carried out in two primary school playgrounds over a period of six weeks, between May and June 2011. The analysis of children's play practices showed the gender hierarchies that had been formed in primary school playgrounds and highlighted how children, through their play practices, reassured their masculine/feminine identity.

6.1 Pupils' Accounts of their Play Practices

In this section I critically review and discuss the findings from group interviews with the pupils, which aimed to explore children's accounts of their play practices. A total of 80 pupils[37], aged 8-10 years old, (40 boys and 40 girls) from two primary schools in Athens participated in the interviews. Participants were selected by the teachers and divided into ten groups. Each tetrad consisted of two boys and two girls. The interviews were semi-structured and lasted approximately one hour and thirty minutes (see chapter 4). The focus of the group interviews was on peer relations, boys' and girls' play practices on school playgrounds and their leisure time activities.

The data from the group interviews pertaining to children's peer relations postulated significant asymmetries between the third- and fourth-grade pupils' friendship groups. The findings also yielded the impact of hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity discourses on regulating pupils' friendships. More specifically, third-grade pupils were more open than fourth-grade pupils in forming gender-heterogeneous friendships.

> **Cleopatra:** '*Yeah… I have got boys as my friends and together we play chasing*'.
> **Thanos:** '*Yes, and together we play hide and seek and chasing*'.
> **Petros:** '*Yes…..and I play volleyball with the girls sometimes*'.

It should be noted that Thanos and Petros, as well as their male classmates who had friends of the opposite gender, performed complicit masculinity whereas Cleopatra and the rest of the girls who had established friendships with boys distanced themselves from emphasised femininity on several occasions.

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[37]A total of 20 boys and 20 girls were selected from school A and 20 boys and 20 girls from school B participated in the interviews.

To the contrary, Nana and Nikolas, who performed emphasised femininity and hegemonic masculinity accordingly, were few of the third-grade pupils who did not have friends of the opposite gender.

> **Nana:** '*No I don't. Boys are silly…sometimes I play with them though, because I want to find a boyfriend*'.
> **Nikolas:** '*No I don't like to play with girls*'.

Nana's answer came to me as no surprise for among the students who participated in the interviews she expressed the most gender normative ideas about gender roles (see chapter 5 and chapter 7). Her answer is symptomatic of the influence of the hegemonic heterosexual matrix on regulating her friendships in primary education. Previous studies have found that girls draw upon these heterosexualised practices, for having a boyfriend is an 'overt compulsory signifier for the public affirmation…of heterosexuality' (Renold, 2003: 181). It can be argued that Nana was 'strategically deploying the boyfriend/girlfriend discourse as a way of legitimately hanging out with the opposite sex' (Renold, 2006a: 501).

Similarly, Achilles, who performed subordinated masculinity, had only girls as friends:

> **Achilles**: '*I do have only girls as friends and I do play only with girls*'.

Achilles' teacher told me that his male classmates did not play with him because 'he liked girls' games'. Achilles was not interested in football and played exclusively with girls. Because of that, he was marginalised and subordinated by his male classmates. Achilles' case highlights the ways in which hegemonic masculinity subordinates other forms of masculinities that are not regulated by hegemonic masculinity discourses. For instance, Achilles' male classmates often made jokes about him and perceived him as effeminate. In particular, during the interviews one of his male classmates told me:

> **Nikolas**: '*He is a girl, sir, that's why he doesn't like to*
>
> *play football. He plays only with girls*'.

Nikolas words are symptomatic of the stigmatisation of Achilles due to his lack of interest in participating in football matches, which also emphasises the influential impact of football on the construction of hegemonic masculinity as well as peer relations. Nikolas was one of the few boys that performed an unequivocal form of hegemonic masculinity. Hegemonic masculinity in the specific schools was characterised by leadership dexterity, athletic adroitness, aggression, disobedience, and physical strength. In parallel with this, boys performed hegemonic masculinity by playing football and forming gender-homogeneous friendships. Nikolas' answer implies a crucial linkage between hegemonic masculinity and heterosexual matrix, which produces gender discourses that regulate children's friendships and influences the way in which pupils negotiate their gender. Besides, it reinforces discourses of 'othering' in education, through which hegemonic masculinity redefines and safeguards its boundaries in relation to all other subordinated forms of masculinity and femininity. These findings are consistent with previous empirical studies on girls' and subordinated boys' marginalisation at school by their peers (Renold, 1997; Skelton, 1997a; Swain, 2000a, b). The analysis of third-grade pupils' accounts showed that hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity discourses played a crucial role in regulating children's formation of friendships.

On the other hand, fourth-grade pupils were more reluctant to participate in gender-heterogeneous friendships, regardless of their performance of gender, for complicit boys as well as the majority of girls who distanced themselves from emphasised femininity did not play in mixed gender groups. It seems that the boyfriend/girlfriend discourses did not significantly influence and legitimate gender-heterogeneous friendships among the fourth-

grade students. Typical of this are the responses of a hegemonic boy (Theodore), a complicit boy (Tassos) and Athena, who often distanced herself from emphasised femininity.

> **Theodore:** '*I play only with boys, girls are boring and they play silly games*'.
> **Tassos:** '*I have boys as friends. I prefer boys because with boys I can play basketball and football. You can't play these games with girls*'.
> **Athena:** '*I have more things in common with the girls. I could not play with the boys the games that I like*'.

Among the few fourth-grade boys and girls who had established friendships with the opposite gender were Panos and Antigone. Panos performed subordinated masculinity whereas Antigone was consistently distancing herself from emphasised femininity. The case of Panos is similar to Achilles; his lack of athletic prowess, his sensitivity and his participation in girls' play groups had led to his marginalisation by his male classmates. In contrast, Antigone although she was playing with boys had not been marginalised and participated in girls' play activities as well. This might be symptomatic of the marginalisation that boys who performed subordinated masculinity experienced in the specific primary schools, for in my study boys who played with girls labelled as effeminate and were marginalised. To the contrary, girls' participation in boys' play activities was tolerated by their female classmates. Hence, a significant asymmetry was observed between third- and fourth-grade pupils who performed complicit masculinity, for most third-grade boys had established gender-heterogeneous friendships whereas most fourth-grade boys had established gender-homogeneous friendships. Similarly, third-grade girls who distanced themselves from emphasised femininity had friends of the opposite gender whereas many fourth-grade girls were reluctant to form gender-heterogeneous friendships. Only subordinated boys from both grades had established gender-heterogeneous friendships, mainly because they were marginalised by their male classmates who performed hegemonic or complicit masculinity.

Children's age difference[38] might elucidate the asymmetries in the gender patterns that characterised third- and fourth-grade pupils' friendships. A number of studies have postulated that children have accepted traditional gender dichotomies by the age of five, 'so at this stage children are keen to demonstrate their awareness and knowledge of being the 'right' gender' and then 'they begin to establish and refine these conceptual understandings' (Skelton et al., 2009: 189). The findings provided a strong indication that 10 year-old boys had established better 'sense of gender identity' than 9 year-old boys (Skelton et al., 2009: 189). This hypothesis is also supported by the data collected in relation to pupils' play practices. In particular, children's responses to the question if they invite peers of the opposite gender to play with them showed that fourth-grade pupils were less willing to engage in mixed-gender play groups than third-grade children.

> **Costas:** '*Yes, I do invite girls to play with me. Most of the times I play board games with the girls*'.
> **Maria:** '*Yes sometimes I play football with them*'.
> **Thanos:** '*Yes, sometimes we play T.V games*'.

Nikolas and Nana were among the few third-grade pupils who did not play with girls and boys respectively, because:

> **Nikolas:** '*No I don't like it...Girls are silly.....it's boring*'.
> **Nana:** '*...they are silly and they want to play football only*'.

Nana's response suggests that she had accepted her marginalisation from football matches as natural; boys played only football and their obsession with football was silly. Although she thought that boys were silly, occasionally she deployed the boyfriend discourse in order to legitimate hanging out with the opposite sex (Renold, 2006a). Nana displayed a form of

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[38]However, in my study the maximum age gap that was recorded between the third and the fourth grade students was only 15.6 months

emphasised femininity, which was characterised by fragility, emotionality and empathy whereas she had idealised matrimony and motherhood (as discussed in chapters 5 and 7). Previous studies on the symbolic gender cultures in primary education have argued that boyhood is often discursively constructed around 'silliness' (Francis, 1998a; 1998b). Boys regularly deploy this discourse in order to perform their masculinity, which places them at the epicentre of classroom interaction (see chapter 5).

On the other hand, Nikolas believed that girls' silliness was associated with their play practices. This demonstrates how the association of hegemonic masculinity with certain play practices led many boys to perceive girls' play activities as silly, in a sense that boys did not find them interesting. Through this discourse of 'othering' some boys negotiated and regulated their masculine identity and maintained hegemonic masculinity. It should be noted that Nikolas performed hegemonic masculinity. In particular, he was aggressive and physically strong (stronger than most of the other boys in his class). Nikolas was also a leader; he often misbehaved in the class and was one of the best football players. Symptomatic of this is his response to the question of whether he ever played with girls.

> **Nikolas:** '*Yes, but very rarely...eh… girls are silly…they can't play the games that we play…*'
> **Researcher: '***So what games do you play when you play with girls*
> **Nikolas:** '*We talk most of the times…*'
> **Researcher: '***Do you enjoy playing with girls?*'
> **Nikolas:** '*No...Very rarely if my friends play*'
> **Researcher: '***So, you play all together. Would you play with girls if your male friends were not playing?*'
> **Nikolas:** '*No. It would be boring because girls turn the game silly*'.

'Girls turn the game silly' by orienting it towards a direction that threatens boys' fragile masculinity. Hence, Nikolas' male friends' participation in girls' play practices safeguarded his masculinity, for being the only boy with a group of girls posed a threat to hegemonic masculinity. In contrast to Nikolas who performed hegemonic masculinity, the other boys

who performed complicit masculinity were more open to participate in gender-heterogeneous groups. The process of othering that is expressed through the identification of girls' play activities with 'silliness' serves the purpose of regulating boys' performance of hegemonic and complicit masculinity.

In contrast to third-grade pupils, most boys and most girls from the fourth grade preferred to participate in gender-homogeneous play groups. In detail, they told me:

> **Andreas:** '*No because with the girls we cannot play with weapons and cars*'.
> **Athena:** '*No because with the girls we play better as we have got more in common*'.
> **Panos:** '*Yes….I play only with girls*'.

There were only a few fourth-grade girls who told me that they played with boys. Their responses were very interesting:

> **Antigone:** '*I do play with boys but only because I want to find a boyfriend*'.
> **Medea:** '*Yes because it's funny…boys are silly*'.

Antigone's response demonstrates the role of the hegemonic heterosexual matrix in regulating her friendships. Antigone deployed the boyfriend discourse for normalising and legitimating her friendships with boys (Renold, 2003, 2006a). However, Medea justified her participation in boys' play practices through the discourse of silliness. For her playing with boys was amusing because boys are 'silly'. This is symptomatic of how femininity is constructed relationally to masculinity, for the silliness of boyhood was antithetical to her understanding of femininity as sensible (Francis, 1998a 1998b, 2000). It can be argued that some girls performed a form of femininity that often contradicted emphasised femininity, but other times it was closer to emphasised femininity.

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Next, I explored children's leisure time activities. The analysis of pupils' responses in relation to their leisure time activities found vigorous gender asymmetries. Crucial differences were also observed between hegemonic/complicit boys and subordinated boys, as well as among girls who performed emphasised femininity and girls who distanced themselves from it. Hegemonic boys' favourite games included football, TV games/ programmes whereas complicit boys preferred football, TV games/programmes and board games. On the other hand, the majority of girls preferred less aggressive games, such as dancing, board games and hide and seek. However, one fourth-grade and one third-grade girl liked football, among other more 'feminine' sports/toys. It was observed that girls who liked football often distanced themselves from emphasised femininity.

> **Cleopatra:** '*I like volleyball, basketball…sometimes I like to play football… and TV games*'.
> **Nana:** '*I like to play with dolls (especially to comb their hair)*'
> **Maria:** '*I like football and dancing and I do not like Barbie*'.
> **Medea:** '*Dancing, acting, rarely I play football. I like though TV games and to play with my dog*'.

Nana who performed emphasised femininity liked, among other games/toys, to play with Barbie dolls. Unlike Nana, Maria emphatically stated that she did not play with Barbie dolls. Maria regulated her femininity through non-normative discourses of gender-appropriate toys/games. Barbie dolls epitomise traditional femininity internationally (Rand, 1998; Rogers, 1999) and 'for young girls, Barbie, especially, appears to be a template of being an ideal girl, a standard against which to judge their own lives' (Wason-Ellam, 1997: 435). However, Maria negated such a positioning and contrary to emphasised femininity discourses she played football. Cleopatra and Medea played football occasionally, which is symptomatic of a paradox. Although there were a few girls that played football, boys' accounts postulated that they did not play football with girls when they played in gender-heterogeneous groups. As

discussed, football was a signifier of successful masculinity in both schools. Hence, 'girls playing football seems to threaten the notion of the 'male footballer', and presents an attack on dominant playground masculinities' (Clark &Paechter, 2007: 274). In the light of this, the hypothesis that was made was that hegemonic boys when they played in mixed-gender groups avoided playing rough games or games that were associated with hegemonic masculinity. Pupils' responses confirmed this hypothesis. Symptomatic of this is my conversation with Manos.

> **Researcher:** '*You told me that football is your favourite game, right?*'
> **Manos:** '*Yes sir*'
> **Researcher:** '*However, you said that when you play with girls you like to play different games. You did not mention football....is it because you forgot to tell me?*'
> **Manos:** '*No sir.....When I play with girls we play different games....I told you, when I play with girls we play chasing hide and seek and sometimes TV games*'.
> **Researcher:** '*Why is that Manos, can you tell me?*'
> **Manos:** '*We don't play football because girls cannot play football...*'
> **Researcher:** '*Why do you think that girls cannot play football?*'
> **Manos:** '*I don't know...they can't...it's also that they don't like football*'
> **Researcher:** '*Why do you think that girls do not like football?*'
> **Manos:** '*eh...eh...because it's a rough game and girls are frightened......eh...but Cleopatra sometimes she plays football with us...but she is not good*'.

Manos' response highlights the central role of football in the construction of hegemonic masculinity in both schools (see section 6.2). As a result, girls had to be excluded from the game and their footballing skills had to be downgraded in order for football to sustain its role as a signifier of successful masculinity (Clark &Paechter, 2007). 'Anything else would have constituted too serious a threat to the construction of masculinity' (Paechter &Clark, 2007: 323). This was also evident in boys' responses when I asked children to tell me if they thought that their peers of the opposite gender could play the same games with them. Boys

from both the third and fourth grades were almost unanimous that girls were not capable of playing boys' games, such as football. In contrast to this, most girls believed that boys are not interested in playing the games they like.

> **Sakis:** '*...Girls cannot play the games that boys play...at least not very well*'.
> **Athena:** '*Boys could play board games but no other games such as with dolls*'.
> **Antigone:** '*Except from Achilles that he likes dancing boys don't like dancing, singing, acting or ballet*' (at this point the rest of the boys in the interview room make a joke that Achilles is a girl because he plays with girls and likes dancing and singing).

There were only a few boys who told me that girls can play boys' games:

> **Panos:** '*Some girls they could play the games that the boys play*'.
> **Achilles:** '*Girls could play all games boy do play*'.
> **Costas:** '*Yes if they want...*'

Achilles', Panos' and Costas' responses came to me as no surprise, providing that they performed subordinated masculinity and they played almost exclusively with girls. Their gender performance excluded them from boys' groups, as their teachers told me. Besides, only one girl held the opinion that boys can play all the games that girls play, except from those that involved singing and dancing:

> **Medea:** '*it depends……most of the games I play with my friends they could be played by boys but some like Greek idol that I play with my friends, boys could not play it because they don't like dancing and singing*'.

The findings yielded that most boys and most girls reproduced and deployed traditional discourses of gender-appropriate play practices. More specifically, the majority of boys had created an 'ideological link between masculinity and football', for through football they performed, constituted and reconstituted their masculine identity (Clark &Paechter, 2007: 264). Analogous were most girls' play practices, which aimed to reinforce their feminine

identity, through activities such as singing and dancing. Boys who had crossed the borderline of hegemonic masculinity and participated in girls' activities were perceived as effeminate by their male classmates and they were marginalised (i.e. Achilles and Panos), for they were a threat to hegemonic masculinity. Hence, at both schools the dynamic 'ideological link between masculinity and football was therefore upheld at girls'' or subordinated boys' expense, for hegemonic boys diminished girls'/subordinated boys' skills, in order to prolong the role of football as masculine sport (Clark &Paechter, 2007: 264).

The findings from interviews revealed an additional characteristic of hegemonic and complicit masculinity at these schools. It was observed that hegemonic/complicit boys reiterated and affirmed their hegemonic/complicit masculinity by watching adventurous films. Children's responses unveiled the vigorous dichotomies between television programmes for boys and for girls. Hegemonic and complicit boys preferred football matches, *Avatar*, *Nickelodeon* and the *Adventures of Jimmy Neutron*. On the other hand, girls who performed emphasised femininity preferred more female-appropriate television programmes, such as *iCarly*, *Big Time Rush* and *Patty*. Medea, Maria and Antigone, who distanced themselves from emphasised femininity watched girls' TV programmes as well as *Nickelodeon*. This was an attempt to distance themselves from emphasise femininity, by doing so they claimed power for 'to oppose stereotypical or normalised feminine positioning is to reject the disempowerment that comes with it' (Paechter, 2012: 257). Similarly, boys who performed subordinated masculinity like Achilles did not watch exclusively television programmes that stereotypically are more appropriate for boys, but as they told me they liked: *Patty* and *Big time Rush*.

A study of gender representations in these children's television programmes by True Child[39] has postulated that both iCarly and Nickelodeon promote gender egalitarian discourses. However, the analysis of male and female characters in 'The Adventures of Jimmy Neutron' showed that 'male scientist characters were...both more prevalent than female scientist characters and were....present in more scenes…' and also 'male scientist characters outnumbered female scientist characters…' (Steinke et al, 2008: 26). According to Steinke et al (2008) male scientist characters were represented as independent and dominant whereas female scientist characters were more likely to be shown as dependent, caring and romantic. Lastly, '…no differences were found in the portrayals of male and female characters' scientific professional roles, marital status, and parental status…' (Steinke et al, 2008: 26). On the other hand, girls' television programmes cultivated their interest in dancing and singing whereas children's programmes for boys reinforced the association of masculinity with adventure and influenced the characteristics of hegemonic and complicit masculinity at these particular schools.

Children's accounts demonstrated the synergies between gender relations, hegemonic masculinity, emphasised femininity and children's play practices. However, I approached children's gender identities as embedded and performed through and within school spaces. Thus, the analysis of children's performance of gender will be concluded with a discussion of the findings from observations on school playgrounds. In the following section, I discuss the data from the observations in two primary-school playgrounds, which show how children perform hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity on school playgrounds.

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[39] TrueChild, a new, non profit Washington, D.C. based organisation that seeks to combat stereotypes that harm children, has reviewed and rated many popular children's television shows. The programs — a sampling from PBS Kids, Disney, Nickelodeon and the Cartoon Network — were evaluated primarily for whether they play into gender-based stereotypes when it comes to appearance, emotion, activities, etc.

6.2 Playground Observations: The Role of Football in the Construction of Hegemonic Masculinity

My observations of students' play practices were conducted in two primary school playgrounds. In detail, I observed four episodes per day, five times a week, for a period of six weeks of children's free play. The data provided valuable insights into pupils play practices and interactions when adults were not directly involved and illuminated that play activities and space were profoundly gender-typed. Peer groups were segregated into boys' and girls' groups and interactions and activities were extremely same-gender. These patterns of interactions and play practices were analogous in both schools. Rigorous gender zones had been established on school playgrounds, dissuading children from cross-gender games (Thorne, 1993, Clark &Paechter, 2007). In the playground settings, boys performing hegemonic/ complicit masculinity controlled the largest space designated for team sports (basketball courts) whereas girls occupied a much smaller space on school playgrounds, the surrounding of the basketball court (see Appendix VIII). Often, girls who distanced themselves from emphasised femininity escaped the rigid zone designated for girls and participated in football matches. Similarly, boys who performed subordinated masculinity were usually in girls' terrain. Although girls (or boys who performed subordinated masculinity) engaged in a variety of activities, hegemonic boys played exclusively football. As discussed, football at both schools was associated with the performance of masculinity and boys through their participation in football matches constituted and reconstituted their masculine identity. This form of masculinity had gained ascendancy over subordinated masculinity and femininity and had become hegemonic. As such, girls' participation in football was not encouraged because it would diminish the significance of football in reinforcing hegemonic masculinity (Clark &Paechter, 2007) and would threaten hegemonic boys naturalised/legitimated link to the sport (Nespor, 1997). On the rare occasion that a girl

joined their team she would be mocked or kicked out soon after, due to her lesser footballing skills (Renold, 1997; Skelton, 1997a; Swain, 2000b). However, some girls were allowed to play football. These were commonly the top girls of the class that had more skills or the few girls who consistently distanced themselves from emphasised femininity. My findings corroborate previous studies that suggest that playgrounds are key sites of gender negotiation and interaction, where football dominates most of the playground space (Thorne, 1993; Epstein et al., 2001; Renold, 2004). At both schools 'the geography and spatial organisation of playgrounds...' revealed '...gendered power relations' (Epstein et al, 2001: 158).

The physical strength and stamina that was required in the match were perceived as identifiers of hegemonic masculinity for '…hegemonic masculinity mobilises around physical strength...' (Kenway &Fitzclarence, 1997: 121). Past research has found a strong synergy between hegemonic masculinity and strength or physicality. More specifically, Swain (2003: 302) has postulated that 'for much of the time the boys defined their masculinity through action, and the most esteemed and prevalent resource that the boys drew on...was physicality/athleticism, which was inextricably linked to the body in the form of strength, power, skill, fitness and speed'. Boys lacking physical strength were marginalised and excluded from the games, for they had been identified through hegemonic masculinity discourses as weak, inferior or effeminate. This is symptomatic of the role that stamina and physical strength played in providing an effective means for some boys to reassure their masculine identities. Typical examples of this were Panos, Costas and Achilles who had been marginalised due to their lack of footballing skills. In contrast, boys who played football regularly had gained much status and respect among their classmates and were widely accepted by both their male and female classmates (top boys) (Swain, 2003). Hence, 'football' was 'a major signifier of successful masculinity' (Epstein, 1998: 7), for 'establishing oneself as a good footballer' goes 'a long way in helping to establish one as a

'real' boy' (Swain, 2003: 303). The association of football with masculinity is reinforced by the discursive representations of masculinity in the anthology textbooks as well as teachers' classroom practices (see chapter 5).Therefore, the impact of school practices on legitimating football as a means of performing an idealised form of masculinity should not be undervalued.

The analysis of children's play practices illuminated the ways in which hegemonic and complicit masculinities are discursively constituted and reconstituted on school playgrounds. In particular, the hegemonic discourses that operated on school playgrounds made the asymmetrical gender relations appear natural when in fact they were specious. In this process football played a critical role, for through football the real man or boy (Connell, 1995) was discursively constructed in relation to subordinated masculinity and emphasised femininity. Analogous are the findings of several studies on the synergies between football and hegemonic masculinity (Westwood, 1990; Hornby, 1992; Miedzian, 1992; Salisbury &Jackson, 1996; Skelton, 1997a; Swain, 2000b, 2003; Clark &Paechter, 2007). As Salisbury &Jackson (1996: 205) pointed out, 'boys have to learn to go for aggressive performance, success, superiority over women, emotional stoicism, physical strength and goal directedness'. Within this framework any other expressions of masculinity that are not in accordance with hegemonic masculinity are marginalised. Symptomatic is the case of Achilles, a ten-year-old boy, whose behaviour did not conform to hegemonic masculinity and as a result, he was considered an outsider by the rest of his male classmates. As discussed, Achilles performed a form of subordinated masculinity. In detail, one of his classmates, Manos, told me:

> **Manos**: '*Achilles likes to play with girls*'
>
> **Researcher**: '*If he asked you to play football with you would you play with him?*'
> **Manos**: '*No because he cannot play football*'

> **Researcher**: '*Why he cannot play football?*'
> **Manos**: '*Eh…he is not good….eh…he is a girl…*'
> **Researcher**: '*Aren't girls good at football?*'
> **Manos**: '*No…they are silly…and they cry if the ball hits them…..they are not strong*'

It is apparent that strength, at both schools was strongly identified with hegemonic masculinity. The association of football with hegemonic masculinity had led to the exclusion of subordinated boys/ girls from football, because they threatened hegemonic boys' masculine identity. A plethora of studies have also found that girls' exclusion from football serves the purpose of safeguarding boys' hegemonic masculinity (Skelton, 1997a; Renold, 1997; Connolly, 1998; Epstein, 1998; Francis, 1998a; Gilbert &Gilbert, 1998; Pattman, 1999; Swain 2000b). In parallel with this, football 'takes heterosexuality as granted and dismisses as deviant any alternative form of masculine representation' as the case of Manos indicates, (Parker, 1996: 132). Thus, it could be argued that masculinity expected to be exhibited by boys in football is meticulously defined in terms of sexuality. Most boys' performance of gender in football matches was regulated under the sway of the hegemonic heterosexual matrix that legitimated and naturalised football as a masculine sport. The potential for football to encourage homophobic attitudes has also been suggested by several studies (Walker, 1988; Jackson, 1990; Thorne, 1993; Martino, 1999), especially as the hegemonic heterosexual matrix is reinforced by the discursive representations of masculinity and athleticism, especially football, in the anthology textbooks.

Therefore, the school playgrounds where my study was conducted were arenas where boys performed and discursively constructed hegemonic, complicit and subordinated masculinities. Although, the form that hegemonic masculinity acquires is localised, and may vary from school to school in my study, hegemonic masculinity had acquired the same characteristics in both schools and it was performed through 'ritualistic' football games. More specifically, the localised form of hegemonic masculinity in the specific schools was characterised by athletic

dexterity, aggression, independence, confidence, speed, low academic skills and physical strength. The association of football with hegemonic masculinity explicates the gender zones that had been created on playgrounds and it is symptomatic of how dominant groups control parts of the playground space (Paechter &Clark, 2007). Crossing over and playing with girls threatens boys' masculinity and results in marginalisation and exclusion. A typical example is Achilles, whose participation in girls' games resulted in being mocked by his male classmates.

Hence, there are profound consequences for taking on discourses that contradict the nature of hegemonic masculinity. It is understood that a system of punishments and rewards, similar to the one described by proponents of social learning theory, operates and materialises on school playgrounds. Within this system of punishments and rewards certain behaviours are legitimated and institutionalised and others are prohibited and sanctioned. Through these complex processes, boys' masculine positioning is fragile. Boys are under continuous pressure to reassure their masculine identity. Unlike boys, girls do not experience so strict constraints, for it is acceptable for girls to play traditionally male games as long as they maintain allegiance to their gender group, perform femininity and demonstrate their differences from boys. A typical example to this is Medea who although she distanced herself from emphasised femininity and played football with boys she was not marginalised by her female classmates and she was girls' leader in her classroom.

This was evident, as girls' groups at both schools characterised by age and gender heterogeneity. In particular, most girls often socialised with older/younger girls and allowed boys to participate in their activities. Typically, boys who joined girls' play groups performed complicit or subordinated masculinity. During recess many girls gathered in small groups (three to six girls) on school playgrounds or remained in the classroom. Their play practices

included chatting about various subjects such as their favourite television programmes or the new fashion trends and playing chasing. When hegemonic boy joined girls' groups (very rarely) the dynamics of the group changed because boys teased girls (Blatchford et al, 2003). More equal was complicit boys' participation in girls' chasing games because boys joined the game in pairs and played against girls. On several occasions, some girls watched boys playing football and, rarely, some of the girls who distanced themselves from emphasised femininity would take part in the match. However, girls' exclusion from football may be explained by the fact that 'the invisibility of gender zone boundaries sometimes makes it difficult for boys or even adults to understand why more girls don't play football and reasoning descends into the apology that girls 'simply don't want to' (Clark &Paechter, 2007: 266). These gender boundaries influenced significantly children's spatial distribution in the playgrounds. The findings showed significant gender asymmetries with reference to the space that boys and girls occupied on the playgrounds. Boys who performed hegemonic or complicit masculinity occupied the largest area of the playground (most frequently they occupied the central area) whereas girls and boys who performed subordinated masculinity occupied the surrounding space. This pattern of spatial distribution has been observed by several researchers (Skelton, 1997a; Swain, 2000b; Clark &Paechter, 2007; Paechter &Clark, 2007). It is evident that 'boys' investment in masculinity through football ensures vocal discouragement as well as ingrained notions of ownership that allot football and the space it takes up to boys' (Clark &Paechter, 2007: 274).

The observations on school playgrounds revealed some of the characteristics of hegemonic masculinity in the specific schools and highlighted the discursive construction of hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity. In parallel with this, the findings support previous studies that football is associated with the performance of hegemonic masculinity (Skelton, 2000; Swain, 2003; Clark &Paechter, 2007).

The observational data yielded crucial gender asymmetries in relation to boys' and girls' nonverbal behaviours and movements on school playgrounds. More specifically, prior to conducting the observations I created three categories for coding children's movement: a) Stationary which describes little or no movement i.e. a child watching other children playing, or discussing quietly b) Moderate movement: fairly intense movement, in between stationary or fast movement i.e. fast walking, skipping, hopping, or jumping and c) Fast movement: movement described as intense or extreme i.e. running, continuous skipping and shouting. The number of occurrences for behaviours of interest was counted within each category. Data for boys and girls were examined individually and analysed. The chart below shows the percentile rank of boys and girls movement for each of the three categories (stationary, moderate and fast) at both schools.

Chart 1: Percentile Rank of Boys and Girls Movement (School A and B).
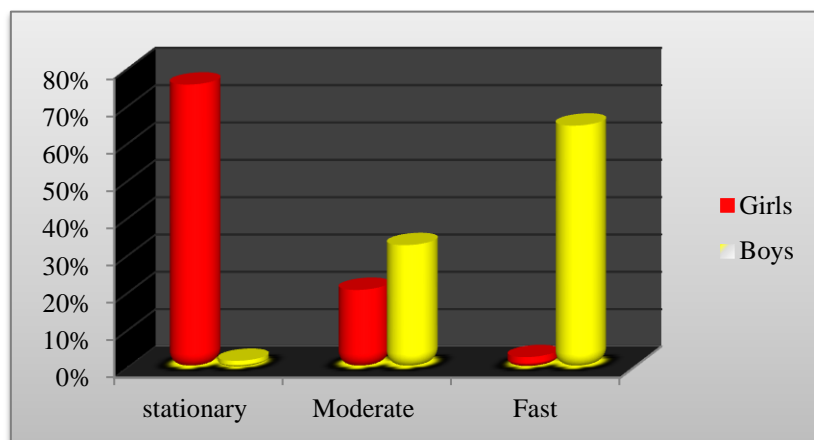
The chart above shows that the majority of girls displayed stationary and moderate body movement during play time whereas boys, especially hegemonic boys, displayed a fast movement. In detail, 76% of girls displayed a stationary movement during recess whereas only 2% of boys fell into this category of body movement. The boys who displayed stationary movement during recess performed mainly subordinated masculinity. To the contrary, in the case of fast body movement, 65% of boys and only 3% of girls displayed such behaviour.

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The girls who fell into this category distanced themselves from emphasised femininity. This is symptomatic of the gender asymmetries in children's play practices, which idealise and naturalise perceptions of what it means to be a boy or a girl (Paechter, 2003). Hence, the idealised form of masculinity in the specific schools required boys to participate in aggressive play whereas emphasised femininity dictated girls to play quietly. Past research has postulated that hegemonic masculinity is associated with physicality and aggression (Swain, 2003), for 'boys...engage in more rough and tumble play and physical fighting' (Thorne, 1993: 91-2) whereas emphasised femininity is often described by lack of sportiness. For boys 'organised sports are both a central activity and a major metaphor in boys' subcultures…' (Thorne, 1992: 117). The education system's role in reinforcing these perceptions of masculinity and femininity should also be considered. As discussed in chapter 5, the discursive representations of masculinity and femininity in the anthology textbooks reinforced these traditional gender discourses with reference to boys' and girls' play activities.

In summary, the analysis of pupils' accounts found that children's play practices were gender normative. Children had established ways of doing masculinity and femininity that encouraged and discouraged activities in relation to gender. Furthermore, pupils' play practices reinforced a hierarchical ordering of masculinities and through this hierarchy a hegemonic form emerged, which subordinated and marginalised other forms of masculinities and femininities. This was symptomatic of how 'different masculinities are constituted in relation to other masculinities and to femininities through the structure of gender relations' (Connell, 1992: 732). In particular, boys' performance of masculinity included: hegemonic, complicit and subordinated masculinities. Hegemonic and complicit masculinities were constituted and performed through cyclical almost ritualistic football practices. Football was

strongly associated with hegemonic masculinity in both schools and fulfilled hegemonic boys' 'constant need to maintain and defend it' (Swain, 2000b: 91).

A crucial characteristic of hegemonic masculinity was that boys who performed it (only a few) had established exclusively gender-homogeneous friendships at school. This can be explained by the fact that hegemonic boys had a 'constant need to maintain and defend' their hegemonic masculinity (Swain, 2000b: 91). In addition, hegemonic boys had a leading role among their classmates. Their athletic prowess, physical strength, aggressiveness and low academic skills constituted the main characteristics around which their leadership was established. They were the 'cool' boys of the school. Contrary, boys who displayed a form of complicit masculinity (majority of boys) were flexible in the formation of gender-heterogeneous friendships and sometimes played with girls. Although complicit boys did not fit into all the characteristics of hegemonic masculinity, they did not do much to challenge it either. As a result, they received/enjoyed some benefits from being males. Subordinated masculinity was performed by only two boys and was characterised by the formation of exclusive gender-heterogeneous friendships. These boys were marginalised by their male classmates, especially by those who performed hegemonic masculinity, but they had established strong friendships with their female classmates. Subordinated masculinity was characterised by sensitivity, physical weakness and exhibition of emotions like sadness. In other words, boys performing subordinated masculinity exhibited qualities that were opposite to those that were valued in hegemonic masculinity.

On the other hand, the majority of girls occasionally distanced themselves from emphasised femininity. However, there were a few girls that consistently distanced themselves from emphasised femininity. Nevertheless, these girls had not been marginalised by their female classmates. They had the liberty to choose to participate in boys' or girls' play groups. This

highlights the difference between hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity, for hegemonic boys had to reaffirm their masculine identity by doing boys' things whereas girls were able to do typical boys' sports, like football, without setting their femininity at risk. Contrary to girls, boys' participation in girls' games would set immediately their masculinity at risk. Girls who consistently performed emphasised femininity played exclusively in gender-homogeneous groups and rarely deployed the boyfriend discourse in order to legitimate hanging out with boys. They played with typical girls' toys like Barbie and their group activities included singing, dancing, chasing, hide and seek and television programmes appropriate for girls. Some girls who distanced themselves from emphasised femininity manoeuvred within and against the culturally valued discourse of emphasised femininity. These girls played football and derided traditional female toys like Barbie. Moreover, these girls were also physically active, loud and challenged the idealised discourses of matrimony and motherhood. Although they played football and socialised with boys they were accepted by their female classmates and they regularly participated in activities such as singing, dancing, chasing etc. Regarding the female classroom leaders, it was observed that the top girls were characterised by sportiness, physical beauty, sociability, assertiveness and academic skills. Although the top girls embodied some elements of emphasised femininity they did often distanced themselves from it. For instance, although they played football with boys, they also played chasing with girls. This flexibility had given them a status, and they were girls' leaders. In addition, they were good students and the often helped their classmates with school homework. They had a large circle of friends which included boys and girls from different grades and they deployed the boyfriend discourse for hanging out with boys.

Discussion

This chapter raised a number of issues in relation to children's play practices and the construction of hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity on school playgrounds. As discussed, in my study gender identities are perceived as embedded and performed through school spaces, for school playgrounds are primary sites where the performance/doing of gender unfolds. The data showed how children's participation in specific activities influences their construction of 'collaboratively...relational understandings of what it is to be male or female' (Paechter &Clark, 2007: 319). In particular, at the two Athenian primary schools children's play practices were diametrically antithetical, on the basis of their gender. These asymmetries related to the nature of activities/games that most boys and most girls engaged in during recess. It was observed that most boys played mainly football while many girls preferred to chat or played quietly games such as chasing. Aggression, although it was not very frequent, was observed during energetic football matches. In parallel with this, it was observed that the majority of boys played in larger game networks than girls and the size of their active network was greater. Most boys' game networks were consisted mostly of children of the same age and gender whereas most girls' game networks were characterised by age and gender heterogeneity, for it was observed that they interacted with girls from other years more frequently than boys and they allowed some boys to participate in their activities. The degree of gender segregation was very low and mixed-gender groups did occur often on school playgrounds (in both schools).

Furthermore, the analysis of gender dynamics highlighted how a specific form of masculinity had gained ascendancy over other forms of masculinities and femininities and dominated the school playgrounds, (spatially and symbolically) leading to the subordination of any other forms of masculinities or femininities. This hegemonic form of masculinity was constituted

and reconstituted discursively on school playgrounds through 'ritualistic' football games. Football was a major signifier of successful/hegemonic masculinity, for non-footballing boys and girls were marginalised and subordinated. Francis (1998b) has postulated that dominant gender norms empower normative gender behaviour and position femininity in the acquiescent roles to the dominant ones. At both schools children were prescribed and restricted in engaging in activities associated with the other gender. It appears that most boys and most girls were involved in what Davies (1989b: 29) called 'gender category maintenance work' and Thorne (1993: 64) 'borderwork', for they were constantly trying to secure the confines that demarcate masculine and feminine behaviour. Gender-homogeneous football teams constituted such an attempt to protect and maintain masculinity. In contrast to most boys, girls were not in constant need to maintain their feminine identity and often crossed the boundaries of femininity by participating in traditional masculine activities. For instance, a girl that would participate in a football match would not set her feminine identity at risk whereas a boy who would play volleyball with the girls would be identified as effeminate. This is symptomatic of the fragility of hegemonic masculinity that needs to be constantly constituted and performed. It is due to the fragile nature of hegemonic masculinity that some boys seemed to be more stressed with policing the boundaries that delimit masculinity and femininity by excluding girls or effeminate boys from their games.

The findings yielded that young children actively participated in the construction and maintenance of their gender identities in line with hegemonic masculinity/emphasised femininity discourses. Boys and girls not only recognised and selected the gender discourses but actively appropriated and amended them to fit into their social worlds. Contrary to what gender socialisation theories have postulated, children are not passive recipients of gender socialisation process that are being trained into normative masculine and feminine roles. Rather, they are active and critical beings who cautiously shaping and altering the existing

gender discourses to suit their own personal needs. Therefore, it can be argued that hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity acquire different characteristics depending on the social context. However, in my study hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity were sharing the same characteristics at both schools.

Schools could play a significant role in encouraging gender egalitarian play practices that promote mixed-gender play and diminish the gender zones on school playgrounds. Mixed-gender play activities could be encouraged by providing young children with additional play resources. Adult intervention is another aspect that should be considered in changing the dynamics of school playgrounds towards a more gender egalitarian and less gender normative direction (Thorne, 1993; Connolly, 1998).

Chapter 7

Snow White in Primary Classrooms:

Children's Responses to Non-Traditional Gender Discourses

'Women do not dig to find diamonds. They only dig in the garden to grow vegetables'
(Nana, primary school girl)

Introduction

The gender dichotomies (masculine-feminine) that are observed in the social cosmos constitute a systematic 'ordering device' in fairy tales (Davies, 1989b: 43). This plays a critical role in shaping children's views of gender, since children are quite deliberately presented with hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity discourses. Children 'through hearing traditional narratives…learn to recognise themselves and others as located within their own lived gendered narratives' (Davies, 1989b: 43). In parallel with this, these traditional narratives provide children with the opportunity to comprehend their own positionings in the social world and regulate their performance of gender. Thus, through the fairy tales children 'assimilate the story to their past experience of similar tales, providing themselves with expectations about such things as types, characters, [and] patterns of behaviour…' (Applebee, 1978: 3-4).

The cultural and social consequences of the fairy tales on children's gender identity construction was at the epicentre of the feminist debate, which was instigated in the early 1970s by Marcia Lieberman. Lieberman (1972) analysed traditional fairy tales from a gender perspective and postulated that the discursive representations of masculinity and femininity in the narratives were gender normative. Analogously, a plethora of studies by feminist critics have contended that children's literature reinforces traditional gender discourses (Dworkin, 1974; Moore, 1975), which might influence dramatically children's views of gender roles and their performance of gender. Hence, 'children's stories present them not only with the

mundane gendered world of women in kitchens but also the fantasy world in which women escape kitchens and are beautiful and loved, their reward for which, is of course, their own kitchen' (Davies, 1989b: 44).

For modern feminists there are three possible solutions to the atavistic portrayals of gender roles and the ideology of male domination, which is abundant in traditional fairy tales. The first is to '…present the tales, unaltered, with their traditional endings, and the devil takes the consequences of the possible damage to a young girl's career expectations' (MacDonald, 1982: 18). A second possible solution is to '…rewrite the tales, deemphasizing physical beauty and marriage, but thereby violating the objectivity of folklore collector by imposing one's own language and bias on the narrative…' (MacDonald, 1982: 18). Lastly, the third solution is to '…write new tales, using folklore motifs with less conventional endings' (MacDonald, 1982: 18).

The third solution, as it was advocated by MacDonald (1982), was fulfilled with the production of feminist fairy tales. As products of disgruntlement with dominant male discourses of traditional fairy tales, feminist tales propose an altered view of the social cosmos and 'speak in a voice that has been customarily silenced' (Zipes, 1986: xi). The discursive representations of femininity in the feminist literature for children challenge the traditional patriarchal structures of fairy tales, bring about more equality in the social world and deconstruct hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity. Ever since the late 1960s there has been an increasing propensity to express non-gender normative perceptions of the 'world through fairy tales or through criticism about fairy tales' (Zipes, 1986: xi). In England and the USA women's movement helped catalytically in the production of feminist fairy tales and a large number of feminist children's stories have been produced in these countries.

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Feminist fairy tales for children and adults satiate the needs of feminism for gender rearrangement and egalitarianism in the family and in the labour market. Looking at the structure of feminist fairy tales one notices that the story is based on the self-definition of a young woman. 'The female protagonist becomes aware of the task which she must complete in social interaction with others to define herself. Instead of pursuing power for the purpose of self-aggrandisement or omnipotence, the heroine rejects violence and seeks to establish her needs in harmony with the needs of others' (Zipes, 1986: 32). The heroine uses power only for protecting herself or for dissuading violence. The notion of vengeance in the way that is presented in the traditional fairy tales is absent. The aesthetic core of feminist children's stories does not encapsulate competition and 'thus, there is a reversal of the morphological structure of the traditional fairy tale based on power plays and the male protagonist's quest for power' (Zipes,1986: 32). However, the effects of feminist readings on children's perceptions of gender roles cannot be presumed, for narratives are 'polysemous sites' (Lemish, 1998: 148) and children as readers are active producers of meanings; not passive recipients of pre-determined meanings (Currie, 1999). Therefore, children can give multiple meanings to a given text by challenging or reproducing specific gender discourses.

This chapter focuses on children's sense making of gender discourses and investigates the ways in which pupils negotiate and make sense of non-traditional gender discourses. In particular, I present and critically discuss the findings of my research with reference to children's responses to the feminist version of Snow White (Zipes, 1986) in an attempt to scrutinise the extent to which their views of gender roles are normative. In addition, I examine pupils' ability to challenge normative gender discourses. The data collected in two Athenian primary schools. A total of 120 third- and fourth-grade primary pupils, (50 boys and 70 girls) participated in the study. In detail, after reading the story, we discussed male and female characters' behaviour in the narrative. The discussion was based on a semi-structured

interview format. Each session lasted approximately 90 minutes, (15-20 minutes were spent for reading the fairy tale and 70-75 minutes for the discussion).

The deployment of a feminist fairy tale for exploring children's responses to non-traditional gender discourses was inspired by Bronwyn Davies' (1989b) research. Despite the noticeable similarities of my study with Davies' (1989b) research, the geographical, cultural and chronologic parameters constitute critical points that differentiate my study to Davies' (1989b). More specifically, my research was conducted two decades after Davies' study in two primary schools in Athens and participants were at a different stage of sexual development (ages eight-ten years old). Davies' (1989b) research took place in Australia and children who participated in her study were significantly younger (five years old). This is crucial, for studies have shown that children accept traditional gender dichotomies by the age of five, 'so at this stage children are keen to demonstrate their awareness and knowledge of being the 'right' gender' and then 'they begin to establish and refine these conceptual understandings' (Skelton et al., 2009: 189). Hence, eight and ten year old boys who participated in my study had established a better 'senses of gender identity' than five year old boys (Skelton et al., 2009: 189). Besides, two different feminist stories were used to explore children's views of non-traditional gender discourses. For the purposes of my study, I deployed the feminist version of Snow White whilst Davies (1989b) based on the feminist reading of *The Paper Bag Princess*. This is a critical asymmetry of my research to Davies' study, for the hypothesis that was made was that pupils would be familiar with the traditional fairy tale of Snow White by Brothers Grimm. Based on this hypothesis, it was expected that boys and girls had preconceived ideas about the female protagonist, which would contradict Snow Whites unconventional subject positionings in the feminist fairy tale. Considering that the traditional fairy tale is very popular another hypothesis that was made was that gender portrayals in the original version of the story would win over the unconventional

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representations of Snow White in the feminist fairy tale. It is for this reason that my study takes a fresh epistemic look into children's responses to non-traditional gender discourses, as will be discussed in the following pages where the asymmetries between my study and Davies' research are addressed.

7.1 Folklore and Feminism: A Review of the Traditional and Feminist Versions of Snow White

'Once upon a time, long, long ago a king and queen ruled over a distant land. The Queen was kind and lovely and all the people of the realm adored her. The only sadness in the Queen's life was that she wished for a child but did not have one. One winter day, the Queen was doing needle work while gazing out her ebony window at the new fallen snow. A bird flew by the window startling the Queen and she pricked her finger. A single drop of blood fell on the snow outside her window. As she looked at the blood on the snow she said to herself, 'Oh, how I wish that I had a daughter that had skin as white as snow, lips as red as blood, and hair as black as ebony'. Soon after that, the kind Queen got her wish when she gave birth to a baby girl who had skin white as snow, lips red as blood, and hair black as ebony. They named the baby princess Snow White, but sadly, the Queen died after giving birth to Snow White.' (Grimm, 2011: 2).

The genesis of Snow White's character gave birth to a plethora of feminist critiques that dynamically censured the normative gender discourses which are abundant in the fairy tale, as well as their potential impact on children's gender identity construction. Snow White, the German fairy tale by the brothers Grimm, has had a long and enduring presence in the course of modern Western European tradition and has been immortalised through oral and written reiterations and films[40]. In the classic version, Snow White is positioned as a beautiful girl that her beauty saves her life and ensures her a place in her own "kitchen" (Davies, 1989b). The word kitchen has a metaphorical meaning and symbolises the patriarchal structures in the social system, which epitomises the traditional positionings of women in the domestic sphere. In particular, in the classic version Snow White is a Princess living with her stepmother, an egocentric and egregious Queen who is assumed to have taken over the kingdom after the death of Snow White's father. The Queen possesses a sentient mirror that answers any

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[40]A total of 34 films have been produced since the first screen appearance of Snow White in 1916. The most recent adaptation is the Disney film Mirror-Mirror.

questions. She often asked the mirror: 'mirror, mirror on the wall, who is the fairest of all?[41]'. To which the mirror always replied: 'you, my Queen, are the fairest of all' (Grimm's 2009: 127). Every time the Queen asked the mirror she would get the same response. But as time passed on, little Snow White grew more and more beautiful. When she was seventeen years old, she was as 'lovely as the bright day' and still lovelier than the Queen herself. So one day when the lady asked her mirror, it answered-'O Lady Queen, though fair ye be, Snow-White is fairer far to see' (Grimm's, 2009: 128). The Queen became furiously jealous and commanded a huntsman to kill Snow White. The huntsman took Snow White into the forest but after raising his knife to stab her, he found himself unable to kill her. Instead, he let her go, telling her to flee and hide from the Queen. This narrative is symptomatic of the politics of female competition over beauty, which epitomises women's ultimate challenge to secure a man and a place in their own "kitchen".

In the forest, Snow White discovered a tiny cottage that belonged to the seven dwarfs. There, the dwarfs took pity on her, saying 'if you will keep the house for us, and cook, make the beds, wash, sew, and knit, and keep everything clean and orderly, then you can stay with us, and you shall have everything that you want' (Grimm's, 2009: 129). They warned her to take care of herself and let no one in when they are away delving in the mountains. The traditional positionings of masculinity and femininity in the narrative reinforce hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity discourses, which position men in the labour market and women in the domestic sphere. These traditional gender dichotomies around which femininity and masculinity are discursively constructed in the classic version of Snow White are perpetuated by the discursive representations of masculinity and femininity in the anthology textbooks and have been taken on by most boys and most girls (see chapter 5).

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[41] In German "Spieglein, Spieglein, an der Wand / Wer ist die Schönste im ganzen Land?"

When the Queen found out that Snow White was still alive she tried to kill her again. Twice the Queen disguised herself and visited the dwarfs' cottage trying to kill Snow White, but with no success. In her third attempt the Queen made a poisoned apple and in the disguise of a farmer's wife offered it to Snow White who ate it fervently and immediately fell into a deep lethargy. When the dwarfs found her they couldn't revive her and they placed her in a glass coffin, assuming she was dead. Time passed, and a Prince travelling through the land saw Snow White. The Prince was enchanted by her beauty and instantly fell in love with her. He kissed her and at once the kiss broke the spell and Snow White woke up. The Prince then declared his love for her and soon a wedding was planned (Grimm's, 2009: 129-135). This traditional ending epitomises the hegemonic heterosexual matrix (Renold, 2003, 2006a), which emphasises the role of men in women's lives, as saviours.

The metaphors, the arrays of power and desire, and the form of synergies that are produced in the fairy tale by brothers' Grimm are gender normative. A form of masculinity is reinforced, which gains ascendancy over femininity and positions female characters in subordinated positions. Thus, hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity are epitomised, legitimated and naturalised through the discursive constructions of masculinity and femininity in the narrative. Besides, the 'mirror on the wall… shows at every point that this is a story about the desire to be the fairest of them all' (Sale, 1978: 1). The term "narcissism" seems altogether too slippery to be the only one we want here'. Beauty is far more significant for men than for women because '…male sexual response depends to a considerable degree on visual clues. Placing each "fair lady" (or anything else) somewhere on an arbitrary hierarchical scale seems to be a male idea. Women may recognise a thousand different types of beauty without having to make them compete' (Walker, 1996: 20). In addition, Snow White's missing father figure is successfully replaced in the fairy tale by seven dwarfs. However, Snow White eventually abandons them in order to be with her Prince. It can be

argued that in the narrative there is a clear indication of a patriarchal organisation of society, for Snow White is taken adrift by the river of male power, passing from one form of control to another (from the daughter's role to the wife's role).

Despite the normative gender discourses that are reinforced by the traditional fairy tale, the impact of the narrative on children's perceptions vis-à-vis gender roles cannot be presumed. As discussed, in the post-structuralist view children make sense of gender discourses using their own understanding and knowledge of other stories as well as their own experiences of the social world with reference to gender. The way that a child relates to a fairy tale and he/she deduces the text and uses it are critical issues, for children can give multiple meanings to narrative structures and reproduce or challenge specific gender discourses. The pluralism that characterises children's sense making of gender discourses instigated my study of children's responses to non-traditional gender representations.

In feminist fairy tales these narrative structures obtain a new content, which enables readers to find new ways and means of resolving conflicts. Based on the narrative structures that are used, feminist stories fall into two categories: a) the stories where the '…subtext is turned into the text- [and] the story becomes a story about gender' (Davies 1989b: 45) and b) the stories '…where gender relations remain the subtext, but where the metaphors through which the children have come to understand being female or male are shifted, such that a new kind of narrative is made possible' (Davies, 1989b: 46). The feminist version of Snow White that I selected for the purpose of my research falls into the second category. In this type of stories commonly 'fantastic projections are used… to demonstrate the changeability of contemporary social relations and the fusion brings together all the possible means for illuminating a concrete utopia. In effect, the narrative techniques of fusion and transfiguration

are aimed at disturbing and jarring readers so that they lose their complacent attitude towards the status quo…' (Zipes, 2006: 316).

Unlike the classic version where Snow White is a victim of her own beauty until she is finally saved by the Prince, the female protagonist in the feminist version is not a Princess. She is portrayed as a capable craftswoman who makes beautiful jewels and a hardworking girl who works in a diamond mine. However, once again Snow White is chased by an evil and egoistic Queen, the Monarch of a mythical kingdom where the story unfolds. Everything that the people of the kingdom produced belonged to the Queen and they were allowed to keep only what was left over or spoiled. Daily the riches of the kingdom were brought to her and every night she would ask the mirror: 'mirror, mirror in my hand who is the happiest in the land?' (Zipes, 2006: 78). Then in a silvery voice the mirror always replied: 'Queen, all bow to your command; you are the happiest in the land' (Zipes, 2006: 78). And the Queen would smile with great pleasure.

Snow White's talent in making jewellery led to her incarceration in the castle of the almighty Queen, as the Queen's personal jewellery maker. Despite the fact that in the castle Snow White could have anything she wished for, she was very disgruntled for she was missing her friends. The Queen was so enthusiastic about her work that she soon offered to make her a Princess. Snow White repudiated the regal title and implored the Queen to allow her to return to her friends in the diamond mine. As the Queen refused to grant her request, Snow White managed to escape by hiding in a chest and returned to her friends. When the Queen found out that Snow White had absconded, she ordered her soldiers to go to the diamond mine where Snow White and the seven dwarfs were working and seal up the entrance. After spending long hours ensnared in the mine all the workers managed to find a way out. As the soldiers commanded Snow White to return to the castle, she heroically resisted and raised all

the people against the soldiers and the Queen of the Mountains. The Queen who was watching from the highest battlements of her castle slipped and she fell and hurtled screaming down until she was shattered into fragments on the rocks below.

The apparent intention of the author here is to present a heroine. Snow White is not a unitary being. She experiences multiple positionings, analogous to the positionings we experience in our quotidian lives. In the commencement of the story she is positioned as a hard working girl who succeeds in a male-dominated field (diamond mine) and as an adept craftswoman. She is then positioned as victim of the Queen. However, she repudiates this subject position and cunningly organises her exodus from the castle. She also rejects the positioning as a Princess and by hiding in a chest becomes a free agent. Finally, she negates the subject position as a victim in the diamond mine and positions herself as a heroine who speaks of the injustice and raises the people against the Queen of the Mountains and succeeds in abolishing the establishment.

The discussion with the students focused on the Snow White's multiple subject positions. Pupils' views of Snow White are symptomatic of the polysemous nature of any text, for their responses elongated from full acceptance to complete rejection of Snow White's roles/activities. Next, I critically discuss children's responses to non-traditional gender discourses in order to divulge the various meanings of the narrative structures as they were produced by the students. Also, a comparison of my findings with Davies' (1989b) research is attempted in order to illustrate the asymmetries between the two studies.

7.2 Snow White in Primary Classroom: Children's Responses to Non-Normative Gender Discourses

Children make sense of what they hear based on their own everyday life experiences, as well as their knowledge of other stories (Applebee, 1978). Based on this, as well as Davies' (1989b) research findings, the hypothesis that was made was that pupils' familiarity with the classic version of the Snow White would have a dissuasive effect on their understanding of the feminist story[42]. In the classic version, the protagonist experiences traditional subject positions (beauty, naivety, aristocracy, and submission), which are utterly negated in the feminist story. Therefore, the multiple unconventional positionings of Snow White in the feminist version would be particularly challenging for the children, for boys and girls would be exposed to non-normative gender discourses that they have not previously experienced across the arrays of schooling context. For this reason, it was expected that the normative discursive representations of Snow White in the classic version would win over the heroic female protagonist who is characterised by dynamism, militancy, fortitude and intelligence. Hence, children were expected to deploy hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity discourses for making sense of the protagonist's positionings in the narrative, due to lack of previous exposure to an analogous discursive content.

As a first step in exploring children's responses to non-traditional gender discourses the discussion with the pupils placed emphasis on Snow White's unconventional occupational roles. Her positionings as a capable jewellery maker and a hard working diamond mine-worker are antithetical to emphasised femininity discourses that are reinforced by the anthologies and teachers' classroom practices (see chapter 5). As discussed, the majority of boys and girls reproduced the normative gender division of occupations promoted by the

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[42] Particularly, all pupils were familiar with the classic version of Snow White.

anthology textbooks (see chapter 5). Thus, it was expected that pupils would be unable to legitimate and naturalise Snow White's non-traditional positionings in the fairy tale. More specifically, I asked pupils to comment on Snow White's activities. The findings showed crucial gender asymmetries among boys' and girls' perceptions of gender. The majority of boys, in particular, conveyed more binaristic and polarised views vis-à-vis gender division of labour and challenged the discourse of a woman working in a traditionally male-dominated field. Typical of this is Theodore's response:

> **Theodore**: '*I didn't like that she [Snow White] was working in a mine. This is not a job for a woman because women are not as strong as men*'.

Contrary to their male classmates, Achilles and Costas did not challenge Snow White's unconventional positioning as a diamond mine worker. In their views femininity was not strongly identified with domesticity, mothering and nurturing, despite the discursive representations of femininity in the anthology textbooks (see chapter 5). In particular, Achilles and Costas told me:

> **Achilles:** '*I am sure Snow White can do that job. All women can do it if they want*'.
> **Costas:** '*It's a hard job but a woman could do it*'.

The analysis of boys demographic characteristics found that unlike Achilles and Costas, the majority of boys who were unable to accept Snow White's subject positioning as a mine worker did not have mothers in paid employment. This is an indication that the mother's employment status plays a crucial role in explaining children's ability to challenge normative gender discourses. My findings corroborate previous studies showing that children with both parents in paid employment are more likely to challenge normative discourses of gender roles in the labour market (Zuckerman &Sayre, 1982; Kessler et al., 1982). They also support Davies' (1989b) findings to a high degree. In particular, Davies (1989b) has postulated that

children 'who understand the feminist interpretation of the story… have mothers engaged in paid work outside the home…' (Davies, 1989b: 63). Although children with mothers in paid employment might be able to reproduce discourses of working women, 'it would be a mistake to think of this relation as a causal one. If it were, the solution to all of our problems would simply be to have all women to go out to work' (Davies, 1989b: 63).

In addition, it was observed that boys who reproduced Snow White's non-traditional positioning in the labour market performed subordinated masculinity; they did not play football and they were labelled as effeminate by their male classmates. This can explicate why some boys did not deploy hegemonic masculinity discourses in understanding Snow White's occupational roles. On the other hand, boys who performed hegemonic masculinity were in constant need to reassure their masculine identity. Thus, by negating Snow White's invasion into a male-dominated domain (the diamond mine) they safeguarded the binaries and dichotomies around which hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity are constructed. Hegemonic boys by challenging Snow White's non-normative positionings in the narrative managed to eliminate the threat that she posed to hegemonic masculinity.

Boys who performed hegemonic or complicit masculinity were unable to challenge the normative gender discourses that regulated their views of gender in order to accept Snow Whites' non-traditional occupational activities. Consequently, they critiqued the protagonist's participation in a traditional male-dominated terrain. This was mainly because they had identified femininity with weakness. According to hegemonic masculinity discourses, females lack physical strength and as a result, Snow White's occupational activity was perceived as atypical for a woman. Their lack of previous exposure to discursive practices of women executing strenuous occupational roles dissuaded children from accepting Snow White's subject positioning. In parallel with this, the polarised discourses of femininity and

masculinity in the anthology textbooks reinforced a binaristic and dichotomous identification of masculinity with strength and femininity with weakness. Also, the discursive content of the anthology textbooks perpetuates a traditional gender division of occupations. These parameters –as well as the fact that many of the boys did not have mothers in paid employment- might elucidate most boys' lack of previous exposure to discursive practices of women working in a traditional male-dominated terrain.

The binary of strong-weak that regulated most boys' views of gender is also crucial in understanding the reasons for negating Snow White's arduous work. Symptomatic of this is my dialogue with Manos and Antonis:

> **Researcher**: '*Do you think that Snow White was very muscular?*'
> **Manos**: '*Yeah, I think she worked out a lot and became like Hercules*'.
> **Antonis**: '*She was working out a lot and didn't look like a woman and the seven dwarfs called her Snow Whiteman*'.
> **Researcher**: '*No. Snow White was slim and slender but very strong*'.
> **Antonis**: '*Then, she couldn't do that job*'.

It appears that hegemonic boys had identified femininity with lack of strength (weakness). Most boys were unable to accept a woman of physical strength and some elegance. It is for this reason that they challenged Snow White's positioning. A woman of physical strength resembles a man and sacrifices her femininity. More specifically, in Antonis' words, Snow White turns into a 'Snow Whiteman'. Femininity is synonymous to weakness and this idea constitutes a socio-political and cultural remnant of patriarchy, which is well-established in modern societies. Polarised notions of strength and weakness regulated most boys' perceptions of masculinity and femininity. Femininity is a fragile concept in the system of social values that is often defined by the characteristics that are lacking or by the opposite attributes of masculinity (Kessler &McKenna, 1978) because otherwise it would be a threat to

hegemonic masculinity. In particular, Paechter (2006b: 256) has postulated that 'femininities are not constructed in the ways masculinities are; they do not confer cultural power, nor are they able to guarantee patriarchy. They are, instead, constructed as a variety of negations of the masculine'. This is because the synergy between masculinity and femininity is dualistic. The dualistic relationship that characterises the construction of masculinity and femininity is defined as a relationship 'in which the subordinate term is negated, rather than the two sides being in equal balance' (Paechter, 2006b: 256). As discussed in chapter 2, emphasised femininity is constructed as the opposite of hegemonic masculinity. Hence, the majority of boys, especially those who performed hegemonic/complicit masculinities, reproduced the hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity dichotomies that regulated also their performance/doing of gender.

Most girls reproduced to a greater extent Snow White's subject positionings in the fairy tale, especially her positioning as a mine worker. Typical is Maria's response:

> **Maria:** '*I liked the fact that she was working in a diamond mine…Of course women can do such a demanding job.*'

Maria's response is symptomatic of most girls' ability to deconstruct emphasised femininity discourses and reproduce non-traditional gender discourses, which position Snow White in a traditional male-dominated field. The disruption of the normative gender discourses by the majority of girls it should be seen in relation to their mothers' occupational roles. In particular, the analysis showed that most girls had mothers who were active agents in the labour market. Their mothers' professional roles were also accompanied by discursive practices that gave them agency and in some cases even authority. Lastly, most girls' parents' education level appeared to be higher than most boys' parents' education level, especially as far as the mothers' education level is concerned. This could partially elucidate the discrepancy in the findings with reference to boys' and girls' ability to challenge normative gender

discourses. It should be noted that some girls by challenging emphasised femininity discourses claimed power (Paechter, 2006b). As discussed, emphasised femininity is less oppressive than hegemonic masculinity and its boundaries are more flexible, which allows girls to participate in traditional male activities without setting their femininity at risk.

Nevertheless, some girls who performed emphasised femininity were not able to challenge the normative gender discourses and negated Snow White's positioning in the narrative as a mine worker. Nana who held the most normative perceptions of gender roles and activities was one of them. Her response came as no surprise when very logically she told me that:

> **Nana**: '*Women do not dig in mines to find diamonds. They dig only in the garden to grow vegetables*'.

Nana's answer is symptomatic of the influence of emphasised femininity discourses on her understanding of gender roles. Nana was unable to challenge the normative gender discourses and therefore, she repudiated Snow White's positioning as a mine worker, for this job seemed to her atypical for a woman. The negation of this subject positioning is not related to the nature of the activity itself, but to the working conditions and the environment where the activity takes place. As discussed, Nana performed a form of emphasised femininity and in various instances she was unable to challenge normative gender discourses. In her perception digging is appropriate for a woman, as she said that women dig in the garden to grow vegetables. However, digging in a mine to unearth diamonds is uncharacteristic for a woman. Traditionally diamond mines are male-dominated domains. This gendered discourse had an influence on Nana's perceptions of gender-appropriate occupations. Consequently, she was unable to challenge the normative gender discourses, which resulted in the negation of Snow White's subject positioning as a mine worker.

Considering that Nana's parents were well-educated[43] and that her mothers' professional status gave her agency or even power, one would have expected Nana (like the rest of the girls in the classroom who had mothers in paid employment) to be able to challenge the normative gender discourses and accept Snow White's occupational role as a mine worker. It can be argued that Nana's case provides an indication that the synergy between mother's employment status and children's ability to challenge traditional gender discourses is not a causal one (Davies, 1989b). Understanding Nana's views requires an examination of the family structures and dynamics of the relationship between her parents at home, for it would illuminate the available gender discourses to her, which had shaped her views of gender roles. Unfortunately, for the purpose of this study this was not possible due to the limited time that I had in my disposal for collecting my data.

To recapitulate, pupils' perceptions of Snow White's positioning as a diamond mine worker differed on the basis of their gender as well as their mothers' education level and professional status. In detail, hegemonic and complicit boys reproduced the binary of strong-weak around which masculinity and femininity are traditionally constructed. On the basis of this normative dichotomy, any female that possesses or demonstrates physical strength is identified as non-feminine and constitutes a threat to hegemonic masculinity. As well, any strenuous activity seems atypical for a woman. Contrary, few boys who performed subordinated masculinity were able to challenge this normative identification of masculinity with strength and femininity with weakness. Similarly, the majority of girls held less gender normative views of masculinity and femininity with reference to gender occupational roles. Therefore, they were almost unanimous in accepting the discourse of a female diamond mine worker. An elucidation to this is that having a mother who participates actively in the labour market might reinforce gender egalitarian views in relation to gender roles. As discussed, the majority of

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[43] Her mother is an English teacher and her father teaches physical education.

boys challenged to a greater extent than girls Snow White's uncharacteristic occupational activities. The fact that most boys had mothers with lower education level and lower professional status than girls' mothers might explain their views of these gender discourses. My findings corroborate with Davies' (1989b) findings that mothers' participation in paid employment might significantly affect students' ability to challenge normative gender discourses. In parallel with this, it was noted that boys who performed hegemonic masculinity (footballing boys) were less capable than boys who performed subordinated masculinity (non-footballing boys) to accept Snow White's unconventional subject positionings. This was symptomatic of some boys' attempt to maintain and safeguard their hegemonic masculinity by continuously challenging females' subject positions that considered as a threat to hegemonic masculinity.

Within this framework some boys were able to reproduce more easily Snow White's subject positioning as an adept jewellery maker. Typical is Christopher's response to the question which of Snow White' jobs (mine-worker/jewellery maker) is more appropriate for a woman?

> **Christopher:** '*It is more normal for a woman to make jewellery*'.

Christopher's opinion was representative of the majority of boys' views of this discourse. More specifically, boys unanimously believed that it is apt for a woman to make jewellery. However, a systematic analysis of boys' responses showed that the acceptance of Snow White's positioning as a jewellery maker was related to the strong identification of jewellery with femininity (as being a female accessory). Most boys disregarded the physical strength and craftsmanship that are required for making jewellery and drew on discourses that reinforced the identification of jewellery with femininity for making sense of Snow White's positioning. The latter can be supported by boys' responses to my question, what would have been different in the story had Snow White been a man?

> **Theodore:** '…*he wouldn't make jewellery because this is*
> *not a job for men*'.

Nevertheless, Nikitas and Tassos were the only boys who placed emphasis on the physical strength that the nature of the profession required and challenged Snow White's subject positioning as jewellery maker for being incongruous. In particular, Nikitas agreed with Tassos, who told me:

> **Tassos**: '*It's a very difficult job and that's why women*
> *can't do it*'.

On the other hand, girls were also almost unanimous that Snow White's positioning as a jewellery maker is appropriate for a female. The only girls who challenged Snow White's positioning as a jewellery maker were Nana and Anna. Both girls placed emphasis on the nature of Snow White's occupation.

> **Nana**: '*This job is very tiring for a girl*'.
> **Anna**: '*It's not a good job for a girl because girls get tired*
> *more easily than boys*'.

Contrary to the majority of their classmates, Nana and Anna challenged this particular discourse due to its arduous nature. As discussed, both girls performed a form of emphasised femininity and reproduced normative gender discourses. The binary of strong-weak had a dynamic influence on some boys' and girls' sense making of gender and regulated their views of gender roles. The hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity discourses that are reinforced by the narratives in the anthology textbooks (see chapter 5) can partially explicate why some pupils made sense of femininity and masculinity on the basis of the traditional gender dichotomy of strong-weak, around which hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity are constructed.

Snow White's multiple positionings in the story enabled me to explore pupils' views of gender in relation to a variety of roles. In the classic version of the story of Snow White, a

Princess, gets married to a Prince and substantiates her regal origin. This way she acquires her own royal "kitchen". However, in the feminist version Snow White refuses to become a Princess and implores the Queen to let her return to the diamond mine. At the end, as a truly free agent she chooses for herself, she rejects the regal title and the positioning as a Princess, she escapes from the palace and returns to her friends in the diamond mine. Based on this, I explored pupils' views of Snow White's negation of the royal title. Girls' responses were very interesting. In spite of the fact that so many of them had painted Princesses[44], they were almost unanimous in saying that they would refuse to become Princesses if they were Snow White.

> **Maria**: '*I wouldn't choose to become a Princess. I would choose my friends. Friends are very important*'.
> **Medea**: '*I do believe that she did the right thing. She didn't want to become a Princess because she was a hard-working woman and because she loved her friends*'.

The strongest criticism to Snow White's repudiation of the regal title came from Nana and Anna, who told me that:

> **Nana**: '*...she was an idiot that's why she didn't become a Princess*'.
> **Anna**: '*...it was wrong. She should have become a Princess*'.

Nana and Anna drew heavily on emphasised femininity discourses, which reinforce the politics of female beauty and epitomise women's ultimate challenge to secure a man and a place in their own kitchen. Contrary to Nana's and Anna's views, the majority of girls did not challenge the protagonist's decision to negate the regal title and return to the diamond mine. Hence, most girls valued friendship, love and freedom higher than nobility (discourse of Princess). This is a critical finding, for previous studies have postulated that the discourse of

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[44] After reading the feminist story to the students I asked them to draw anything they wanted related to the story. These findings were not incorporated into this chapter due to strict word limit.

Princess 'engage[s] with the production of girls' conscious and unconscious desires, prepare[s] for and proffer[s] a happy ever after situation in which the finding of the Prince (the knight in shining armour, 'Mr. Right') comes to seem like a solution to a set of overwhelming desires and problems' (Walkerdine, 1984: 163). Furthermore, 'the importance of being pretty and the role it plays in creating femininities and masculinities provide another opportunity for locating the heterosexual matrix' (Blaise, 2005b: 77), for these discourses 'prepare the ground for the insertion of the little girl into romantic heterosexuality' (Walkerdine, 1984: 163). Although popular culture and especially, Disney films reinforce these discourses, the majority of girls in my research were able to challenge the discourse of Princess. The anthology textbooks' contribution to the devaluation of the discourse of the Princess should also be considered, for they do not epitomise this discourse (see chapter 5). Also, Hellas is not a constitutional monarchy, which might contribute to the deconstruction of this discourse.

Analogous were boys' responses to Snow White's repudiation of the title of the Princess. The majority of boys said that they wouldn't become Princes, if they found themselves in Snow White's situation.

> **Tassos**: '*No…because I would be alone and I would get bored*'.
> **Manos**: '*No…because friendship is more important than money*'.

Unlike the rest of the boys, Sakis believed that Snow White should have become a Princess and added:

> **Sakis:** '*If I were Snow White I would have become a Prince*'.

The data postulated that boys and girls were almost unanimous that Snow White made the right decision in refusing the title of the Princess and returning to the diamond mine. Pupils

did not challenge the discourse of a young girl negating the title of Princess, in spite of the fact that in the classic version Snow White's character is identified with nobility. Hence, the classic story of Snow White, which all pupils had read, was not a burden for accepting Snow White's unconventional positionings.

Next, in the discussion with the pupils I explored the binaries around which masculinity and femininity are constructed, in an attempt to deconstruct the influence of hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity on their sense making of gender. In detail, I asked boys and girls to tell me whether a male Snow White (Snow Whiteman) would have rejected/accepted the regal title. Children's responses are symptomatic of the gender dichotomies that regulated their views of masculinity and femininity. Specifically, boys unanimously believed that had Snow White been a man he would have become a Prince for:

>**Theodore:** '… *because men are lazy*'.
>**Marios:** '…*and they love money*'

Boys expressed the opinion that materialism and lethargy are inherent properties of masculinity. A further discussion with the boys revealed that they believed that men are indolent and thus, being a Prince would make everything easier in their lives. Therefore, they wouldn't negate this positioning as Snow White did. However, some boys agreed that if Snow White was a man:

>**Nikolas**: '*….he would have refused to become a Prince*'.

Similarly, girls were unanimous that if Snow White had been male would have chosen to become a Prince:

>**Medea**: '*…because men like power*'.
>**Antigone**: '*…and they like to dominate*'.
>**Athena**: '*he would choose the riches and would become a Prince because men like to rule*'.

Most boys' and girls' views of masculinity were constructed around dichotomous binaries, which position masculinity in the realm of dominance, power, apathy and materialism. This provides an insight into the characteristics that hegemonic masculinity had acquired in the specific primary schools. Especially, the association of masculinity with power and dominance is reinforced by the discursive representations of hegemonic masculinity in the anthology textbooks (see chapter 5) and the power and dominance of boys on school playgrounds (see chapter 6).

Had Snow White been a man would have altered the story drastically, for boys and girls were almost unanimous that a male Snow White ('Snow Whiteman') would have been stronger, more powerful but less clever. This would have made the story more adventurous and violent.

> **Andreas**: '*If it was a man he would shout more and would kill the bad Queen*'.
> **Danae:** '*Having more strength, he would pull down the door and made his way out of the castle*'.

In other words, had Snow White been a man:

> **Thanos**: '*...the story would have been more adventurous.*'

Children's accounts are symptomatic of the impact of traditional gender discourses in classic fairy tales. The strong and dominant Prince, "*The Snow Whiteman*" as children called him, would have killed the Queen in a demonstration of his physical superiority and his unparalleled martial skills. This deconstructs the binaristic approach to the discourse of the Prince and Princess in children's perceptions, for being a Prince is much more powerful than being a Princess. The traditional discursive representations of the Prince, who fights against evil powers in order to save himself or his beloved Princesses, likely had influenced pupils' views of this discourse. As a result, a male protagonist would alter the story drastically, for the death of the Queen would basically assert the superiority of masculinity over femininity.

This is typical of the ascendancy that masculinity gains over femininity and subordinated masculinities in terms of physical power.

Contrary to the strong association of masculinity with physical power, most pupils had identified femininity with imagination, cunningness and intelligence. Children were almost unanimous that a male Snow White wouldn't have been smart/cunning enough to hide in the chest and escape from the castle of the evil Queen, as well as he would lack imagination to make such beautiful jewellery.

> **Medea**: '*He wouldn't have imagination*'.
> **Athena**: '*He wouldn't make jewels for women*'
> **Danae**: '*He wouldn't have thought about hiding in the chest in order to escape*'.
> **Georgia:** '*He would not be so imaginative to make such beautiful jewelleries*'.
> **Andreas**: '*…he would have acted differently and would do more than Snow White did in order to set himself free, because men are stronger but women are smarter*'.

In other words a male Snow White, as one of the female student noted, means that:

> **Sophia**: '*…it would be a completely different story*'.

The identification of masculinity with physical strength/dominance and femininity with intelligence/cunningness demonstrates the gender dualism that characterised most children's perceptions of gender. These gender normative binaries are reinforced by the curriculum materials, classroom practices and popular culture. As discussed in chapter 2, hegemonic masculinity is defined against emphasised femininity and it is always at risk of failing (Paechter, 2006b), which explains why there were such strong dichotomies that regulated some boys perceptions of masculinity and femininity.

Children's accounts of the farewell scene where '*one by one the seven little men kissed Snow White goodbye…*' with '*tears in their eyes, for she was their dearest friend...*' is symptomatic of how fixed are the qualities that define hegemonic masculinity. In particular, most pupils

expressed the opinion that men do not cry. Most of the girls agreed with Aphrodite who told me that:

>**Aphrodite**: '*Men do not cry because they are cold. Only children and women cry*'.

However, a few girls believed that men do cry, but they do not cry the same way as women or as often as women.

>**Medea**: '*Yes, they do but without tears though.*'
>**Athena:** '*Girls are more sensitive than boys...Men cry internally and less often than women.*'

Two of the girls were able to challenge the hegemonic masculinity discourses according to which men don't cry, for they believed that men and women cry.

>**Antigone**: '*Yes, they do cry*'.
>
>**Cleopatra**: '*Yes men do cry as often as women do*'.

Contrary to most girls, the majority of boys expressed more traditional perceptions of masculinity, for they believed that men don't cry. Specifically, most boys agreed with Tassos and Thanos:

>**Tassos**: '*Men do not cry, when we grow up we will not cry either*'.
>**Thanos**: '*No, men do not cry. Only, women cry*'.

There were, however, a few boys, who performed subordinated masculinity who seemed to disagree with their male classmates, for they believed that men do cry.

>**Achileas**: '*Yes they do cry*'.
>**Costas**: '*Sometimes they do cry*'.
>**Petros**: '*Men cry very rarely*'.

It can be argued that some girls (i.e. Nana) reproduced emphasised femininity discourses and viewed sensitivity as an inherent property of femininity. However, most girls were more

prepared than most boys to accept a man who cries, for it would not constitute a threat to their gender identity. On the other hand, it was noted that boys who performed hegemonic masculinity and boys who performed subordinated masculinity held antithetical views of masculinity. Hegemonic boys did not challenge the normative discourses that position masculinity as unemotional and thought that men never cry. For boys who performed subordinated masculinity, masculinity was identified with sensitivity to a greater extent. In detail, they believed that men do cry sometimes or as often as women. Hegemonic boys perceived sensitivity as a threat to their masculinity because in the specific schools hegemonic masculinity was epitomised in the adage 'men don't cry'. This is symptomatic of the way that hegemonic masculinity is constructed relationally to emphasised femininity by defining as masculine anything that is not feminine. This is also representative of the frail nature of hegemonic masculinity that requires those who enact it to constantly reassure their masculine identity.

In an attempt to explore further the binaries around which masculinity and femininity are constructed, I discussed with the pupils the role of the evil and egocentric Queen. This discursive representation of femininity is traditionally reinforced in the fairy tales, for Queens and stepmothers are assigned such negative personality characteristics. In particular, I asked children if a King would be as wicked and as evil as the diabolical Queen in the feminist version of the fairy tale. The majority of boys and girls unanimously believed that a King would be as evil as the Queen.

> **Marios:** '*The Queen was bad but if she was a man he would also be as bad as the Queen*'.

Only very few boys seemed to believe that if the Queen was a man:

> **Andreas:** '*He would be worse than the Queen*'.

Similarly, most girls' responses demonstrated that had the evil Queen been a man, he would have been as wicked and diabolical as the Queen. However, Nana told me that an evil King would have been very difficult to be tricked and thus,

Nana: '*Snow White wouldn't have managed to escape***'.*

Nana was not able to challenge emphasised femininity discourses that position femininity as inferior to masculinity. This was also evident from her response to my question: *Do you think that if Snow White were a man would manage to escape from the evil King?* As Nana said:

Nana: '*Certainly he would escape*'.

Nana's traditional view that a malevolent man could more easily capture a woman is rooted in the normative identification of femininity with weakness and the superiority of masculinity over femininity. Hence, the superiority of a powerful diabolical King over an evil Queen is symptomatic of the supremacy of hegemonic masculinity over emphasised femininity. Nana's account indicates that she reproduced these binaristic discourses that position femininity as inferior to masculinity.

We are all familiar with the traditional ending to fairy tales "*and they lived happily ever after*". In contrast to the traditional narratives, the feminist version of Snow White doesn't end with a kiss and a "*lived happily ever after*" ending. Snow White does not get married to a handsome Prince but she remains with her friends in the diamond mine. Based on this, I asked children to compare the ending of the feminist fairy tale with the ending of the classic version of Snow White by Brothers Grimm. The analysis of girls' accounts yielded that they would have preferred a more traditional ending, where Snow White would have got married to a Prince, for the majority of girls who participated in my research agreed with Nana, who held the opinion that:

Nana: '*It would be better if Snow White met a Prince*'.

In addition, I asked girls to describe what it would happen next in the fairy tale. Most girls' responses highlighted the role of 'idealised and compulsory heterosexuality' (Butler, 1990) in regulating their imagination, for the majority of girls agreed with Maria who told me that:

Maria: '*Later, she met a Prince and they got married*'.

The idealised discourse of marriage and the hegemonic heterosexual matrix had a crucial effect on the ending of the story proposed by many girls. However, it should be noted that in the alternative ending girls did not make any references to motherhood, although in the anthology textbooks the hegemonic heterosexual matrix is reinforced by the discursive representations of motherhood. Most girls' ability to challenge the discourse of motherhood was evaluated positively. Contrary to the majority of girls who had accepted the hegemonic heterosexual matrix, there were a few girls who were able to challenge the discourse of matrimony. Medea was one those girls that did not 'bet on the Prince'. Specifically, she told me that Snow White:

Medea: '*lived with her friends and became very rich by selling the jewelleries that she was making*'.

Medea's ending to the story negates the idealised heterosexual matrix and the discourse of matrimony and motherhood. On the other hand, boys unanimously believed that Snow White would get married at a later point in her life because she would like to have children. Boys' deployed the hegemonic heterosexual matrix and discourses of motherhood and matrimony for providing an alternative ending to the story. Boys' accounts did not unravel any significant identifications of masculinity with fatherhood and virility, for they placed emphasis on motherhood and matrimony.

Although in traditional fairy tales the couple '*lives happily ever after*' I was interested in investigating the after wedding life of Snow White. In particular, I asked pupils to tell me what would change in Snow White's life after getting married to the Prince, which allowed me to explore their views of gender roles in the domestic sphere. Boys were almost unanimous that Snow White's life would change drastically after the wedding. Symptomatic of this is Nikitas' response:

> **Nikitas:** '*She would make Jewelleries from home but she wouldn't work in the diamond mine*'.

Nevertheless, boys who performed hegemonic masculinity held more gender anachronistic views of gender roles.

> **Nikolas:** '*Yes, she would give up her job and she would stay at home to look after her kids*'.
> **Christopher:** '*She wouldn't work; she would be busy at home*'.

Therefore, boys who performed hegemonic/complicit masculinity positioned Snow White in the domestic sphere despite her dynamic presence in the fairy tale and the unconventional positionings that she experienced throughout the story. As a result, they suggested that Snow White gave up her professional life in order to undertake her role as mother and housewife. The majority of boys were unable to challenge the traditional gender discourses, which regulated their perceptions of gender roles in the domestic sphere. These patriarchal family structures are idealised in the anthology textbooks (see chapter 5). The association of femininity with the domestic sphere was proposed even from the boys who said that Snow White would continue to work after her marriage for they suggested that she would work from home. It can be argued that women working outside the domestic sphere pose a threat to hegemonic masculinity, for according to hegemonic masculinity discourses the father is identified as the breadwinner and the economic supporter of the family. This explicates why

hegemonic boys were unable to imagine Snow White working outside the home after her marriage to the Prince. Moreover, their mothers' employment status may have also shaped their views, for in their majority boys did not have mothers in paid employment.

On the other hand, boys who performed subordinated masculinity did not reproduce these normative perceptions of gender roles. Typical is Achilles' response:

> **Achilles:** '*In the mornings she would go to the diamond mine and in the afternoon she would return home to cook and play with the kids*'

Similarly, the majority of girls told me that although Snow White would make jewellery from home, sometimes she would work in the diamond mine. Specifically, most girls agreed with Medea who said that:

> **Medea:** '*She would make jewelleries from home and she would go sometimes to the diamond mine to help her friends*'.

However, girls who performed emphasised femininity were unanimous that Snow White wouldn't work after getting married.

> **Nana**: '*She would become a Princess and she would not have to work….because she would be very rich*'.
> **Anna**: '*She wouldn't work...she would go to the mine to see her friends*'
> **Danae**: '*She would stay at home*'.

Nana's, Anna's and Danae's responses indicate that Snow White would give up her occupational activities, mainly for two reasons. First of all, in their perceptions of gender roles married women do not have to work and secondly, because they believed that an heir to the royal throne would not be in need of participating in paid employment. Their views are symptomatic of the power of the discourse of the Princess which 'engage[s] with the production of girls' conscious and unconscious desires, prepare[s] for and proffer[s] a happy

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every after situation in which the finding of the Prince (the knight in shining armour, 'Mr. Right') comes to seem like a solution to a set of overwhelming desires and problems' (Walkerdine, 1984: 163).

Snow White in the feminist fairy tale experiences multiple subject positions, which emphasise her heroic character. What I was interested in was children's ability to accept the female protagonist as a heroine. As discussed, participants in Davies' (1989b) study failed to recognise the 'Paper Bag Princes' as a heroic figure due to the fact that they were unable to challenge the traditional gender discourses that regulated their views of femininity and heroism. Unlike Davies' (1989b) research, most pupils in my research were able to accept Snow White as a heroine. In particular, third- and fourth-grade girls unanimously believed that Snow White is a heroine.

> **Cleopatra**: '*She is a hero because she was brave*'.
> **Medea**: '*She is a hero because she roused the people of the village against the Queen*'.

Similarly, fourth-grade boys perceived Snow White as a heroine, despite that they were not able to reproduce some of Snow White's unconventional positionings in the fairy tale.

> **George**: '*Yes she is a hero because she is true and really brave*'.
> **Achilles: '***She is a hero because she is smart, she didn't become a princess and she contradicted the Queen*'.

Nevertheless, most third-grade boys believed that Snow White's actions in the narrative are not heroic, for they had associated heroism with violence. Symptomatic of this is Nikolas response:

> **Nikolas**: '*She is not a hero because she didn't kill anybody*'.

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The findings designate that the majority of third-grade boys were more attached to a binary understanding of gender, for they were staking out their own masculinity. The fact that the third- and fourth-grade boys have been exposed to the same gender discourses that are reinforced by the instructional materials and were coming from similar socio-economic backgrounds allowed me to hypothesise that the discrepancy in the findings is probably related to their age difference and their different stages of psychosexual development. Specifically, scholars have postulated that by the age of five 'children are keen to demonstrate their awareness and knowledge of being the 'right' gender' and then 'they begin to establish and refine these conceptual understandings' (Skelton et al., 2009: 189). Hence, fourth-grade boys who participated in my study had established a better 'sense of gender identity' than third-grade boys (Skelton et al., 2009: 189). Also, it can be argued that most girls establish a better sense of gender identity at an earlier stage, for there was no discrepancy between third- and fourth- grade girls in their understanding of Snow White's positioning as a heroine.

Lastly, the discussion with the students was concluded by asking pupils to tell me which of the two version of Snow White they preferred. Third- and fourth-grade pupils almost unanimously told me that the feminist version of Snow White was their favourite:

> **Thanos***: 'it reminded me a little of the fairy tale of Snow White and the seven dwarfs. But this Snow White is doing a difficult job. This story is better than the other one. The jewelleries make it a better story'.*
> **Cleopatra***: 'it was different from the other story of Snow White because in the other story she met the Prince. But I like it more than the other one because there was more action'.*

There was, though, a boy and a girl that didn't like the feminist version of Snow White

> **Nikolas**: '*No I didn't like it because Snow White did men's jobs'.*
> **Nana**: '*No because she didn't become a Princess'.*

Although some boys and some girls were not able to reproduce many of Snow Whites' positionings in the feminist fairy tale, for they contradicted the hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity discourses that regulated their understanding of gender roles, they preferred the feminist over the classic version of the story. Overall, the analysis of children's responses to the feminist fairy tale postulated that students provided contradictory accounts of femininity and masculinity and their answers had no consensus. This contradiction in subjectivity was noted at an individual level, as well as at a group level, for not all of them gave the same responses.

Discussion

In this chapter, I critically reviewed children's responses to non-traditional gender discourses. The findings from the analysis both support and contradict Davies' (1989b) research outcomes. Unlike Davies' (1989b) study, most participants in my research were able to accept Snow White as a heroine, despite her unconventional positionings in the narrative. Furthermore, children's accounts highlighted the influence of hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity discourses in regulating their understanding of masculinity and femininity as oppositional concepts. More specifically, most pupils were attached to the binary of strong/weak for making sense of Snow White's unconventional occupational roles. In particular, most boys seemed more attached to this binary than most girls. The majority of girls were able to challenge emphasised femininity discourses and reproduced Snow White's positioning as a jewellery maker and a mine worker. In contrast to many girls, most boys were unable to challenge hegemonic masculinity discourses and disrupt the binary of strong-weak (Leaper, 1995). Based on this binary most boys negated the protagonist's occupational roles as atypical for a female. Similarly to Davies' (1989b) study, my findings demonstrated that parents' educational level and professional status affect children's ability to reproduce non-normative gender discourses. This relationship appeared stronger when the mother actively participated in paid employment.

Masculinity and femininity were also attached to the dualism of sensitivity/apathy. Femininity, in particular, was identified with sensitivity and masculinity with apathy/lack of sensitivity. This polarised binary is rooted to the notion of hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity (Leaper, 1995; Delph-Janiurck, 2000). According to hegemonic masculinity discourses, sensitivity or any emotional demonstrations of weakness by men is antithetical to the 'ideal' masculine paragon (Connell, 1990). Drawing on these discourses pupils were almost unanimous that men 'don't cry' for crying was perceived as an expression

of weakness (Spark, 1996). In contrast, most of the children did not challenge the identification of femininity with sensitivity. Hence, according to emphasised femininity discourses, females express their feelings of melancholy/sadness through crying. This normative and polarised identification of masculinity with apathy and femininity with sensitiveness was supported by the majority of pupils, although many girls seemed more able than most boys to accept a male crying. This is symptomatic of the fragility that characterises hegemonic masculinity, for those who perform it are in constant need to reaffirm and safeguard their gender identity. More specifically, boys who performed hegemonic masculinity, (see chapter 7), were fervently supporting the lack of sensitivity as an inherent property of masculinity.

The discussion with the pupils unravelled four more binaries around which masculinity and femininity were constructed as oppositional concepts: a) violent/submissive, b) imaginative/unimaginative, c) gullible/cunning, and d) adventurous/unadventurous. In this binary and dichotomous construction of gender, femininity was identified with weakness, passivity, cunningness, imaginativeness and submissiveness. Contrary to this, masculinity was associated with strength, adventuress, unimaginativeness, gullibility and violence. The binary of opposites around which femininity and masculinity were constituted and reconstituted were evident when children asked to point out the shifting in the narratives of the feminist fairy tale had Snow White been a man. Children's accounts suggest that a male protagonist ('*Snow Whiteman*') would alter the narrative dramatically, for he would be strong and brave enough to kill the evil Queen. Pupils had internalised the normative gender discourses of the traditional fairy tales where a Prince fights against the evil powers in order to save himself or his beloved Princess. The death of the Queen would simply assert males' superior power, a perception that the majority of students had accepted. However, a male protagonist would lack imagination and cunningness. In detail, '*Snow Whiteman*' would not

be cunning enough to hide in the chest and escape from the castle of the evil Queen and he would not have the imagination to make such beautiful jewellery.

The findings suggest that pupils had idealised androphilia and gynephilia as the only acceptable expressions of sexuality. Within this hegemonic heterosexual matrix the discourses of marriage and motherhood were epitomised. Symptomatic of this is the alternative ending to the fairy tale provided by the children. Most girls' accounts, in particular, emphasised the importance of romantic heterosexuality, which is epitomised through marriage (for Snow White was married to a Prince). Most girls through the discourses of Princess, Prince and matrimony had idealised romantic heterosexuality (Walkerdine, 1984). Especially the discourse of Princess 'engage[s] with the production of girls' conscious and unconscious desires, prepare[s] for and proffer[s] a happy ever after situation in which the finding of the Prince (the knight in shining armour, 'Mr. Right') comes to seem like a solution to a set of overwhelming desires and problems' (Walkerdine, 1984: 163). Girls did not deploy the discourse of motherhood for constructing the alternative ending to the fairy tale, although within the heterosexual matrix the discourses of marriage and motherhood are strongly interrelated.

On the other hand, most boys did not deploy these discourses for constructing an alternative ending to the story. However, they placed emphasis on the discourses of motherhood and family, which is symptomatic of how the hegemonic heterosexual matrix underlined most boys' perceptions of gender. More specifically, boys told me that Snow White's decision to get married was based upon her strong desire for motherhood.

Lastly, crucial findings emerged from the analysis of children's accounts of gender dynamics and the distribution of roles and responsibilities in the domestic sphere, which showed the influence of hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity discourses on their

perceptions of gender. In particular, many boys held polarised and dichotomous views of gender roles in the domestic sphere and although motherhood figured strongly, fatherhood did not. Boys were almost unanimous that Snow White's life after her marriage would change drastically, for she would give up her professional life in the interest of her family and would undertake her family role as a mother and wife. This normative view of femininity is reinforced by the discursive representations of femininity in the anthology textbooks, which had an influence on their perceptions of gender roles (see chapter 5). Analogous were most girls' perceptions of masculinity and femininity. However, many girls challenged to a certain extent emphasised femininity discourses, which position women in the domestic sphere as mothers and housewives. The majority of girls suggested that Snow White would continue her occupational activities (less frequently though) even after her marriage to the Prince.

The analysis of children's responses to the feminist fairy tale offered valuable insights into how children deployed hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity discourses for making sense of gender. The findings yielded that most boys and most girls provided contradictory accounts of femininity and masculinity and their answers had no consensus. This contradiction in subjectivity was noted at an individual level as well as at a group level as not all of them gave the same responses. Lastly, the discussion highlighted the form that hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity had acquired in the specific schools.

Chapter 8

Epilogue:

Conclusions and Implications

Introduction

This thesis reported on a qualitative study of the role of education system and its practices in reinforcing traditional gender discourses. In addition, this thesis explored how pupils negotiate, reproduce and challenge normative and non-normative gender discourses in their narratives and deploy these discourses in their daily performances of gender on school playgrounds.

A multifaceted analysis was carried out to examine the impact of the educational praxis on children's sense making of the gender discourses materialised within primary schools. The analysis focused on the discursive representations of masculinity and femininity in anthology textbooks, teachers' views of gender roles and their classroom practices. As discussed, in this study, children's gender identities are perceived as embedded and performed through and within school spaces because schools are sites where hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity are discursively constructed (Connell, 1989; Mac an Ghaill, 1996). Within the physical space of the primary school, classrooms serve as spaces in which the performance of gender and the construction of hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity take place. In particular, gender asymmetries are 'deeply embedded within the structures of classroom discursive practice' (Baxter, 2003: 98) because teachers, through their quotidian classroom practices, regulate and normalise children's performance of gender and 'contribute towards the construction of dominant modes of masculinity' (Skelton, 2002: 17) and normative femininity (Paechter, 2006a). Thus, at the centre of this analysis were the gender discourses operating in third- and fourth-grade primary-school classrooms. Emphasis was placed on teachers' classroom practices, student–teacher interactions and teachers' sense making of gender discourses.

This research also moved beyond the physical space of the schools to the discursive representations of masculinity and femininity in the curriculum materials (anthology textbooks). The instructional materials form the foundation for most classroom activities and are 'important influences that shape us by reflecting the politics and values of our society' (Fox, 1993a: 656). Consequently, books can reinforce dominant social gender norms or challenge and foster change (Jordan et al, 2005). At the centre of the textual analysis of the third- and fourth-grade anthology textbooks were gender discourses and the discursive construction of hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity.

In my research, textbooks were perceived as 'polysemous sites' (Lemish, 1998: 148). Children can give multiple meanings to a given text, and therefore, the influence of the textbooks' gender discourses on pupils' perceptions of gender cannot be presumed. Thus, it was crucial to explore children's sense of the gender discourses promoted by the instructional material. Children's understanding of gender discourses was also investigated through an analysis of their responses to non-traditional gender discourses promoted by a feminist version of the fairy tale of Snow White. The feminist fairy tale was a useful tool for scrutinising pupils' ability to negotiate polarised, binaristic construction of gender and to challenge hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity discourses. Moreover, emphasis was placed on children's play practices on school playgrounds as they constitute a crucial physical space within schools and are 'the first arenas in which girls and boys learn to negotiate their behaviour in public' (Karsten, 2003: 471). Children's construction of gender identities includes the use of 'social and physical structures of the school' and 'participation in specific activities' (Paechter & Clark, 2007: 319). School playgrounds, therefore, are perceived as sites where gender is done and performed because through play activities, children 'collaboratively develop relational understandings of what it is to be male or female' (Paechter & Clarke, 2007: 319). Certain forms of masculinity gain ascendancy over other

masculinities and femininities and become hegemonic. In this context, I explored boys' and girls' play practices and scrutinised the gender asymmetries operating on school playgrounds. The findings offer valuable insights into how children deploy gender discourses and unravel the characteristics that hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity have acquired in specific primary schools.

In this chapter, I reflect on the findings of this study. First, I synoptically discuss how this thesis explored the research questions through the data analysis. Next, I explain how my study contributes to existing knowledge on the subject and discuss the study's limitations and strengths. In the last section, I highlight the implications of the study and provide some suggestions for future research.

8.1 A Synoptic Presentation of the Critical Research Findings

The main research questions underpinning this study were as follows:

1. Does the Hellenic education system challenge or reinforce normative gender discourses through curriculum materials and classroom practices?

2. How do children negotiate, reproduce or challenge normative and non-normative gender discourses identified in school textbooks, and how do they deploy these discourses in their daily performances of gender on school playgrounds?

For the first research question, the data collected from anthology textbooks, interviews with teachers and classroom observations showed that the quotidian practices in the education system reinforce traditional gender discourses and contribute to the discursive construction of hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity. In particular, anthology textbooks promote anachronistic views of masculinity and femininity in the domestic sphere and labour market and reinforce normative gender discourses. As well, the analysis of teachers' views of gender found that educators deployed traditional gender binaries while making sense of gender, held higher expectations for boys and encouraged boys and girls to perform normative masculinity and femininity. Educators reinforced the normative gender discourses promoted by the anthology textbooks, for they did not discuss gender equality issues in the classrooms. The data also revealed the need for primary school educators to be trained in gender equality issues, as the only teacher who had received informal training in gender equality issues held more egalitarian views than her colleagues and could challenge the normative gender discourses. Similarly, the data from observations in five primary-school classrooms identified crucial gender asymmetries. Boys monopolised teachers' attention and were the protagonists in classroom interactions. In contrast to boys, girls were marginalised, for they received less attention by their teachers. Teachers treated boys and girls as two

greatly different groups on the basis of their gender. Overall the data yielded that educators reinforced traditional gender discourses and encouraged the construction of hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity through their classroom practices.

The findings on the second research question indicated crucial gender asymmetries among boys and girls in their ability to challenge normative gender discourses. A significant factor that affected children's ability to reproduce non-normative gender discourses and to challenge normative gender discourses was their mothers' professional status. In particular, having a mother in paid employment had a positive impact upon children's sense making of gender discourses. However, in several cases, children gave contradictory accounts of gender, sometimes reproducing traditional gender binaries and at other times challenging normative gender discourses. A crucial pattern that emerged in children's ability to challenge normative gender discourses was that boys who performed hegemonic or complicit masculinity were less prepared than boys who performed subordinated masculinity to participate in the disruption of gendered discourses, most likely 'because they had more to lose than gain from the changes' (Westland, 1993: 244). Similarly, girls who performed emphasised femininity reproduced the traditional gender discourses to a greater extent than girls who distanced themselves from it. Crucial gender asymmetries were also observed on primary school playgrounds. The data revealed that rigid gender zones were established on school playgrounds and that gender hierarchies were formed on some primary school playgrounds. By participating in certain play activities, children constituted and reconstituted their gender identity. Specifically, the data revealed that boys performed three forms of masculinity— hegemonic, complicit and subordinated—while girls performed emphasised femininity or distanced themselves from it. In both school, hegemonic masculinity was associated with sportiness, aggression, physicality, independence, low academic achievement, confidence and assertiveness. It was observed that football played a key role in the construction of

hegemonic masculinity on school playgrounds. Through football, boys learnt the appropriate masculine behaviours, beliefs and values, and what the dominant culture determines it means to 'be a man'. It is for this reason that subordinated boys were excluded from football and played exclusively with girls. Subordinated masculinity in both schools exhibited qualities that were opposite to those that were valued in hegemonic masculinity such as physical weakness, lack of sportiness, obedience and emotionality.

On the other hand, emphasised femininity characterised by sociability, compliance, obedience, lack of physicality/sportiness and submission to authority. Girls who performed emphasised femininity participated in gender-homogeneous groups and deployed the boyfriend discourses in order to legitimate hanging out with boys. To the contrary, girls who distanced themselves from emphasised femininity often participated in gender-heterogeneous groups and sometimes played football. These girls exhibited qualities such as sportiness, confidence, and disobedience.

In the following pages, I synoptically discuss my findings, which answer in more detail the questions that guided my research. Regarding the first research question, I begin with the education system's role in reinforcing traditional gender discourses and present the findings from classrooms interactions, teachers' classroom practices and gender representations in the anthologies. Next, I highlight the findings relevant to the second research question. In particular, I review the outcomes from the observations on school playgrounds, interviews with the pupils and children's responses to traditional and non-traditional gender discourses.

8.1.1 The Role of the Education System in Reinforcing Traditional Gender Discourses through Its Quotidian Practices

The role of the education system in reinforcing and challenging normative gender discourses was explored by analysing the discursive representations of masculinity and femininity in anthology textbooks, teachers' views of gender and their classroom practices. The analysis of the gender representations in anthology textbooks, in particular, revealed crucial qualitative and quantitative aspects of gender asymmetries. The quantitative data (see appendix XVIII) demonstrated that textbooks are male dominated; the majority were written by male authors, and male protagonists and minor characters outnumbered females. The distribution of male and female figures in the illustrations yielded similar findings that female characters were significantly underrepresented. These findings corroborate previous studies on Hellenic instructional material for primary education, which suggested that male characters numerically dominate females (Ziogou Karastergiou & Kouimtzi Deligianni, 1981; Anthogalidou, 1989; Kantartzi, 1991; Freiderikou, 1995; Anagnostopoulou, 1995; Kanatsouli, 1997). It is important to note that, despite several reviews of the anthologies, female characters continue to be underrepresented. The androcentrism in the textbooks might have a crucial influence on students' early learning experience, as the curriculum materials devalue female presence in the narratives and depict a male-dominated world. Educators' role in altering the normative gender discourses in the anthologies must be emphasised, and teachers should become more aware of these gender asymmetries through continuous training in order to ensure equal learning opportunities for all pupils in the classroom.

Manifestations of male dominance in addition to the rate of representation were found in other discursive trends. The qualitative characteristics of gender asymmetries in the discursive representations demonstrated how the anthologies reinforce hegemonic

masculinity and emphasised femininity discourses in gender dynamics and roles in the domestic sphere and labour market. In the textbooks, masculinity and femininity are tied together in a binary relationship and acquire meaning in relation to each other and through a hierarchy. Masculine is what is not feminine, and feminine is what is not masculine (Paechter, 2006b). This polarised binary is reinforced by the narratives in the textbooks which have the apparent intention to crystallise pupils' perceptions. Symptomatic of this are the findings concerning gender discourses in the family. Male and female characters' domestic roles and responsibilities are highly normative, for the narratives perpetuate a strictly patriarchal model of family organisation. At the same time, the discursive representations of family life reinforce the heterosexual matrix and emphasise heterosexuality as the norm through which all else acquires meaning and materialises. Within this scheme, a real boy and a real girl must desire the opposite sex (Renold, 2006a).

In these anachronistic discursive representations of the gendered domestic hierarchy, the anthologies fail to deconstruct the patriarchal values in family life. In the complex network of family relationships, masculinity is identified with hegemonic masculinity values (i.e. the father is the financial supporter of the family and does not perform any household chores) (Connell, 1995). In this polarised binary, females are confined to the rigidly demarcated sphere of the home. The discursive representations of femininity emphasise and idealise motherhood and matrimony. Women's positioning as pariahs in the labour market and their marginalisation from society at large are presented as natural. In the textbooks, female characters live for and through others, primarily their children and husband. These discursive practices of motherhood and fatherhood in the domestic sphere reinforce the manifestations and institutionalisation of male dominance over women in the family and perpetuate that

paragon of hegemonic masculinity, the *paterfamilias*[45]. The idealised public/private dichotomy is used to justify restricting women to the private sphere (Benhabib, 1998). In particular, textbooks perpetuate the traditional view that 'women's natures are such that they are properly subject to men and their proper place is in the private, domestic sphere', while men 'properly inhabit, and rule within, both spheres' (Pateman, 1989: 120).

The gender dynamics in the domestic sphere support absolute gender dichotomies and traditional gender discourses which do not reflect the gender dynamics operating in the modern Hellenic social cosmos. Since the early 1970s, numerous studies have noted signs of decline in the organisational structure of the patriarchal family in modern Hellenic society (Safiliou-Rothchild, 1972; Teperoglou, 1982; Mousourou, 1985; Lampsa, 1994; Kavounidou, 1996; Maratou-Alipranti, 1999). Hence, these strong, gendered binaries in family organisation reinforced by anachronistic discursive representations of masculinity and femininity might have deleterious effects on pupils, crystallising discourses of hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity in boys' and girls' perceptions of gender roles. These discourses have the potential to influence boys' and girls' future occupational roles and positionings in adult society.

The findings from the analysis of gender heterogeneity in the labour market are similar. The dominant male presence in paid employment is manifested through the numerical predominance of male characters and the high social status of their occupational roles. In contrast to men, female characters perform manual occupations with low social prestige or other occupational roles traditionally considered appropriate for women, such as teaching (Pateman, 1989). The gendered division of labour is symptomatic of the textbooks' role in reinforcing hegemonic masculinity. As scholars have noted, the gendered division of labour supports hegemonic masculinity (Ochberg, 1987; McDowell, 2003) by resulting in the 'social

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[45]This is the Latin term for head of the family or father of the family.

definition of tasks as either "men's work" or "women's work" and the definition of some kinds of work as more masculine than others' (Carrigan et al, 1987: 94). Even as working fathers were overrepresented in the narratives, there was a complete absence of employed mothers. These discourses perpetuate the historically normative identification of masculinity with the role of family bread-winner and idealise emphasised femininity discourses that position females naturally as inferior and, in this case, relegated to the inferior domestic sphere (Pateman, 1989). However, the discursive representations of the gendered division of labour do not reflect women's changing roles in 21st-century Hellenic society (see Safiliou-Rothchild, 1972; Teperoglou, 1982; Mousourou, 1985; Lampsa, 1994; Kavounidou, 1996; Maratou-Alipranti, 1999).

These anachronistic representations of female employment have significant social, educational and political dimensions and implications. First, they indicate that, on the political level, official government education policy makers have placed little emphasis on gender equality issues. On the social and educational levels, these normative discourses of masculinity and femininity might have a crucial impact on pupils' perceptions of gender and future roles in the social cosmos.

Moving beyond the discursive representations of adults, the discourses of children's positioning in the domestic sphere were also gender normative. Representations of boys resembled those of their fathers. Their actions were positioned outside the demarcated domestic sphere, and in a few cases, they even performed manual work. The absence of discursive representations of boys helping with household chores or acting out nurturing roles served to reinforce hegemonic masculinity discourses. According to these, males are the financial supporters of the family and, as such, occupy a higher position on the hierarchical scales governing the structures of the domestic sphere.

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The discursive positionings of girls outside the domestic sphere and, performing manual work and the complete lack of representations of girls carrying out household chores was evaluated very positively, for previous studies have found representations of girlhood in instructional materials to be highly normative (see Ziogou-Karastergiou & Deligianni-Kouimtzi, 1981; Deligianni-Kouimtzi, 1987; Anthogalidou, 1989; Kantartzi, 1991; Louvrou, 1994; Freiderikou, 1995, 1998). However, the emphasis on girls' nurturing role in the domestic sphere reinforces the discourses of motherhood and matrimony. Given the emphasis on girls' future roles as mothers and wives, the anthology textbooks only partially deconstruct the normative gender representations of femininity. The idealisation of motherhood and matrimony empowers the emphasised femininity discourse, which excludes women from the labour market and positions them in the demarcated domestic sphere. This discourse thus reinforces traditional gender roles within the family (Pateman, 1989).

Children's play practices are another significant aspect of normative gender discursive representations in the narratives. The analysis of boys' and girls' play practices found a strong, gendered dichotomy in both individual and collective play activities. The narratives emphasise the traditional division of toys and games into masculine and feminine. Boys played with technologically advanced toys, whereas girls played with dolls. These discursive representations promote a highly gendered division of toys, perpetuating the association of masculinity with adventure, inventiveness and intelligence. Meanwhile, the normative representations of femininity strengthen the association of females with nurturing, mothering and domesticity and tie them to their biological reproductive function, a link intensified by the discursive representations of girls playing with dolls. Therefore, it can be argued that the narratives reinforce highly polarised gender dichotomies in children's individual play activities and perpetuate a traditional division of gender-appropriate toys. The findings demonstrate the need for textbooks that promote more egalitarian discursive representations

of boys' and girls' play activities, if the aim is to eradicate polarised gender binaries in children's toys and play practices. The analysis also found that the sole representation of a boy playing with a doll bear, although assessed positively, is not adequate to deconstruct the traditional gendered division of toys otherwise promoted by the narratives.

The analysis of children's collective play activities yielded similar findings for, in the narratives, boys and girls participate in gender-homogeneous groups. This tendency can be explained partially by the fact that boys' and girls' group play activities are gender normative. Boys participate in large, homogeneous groups and engage in energetic football matches, whereas girls draw and paint in small, quiet groups of two or three. A strong contrast is drawn between boys' play exercises, which require intense physical effort, and girls' artistic activities, which lack any intensity or physical effort. These discursive representations reinforce the gendered division of play activities and perpetuate the binaries of active/passive, athletic/non-athletic and adventurous/unadventurous, which reflect the traditional, hegemonic, masculine views of appropriate activities for boys and girls (Connell, 1989; Skelton, 2001; Swain, 2003). In particular, Swain (2003: 302) observes that, 'for much of the time, the boys defined their masculinity through action, and the most esteemed and prevalent resource that the boys drew on ... was physicality/athleticism, which was inextricably linked to the body in the form of strength, power, skill, fitness and speed'.

In addition to the discursive representations of males' and females' personality characteristics, roles and responsibilities in the domestic sphere and labour market, I explored visual portrayals of female characters. Girls and women were depicted wearing dresses, long hair and traditional female accessories such as handbags and earrings. The scarcity of depictions of women who wear trousers or have short hair signifies a very traditional view of femininity that does not necessarily reflect the diversity of women's and girls' styles in the

Hellenic social cosmos (Maragoudaki, 1993). Men were depicted as wearing trousers, and boys shorts or trousers. The portrayals of femininity in the anthology textbooks could have a crucial impact on children's perceptions of gender-appropriate attire because men and women tend to wear gender-specific articles of clothing in daily life. The selection of articles of clothing is based on socially constructed norms of gender. Failing to conform to these norms can have significant consequences for 'we regularly punish those who fail to do their gender right' (Butler, 1990: 140). Thus, the manner of dress is an important part of gender performance; as Butler (1990: 137) suggests, gender performance is a kind of drag performance, and 'in imitating gender, drag implicitly reveals the imitative structure of gender itself as well as its contingency'. However, Butler (1993: 231) later claims that 'I never did think that gender was like clothes, or that clothes make the woman'. Nevertheless, in a practical sense, the costume is a crucial part of every performance. Similarly, in performances of gender, articles of clothing have significant political and social implications and can reinforce or challenge gender norms. Thus, the portrayals of femininity in the book reinforce normative perceptions of gender-appropriate clothing.

In summary, it can be argued that, over the past three decades, very few changes have been made to the discursive representations of masculinity and femininity in instructional materials (Ziogou-Karastergiou & Deligianni-Kouimtzi, 1981; Deligianni-Kouimtzi, 1987; Anthogalidou, 1989; Kantartzi, 1991; Louvrou, 1994; Freiderikou, 1995, 1998). In particular, gender roles and responsibilities in the domestic sphere and labour market have remained unaltered and continue to reinforce hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity discourses which do not reflect current social reality (see Kataki, 1984; Pantazis-Tzifa, 1984; Safiliou-Rothchild, 1972; Antonopoulou, 1999; Maratou-Alipranti 1999, 2000; Kaklamanaki, 1984; Chronaki-Papamichos, 1982; Gizelis, 1984; Stott, 1973; Kousis, 1989; Alibranti-Maratou, 1999; Costa, 2005). Despite the few positive developments noted in the discursive

representations of girlhood in the domestic sphere, children's play activities remained highly gender normative. The anthologies' discursive representations of boyhood and girlhood have crucial significance because the pupils who read the textbooks are of the same age as the young protagonists, which could promote the adoption of these traditional gender discourses (Hunt 1990, 1991; Geoff 1995; Zipes, 1997). Thus, it can be argued that institutional measures promoting gender equality have not been sufficiently incorporated into the official educational policies for printed teaching materials for primary schools.

In addition to the traditional discursive representations of masculinity and femininity in the anthologies (official curriculum), the teachers and pedagogy in the classroom also influence students. Therefore, I also examined teachers' views of gender discourses and their classroom practices in order to understand the education system's role in reinforcing normative gender discourses. Teachers, in particular, have the power to alter the normative discursive content of a story if they can identify the gendered discourses. The data from the teacher interviews and classroom observations shed light on the role of teachers in regulating pupils' gender performance and reinforcing hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity.

As discussed in chapter 5, my findings corroborate those of earlier studies suggesting that classrooms are primary sites where children learn the lived narratives available to them (Davies, 1993) and the performance of gender takes place. My findings show that, through classroom practices, teachers regulate and normalise children's performances of gender and reinforce the construction of hegemonic forms of masculinity (Skelton, 2002) and emphasised femininity. It can be argued that, in the schools where I conducted research, the educational praxis is highly gendered for teachers treated boys and girls as separate and different groups. Teachers thus reinforced the polarised binaries of masculinity and femininity. In particular, teachers reproduced the oppositional and dichotomous binaries of

independent/docile, active/passive and unemotional/sensitive around which many studies have postulated that masculinity and femininity traditionally are constructed in primary schools and society at large (Jordan, 1995; Riddell, 1989; Walkerdine, 1990; Belotti, 1975; Spender, 1982). Teachers also supported traditional gender divisions in the labour market that males participate in high-status professions, management or the hard sciences. At the same time, teachers identified primarily teaching as an appropriate occupation for females. These gender normative views of the division of labour had significant implications for the categorisation of school subjects as masculine and feminine. Typically, teachers supported this traditional gender division in which mathematics is viewed as a male subject and linguistic subjects as more appropriate for female. The findings corroborate those of previous studies on teachers' views of gender roles in the Hellenic education system (Sidiropoulou-Dimakakou, 1990; Savvidou, 1996; Kantartzi, 1996; Natsiopoulou & Giannoula, 1996).

A crucial element in understanding teachers' perceptions of gender discourses is the lack of official training in gender equality issues. The findings show critical differences in the views of gender held by teachers who had received such training and those who had not. Athena, in particular, was able to challenge the traditional gender binaries regulating her colleagues' views of masculinity and femininity. The contrast between Athena's views of gender discourses and those of her colleagues highlight the critical lack of gender-equality training for teachers in official Hellenic education policy.

However, teachers held more egalitarian views of gender roles in the domestic sphere, which is symptomatic of the changing values of gender roles in the Hellenic society. Although teachers reproduced hegemonic masculinity discourses of gender roles in the labour market and deployed traditional gender binaries to make sense of masculinity and femininity, teachers unanimous believed that men should perform household chores and women should

actively participate in labour market. The positioning of men in the domestic sphere carrying out household chores challenges the traditional, hegemonic discourse of masculinity, which positions men as breadwinners and the head of the family (Pateman, 1989)—a view highly emphasised in the anthology textbooks, as discussed. Teachers' views of gender roles in the domestic sphere were evaluated very positively as they challenged normative discourses. Although teachers lacked training and guidance, they recognised the significance of making young children aware of gender equality issues. In interviews, teachers said that they opposed some aspects of gender inequality, such as women's unequal domestic burden. Such statements contradicted the gender division prevalent in the classroom. Although teachers acknowledged the importance of discussing gender equality issues in the classroom, none did so. This failure is symptomatic of the extent to which the traditional discourses in the textbooks shape the ideas of the classroom and produce norms that inform the understanding of gender. This discrepancy also points to the need to revise the official curriculum as it does not provide any guidelines for classroom discussion of gender inequality issues.

Overall, it can be argued that teachers did not offer the children any substantive tools to challenge the normative gender discourses promoted in the anthology textbooks. To the contrary, the findings from interviews indicated that teachers reproduce many gendered discursive representations of masculinity and femininity and could not change the gendered discourses reinforced by the instructional materials.

The analysis of teachers' views of gender discourses enabled a better understanding of their classroom practices, which were at the centre of my observations. The data revealed the influence of teachers' views of gender on their classroom practices, as well as the numerous contradictions between what they stated during the interviews and their actual classroom practices. The traditional binaries that regulated teachers' views of masculinity, femininity

and gender-appropriate school subjects influenced their expectations for boys and girls. Symptomatic of this were teachers' higher expectations for boys in mathematics and for girls in linguistic subjects. The outcomes of my classroom observations support previous studies which suggested that boys are the protagonists in the classroom, receiving more attention, answering more questions, initiating more conversations, being called to the whiteboard more often and getting more praise and criticism (Brophy & Good, 1974; Etaugh & Hughes, 1975; Leinhardt et al, 1979; Lockheed, 1982, 1985; Lockheed & Harris, 1984, 1989; Mahoney, 1983; Sadker & Sadker, 1985; Jones, 1987, 1989; Howard & Henney, 1998; Crombie et al, 2003; Jones & Dindia, 2004). This tendency could have a crucial impact on boys' and girls' educational and social experiences because boys and girls likely form different professional and personal life expectations as a result of these practices.

The analysis suggests that teachers' classroom practices not only reproduced highly polarised binaries but also reinforced a hegemonic heterosexual matrix. Teachers often intervened to correct boys' and girls' behaviours based on the ideals of hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity. Such interventions included reporting to the parents boys and girls who did not perform hegemonic masculinity or emphasised femininity and encouraging boys to participate in activities associated with the performance of masculinity. Take, for example, the common practice of urging boys who perform subordinated masculinity to participate in football games, a signifier of successful (normative) masculinity in these schools. It should be noted that teachers were more concerned about boys performing successful masculinity than girls performing successful femininity. The findings suggest that heterosexuality was a signifier of what it meant to be a real boy and a real girl (Butler, 1990, 1993). They also demonstrate the fragile nature of hegemonic masculinity, which requires those who perform it to constantly reaffirm their gender identity. In contrast, femininity was more elastic for the specific age group (8–10 years old), and as various scholars have argued, girls of this age can

perform non-normative femininity without putting their feminine identity at risk (Renold, 2005, 2006a; Robinson & Davies, 2007; Davies, 2008). However, if girls continue to practice a non-normative gender performance in adolescence, adults become seriously concerned (Halberstam, 2005).

In summary, the lack of training or guidance for teachers on normative gender discursive representations and gender equality issues in general was identified as a crucial issue for further research in the Hellenic context. To a certain extent, this lack explains teachers' views of gender discourses and classroom practices. In addition to addressing the gender binaries prevalent in the formal curriculum, government officials and policy makers urgently need to place more emphasis on teachers' training in gender equality issues. The findings demonstrated how children's gender identities are embedded and performed through and within school spaces, for primary-school classrooms are sites where hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity are discursively constructed (Connell 1989, Mac an Ghaill 1996). More specifically, hegemonic masculinity discourses are embedded in classroom discursive practices (Baxter, 2003: 98) because, through quotidian classroom practices, teachers regulate and normalise children's performance of gender and play a role in the construction of hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity (Skelton, 2002).

In conclusion, the findings demonstrated that the textbooks promote traditional gender discourses reproduced by teachers' classroom practices. The data from the teacher interviews and classroom observations highlight educators' role in reinforcing normative gender discourses. A review of the instructional materials focused on issues of gender and training educators in gender equality issues is necessary to eliminate the potentially deleterious influence of the instructional materials and classroom practices on children's perceptions of gender.

8.1.2 Pupils' Responses to Normative and Non-Normative Gender Discourses and the Construction of Hegemonic Masculinity and Emphasised Femininity through Children's Play Practices

The analysis of children's sense making of gender discourses focused on pupils' views of the normative gender discourses promoted by the anthology textbooks and the children's understanding of the non-traditional gender discourses demonstrated through the feminist version of the fairy tale of Snow White.

As discussed, the analysis of the gender representations in the anthology textbooks showed that they promote anachronistic views of gender roles in the domestic sphere and labour market. Academics have postulated that children are active readers and have the power to challenge the normative gender representations in the texts if the discourses necessary to resist or repudiate the gendered texts are available. According to Parsons (2004: 143), upper elementary school pupils (ages 8–14) have reached a sufficient level of maturity to challenge gendered discourses, and in particular, girls are more prepared than boys to participate 'in this disruption of discourse'. Therefore, it was important to explore children's sense making of the traditional gender discourses in the anthology textbooks.

The analysis showed that boys and girls negotiated differently the discourses of hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity reinforced in the narratives. Most girls were more prepared than most boys to challenge the normative gender discourses, most likely because they had less to lose from doing so. It was noted that boys who performed hegemonic masculinity reproduced the gendered division of roles and occupations in the domestic sphere and labour market, whereas boys who performed subordinated masculinity could challenge the normative discourses. Similarly, girls who performed emphasised femininity reproduced the normative gender discourses promoted by the anthology textbooks, whereas girls who

distanced themselves from normative femininity challenged the normative representations of masculinity and femininity to a greater extent. Another crucial element that affected pupils' sense making of gender discourses was their parents' occupational status. It should also be noted that, contrary to the initial hypothesis, no crucial differences were noted in the views of genders held by the third- and fourth-grade pupils at the two schools. In short, it can be argued that children can challenge the gendered discourses of a text if they have the discursive knowledge to do so (Rice 2000). However, as discussed, teachers' classroom practices reinforced traditional gender discourses and limited children's ability to challenge the normative gender representations in the anthology textbooks. As a result, most pupils reproduced traditional gender discourses to make sense of masculinity and femininity.

My study also sought to replicate Bronwyn Davies' (1989b) research on children's responses to feminist fairy tales in a Hellenic educational context with a high degree of gender dichotomisation in the formal curriculum. The similarity of my findings with Davies' (1989b) study is astounding considering that the two studies took place in different socio-cultural environments at different times. However, there were some significant differences, which are discussed.

As discussed in chapter 7, the data show that, to a certain extent, many of the third- and fourth-grade boys and girls could challenge traditional gender discourses and reproduced several unconventional positionings of Snow White. Children's gender, however, played a crucial role in their sense making of non-traditional gender discourses. Most boys, in particular, were less capable than girls of reproducing the non-normative gender discourses in the narrative and supported a highly polarised binary of masculinity and femininity, which was evident in the discussion of Snow White's unconventional occupational roles. Specifically, the majority of boys challenged Snow White's positioning in the story as a mine

worker and jewellery maker. The professional status of the students' mother was also strongly associated with their ability to challenge traditional gender discourses. Children with mothers in paid employment were more able to accept non-traditional gender discourses than pupils whose mothers did not actively participate in paid employment. This positive relationship between the mother's occupational status and children's ability to challenge the traditional discourses of gender-appropriate professions was even stronger when the mother held a position which gave her agency or authority. These findings support those of previous research in which children with both parents in paid employment were more likely to challenge normative discourses of gender roles in the labour market (Zuckerman & Sayre, 1982; Kessler et al, 1982). They also corroborate Davies' (1989b: 63) finding that children 'who understand the feminist interpretation of the story … have mothers in paid work outside the home'. Moreover, it was observed that boys who performed subordinated masculinity more easily reproduced Snow White's unconventional positioning in the labour market than boys performing hegemonic masculinity. They felt a constant need to reassure their masculine identity by challenging Snow White's invasion of a male-dominated domain (the diamond mine) and safeguarding the binaries and dichotomies around which hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity discourses are constructed. In this way, some boys managed to eliminate the threat that Snow White posed to hegemonic masculinity by performing traditional male occupations.

Nevertheless, no gender differences were observed in relation to pupils' views of the discourse of the Princess. Students did not value the Princess discourse as highly as freedom, friendship or love and almost unanimously accepted Snow White's negation of that positioning in the narrative. This is a critical finding for previous studies argued that the discourse of the Princess 'engage[s] with the production of girls' conscious and unconscious desires, prepare[s] for and proffer[s] a happily ever after situation in which the finding of the

Prince (the knight in shining armour, "Mr. Right") comes to seem like a solution to a set of overwhelming desires and problems' (Walkerdine, 1984: 163). In addition, 'the importance of being pretty and the role it plays in creating femininities and masculinities provide another opportunity for locating the heterosexual matrix' (Blaise, 2005b: 77). These discourses thus 'prepare the ground for the insertion of the little girl into romantic heterosexuality' (Walkerdine, 1984: 163). My finding conflicts with Davies' (1989b) study, which found that pupils placed great emphasis on the discourse of the Princess. Although popular culture and especially Disney films reinforce these discourses, the majority of girls in my research could challenge the discourse of the Princess; however, as discussed later, they deployed a hegemonic heterosexual matrix to provide an alternative ending to the fairy tale. The anthology textbooks' contribution to the devaluation of the discourse of the Princess should be considered because their discursive representations of femininity do not epitomise the discourse of the Princess (see chapter 6). As well, Hellas is not a constitutional monarchy, which might contribute to the deconstruction of this discourse. It could be fruitful to examine children's responses to Snow White's repudiation of the regal title in a country with a constitutional monarchy, such as the United Kingdom where the political system and media appear to strong reinforce the discourse of the Princess.

Although children challenged the normative discourse of the Princess and its associations with femininity, they did not do so with the highly polarised binaries of strong/weak, violent/submissive and adventurous/unadventurous around which masculinity and femininity traditionally are constructed. These binaries became evident when children were asked to retell the fairy tale and replace Snow White with a male protagonist, Snow Whiteman, as the children called him. The discursive representations of masculinity that emerged from the alteration of the narrative were gender normative. Children believed that Snow Whiteman would be very strong and brave and kill the evil Queen. In retelling the story, pupils deployed

hegemonic masculinity discourses according to which masculinity is associated with physical strength, bravery and violence. It appears that pupils had internalised the normative gender discourse of traditional fairy tales in which a Prince fights against evil powers in order to save himself or his beloved Princess. The death of the Queen simply asserted males' superior power, a perception that all students seem to have accepted. Similarly to pupils' views of masculinity, the discursive representations of male characters in the anthology textbooks reinforced the association of masculinity and physical strength. The role of popular culture should also be considered in making sense of these findings, which demonstrate that 'femininities are not constructed in the ways masculinities are; they do not confer cultural power, nor are they able to guarantee patriarchy. They are instead constructed as a variety of negations of the masculine' (Paechter, 2006: 256). This finding highlights the dualistic synergy that exists between and characterises the constructions of masculinity and femininity, a relationship 'in which the subordinate term is negated, rather than the two sides being in equal balance' (Paechter, 2006b: 256). The association of masculinity with physical strength and femininity with weakness in most children's perceptions reflects this construction. Hence, it can be argued that most pupils had accepted the dichotomy of hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity which regulates the performance and doing of gender (see chapter 2).

Although Snow Whiteman was strong, brave and aggressive, children believed that he could not be as smart or cunning as Snow White, who hid in a chest to escape from the castle of the evil Queen. Snow Whiteman could not make beautiful jewellery as he was not as imaginative and as artistic as Snow White. The discourse of the creative, dexterous female is reinforced by the anthologies' discursive representations of femininity which emphasise female characters' ability to make beautiful dresses. This example indicates a degree of affinity between the anthologies' discursive representations of femininity and the children's views of

gender roles. The discursive construction of masculinity as violent and physically strong is opposed to construction of femininity as creative and cunning. Here emerges a polarised binary which contributes to the construction of masculinity and femininity in most children's perceptions around strong antitheses. What is masculine is not feminine, and what is feminine is not masculine. The traditional fairy tales and Disney films popular amongst young children in Hellas promote these highly polarised binaries.

In most pupils' perceptions of gender, the creative female was also associated with sensitivity. The majority of students appear to have adopted the hegemonic masculinity discourses which identify females with sensitivity. Within the hegemonic, masculine frame of social values and norms, sensitivity or any expression of emotions such as crying is not approved. Tears are associated with weakness; therefore, men do not cry, and boys must learn not to. However, pupils supported the gendered discourses that, unlike males, females can express emotions of melancholy and sadness through crying. Children were unable to challenge this highly normative discourse, which is deeply embedded in the values and norms of the Hellenic social cosmos and is known globally in the adage 'boys don't cry'. The discursive representation of the crying, emotional father in the anthologies could not deconstruct the traditional view of masculinity and might even have been overlooked in the classroom by the teachers. It should be noted that most girls were more able than most boys to accept a male who cries. This tendency demonstrates that, in the quotidian performance of masculinity, boys internalise strength and invulnerability as inherent properties of hegemonic masculinity. Although some girls believed that a man who cries is still masculine, the boys unanimously held that men do not cry. It is evident that the boys felt pressure to reconfirm their masculine identity in all aspects of their quotidian lives. Failing to perform gender in accordance with the ideals of hegemonic masculinity would signify the unsuccessful masculinity feared by many boys. However, failing to perform emphasised femininity (not

performing the nurturing girl or performing the unemotional girl who does not cry) was not perceived as a threat to normative femininity because the boundaries of emphasised femininity are more elastic than those of hegemonic masculinity (Davies, 2008; Renold, 2005, 2006a; Robinson & Davies, 2007). Distancing oneself from the ideal of emphasised femininity represents claiming power (Paechter, 2006b); 'to oppose stereotypical or normalised feminine positioning is to reject the disempowerment that comes with it' (Paechter, 2006b: 257). Typically, those who do so are tomboy girls (Reay, 2001) and butch women (Halberstam, 1998).

Other aspects of emphasised femininity considered during pupils' discussion of the feminist fairy tale were the discourses of marriage and motherhood, which were highly valued and reinforced as basic, taken-for-granted elements of a successful female life. Girls' accounts revealed that they strongly supported the discourse of marriage, and when asked to give an alternative ending to the fairy tale, the majority described of the wedding between Snow White and her Prince/dream man. Children had idealised androphilia and gynephilia as the only acceptable expressions of sexuality. Within this hegemonic heterosexual matrix, the discourse of marriage was idealised. Many girls, in particular, emphasised the importance of romantic heterosexuality, as found in the discourses of the Prince, Princess and matrimony (Walkerdine, 1984). The discourse of the Princess, in particular, engaged 'with the production of girls' conscious and unconscious desires, prepare[d] for and proffer[ed] a happily ever after situation in which the finding of the Prince (the knight in shining armour, 'Mr. Right') comes to seem like a solution to a set of overwhelming desires and problems' (Walkerdine, 1984: 163). It should be noted here that the Orthodox Church and the wider system of social values in Hellas value the discourse of marriage. Therefore, it was expected that, to a certain extent, girls would prefer an alternative ending similar to that of traditional fairy in which where the Prince and the Princess get married and *live happily ever after*.

However, the girls overlooked the discourse of motherhood, despite its strong interrelation with the discourse of matrimony and the significant meaning it bears in the patriarchal system of social values. This result is extremely positive because it demonstrates girls' ability to negate certain discourses.

In contrast, boys' descriptions of an alternative ending did not include a wedding. However, they strongly supported the discourse of motherhood, and the majority believed that Snow White would decide to get married in a later stage of life due to her strong desire to having children. This view was also reinforced by the discursive representations of femininity in the anthology textbooks, which emphasise women's nurturing role in the domestic sphere. As discussed, the discursive representations of femininity in the anthology textbooks are similar as the female characters live for and through others.

Lastly, I explored pupils' views of Snow White's positioning in the domestic sphere and labour market after her wedding. Interestingly, pupils gave conflicting accounts of Snow White's roles and responsibilities in the domestic sphere. Again, their views differed by gender. Most boys expressed more anachronistic views of family structures and females' roles and responsibilities in the family, demonstrating acceptance of an emphasised femininity positioning in the domestic sphere. In particular, the boys almost unanimously believed that Snow White's life would change drastically after marriage as she would give up her professional life in the interests of her family and take up her family role as a mother and wife. This view aligns with the dominant representations of married women's positioning in the family and domestic sphere in the anthology textbooks. More specifically, in the anthologies, married women are excluded from the labour market, and the home is presented as their naturally assigned sphere. Although teachers did not support these traditional gender roles in the family network, their classroom practices failed to deconstruct the normative

gender positioning of males and females in the domestic sphere because they did not discuss gender equality issues in the classroom. Interestingly, girls and boys negotiated the traditional gender discourse promoted through the textbooks differently. Most girls held more egalitarian views of gender than most boys, and the majority did not question that Snow White would continue her occupational activities even after her marriage to the Prince. Thus, most girls were more able than most boys to accept non-normative gender discourses which position femininity outside the domestic sphere.

In conclusion, the analysis of children's responses to the feminist version of Snow White offered valuable insights into how children deploy hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity discourses to make sense of gender. Boys and girls provided contradictory accounts of femininity and masculinity, and their answers had no consensus. These conflicting subjectivities were observed at the individual and group levels as not all students gave the same responses. These findings demonstrate that feminist fairy tales can be a useful tool for primary school educators to promote egalitarian gender discourses, presenting children with non-traditional views of the social cosmos.

Moving from children's responses to traditional and non-normative gender discourses, I explored how pupils deploy gender discourses in their quotidian playground activities. This analysis was highly important as school playgrounds are sites where children make sense of and perform their gender (Paechter & Clark, 2007). The crucial role that school playgrounds play in the construction and performance of children's gender identity is discussed in Chapter 6. Data were collected through observation and group interviews with the pupils. The findings suggest that boys and girls had established mostly gender-homogeneous friendships. Boys who performed hegemonic masculinity played exclusively with boys, whereas girls who performed emphasised femininity played mainly with girls. On the other hand, boys who

performed complicit masculinity and girls who distanced themselves from emphasised femininity often participated in gender-heterogeneous groups. Boys who performed subordinated masculinity played exclusively with girls. Age had a crucial impact in shaping children's friendships; fourth-grade boys who performed complicit masculinity and girls who distanced themselves from emphasised femininity were less open to friendships with the opposite sex, as they felt that they had more in common with their classmates of the same sex. A possible explanation of this change lies in the fourth-grade children's greater eagerness 'to demonstrate their awareness and knowledge of being the "right" gender' than third-grade pupils (Skelton et al, 2009: 189). Hence, it can be argued that fourth-grade boys who performed complicit masculinity and participated in my study had established a better 'sense of gender identity' than third-grade complicit boys (Skelton et al, 2009: 189). Additionally, the hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity discourses reinforced by the anthology textbooks (see chapter 6) normalise gender-homogeneous friendships. Given that pupils reproduced the gender discourses promoted in the anthology textbooks (see chapter 5), the influence of the discursive representations in instructional materials should also be considered to explain these findings. As well, educators encouraged gender segregation through their classroom practices, treating pupils differently based on their gender and implementing interventions that often reinforced pupils' participation in same-sex groups (see chapter 6).

The development of gender-homogeneous friendships is also reinforced by boys' and girls' greatly different play practices. In particular, children's accounts of their play activities showed that boys performing hegemonic and complicit masculinity preferred football and video games, whereas girls' favourite games included dance, chase, chatting and hide-and-seek. However, some girls who distanced themselves from emphasised femininity often played football. As a result of these differences, in the rare event that boys and girls played

together, they had to give up their common play activities and engage in more gender-neutral games not strongly associated with either masculinity or femininity, such as board games. This move was crucial for boys performing hegemonic masculinity as by participating in gender-neutral games, they could maintain their masculinity. In addition, boys who performed complicit masculinity joined girls' groups in pairs as a single boys participating in a girls' group could be seen as giving up his masculinity. Girls did not experience analogous constraints for the performance of femininity allowed more flexibility.

It can be argued that rigid gender zones were established on school playgrounds, which discouraged pupils from participating in gender-heterogeneous groups (Thorne, 1993; Clark & Paechter, 2007). The analysis of the spatial distribution of boys and girls on the playgrounds shows that boys performing hegemonic and complicit masculinity dominated the physical space of the playground. Specifically, in the playground setting, boys performing hegemonic masculinity controlled the largest space designated for team sports (basketball courts), while girls and boys performing subordinated masculinity occupied a much smaller space of the school playground, usually the area surrounding the basketball court. Girls and boys performing subordinated masculinity engaged in a variety of activities (such as chasing, hide-and-seek and chatting), whereas boys performing complicit masculinity frequently played football and sometimes with girls. However, boys performing hegemonic masculinity played only football, which played a crucial role in the construction of masculinity. The data corroborate previous studies which suggested that football is a signifier of successful masculinity (Westwood, 1990; Miedzian, 1992; Hornby, 1992; Connell, 1995; Salisbury & Jackson, 1996; Skelton, 1997a; Epstein, 1998; Swain, 2000b, 2003; Paechter & Clark, 2007). The boys who performed hegemonic and complicit masculinity and regularly played football gained much status and respect among their classmates. Symptomatic of this trend was that the socially dominant boys were also very good football players. Most boys and most girls

widely accepted the masculine status associated with football. Consequently, non-footballing boys (boys who performed subordinated masculinity) and girls were excluded from games for their participation would diminish the significance of football in reinforcing hegemonic masculinity (Clark & Paechter, 2007) and threaten its naturalised and legitimated link to the sport (Nespor, 1997). On the rare occasions that a girl joined the team, she was mocked or kicked out soon after due to perceived inferior footballing skills (Renold, 1997; Skelton, 1997a; Swain, 2000b). However, boys performing complicit masculinity sometimes let girls who distanced themselves from emphasised femininity to participate in matches.

In summary, the data illustrated that playgrounds were key sites of gender negotiation and interaction, where football dominated most of the physical space (Thorne, 1993; Epstein et al, 2001; Renold, 2004). Thus, it can be argued that my findings from observations on school playgrounds demonstrate that 'the geography and spatial organisation of playgrounds speak gendered power relations' (Epstein et al, 2001: 158).

In contrast to boys, most girls preferred to gather in groups and sometimes play games such as chasing but mostly chatted about various subjects such as their favourite television programmes and new fashion trends. Girls' groups were smaller and less gender and age homogeneous than those of boys performing hegemonic and complicit masculinity. In the rare event that a boy performing hegemonic masculinity joined a girls' group, the dynamics would change, as on many occasions, the boys would disturb the girls' team by teasing them. The dynamics when a group of boys performing complicit masculinity joined girls' play groups were different for often they played together. Chasing was one of girls' favourite games in which boys performing complicit masculinity participated frequently. However, it should be noted that complicit boys' participation in girls' activities involved several restrictions. Complicit boys joined girls in pairs, for if a boy participated in girls' activities by

himself, it threatened his masculinity. Unlike most boys, girls were free to participate in boys' activities because their classmates did not perceived it as a threat to the girls' femininity as long as they maintained their feminine personality and repetitively manifested their differences from boys (i.e. by playing football poorly).

Crucial gender asymmetries were also observed in children's nonverbal behaviours and movements. The vast majority of girls displayed stationary or moderate body movement during playtime, whereas most boys exhibited fast movement (Azzarito, 2010). Crucial differences were noted between boys performing hegemonic or complicit masculinity and boys who performed subordinated masculinity. Most subordinated boys exhibited stationary and moderate body movement, and hegemonic/complicit boys mostly fast body movements. Similarly, girls who distanced themselves from emphasised femininity more frequently displayed moderate body movement, and girls who performed emphasised femininity mostly stationary body movement. These findings could be explained by the nature of hegemonic and complicit boys' and girls' play practices. The aggression that characterised hegemonic and complicit boys' behaviour on school playgrounds reflected the form of hegemonic masculinity they had acquired in particular schools. Through intense, aggressive play practices, hegemonic boys asserted their masculinity. The nature of girls' play practices was influenced by emphasised femininity discourses, which reinforced girls' participation in less aggressive or intense activities than boys.

The significant influence that the school itself has on children's play activities and on the dynamic of the interactions between boys and girls on the school playground should be mentioned. Mixed-gender play activities should be encouraged by providing young children with additional play resources. Other social researchers have suggested adult intervention as means to make the dynamics of school playgrounds more gender egalitarian and less gender

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normative (Thorne, 1993; Connolly, 1998). For instance, discouraging gender segregation in group play activities could help eliminate gendered zones on school playgrounds.

In summary, there was a tendency towards gender segregation in both schools. Children's play activities reinforced and reproduced the dominant forms of hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity. The dominant gender norms in these schools empowered normative gender behaviour and positioned femininity in subordinate roles to dominant masculinity (Francis, 1998a). In both schools, children were restricted in engaging in activities associated with the opposite gender. It appears that most boys and most girls were involved in what Davies (1989b: 29) called 'gender category maintenance work' or 'borderwork' (Thorne, 1993: 64) for they constantly tried to secure the limits delineating masculine from feminine behaviour. Gender-homogeneous football teams marked an attempt to protect and maintain masculinity. Unlike the majority of boys, most girls did not experience a constant need to perform normative femininity and reassert their feminine identity, indicating the narrower boundaries of masculinity compared with femininity. For instance, a girl who participated in a football match did not put her feminine identity at risk, whereas a boy who played volleyball with girls was identified instantly as effeminate. Therein lies the likely explanation of why many boys seemed to place more stress on policing the boundaries between masculinity and femininity. It is evident from the data that most young children actively participated in the construction and maintenance of gender identities in line with hegemonic masculinity and emphasised feminine norms. Boys and girls not only recognised and selected these gender discourses but actively appropriated and amended them to fit into their social worlds. Contrary to gender socialisation theories, children are not passive recipients of the gender socialisation process who are trained into normative masculine and feminine roles. Instead, they are active and critical beings (although some are more critical than others) who cautiously shape and alter the existing gender discourses to suit their own personal needs.

The findings from observations and student interviews yielded that in the schools where I conducted my research three types of masculinity coexisted (hegemonic, complicit and subordinated). Boys performing hegemonic masculinity had established gender-homogeneous friendships at school. This can be explained by the fact that hegemonic boys had a 'constant need to maintain and defend' their hegemonic masculinity (Swain, 2000b: 91). Hegemonic masculinity was also characterised by athletic prowess, physical strength, aggressiveness and low academic skills. The hegemonic boys were the 'cool' boys of the school and had a leading role among their classmates. Contrarily, boys who displayed a form of complicit masculinity (majority of boys) were more flexible than hegemonic boys. They had established gender-heterogeneous friendships and sometimes played with girls. Although complicit boys did not fit into all the characteristics of hegemonic masculinity, they did not do much to challenge it either. As a result, they received/enjoyed some benefits from being males. Lastly, subordinated masculinity characterised by sensitivity, physical weakness and exhibition of emotions like sadness. In other words, boys performing subordinated masculinity exhibited qualities that were opposite to those that were valued in hegemonic masculinity. Subordinated boys had established exclusively gender-heterogeneous friendships, for they were marginalised by their male classmates, especially hegemonic boys.

On the other hand, girls performed emphasised femininity or distanced themselves from it. Girls who consistently performed emphasised femininity participated exclusively in gender-homogeneous groups and rarely deployed the boyfriend discourse in order to legitimate hanging out with boys. They played with typical girls' toys like Barbie and their group activities included singing, dancing, chasing, hide and seek and television programmes appropriate for girls. At both school emphasised femininity was constructed around emotionality, compliance, passivity and sensibility. However, it was observed that the majority of girls occasionally distanced themselves from emphasised femininity whereas

some girls consistently distanced themselves from emphasised femininity. Nevertheless, these girls had not been marginalised by their female classmates. They had the liberty to choose to participate in boys' or girls' play groups. Some girls who distanced themselves from emphasised femininity manoeuvred within and against the culturally valued discourse of emphasised femininity. These girls played football and derided traditional female toys like Barbie. Girls who distanced themselves from emphasised femininity were physically active, loud and challenged the idealised discourses of matrimony and motherhood. Although they played football and socialised with boys they were accepted by their female classmates and they regularly participated in activities such as singing, dancing, chasing etc. Regarding the female classroom leaders, it was observed that the top girls were characterised by sportiness, physical beauty, sociability, assertiveness and academic skills. Although the top girls embodied some elements of emphasised femininity they did often distanced themselves from it. For instance, although they played football with boys, they also played chasing with girls. This flexibility had given them a status, and they were girls' leaders. In addition, they were good students and the often helped their classmates with school homework. They had a large circle of friends which included boys and girls from different grades and they deployed the boyfriend discourse for hanging out with boys.

In this section, I have discussed synoptically how my research answered the main research questions. The outcomes of this study make a significant contribution to the field of gender in the Hellenic primary schooling, an area that has not received adequate scholarly attention. The significance and contributions of my study are discussed in the following section.

8.2 Significance and Contributions of the Study

The findings of my research discussed in the previous section offer some valuable insights into the role of the practices of the Hellenic education system in reinforcing traditional gender

discourses and shed light on how children negotiate, challenge and deploy these discourses in their play practices on school playgrounds. This multifaceted analysis illuminates the extent to which children's gender identities are embedded and performed through and within school spaces, for schools are sites where hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity are discursively constructed (Connell, 1989; Mac an Ghaill, 1996). The observations in primary school classrooms revealed the crucial influence of classroom discursive practices on children's gender identity construction and performance (Baxter, 1990). Through quotidian classroom practices, teachers regulate and normalise children's performance of gender and 'contribute towards the construction of dominant modes of masculinity' (Skelton, 2002: 17). As well, the analysis of teachers' views of gender discourses and classroom practices highlighted the lack of space that primary school teachers in Hellas seem to have to challenge traditional gender identity construction, given the discursive constraints of the teaching materials.

My study also demonstrates that school playgrounds are a critical component of the physical space of schools as the data show that, through play practices, boys and girls 'collaboratively develop relational understandings of what it is to be male or female' (Paechter & Clarke, 2007: 319). This has a crucial impact on children's performance of gender and construction of gender identity (Karsten, 2003; Paechter & Clark, 2007). It was observed that football played a significant role as a major signifier of successful masculinity. In particular, boys who played football regularly performed a form of masculinity that had gained ascendancy over other forms of masculinity and femininity and become hegemonic.

The influence of the curriculum materials was also crucial, creating the foundation for most classroom activities. The analysis of the discursive representations highlighted the potential influence of hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity discourses on children's

perceptions of gender. The analysis of student interviews showed that most boys and most girls reproduced many of the gender discourses promoted through the anthology textbooks. This was also evident by the degree of affinity between the discursive representations of hegemonic masculinity in the anthologies and the specific form that hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity had acquired in the schools. I, therefore, argue that official government policy makers should place greater emphasis on challenging the traditional discursive representations of gender in the instructional materials for primary schools. Thus, the analysis of these aspects of the educational praxis in two primary schools in Athens addresses root sources of gender inequality in primary education in Hellas.

Lastly, the study of children's responses to non-traditional gender discourses had not been attempted previously in the Hellenic primary education. The feminist fairy tale was a useful tool to assess pupils' ability to challenge polarised, binaristic construction of gender and to challenge hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity discourses. The findings demonstrate that feminist fairy tales can challenge gender inequality and reinforce egalitarian gender discourses. My approach of sharing a feminist fairy tale in the Hellenic primary school context is a unique application of an Australian study and constitutes a feminist intervention. It offers valuable insight into children's sense making of non-normative gender discourses, and thus, a similar approach could be employed by future researchers interested in examining children's negotiations of gendered discourses.

These findings make a significant contribution to the existing Hellenic literature on gender identity construction in primary schools by shedding light on an under-researched field. Additionally, my research makes crucial contributions at the theoretical and methodological levels. At a theoretical level, the use of a post-structuralist paradigm to make sense of the data is a pioneering approach to understanding gender identity construction in Hellenic primary

schools, for all previous studies utilised social learning approaches. The post-structuralist approach to gender highlights the fluidity of gender, while the use of Butler's theory of performativity offers valuable insights into how children perform gender and construct their gender identity. As well, the combination of Connell's theory of multiple masculinities and emphasised femininity illuminates the hierarchies of gender and the discursive forces that normalise certain performances of gender and marginalise, pathologise and subordinate all other expression of masculinities and femininities (masculine and feminine subject positions). The study of the anthologies from a post-structuralist perspective enables viewing the textbooks as polysemous sites and the pupils as active readers who make sense of gender discourses in individual ways. The concepts of hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity allow me to deconstruct the hierarchies of gender and identify the specific characteristics of hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity in the textbooks. Similarly, the application of Butler's (1990) theory of performativity to school playgrounds offers understanding of how pupils perform gender through play practices. In addition, the use of Connell's theory on hegemonic masculinity in conjunction with the concept of emphasised femininity reveals the influence of certain activities on the construction of hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity. Finally, the post-structuralist approach to classroom interactions helps to illustrate how gender works and is embedded in classroom discursive practices and to highlight the role of teachers' practices in reinforcing hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity. This approach is a significant contribution from my research, for it had not been attempted previously in Hellas.

At a methodological level, my research makes a significant contribution with the triangulation of data, which helped generate more explanatory insights into education system's role in reinforcing traditional gender discourses through its practices and pupils' sense making of normative and non-normative gender discourses. No previous studies

explored how children negotiate, challenge or reproduce gender discourses in Hellenic primary schools through classroom and playground observations and analysis of textbooks. The richness of the data collected through this multifaceted analysis makes the methodological approach employed by this study highly effective at scrutinising the complexities of gender in primary education.

8.3 Strengths and Limitations of the Study

The systematic analysis of the gender discourses operating in the Hellenic primary school system revealed crucial aspects of the education system's role in reinforcing traditional gender discourses through its practices. Most importantly, it illuminated how children simultaneously are positioned within these discourses and engage with and negotiate these positionings. Additionally, this analysis employed a post-structuralist paradigm to investigate how gender meanings are constituted and reconstituted through discourses in multiple and diverse ways and how these are related to broader social norms, hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity. Throughout the study, I attempted to understand children's perceptions, experiences, meanings and performances of gender within the broader Hellenic social context. By keeping in mind the broader gender discourses and the structural and social dynamics of gender, I could understand the complexities of children's negotiation of gender discourses and the education system's role in reinforcing traditional gender discourses. Hence, it can be argued that the theoretical and methodological approaches to gender in my research are one of its main strengths.

However, in a theoretical limitation, this study rejects the male/female binary as multiple masculinities and femininities exist in the social cosmos, but I discuss gender in terms of male (men and boys) and female (women and girls), which assumes an unproblematic, *a priori* categorisation of individuals as male and female. Another significant limitation of this

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study is the exclusion of the analysis of ethnicity in understanding gender identity construction. Although the intersection of gender with ethnicity is not denied, the data collected did not support an analysis of the intersection of ethnicity with gender. Parents' views of gender discourses also should have been considered in the analysis of children's responses to normative and non-normative gender discourses. However, this was not possible given the limited timeframe of this research project and the already complex methodological strategies used at the schools. Parents' views of gender roles are an extremely interesting influence that could be considered in a future research project. In retrospect, the third and fourth grades seem too close in age to make comparisons. I believe that I should have used a greater age gap, i.e. first and sixth grades. In addition, it might have been good to have included some of the students' views on the classroom interactions, and particularly, I should have explored how aware they were of the gender imbalances in the classroom. Lastly, a crucial limitation of my study is that it did not explore children's activities in physical education lessons, which would have offered the opportunity to compare and contrast formal and informal sporting organisations and practices. Further considerations for future research are given in the next section.

8.4 Implications for Further Research

The discussion of the strengths and limitations of this study has already highlighted some future avenues for research which could build on and develop the approaches and findings of this study within or beyond the Hellenic primary schooling. First, the influence of social class and ethnicity could be explored and analysed. It could also be worthwhile to conduct a longitudinal study and make repeated observations over a long period of time, which might enrich the findings of this study and demonstrate whether gender beliefs, values and practices change or remain the same across live transitions. The study of non-verbal and non-activity

forms of children's gender performance could also be considered in future research. Lastly, an exploration of parents' views of gender discourses could provide useful data that would enable a future researcher to better understand how children negotiate traditional and non-traditional gender discourses.

8.5 Implications for Government Policy Makers and Educators

Although the implications of this study have been embedded in the analysis throughout the thesis, I summarise them in this section.

> ➢ Official government policy makers should place greater emphasis on gender equality issues in primary education. The curriculum should be given a new orientation which encourages educators to discuss gender equality issues in the classroom.

> ➢ The study of the anthologies shows that gender equality issues have not been taken into consideration; thus, more attention should be paid to the discursive representations of masculinity and femininity. A revision of textbooks with attention paid to gender issues is also recommended.

> ➢ Special training in gender equality should be provided to educators so that they can apply more egalitarian gender practices in the classroom. Educators also should be trained to recognise the normative gender discursive representations in instructional materials and be made more aware of the impact of their classroom practices on children's perceptions of gender.

> ➢ Classroom practices should ensure that boys and girls are affirmed equally so that they can develop fully their potential.

> ➢ The practices of the education system should encourage the performance of forms of masculinities and femininities other than hegemonic masculinity and emphasised

femininity. This could be achieved by training educators and making the discursive content of the instructional materials more gender egalitarian.

➢ The reform of the educational system should not be limited to eliminating gender inequalities. The implementation of other strategies that will diminish other spheres of human inequality (class, age, sexual orientation) is also necessary.

➢ Feminist narratives can be a very useful tool for eliminating normative gender discourses and challenging children's perceptions of gender roles. However, these stories must be taught by trained educators capable of critically engaging with and encouraging critical thinking about gender stereotypes.

Epilogue

This qualitative study explored children's performance of gender in the Hellenic primary schooling and highlighted how hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity are discursively constructed. The education system's role in reinforcing traditional gender dichotomies and perpetuating normative gender discourses was explored in classroom interactions, teachers' practices and views of gender roles, and the discursive representations of masculinity and femininity in instructional materials (anthology textbooks). The analysis showed that the practices of the Hellenic education system perpetuate normative gender discourses. This can have a negative impact on children's perceptions of gender roles and future roles in the society. Therefore, the education system needs to be reformed, and a more gender egalitarian curriculum is needed. Revising the instructional materials from a gender perspective and training educators in gender equality issues are the first steps towards gender equality in education.

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Employment Rate by Gender and Gender Gap 2000-2008

Table 1: Employment rate by gender and gender gap 2000-2008

Year	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Males	71.7	71.6	72.5	73.5	74.0	74.2	74.6	74.9	75.0
Females	41.8	41.7	43.1	44.5	45.5	46.1	47.4	47.9	48.7
Gap	29.9	29.9	29.3	29.1	28.5	28.1	27.2	27.0	26.3

Source: Eurostat, 2009 Compendium of Indicators for the Employment Guidelines.

Unemployment Rate by gender and Gender Gap 2000-2008

Table 2: Unemployment Rate by gender and Gender Gap 2000-2008

Year	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Males	7.4	6.9	6.4	6.0	6.3	6.1	5.6	5.2	5.1
Females	17.0	15.9	15.2	14.3	15.9	15.3	13.6	12.8	11.4
Gap	9.7	9.0	8.8	8.8	9.6	9.2	8.0	7.6	6.3

Source: Eurostat, 2009 Compendium of Indicators for the Employment Guidelines.

Part-time rate (% of all employed) by Gender and Gender Gap 2000-2008

Table 3: Part-time rate (% of all employed) by gender and gender gap 2000-2008

Year	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Males	2.6	2.2	2.3	2.2	2.2	2.3	2.9	2.7	2.5
Females	7.8	7.2	8.0	7.7	8.5	9.3	10.2	10.1	9.7
Gap	5.2	5.0	5.7	5.5	6.3	7.0	7.3	7.4	7.2

Source: Eurostat, 2009 Compendium of Indicators for the Employment Guidelines.

Self-employed (% of all employed) by gender and gender gap 2000-2008

Table 4: Self-employed (% of all employed) by gender and gender gap 2000-2008

Year	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Males	37.4	36.4	36.1	35.7	35.2	34.8	34.5	34.2	34.0
Females	21.3	20.6	21.2	21.3	20.3	20.5	20.7	20.1	20.8
Gap	16.1	15.8	14.9	14.4	14.9	14.3	13.8	14.1	13.2

Source: Eurostat, 2009 Compendium of Indicators for the Employment Guidelines.

Gender Equality in Participation in Primary Education 2006-2012

Table 5: Gender Equality in Participation in Primary Education 2006-2012

Gender Equality in Participation in Primary Education 2006-2012			
School Year	Males	Females	Total
2006-2007	328.771	311. 190	639.961
2007-2008	327.360	309.190	637.309
2008-2009	400.552	382.184	792.433
2009-2010	406.798	384.516	791.314
2010-2011	411.970	389.191	801.101
2011-2012	410.494	387.886	798.380

Source: Hellenic Statistical Authority, 2006-2012.

Gender Equality in Participation in Secondary Education 2006-2012

Table 6: Gender Equality in Participation in Secondary Education 2006-2012

Gender Equality in Participation in Secondary Education 2006-2012			
School Year	Males	Females	Total
2006-2007	358.428	322.061	680.489
2007-2008	360.070	328.797	688.867
2008-2009	360.075	328.080	688.155
2009-2010	363.176	331.518	694.950
2010-2011	360.837	330.695	691.556
2011-2012	362.165	333.540	695.705

Source: Hellenic Statistical Authority, 2006-2012.

Gender Equality in Participation in Tertiary Education 2005-2009

Table 7: Gender Equality in Participation in Tertiary Education 2005-2009

Gender Equality in Participation in Tertiary Education 2005-2009 (First Year students)			
School Year	Males	Females	Total
2005-2006	15.256	24.764	40.020
2006-2007	14.940	24.784	39.724
2007-2008	15.227	24.745	39.972
2008-2009	15.699	26.084	41.783

Source: Hellenic Statistical Authority, 2006-2012.

School Plans

School A
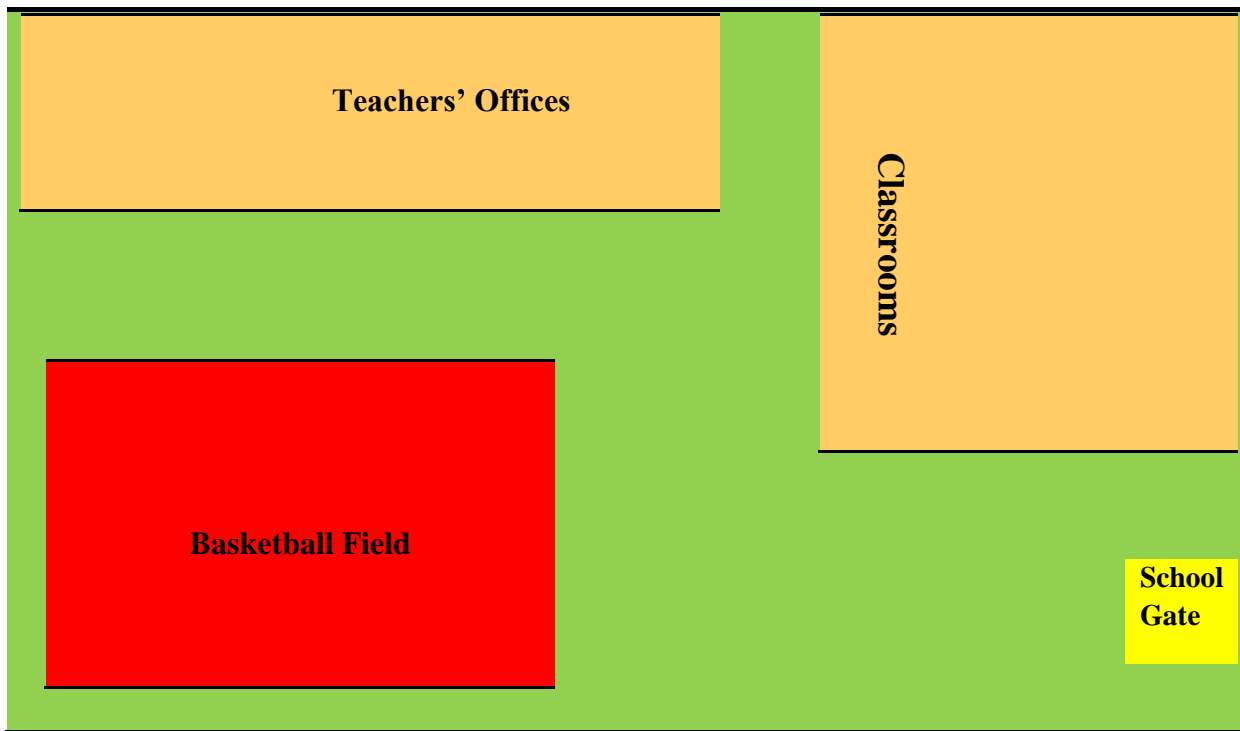
School B
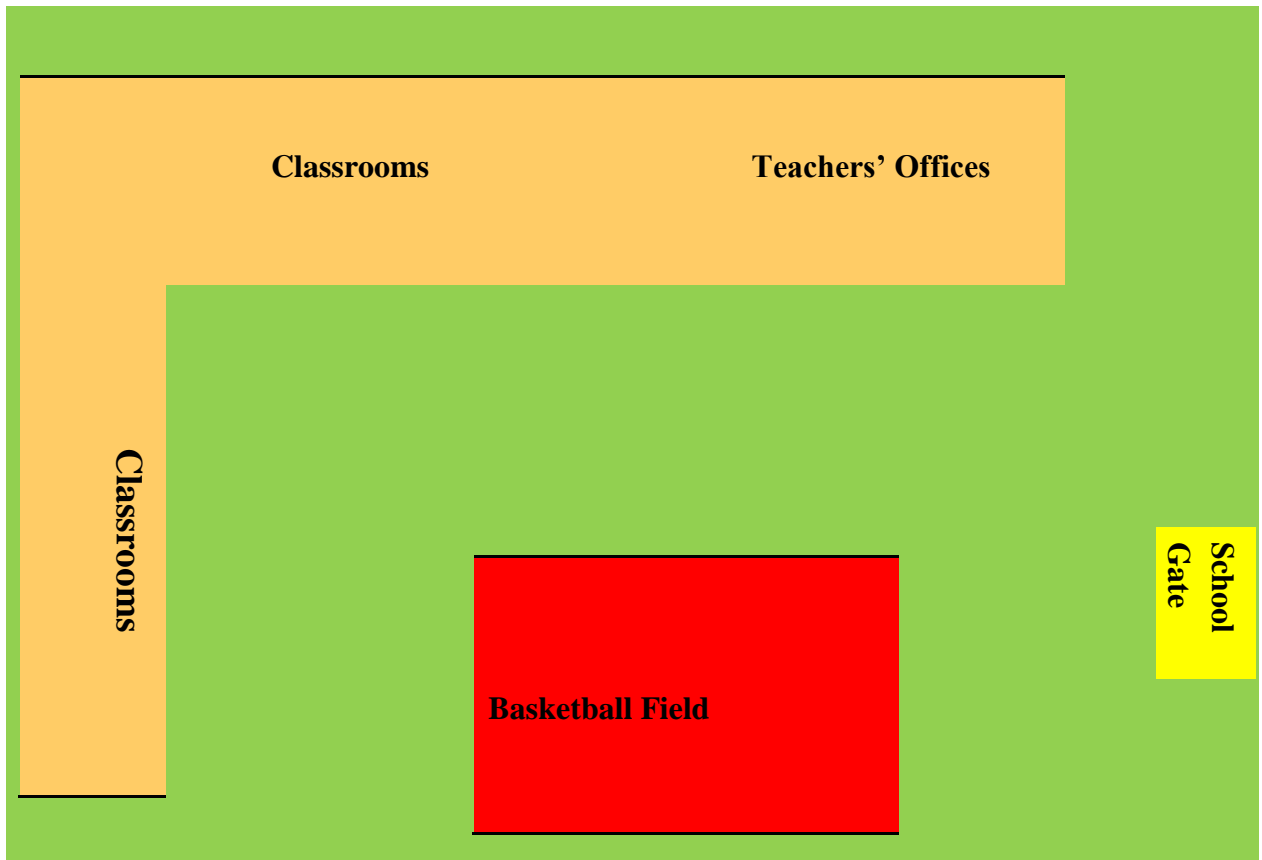
APPENDIX IX

Teacher Interview Protocol

A. Personal information:

a. Sex:...

b. Age:..

c. Teaching in grade:...

d. Location of school:..

e. Father's occupations..

f. Mother's occupation..

g. For how many years have you been teaching in primary schools....................................

h. Where were you born...

B. Questions

1. Match up the following traits with the corresponding gender: ***Docility, independence, thoughtfulness, dreamy nature, sloppy appearance, self confidence, sensitivity, quality of leadership, ambition, competitiveness***.

2. Who do you think is better at handling pressure situations (boys or girls)?

3. Please categorize as masculine or feminine the following traits: active, outspoken, strong, weak.

4. Describe the ideal male and female student.

5. If you need help with class paperwork, which student(s) do you often call for help? Is that a girl or a boy? Why you choose that student?

6. Do you consider making a boy sit next to a girl as a punishment? Why?

7. If you recognize any student in your class that have cross-gendered dressing or behaviours, do you think it is necessary to correct it? If yes, how would you correct her/him? Why? What are your views on homosexuality?

8. Think of the top 2 girls and 2 boys in your class, what jobs do you think they can do after finishing education? Why?

9. Do you think that girls should be encouraged to enter traditionally male dominated professions?

10. Do you think some subjects are boys' subjects and some are girls' subjects? If yes, what are they?

11. Do you think it is more important to prepare boys for a successful career than a successful family life?

12. Do you agree with the following statement? Women's natural place is the home. Please explain.

13. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Men are the head of the family. Please explain

14. Do you discuss gender equality issues in the classroom?

15. What are your students' views about gender? Are their views anachronistic?

16. Do you take gender into consideration in the classroom? Would you say that you use gender equitable language in the classroom?

17. Do students get the same chances to speak in the classroom?

18. Do you try to discourage gender normative behaviours in the classroom?

19. Do you think that boys lose interest in the lesson more easily than girls? How do deal with that?

20. Is it important to discuss gender equality issues in the classroom?

21. Have you received any training on gender equality issues? If yes, what is the training/guidance?

22. Do you have experience of teaching the old anthology textbooks? a) If yes, can you describe briefly if you have noticed any changes in relation to gender representations? b) What do you think about the representation of gender in the new anthology textbooks? What changes do you think are urgent? Why?

23. Do you discuss your own opinion about female/male representations in the anthology textbooks with your students? If yes, what are your opinions? What are their attitudes concerning this issue? Do you think such discussion is necessary? Why?

APPENDIX X

Student Interview Protocol

A. *Personal information***:**

a. Sex: …………………………………………………………………………..…

b. Age: ………………………………………………………….………………....

c. Ethnicity…………………………………………………………………….....

d. Grade: ………………………………………………………………………....

e. Father's occupation………………………………………………………......

f. Mother's occupation…………………………………………………….........

g. Father's education level………………………………………………...........

h. Mother's education level………………………………………………..........

i. Address of school: ……………………………………………………….......

B. Questions

1. Do you like the anthology textbooks? Why/ Why not?

2. Do you think the images of female and male characters in the stories match those in the real world?

3. I am going to read some extracts from the anthology textbooks and then I would like to discuss them: 1. '*... aunt Kostaina is making pancakes, and Uncle Costas with children have taken a seat at the table and waiting...*'. 2. '*...made sweet bread and took it to church overnight in a basket, covered it with a fully embroidered towel...*' and '*...she kneaded the dough for the bread herself…*'. 3. '*…when she was not cooking, she was sewing festive dresses for herself and her daughter. Black skirts*

embroidered with geometric shapes-triangles, squares, beautifully blended with cypress, swords, birds, red and purple...'.

a) What do you think about these families?

b) What do you have to say about the activities that the father and the mother do?

c) If the mother was working and the father was at home would it be ok?

4. Do you all remember the story entitled: *The Garden of Samich* by Litsa Psarafti, pp.154-157 that you did in the classroom today?

   a) Do you think that girls can do this job?

   b) In your opinion what professions are appropriate for men and women?

5. Do you think that boys and girls should help with the household chores at home?

6. Now I would like to discuss some of the stories you have recently done in the classroom. First I will give you a summary of the story to make sure that you all remember it. The stories that I want to discuss with you are: Nordin in the Church by Elsa Chiou, p.72, Prasinoskoufis by Pipina Tsimikali, p.64, The Garden of Samich by Litsa Psarafti,p.154, Katerina and the Invisible Man in the Dark, by Maro Loizou, p.132.

6a) 'What do you think about the activities of the father and the mother in these stories that I read to you?'

6b) Do you think that the mother should work or stay at home?

7. I have noticed that in the anthology textbooks boys played usually football or when they played alone they played with toys such as robots whereas girls liked painting,

drawing and playing with dolls. Could you please tell me what do you think about boys' and girls' activities in the textbooks? Are they appropriate?

8. What kind of job do you want to do after finishing school? Why do you choose that job?

9. In your opinion, what kind of work should females / males do? Please give reasons.

10. Do you have any boys/girls as friends? If you don't can you tell me why?

11. What kind of games do you play with the boys/girls?

12. Can you tell me which your favourite toys/games are?

13. Do you think that a girl/boy could play the same games as you and your friends?

14. When you play with your friends outside school, do you invite girls/boys to play with you? If you don't, can you tell me why?

15. What are your favourite TV programmes?

Guidelines for Classroom Observation

1. How many students are there in the class? How many girls? How many boys?

2. Draw a map of the classroom with labels of doors, windows, and chalkboard. Label girl = +; boy = 0; teacher = X.

3. Where do the girls and boys sit? Are their seats fixed or flexible as they choose to? Is the seating pattern sex-segregated? Count 10 students sitting closest to the teacher. Are they more boys or girls? (The students sitting closest to the teacher often get more attention from him/her)

4. When the teacher walks around the classroom, does the teacher walk near; stop to talk to boys and girls equally? Draw pencil lines of teachers' walk, draw an arrow to the students teacher talks to. Count the number of arrows after class.

5. Look at the pictures / posters on the walls. Do they show equal number of females and males? Do they show female doing things in male's domains? Do they show females and males in conventional activities? If not sure about the sex of a figure, ask students what they think the sex of that figure is.

6. Does every child in the class have textbooks, pens, and exercise books?

7. How many times does the teacher call / address girls and boys during the lesson?

8. How many times do girls / boys go to the chalkboard?

9. How many times does the teacher give feedbacks to boys and girls? What are those feedbacks?

10. What are the tasks / responsibilities of boys and girls in class?

11. How does the teacher discipline girls and boys?

12. Is the teacher's language gendered?

13. How does the teacher treat a gendered text? Reinforce the stereotypes? Ignore it?

14. Reduce the impact of the stereotypes? What are the strategies the teacher uses to reinforce / reduce the stereotypes?

Playground Observation Guidelines

1. What kind of activities do boys prefer?

2. What kind of activities do girls prefer?

3. Do boys and girls play together?

4. What kind of games do boys and girls play when they play together?

5. What are the characteristics of boys' and girls' play groups? Are they gender/age homogeneous? Do boys and girls participate in large or small groups?

6. Where do boys and girls play?

7. Who occupies the largest part of the school playground?

8. How boys and girls interact in school playgrounds?

9. Categorize boys' and girls' behaviour into the following categories: a) Stationary which describes little or no movement i.e. a child watching other children playing, or discussing quietly b) Moderate movement: fairly intense movement, in between stationary or fast movement i.e. fast walking, skipping, hopping, or jumping and c) Fast movement: movement described as intense or extreme i.e. running, continuous skipping and shouting.

10. What is boys' verbal behaviour in school playgrounds?

11. What is girls' verbal behaviour in school playgrounds?

Interview Protocol for Exploring Children's Views of Snow White

1. What do they think about Snow White's activities?

2. Do you think that Snow White was very muscular?

3. Which of Snow White' jobs (mine-worker/jewellery maker) is more appropriate for a woman?

4. What would have been different in the story had Snow White been a man?

5. What do you think about Snow White not wanting to become a Princess?

6. What would you do if you were in Snow White's position? Would you become a Prince/Princess?

7. If Snow White was a man would he do the same? (Would he reject the title of the Prince?)

8. What it would be different in the story if Snow White was a man?

9. How do you find the scene where the dwarfs cry? Do you think that men cry?

10. Do you think that a King would be as wicked and as evil as the Queen in the fairy tale?

11. If Snow White was a man would he be able to escape from the evil King?

12. Did you like the ending of the story? Make up your own ending to the story.

13. Describe Snow White's life after she got married to the Prince.

14. Do you think that Snow White is a heroine?

15. Which fairy tale do you prefer? The traditional or the feminist?

ZIPES, Z. (1986), DON'T BET ON THE PRINCE: CONTEMPORARY FEMINIST FAIRY TALES IN NORTH AMERICA AND ENGLAND. **LONDON: ROUTLEDGE, PP. 74-81.**

SNOW WHITE

High above a far off kingdom, carved into the rock of a mountainside, there once stood a mighty castle. It was so high that the people working on the distant plain could look up and see it among the clouds and when they saw it they trembled, for it was the castle of the cruel and powerful Queen of the Mountains.

The Queen of the Mountains had ten thousand soldiers at her command. She sat upon a throne of marble dressed in robes weighed down with glittering jewels, and holding in her hand a mirror. This mirror could answer any question the Queen asked it and in it the Queen could see what was happening anywhere in her kingdom. When she looked into her mirror and saw any of her subjects doing things which displease her she sent soldiers to punish them.

Night and day her soldiers stood guards on the walls of the castle and every day they watched as people from all over the kingdom toiled up the steep pathway carrying heavy loads: iron to shoe the royal horses and, weapons to arm the soldiers; food to be cooked in the royal kitchen; cloth to cloth the royal servants. The procession would go on and on up the mountainside to the castle. the people were carrying with them all the useful and beautiful things that had been made in the kingdom, for everything they made belong to the Queen and they were allowed to keep only what was left over or spoiled.

No one could save anything from the Queen of the Mountains for no place was hidden from her magic mirror. Every day the riches of the kingdom were brought to her and every night she asked the mirror:

> '*Mirror, Mirror in my hand,*
>
> *Who is the happiest in the land?*'

Then in a silvery voice the mirror always replied:

> '*Queen, all bow to your command*
>
> *you are the happiest in the land*'. And the Queen would smile.

One day among the procession climbing the steep path to the castle were a pale little girl called snow white and seven little men, dwarfs, even smaller than her. Snow White and the dwarfs were carrying between them a heavy chest bound with metal bands. They had travelled all the way from the diamond mines beside the distance sea. There, far underground, often in danger, they and many other men, women and children worked long and weary hours. Every year the must send a chest full of diamonds to the Queen of the Mountains or they would be cruelly punished.

When the other people in the procession reached the castle gates the lovely things they had been carrying were taken from them and they were sent away, but snow white and the seven dwarfs were surrounded by soldiers and brought to the throne room of the Queen herself.

'Open the chest' ordered the Queen as they bowed low before her. Two dwarfs lifted the lid. The chest was full of glittering diamonds and on top of them laid a necklace shaped like branches of ice. The Queen held the necklace up to the light

-'Did you make this?' She asked the Snow White

-'Yes majesty', said the girl.

It is well made, said the Queen. You are to stay in the castle as a jewellery maker

Snow white's pale cheeks turn red and she open her mouth to cry No! But each of the seven dwarfs put a crooked finger in his lips warning her to be silent.

Take her to the workshop ordered the Queen.

The soldiers led snow white and the dwarfs out of the throne room and up a twisting stairway to a small room at the top of the tower. In the room there was a work bench with jeweller's tools laid out on it. All around the walls, stored in tall glass jars, gleamed jewels of many colours: amethysts, emeralds, rubies, sapphires, topaz. Little light came through the one small window but the jewels shone so brightly that when snow white looked at them her eyes were dazzled and her head began to ache.

Snow white and the dwarfs took the diamonds from the chest and put them into empty glass jars. Then, one by one the seven little men kissed snow white goodbye. There were tears in their eyes for she was their dearest friend. They shouldered the empty chest and they went slowly down the twisting staircase.

You are very lucky said one of the soldiers to Snow White. You will no longer be poor and lead a hard life toiling underground in the mine. Here servants will wait on you. You will sleep in a soft, scented bed and be brought whatever delicious food and drink you want. And if the Queen is especially pleased with your work she will give you rich rewards.

But my friends will still be toiling in the mine, said now white and her heart felt like a stone with sorrow.

In the long days and weeks which followed Snow White grew more and more skilful at making beautiful pieces of jewellery out of the precious stones and metals in the workshop. The jewellery pleased the Queen of the Mountain. One evening she summoned Snow White to the throne room.

-'This brooch pleased me', said the Queen. You may choose a reward.

-'Oh majesty' answered Snow White, falling in her knees, please let me go home.

The Queen was angry. She turned her mirror towards Snow white and in it the little girl could see the dwarfs and all her other friends digging in the mine and dragging heavy loads along its narrow tunnels.

You could have anything you heart desires and yet you ask to return to that miserable life! The Queen exclaimed. Go back to your work and think hard before you enter my presence again. So as she deftly twisted the metal and fitted the precious stones snow white though long and hard. She thought of the suffering she had shared with her friends in the distant mines, of how they and all the other people of the land spent their whole lives working to make lovely things for the Queen of the mountains while they themselves had barely enough to live on. And snow white knew what she would ask for.

I will make a jewelled belt o beautiful that the Queen will all me before her again, she thought and at once she set to work.

Well snow white said the Queen as the girl stood before her throne a second time, you have had time to think. Tell me your heart's desire and I will grant it, for what you have made is more beautiful than anything in my treasure chambers. As she spoke the Queen ran her fingers along the red and purple gems of the jewelled belt.

Majesty said the snow white I have thought and what I ask for is this: take only what you need from the people of the kingdom and let them keep the rest so that they no longer be cold and hungry and miserable.

The Queen's eyes glittered with rage and her hand tightened on the jewelled belt, but when she spoke her voice was as sweet as honey.

Snow White if anyone but you had spoken such treachery I would have ordered my soldiers to throw them from the walls of the castle onto the rocks below. But you have a rare skill and you are young enough to change your thoughts. Come close and look in my mirror.

Snow white looked into the magic mirror and saw herself reflected there, but strangely. She was wearing working clothes and yet in the mirror she was dressed in a richly embroidered gown, pearls and rubies were entwined in her long hair and on her head was a golden crown.

You see, Snow white, said the Queen you could be a Princess. Now go.

Snow white went back to the workshop. She stood gazing out of the tiny window and thinking of how she had looked in the mirror, adorned with jewels and gold. Far below her she could see the daily procession of people carrying up the mountainside all the things they had made and must give to the Queen. Beyond them the green plain stretched out until it reached the distant hills. On the other side of the hills was the sea and snow white's home. The words of a song which she and her friends used to sing when the long day's work in the mine was over came back to her mind.

'*Emerald's green but grass is greener*'.

Sapphires pale beside the sea.

No jet as black as the wild night sky.

No ruby red

No ruby red

No ruby red as hearts which cry to be free'.

What my friends long for is my heart's desire too, thought Snow White, but the Queen of the Mountains will never set us free.

Soon the Queen summoned Snow White before her throne a third time.

-'No flowers in all my gardens are as delicately shaped as these ear-rings you have made' she said 'what reward do you want?'

-'Nothing majesty', said Snow White quietly.

-'Foolish girl!' cried the Queen, 'I know you are unhappy yet you only have to ask and you can become a Princess'. Very well, you will continue to make jewels for me but from no on soldiers will stand guard at the foot of the tower where you work and unless you choose to be a Princess you will never leave the tower again.

The months passed by. Still Snow White remained alone in the tower and did not ask for her reward. Quiet and pale she sat at her work and thinking and waiting.

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When a whole year had passed Snow White looked from her tiny window and saw below, among the people toiling up the pathway to the castle, seven little figures carrying between them a heavy chest. It was her friends the dwarfs at last. Snow White waited for the dwarfs to bring the chest of diamonds to the workshop but when the chest was brought in it was carried by some of the Queen's soldiers.

-'The Queen has given orders that you are not to see your friends from the mine' said one of the soldiers. 'She is watching them in her mirror all the time they are here'.

-'Please go back to the foot of the stairs and leave me alone' said Snow White in a sad voice. 'I will fill the glass jars with diamonds and put the empty chest outside the door'.

The soldier did as she asked for they liked Snow White and secretly admired her for daring to displease the Queen.

An hour later they returned and took the chest away, down the twisting stairway and into the courtyard where the dwarfs were waiting. The little men swung it onto their shoulders and carried it out of the castle gate and down the mountainside.

All that day the Queen of the Mountains sat on her throne and watched in her mirror the as the dwarfs went further and further away. By the time that evening came they had crossed the distant hills. The Queen smiled to herself and asked the mirror the usual question:

> 'Mirror, Mirror in my hand,
>
> Who is the happiest in the land?'

In its silvery voice the mirror replied:

> 'Though all bow to your command
>
> Snow White is the happiest in the land'.

Snow white hissed the Queen, Show me Snow white!

Then in the mirror she saw the seven dwarfs lifting the lid off the chest and out of the chest climbed Snow White, her face full of joy.

The Queen's rage was terrible. She ordered that the soldiers who had let snow white to escape were to be thrown from the castle walls. Throughout the night she sat on her throne speaking to no one. Then as the sun rose she gave orders to her soldiers.

-'Go to the diamond mines', she commanded. 'Seal up the entrance while Snow White and her companions are working so that they will all die underground'.

Many of the soldiers were filled with horror but they dared not to disobey. The Queen watch in her mirror as they sealed up the way out of the mine and when it was done she laughed.

Word of the terrible thing done at the Queen's command spread quickly through the land. Many people came to where the Queen's soldiers stood guard beside the sealed up entrance to the mine. As the day wore on more and more people arrived. They stood there quietly at a little distance from the soldiers as if they were waiting for soothing to happen. By the evening a great crowd had gathered. They lit fires to keep themselves warm through the night and talked in low voices about all the people trapped underground and about the cruelty of the Queen of the Mountains. They knew that by now there must be little air left to breath down in the mine. Soon snow white and her friends would be dead as the Queen of the mountains had commanded.

Suddenly, among some rocks on the outskirts of the crowd, a tapping sound could be heard. As the people looked at each other in bewilderment, one of the rocks began to move and then was pushed aside from behind, to reveal a narrow shaft going deep into the earth. Climbing from this passage was one of the dwarfs.

Just in time, wheezed the dwarf. I do not think we could have done on digging much longer. My oldest brother remembered that when he was very young there was another way out of the mine. He led us to the place and we dug in the dark until the way was opened up.

One by one helping each other the workers from the diamond mine climbed out into the fresh night air. Some were faint, some were bruised and many had torn and bleeding hands. But every child woman and man was safe. Among them was Snow White.

The great crowd of people round the fires and the soldiers stared in amazement. Then the people began to cheer. Some of the soldiers joined in the cheering but other drew their weapons. One of these called out to snow white.

-'Snow White', he ordered, 'you must come with us at once back to the castle'.

-'No', answered Snow White. I will not go back to the castle and we will send no more diamonds to the Queen. Everyone will keep the things they make and send nothing to the Queen of the Mountains.

As she spoke the cheers grew louder and louder.

-'Then, we will kill you', said the soldier.

-'You may kill some of us', said the Snow White, 'but in the end you will lose for there are far more people than there are soldiers'.

The people realised that this was true and they surrounded the soldiers determined to take their weapon from them, whatever the cost.

Far away on her marble throne the Queen of the Mountains took the jewellery snow white had made and broke it into pieces. In her magic mirror she could see all that was happening. She knew that the people of the land were rising up against her.

> 'Mirror, mirror in my hand
>
> Make them bow to my command'.

She ordered her mirror but the mirror answered:

> 'Queen who was so rich and grand
>
> The people cast you out from their land'.

The magic mirror misted over and when the mist had gone the Queen could see nothing reflected there but her own face.

Still grasping the mirror in her hand, the Queen of the Mountains rose from her throne and climbed the stone steps to the highest battlements of the castle. From there she could look out and see with her own eyes the crowds of people gathering on the distant plain. In fear and fury she lifted the mirror above her head and flung it from the castle wall.

The mirror would not leave her hand. She fell with it and hurtled screaming down until she was shattered into fragments on the rocks below.

ZIPES, Z. (1986), DON'T BET ON THE PRINCE: CONTEMPORARY

FEMINIST FAIRY TALES IN NORTH AMERICA AND ENGLAND.

LONDON: ROUTLEDGE, PP. 74-81.

Translation in Greek   (My translation)

Η Χιονάτη

Ψηλά, σε ένα μακρινό Βασίλειο, πάνω σε ένα λαξευμένο βράχο μιας βουνοπλαγίας στεκόταν κάποτε ένα ισχυρό κάστρο. Το κάστρο βρισκόταν τόσο ψηλά που ακόμη και οι άνθρωποι που εργάζονταν στη μακρινή πεδιάδα κοιτάζοντας τον ουρανό μπορούσαν να το αντικρύσουν ανάμεσα στα σύννεφα. Κάθε φορά που το έβλεπαν έτρεμαν από το φόβο τους καθώς ήταν το κάστρο της κακίας και πανίσχυρης Βασίλισσας του Βουνού.

Η Βασίλισα του Βουνού είχε δέκα χιλιάδες στρατιώτες στη διαθεσή της. Συνήθως καθόταν στο μαρμάρινο θρόνο της φορώντας φορέματα με κεντημένα λαμπερά κοσμήματα και κρατώντας στο χέρι της ένα μαγικό καθρέπτη. Ο καθρέπτης αυτός μπορούσε να απαντήσει σε οποιαδήποτε ερώτηση κι αν ρωτούσε η Βασίλισσα και μέσα από αυτόν μπορούσε να δει τι συνέβαινε από άκρη ως άκρη του Βασιλείου της. Κάθε φορά που θα έβλεπε μέσα στον καθρέπτη κάποιον από τους υπηκόους της να κάνει κάτι που τη δυσαρεστούσε αμέσως έστελνε το στρατό της για να τον τιμωρήσει.

Νύχτα-μέρα στρατιώτες φρουρούσαν τα τοίχοι του κάστρου και κάθε μέρα παρακολουθούσαν τους ανθρώπους που έφταναν από όλες τις γωνιές του βασιλείου και με μόχθο ανέβαιναν το απότομο μονοπάτι για να μεταφέρουν τα βαριά φορτία με σίδερο για το πετάλωμα των βασιλικών αλόγων, όπλα για να οπλιστούν οι στρατιώτες, τρόφιμα για να εφοδιάστει η βασιλική κουζίνα και ρούχα για το προσωπικό της βασίλισσας. Η πομπή προχωρούσε και προχωρούσε στην πλαγία του βουνού μέχρι να φτάσει στο κάστρο. Οι άνθρωποι μετέφεραν όλα τα χρήσιμα και όμορφα αντικείμενα που είχαν φτιάξει στο βασίλειο, καθώς όλα όσα έφτιαχναν άνηκαν στη βασίλισσα και δεν τους επιτρέποταν να κρατήσουν τίποτα παρά μόνο ό,τι περίσευε ή χάλαγε.

Κανένας δεν μπορούσε να κρύψει τίποτα από τη βασίλισσα του βουνού καθώς μέσα από το μαγικό καθρέπτη της μπορούσε να δει τα πάντα. Κάθε μέρα η βσίλισσα λάμβανε όλα τα πλούτη του βασιλείου και κάθε βράδυ ρωτούσε τον καθρέπτη:

«Καθρέπτη, καθρεπτάκι μου,
Ποιος είναι ο πιο χαρούμενος στο Βασίλειο;»

Και ο καθρέπτης απαντούσε;

«Βασίλισσα, που όλοι στη θελησή σου υπακούν
Εσύ είσαι η πιο χαρούμενη στον τόπο αυτό»

Και η Βασίλισσα Χαμογελούσε με Ικανοποίηση.

Μια μέρα ανάμεσα στην πομπή που ανέβαινε το απότομο μονοπάτι του κάστρου ήταν κι ένα χλωμό κοριτσάκι που το έλεγαν Χιονάτη και επτά ανθρωπάκια, νάνοι, που ήταν ακόμη πιο μικρά από τη Χιονάτη. Η χιονάτη και οι επτά νάνοι κουβαλούσαν ένα μεγάλο και βαρύ μπαούλο που το είχαν δέσει με αλυσίδες και το έφερναν από τα ορυχεία διαμαντιών που βρίσκονταν κοντά στη μακρινή θάλασσα. Εκεί, πολύ βαθιά μέσα στη γή, συχνά με κίνδυνο την ίδια τους τη ζωή, δούλευαν κοπιαστικά για πολλές ώρες οι Χιονάτη και οι επτά νάνοι μαζί με πολλούς ακόμη άνδρες, γυναίκες και παιδιά. Κάθε χρόνο έπρεπε να στέλνουν ένα μπαούλο γεμάτο με διαμάντια στη βασίλισσα του βουνού αλλιώς η βασίλισσα θα τους τιμωρούσε αυστηρά.

Όταν όλοι οι άλλοι άνθρωποι της πομπής έφτασαν στις πύλες του κάστρου τους ζητήθηκε από τους στρατιώτες να αφήσουν όλα τα όμορφα αντικείμενα που κουβαλούσαν και φύγουν, αλλά η χιονάτη και οι επτά νάνοι περικυκλώθηκαν από τους στρατιώτες, οι οποίοι τους συνόδευσαν στην αίθουσα του θρόνου.

«Άνοιξε το μπαούλο» τους διέταξε η βασίλισσα καθώς αυτοί υποκλίθηκαν μπροστά της.

Δυο από τους νάνους άνοιξαν το καπάκι. Το μπαούλο ήταν γεμάτο με αστραφτερά διαμάντια και στο πάνω μέρος βρισκόταν ένα περιδέραιο σε σχήμα νιφάδων χιονιού. Η βασίλισσα κοίταξε το περιδέραιο στο φώς.

«Εσύ το έφτιαξες αυτό;» ρώτησε τη χιονάτη.

«Ναι μεγαλειοτάτη» είπε το μικρό κορίτσι.

«Είναι πολύ ωραίο» είπε η βασίλισσα, «Θα μείνεις στο κάστρο και θα φτιάχνεις τα κοσμηματά μου».

Τα χλωμά μαγουλάκια της χιονάτης έγινα κατακόκκινα και ήθελε να φωνάξει ΟΧΙ! αλλά οι επτά νάνοι έβαλαν το δάχτυλά τους μπροστά από το στόμα τους, θέλωντας να την προειδοποιήουν να κάνει ησυχία.

«Πάρτε τη στο εργαστήριο» διέταξε αμέσως η Βασίλισσα.

Οι στρατιώτες συνόδευσαν τη χιονάτη και τους επτά νάνους έξω από την αίθουσα του θρόνου και από μια στριφογυριστή σκάλα τους οδήγησαν σε ένα μικρό δωμάτιο στην κορυφή του πύργου. Στο δωμάτιο υπήρχε ένας πάγκος και επάνω του απλωμένα όλα τα σύνεργα χρυσοχοίας. Γύρω-γύρω στους τοίχους υπήρχαν μεγάλα γυάλινα βάζα με λαμπερούς και πολύχρωμους πολύτιμους λίθους: αμέθυστος, σμαράγδια, ρουμπίνια, ζαφείρια και τοπάζι.

Το λιγοστό φως που έμπαινε μέσα από το παράθυρο έκανε τα κοσμήματα να λάμπουν τόσο πολύ που όταν η Χιονάτη τα κοίταξε, τα μάτια της θάμπωσαν και το κεφάλι της άρχισε να πονά.

Η Χιονάτη και οι νάνοι πήραν τα διαμάντια από το μπαούλο και τα έβαλαν σε ένα γυάλινο βάζο. Ύστερα, ένα προς ένα τα επτά μικρά ανθρωπάκια φίλησαν τη Χιονάτη και την αποχαιρέτησαν. Δάκρυα κύλησαν στο προσωπό τους καθώς ή Χιονάτη ήταν η καλλίτερη τους φίλη. Στη συνέχεια επωμίστηκαν το άδειο μπαούλο και αργά-αργά κατέβηκαν τη στριφογυριστή σκάλα.

Είσαι πολύ τυχερή είπε ένας από τους στρατιώτες στη Χιονάτη. «Δε θα είσαι φτωχή πια και δεν θα ζεις τη σκληρή ζωή του μόχθου των ορυχείων. Εδώ θα έχεις υπηρέτες να σε υπηρετούν. Θα κοιμάσαι σε ένα μαλακό και ευωδιαστό κρεβάτι και θα σου φέρνουν να φας και να πιείς ό,τι επιθυμείς. Και αν η βασίλισσα είναι ευχαριστημένη με τη δουλεία σου θα σου δίνει πλούσιες ανταμοιβές.

«Αλλά οι φίλοι μου θα μοχθούν στα ορυχεία» είπε η Χιονάτη και η καρδιά της σφίχτηκε.

Μέρα με τη μέρα, εβδομάδα με την εβδομάδα (Στις μέρες και τις εβδομάδες που ακολούθησαν) η Χιονάτη γινόταν όλο και πιο επιδέξια στην κατασκευή όμορφων κοσμημάτων με πολύτιμους λίθους και μέταλλα. Τα κοσμήματα ικανοποίησαν πολύ τη βασίλισσα του Βουνού. Έτσι ένα βράδυ κάλεσε τη Χιονάτη στην αίθουσα του θρόνου.

«Αυτή η καρφίτσα με ευχαρίστησε πολύ» είπε η βασίλισσα. «Μπορείς να μου ζητήσεις ό,τι θέλεις»

«Μεγαλειοτάτη» απάντησε η Χιονάτη πέφτοντας στα γόνατα της, «σας παρακαλώ αφήστε με να πάω σπίτι».

Η Βασίλισα θύμωσε. Έστρεψε τον καθρέπτη της προς στη Χιονάτη και μέσα σε αυτόν το μικρό κορίτσι είδε τους νάνους και όλους τους άλλους φίλους της να σκάβουν και να σέρνουν βαριά φορτία στα στενά περάσματα των ορυχείων.

«Μπορείς να έχεις ό,τι επιθυμεί η καρδιά σου και εσύ μου ζητάς να επιστρέψεις σε αυτή τη μίζερη ζωή!» Αναφώνησε η βασίλισσα. «Πήγαινε πίσω στο εργαστηριό σου και να σκεφτείς πολύ σοβαρά πριν έρθεις να με δεις ξανά».

Και καθώς με επιδέξιότητα η Χιονάτη επεξεργαζόταν το μέταλλο και πρόσθετε τους πολύτιμους λίθους για να φτιάξει τα όμορφα κοσμήματα οι σκέψεις της τη βασάνιζαν. Σκεφτόταν όλα τα δεινά που είχε περάσει με τους φίλους της στα μακρινά ορυχεία, το πως αυτοί και όλοι οι άλλοι άνθρωποι του Βασιλείου εργάζονταν όλοι τους τη ζωή για να φτιάξουν όλα αυτά τα όμορφα πράγματα για τη βασίλισσα ενώ οι ίδιοι ίσα-ίσα εξασφάλιζαν τα απαραίτητα για να ζήσουν. Ύστερα από αυτές τις σκέψεις η Χιονάτη ήξερε τι θα ζητούσε από τη βασίλισσα.

«Θα φτιάξω μια ζώνη με κοσμήματα τόσο όμορφη που η βασίλισσα θα εντυπωσιαστεί και έτσι θα με καλέσει πάλι στην αίθουσα του θρόνου» σκέφτηκε η Χιονάτη και αμέσως έπιασε δουλειά.

«Λοιπόν, Χιονάτη» είπε η βασίλισσα όταν η Χιονάτη βρέθηκε στην αίθουσα του θρόνου για δεύτερη φορά, «είχες αρκετό χρόνο για να σκεφτείς». Πες μου τι λαχταρά η καρδιά σου και εγώ θα το πραγματοποιήσω, καθώς η ζώνη που έφτιαξες είναι πιο όμορφη άπο όλα τα πράγματα που έχω στους θαλάμους με τους θησαυρούς μου. Καθώς μιλούσε η βασίλισσα είχα τα δάχτυλα της στη ζώνη με τους κόκκινους και μωβ πολύτιμους λίθους.

«Μεγαλειοτάτη» είπε η Χιονάτη, «Σκέφτηκα και θέλω να ζητήσω το εξής: να παίρνεις μόνο ό,τι χρειάζεσαι από τους ανθρώπους του βασιλείου και να τους επετρέπεις να κρατούν τα υπόλοιπα ώστε να μην μην κρυώνουν, να μην πεινάνε και να μην είναι πια δυστυχισμένοι».

Τα μάτια της βασίλισσας έλαμψαν από οργή και με τα χέρια της έσφιξε με δύναμη τη ζώνη με τα πολύτιμα πετράδια αλλά όταν μίλησε η φωνή της ήταν τόσο γλυκιά σαν μέλι.

«Χιονάτη, αν οποιοσδήποτε άλλος μου έλεγε κάτι τέτοιο θα διέταζα αμέσως τους στρατιώτες μου να τον πετάξουν από τα τοίχοι του κάστρου στα βράχια. Αλλά έχεις μια σπάνια δεξιότητα και είσαι αρκετά νέα για να αλλάξεις γνώμη. Πλησίασε και κοίταξε μέσα στον καθρέπτη μου».

Η Χιονάτη κοίταξε μέσα στο μαγικό καθρέπτη και είδε τον εαυτό της να αντικατοπτρίζεται εκεί, αλλά ήταν πολύ περίεργο. Από τη μια φορούσε τα ρούχα εργασίας

και ταυτόχρονα ήταν ντυμένη με πλούσια κεντημένα φορέματα, μαργαριτάρια και ρουμπίνια στόλιζαν τα μακριά μαλλία της και στο κεφάλι της φορούσε μια χρυσή κορώνα.

«Βλέπεις Χιονάτη» είπε η βασίλισσα, «Θα μπορούσες να γίνεις πριγκίπισσα, πήγαινε τώρα».

Η Χιονάτη πήγε πίσω στο εργαστήριο. Στάθηκε μπροστά από το μικροσκοπικό παράθυρο και σκεφτόταν τον εαυτό της όπως τον είδε στον καθρέπτη, στολισμένο με κοσμήματα και χρυσάφι. Κάτω χαμηλά μπορούσε να δεί την πομπή των ανθρώπων που μετέφεραν στη βουνοπλαγιά όλα εκείνα τα αντικείμενα που είχαν φτιάξει και έπρεπε να τα προσφέρουν στη βασίλισσα. Παράλληλα, έβλεπε και τον καταπράσινο κάμπο που απλωνόταν μέχρι τους μακρινούς λόφους. Πίσω από τους λόφους εκείνους βρισκόταν το σπίτι της Χιονάτης. Οι στίχοι του τραγουδιού που συνήθιζε να τραγουδά με τους φίλους της όταν τελείωναν την κουραστική μέρα στα ορυχεία έρχονταν τώρα στο μυαλό της.

Πρασινο είναι το Σμαράγδι, μα το γρασίδι Πρασινότερο

Το Ζαφύρι είναι χλωμό αν το βαλείς διπλά στις θάλασσας

το νερό

Και κανείς μαύρος λίθος δεν είναι τοσό μαύρος όσο η άγρια

μαύρη   νύχτα.

Κανένα ρουμπίνι δεν είναι τόσο κόκκινο

Κανένα ρουμπίνι δεν είναι τόσο κόκκινο

Κανένα ρουμπίνι δεν είναι τόσο κόκκινο όσο οι καρδίες που

λαχταρούν να είναι ελεύθερες.

«Αυτό που λαχταρούν οι φίλοι μου τόσο καιρό είναι αυτό που λαχταρά η καρδιά μου» σκέφτηκε η Χιονάτη, «αλλά η βασίλισσα του βουνού δε θα μας αφήσει ποτέ να ζήσουμε ελέυθεροι».

Λίγο αργότερα, η βασίλισσα κάλεσε τη χιονάτη στην αίθουσα του θρόνου για τρίτη φορά.

«Κανένα άνθος στους κήπους μου δεν είναι τόσο ωραίο όσο τα σκουλαρίκια που μου έφτιαξες» είπε η βασίλισσα. «Τι ανταμοιβή θέλεις»

«Τίποτα» μεγαλειοτάτη» είπε η χιονάτη χαμηλόφωνα.

«Ανόητο κορίτσι!» Φώναξε η βασίλισσα, ξέρω ότι είσαι δυστυχισμένη αλλά αν μου το ζητήσεις θα σε κάνω αμέσως πριγκίπισσα. Η Χιονάτη έμεινε σιωπηλή.

«Πολύ καλά», είπε η Βασίλισσα, «θα συνεχίσεις να φτιάχνεις κοσμήματα για μένα, αλλά από εδώ και πέρα οι στρατιώτες μου θα φρουρούν την είσοδο του πύργου που

εργάζεσαι και αν δεν μου ζητήσεις να σε κάνω πριγκίπισσα δεν θα βγεις από τον πύργο ξανά».

Οι μήνες περνούσαν και η χιονάτη παρέμενε μόνη στον πύργο και δεν ζήτούσε την ανταμοιβή της. Χλωμή και ήρεμη, καθόταν στο εργαστήριο σκεφτόταν και περίμενε.

Ύστερα από έναν ολόκληρο χρόνο η Χιονάτη κοιτάζοντας από το μικροσκοπικό παράθυρο είδε ανάμεσα στους άλλους ανθρώπους που μοχθούσαν να ανέβουν το μονοπάτι για το κάστρο, επτά μικρά ανθρωπάκια που μετέφεραν ένα βαρύ μπαούλο. Ήταν οι φίλοι της, οι νάνοι.

Η Χιονάτη περίμενε πως οι νάνοι θα μετέφεραν το μπαούλο με τα διαμάντια στο εργαστήριο, αλλά τελικά το μετέφερε κάποιος από τους στρατιώτες της βασίλισσας.

«Η βασίλισσα μας διέταξε να μη σου επιτρέψουμε να δεις τους φίλους σου από το ορυχείο» είπε ένας από τους στρατιώτες. «Από τη στιγμή που έφτασαν στο κάστρο τους παρακολουθεί όλη την ώρα από τον καθρέπτη της».

«Σε παρακαλώ φύγε και άσε με μόνη μου» είπε η χιονάτη με μια λυπημένη φωνή. «Θα γεμίσω τα γυάλινα βάζα με διαμάντα και θα αφήσω το άδειο μπαούλο έξω από την πόρτα»

Οι στρατιώτες έκαναν ακριβώς ότι τους είπε, καθώς τη συμπαθούσαν και τη θαύμαζαν που είχε τολμήσει να δυσαρεστήσει τη βασίλισσα.

Λίγο αργότερα επέστρεψαν και πήραν το μπαούλο. Το κατέβασαν από τη σκάλα και το πήγαν στην αυλή όπου περίμεναν οι νάνοι. Τα μικρά ανθρωπάκια το φόρτωσαν στους ώμους τους και το μετέφεραν έξω από το τις πύλες τους κάστρου και κάτω στην πλαγιά.

Όλη την ημέρα η βασίλισσα καθισμένη στο θρόνο παρατηρούσε τους επτά νάνους μέσα από τον καθρέπτη της καθώς απομακρύνονταν όλο και περισσότερο. Μέχρι το απόγευμα είχαν περάσει τους μακρινούς λόφους. Η βασίλισσα χαμογέλασε και ρώτησε τον καθρέπτη της τη συνιθυσμένη ερώτηση:

«Καθρέπτη καθρεπτάκι μου

Ποιος είναι ο πιο χαρούμενος στη χώρα αυτή;»

Και ο καθρέπτης απάντησε:

«Παρόλο που όλοι στις διαταγές σου υπακούν,

Η χιονάτη είναι η πιο χαρούμενη στη γη αυτή».

«Η Χιονάτη» ούρλιαξε η βασίλισσα, «Δείξε μου τη Χιονάτη!»

Ύστερα, η βασίλισσα είδε στον καθρέπτη, τους επτά νάνους να ανοίγουν το μπαούλο και μέσα από αυτό να ξεπετάγεται χαρούμενη η Χιονάτη.

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Ο θυμός της βασίλισσας ήταν μεγάλος. Αμέσως διέταξε οι στρατιώτες που είχαν αφήσει τη χιονάτη να δραπετεύσει να ριχθούν από τα τείχη του κάστρου. Όλο το βράδυ η βασίλισσα παρέμεινε στο θρόνο της και δεν μιλούσε σε κανέναν. Με την ανατολή του ηλίου έδωσε αμέσως διαταγή στους στρατιώτες της να βρουν τη Χιονάτη.

«Πηγαίνετε στα αδαμαντορυχεία» πρόσταξε. Σφραγίστε την έξοδο ενώ η χιονάτη και οι φίλοι της δουλεύουν έτσι ώστε να πεθάνουν όλοι.

Πολλοί από τους στρατιώτες τρομοκρατήθηκαν αλλά δεν τόλμησαν να παρακούσουν τη διαταγή. Η βασίλισσα παρακολούθησε από τον καθρέπτη της τους σταρτιώτες που σφράγιζαν την έξοδο και μόλις τελείωσαν γέλασε.

Τα τρομερά νέα εξαπλώθηκαν γρήγορα στο βασίλειο. Πολύς κόσμος μαζεύτηκε στο σημείο που οι στρατιώτες φρουρούσαν τη σφραγισμένοι έξοδο του ορυχείου. Καθώς οι μέρα περνούσε όλο και περισσότερος κόσμος μαζευόταν. Στέκονταν όλοι ήσυχα σε μικρή απόσταση από τους στρατιώτες σαν να περίμεναν κάτι να συμβεί. Μέχρι το βράδυ ένα πλήθος ανθρώπων είχε μαζευτεί. Άναψαν φωτιές για να ζεσταθούν και μιλούσαν χαμηλόφωνα για τους ανθρώπους που είχαν παγιδευτεί στο ορυχείο και για τη σκληρότητα της Βασίλισσας του Βουνού. Ήξεραν πολύ καλά ότι πολύ λίγος αέρας απέμενε στους ανθρώπους για να αναπνεύσουν κάτω στο ορυχείο. Σύντομα η Χιονάτη και οι φίλοι της θα πέθαιναν όπως είχε προστάξει η Βασίλισσα του Βουνού.

Ξαφνικά, ανάμεσα στους βράχους, όχι μακρια από το πλήθος, ένας ανάλαφρος θόρυβος ακούστηκε. Καθώς οι άνθρωποι άρχισαν να κοιτάζονται με αμηχανία ένας από τους βράχους άρχισε να κινείται, σαν κάποιος να τον έσπρωχνε από πίσω και τότε αποκαλύφθηκε ένα στενό πέρασμα που έφτανε πολύ βαθιά μέσα στη γη. Ήταν ένας από τους νάνους που ανέβαινε αυτό το πέρασμα.

«Πάνω στην ώρα» είπε ξεφυσώντας ο νάνος. «Δεν νομίζω ότι θα μπορούσαμε να συνεχίσουμε το σκάψιμο για πολύ ακόμα». «Ο μεγαλύτερος μους αδελφός θυμήθηκε ότι όταν ήταν πολύ μικρός υπήρχε μια άλλη έξοδος από το ορυχείο. Μας πήγε στο σημείο που ήταν η έξοδος και μετά αρχίσαμε να σκάβουμε στο σκοτάδι μέχρι που ανοίξαμε δρόμο».

Ένας-ένας, βοηθώντας ο ένας τον άλλο, οι εργάτες από το αδαμαντορυχείο βγήκαν στον καθαρό αέρα της νύχτας. Κάποιοι είχαν λυποθυμήσει, κάποιοι είχαν χτυπήσει, κάποιοι είχαν γδαρμένα και ματωμένα χέρια αλλά όλα τα παιδιά, οι γυναίκες και οι άνδρες ήταν όλοι ασφαλείς. Ανάμεσα σε αυτούς και η Χιονάτη.

Τα πλήθη των ανθρώπων που στέκονταν γύρω από τις φωτιές κοιτάζονταν με απορία. Αμέσως άρχισαν να ζητηωκραυγάζουν. Αν και μερικοί απο τους στρατιώτες άρχισαν να

ζητοκραυγάζουν μαζί με το πλήθος, κάποιοι σήκωσαν τα όπλα τους και ένας από αυτούς φώναξε τη Χιονάτη.

«Χιονάτη» διέταξε «πρέπει να έρθεις μαζί μας αμέσως πίσω στο κάστρο»

«Όχι» αποκρίθηκε η Χιονάτη, «Δεν θα πάω πίσω στο κάστρο και δεν θα στείλουμε άλλα διαμάντια στη Βασίλισσα. Ο καθένας από εμάς θα κρατάει για τον εαυτό τα τα πράγματα που φτιάχνει και δε θα στείλει τίποτα στη βασίλισσα του βουνού».

Καθώς μιλούσε η χιονάτη, το πλήθος την επευφημούσε όλο και πιο δυνατά.

«Τότε θα σας σκοτώσουμε» είπε ο στρατιώτης.

«Μπορείς να σκοτώσεις μερικούς από εμάς» είπε η Χιονάτη, «αλλά στο τέλος θα χάσετε καθώς είμαστε περισσότεροι από εσάς.»

Όλοι οι ανθρωποι που ήταν μαζεμένοι αντιλήφθηκαν ότι αυτό ήταν αλήθεια και περικύκλωσαν τους στρατιώτες αποφασισμένοι να τους πάρουν τα όπλα με όποιο τίμημα.

Πολύ μακρια από εκεί, η βασίλισσα του βουνού καθισμένη στο θρόνο της πήρε τα κοσμήματα που είχε φτιάξει η χιονάτη και τα έκανε κομματάκια. Στο μαγικό της καθρέπτη μπορούσε να δεί όλα όσα γίνονταν. Καταλάβαινε ότι οι άνθρωποι του βασιλείου της είχαν επαναστατήσει εναντίον της. Τότε με αγωνία διέταξε τον καθρέπτη της :

«Καθρέπτη καθρεπτάκι μου,

Κάνε τους να υποκύψουν στην εξουσία μου ξανά».

Αλλά ο καθρέπτης της απάντησε:

«Βασίλισσα που ήσουν τόσο πλούσια και σπουδάια τώρα

οι άνθρωποι σε εξορίζουν από τη γη αυτή».

Τότε ο μαγικός καθρέπτης έγινε καπνός κι όταν ο καπνός διαλύθηκε η βασίλισσα δε μπορούσε να δεί τίποτε άλλο εκεί παρά μόνο το προσωπό της. Ακόμη κρατώντας τον καθρέπτη στο χέρι της η βασίλισσα του Βουνού σηκώθηκε από το θρόνο της και ανέβηκε τα πέτρινα σκαλοπάτια που οδηγούσαν στο υψηλότερο σημείο του κάστρού. Από εκεί μπορούσε να δεί με τα ίδια της τα μάτια τα πλήθη των ανθρώπων που είχαν συγκεντρωθεί στη μακρινή πεδιάδα. Κυριευμένη από φόβο και οργή σήκωσε τον καθρέπτη και προσπάθησε να τον πετάξει.

Ο καθρέπτης όμως δεν ξεκόλαγε από το χέρι της και έτσι έπεσε μαζί με αυτόν ουρλιάζοντας κάτω στα βράχια.

Greek Pedagogical Institute: Letter of Ethics Approval

ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ
ΥΠΟΥΡΓΕΙΟ ΠΑΙΔΕΙΑΣ
ΔΙΑ ΒΙΟΥ ΜΑΘΗΣΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΘΡΗΣΚΕΥΜΑΤΩΝ

ΕΝΙΑΙΟΣ ΔΙΟΙΚΗΤΙΚΟΣ ΤΟΜΕΑΣ
ΠΡΩΤΟΒΑΘΜΙΑΣ ΚΑΙ ΔΕΥΤΕΡΟΒΑΘΜΙΑΣ
ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ
ΔΙΕΥΘΥΝΣΗ ΣΠΟΥΔΩΝ ΠΡΩΤΟΒΑΘΜΙΑΣ
ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ
ΤΜΗΜΑ Α' ΕΦΑΡΜΟΓΗΣ ΠΡΟΓΡΑΜΜΑΤΩΝ

Ταχ. Δ/νση: Α. Παπανδρέου 37
Τ.Κ. – Πόλη: 151 80 Μαρούσι
Ιστοσελίδα: http://www.minedu.gov.gr
Πληροφορίες: Ρ. Γεωργακόπουλος
Τηλέφωνο: 210 344 2248
Fax: 210 344 3288
e-mail: spudonpe@ypepth.gr

Να διατηρηθεί μέχρι
Βαθμός ασφαλείας

Μαρούσι, 10- 01– 2011

Αριθ.Πρωτ.   Βαθμός Προτερ.
Φ15/ 16 / 9104   /Γ1

ΠΡΟΣ: Παιδαγωγικό Ινστιτούτο
       Μεσογείων 406
       153 41 Αγ. Παρασκευή

ΚΟΙΝ: κ. Κώστα Μάριο
       263 Chelsea Cloisters
       Sloane Avenue
       London SW3 3DU

Θέμα: Χορήγηση άδειας διεξαγωγής έρευνας

Σας διαβιβάζουμε την αίτηση του κ. Μάριου Κώστα και τα συνημμένα σ΄ αυτή στοιχεία, που αφορούν στη διεξαγωγή έρευνας με θέμα:
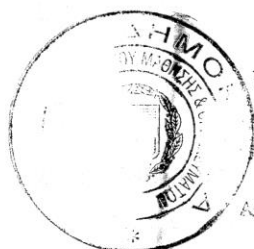
«Κατασκευή της έμφυλης ταυτότητας και στερεοτυπικές αναπαραστάσεις του φύλου στο πλαίσιο της πρωτοβάθμιας εκπαίδευσης» και απευθύνεται σε μαθητές σχολείων Πρωτοβάθμιας Εκπαίδευσης.

Παρακαλούμε να γνωμοδοτήσετε:

α) Για την αναγκαιότητα και την επιστημονική εγκυρότητα της έρευνας

β) Για την παιδαγωγική αξία και σημασία της, καθώς και για τη σκοπιμότητά της

γ) Για το χρόνο και τις διαδικασίες εφαρμογής της στο ωρολόγιο πρόγραμμα

Συν.: 1 φάκελος

Εσωτ. Διανομή
Δ/νση Σπουδών Π.Ε
Τμήμα Α΄

Ο ΑΝ. ΔΙΕΥΘΥΝΤΗΣ

Ακριβές Αντίγραφο
Από τη Διεύθυνση Διοικητικού
Τμήμα Διεκπύρεωσης & Πρωτοκόλλου

ΡΗΓΑΣ ΓΕΩΡΓΑΚΟΠΟΥΛΟΣ

ΑΘΑΝΑΣΟΠΟΥΛΟΣ ΚΩΝ/ΝΟΣ

Informed Consent Letter to Parents (Statement of Assent for Observations)

«Κατασκευή της Έμφυλης Ταυτότητας και Στερεοτυπικές Αναπαραστάσεις του Φύλου στο Πλαίσιο της Πρωτοβάθμιας Εκπαίδευσης»

Αξιότιμοι γονείς/ Κηδεμόνες,

Το ονομά μου είναι Μάριος Κώστας και είμαι υποψήφιος διδάκτορας στο Ιντιτούτο Εκπαίδευσης του Πανεπιστημίου του Λονδίνου (Institute of Education, University of London).

Με την παρούσα επιστολή θα ήθελα να σας ενημερώσω αναφορικά με τους σκοπούς της έρευνάς μου. Για οποιεσδήποτε αλλές πληροφορίες μπορεί να χρειαστείτε παρακαλώ μη διστάσετε να επικοινωνήσετε μαζί μου.

Καταρχάς, θα ήθελα να σας παρακαλέσω να εξηγήσετε την έρευνα στο παιδί σας και να συζητήσετε μαζί του για το αν επιθυμεί να λάβει μέρος στην έρευνα. Θα ζητήσω, επίσης, και από τα παιδιά κατά τη διάρκεια της έρευνας αν επιθυμούν να λάβουν μέρος και θα τους καταστήσω σαφές ότι μπορούν να ακυρώσουν τη συμμετοχή τους οποιαδήποτε στιγμή, εφόσον το επιθυμούν.

Σκοποί της Έρευνας

Η παρούσα έρευνα αποσκοπεί στην διερεύνηση των στάσεων και των αντιλήψεων των μαθητών της Γ' και Δ' τάξης Δημοτικού αναφορικά με τους ρόλους των δυο φύλων. Οι απόψεις των μαθητών θα εξεταστούν σε στενή σχέση και συνάρτηση με το περιεχόμενο των ανθολογίων και τις εκπαιδευτικές πρακτικές που ακολουθούνται στο πλαίσιο της πρωτοβάθμιας εκπαίδευσης. Μέσα από την ανάλυση αυτή θα μου επιτραπεί η διεξαγωγή χρήσιμων συμπερασμάτων αναφορικά με το ρόλο του εκπαιδευτικού συστήματος στην αναπαραγωγή στερεοτυπικών αντιλήψεων για τους ρόλους των δυο φύλων.

Συμμετέχοντες στην Έρευνα

Για τους σκοπούς της έρευνας απαιτείται η διεξαγωγή παρατήρησης στις σχολικές αίθουσες κατά τη διάρκεια του μαθήματος και στον προαύλιο χώρο του σχολείου κάτα τη διάρκεια του διαλείμματος. Οι παρατήρηση μέσα στην τάξη αποσκοπεί στη διερεύνηση ανισοτήτων του φυλου κατά τη διάρκεια της διδασκαλίας. Ειδικότερα, η έρευνα μου θα εστιάσει τις διαντιδράσεις μεταξύ μαθητών και εκπαιδευτικών, τον τρόπο με τον οποίο τα παιδιά επιλέγουν να καθίσουν, και τα επίδεδα συμμετοχής τους στα μαθήματα, στη βάση της κατά φύλο διαφοροποίησής τους. Η πάρατήση στον προαύλιο χώρο του σχολείου θα επικεντρωθεί στις δραστηριότητες/παιχνίδια που αναπτύσσουν τα παιδιά κατά την ώρα του διαλείμματος. Τα δεδομένα που θα συλλεχθούν θα μου επιτρέψουν να εξετάσω την επίδραση των εκπαιδευτικών πρακτικών (μέσα στη σχολική τάξη) και του παιδικού παιχνιδιού στην κατασκευή της ταυτότητας του φύλου. Ο ρόλος μου κατά τη διάρκεια της έρευνας θα είναι διακριτικός και δεν θα επηρρεάσει την διδασκαλία των μαθημάτων ή τις δραστηριότητές τους κατά τη διάρκεια του διαλείμματος.

Θα μπορούσε η συμμετοχή του παιδιού μου να το βλάψει το ίδιο προσωπικά;

Η φύση της παρατήρησης είναι τέτοια που δεν ελοχεύει κανένας κίνδυνος για την ψυχική υγεία των μαθητών που θα συμμετάσχουν στην έρευνα. Αντιθέτως, ελπίζω πως τα παιδιά θα το εκτιμήσουν σαν μια θετική εμπειρία που θα απολαύσουν. Σε οποιαδήποτε περίπτωση όμως, αν το παιδί σας αισθανθεί πως ενοχλείται από την παρουσία μου μέσα στην τάξη τότε η συμμετοχή του θα ανακληθεί αμέσως.

Ποιοί θα γνωρίζουν για τη συμμετοχή του παιδιού μου στην έρευνα;

Καθώς η ανωνυμία των συμμετεχόντων στην έρευνα θα εξασφαλιστεί κανείς δε θα γνωρίζει για τη συμμετοχή στην έρευνα πέρα εμού του ιδίου και του εκπαιδευτικού της τάξεως. Παράλληλα, οι σημειώσεις που θα κρατήσω κατά τη διάρκεια της παρατήρης θα είναι ανώνυμες και κατ' αυτό τον τρόπο κανείς δε θα γνωρίζει ποιός είπε τι.

Επιβάλλεται η συμμετοχή του παιδιού μου στην έρευνα;

Η απόφαση για τη συμμετοχή του παιδιού σας στην έρευνα είναι αποκλειστικά δική σας και του παιδιού σας. Ακόμη και αν συμφωνήσετε μπορείτε οποιαδήποτε στιγμή να ακυρώσετε τη συμμετοχή του παιδιού σας.

Μπορείτε να με ενημερώσετε αν επιθυμείτε το παιδί σας να λάβει μέρος στην έρευνα με το να υπογράψετε το έντυπο συγκατάθεσης.

Θα ενημερωθώ για τα αποτελέσματα της έρευνας;

Εφόσον το επιθυμείτε μπορώ να σας στείλω συνοπτικά τα αποτελέσματα της έρευνας.

Ποιός Χρηματοδοτεί την έρευνα;

Η έρευνα αυτή είναι αυτοχρηματοδοτούμενη στο πλαίσιο της εκπόνησης της διδακτορικής μου διατριβής.

Η έρευνα καθώς και οι ερωτήσεις που θα ερωτηθούν οι μαθητές έχουν εξεταστεί και εγκριθεί από την επιτροπή ερευνών του Ινστιτούτου Εκπαίδευσης του Πανεπιστημίου του Λονδίνου (Institute of Education, University of London).

Σας Ευχαριστώ για το χρόνο σας.

Για οποιαδήποτε πληροφορία η διευκρίνηση παρακαλώ μη διστάσετε να επικοινωνήσετε μαζί μου

Μάριος Κώστας

Email:

Telephone:

Βεβαίωση

Με την παρούσα επιστολή βεβαιώνω ότι ως γονέας/κηδεμόνας έλαβα γνώση για τους σκοπούς της έρευνας που διεξάγεται στο (όνομα σχολείου) και επιτρέπω στον γιο μου/κόρη μου να συμμετάσχει στην παρατήρηση που θα πραγματοποιηθεί στο πλαίσιο της εν λόγω έρευνας.

Όνομα:..

Επώνυμο:...

Ημερομηνία:...

Υπογραφή:...

Informed Consent Letter to Parents (Assent for Interviews)

IOE LONDON
Leading education
and social research
Institute of Education
University of London

«Κατασκευή της Έμφυλης Ταυτότητας και Στερεοτυπικές Αναπαραστάσεις του Φύλου στο Πλαίσιο της Πρωτοβάθμιας Εκπαίδευσης»

Αξιότιμοι γονείς/ Κηδεμόνες

Το ονομά μου είναι Μάριος Κώστας και είμαι υποψήφιος διδάκτορας στο Ιντιτούτο Εκπαίδευσης του Πανεπιστημίου του Λονδίνου (Institute of Education, University of London).

Με την παρούσα επιστολή θα ήθελα να σας ενημερώσω αναφορικά με τους σκοπούς της έρευνάς μου. Για οποιεσδήποτε αλλές πληροφορίες μπορεί να χρειαστείτε παρακαλώ μη διστάσετε να επικοινωνήσετε μαζί μου.

Καταρχάς, θα ήθελα να σας παρακαλέσω να εξηγήσετε την έρευνα στο παιδί σας και να συζητήσετε μαζί του για το αν επιθυμούν να λάβουν μέρος στην έρευνα. Θα ζητήσω, επίσης, και από τα παιδιά κατά τη διάρκεια της έρευνας αν επιθυμούν να λάβουν μέρος και θα τους καταστήσω σαφές ότι μπορούν να ακυρώσουν τη συμμετοχή τους οποιαδήποτε στιγμή, εφόσον το επιθυμούν.

Σκοποί της Έρευνας

Η παρούσα έρευνα αποσκοπεί στην διερεύνηση των στάσεων και των αντιλήψεων των μαθητών της Γ' και Δ' τάξης Δημοτικού αναφορικά με τους ρόλους των δυο φύλων. Οι απόψεις των μαθητών θα εξεταστούν σε στενή σχέση και συνάρτηση με το περιεχόμενο των ανθολογίων και τις εκπαιδευτικές πρακτικές που ακολουθούνται στο πλαίσιο της πρωτοβάθμιας εκπαίδευσης. Μέσα από την ανάλυση αυτή θα μου επιτραπεί η διεξαγωγή χρήσιμων συμπερασμάτων αναφορικά με το ρόλο του εκπαιδευτικού συστήματος στην αναπαραγωγή στερεοτυπικών αντιλήψεων για τους ρόλους των δυο φύλων.

Συμμετέχοντες στην Έρευνα

Για τους σκοπούς της έρευνας έχουν επιλεγεί 8 μαθητές (4 αγόρια και 4 κορίτσια) από το (όνομα σχολείου). Η επιλογή των μαθητών έγινε από τον εκπαιδευτικό της τάξεως (όνομα εκπαιδευτικού)

Τι αφορά η συμμετοχή των μαθητών στην Έρευνα

Οι μαθητές που θα συμμετάσχουν στην έρευνα θα κληθούν να απαντήσουν σε ορισμένες ερωτήσεις. Η διάρκεια των συνεντεύξεων έχει υπολογιστεί περίπου στα 30 λεπτά. Κατά τη διάρκεια των συνεντεύξεων θα κρατήσω σημειώσεις και θα τηρηθεί αυστηρά η ανωνυμία των μαθητών που θα συμμετάσχουν στις συνεντεύξεις. Τα δεδομένα που θα συλλεχθούν θα δημοσιευθούν στο πλαίσιο εκπόνησης της διδακτορικής μου διατριβής, καθώς και σε άλλα διεθνή ή και εγχώρια επιστημονικά περιοδικά.

Το είδος των ερωτήσεων που θα ερωτηθούν οι μαθητές

Ορισμένες ενδεικτικές ερωτήσεις που θα ερωτηθούν οι μαθητές είναι:

Κατά την άποψή σου, ποιες δουλειές θα έπρεπε να κάνουν οι άνδρες και ποιες οι γυναίκες; Για ποιο λόγο;

Έχεις και αγόρια και κορίτσια φίλους; Αν δεν έχεις, μπορείς να μου πεις γιατί;

Μπορείς να μου πεις ποια είναι τα αγαπημένα σου παιχνίδια;

Όταν παίζεις με τους φίλους σου προσκαλείς αγόρια/ κορίτσια να παίξουν μαζί σας; Αν όχι, μπορείς να μου πεις γιατί;

Τι παιχνίδια παίζετε με τους φίλους σου; Νομίζεις πως θα μπορούσε ένα αγόρι/ κορίτσι να παίξει τα παιχνίδια αυτά; Τι θέλεις να γίνεις όταν μεγαλώσεις; Γιατί ;

Θα μπορούσε η συμμετοχή του παιδιού μου να το βλάψει το ίδιο προσωπικά;

Η φύση των ερωτήσεων που θα ερωτηθούν οι μαθητές είναι τέτοια που δεν ελοχεύει κανένας κίνδυνος για την ψυχική υγεία των μαθητών που θα συμμετάσχουν στην έρευνα. Αντιθέτως, ελπίζω πως τα παιδιά θα το εκτιμήσουν σαν μια θετική εμπειρία που θα απολαύσουν. Σε οποιαδήποτε περίπτωση όμως, αν το παιδί σας αισθανθεί πως δε θέλει να συνεχίσει με τη συνέντευξη τότε η συμμετοχή του θα ανακληθεί αμέσως.

Ποιοί θα γνωρίζουν για τη συμμετοχή του παιδιού μου στην έρευνα;

Καθώς η ανωνυμία των συμμετεχόντων στην έρευνα θα εξασφαλιστεί κανείς δε θα γνωρίζει για τη συμμετοχή στην έρευνα πέρα εμού του ιδίου και του εκπαιδευτικού της τάξεως. Παράλληλα, οι

σημειώσεις που θα κρατήσω κατά τη διάρκεια της συνεντευξης θα είναι ανώνυμες και κατ' αυτό τον τρόπο κανείς δε θα γνωρίζει ποιός είπε τι.

Επιβάλλεται η συμμετοχή του παιδιού μου στην έρευνα;

Η απόφαση για τη συμμετοχή του παιδιού σας στην έρευνα είναι αποκλειστικά δική σας και του παιδιού σας. Ακόμη και αν συμφωνήσετε μπορείτε οποιαδήποτε στιγμή να ακυρώσετε τη συμμετοχή του παιδιού σας.

Μπορείτε να με ενημερώσετε αν επιθυμείτε το παιδί σας να λάβει μέρος στην έρευνα με το να υπογράψετε το έντυπο συγκατάθεσης.

Θα ενημερωθώ για τα αποτελέσματα της έρευνας;

Εφόσον το επιθυμείτε μπορώ να σας στείλω συνοπτικά τα αποτελέσματα της έρευνας.

Ποιός Χρηματοδοτεί την έρευνα;

Η έρευνα αυτή είναι αυτοχρηματοδοτούμενη στο πλαίσιο της εκπόνησης της διδακτορικής μου διατριβής.

Η έρευνα καθώς και οι ερωτήσεις που θα ερωτηθούν οι μαθητές έχουν εξεταστεί και εγκριθεί από την επιτροπή ερευνών του Ινστιτούτου Εκπαίδευσης του Πανεπιστημίου του Λονδίνου (Institute of Education, University of London).

Σας Ευχαριστώ για το χρόνο σας.

Για οποιαδήποτε πληροφορία η διευκρίνηση παρακαλώ μη διστάσετε να επικοινωνήσετε μαζί μου

Μάριος Κώστας

Email:

Telephone:

Βεβαίωση

Με την παρούσα επιστολή βεβαιώνω ότι ως γονέας/κηδεμόνας έλαβα γνώση για τους σκοπούς της έρευνας που διεξάγεται στο (όνομα σχολείου) και επιτρέπω στον γιο μου/κόρη μου να συμμετάσχει στις συνεντεύξεις που θα πραγματοποιηθούν στο πλαίσιο της εν λόγω έρευνας.

Όνομα:...

Επώνυμο:...

Ημερομηνία:...

Υπογραφή:...

APPENDIX XVIII

Quantitative Data of Gender Asymmetries in the Anthology Textbooks

In this section, I discuss the findings of the quantitative aspects of gender asymmetries in the anthology textbooks. The analysis placed emphasis on the sex of the authors and the distribution of male and female protagonists and minor characters in the narratives. In parallel to this, I explored the ratio of male to female characters in iconography and the attire of male and female figures.

The gender of the author may exert a significant influence upon the discursive content of the textbooks, for several studies have postulated that male authored stories are characterised by a high degree of androcentrism (Mill, 1988). Besides, the dominance of male authors in the anthology textbooks may encourage students to undervalue women's role in the literary tradition (Freiderikou, 1995). The analysis of the textbooks designated that the majority of texts in the anthology textbooks are produced by men. In particular, 58% of all authors are males and 42% are female. This is surprising given the dynamic presence of women in children's literature. My findings collaborate previous research in the curriculum material of primary education (Ziogou-Karastergiou & Deligianni- Kouimtzi, 1981). Hence, over the last three decades male authored texts have been dominating the curriculum material of primary education. This is symptomatic of the little attention that has been paid to gender equality issues by government education policy makers. The higher percentage of male authors could be related to the fact that traditionally male literary production is more highly valued than female and thus, there is a preference for stories written by men. In addition, the high number of male authors may also elucidate the normative gender representations of masculinity and femininity in the narratives (see chapter 6), for in most male authored texts male characters

receive prominent and dominating roles whereas women occupy subservient roles or they are presented as having their lives fulfilled by the males (Mill, 1988).

In parallel to the gender of the authors, I explored the distribution of male and female characters in the titles of the stories. The conjecture that led to the scrutiny of the number of male and female characters in the titles was that boys would be more interested in reading a story when a male character is mentioned in the title (Beyard-Tyler &Sullivan, 1980) whereas girls would be more interested in stories with female characters in the title. Besides, the erstwhile literature on gender asymmetries in the curriculum material have postulated that male dominance in the titles of the stories is symptomatic of androcentrism in the narratives (Fragoudaki, 1979; Freiderikou, 1995; Ziougou-Karastergiou &Deligianni- Kouimtzi, 1981). The findings of my analysis illustrate that from the 59 titles included in the two volumes of the anthology textbooks about in half of them (51%) there was no reference to gender, for they referred to abstract concepts (such as freedom, family etc.) or non-gender specific animals. However, in the titles with reference to gender male dominance was noted with male to female distribution of 29% and 8% respectively. In addition, a reference to both genders was made in 12% of the titles.

Analogous are the findings of the distribution of male and female characters in the narratives. More specifically, from the total of 192 characters, there were 136 males, 53 females and 3 non-gender specific characters of which 2 animals. The male to female distribution in the narratives was 71% males and 27% females. The findings of the analysis of male and female protagonists in the textbooks are similar, for the majority of central characters are males. In particular, male characters appeared almost twice more often than female characters, for 68% of all main characters were males and only 32% females.

Moving beyond the text itself, I explored the distribution of male and female characters in the illustrations that accompany the texts in the anthologies. The study of the iconography is crucial, for the images that accompany the texts constitute a supplementary part of the discursive content of the texts. This is because the gender depictions in the illustrations can reinforce gender normative discourses of masculinity and femininity. In addition, the gender portrayals in the iconography may reinforce or eliminate the normative gender representations in the narratives, for the discursive construction of masculinity and femininity in the narratives may contradict the gender depictions in the illustration (Giannikopoulou, 2004). Symptomatic of this is the book "Billy and the Baby" by Bradman (2000), which describes the life of a family in anticipation of the new member. Although the dialogue between the two brothers could be characterised as sexist neutral the picture that accompany the text depicts the two parents seating on the couch in unconventional roles, for the mother is presented seating comfortably and enjoying a cup of tea whereas the father is sitting next to her knitting. Undoubtedly, illustrations reinforce gender discourses, which may have a great impact on the reader, greater than the impact of the discursive content of the written text. Thus, the study of the iconography in the anthology textbooks is crucial, for the depictions of masculinity and femininity in the illustrations can reinforce gender normative or egalitarian discourses.

The analysis of the iconography in my study focused on the ration of male to female characters (humans or animals). The findings illuminate that the textbooks are male dominated. The distribution of male characters in the anthology textbooks is symptomatic of the androcentrism in the anthologies. In particular, of the total male characters 47% were adult males, 26% were boys and 27% were male animals. Contrary to male characters, female figures occupy a very limited space in the illustration of the anthology textbooks. It should also be noted that girls and females animals appear more frequently than adult female

characters. In particular, of all female characters 20% were women, 44% were girls and 35% were female animals. The data also illuminate that male characters outnumber females in the illustrations, for 34% of all figures were males and 5.4% were females. The findings of the percentile distribution of boys and girls in the iconography, however, it showed that boys and girls are more equally represented in the iconography (20% of the total characters are boys and 12% are girls). Hence, the distribution of male to female characters is unequal and illustrations are male dominated. The iconography is in harmony with the discursive content of the anthology textbooks, for they promote a male dominated world in which women occupy subservient roles.

Lastly, in relation to the dressing and presentation manner of the two genders in the illustrations, the analysis mainly focused on the extent to which female figures were pictured dressed with clothing or accessories that coincide with the normative way of dressing. In detail, I was interested in the extent to which elements of the figures' dressing manner expressed traditional views on typically accepted dress codes of men and women. Notably, male figures were excluded from this analysis, as it was not expected that men or boys would be depicted with clothing attributed to the female gender, since any such case does not reflect the social reality. In the case of women, however, it could be said that nowadays a disintegration of the traditionally accepted way of female dressing is noted and often in everyday practices female clothing accommodates elements that are typically considered as masculine, such as trousers, ties etc. Consequently, through the study of the dressing manner of the two genders, what will be examined is the degree to which literary texts mirror the social change regarding the female way of dressing. The findings designate that the portrayals of female characters' attire in the iconography does not reflect the social change that have taken place in the recent decades. In particular, women and girls portrayed in traditional female attire, which includes dresses, high heels purses and other accessories (necklaces and

wrist bands). However, there was one depiction of a little girl in the illustrations that breaks away from the traditional views of gender-appropriate attire, for in the illustration the little girl is shown wearing trousers and sports shoes. This portrayal although it is very positive it is not adequate to challenge the traditional views of females' attire that are promoted through the iconography. The normative depictions of femininity (girlhood and womanhood) in the illustrations go beyond clothing to the overall appearance of male and female characters. In particular, women and girls are depicted wearing high heels and jewelleries whereas they have long beautiful hair adorned with hair bands etc.

In summary, the quantitative aspects of gender asymmetries in the anthology textbooks have offered some valuable insights into androcentrism. The findings designate that the textbooks are male dominated for male authors, protagonists and minor characters outnumbered females. In parallel to this, analogous were the outcomes of the analysis of the iconography, for the distribution of male and female characters was unequal at women's expense. Lastly, the portrayals of femininity in the iconography reinforced traditional views of gender appropriate attire and emphasised women's interest in grooming and anxiety of good appearance.

Classroom Interaction Patterns

Table 8: Classroom Interaction Patterns in Schools A and B

Lessons	Number of Questions Asked		Conversation Initiated by Students		Students called to the Whiteboard		Praise directed at		Reprimand	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Greek Language	623	515	364	270	225	180	135	90	360	135
Maths	287	188	240	160	180	100	80	40	80	40
En. Studies	193	147	80	60	0	0	40	20	100	60
Religious Education	153	97	40	30	0	0	30	10	70	30
History	127	93	60	40	0	0	50	30	30	10
Literature	68	52	25	20	0	0	10	10	15	10
Total	1451	1092	809	580	405	280	345	200	655	255