REPRODUCING AND RESISTING THE BINARY: DISCURSIVE CONCEPTUALIZATIONS OF GENDER VARIANCE IN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

AMEERA ALI

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

GRADUATE PROGRAM IN GENDER, FEMINIST, AND WOMEN'S STUDIES
YORK UNIVERSITY
TORONTO, ONTARIO

July 2020

© Ameera Ali, 2020

ABSTRACT

This dissertation contends that within the slowly growing representation of gender variant characters in children's literature, particular subjectivities of gender variance are often emphasized while others remain overwhelmingly excluded. This research encompasses an exploration of gender and children's literature in an attempt to gain an understanding of the ways gender variance is constituted within 30 children's picture books featuring gender variant protagonists. By implementing a feminist poststructuralist theoretical orientation, this study utilizes a critical discourse analysis to respond to the following three guiding research questions: 1) *How is gender discursively constructed within children's picture books on gender variance?* 2) *How do characters constitute and navigate their gender subjectivities and subject positions within the narratives of these texts?* 3) *What subject positions are available for readers to identify and align themselves with within these texts?* Key findings that were elucidated through this analysis include that: 1) these texts emphasize a largely [trans]normative depiction of gender variance, wherein binary forms of gender variance are overwhelmingly overrepresented; 2) non-binary subjectivities were largely underrepresented as they were only marginally present; and 3) agender and genderless subjectivities were wholly non-existent. Considering that children's literature serves as a tool through which children can learn about themselves, others, and the social world, the overrepresentation of binary subject positions alongside the underrepresentation of non-binary and genderless subject positions has significant implications for the children engaging with these books. Children belonging to the latter two groups are not able to identify with these characters and thus do not find themselves represented within this genre of texts. These children learn that their subjectivity is 'other', peripheral, and fundamentally erased as they become relegated to the margins of a genre of literature that is *already* marginalized to begin with. More importantly, the prospect of existing 'beyond' and without gender is not a possibility within these texts as gender itself is principally naturalized and normalized. Given its distinct overlapping emphasis on childhood, gender, and discourse, this dissertation offers a contribution to scholarship within the fields of early childhood studies, gender studies, sociology, and discourse analysis, and thus is largely multidisciplinary in scope.

Keywords: children; gender variance; gender non-conformity; children's literature; picture books; discourse; non-binary; genderless

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation has only been possible due to the unwavering support of the individuals in my life. I would like to thank you all for your contributions in getting me to this point. I would like to begin by expressing my deepest gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Deborah Davidson. You have gone above and beyond your role as a supervisor, and have mentored me into the individual I am today. You have always made me a priority and I am so grateful for all of the time, patience, and encouragement you have provided me, along with the comfort of knowing you were always one call away. I will deeply cherish these past years of having the pleasure and privilege to have known you, and although I will miss our dissertation phone calls, I am excited to move from supervisor and student, to colleagues and lifelong friends. Thank you for all you have done for me and thank you for being you. To Dr. Rachel Berman, you have known me since I was a teenager figuring out my first few years of university and have stood by me throughout the pursuit of both my Master and PhD degrees. It was such a pleasure to have had you along with me for so long and yet, our friendship and journey of working together has just begun. Thank you for playing such a pivotal role in shaping my critical understandings of childhood and my development as an academic. To Dr. Amber Gazso, I met you as a graduate student in your class, went on to work with you as a TA, was fortunate enough to have you as a valued member of my supervisory committee, and I am lucky to call you my friend. Thank you for all of the diligence and care you have given me over the years, and for supporting my growth as a student, educator, and scholar. I am excited to see how life will keep us together. To Dr. Katherine Bischoping, thank you for all that you have done in ensuring that this process went both smoothly and enjoyably. I will always remember how calm and comfortable you made me feel during the defence, and will never forget your sincerity and care. I take great pride in having you as my intellectual great-aunt! To Dr. Natalie Coulter, it has been such a pleasure and honour to have met you over the past couple of years and I am sincerely grateful for all of the care and mentorship you have invested into my development in so many ways and in such little time. I am so thrilled that you were a part of this process and am even more thrilled to continue to work with you moving forward. Thank you for everything. To Dr. Naomi Hamer, it was such a wonderful experience to meet and engage with you at the defence. The role of an external examiner is so critical and you have handled this with such rigour, thoughtfulness, and kindness. Thank you for sharing your academic expertise and for all of the guidance you have offered me. I look forward to a blossoming relationship with you.

I would also like to say a sincere thank you to everyone in the GFWS department who supported me throughout the years. A special thank you to Dr. Allyson Mitchell, Dr. Enakshi Dua, Hazel Beecham, Yemi Adebisi, Celeta Irvin, and Sue Sbrizzi. Thank you for always gifting me with your bright smiles and offering me so much support and encouragement throughout this journey.

To all of the delightful individuals who make up the Sociology Department, thank you for giving me a second departmental home and for all of the meaningful conversations and moments we have shared. I will miss roaming the halls and seeing all of your lovely faces.

To the wonderful members of the Teaching Commons, thank you for supporting me in building my pedagogical praxis which has also greatly influenced this journey. A special thank you to Dr. Natasha May, Lisa Endersby, Mary Lynn Belmonte, Dr. Geneviève Maheux-Pelletier, Dr. Mandy Frake-Mistak, and Dr. Celia Popovic. I will always cherish all of our time together.

To my friends and colleagues, especially: Dr. Shihoko Nakagawa, Dr. Liane Cheshire, Elizabeth Johnson, Nancy el Gindy, Helen Dring, Aidan Moir, Daniela Sanzone, Andrew Molas, Racheal Lawrence, Zohra Nouri, Ame Khin, Dr. Abigail Shabtay, Dr. Keith O'Regan, Sarah Irwin-Gardener, Cathy Boyd-Withers, Rubina Karyar, Wendy Chappel, Tamar Faber, Grace Lao, Dr. Tannaz Zargarian, Sofia Noori, and Sabina Mirza; thank you for supporting me through this process in whatever way you have. Whether it was through your constant support and check-ins, or simply having an encouraging conversation when running into one another, I appreciate you all.

To my partner, Mohsen, thank you for all of the support and encouragement you have offered from day one until now. You are my inspiration and I aspire to be as passionate of a scholar as you are. I am excited to embark on the next chapter of my academic life knowing I will have your steadfast support and fruitful words of wisdom as always. I look forward to many more engaging conversations with you as we continue to traverse the academy.

And lastly, to my parents. My gratitude to you in the roles you have had in contributing to this journey goes back to my first day of school when I was just shy of 4 years of age. Thank you for always fostering and nourishing my insatiable passion for education throughout the decades and instilling into me the values that have contributed to where I am today. Thank you for striving to give me so many opportunities that I never thought I would have been able to have, and for emphasizing the value in hard work, humility, and perseverance. Without your time, sacrifices, love, and dedication, the seeds of my academic 'plant' would neither have been able to sprout nor grow. I am eternally grateful for everything you have done for me.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract ii

Acknowledgements iii

Table of Contents v

Chapter I: Introduction 1

Statement of the Issue 1

Objective and Scope of Study 6
Research questions. 10

Conceptual and Operational Phraseology 11

Chapter II: A Review of the Literature 23

Salience of Children's Literature 25

Theories of Gender 34
Biological theories of gender. 36
Social theories of gender. 39
Theoretical debates on gender variance and transgender. 42
Beyond the binary: Queer perspectives. 48

Historicizing Gender Variance 56
Diagnostic manuals. 56
'Reparative therapies'. 58
Surgical procedures. 61
Controversies surrounding diagnostic labelling. 62

Gender Variance in Childhood and Adolescence 69
Gender development. 69
Treatment and therapy. 76
Pubertal suppression. 77
Gender-affirming hormone therapy. 80
Gender-affirming surgery. 81
Ethical issues. 83
Gender identity development. 84
Persisters and desisters. 86
Adverse effects and benefits. 87

Chapter III: Theoretical and Methodological Underpinnings 91

Theoretical Framework and Key Concepts: Feminist Poststructuralism 91

Methodology: Critical Discourse Analysis 98
Discourse. 101
Ideology. 106
Intertextuality and interdiscursivity. 107

Methods 111
Sampling. 112
Composition of books. 116

Analytic procedures. 118
Chapter IV: Analysis A – Discursive Constructions of Gender 126
The Gender Within 131
The Gendered Mind and Brain 138
The Mirror 147
The Body 158
The wrong body. 160
The sexed body. 164
Chapter V: Analysis B- Discursive Constructions of Character Subject Positions 186
Constituting Gendered Subjectivity 190
"Girl Stuff": Dolls, Dresses, and Dancing 190
"Boy Things": Sports, Speed, and Superheroes 209
"Flowers and Rainbows" 228
Subjective Awareness 242
'Difference'. 243
Navigating Subjectivity 256
Chapter VI: Implications 272
Gender-Binary Characters Constituted by Traditional Archetypes of Gender 273
Gender-Binary Characters Not Constituted by Traditional Archetypes of Gender 276
Gender Non-Binary Characters 278
Agender, Non-Gendered, and Genderless Subjectivities 283
Broad Implications 288
Chapter VII: Recommendations, Limitations, and Concluding Thoughts 293
Recommendations 293
Limitations 297
Final Concluding Thoughts 299
References 304
Appendices 342
Appendix A: List of Titles 342
Appendix B: List of Figures 344
Appendix C: Book Information and Story Summaries 354
Appendix D: Recommended Ages for Readers 361
Appendix E: Ages of Main Characters 363

Appendix F: Character Subject Positions ... 364
Appendix G: Family Depictions ... 366
Appendix H: Glossary ... 373

Chapter I: Introduction

Statement of the Issue

Gender has historically been, and continues to be, what is known as a 'master status'; as a master status, gender is not only conceived as a key facet of our identity, but also a primary mechanism through which we divide society and distribute social benefits and resources (Stein, 2018). Moreover, as a social institution, "gender is created socially and constitutes a key system for organizing society" (Rosenberg, 2009, p. 264). Historically, Western society has privileged some forms of gender (namely, cisgender categorizations), while marginalizing others (namely, transgender categorizations). There has been a significant shift, however, in the visibility and awareness surrounding non-cisgendered forms of being within the past few decades. Transgender and gender non-conforming identities and expressions have been more widely recognized and acknowledged within Western societal and cultural contexts. However, despite this progress, efforts to establish gender equity remain unsuccessful and there still remains positive bias towards certain genders and discrimination against others. Moreover, certain gender identities and expressions remain more normalized, recognized, and visible as opposed to others.

One group in particular that remain marginalized and, much of the time, stigmatized, are gender variant, gender non-conforming, and trans children (including transgender, non-binary, gender-fluid, agender, and genderless children); these terms will be further defined and operationalized at a later point within this chapter. In spite of the increase in awareness surrounding gender non-conforming children in popular Western media as well as amongst those who work with them, this group is still extensively misunderstood and unacknowledged by the general population (Ehrensaft, 2011; Irving & Lehault, 2017). Indeed, gender non-conforming children have only recently begun to gain wider recognition and visibility (Stein, 2018). This

may be in part due to the fact that gender is commonly seen as being sensitive territory in relation to childhood, as discourses of childhood naiveté and innocence position children as being incapable of conceiving and navigating their gender expressions and identities with autonomy and agency. Subsequently, the diversity of gendered identities and expressions that children exhibit, is often overlooked and unheeded. One space, however, where gender non-conforming children are provided with slightly increased visibility, is children's literature. In comparison to television programming and films which are produced for and targeted at children, which have yet to feature main characters that are gender non-conforming in either identity or expression, children's literature has seen more progress in this realm; albeit cursorily. Although there has been a recent upsurge in children's books featuring transgender and gender non-conforming characters, at the present juncture, children's literature focusing on gender variance is still in its inception (Naidoo, 2012).

In comparison to reading material belonging to other genres and themes, children's literature surrounding queer themes and topics, and literature which portrays transgender and gender variant characters are relatively scarce (Bittner, Ingrey, & Stamper, 2016; Mickenberg & Nel, 2011; Naidoo, 2012; Smolkin & Young, 2011). *Adolescent* literature featuring these groups have been increasingly prevalent as LGBTQI2SA movements have gained momentum, however it appears that *children's* literature has been more resistant to themes of gender variance and non-conformity. Even so, mainstream literature for *adolescent* children featuring gender variant protagonists did not begin increasing frequency in this realm until after 2007 (Bittner, Ingrey, & Stamper, 2016). The first picture book for non-adolescent children featuring a gender non-conforming main character, *William's Doll*, was introduced in 1972 and only a limited number of

titles belonging to this genre were produced following this throughout the remainder of the twentieth century.

The production of Western children's books featuring gender variant characters did not begin to accelerate until the beginning of the 2010s. Nonetheless, over the past several years, the number of children's books with gender variant themes has been rising, with the peak of this production being in 2014 (Bittner, Ingrey, & Stamper, 2016). Still, Naidoo (2012) suggests that many of these titles possess storylines that create a unidimensional view of characters and are primarily meant to be edifying as they teach children *about* gender variance, rather than integrate gender variant characters into stories that focus on other narratives and themes. Furthermore, in relation to gender non-conforming children, emphasis has been given to certain identities and expressions in comparison to others. Alas, despite the dramatically higher percentage of trans and gender non-conforming individuals in the under-eighteen sector of the population (Stryker, 2017), portrayals of these groups remain scarce in children's literature.

Importantly, Mickenberg and Nel (2011) assert, "neither children nor literature for them can be extricated from politics" (p. 445). Similarly, both Naidoo (2012) and Friddle (2017) note that the political climate and societal response to such books can influence the ways in which they are written. These elements can also influence the publishing process of picture books as well. The types of picture books that are published will not only vary across global contexts, but *within* them as well (Salisbury & Styles, 2012). Referencing their correspondence with George Nicholson—a literary agent and veteran of the children's literature industry—Mickenberg and Nel (2011) state that topics perceived to be controversial or those which challenge conventional social norms, are regularly evaded by major publishing companies largely due to the fear of disrupting sales and marketing and due to negative public reception to these works. These

authors contend that as a result of this, when publishers do endeavour to take on more 'difficult' texts, they tend to be more inclined to write about particular issues over others. Similarly, Naidoo (2012) suggests that some authors may opt to write "safer" books to avoid censorship and resistance from adults. Thus, the anticipated public reception often fundamentally influences which books get published and which do not.

Indeed, wider societal perceptions of gender often influence the types of resources to which expose children (Stein, 2018). As such, it is not surprising that many LGBTQI2SA-themed books written for children are resisted and censored by schools and libraries as they are seen as being inappropriate for children, and depicting beliefs, values, and morals that are not necessarily representative of mainstream society (Naidoo, 2012; Norton, 2011; Pacini-Ketchabaw et al., 2015). In fact, several books that I have included in this dissertation have a history of being banned or challenged within school systems and public libraries within North America. Some of these titles include: *Jacob's New Dress, I am Jazz, Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress*, and *My Princess Boy*. Many times, when these types of books are resisted, it is due to adults' objections to the books' content which are frequently based on inaccurate conflations between issues of gender and sexuality (Friddle, 2017). In other words, adults assume that if a book is discussing gender variance, issues of sexuality will inevitably be present; both of which are often viewed as inappropriate topics for children. As will be discussed in Chapter II, gender variant and trans children are often automatically assumed to also belong to LGB categorizations (Friddle, 2017; Mallon & DeCrescenzo, 2006), which further contributes to misrepresentations of this group. Thus, in addition to resistance in publishing these genres, the resistance in reception to these books may also explain the scarcity of this genre of children's literature. As a result, many books that represent gender diversity and expose readers to new

gender narratives, do not even make it into children's reach. This fundamentally elicits considerations as to what is deemed appropriate for a child and how much agency a child is granted in their selection of children's literature (Mickenberg & Nel, 2011).

Academics are now underscoring the need to focus on how these characters are portrayed and the 'authenticity' behind these character representations (Bittner, Ingrey, & Stamper, 2016; Skelton, 2015a) as there is a lack of research and critical inquiry into how gender is constructed in these books (Hassel & Clasen, 2017; Naidoo, 2012). Given the relatively limited availability of children's literature featuring transgender and gender non-conforming characters, this seems particularly paramount. Since this results in all children having a limited number of gender-diverse texts from which to choose, the ones that are currently available are likely primarily accessed; albeit through the meditation of adult gatekeepers. Literature that contains positive and progressive representations of transgender and gender non-conforming children are pivotal in supporting the development of children's gender identity and expression (Naidoo, 2012) and have the potential to normalize gender variance for all children. As such, this current state of affairs has been the impetus for the current research in this dissertation. Considering that books are particularly useful materials to analyze as they elicit [and construct] discursive messages regarding children's social worlds (Reynolds, 2011), a critical analysis of currently available children's literature on gender variance and non-conformity can provide us with a better understanding as to how transgender and gender non-conforming children may be portrayed, as well as what messages children are receiving from these books and how these messages remain embedded within sociopolitical dynamics.

Through this section, I have outlined that despite growing awareness and acceptance of gender non-conforming and transgender individuals, these groups remain only marginally

present in children's picture books. Next in this chapter, I outline the objectives and scope of this research, the research questions guiding this project, as well as conceptual and operational definitions for the terminology I use throughout this dissertation. Following this, in Chapter II, I begin by outlining the salience of children's literature, and then provide a literature review which chronicles social and biological theories of gender, historical and contemporary theorizations of gender and gender variance, and an overview of key issues in gender variance in childhood. Then, in Chapter III, I underscore the theoretical and methodological underpinnings of this research and provide a detailed and rigorous account of the analytical methods used throughout the collection and analysis of my data. Further to this, Chapters IV and V encompass a comprehensive Critical Discourse Analysis of my data along with a discussion of my main findings, while Chapter VI underscores the implications and broader considerations of my findings. Finally, in Chapter VII, I provide recommendations based on my analysis and its implications, and I close with a few concluding remarks.

Objective and Scope of Study

As stated, despite gender variant groups remaining perpetually marginalized and ostracized within society, there has been increasing awareness that these communities do exist. The rising levels of public awareness on gender diversity underscores the significance of further research into comprehensive understandings of gender diversity in childhood as well as the perils of rigid constructions of gender in netting the diversity of gender that is present in many children's lives (Blaise, 2005). Children's literature on gender variance and gender diversity attempt to raise awareness of varying forms of gender and seek to surpass these rigid constructions of gender that not all individuals can identify with. Books on gender variance typically depict characters that do not conform to cisnormative forms of being, and offer

discussions around diverse ways of 'doing' and expressing gender. As mentioned previously, there have been appeals for more critical inquiries into children's books that encompass gender and gender identity (Bittner, Ingrey, & Stamper, 2016; Naidoo, 2012).

My objective in this research is to address this void by providing a critical analysis of contemporary children's books on gender from the onset of the twenty-first century onward. To operationalize my terminology, in line with Anderson (2013) I define children's literature as all reading materials that have been written specifically for children—barring reference-type materials such as dictionaries and encyclopedias. Also, as supported by Anderson, I define children's literature as books targeted at children from birth through to age 12-13 (in comparison to adolescent literature which entails youth ages 13 to 18). More specifically, I have narrowed my focus to children's picture story books in particular, which I further outline in the section on methods. Through these books, I investigate and analyze the ways in which gender is conveyed and represented within children's books both linguistically and discursively; I also analyze visual depictions. The objective of this research is to *analyze the ways in which transgender and gender non-conforming children are portrayed in children's picture books, and, subsequently, analyze what discursive messages are being conveyed to children within these materials*. N. Browne (2004) reminds us that "various discourses a child has access to do not all provide the same 'world view', and discourses may conflict with each other" (p. 61). As such, I endeavour to expose these (conflicting) discourses to elicit the various discursive resources that children are provided with within these texts and explore whether contradictory messages are present.

The books included in this study feature main characters that exhibit non-traditional gender identities and/or expressions. Through this research, I analyze character portrayals and unpin the discursive constructions that are present both textually and visually. The vast majority

of research that has previously been conducted regarding portrayals of gender in children's books has primarily focused on general children's books that do not have a theme or focus on the matter of 'gender' itself; this has primarily been due to the scarcity of such materials. Thus, many books that have been explored tend to discuss varying topics that do not pertain to the construction of gender or to gender identities in relation to gender non-conformity, but rather focus primarily on covert stereotypes of cisgendered characters. Consequently, these studies have predominantly discussed implicit notions of gender and/or gendered undertones within children's literature. Moreover, as stated previously, a rich discursive analysis of gender within children's books is relatively scant as many studies have primarily involved the use of quantitative measures or non-discursive type analyses (e.g. content analysis) (Naidoo, 2012). In contrast, books that entail specific topics on gender variance, subsequently have a direct focus on gender identities and/or gender expression. As such, these texts possess explicit content in relation to gender and gender identity which offer a more comprehensive understanding into the ways the concept of gender is actively constructed in these texts.

I would like to state at this point that this qualitative research is not meant to be representative of all children's books nor is my analysis intended to be generalized. Discourse analysis is subjective and seeks to transcend notions of universal truths (Rose, 2007), and, as such, this is simply a unique analysis of 30 specific children's books on gender variance and non-conformity which aims to deeply and specifically analyze, rather than predict or generalize (Bull & D'Arrigo-Patrick, 2018). I recognize that an analysis of these books by an alternative researcher may elicit different results as a single text can have many varying readings. As Gavey (1997) notes, "there is no essential "true" meaning that resides within [a] text; rather, different meanings are constructed on every reading" (p. 55). Moreover, with picture books in particular,

the fusion of verbal and visual text "creates layers of meaning, open to different interpretations" (Arizpe & Styles, 2003, p. 22). As such, although the interaction of visual and verbal elements of picture books are often complimentary as they fill one another's gaps, these gaps are also filled by the reader through their "previous knowledge, experience, and expectations" (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2001, p. 2). Thus, I also acknowledge the role that my theoretical lens of feminist post-structuralism and my methodological framework of Critical Discourse Analysis possess over my analysis. Although I remain reflexive in my role as a researcher, I nonetheless enter this project with a very particular scope, and, as such, alternative areas may inadvertently be overlooked in my analysis. Nevertheless, my endeavour is informed by critical reflexivity – "the attempt to place one's premises into question, to suspend the 'obvious', to listen to alternative framings of reality and to grapple with the comparative outcomes of multiple standpoints" (Gergen, 2009, p. 13)-- and I embark on this research with utmost care.

More importantly, I would like to state that this research does not seek to argue as to whether gender itself is innate or socially constructed, nor does it position particular gender identities and expressions as more 'valid' than others. Rather, this analysis seeks to simply explore the many ways gender is conceptualized within my particular selection of children's picture books. The scholarship and literature utilized throughout this dissertation, may at times concur with various perspectives on the inherence (or lack thereof) of gender. Children's subjectivities do arise within my research; however, I take subjectivity to be an eclectic concept. This research validates and recognizes individuals who feel that their gender identity is innate, and as such, not a choice, as well as those who feel that they have control over their gender identity. As well, I concede and embrace the ways in which various intersectional categories influence one's gender identity and expression. While a complete intersectional approach is

beyond the scope of this dissertation, when possible, I do attempt to acknowledge the idiosyncrasies of intersectional identity categories in relation to gender subjectivity.

Research questions.

In this dissertation I aim to explore how gender is represented within my sample of children's picture books on gender variance and whether or not these picture books provide diverse representations of gender and diverse gendered subject positions for children to take up. Considering that all stories convey subject positions for readers to identify (or not identify) with (Nodelman, 2005), I aim to explore what subject positions are presented within my sample of texts as well as the ways they are navigated by the protagonists. An analysis of how characters in my sample of texts take up their own subject positions is also central to an understanding of the ways individuals use language and available discourses to position themselves within the world. The language and discursive framings within a text that makes particular subject positions available presumes that readers will be able to orient themselves within these. For children who do not fit into these represented subject positions, this can create a sense of dissonance and marginalization. As such, I aim to analyze which (if any) subject positions are privileged or emphasized within these texts and which (if any) are missing. Since picture books typically discuss concepts that encompass children's feelings and lived realities (Edward, 2013), discussions and analyses of gender in children's literature should always encompass insight as to whether children "can find the imaginative spaces to explore gendered options for themselves in the books they read" (Krasny, 2013, p. 102). Correspondingly, the key research questions guiding this study are as follows:

- *How is gender discursively constructed within children's picture books on gender variance?*
- *How do characters constitute and navigate their gender subjectivities and subject positions within the narratives of the texts?*

- *Subsequently, what subject positions are available for readers to identify and align themselves with within these texts?*

The first two of these questions will be addressed within the analysis chapters of this dissertation while the last will be addressed within the chapter on implications.

Conceptual and Operational Phraseology

It is imperative for me to note that I write this paper as a cisgender individual — I use the term cisgender here, and throughout this dissertation, to refer to instances where one's assigned sex and assigned gender align with one another (Iantaffi, 2017). It is important to note that being cisgender does not automatically assume that one is heterosexual as sexual orientation is not inevitably contingent upon gender identity. As an ally with (but not a member of) the communities I speak of, my positionality in writing this paper is that of an individual who has not directly experienced many of the issues discussed. Similar to Elliot (2010), a limitation of my positionality involves the issue of "lacking insider expertise" (p. 5). However, as Elliot further notes, when considering the 'insider' versus 'outsider' dynamics of research, it is more important for researchers to focus on the commitment to common goals rather than the existence of identical or similar positionalities. Thus, working in unison with others to ensure that valuable contributions to a field are made, triumphs over the simple presence of bearing similar experiences. Nonetheless, as someone who does not share in the many of the trials and tribulations that these communities endure, my positionality is something that should not be taken for granted. As such, I feel it pertinent for me to be explicit in my usage of particular terms throughout this paper and to clarify my rationale for using these. I attempt to use language and terminology that is inclusive and respectful, however given the sociopolitical idiosyncrasies embedded within discipline-specific jargon and vernacular, some may agree with my choice of terms, while others may not, as language remains an area of contention in gender studies

(Serano, 2013), and “meanings surrounding sex, gender, and embodiment remain unclear and contestable” (Elliot, 2010, p. 9). Moreover, novice terms and concepts are constantly arising within the field of gender studies, thus the time in between when this dissertation was written and when it is being read, revised terminology may be present rendering my usage of certain phraseology ‘out of favor’ (Stryker, 2017). My objective is to utilize language that is inclusive of all and exclusive to none, however at times I may inadvertently fail to do so. In line with Bittner, Ingrey, and Stamper (2016) I acknowledge the impossibility of representing all subjective experiences. Considering that much of the terminology I use can be rather ambiguous and/or context-specific, I feel that it is critical for me to operationalize these at the outset of this study. In this section I contextualize several terms that I utilize frequently within this paper, including terms such as ‘sex’, ‘gender’, ‘transgender’, ‘gender variant’, and ‘gender non-conforming’. I define these terms in line with the ways I operationalize my usage of them as I simultaneously recognize the fluctuating and shifting elements of them. Given the nuance that exists regarding how these terms are utilized within the community and within scholarship, I also emphasize how, at times, the same term can be both celebrated and denounced both within and between groups. In addition to these definitions, I also provide a glossary of additional terms at the culmination of this paper.

The research presented herein discusses notions of sex, gender, identity, expression, childhood, subjectivity, and power. To begin, utilizing terms such as *sex* and *gender* requires one to be particularly explicit in their operationalization of these terms as they are often inaccurately conflated and employed interchangeably in popular usage (Klein, 2011; Paoletti, 2012) as well as in scholarly literature (Stryker, 2008). Moreover, a distinct demarcation between the two wherein it is stated precisely where one ends and the other begins is not always

possible as “biology likely plays some role in influencing gender identity and expression” and it is likely that “sex also has social components” (Serano, 2013, p. 9). Indeed, several scholars have taken up the socially constituted elements of sex in their work. For instance, Butler (1990) underscores the relationship between sex and gender in her theorization that sex is “always already gender” (p. 11) wherein she contends that there is no fundamentally ‘true’ prediscursive ‘sex’ as sex is concurrently constructed along with gender. As such, if gender is understood to be socially constructed, then it follows that this also applies to the notion of sex (Bettcher, 2009; Butler, 1990, 1993; Fausto-Sterling, 2000a; Overall, 2009, Weedon, 1987). To contextualize this further, I provide a brief historicization of ‘sex’ below.

Until the commencement of the 17th century, the body was not differentiated based upon what we now define as sex differences, but rather were conceived in-line with the ‘one sex/ flesh’ model (Laquer, 1990; Shilling, 2016). According to this model, bodies were perceived as principally similar, in spite of the minimal reproductive variations that exist, and, as such, there was no ‘true’ sex (Foucault, 1980a; Laquer, 1990). Indeed, “the one-sex body would seem to have no boundaries that could serve to define social status” (Laquer, 1990, p 52). Moreover, sex was understood to be largely fluid and malleable. For example, in the case of intersexed individuals, some were designated a ‘sex’ by a father or godfather upon birth, however they were free to assume whichever ‘sex’ they desired for themselves so long as they declared this as their permanent sex henceforth (Foucault, 1980a).

A substantial shift in conceiving of sex took place during the 18th century when scientists began to naturalize biological differentiation wherein differences in anatomical variation progressed from mundane elements to highly prescriptive of one’s gendered ‘essence’ (Foucault, 1980a; Laquer, 1990; Shilling, 2016). These changes were primarily provoked by expanding

biological theories of sex, gender, and sexuality which restricted ‘free choice’ through which the notion of a ‘true’ and stable ‘sex’ were precipitated (Foucault, 1980a; Laquer, 1990). This is where the ‘sexing’ of the body inaugurated, as now variations in sex were interpreted as one of the primary markers of one’s social and cultural status (Shilling, 2016). Indeed, not only were ‘the sexes’ now conceived of as inherently different, but they were also perceived to be distinct both physically and morally (Laquer, 1990). As such, the delineation of bodies based upon anatomy fundamentally also served to impose constructed social differences between males and females. This area will be taken up more extensively within the section on ‘the sexed body’.

In the conventional sense, then, sex generally signifies “biological differences” between males and females, while gender typically refers to “distinctions in role, appearance, and behavior” that usually correlate to one’s sex (Paoletti, 2012, p. 2). More specifically, sex commonly refers to “physical attributes such as anatomy, genitals, reproductive capacity, hormones, sex chromosomes, secondary sexual characteristics, and so forth” (Serano, 2013, p. 8), whereas terms such as ‘male’ and ‘female’ are coupled with sex, while terms such as ‘boy/man’ and ‘girl/woman’ are associated with gender (Serano, 2013; Stryker, 2008). In this paper, I utilize the term sex to refer to “chromosomal, hormonal, and anatomical characteristics which are used to *categorize* a person as female, male, or intersex” (Killerman, 2017, p. 259; emphasis added). With the recognition that sex is neither binary nor fixed, I emphasize the role of classification that occurs to underscore the passivity experienced when we are initially categorized as a particular sex. Thus, sex represents a category “in which a person is *placed* when born” (Tauches, 2009, p. 844; emphasis added). As such, I sometimes employ the term ‘assigned sex’ to refer to the antithesis of one’s *own* (declared) sense of sex. The term *assigned*

sex indicates the sex an individual is assigned at birth based on their genitalia and/or chromosomal and hormonal features (Henry, 2017; Miller, 2016).

With respect to *gender*, the many ways of conceiving of gender are representative of the many ways that gender is defined. Wilchins (2002) suggests that an agreed-upon definition of gender does not exist as conceptions of gender vary widely based on context; thus, gender is principally "a set of meanings" (p. 23). Tauches (2009) stresses the role of (assigned) sex in relation to gender in stating that "gender refers to the social behaviors and traits that are considered normal for a particular sex" (p. 844). Paoletti (2012), also recognizes the place of (assigned) sex in asserting that a common characterization of gender alludes to "cultural differences between men and women" often presumed to be based upon biological distinctions between males and females (p. 2). By recognizing the salience of multiplicity associated with gender, as well as the intricacies associated with assigning 'sex', I employ the term gender to indicate the ways in which characteristics of masculinity and femininity are expressed (or not expressed) and embodied (or not embodied) by individuals. In this usage, I acknowledge that gender is an intricate "interweaving of nature, nurture, culture" and society (Ehrensaft, 2016, p. 15), and emphasize that gender is often manifested "within power and knowledge relations" (Martin, 2011, p. 136). Moreover, I conceive of gender as a "social, cultural and psychological system" which stems from "political, economic, moral, religious and legal domains" (Nataf, 1996, p. 14). Thus, in line with Wilchins' (2002) definition, I view gender as "a system of symbols and meanings– and the rules, privileges, and punishments pertaining to their use– for […] masculinity and femininity, strength and vulnerability, action and passivity, dominance and weakness" (p. 14).

Individuals are generally assigned a gender in-line with cisnormative categorizations in-utero or at the time of their birth. Correspondingly, I make reference to the term *assigned gender*, to denote the gender one is assigned by others based on their assigned sex (Miller, 2016), as well as the term *gender categorization* – how others categorize an individual's gender (Klein, 2011)-- to distinguish between one's *declared* sense of gender and a gender that has been *assigned* to an individual by others. Moreover, I distinguish between the term gender *identity*, which I refer to as indicating one's internal sense of gender" as it relates to "feelings of being a man [or boy], woman [or girl], some combination, or neither" (Girshick, 2008; Tauches, 2009), and gender *expression*, which I refer to as "behaviors, clothing, hairstyle, mannerisms, roles, activities, and so on […] typically referred to as masculine, feminine, or androgynous" (Keo-Meier & Ehrensaft, 2018, p. 7). One's gender identity is not typically visible to others, whereas one's gender expression is communicated to others through visual modes; for example: through clothing, accessories, and/or hairstyle (Tauches, 2009). This paper emphasizes the variance and diversity that exist within and between notions of sex and gender. Two terms that I utilize often and usually interchangeably are *gender variant* and *gender non-conforming*. In referring to individuals that are gender variant, this is generally in reference to those who do not express or identify with cisnormative characteristics of gender (Di Ceglie, 2014). Similarly, gender non-conforming individuals also eschew cisnormative forms of gender expression and identity and essentially, do not *conform* to these (Killerman, 2017). I cannot emphasize enough that these terms are *not* meant to imply that gender variance or non-conformity are deviant, abnormal, or 'Other'. Rather, my emphasis is on the ways that they vary from or do not conform to cisnormative ideals of gender which have historically and contemporarily been seen as 'standard'. Given the prevailing cisnormative ethos of gender within Western society, I argue

that these terms are necessary to emphasize non-conformity and variance in comparison to rigid and limiting cisnormative standards, to underscore the salience of transgression. Throughout this paper, I use these as umbrella terms for any form of gender identity or gender expression that do not subscribe to cisnormative ways of being; this includes the notion of transgender identities (outlined below).

Hines (2007) suggests that the term *transgender* is vast, encompassing expressions and identities that involve movements across, between, or beyond traditional normative categories of 'male' and 'female'. Varying forms of the term have been present since the early 1960s where terms such as 'transgenderal', 'transgenderist', and 'transgenderism' were employed to distinguish between transvestites and transsexuals (Stryker, 2017). The term 'transgender' was officially inaugurated in 1969 when its usage by Virginia Prince appeared in *Transvestia* magazine to speak of those who lived as a gender contrasting with their assigned gender/sex but did not partake in any surgical procedures (Stryker, 2006; Taches, 2009). Later, in 1992, Leslie Fienberd utilized the term in a pamphlet entitled *Transgender Liberation: A Movement Whose Time Has Come*, to expand the term to encompass any individual who identified as gender variant (Taches, 2009). Today, although the term remains in flux, it continues to be used to include both those who have endured treatments, therapies, and/or surgeries to re-align their bodies, as well as those who transgress gender boundaries in non-medical, non-surgical, and non-invasive ways (Stryker, 2017). Additionally, this term represents individuals who transgress these boundaries as a part of their everyday lives, as well as those who do so more transiently and temporarily (Tauches, 2009). As such, I use the term *transgender* as an umbrella term referring to a diversity of practices, identities, behaviours, presentations, and expressions regarding those who do not self-identify with the gender assigned to them at birth (Clucas &

Whittle, 2017; Henry, 2017; Hines, 2007; Norwood, 2013; Schilt, 2018; Schrage, 2009; Schwartz, Luyckx, & Vignoles, 2011; Stein, 2018) and by using this term I acknowledge and emphasize the idiosyncratic and multifaceted facets of gender as binary, non-binary, fluid, non-fluid, changing, and unchanging (Ehrensaft, 2016). I use the terms 'gender variant' and 'gender non-conforming' to include the term transgender when a distinction is not necessary (e.g. all of the books within my sample feature a gender variant or non-conforming character; in other words, a character whose gender varies from or does not conform to cisnormative expectations—which includes cisgender individuals), yet I use the term 'transgender' distinctly to refer to those who identify as such (e.g. out of all protagonists within these texts, only some identify as, say, a transgender girl, a transgender boy, or a transgender child). Thus, while I refer to all characters (including transgender characters) as gender variant and non-conforming, I do not refer to all characters as transgender unless this is explicitly stated.

While the term *transgender* as well as the shortened version, *trans*, are broad umbrella terms, these are generally perceived primarily pertain to those who transgress gender boundaries in binary ways; namely, transmen and transwomen (Killerman, 2017). The groups subsumed under the term transgender are sometimes independent, but at times they also overlap (Flanagan, 2010), thus categorizations are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Thus, to increase inclusivity, at times I also employ the term *trans* to further extend *transgender* to a wider range of meanings and identities (Tompkins, 2014). Trans, here, is representative of the many diverse non-cisgendered forms of being (Killerman, 2017). When I do utilize the term trans this is done to emphasize inclusivity of the expansive expressions and identities encapsulated in acts of gender transgression, and to include the various 'labels' associated with transgressing gender norms (Stryker, 2017). This includes, but is not limited to, transsexuality, intersex, and two-spirit

individuals, as well as those who do not self-identify within binary categorizations of gender, who may also be referred to as *genderqueer*, *agender*, *genderfluid, genderless*, or *gender-neutral* (Henry, 2017; Killerman, 2017).

Trans individuals have varying opinions regarding appropriate terminology, with some preferring more 'medicalized' terms, and others preferring 'community' terms (Henry, 2017). For example, the term *transsexual*, which was originally created as a psychiatric diagnostic term for individuals who had undergone surgical or hormonal procedures that assist them in personifying their preferred gendered self (Clucas & Whittle, 2017; Henry, 2017; Shrage, 2009), initially positioned trans individuals as abnormal and requiring 'treatments' and 'cures' from their 'sickness'. Thus, many trans individuals consider this term pathologizing and even pejorative and do not employ this term in reference to themselves. Additionally, for others, a classification of transsexual is not possible, particularly when surgical procedures are incomplete (Noble, 2006); which further results in this term being inapt for many. Yet, others view transsexual as a validating term that is central to their self-identity and utilize this term to disentangle themselves from the overarching category of transgender (Elliot, 2010; Henry, 2017; Namaste, 2005). In this dissertation, I only employ the term transsexual in reference to an individual who has self-identified as such (to my knowledge), or when discussions warrant the usage of this term. Otherwise, as stated, I utilize the term trans to be inclusive of as many groups as possible.

It is imperative to note that discrepancies still remain within and between communities and academic fields regarding appropriate terminology. With this said, terms of identity regularly shift and evolve relatively precipitously; thus, academic, scientific, and community terminology do not always align (McNabb, 2018). Consider the anachronistic term *transvestite* (which today

has been re-termed as *cross-dressing*) as well as the term *transsexual* that I have previously addressed; these usage of these terms ranges from unabashed pathologization to conscious self-identification. Even the term *transgender*, which originated in the early 1990s to refer to those who eschewed psychological and medical categorization and was predominantly utilized to refer to binary transgressive states in relation to one's gender *and* sex (McNabb, 2018), has now expanded to form an umbrella term that is neither reduced to physical bodies nor a compulsory gender identity (e.g. agender and/or genderless individuals). Agender or genderless individuals (also known gender neutrois or gender-neutral) are those who have no connection to or identification with the notion of gender (Killermann, 2017). Their sense of self is not defined through being or feeling gendered, and gender has little to no influence on their identity.

As can be noted from observing the three research questions guiding this dissertation, the two latter questions entail a distinct focus upon notions of subjectivity and subject positions. As such, it is important for me to distinguish between these two terms here as the sections that follow rely on an understanding of them. These terms will be further contextualized throughout the dissertation, however a brief overview of what they entail is warranted at this point.

The term subjectivity is often conflated with the term 'identity', however the two are fairly distinct in that identity can be conceived of as a "particular set of traits, beliefs, and allegiances that […] gives one a consistent personality and mode of social being", (Hall, 2004, p. 3). Subjectivity, on the other hand, refers to "a degree of thought and self-consciousness about identity" (Hall, 2004, p. 3). In simpler terms, the term subjectivity underscores the *process* through which identity is materialized (Browne, N, 2004; Gavey, 1997; Weedon, 1987), focusing on how and from where identity is formed and the extent of our own agency in its development (Hall, 2004). This formation does not occur in a vacuum as this process is directly informed by

one's societal context. According to Weedon (1987), subjectivity refers to the "conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions of the individual" (p. 32), as well as their sense and understanding of self in relation to the world. The 'self' in this case is not something that is present at birth, but rather a subjective entity which develops through a social process of interactions and relationships with others (Cooley, 1902; Mead, 1934). As will be elucidated throughout this dissertation, language and discourse are fundamental in the development of the self (Mead, 1934). Subjectivity and the 'self' are closely related to the concept of subject positions.

The notion of subject positions builds upon that of subjectivity as it considers the prospects of subjective experiences that are possible. Discourses of subjecthood create 'possible' subject positions which individuals subsequently assume (Weedon, 1987). It is then that subjectivity crystallizes "through the identification by the individual with particular subject positions within [these] discourses" (p. 112). In other words, individuals take up their positions as subjects based on the possibilities made available through larger discourses and this is where their experiences of subjectivity become invoked. Similar to subjectivity, then, subject positions fundamentally pertain to notions of identity, behaviour, and conceptions of the world (Gavey, 1999), however they can be thought of more as a 'category' which influences the ways an individual negotiates their identity (i.e. their subjectivity). The intricacies of these terms will be more apparent as the dissertation progresses.

Before moving on, I would like to emphasize that the terms I define throughout this section are not meant to be mutually exclusive, as there can be much nuance between terms (as can be seen in this section), and, as such, terms are sometimes used interchangeably. In these cases, I specify the individuals, groups, and populations to which I am referring. Terminology

and phrasing that are not included in this section can be found in the glossary at the end of this paper. Other ambiguous terms will be defined throughout the paper upon their initial introduction.

Given the many multifaceted elements of the topic of this dissertation, I sought to divide my review of literature conceptually, as will be evident in the impending chapter. As will be seen, I begin by outlining the scholarship on children's literature as it pertains to gender variance, I then provide an overview of the literature on the major biological and social theories of gender wherein I historicize several of terms listed above. Following this I provide a review of literature on traditional and contemporary perspectives on gender variance, and lastly I offer an overview of several key elements and ethical considerations pertaining to gender variance in childhood. As such, I transition between each subtheme to contribute towards a more comprehensive understanding of the ways in which each of element speaks to the topic at hand.

Chapter II: A Review of the Literature

The purpose of a literature review is to provide a comprehensive overview of knowledge on a topic(s) which serves to contextualize this information for the reader (Green, Johnson, & Adams, 2006). This involves the inclusion of particular phraseology, main theories, key issues, and notable discrepancies, from a contemporary and/or historical lens (Randolph, 2009). According to Baumeister and Leary (1997), literature reviews are generally not intended to propose “novel ideas, new interpretations, or sweeping conclusions” (p. 312), but should rather elucidate tensions, gaps, contradictions, and controversies pertaining to topics informing the research. As such, this literature review seeks to underscore all of the above, and provide insights into the salient issues concerning children’s literature, gender, and gender variance in childhood as they pertain to the research focus of this dissertation.

Both Randolph (2009) and Grant and Booth (2009) convey that the organization of a literature review may be executed in several ways; some of which include a chronological/historical, methodological, conceptual, or thematic arrangement. Considering that the scope of my research is rather interdisciplinary and focuses on issues of childhood, children’s literature, picture books, gender, and gender variance/non-conformity, the relevant literature in its entirety will be organized conceptually as this arrangement is most suitable for the research at hand; however, there are particular facets of this review that are organized in a historical manner. The review of literature I provide in the chapter herein begins with the *Salience of Children’s Literature* wherein I provide a review of the scholarship on children’s literature and underscore the current gaps pertaining to the inclusion of gender variant characters and why this absence is problematic.

Following this, in *Theories of Gender,* I open the milieu into the issue of gender variance by providing an overview of this topic to contextualize the focus of the dissertation. A complete history of gender and gender variance is beyond the scope of this research, however in this section I provide an overview of the major theories of gender and include a historical review of the ways that gender has been and continues to be conceptualized and experienced. I begin this by outlining a brief history of *gender* and provide a demarcation between biological and social theories surrounding ontological perspectives of gender, including the tensions and rifts that remain afoot. Next, in *Historicizing Gender Variance,* I historicize gender variance and transgender orientations for better contextualization as it pertains to my focus on gender variance and non-conformity in childhood. I establish a historical terrain pertaining to the privileging of particular genders in relation to the pathologization of the others and contextualize this in relation to the contemporary milieu. I further provide an abridged account of the history of gender non-conforming and transgender orientations, offer a review of the debates on gender variance, and introduce queer and non-binary gender orientations. Given the intricate nature of gender and gender variance in particular, a thorough overview of the idiosyncrasies of each of these concepts is paramount.

Finally, in *Gender Variance in Childhood*, I underscore the salient issues pertaining to gender variance and childhood and review the ways in which gender variance and non-conformity in childhood have historically been and contemporarily are 'treated'. I provide an overview of the primary tensions and ethical considerations encapsulated within the realm of childhood gender variance. These issues are critical to review as the sample of books in this study both implicitly and explicitly allude to these issues in their character depictions. Thus,

beginning with the salience of children's literature, a comprehensive overview of these issues serves to further contextualize the research herein.

Salience of Children's Literature

Children's literature has an extensive history around the world encompassing facets of folk, fairy tale, and the oral tradition (Hunt, 2005). It is wide-ranging and encompasses forms such as books, novels, comics, magazines, and poetry. Literature for children has many uses and benefits: it facilitates the development of literacy skills, fosters creativity and creative thinking, and the many forms available can be efficient educational tools. Children's literature is also seen as a foundational mode through which children learn about the broader global context and the people within it. Indeed, children's literature often represents and reproduces dominant sociocultural values prevalent at the time of each book's publication and works to maintain these values into current and future generations of children (Nodelman, 2008). At times this is done implicitly, wherein children comprehend these values through covert aspects of a story, and at other times this is an intentional undertaking by the author. Depending on the source, the objective of the literature will vary as each form possess a distinct set of literary attributes. Although all forms of children's literature have made considerable contributions to the cultures of childhood, the particular form of literature that my research focuses upon is that of children's picture books.

Although a comprehensive overview of the history of picture books is beyond the scope of this dissertation, it is important to briefly contextualize their history. The evolution of the picture book traces back to sixteenth through nineteenth centuries, from the use of hornbooks [hand-held reading tools with letters and words mounted on wood] and battledores [words and images on cardboard folded into thirds] to the larger print picture books that have since become

widespread (Hamer, 2017). Prior to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, picture books were primarily created for adults; as the interest in educating children expanded, children increasingly became the targeted audience for picture books (Kiefer, 2008). Indeed, the history of children's literature has been fundamentally influenced by the history of childhood as the ways in which childhood has been conceptualized has had a direct influence on the forms of children's literature produced. Originally, the earlier forms of children's picture books in the West, namely in the 17th and 18th centuries, were highly didactic and were primarily focused on fostering children into morally and religious pious adults (Hunt, 2005). This was largely attributed to traditional conceptions of children as passive, innocent, and pure beings. As such, children's literature sought to preserve these characteristics into adulthood. Indeed, modern childhood in the West as we know it today with the recognition of childhood as a category in its own right, did not exist prior to the late 19th century. Moreover, since most Western civilizations were agriculturally based, many young children engaged in a form of adult 'apprenticeship' wherein they worked, farmed, manufactured, cared for siblings, and maintained the family household (Heywood, 2013). It was not until the end of the 19th century that a more 'modern' childhood evolved wherein children were not solely valued for their economic roles, formal education was advocated, and that children's well-being was prioritized (Heywood, 2013; Marten, 2018).

As notions of children began to shift in the late 19th century to recognize their agency, autonomy, and creativity, children's literature too began to shift. Initially, the educational and instructive qualities of children's literature were prioritized over aesthetic and pleasurable qualities (Nikolajeva, 2013). However, once more imaginative and adventurous forms of children's literature began to gain further traction, they progressively became a favourite for decades to come. The modern children's literature of today that we have come to associate with

fantasy, fairy tales, biography, and that which leads children to the thresholds of their imagination, is relatively recent as the production of these types of children's books only arose during this 'golden age' throughout the late 19th and early 20th century (Hunt, 2005; Nikolajeva, 2013; Nodelman, 2008). Indeed, this period [the late 19th and early 20th century] is often understood as the golden age of children's literature as this was a time in which shifting attitudes towards childhood, advancements in printing technology, and the rise of many passionate authors were largely afoot (Salisbury & Styles, 2012). Children's picture books have expanded exponentially since then. This includes the development of the modern (and then, postmodern) picture books from the early to mid-20th century, as well as the development and integration of new media platforms and the transition towards digital and interactive mediums (Hamer, 2017).

Now that a brief historicization of picture books has been established, it is also important to define this genre of children's literature. Children's picture books entail precisely what the name implies — books with pictures— yet they are much more than this. Bader (1976) eloquently defines a picture book as:

> Text, illustrations, total design; an item of manufacture and a commercial product; a social, cultural, historic document; and foremost, an experience for a child. As an art form it hinges on the interdependence of pictures and words, on the simultaneous display of two facing pages, and on the drama of the turning page (Bader, 1976, p.1).

The interdependence of pictures and words that Bader mentions is also emphasized by many others such as Hamer (2017) who underscores [print] picture books' "multimodal design" which encompass "two modes of communication, the verbal and the visual, in the realization of discourse" (p. 66), Nikolajeva (2002) who states that this fusion "creates unlimited possibilities for interactions" (p. 37), as well as Winters et al. (2017) who further expand that a picture book is a "multi-semiotic space where modes, such as text, illustrations, fonts, and design elements, rhythms, and cadence come together to interanimate one another (Winters et al., 2017, p. 101).

In other words, picture books are a symbiotic literary production of written text and visual imagery. Through picture books, children are able to peruse the images, engage with the storyline, and connect with the characters. These books are unique in that they convey their messages through the use of imagery with only a minimal degree of text (Anderson, 2013), yet both text and image work in unison to concurrently convey the narrative as "the words tell us what the pictures do not show, and the pictures show us what the words do not tell us" (Nodelman, 1988, p. 222). Indeed, the union of visual and verbal text establishes meaning that cannot be achieved independent of one another.

Although both written text and imagery are central to picture books, Nodelman (1988) suggests that considerations of children's picture books tend to dismiss the salience of visual images and frame them as mere supplementary aspects of the text. The lack of acknowledgement of the importance of images in *picture* books seems quite ironic given that *picture* is the primary term in their categorization. Hunt (2005) concurs and argues that in order to achieve a comprehensive understanding and appreciation of children's books, it is critical that we attend to both written text as well as visual text as many children who read this literature are still learning about language and thus rely on visual imagery more so than more advanced readers. At times, children will read to themselves, and at other times they will have an adult read to or with them. In any case, children at these stages often *depend* on the images in a picture book to process the story in its entirety.

Indeed, before children learn to read, they focus on imagery in books in order to comprehend what the story entails; through the exposure to images, children are able to grasp the concept of the book as well as apply the implicit messages to more macro contexts of everyday life (Jackson, 2007). Imagery in picture books also facilitates an understanding of the feelings

and expressions of the characters, changes to the environment, and the intricacies associated with the plot (Anderson, 2013; Painter, Martin, & Unsworth, 2012) and work as a mediator between the text and the reader (Hladíková, 2014). Chatton (2001) contests that due to their heightened attention to illustrations, children tend to focus more intensely on character portrayals in images as opposed to descriptions in written text and place emphasis on characters' external characteristics. This is particularly important considering that my selection of books entail gender expression and gender identity, meaning that the visual appearance of characters is a salient focus of these texts. Many of these books challenge normative forms of gender expression and these transgressions are highly emphasized within the imagery in the books. Thus, given the nature of this theme, visual illustrations of characters are particularly salient in these texts. Characters are of central importance in picture books as they represent "transitory constructs" whose representations reflect the historical and sociocultural context of the time in which they are produced (Taylor, 2012, p. 141).

Nodelman (1988) further explains that the bimodal nature of picture books allows images and written text to share an interdependent relationship that works to facilitate an emotional, rich, and meaningful experience for the reader that could not necessarily be achieved by each of these independently. Indeed, the images of a picture book become just as salient as the text of the story in that they facilitate the transmission of the book's content and allow children to achieve a deeper comprehension of the storyline (Anderson, 2013; Nodelman, 2005). Images in picture books do not stand alone as they are intertwined with written text, storylines, and represent both the author and illustrator's perspective regarding the particular theme of the book. Thus, the fusion between images and written text that occurs in picture books creates a unique experience for the reader. Often times in picture books, written text will be placed directly on top of or

closely beside an image, creating unison between the two. Furthermore, imagery in children's picture books have a pivotal role in storytelling as they are capable of summarizing passages of text as they go from one salient experience to another. For example, on one page an image in a book may depict a child prior to their gender transition, whereas the very next photo will encapsulate the beginning, middle, and/or end of the transition process. Between just two photos, an elaborate shift has occurred; one that encompasses a variety of experiences, emotions, and meanings. This is where the remarkable capability of images becomes apparent as, in one frame, they can efficiently embody extensive experiences and the passage of time which is a shining asset in story telling (Nodelman, 2005).

Often underestimated due to their limited text and relatively short page count, children's picture books are often thought of as being 'safe', value-neutral, and unsophisticated forms of literature. However, as Canadian author and scholar Egoff (1981) articulately expresses: "the picture book, which appears to be the cosiest and most gentle of genres, actually produces the greatest social and aesthetic tensions in the whole field of children's literature" (p. 248). Correspondingly, Nodelman (2005) asserts that since young children are still learning how to think about the larger social world and understand themselves as well as others, picture books become a mechanism though which children come to understand the intricacies of their society and culture. Picture books, then, allow for an exploration of the outside world through the ways that this world is represented in the images and narratives within them. Through the fusion of image and written text, children acquire a sense of self and an understanding of the social world, which serve as tools through which children build their understandings of notions of identity through both the explicit and implicit messages present (Jackson & Gee, 2005; Reynolds, 2011).

Indeed, books are highly influential in contributing to children's perceptions of social phenomena, conceptual knowledge, and understandings of the self (Booker, 2012; Jackson, 2007) as the written text and images work together to construct characters and narratives, with which children are able to identify with and further consider actions, beliefs, and emotions in relation to their own personal lives (Jackson, 2007; Mendoza & Reese, 2001; Nodelman, 1988). Thus, through picture books, children not only acquire an understanding of their social world, but also their position within it (Hladíková, 2014; Nodelman, 2008; Rogers & Christian, 2007). Stephens (1992) attests that when children engage with picture books, this is, in and of itself, a part of the socialization process as books are saturated with ideological values. Painter, Martin, and Unsworth (2012) refer to this as an 'apprenticeship' into social values. In this manner, picture books can be thought of as resources through which children learn the 'skills' of being a social citizen, prior to navigating this independently. Nodelman (2008) concurs in stating that through adult constructions of childhood within children's picture books, children subsequently learn the values and expectations of them at this stage of life. Picture books, then, are highly effective spaces for children to develop and understand conceptions of the self.

When children engage with a picture book, they are potentially able to figurately place themselves into the narrative and discover how the story pertains to them (Winters et al., 2017). Nodelman (2005) suggests that picture books are especially salient in exploring and developing various subject positions as "all stories imply subject positions for readers to occupy" (p. 134). He states that picture books not only allow children to become exposed to other subjectivities presented, but also invite them to reflect on their own subjectivity as they see themselves represented in the story. This contributes to a further development of the self and one's identity (Nodelman, 2005; Rogers & Christian, 2007). Krasny (2013) concurs and states that when a

child can relate to a protagonist (or any character) in a text, they are able to claim their subjectivity in the source and position themselves in relation to the broader social world. It should also be noted that picture books are both produced and engaged with in specific contexts. The ways in which a reader will absorb the content in a picture book will be influenced by their individual experiences, values, and beliefs (Winters et al., 2007). Indeed, the “social contexts where picture books are read, looked at, discussed, and enacted” will directly influence the engagement a child has with that particular book (Winters et al., 2007, p. 103). Two children may read the same book but may have entirely different experiences when doing so.

Indeed, while picture books invite children to engage in constructions of the self and better comprehend others’ subjectivities, the ways in which the world is presented in picture books will not necessarily reflect the ways that all children see it, nor will it reflect the experiences of all of the children who read it. Scholar Sims Bishop (1990) provides an eloquent and timeless metaphor of books as mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors where she states:

> Books are sometimes windows, offering views of worlds that may be real or imagined, familiar or strange. These windows are also sliding glass doors, and readers have only to walk through in imagination to become part of whatever world has been created and recreated by the author. When lighting conditions are just right, however, a window can also be a mirror. Literature transforms human experience and reflects it back to us, and in that reflection we can see our own lives and experiences as part of the larger human experience. Reading, then, becomes a means of self-affirmation, and readers often seek their mirrors in books. (p. ix)

For Sims Bishop, “mirrors” reflect readers’ own positionalities, “windows” allow readers to peer into the lives of those other than their own, and “sliding glass doors” allow readers to engage with unfamiliar experiences which fosters new understandings and builds solidarities. She further states that “when children cannot find themselves reflected in the books they read […] they learn a powerful lesson about how they are devalued in the society of which they are a part” (p. ix). In other words, through their representation of characters, picture books inform children of

normative understandings of who is constructed to be 'worthy' of representation, whose stories matter, and whose do not.

Picture books have yet to offer a broader range of subject positions for children, particularly those who have been marginalized within their respective sociocultural contexts. As has been outlined in the previous section, one group in particular that is underrepresented in children's books is transgender and gender non-conforming individuals (Bittner, Ingrey, & Stamper, 2016; Naidoo, 2012; Smolkin & Young, 2011). Yet, children's books are tools through which children build their understandings of cultural and social notions of gender identity (Chatton, 2001; Jackson and Gee, 2005) and challenge gender archetypes (Martin, 2011). Regardless of theme, representations of characters as gendered individuals are present in most texts, which serves to implicitly influence children's conceptions of gender norms. Children's books that are *particularly* focused upon gender and gender variance, then, can elicit more explicit understandings of gendered relations and can create modes of gender identity construction. The significant absence of representations of gender variant characters in children's books implies to children that these lives are not validated and contributes to the erasure of these individuals in children's literature (Smolkin & Young, 2011).

When looking to representations of mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors, there is a scarcity of all three of these when it comes to this group of children. The notion that particular groups are often excluded from picture books is disconcerting in and of itself, however this has further implications for other readers. Sims Bishop makes a critical point in that "children from dominant social groups have always found their mirrors in books, but they, too, have suffered from the lack of availability of books about others" (1990, p. xi). Thus, the lack of representation of certain groups of children not only harms those children, but it does an injustice

to all children as they are unable to access resources from which they can learn about others. She asserts that given the social injustice that exists for marginalized groups, books are often one of the primary tools through which children can 'meet' those who are socially ostracized. The mirrors are unquestionably critical, but so too are the windows and doors.

Diverse representation in children's books is crucial as it conveys to children that we do not all live in or experience the world in the same way. This facilitates understandings of the ways in which differences and similarities are not only present between groups but also within groups. Furthermore, books featuring characters from marginalized or underrepresented groups help children to counter inaccurate and adverse preconceived notions and connotations that they may have gathered through other modalities. Children's literature is a space where children have the agency to explore, imagine, and think in an otherwise adult-centric, and sometimes ageist, world. Through these books, *children* become the stars of the show; their points of views are acknowledged and their knowledge is embraced. Books empower children, books respect children, and books honour children. When only certain groups of children are found in these books, however, this creates a dangerous account as to which children are 'worthy' of this platform. Considering that the literature focused upon in this dissertation entails a focus on gender variance, it is imperative for me to provide an overview on gender and gender variance as this aids in contextualizing the different ways that these concepts have been and continue to be conceptualized; I do just this in the following section.

Theories of Gender

In order to develop a comprehensive understanding of gender variance and gender non-conformity — which are the foci of this dissertation — it is critical to primarily provide a brief introduction into the notion of *gender* itself. To begin, I make reference, primarily to Scott

(1986), who has produced an instrumental account of the history of ‘gender’ in her classic piece entitled: *Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis*. Scott proposes that ‘gender’ has been used (primarily by feminists) “as a way of referring to the social organization of the relationship between the sexes” (p. 1053). ‘Gender’ first surfaced among American feminists who strived to place emphasis on the social facets of classifications based on sex [and meanings assigned to bodies] to eschew biologically deterministic undertones present in sex-based terminology (Scott, 1986). Prior to the introduction of the term ‘gender’, sex-based terms such as *male* and *female* were used to refer to terms that we now know as *girl/woman* and *boy/man*. As such, ‘gender’ was initially introduced to detach itself from conflations with ‘sex’, and subsequently underscore the role of the socially constructed distinctions between men and women in producing hierarchies and inequality between the two (Fine, 2017). This distinction was also taken up by those in medical and psychological disciplines when addressing gender variance in children and adults (Stein, 2018).

The term ‘gender’ was also introduced to emphasize the salience of acknowledging the role of men in relation to the social positioning of women. By implementing ‘gender’ into feminist studies, an understanding of women as embedded within patriarchal and societal contexts was better achieved. Women and men were viewed as being defined in relation to each other, as a comprehensive understanding of one was not as seen as possible without studying the other (Scott, 1986). The introduction of this term, then, largely implored gender to be utilized as an analytic category (Scott, 1986). In this sense, gender became a tool through which social and cultural prescriptions for women and men were illuminated, and notions of sex also became problematized. Through the introduction of ‘gender’, variations in anatomical sex were seen to be representative of shifting meanings which were contingent upon time and place (Scott, 2010).

The social dynamics of gender in relation to sex became elucidated, which is apparent in Scott's eloquent articulation that gender is "a social category imposed on a sexed body" (p. 1056). As such, gender is positioned as a principal component of social relationships based on alleged distinctions between the sexes, as well as a key mechanism through which relations of power are dispersed. Thus, gender offers itself as a tool to uncover meanings and reveal intricate power dynamics that exist in human interaction (Scott, 1986, 2010); a theme that is further explored throughout this dissertation. In theorizing gender, one of the most — if not *the* most — controversial inquiry is that of whether gender is socially constructed or biologically inherent (Whittle, 2006a). To better contextualize this development of 'gender', a brief account of biological and social theories of gender is warranted.

Biological theories of gender.

Biological theories of gender in the West date back to the 1800s and have often been based upon notions of essentialism. Theorizations as such were originally postulated by Ancient Greek philosophers and became largely influential on theorizations throughout the enlightenment period. Indeed, classical philosophers throughout the enlightenment argued that individuals possessed an intrinsic 'essence'; meaning that a particular set of attributes were seen as 'essential' components of a person or thing (Hill, 2006); hence the term 'essentialism'. Essentialism is based on the assumption that gender is naturally aligned with one's sex. Essentialist principles suggest that there are only two sexes — male and female — and thus, there are successively only two genders — man/boy and woman/girl — (Girshick, 2008). Essentialism suggests that there are specific innate features based on one's sex that exist as fundamental distinctive properties of one's gender, which serve to differentiate between the two (Hill, 2006; Shilling, 2016). This creates a view of gender that is overwhelmingly binary and

polarized, since this creates only two possibilities: men and women. Gender, here, is also seen as being reduced to sex, since one's assigned gender is perceived to be related to one's assigned sex; dichotomous representations of sex subsequently created these polarized constructions of gender. These ('natural') differences in gender were originally viewed as serving an adaptive evolutionary purpose regarding the survival of the 'two' sexes as well as humankind as a larger species (Anderson, 2018). For instance, traits such as dominance, assertiveness, strength, and courage have historically been associated with masculinity and manhood, while traits perceived to be in contrast with these–such as passivity, compliance, weakness, and obedience– have been largely attributed to femininity (Martin, 2011).

Biological theories generally purport the notion that anatomical features predetermine one's gender, which further predetermines certain facets of one's life (Anderson, 2018; Shilling, 2016; Werhun, 2009); this establishes a deterministic view of gender subjectivity, which centrally implies that destiny is based upon sex. This is where conceptions of 'biological determinism' become apparent as biology is perceived to 'determine' one's vocations. Biological determinism insists that gendered destiny stems primarily from biological factors as opposed to those that are social, contextual, or environmental (Shilling, 2016; Werhun, 2009). Biological determinism is especially problematic as it categorizes individuals based on binary classifications, which further perpetuates the notion that one must be superior to the other. This form of categorization readily works to position men as superior to women intellectually and physically (Shilling, 2016; Werhun, 2009). By principally positioning women as inferior to men, this created a view of women being 'naturally' inferior to men, and thus secondary.

This can be best encapsulated by Simone de Beauvoir's coining of the term 'the second sex', where she discusses women as being constructed as being inferior, secondary, and Other to

men (de Beauvoir, 1952). Moreover, by positioning men as the primary and superior 'sex', women are viewed in relation to men rather than as sovereign individuals (de Beauvoir, 1952). Alas, biological theories blazed a precarious trail placing men at the forefront with women relegated to the rear. These perceived 'natural' differences between men and women worked to naturalize gender hierarchies in broader social contexts (Connell, 1987). Moreover, the hierarchal facets of these 'differences' were frequently used to validate social inequalities (Martin, 2011). Once scholars began to study gender in relation to history and anthropology, they observed that these gender traits, which were presumed to be universal, rather shifted across time and context (Rosenberg, 2009, p. 465). This is where 'sex-role' theories began to transpire.

Sex-role theories emphasize both biological and social aspects of gender development, and largely positions early childhood socialization has having a salient influence on one's gender development (Rosenberg, 2009, p. 464). Sex-role theory, or simply 'role-theory', was originally praised for its acknowledgement on social influences on gender development (Connell, 1985). Moving past biological determinism as outlined above, role theory can be conceived as a form of what Connell refers to as "social determinism"; highlighting the ways in which individuals become confined to gendered stereotypes and exemplify these throughout their lives (Connell, 1985, p. 263). However, Connell notes that this notion becomes problematized once we inspect the ways in which conformity is rewarded and transgression is dissuaded. In discussing why boys are acclaimed for behaving aggressively, but chastised for behaving 'girlish', Connell argues that individuals administer sanctions as a result of voluntarism; in other words, people actively choose to abide by and reinforce gendered mores. Thus, the role of society becomes curtailed in relation to the role of the individual. Moreover, Connell avows that role theory takes gendered 'roles' for granted in that it lacks a historicization of these roles. To Connell, role

theory focuses on sex roles as they already exist and does not explore the ways these roles have emerged within socio-historical context; thus, role theory does not "grasp social change as history, that is, as transformation generated in the interplay of social practice and social structure" (Connell, 1985, p. 263). Although, sex-role theory did provide spaces for scholarly analysis, scholars have criticized its insinuation that roles become static after early childhood socialization and are not generally amenable to change thereafter (Rosenberg, 2009, p. 465). Furthermore, biological and sex-role theories have been widely criticized in their negligence in recognizing cultural and social variation (Blaise, 2005, Fausto-Sterling, 1992; Thorne, 1997), in addition to the fact that studies promoting this view homogenize individuals and elicit methodological concerns and inconsistencies (Bohan, 1997; Connell, 1987). They also fail to consider facets of social change in societies, as understandings of 'womanhood' and 'manhood' have changed drastically from the 1800s to the 1900s (and now into the 2000s) (Blaise, 2005).

Social theories of gender.

As a result of these limitations, scholars have moved toward analyses of gender that are less rigid and more historically, politically, and socially informed. Following the inception of sex-role theory, socially-based theories have expanded exponentially. Moving away from viewing gender as a biological trait, many scholars fervently developed social constructionist perspectives of gender. Social constructionist perspectives assert that gender is, as the title suggests, 'socially constructed' and, thus, embedded within social contexts, manifested through social relations, and reflective of social norms (Hill, 2006), and precipitated through interactions with others as opposed to being a 'natural' element of our existence (Kessler & McKenna, 2006). The underlying premise of social constructionist theories is that gender arises through social relations as opposed to manifesting within the individual. In other words, gender is constituted

through the embodiment of normative ideals of masculinity and femininity as individuals use 'signs and symbols' of society to develop their gender identities and expressions (Mayeda, 2009). As such, gender is often evaluated and modified as it is embodied by individuals based on shifting meanings in society (Martin, 2011). It is important to note that perspectives arguing that gender is socially constructed do not suggest that gendered traits established within societal and cultural discourses become intrinsic to individuals through their embodiment of these traits, but rather that gender primarily serves as a construct through which particular characteristics are transmitted and thrive in social interactions (Bohan, 1997). In constructing the idea of gender, we construct the 'reality' of gender itself. Thus, gender is not a pre-existing entity that inhabits individuals irrespective of social dynamics. Rather, 'truths' of gender arise only within the social relations in which they are created (Bohan, 1997). Furthermore, understandings of gender as a social construct do not infer that gender is a docile product of society over which individuals lack control; rather, these perspectives view gender as possessing the capacity for change as social contexts are in a constant state of flux (Mayeda, 2009).

Regardless of the particular characteristics of individual perspectives on gender as a social construct, most tend to be informed by the following five underlying principles as outlined by Rosenberg (2009). First, social theories regard gender as a social institution; meaning that it is organized by society. As such, gender is reckoned as being socially constructed; gender differences on the basis of categorical sex are viewed to be a product of social processes. Secondly, social theories purport that gender is manifested within groups and social structures, rather than at an individual level. This does not overlook the significance of individual experiences in the development of one's gender, but, rather, analyzes the social forces that influence these experiences. Thirdly, social theories transcend analyses of gender from the

confines of the family to the broader socio-political context involving other institutions such as education, law, economy, and religion. Fourth, a central component of social theories are their foci on power; these theories view gender as being embedded within social structures, processes, and relations of power. Through this focus, gender is examined in relation to hierarchical power organizations and how these serve to establish positions of gender privilege and oppression. Lastly, social theories are generally prescriptive in that they advocate for social change. Considering that these theories, again, view gender as a social institution, most underscore the importance subverting the status quo, and seek to establish change at an institutional or social level. It should be noted that although the movement toward social theories of gender has been incredibly extensive in both scholarly theorizations of gender as well as understandings in the general public, biological theories of gender are still existent at this juncture.

When reflecting on the efficiency social constructionist theories of gender in establishing a comprehensive understanding as to why gender has developed in a particular way or how normative conceptions of gender shift with time, some have paved the way more than others. Indeed, a rigorous understanding of the intricacies involved in the navigation of social relations of power regarding gender subjectivity is not in present many inaugural social understandings of gender (Blaise, 2005). This is where perspectives such as feminist poststructuralism facilitate more critical understandings of the place of power, language, discourse, subjectivity, and agency in relation to gendered experiences and gendered inequality (Blaise, 2005). Feminist poststructuralism is indeed the theoretical framework informing this dissertation and will be examined in further detail in the next chapter on the theoretical and methodological underpinnings of this research. At this point, it is important to contextualize how biological and social theories of gender materialize in discussions surrounding gender variance and non-

conformity. In the following section, I underscore the rifts that exist between these two areas of thought in relation to theorizing around gender variant and transgender individuals.

Theoretical debates on gender variance and transgender.

In the previous sections, theorizations of gender have been largely discussed with reference to cisnormative understandings of gender. Discussions around gender variance evoke similar dichotomous discourses regarding biological and social theories, yet there are particular idiosyncrasies that are salient to underscore. The authenticity of gender variant individuals and transpeople as legitimate and autonomous gendered beings is an area that has garnered extensive disputes both historically and contemporarily. Similar to the notion of 'gender' in the general sense, there have been various ways of conceptualizing *trans*gender that encompass either biological or social origins; and sometimes a combination of the two. Questions surrounding whether transgender is biological or social have produced a stimulating tension between scholars and theorists who conceive of gender as social and those (namely trans feminists) who argue that it is biological, and thus, an aspect of being (Wilchins, 2002). Although the intricacies of this debate are not central to the scope of this research, it is nonetheless critical to briefly contextualize these arguments to provide a more grounded understanding of the fundamental challenges faced by gender non-conforming and trans individuals. I will also note that for the sake of brevity, Judith Butler's work on 'doing' gender will not be extensively outlined here as it will be taken up in more detail at a later point in this dissertation.

At the time modern Western transgender practices gained momentum in the 1950s, second-wave feminism was becoming one of the primary movements to address notions of transsexuality and transgender (Hines, 2007; Stryker, 2017). For second-wave feminists, the notion of transgender elicited several salient issues regarding understandings of 'sex' in relation

to gender which have been eternally integral to feminist inquiry (Hines, 2007). In the height of this exposure, some radical feminists began to express criticism towards the acts of cross-dressing, hormone therapies, reconstructive surgeries, and 'passing' (Stryker, 2017). These feminists fervently conceived of transgender practices as a guise to evade gender-based oppression in society. Radical feminist perspectives swiftly expanded throughout the late 1980s and early 1990s and debates of transpeople's legitimacy became a primary focus in community and scholarly spaces (Hines, 2005). The number of feminists who have contributed to these discourses is relatively vast, however two particularly notable feminists who have actively propagated anti-trans rhetoric include Janice Raymond — who is well-known for her 1979 text [revised in 1994] entitled *The Transsexual Empire: The Making of the Shemale*, which has provided an extraordinary impetus for anti-trans sentiments — and Sheila Jeffreys, who published her most recent provocative text in 2014 entitled *Gender Hurts: A Feminist Analysis of the Politics of Transgenderism*.

Raymond and Jeffreys are both well-known for their controversial arguments that trans 'ideologies' are harmful to others, with Raymond even presenting trans existence as akin to rape in alleging that: "all transsexuals rape women's bodies by reducing the real female form to an artifact, appropriating this body for themselves" (Raymond, 1994, p. 104); this is meant metaphorically in that said 'rape' is "accomplished by deception" (p. 104). Raymond refers to trans existence as a "falsification of reality" (p. xxiii) and describes transpeople as "medical victims of sex-role conformity" who undergo surgery as they are "so alienated from their bodies [...] that they think little of mutilating them" (p. xxiv). Jeffreys (1997) concurs and states that transsexualism is "a violation of human rights and should certainly not be uncritically accepted as socially transformative force equivalent to gay liberation" (p. 56) and that it "opposes

feminism by maintaining and reinforcing false and constructed notions of correct femininity and masculinity" (p. 57). In her more recent text, Jeffreys (2014) continually refers to transgender as "transgenderism" — which implies that it is an ideology rather than an aspect of being — and suggests that "the ideology and practices of transgenderism were invented by men" (p. 14). Jeffreys vehemently argues that 'trangenderism' has been constructed as a result of a joint collaboration between transpeople seeking bodily modification (also referred to as the "demanders") and the medical community. Jeffreys further contends that the pursuit of hormonal and surgical procedures is a symptom of the mental distress (i.e. gender dysphoria) that transpeople experience. She asserts that transgender children are a fabrication and refers to transgender as a "hugely harmful phenomenon" (p. 183) which hurts partners, family members, feminism, society, and transpeople themselves. Both Raymond and Jeffreys, as well as many of their acolytes, argue that 'authentic' gender identity is reduced to biological sex and subsequently position transpeople as manipulators of their bodies who use the medical system as a means of achieving a fraudulent sense of gender.

Through these discursive framings of trans existence, both transmen and transwomen have faced discrimination and marginalization from radical feminists. Transmen have regularly been accused of eschewing their lived social inequalities as women by attempting to achieve male power and privilege through their trans identities, and transwomen have been readily positioned as simply trying to elude stigmas associated with effeminate masculinity, and instead attempting to embrace femininity to evade this (see Raymond, 1979, 1994; Jeffreys, 1997). Moreover, feminists supporting these claims also assert that transwomen could not ever be akin to 'real' women as it is "biologically impossible" (Raymond, 1994, p. 10) to change one's sex, and due to the fact that they have often spent a significant portion of their lives as boys and/or

men, they have not shared the lived experiences as 'women-born' women (Hines, 2005; Stryker, 2017). Consequently, some have been known to refer to trans individuals as a betrayal to feminist objectives, and, thus, anti-feminist (see Raymond, 1994) as trans individuals are seen as reinforcing gender roles and, subsequently, as an impediment to eliminating and overcoming the gender system. Thus, a discursive framing was born that positioned transpeople as regressive 'dupes' that solely serve to maintain patriarchal relations in society and reify harmful binary gender architypes. These ideas continue to be taken up by anti-trans feminists and, in short, trans existence continues to elicit conflicting opinions surrounding legitimacy regarding the possession of gender categories and identities, as well as the legitimacy of 'sex'.

Feminists who support these claims are sometimes referred to as 'gender-critical' feminists meaning that they are 'critical' of gender in that they view it as working to conceal and sustain patriarchy and the oppression of women (Stryker, 2017). At other times these feminists are referred to as 'trans exclusionary radical feminists', otherwise known as TERFs —a term argued to be derogatory by those to whom it refers. Although the term TERF is primarily used by trans feminists, it was originally created by cisgender radical feminists in an attempt to distance themselves from transphobic discourses and practices and to simply emphasize that some feminists are inclusive of trans issues while others are not (Stryker, 2017). The rift between these [radical] feminists and trans activist feminists seems polarizing, however it should be noted that this divide is much more nuanced than it is often presented and that radical feminists have indeed been inclusive and supportive of trans activism. Williams (2016) explicitly distinguishes between 'TERFS' who she writes are often aligned with a "biology-based/sex-essentialist ideology" (p. 254), and those radical feminists who actively promote trans-inclusivity. She declares that the integrity of radical feminism becomes compromised when it is epitomized as

having transphobic objectives. Further dismaying is that by disregarding the radical feminists who have historically been in solidarity with transpeople "we participate in diminishing the very feminism that braved violence and possible death to ensure that all women—even trans women—were included in their work toward the liberation of women" (p. 257). Stryker (2017) also conveys that second wave feminism did encompass some of the most resistant attitudes towards trans individuals, however she also emphasizes that second wave feminists were neither homogenously nor predominantly antagonistic towards trans groups. Both Stryker and Williams avow that there has not been as much divisiveness between radical feminists and trans activists as has been popularized, and attest that much divisiveness exists between gender-critical feminists (i.e. 'TERFS') and radical feminists themselves.

As will be underscored in the section wherein gender variance is historicized, understandings of transgender and gender non-conforming individuals have shifted (albeit, in a non-linear manner) from conceptions involving psychosis, to conceptualizations of gender variance and transgender as a 'medical condition', to theorizations that question the actual legitimacy and authenticity of transgender individuals. As such, transpeople have largely served as *objects* of study in transgender research and scholarship in the early days of the transgender movement. Following this, however, they exercised much more agency in trans scholarship by assuming the role of researchers, academics, and writers, and contributed to the field through thoughtful and critical insight (Stewart, 2017; Stryker, 2006); this is where transgender studies becomes salient. According to Stryker (2006), transgender studies signifies:

> The academic field that claims as its purview transsexuality and cross-dressing, some aspects of intersexuality and homosexuality, cross-cultural and historical investigations of human gender diversity, myriad specific subcultural expressions of "gender atypicality," theories of sexed embodiment and subjective gender identity development, law and public policy related to the regulation of gender expression, and many other similar issues. (p. 3)

Furthermore, it "investigate[s] questions of embodied difference" and "is as concerned with material conditions as it is with representational practices, and often pays particularly close attention the interface between the two" (p. 3). In other words, transgender studies challenges cisnormative understandings of gender and examines the idiosyncrasies of the lived experiences of transpeople and how dominant discourses, power, and institutions influence trans subjectivity and positionality. Scholarship in transgender studies is often embarked on by and for transgender individuals themselves.

A notable moment in trans scholarship dates back to 1991 when transgender feminist and scholar Sandy Stone critically responded to Raymond's *The Transsexual Empire,* with her esteemed text, *The Empire Strikes Back: A Posttranssexual Manifesto,* which has served as a pivotal goad for the field of transgender studies. In this text, Stone calls out Raymond's transphobic rhetoric, however this is less so of a direct attack on Raymond, and more so a reclamation of trans subjectivity. Stone speaks to the misconceptions of trans subjectivity as she contextualizes the medicalization and pathologization of trans individuals regarding the rigid ways in which 'access' to trans status is granted without recognizing the complexities of lived experience. She considers this as akin to the ways in which men have stripped women from the agency of their own stories, voice, and experience in theorizations of women, and underscores the similarities of infantilization that both groups have experienced wherein they are constructed of as being too naïve to display an authentic subjectivity. Stone fundamentally asserts that in order to mitigate the erasure of trans subjectivity and for the authenticity of trans people to be recognized, there must be a disruption to the misleading binary discourses through which they have been defined. She encourages others to utilize Raymond's transphobic rhetoric to problematize and subvert binary discourses of gender to create a new 'genre' and diverse culture

of trans subjectivity. It was this single text that served as the impetus for the surge of transgender scholarship which was to succeed it.

Indeed, the 1990s are seen as marking a new wave of transgender scholarship (Stryker, 2006) where trans individuals themselves were *producers* of knowledge, rather than passive recipients. This wave encompassed a profound upsurge in trans awareness and a fairly fervent increase both in the positive representations of transpeople as well as in the number of individuals self-identifying as trans along with increased visibility and representations of transpeople in mainstream Western media that have been produced by transpeople themselves (Stryker, 2017). Transgender studies has expanded to not only raise awareness of trans communities, but also to explore the ways in which trans subjectivities are produced, and critically analyze discursive constructions of trans identities and expressions (Stryker, 2006).

Beyond the binary: Queer perspectives.

The conceptual distinction between gender (as socially constructed) and sex (as related to biology) was a critical advantage to have come out of feminism and transgender studies, however this did not directly problematize the conception that gender and bodies are still overwhelmingly categorized along binary modes (Girshick, 2008). As outlined in the section above, initially, transgender scholars' and activists' primary objective was to validate and legitimize gender identities and expressions that were in direct opposition to cisgender orientations; namely for transwomen and transmen. Thus, trans individuals who embodied orientations that do not adhere to dichotomous constructions of gender (i.e. polarized forms of masculinity/femininity) were not directly accounted for in these discussions. Moreover, biology (i.e. the body) was still seen as a central component in regulating one's assigned or affirmed gender (Girshick, 2008). The notion of this, in and of itself, is not problematic, however when

considering those for whom the body is *not* central to gender identity, this becomes increasingly complex. This is where the move from dichotomous transgender identities to more ‘queer’ understandings of transgender began to gain momentum.

The ‘queer’ movement has served to divide both feminists and transgender activists, as well as LGBTQI2SA scholars and LGBTQI2SA activists. This movement introduced new ways of conceptualizing gender, and subsequently, new forms of debate. Notions of ‘queer’ and ‘queerness’ are not universal or fixed and remain in flux. Jagose (1996) asserts that ‘queer’ is a category in constant formation and suggests that it “can have neither a foundational logic nor a consistent set of characteristics” (p. 96). Usage of the term ‘queer’ is also highly contextual and subjective. As Sedgwick (1994) contends, an individual’s use of the term queer to refer to themselves may differ from the way in which they use this term to reference to another individual. Indeed, the ambiguous and relational elements of ‘queer’ make it difficult to define. However, defining queer may not be necessary at all. As Sullivan (2003) puts it, defining ‘queer’ would be a fundamentally “unqueer thing to do” (p. 43). Rather than establishing a fixed definition of this term, it may be apropos to garner a broad understanding of what it entails. I employ Sedgwick (1994)’s description of the notion of ‘queer’ wherein she refers to it as an “open mesh of possibilities, gaps, overlaps, dissonances and resonances, lapses and excesses of meaning when the constituent elements of anyone’s gender or anyone’s sexuality aren’t made (or can’t be made) to signify monolithically” (Sedgwick, 1994, p. 7). As such, queer fundamentally dismantles conventional boundaries of ‘either/or’ in terms of sex, gender, and sexuality.

As stated previously, the 1990s were a pivotal time in which the onset of transgender studies was precipitated. Transgender studies fundamentally sought to establish the awareness of and rights for transpeople who had been historically marginalized and pathologized within both

academic circles and gender communities, and reclaim their trans subjectivities. The expansion of transgender studies in the 90s was significant in that it also subsequently evoked a significant increase in scholarship surrounding the 'queering' of gender as this is when queer studies began to gain increasing prominence in both academia as well as within activist communities (Stewart, 2017; Stryker, 2017). Although there exists more than a single conceptual lineage of what is now known as 'queer studies', this field largely emerged as a critical response to the classification of AIDS as a 'gay disease' and went on to expand to wider resistance to heteronormative [and homonormative] inequality, oppression, and social power (Stryker, 2017), and fundamentally transcended polarizing binary conceptions of sex and gender. Initially, queer studies strove to transgress mainstream thinking and disrupt taken-for-granted norms surrounding heteronormative and homonormative prescriptions of sexuality; or in other words, the assumption that heterosexuality is normative and superior to alternative forms of sexual identity [heteronormativity] (Killerman, 2017), and that there are 'ideal' or 'normative' ways to be gay or lesbian [homonormativity] (Bolen, 2016).

Queer studies is largely informed by queer theory; and although there are intersections between the two, they are also distinct terms. Queer studies is the general field of scholarship which broadly focuses upon various issues related to notions of gender, sex, and sexuality primarily pertaining to the LGBTQI2SA community. Queer theory is a critical orientation to researching issues within queer studies, which possesses a distinct theoretical framework. In the simplest of terms, queer theory challenges the notion of stable and binary sexes, genders, and sexualities, and does so by deconstructing dominant discourses of sexuality and gender that have inundated our understandings of these concepts (Jagose, 1996). Originally, queer theory was primarily focused around sexuality, and it later expanded to include notions of gender and gender

variance. Many scholars who work in the field of queer studies employ a queer theory framework to their research, however not all queer theorists solely work in queer studies.

Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, known as one of the founding scholars of queer theory, has been celebrated for her inaugural writing on queerness. In her highly esteemed text, *The Epistemology of the Closet* (1990), Sedgwick problematizes the ways in which sexual identity is understood on the bases of the gender of an individual's sexual object choice. She proclaims:

> It is a rather amazing fact that, of the very many dimensions along which the genital activity of one person can be differentiated from that of another […] precisely one, the gender of the object choice, emerged from the turn of the century, and has remained, as the dimension denoted by the now ubiquitous category of 'sexual orientation'. (p. 8).

In other words, she critiques the fact that regardless of the many proclivities that influence the many facets of sexuality, sexual orientation is curiously always reduced to the gender of the individual(s) that one pursues. Sedgwick refers to the dominant binary oppositions of sexuality and gender as an "endemic crisis of homo/heterosexual definition" (p. 1). She suggests that the homo/heterosexual definition is salient for those who are from the 'fixed homosexual minority', however this disadvantages and excludes those for whom sexuality is experienced on a spectrum. Importantly, Segdwick does not argue that there is a 'true' or 'universal' way in which sexuality materializes, but rather, she argues for 'a certain irreducibility' of sexuality and gender, and one that recognizes the performative effects of discourses in shaping our understandings of these concepts.

Queer studies' initial critiques of heteronormativity and homonormativity have served as a great impetus to transgender studies in the critique of cisnomativity (Messerschmidt, Martin, Messner, & Connell, 2018; Stryker, 2006) wherein trans and genderqueer individuals are seen to exemplify the ways in which dominant constructs of gender can be subverted and redefined. More importantly, much in the same way that queer studies elicited the recognition of the fluidity

and multiplicity that exist within the diverse range of sexual orientations, it has also influenced transgender studies to do the same in relation to gender identities and expressions. Thus, queer studies provides space to transcend conceptions of transgender as a homogenous group and underscores the diversity that exists in the spectrum of transgender identities (Henry, 2017; Hines, 2007). In principle, then, queer studies surpasses normative understandings of how gender and sexuality '*should'* materialize, and asserts that both gender and sexuality are much more complex than heteronormative and cisnormative notions of masculinity and femininity (Stein, 2018), often praising trans orientations that are ambiguous, fluid, unstable (Elliot, 2010).

Similar to that of Sedgwick, Judith Butler's work in *Gender Trouble* is also seen as pivotal to the field of queer theory. In deconstructing and problematizing the linear and binary ways that sex, gender, and sexuality are expected to materialize, Butler (1999) contends that "“intelligible” genders are those which in some sense institute and maintain relations of coherence and continuity among sex, gender, sexual practice, and desire" (p. 17). Moreover, she continues:

> The cultural matrix through which gender identity has become intelligible requires that certain kinds of "identities" cannot "exist"—that is, those in which gender does not follow from sex and those in which the practices of desire do not "follow" from either sex or gender (p. 17).

Focusing more explicitly on gender, she goes on to argue that when particular gender 'identities' and bodies do not adhere to these norms, they are read as unintelligible as perceived as 'failures' and fundamental 'impossibilities'. Butler further exposes the contradictions and limitations that discourses of intelligibility possess and problematizes perceived correlations between sex, gender, and sexuality. Furthermore, she emphasizes the salience of the performative, regulatory, and discursive practices which shape the ways that gender 'identities' are navigated by subjects; a notion that will be taken up much more extensively within the analysis of this dissertation.

As such, queer theorists like Butler have transgressed biologically deterministic conceptualizations of gender both in terms of gender being reduced to sex, and also in terms of gender as rigidly dichotomous. In simple terms (as will be further elucidated within the analysis of this dissertation), if sex has been deconstructed as not being binary (Bettcher, 2009; Butler, 1990, 1993; Fausto-Sterling, 2000a; Overall, 2009, Weedon, 1987), then from a queer perspective, it can be deduced that gender cannot fundamentally be binary either (Paoletti, 2012). The theoretical shift here is apparent, moving from cisnormative conceptions of gender, to transgressing to the 'other' category, to denouncing binary categories altogether. Although the description herein appears to trace the emergence of queer theory as an undeviating transition from radical feminism and transgender theories, it is paramount to assert that this trajectory was not entirely linear as radical feminist approaches continue to inform feminist theory and politics, as do non-queer theorizations of trans subjectivities (Hines, 2007). Rather than replacing prior theorizations, queer theory and queer studies have principally added to theoretical conversations regarding trans existence.

A salient term to emerge from queer approaches to trans studies is that of the term *genderqueer*. Akin to the ways in which transgender and/or trans are umbrella terms for gender identities and expressions that are non-cisnormative, *genderqueer* is often employed as an umbrella term to refer to individuals who do not affiliate themselves with binary forms of gender (Killermann, 2017). Genderqueer is an identity on its own, and also a broader overarching category which encompasses various sub-identities (for example: bigender, gender-fluid, gender-neutral). Genderqueer also encompasses those who are in-between genders, a combination of different genders, regularly fluctuate between genders, or move beyond the notion of 'gender' altogether (Henry, 2017; Killermann, 2017; Richards, Bouman, & Barker, 2017).

Since genderqueer is an umbrella category, some prefer the specific term *non-binary*. Non-binary is similar to genderqueer in that it refers namely to those who align themselves outside of polarized classifications of girl/woman, boy/man, or, male/female (Girshick, 2008; Iantaffi, 2017; Richards, Bouman, & Barker, 2017), however it distinguishes itself from other identities that are also subsumed under the genderqueer umbrella. Those who identify as non-binary are not a homogenous group, however, as non-binary genders are an intricate series of identities both within and outside of dichotomous conceptions of gender (Clucas & Whittle, 2017). Indeed, there is a vast amount of diversity within and between trans, genderqueer, and non-binary. Importantly, some who identify as genderqueer also identify as trans — and some do not (Killermann, 2017), and, similarly, some who identify as non-binary also identify as trans — and some do not (Murjan & Bouman, 2017). Additionally, some genderqueer and non-binary individuals do seek medical intervention when affirming their gender — in both permanent and transient forms — while some do not seek any form of bodily modification and affirm their gender identities along non-surgical terms; in other words, the site of the body is not always integral to gender identity (Henry, 2017; Murjan & Bouman, 2017). The non-binary movement, in particular, is often presented as a new crusade and, although it is only now that it has begun gaining wider recognition, this movement has been underway since the peak of the transgender movement altogether. A key trailblazer in this realm is that of Kate Bornstein, with the 1994 book *Gender Outlaw: On Men, Women, and the Rest of Us*, which has been a monumental piece in the non-binary movement. The notion of non-binary gender and gender 'outlaws' will be further taken up in the analysis of this dissertation.

The progression in the theorization of genderqueer and non-binary trans identities created vital spaces for trans individuals who felt restricted by dichotomous normative conceptions of

transgender subjectivity. As such, the queer trans movement allowed for a plurality of trans identities and expressions, and inaugurated novice ways of conceiving of gender and its association with sex and the body. This movement was not without resistance, however. Some viewed queer approaches to gender as evoking a hierarchical relationship within the trans community wherein identities that were non-binary were seen as being highly valorized and, thus, more privileged than 'less transgressive' transgender identities that sought to align gender identity with sex and the body. Moreover, queer theorists who emphasize the social and performative aspects of gender have been criticized for demonstrating an inattentiveness to the lived subjectivities and material realities for transpeople who do not relate to a solely performance/performative-based experience of gender (Hines, 2007). Theorists such as Viviane Namaste, Gayle Rubin, and Rosslyn Prosser have problematized the implied queer notion that transpeople who identify outside of binary forms of trans identity are 'more transgressive' than those who do not. Indeed, particular theorists who adopt a queer approach to trans studies (such as Judith Butler, Sandy Stone, Kate Bornstein, Riki Wilchins, and Judith Halberstam) have been criticized by transgender theorists for misappropriating transgender narratives and exploiting them to further their own theoretical stances on transgression from the sex/gender binary (Elliot, 2010).

The queer emphasis on moving past the gender binary has sometimes been viewed as an effort to undermine the rights of particular binary-aligned transgender individuals to live as men and women and seek bodily modification in the process. Thus, some have deduced from queer theory that to be 'truly' transgressive, transpeople must forsake their right to bodily modification and subsequently reject the salience of the sex/gender congruence in the affirmation of their gender identity (Elliot, 2010). Queer theorists are not a homogenous group, however. In

adopting queer analyses of gender, queer theory does not seek 'erasure' of transmen and transwomen, but rather often simply strives to make room for a continuum of transgender where gender diversity provides spaces for formerly marginalized trans individuals (Elliot, 2010). In short, queer studies and transgender studies share a complex relationship with some even referring to queer studies as transgender studies' "evil twin" (Stryker, 2004) in that they both have originated based on a similar objective (to overthrow hegemonic discourses of heteronormativity), but can often face tensions in their differing theoretical foundations. As such, queer theorists are sometimes simultaneously positioned as in solidarity with trans folks, yet also in fundamental theoretical opposition to them as well (Elliot, 2010). Nonetheless, much in the same way that transgender studies has problematized cisnormative understandings of gender, queer studies has similarly troubled transnormative understandings of gender. Indeed, it is through the queer movement that discussions on gender variance became diversified.

Now that an overview of some of the major areas of thought surrounding gender and gender variance has been underscored, it is important to contextualize this by historicizing gender variance and explicating the ways in which it has been and continues to be conceived from a medicalized perspective. In the next section, I will provide this context, beginning with a focus on the pathologization that has unrelentingly framed it as deviant.

Historicizing Gender Variance

Diagnostic manuals.

Gender-variant and transgender orientations have been highly pathologized both historically and contemporarily. While documented existence of various forms transgender practices dates back to the Middle Ages (and likely prior to this), the classification and conceptualization of transgender is fairly recent and originally transpired in the early 19th century

within medical fields (Hines, 2007; Stewart, 2017). Initial understandings surrounding gender-variant and transgender expressions and identities was primarily established based upon psychiatric diagnoses (Stein, 2018), and originally arose from literature produced primarily by non-trans individuals (Stryker, 2017). The two primary internationally recognized manuals contemporarily used in transgender diagnoses are: 1) the American Psychiatric Association's (APA) Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM), and 2) the World Health Organization's (WHO) International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Health Related Problems (ICD); the former being more widely used than the latter.

Although *transsexualism* was inaugurally listed in the DSM I in 1968 under the category of "sexual deviations", the concept of gender identity itself was not addressed until the third edition of the DSM (released in 1980) listed *gender identity disorder of childhood* (GIDC) under the category of "psychosexual disorders" (Drescher, 2014; Fausto-Sterling, 2012; Stryker, 2017; McDonald, 2006). Interestingly, this was the first version of the DSM published after homosexuality had been removed (Stryker, 2017). In a revised edition in 1987, a more general classification — gender identity disorder (GID) — was implemented and separated into two sets: one for childhood, and one for adolescence and adulthood. With each revision of the manual, GID was subsumed under various headings including: psychosexual disorders; disorders usually first evident in infancy, childhood, or adolescence; and sexual and gender identity disorders. Many trans activists [and queer theorists] resisted classifications of gender variance and transgender as a 'disorder' and advocated for an amendment both linguistically and categorically (Drescher, 2014; Stein, 2018). GID remained a classification until 2013 when it was renamed 'gender dysphoria' in the fifth edition of the manual (Drescher, 2014; Stein, 2018). This new classification was assigned an independent category of its own. Prior to this revision, GID

criteria focused primarily on a "strong and persistent cross-gender identification" (Cohen-Kettenis, & Pfäfflin, 2010, p. 510; Fausto-Sterling, 2012, p. 63; McDonald, 2006, p. 44) which served to stigmatize and pathologize non-cisnormative gender orientations. The revised version was the first edition to: 1) include non-binary categorizations of gender, 2) make reference to "assigned gender", and 3) to place emphasis on distress rather than psychosis (Lev, 2013). A similar trajectory occurred within the ICD, however rather than replacing GID with Gender Dysphoria, the ICD-11 listed the term 'Gender Incongruence' in its most recent edition (Drescher, 2014).

'Reparative therapies'.

As noted, gender variance has been overwhelmingly associated with notions of pathology and deviance. Historically, associations between gender variance and sexual pathologies were also overwhelmingly prevalent in medical and popular discourse. Throughout the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, homosexual desire and gender variance were often conflated; this was often conceived of as 'gender inversion' in which men attracted to other men were thought to be 'like' women, and vice versa (Stryker, 2017). Thus, conflations between sexual orientation and gender variance have since generated incessant resistance to non-cisnormative forms of gender, which largely influenced the pathologization of gender-variant orientations. Despite widely acknowledged distinctions between sexual orientation and gender identity, gender variant children continue to regularly be mistaken for children that are gay or lesbian (Friddle, 2017; Mallon & DeCrescenzo, 2006). Although gender identity can indeed share a relationship with sexual orientation, this is not universally true. Butler (2004) asserts that it is "difficult to say whether the sexuality of the transgendered person is homosexual or heterosexual" p. 142). Tauches (2009) also reminds us that, similar to cisgender individuals,

transgender and gender-variant individuals are heterogenous and comprise a multitude of sexual orientations including — but not limited to — gay, straight, lesbian, bisexual, asexual, pansexual, fluid, or no explicit orientation at all. A transperson could be gay or straight in the same way that they could be white or black, or able-bodied or disabled (Stryker, 2017). A discussion of sexuality and gender identity is beyond the extent of the inquiry of this research, however inaccurate conflations between sexuality and gender are paramount to consider here as attempts to 'reverse' gender variance have historically been influenced by objectives to prevent and counter non-heterosexual (i.e. gay and lesbian) behaviours.

As stated, in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, gender variance was conceived of as an indication of sexual 'deviance' (Mallon & DeCrenscenzo, 2006; Schrage, 2009; Stewart, 2017; Stryker, 2017), and, as such, was sought to be regulated. Similar to early theorizations of non-heterosexual forms of sexuality, initial Western and European theorizations of gender variance were inaugurated within medical fields (Hines, 2007; Stewart, 2017). In fact, "many of the same diagnostic criteria used to justify a diagnosis of Gender Identity Disorder [were] also supposed "cues" to a gay or lesbian identity" (Mallon & DeCrenscenzo, 2006, p. 231). Moreover, in line with anachronistic methods of 'reparative' therapies for gay and lesbian individuals, those seeking to 'reform' gender 'deviance' also followed suit. 'Reparative' therapies, more commonly referred to as conversion therapies, began in the late nineteenth century as 'treatments' predicated upon the conception that LGBTQI2SA individuals are deviant and require curative procedures to remedy their conditions (Mallory, Brown, & Conron, 2018). Individuals whose gender identities do not conform to cisnormative ideals were initially — and are still to this day — involved in many forms of 'reparative' therapies.

To dispel inaccurate associations between gender variance and psychosexual ‘disorders’, scholars have been explicit in their understandings of gender non-conformity and transgender as independent of sexuality (Shrage, 2009); however, pathologizing ‘reparative’ therapeutic measures nevertheless prevail. Based on the Generations Survey as well as the U.S. Transgender Survey, a report by The Williams Institute suggests that approximately 698,000 LGBTQ adults in the U.S. have endured conversion therapy at some point in their lives; 350,000 of which received therapies throughout adolescence. More specific to transgender populations, the report approximates that 51% of transgender individuals have undergone therapies at 18 years of age or younger. At this juncture, research suggests that approximately 57,000 LGBTQ youth are expected to receive conversion therapies from religious figures before the age of 18, while 20,000 LGBTQ youth are expected to receive conversion therapies from licensed professionals (Mallory, Brown, & Conron, 2018).

Although these therapies were originally more precarious and involved methods such as institutionalization, castration, and electroconvulsive therapies, methods today continue to range from talk therapy and cognitive behavioural therapy to aversive conditioning (National Center for Lesbian Rights, 2019). Conversion therapies have not only been found to be grossly ineffective, but also to result in devastating adverse effects on individuals including, but not limited to, poor mental health, low self-esteem, depression, anxiety, social withdrawal, and suicidality (Haldeman, 2008; Mallory, Brown, & Conron, 2018). Most disturbing is that advocacy for transgender conversion therapy is still present. For instance, Stock (2018) attempts to make a comparison between conversion therapies for LGB versus transgender groups by stating that conversion therapy for LGB individuals is unwarranted as sexual orientation is

neither malleable nor harmful; which implies that transgender orientations are the opposite (see Stock, 2018).

Indeed, in Canada, conversion therapy is still legal in many provinces. In fact, only a select few provinces and cities have outright 'banned' the practice. Currently, conversion therapy is banned in Manitoba, Vancouver, and Nova Scotia, while Ontario has restricted the practice by ceasing funding through Ontario's health insurance plan (Borsellino, 2018). Ontario's funding prohibition can only go so far, however. Indeed smaller (unregistered) organizations who engage in these practices independently are much harder to regulate since the practice itself is not illegal (Borsellino, 2018). The practice is not yet banned at the federal level as health and social service matters are handled at the provincial level. Recently, however, the federal government issued a letter to Canada's Minister of Justice insisting that the Criminal Code be amended so that the practice be banned across Canada (Bulman, 2019; Wells, 2019).

Surgical procedures.

As meanings associated with the term *transsexual* began to shift in the 1950s from a 'psycho-pathological' abnormality to a 'medical condition', approaches to 'treating' gender variant and transgender individuals also underwent a subsequent shift (Stewart, 2017). Approaches transitioned from *pure* 'conversion-type', psychotherapeutic, and psychoanalytic methods toward medical approaches involving hormone therapies and 'sex change' surgeries (Stewart, 2017). Although 'sex change', or sex reassignment surgeries (SRS), had initially begun in Europe in the 1920s, SRS experienced a significant expansion following the sensationalized case of Christine Jorgensen; the first individual to become popularized for having undergone SRS in the 1950s (Drescher, 2014; Stryker, 2017). It was the exposure of this case which inevitably resulted in a raised a different awareness of transgender identities within

popular, medical, and psychiatric domains, with SRS procedures becoming increasingly prevalent and increasingly accessible (Drescher, 2014; Hines, 2017).

The acceptance of medicalized approaches was far from immediate, however. This shift was occurring at a time during which the supposed links between sexual pathology and gender variance had attracted practitioners and psychiatrists to psychotherapeutic and 'reparative' methods in an attempt to 'cure' gender-variant individuals as discussed earlier. In fact, Jorgensen's procedure was initially not intended to result in a 'sex change', but rather as a 'cure' for homosexuality (Cohen-Kettenis & Pfäfflin, 2010). It was only after the case became popularized that the procedure was regarded and accepted as transitional. As such, physicians, psychiatrists, and clinical practitioners remained skeptical of performing SRS —which would largely be permanent— as they conceived gender identity 'disorders' to be indicative of pathology and psychosis rather than a medical condition (Drescher, 2014). Nonetheless, by the 1970s, surgical interventions were frequently employed and perceived to be the most ethical approach to 'treating' transgender individuals (Cromwell, 1999 as cited in Stewart, 2017). Yet, this was still not an absolute shift as conversion therapies, psychoanalysis, and other traditional 'treatments' were still implemented, whether as supplementary to medical approaches, or independent of them. The former terms 'sex change' and 'sex reassignment surgery', have since seen a transformation into far more affirming terms such as *gender realignment surgery*, *(gender) confirmation surgery*, and *(gender) affirmation surgery*. As well, more specific terms, such as *top-surgery* and *bottom-surgery,* have also followed to indicate the undertaking of particular procedures (Killerman, 2017). The next section provides a brief overview of some of the contentions associated with labelling and diagnoses.

Controversies surrounding diagnostic labelling.

The presence of gender identity diagnoses in the ICD and DSM reflect both the conflicting perspectives of medical practitioners and transgender groups, but also the opposing viewpoints within the LGBTQI2SA community itself (Drescher, 2014). The inclusion of gender dysphoria in the DSM in particular, has been met with varying responses: many advocate for an entire elimination of the term from the DSM, others demand further modification of the label and associated criteria, while some are resistant to its removal altogether (Butler, 2004; Drescher, 2014; Lev, 2013). In order to receive access to surgical procedures, individuals are currently required to receive an official diagnosis of gender dysphoria (formerly GID) (Farr, 2009; Henry, 2017; Stein, 2018). This was initially largely problematic prior to the re-classification of GID as gender dysphoria, namely due to the fact that receiving a diagnosis of GID was perceived to render one as abnormal and deficient. The GID classification was understood by many to infer that any cisgender orientations were 'natural', and thus, any orientations second to these were unnatural, pathological, and fundamentally deficient (Butler, 2004; Girshick, 2008). Asserting that transgender identities are disordered also infers that gender-variant orientations are not legitimate, which further serves to dehumanize these groups of individuals. In response to the term gender identity *disorder*, individuals argued that transgender identities are, in fact, quite *ordered*, albeit not in-line with cisnormative constructions of gender (Lev, 2013). Indeed, in the same way that many cisgender individuals often experience structure and equilibrium from their gender identities and expressions, so too do many gender non-conforming and transgender individuals.

The initial response to GID encompassed varying reactions from the trans community: although the classification was appeasing to some trans individuals who felt comfort in being diagnosed with a medical condition that could be treated, most found the classification as a

disorder to be categorically abhorrent (Stryker, 2017). Following the inception of the term gender dysphoria to replace GID, the association with a 'disorder' has become less pervasive, however many suggest that maintaining these listings in the DSM and ICD nonetheless perpetuate stigmatized assumptions of trans individuals given that the listing is in a manual of mental *disorders*. Classifications in texts as such serve to maintain classifications of trans and gender-variant individuals as having a mental illness or physical aberration considering that it is the diagnosis itself that serves to warrant access to medical services (Stryker, 2017). The 'illness versus cure' trope is very much entrenched within the process of diagnostic labelling as a requirement for 'treatment', which stigmatizes trans orientations irrespective of whether or not 'disorder' is in the classification title. Transgender activists often express resistance to the need for a diagnosis at all as they perceive the process of being explicitly labelled to be both redundant and abject (Henry, 2017). They assert that these labels and diagnoses do nothing more than perpetuate stigmatized notions of trans and gender-variant people. Contrastingly, others do not regard removal on the basis of stigmatization as being necessary as they do not perceive stigmatization itself to warrant an elimination of the condition from the manual. In other words, they acknowledge that most mental health conditions have continually been socially stigmatized, but reckon that their inclusion in diagnostic manuals serves a fundamental purpose; to remove *any* health condition from a diagnostic manual simply for the purpose of countering stigmas creates a counterproductive endeavour (Drescher, 2014). In refutation to these claims, it has been counter-argued that the collective stigmatization associated with both trans orientations *and* the association with mental disorders is what creates a particularly marginalizing experience; which itself is said to warrant a disassociation between gender identity and mental disorders (Drescher, 2014).

Stein (2018) contests the original classification of transgender identities as a 'disorder' is indicative of the label's initial objective to sustain cisnormative forms of gender and to 'normalize' trans individuals by aligning them as closely as possible to conventional forms of men//boys and women/girls to 'fix' their incongruence. Considering that objectives for undergoing surgical and hormonal procedures, have transitioned from methods by others attempting to 'fix' a pathology to methods that now are readily sought by transpeople themselves to confirm and, more importantly, *affirm* their gender identity, a diagnostic label is perceived as redundant and regressive to this movement by many. In regard to non-surgical procedures, some avow that diagnoses simply work to reinforce unethical and imprudent alternative techniques for 'treating' gender variance (such as conversion therapies outlined earlier) through which transgender and gender-variant individuals are encouraged to forfeit their desired gender identity and revert to their assigned gender (Drescher, 2014). Others further suggest that the inclusion of transgender identities in diagnostic manuals is nonsensical for the reason that gender non-conformity and gender variance are fairly prevalent (Stein, 2018). To these individuals, conceptions of normative gender identities are constructed by socio-political contexts; thus, by including gender identity labels in a manual of mental disorders — which was also created in-line with cisnormative prescriptions — this only serves to reify ideals that have been manufactured by society. It should be noted that many medical and health care professionals attest that their primary goal is often simply to alleviate negative feelings and discomfort associated with dysphoria, and mitigate the experienced incongruence between the mind and body of their clients (Giordano, 2014).

Individuals receiving diagnoses to qualify for surgical or hormonal procedures, must also attest that there has always been and will always be a permanence to the gender they purport to

be (Butler, 2004; Stein, 2018). Thus, it is understood that these 'treatments' are generally intended to have a permanent result and that these procedures are not intended to be a transient undertaking (Butler, 2004; Stein, 2018). As such, individuals who may identify as non-binary, genderqueer, gender-fluid, gender-questioning, or agendered are neither accounted for nor acknowledged in the diagnostic process. Moreover, although the emphasis of the diagnosis on 'distress' has been positive in the sense that the listing does not primarily focus on gender identity, emphasizing 'distress' serves to create a generalized assumption that trans and gender-variant individuals *will* and *should* experience distress — or 'dysphoria' (Butler, 2004). Some further argue that this implies that it is the gender dysphoria *itself* that is the cause of distressing feelings, rather than the ways in which gender-variant and trans individuals have continually been stigmatized and marginalized by society (Farr, 2009). This type of rhetoric, then, serves to normalize feelings of distress associated with gender variance — which further privileges cisgender orientations and marginalizes trans identities — rather than problematizing the socio-political factors that influence these dynamics in the first place.

The most recent revisions to both the ICD and DSM have been completed in an effort to abate stigmatizing constructs of non-cisgendered orientations, as well as to mitigate barriers to the accessibility of surgical and hormone services (Drescher, 2014), however it is evident that further revisions are necessary to conciliate those in the trans community. The primary reason for those wanting to uphold a gender identity diagnosis, particularly in the DSM, is to impede the potential loss of reimbursements and insurance coverage for procedures (Butler, 2004; Drescher, 2014). Gender identity diagnoses provide resounding support for medical procedures as a medical necessity for trans individuals, which is indeed necessary as the legitimacy of trans identities are still very much contested by those in power to provide these services (Butler, 2004;

Drescher, 2014). Without a diagnostic label, attaining medical and surgical procedures would be particularly challenging given the reluctance of medical practitioners to provide services without receiving a formal diagnosis. Alarmingly in the UK, transpeople have been refused treatment even *with* a diagnosis, and instead up to one in five transpersons have been pressured into undergoing conversion therapy (Elks, 2018). As such, the most disquieting concern by far is what a revision to or elimination of gender identity diagnoses would elicit for those seeking gender-related health care services. Some are insistent that an elimination of gender identity diagnoses would not inhibit the receipt of treatment in the same way that individuals can access prescriptions and medical procedures for various conditions that are not listed in diagnostic manuals (Girshick, 2008). Indeed, Stein (2018) emphasizes that a removal of gender dysphoria from the DSM will not likely result in a cessation of medical procedures, but rather that due to increasing tolerance and awareness of gender diversity, practitioners will be more likely to work with trans individuals in less pathologizing contexts and with better understandings of gender variance and gender fluidity. *How* this would precisely transpire, however, remains ambiguous.

Varying perspectives regarding the diagnostic classification of trans gender identities clearly stem from an extensive history of transgender pathologization, and the disputes continue to ensue. Scholars have taken up various perspectives on this conundrum as well. Butler (2004) discusses that those advocating for the inclusion or removal of gender identity diagnoses fundamentally seek the same outcome: transautonomy. She states that for those who wish to keep the classification to facilitate the process of receiving treatment, the label serves as a mechanism through which autonomy (via treatment) is achieved. Similarly, those who argue that the label should be abolished, view the removal as a pathway to autonomy in that transgender groups would no longer be diagnostically pathologized, which would serve to

liberate them from stigma and empower them as a community. Thus, Butler suggests that gender identity diagnoses "can be enabling, but they can also be restrictive and often they can function as both at the same time" (p. 77). She refers to this as the "paradox of autonomy" that impedes one's "gendered agency" (p. 101) and that the only real way to obviate this is to restructure social norms, social conditions, and the social world itself.

Fausto-Sterling (2012) writes expressively of the ways in which conceptualizing gender variance, particularly in childhood, is often an area of contention in stating that there is profound disagreement as to whether gender non-conforming children represent a 'disordered' population or are "merely one end on a spectrum of totally normal gender variability" (p. 65). Concurring with those who view trans identities as part of a gender spectrum rather than a 'disordered' condition, Lev (2013) refers to the presence of gender dysphoria in the DSM as a form of "medicalization of human diversity" (p. 290) which inhibits the civil rights of trans individuals as well as their "acceptance within the human family" (p. 291). She further states that the although the revisions of name, criteria, and category are a significant advancement for trans communities, the inclusion of gender dysphoria in the DSM-5 — essentially a diagnostic manual of *psychopathology* — represents a battle "only half won" and that trans identities will likely remain in diagnostic manuals "for decades to come" (p. 292) as the classification of gender dysphoria in the DSM preserves non-cisgender orientations as a mental health problem. Other scholars remain hopeful that prospective changes are afoot. Henry (2017) suggests that awareness and progressive thinking have expanded exponentially throughout the Western world in the past few decades. Henry underscores the fact that France successfully removed the listing of trans identity from the list of mental disorders in 2010 and suggests that other countries are likely to follow suit. As stated earlier, Stein (2018) also concurs that the elimination of gender

from diagnostic manuals would not fundamentally restrict access to medical procedures, and suggests that it is likely inevitable that gender dysphoria will eventually be removed from the DSM.

Contentions faced in regard to labelling and diagnoses are just the tip of the iceberg in discussions of gender non-conformity as the fight for transautonomy regarding gender identity diagnoses is a battle that remains ongoing at the present juncture. In the next section, I underscore how these controversies become further exacerbated in discussions of children, and I provide an overview of some of the central and ethical issues pertaining to gender variance and non-conformity in relation to childhood and adolescence.

Gender Variance in Childhood and Adolescence

Gender development.

The ways that childhood gender 'development' is understood vary according to the approach that one adopts; two major approaches to conceptualizing gender formation include developmental theorizations and social theorizations of gender development. Although a comprehensive exploration of these approaches is outside the scope of this dissertation, a brief overview of each will be provided below to contextualize this area.

Developmental theories of gender assert that gender development occurs during particular ages and stages of one's life. Often focusing on infancy and early childhood as periods wherein gender development commences, developmental approaches to gender utilize a time-course perspective wherein the temporal qualities of 'gender-related behavior' are emphasized (Eckes & Trautner, 2000, p.6). As such, developmental theorists tend to see gender development as fixed, linear, and universal, and generally purport notions of 'normal' childhood gender development while pathologizing gender formations that are outside of this.

Developmental approaches to gender formation generally do not account for the social, contextual, and cultural influences on gender formation (Eckes & Trautner, 2000).

Contrastingly, social approaches to gender acknowledge that children's conceptions of gender throughout childhood are contingent upon various external factors such as how a child has or has not been 'gendered' by others (or socialized according to dominant norms of gender 'appropriate' behaviour), and the ways in which a child internalizes and makes sense of the gendered world in which they live. Indeed, factors such as family dynamics, environmental factors, cultural characteristics, societal contexts, and exposure to the media are a few of the many various elements that influence one's understanding of the expectations associated with gendered ways of being (Blaise, 2005; Fausto-Sterling, 2012). Social understandings of gender purport that children come to first learn about gender and develop understandings of gender through their engagement with others and with society as they actively position themselves within society while they are concurrently positioned by others (Browne, N, 2004). Social paradigms of gender development, then, underscore the role of social, cultural, and institutional contexts in influencing the ways that gender is conceived by children. This is taken up further below.

Regardless of the way one perceives gender development and formation, it is clear that childhood is certainly a pivotal time in the formation of both a child's gender identity (Foss, Domenico, & Foss, 2013) as well as their understanding of gender in and of itself. Indeed, children of all gender identities may exude an awareness of their own sense of gender in early childhood (Girshick, 2008; Golombok & Fivuch, 1994, as cited in Keo-Meier & Ehrensaft, 2018); some as early as 18 months of age (Fausto-Sterling, 2012). Generally speaking, children commonly begin to express overall gender proclivities between the ages of 2-4 (Calahan, 2009;

Chatton, 2001; Fausto-Sterling, 2012; Giordano, 2014; Paoletti, 2012; Rivers & Barnett, 2011). This is usually a gradual occurrence and does not generally occur abruptly as children are constantly constructing their sense of gender from birth onwards (Fausto-Sterling, 2012). Children along all points of the gender constellation begin to understand their own gender subjectivities as well as what this means in terms of the larger society. For some, a sense of gender [identity] is very apparent early in life, for others it may be more gradual, fluid, versatile, and transient (Robinson, 2005), and for others, it may be fundamentally ambiguous.

Gender development and gender identity formation are not linear experiences, as gender identity and expression can change throughout life; however, children are often discursively informed that they must conform to a particular gender (namely, the one assigned to them at birth), and that this must be stable throughout their life (Fausto-Sterling, 2012). Although gender identity can indeed be constant and unchanging for some, this is far from the experience for many children as there is often an agile fluidity associated with gender construction making gender identification very versatile (Robinson, 2005). Claims stating that gender is static and fixed are not only inaccurate, but can also be harmful when navigating one's gender subjectivity. Moreover, the process of gender development does not only pertain to the development of one's *own* sense of gender, but also their sense of how gender should materialize more generally, which includes the understanding of the gender of others, the meanings of gendered expressions and endeavours, and the salience of gender itself within the larger social world.

Throughout childhood, many children learn to categorize behaviour and expectations based on expected gender 'roles' (e.g. linking photos of men with tools and sports equipment, and linking images of women with certain clothing items and kitchen utensils (Levy & Haaf, 1994, as cited in Fausto-Sterling, 2012). As children grow, they continue to actively expand this

knowledge and learn gender 'labels' (i.e. boy, girl), pronouns, and begin to make connections between gender, appearance, and behavioural characteristics (Chatton, 2001; Paoletti, 2012). As such, they often subsequently learn what their respective gender roles 'should' be and which expressions, behaviours, play choices, etc. are 'correct' for their assigned gender.

For instance, research has found play materials which emphasize domestic activities and nurturance (such as kitchen sets and dolls) and those which accentuate the salience of beauty to femininity to be associated with girls, while those emphasizing competition, physical ability, and aggression (such as cars, trucks, and action figures) have been associated with boys (Banse et al., 2010; Blakemore & Centers, 2005; Conry-Murray & Turiel, 2012; Kollmayer et al., 2018; Rizzo & Killen, 2018). Moreover, colours such as pink and blue have been ubiquitously associated with girlhood and boyhood (respectively) and children learn that there are gendered affiliations behind these colours (Yeung & Wong, 2018; Paoletti, 2012). These labels and cues are conveyed to children through the discourses and modalities including the media, parents, caregivers, educators, and peers, whereby and children learn that particular objects and behaviours are affiliated with particular genders (Banse et al., 2010; Freeman, 2007). As such, they utilize this information to make meaning of gender (Halim & Lindner, 2013).

Indeed, young children are often wholly cognisant of society's expectations of them based on their assigned gender, and generally use this information to navigate the social world (Blaise, 2005; Rivers & Barnett, 2011). Skelton et al. (2009) assert that this is an entirely active process. Children do not simply absorb knowledge regarding notions of gendered roles in a passive manner, but rather maintain an active position in constructing their perceptions of gender imposed by society and act upon these conceptions. Children learn what expressions, identities, and behaviours are deemed acceptable within their respective societal and cultural environments

and actively apply this knowledge when constructing gender identities of themselves as well as understanding the gendered roles of others (Robinson, 2005). Research indicates that children are more likely to behave in gender-conforming ways when in the presence of adults, while behaving in much more variable and diverse ways when adults are not present (Rivers & Barnett, 2011). Children attempt to express and embody gender in the 'correct' way to avoid stigmatization, marginalization, and reprimand (Blaise, 2005).

Indeed, the information children learn pertaining to the gendered affiliations of activities and behaviours including clothing (e.g. girls wear dresses), behaviour (e.g. girls are nice, girls are nurturing), and activities (e.g. boys build) (Campbell & Friedman, 2007) influences the ways that they act upon this knowledge based on their assigned gender. For instance, research has suggested that children make toy choices based on toys that are perceived to be labelled as congruent with their assigned gender. Children utilize implicit and explicit gender discourses and labels associated with play materials to both inform their own selection of toys as well as their expectations of the toy selection of other children (Lam and Leman, 2003; Martin, Eisenbud, & Rose, 1995; Starr, 2010). Gender stereotypes in children's television programming involving subjects like math have also been found to influence children's reification of these stereotypes as well as their motivational dispositions and attitudes towards mathematics (see Wille et al., 2018). Similarly, this may even extend to music as research has found that children's selection of musical instruments is often informed by which instruments they understand to be associated with their assigned gender, as they often eschew those that are perceived to be 'gender-inconsistent' in order to evade being teased, bullied, or disliked by peers (see Harrison & O'Neill, 2002).

In the same way that cisgender children identify and express themselves in-line with dominant cisnormative forms of gender, gender variant and trans children do so in contrast to this. In a world where all gendered ways of being are seen as 'normative' and a world in which hierarchal forms of gender is non-existent, we would not think to designate children's gender development as 'typical' or 'atypical'. However, given that Western society is indeed still rigidly cisnormative, terms such as gender 'non-conformity' and gender 'variant' are used with reference to what is peripheral to the 'norm'. Gender non-conformity can appear at any stage or age of life and is, in many ways, comparable to the progression of cisgender identity development (Keo-Meier & Ehrensaft, 2018). Indeed, all forms of gender identity are capable of being established early on in life, thus, notions of gender variance too can become present early on in childhood. Gender non-conformity can manifest in various ways; for instance, sometimes children will express an interest in and preference for play materials, clothes, and activities that are considered atypical for their assigned gender, they may identify with a gender other than that to which they had been assigned at birth (Giordano, 2014), and/or they may express gender dysphoria — feelings of distress, discomfort, or dissatisfaction with one's gender, and/or the feeling that one's natal body is not aligned with one's internal gender; i.e. one's 'sex' is incongruent with one's gender identity (Farr, 2009; Hines, 2010; McNabb, 2018; Stein, 2018). Research has perpetually demonstrated that gender non-conforming and gender variant children regularly find themselves being reprimanded or redirected by peers, parents, and educators and are often the victims of teasing and bullying (Gerouki, 2010; Luecke, 2011).

In considering the notion of gender variance, it is important to note that is neither a fixed nor universal experience. Firstly, since gender construction is often fluid and variable, 'indicators' of gender variance (such as those listed above) that are present in early childhood

may change as a child gets older. It may be that the child develops different forms of gender variance, or that they shift in that they align more closely with their gender assigned at birth. In any case, the ways in which a child's gender expressions or identity are observed in early childhood, are not necessarily an indication of that child's future gender expressions and identity. Secondly, not all adolescents and adults who identify and express themselves in gender non-conforming ways have experienced this in a linear trajectory throughout childhood. Although many gender variant and trans individuals recall experiencing feelings of gender variance by the age of 10-12 (Ehrensaft, 2018; Hines, 2007; Stein, 2018) some individuals only begin to experience gender dysphoria and/or gender non-conformity during or well-after puberty has commenced (Anderson, 2018; Hines, 2007). Thus, for some, gender variance may only first begin to present itself in adolescence or adulthood. This does not mean that these individuals did not have a sense of gender identity prior to this, but rather that they have been continuously forming this throughout their lives; gender identity formation is indeed contextual and diverse.

This is a salient point to emphasize as it primarily highlights the fluidity and variability of gender development, and counters the assumption that gender formation *must* commence in childhood. There is a pervasive misconception that if an individual identifies as gender variant and/or trans after the childhood stage has passed, that their experience is not genuine and will subside with time (Ehrensaft, 2018). Developing a comprehensive awareness of the diversity and fluidity of gender construction is a paramount step in dismantling discourses as such. Gender-variant and trans children and adolescents who experience feelings of gender incongruence and/or gender dysphoria may seek and require medical intervention to help mitigate these feelings and affirm their gender (Giovanardi, 2017). In the remainder of this chapter, in line with Giordano (2014), I use the phrasing 'children and adolescents' rather than

explicitly distinguishing between the two as 1) children achieve puberty at varying stages and 2) there is no official distinction between childhood and adolescence. I use these terms to refer to minors who may seek early medical intervention; two of which are treatment and therapy.

Treatment and therapy.

Two initial and rather controversial approaches that have been used to treat gender non-conforming children and adolescents include behavioural and psychoanalytic therapies (Giordano, 2014). These therapies — which utilize various methods to help children and adolescents 'overcome' their gender variance — have been largely criticized for their assumption that gender variance and non-conformity can be 'cured' or 'reversed'; this is problematic in and of itself as this fundamentally suggests that gender variance is something that *should* be 'cured'. These therapies were widely utilized in the late 19th and mid 20th century, however varying forms are still in practice today (see section on 'reparative' therapies); albeit less prevalently. At this juncture, supportive care for gender variant children and adolescents is still therapeutic in nature, however this has largely shifted from a 'curative' focus to one that seeks to support children and adolescents through discomfort and distress associated with gender dysphoria (Delemarre-van de Waal, 2014). Initial therapeutic treatments involving behavioural therapy and psychoanalysis were largely in place for the reasons that, firstly, childhood and adolescence were seen as a stage in which children and adolescents would be most receptive to 'reparative' type therapies, and, secondly, accessing medical intervention has continuously been seen as controversial due to reasons that will be outlined further in this section.

According to the World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH), these physical interventions can be subsumed under three categories: fully reversible interventions; partially reversible interventions; and irreversible interventions. Fully reversible

interventions generally include any type of puberty-suppressing hormone therapies so long as they are given soon after puberty begins. Partially reversible interventions include hormone therapies that provide hormones to children and adolescents who seek to 'masculinize' or 'feminize' their body. Some of these are able to be fully reversed, while others remain permanent. Finally, irreversible interventions generally encompass surgical procedures such as top-surgery, phalloplasty, and vaginoplasty (WPATH, 2012). A more detailed description of these procedures as well as the controversies they encompass is provided below. I describe the process of gender affirmation here in a linear fashion by discussing the progression from pubertal suppression, to gender-affirming hormone therapy, to gender-affirming surgery. It is important to note, however that this progression is *not* universal amongst gender variant children and adolescents, and a 'one-size-fits-all' approach cannot be applied to this group (Di Ceglie, 2014). Some children and adolescents may choose to undergo one or two of these procedures at most. The completion of one procedure does not inevitably lead to the pursuit or completion of others (WPATH, 2012). Moreover, similar to gender variant and trans adults, not all children and adolescents desire to seek medical interventions at all (Giordano, 2014). My reasoning for utilizing a linear approach in this section is simply to underscore the ethical issues associated with each stage and emphasize the general age requirements that are in place for many of these procedures. The notion of age is a very salient issue in the next section on pubertal suppression.

Pubertal suppression.

In the late 1990s a new, but nonetheless controversial, method of treatment for children and adolescents became available which involved the suppression of pubertal hormones (Delemarre-van de Waal, 2014). Puberty-suppressing hormones (colloquially known as puberty blockers) generally inhibit the development of pubertal hormones such as estrogen and

testosterone through the administration of gonadotrophin-releasing hormone (GnRH) analogs (Delemarre-van de Waal, 2014; Giordano, 2014; Giovanardi, 2017). Puberty suppressants are addressed in international guidelines, however there is no worldwide consensus on the Standards of Care (SOC) of the WPATH and the Endocrine Society guidelines (Delemarre-van de Waal, 2014; Giovanardi, 2017) and, as such, flexibility is often used by practitioners when applying these to their cases (Giorbano, 2014). Prior to a child beginning this form of therapy, the standards of care in the of the WPATH advise that they have been diagnosed with an extensive and intense history of gender dysphoria, that their gender dysphoria either developed or was exacerbated by the initial onset of puberty, any potential conflicting co-existing psychological, medical, or social issues have been addressed, and that informed consent is provided by the child and parent/guardian (if the child has not yet reached the age of consent) (WPATH, 2012). Thus, children and adolescents with severe and consistent gender dysphoria are 'ideal' candidates for this therapy. The decision to undergo pubertal suppression is often made by adolescents and their families along with the help of a team of psychologists, physicians, clinicians, and nurse practitioners, amongst others. This type of therapy is usually first administered very shortly after the onset of puberty and before the extensive development of secondary sex characteristics (Giordano, 2014). Specifically, WPATH (2012) recommends that children and adolescents reach at least Tanner Stage 2 of pubertal development prior to beginning pubertal suppression due to the fact that for some, gender dysphoria subsides with the onset of puberty. As such, it is critical to allow a child time to experience the initial inception of puberty so that they may make a better-informed decision related to the way they feel, yet it is still important to start this treatment early on to retain its reversible properties. Since puberty is variable, the administration of these hormones can begin as early as age 9 or 10, however it is most common between the

ages of 12-14. Hormone suppression is not a permanent halt, but is rather a temporary ‘pause’ to the hormonal effects of puberty; thus, making it a reversible intervention.

Pubertal-suppression is conceived of as a useful process for two reasons: firstly, it allows more time for adolescents to explore their gender proclivities and consider how they wish to proceed (i.e. to begin further hormonal therapies and/or surgical interventions, or stop treatment altogether), and secondly, should the child wish to continue with further treatments and eschew their natal pubertal characteristics, pubertal suppression facilitates this process as pubertal development has been suspended (Delemarre-van de Waal, 2014; Giordano, 2014; Giovanardi, 2017). In simple terms, it can be much more difficult, painful, and costly for one to modify their body once pubertal physical changes have transpired (e.g. the formation of the Adams apple, facial hair growth, breast development, voice changes, penile growth, menstruation, etc.). Moreover, for children and adolescents who feel that they are ‘trapped’ in the ‘wrong’ body, the progression of physical pubertal changes can have devastating effects as this can significantly exacerbate feelings of gender dysphoria and gender incongruence (Delemarre-van de Waal, 2014; Giordano, 2008; Giovanardi, 2017). As such, the administration of puberty-suppressing hormones can subsequently aid in mitigating experiences of bullying, dysphoria, and mental health issues (Giordano, 2008; Giovanardi, 2017). Thus, hormone suppression therapy can largely mitigate the challenges of further hormonal and surgical interventions as well as prevent additional challenges associated with socially transitioning. Children and adolescents are typically recommended to continue pubertal suppression therapy until the age of 16 (Giordano, 2008). Proponents of early intervention advocate that due to the reversible nature of pubertal suppressants, that these be administered at the very beginning of puberty (as opposed to at

Tanner stages 2-3) so that the next phase (gender-affirming hormone therapy) may commence earlier (Delemarre-van de Waal, 2014).

Gender-affirming hormone therapy.

If the implementation of pubertal suppression hormones is found to be successful and an adolescent wishes to pursue further intervention, the next step is generally hormone replacement therapy and involves the administration of estrogen to those assigned male at birth, and testosterone to those assigned female at birth (Giordano, 2008). Gender-affirming hormone therapy facilitates the experience of gender affirmation by inducing particular desired physical characteristics that are congruent with one's affirmed gender (Crall & Jackson, 2016; Irving & Lehault, 2017; Mahfouda et al., 2018). This process typically begins at age 16 for adolescents (Delemarre-van de Waal, 2014) and is only distributed once persistent gender dysphoria has been diagnosed, and the capacity to provide informed consent is established. In some countries, 16-year-olds have reached the age of majority and are, thus, legal adults who do not require parental consent for this procedure. However, for countries where the adolescent has not yet reached the age of majority, parental consent is also required and it is advised that medical experts also help to facilitate this decision (WPATH). Some practitioners will also require that the adolescent completes at least one year of puberty-suppressing hormones (if possible) prior to undergoing this form of therapy; however, for those who did not undergo puberty-suppression, this may be their first stage of medical intervention.

Since every adolescents' situation is contextual, depending on the severity of the gender dysphoria and the age of initial pubertal onset, some may request that gender-affirming hormone therapy begin prior to the age of 16. The Endocrine Society and WPATH have recommended that in these cases, the individual work closely with medical experts and clinicians to assess if

this is an advisable and safe possibility. Whenever exceptions are made to international guidelines, it is recommended that experts work closely with children and adolescents and their families to determine the best course of action (Giorbano, 2014). This is usually done in cases where gender dysphoria is found to be particularly distressing and persistent and when the onset of gender dysphoria began particularly early in childhood. As stated previously, gender-affirming hormone therapy is subsumed under the category of partially-reversible medical interventions. This means that some of the effects of this form of therapy (for example: a deepening of the voice, wider hips, increased height) will not wane if therapy is terminated (Delemarre-van de Waal, 2014). As such, the provision of informed consent is particularly critical as certain results are intended to be permanent. As is the case with pubertal suppression, hormone therapy is a pivotal tool in curtailing adverse mental health issues (Crall & Jackson, 2016). Children and adolescents commonly also receive psychological care throughout the processes of pubertal suppression as well as gender-affirming hormone therapy to alleviate feelings of apprehension, to support them in making well-informed and autonomous decisions and to discuss the anticipated changes that may take place and how to deal with these both personally and socially (Delemarre-van de Waal, 2014; Giordano, 2014; Giovanardi, 2017).

Gender-affirming surgery.

Once pubertal suppression and gender-affirming hormone therapy have been successfully undertaken, the final stage of medical intervention for those seeking further intervention usually involves surgical procedures. Since this stage falls under the category of irreversible intervention, protocols are increasingly stringent, and far more precautions are taken for adolescents. Gender-affirming surgery can include surgical procedures to ‘feminize’ the body such as orchiectomy, penectomy, vaginoplasty, clitoroplasty, and labiaplasty (WPATH, 2012).

Procedures administered to 'masculinize' the body include, but are not limited to, hysterectomy, vaginectomy, scrotoplasty, and phalloplasty (WPATH, 2012). These procedures help individuals affirm their gender by physically modifying their bodies to better align with their internal sense of gender identity. As mentioned previously, not all individuals pursue gender-affirming surgery after seeking pubertal suppression and/or gender-affirming hormone therapy, however for those that do decide to continue with medical intervention, gender-affirming surgeries are often a medical necessity (WPATH, 2012). As such, for many gender variant and trans individuals, gender-affirming surgery can provide a completed sense of self and promote better well-being and overall health and adjustment in relation to one's affirmed gender.

The Endocrine Society and WPATH both advise that medical practitioners and clinicians only recommend gender-affirming surgery after the individual has a diagnosis of gender dysphoria, has undergone a minimum of 1 year of continuous hormone therapy (unless undesired or unnecessary), is able to provide informed consent, and has reached 18 years of age or the legal age of majority in their country. Reaching the age of majority is particularly emphasized for genital (i.e. bottom surgeries); adolescents may be able to access chest (top) surgery prior to this age, but will need to consult with medical experts to assess their physical and mental health status. Similar to the guidelines for pubertal suppression and gender-affirming hormone therapy, there is flexibility in how guidelines pertaining to surgical procedures are implemented as there remains a lack of consensus on many issues pertaining to the treatment of gender variant and trans children and adolescents. Some countries apply looser requirements for gender-affirming surgeries, while others remaining more stringent. In Ontario, Canada, for instance, to be approved for [chest] confirmation surgery, one must specifically: receive two assessments from a doctor or nurse practitioner indicating that there is a diagnosis of persistent gender dysphoria,

and also must have completed 12 consecutive months of hormone therapy. For genital confirmation surgery, one must also have lived 12 continuous months in the gender one identifies with (Service Ontario, 2016). There have been calls to allow children and adolescents access to gender-affirming surgeries prior to reaching the age of majority, however at this juncture, research informing the best practices to surgeons and medical professionals regarding surgical interventions of minors is relatively scant (Crall & Jackson, 2016; Giovanardi, 2017; Mahfouda et al., 2018). Ethical issues pertaining to all three types of medical interventions in childhood and adolescence are outlined below.

Ethical issues.

Given the conflicting perspectives on gender variance and trans subjectivities general it is hardly surprising that conflicting viewpoints also exist when discussing treatments for gender variant and trans children and adolescents. Historically, trans individuals were required to reach the age of 18 to receive any form of gender-affirming medical intervention, however, due to the increasing number of gender variant and trans children and adolescents requesting care at progressively younger ages, medical practitioners and clinicians have begun to offer these interventions much earlier (Cohen-Kettenis, Delemarre-van de Waal, & Gooren, 2008; Olson, Forbes, Belzer, 2011). The demand for earlier interventions is partly due to the increasing awareness around trans children and adolescents, however it is also due to the positive results and increasing knowledge that have been generated on the benefits of interventions and care for trans children and adolescents in early life. Two overarching themes across all three forms of intervention involve whether or not children and adolescents are capable of making fully-informed decisions when navigating these interventions (Delemarre-van de Waal, 2014) as well as any adverse physical effects early interventions may pose. A brief summary of contemporary

arguments surrounding the ethics and controversy of early intervention is provided below. This section is not meant to respond to these ethical dilemmas (as the scarcity of current research impedes this), but rather to provide insight into the current context of early medical intervention.

Gender identity development.

Resistance to early medical intervention for gender-variant and trans children and adolescents comes in many forms. One form of resistance involves the argument that gender identity development is not fully complete until puberty has abated. For example, the American Psychiatric Association (APA) argues that children's experiences with anatomic dysphoria are not as persistent as that of adolescents and adults and that their dysphoria may subside with time. Thus, although the APAs shift in classifications from 'gender identity disorder' to 'gender dysphoria' within the DSM-5 may be less pathologizing, the emphasis on transience subsequently invalidates the legitimacy of gender non-conforming children. Indeed, many argue that diagnoses of gender dysphoria cannot be accurately given until the child or adolescent has at least reached advanced stages of puberty or not until puberty has wholly subsided (Giovanardi, 2017). This concern namely problematizes the use of puberty suppressants as well as gender-affirming hormone therapy, but is also present in discussions of gender-affirming surgery; primarily in cases where this is done relatively early. Arguments stating that diagnoses of gender dysphoria in childhood and adolescence are premature have been somewhat addressed in assertions that chronological age does not necessarily coincide with one's internal experience of gender as gender development is fluid and variable (see Fausto-Sterling, 2012; Robinson, 2005). Thus, there is no guarantee that a child will or will not experience a particular milestone in gender development by a certain age.

This has been touched on earlier in this chapter, wherein it was stated that gender does not necessarily develop in a linear manner as gender identity can change throughout life. Some will have an affirmed sense of gender identity early in life, for others this may occur past childhood and/or change throughout the course of one's life, and others may never identify with gender at all. However, notions of gender exploration, curiosity, and variability in childhood and adolescence are quite different from the notion of having a firm sense of gender identity and experiencing intense feelings of gender dysphoria. Consequently, this becomes less of an issue of when gender identity should develop, and more of an issue of validating and providing access for those who *do* have a developed gender identity prior to experiencing puberty, and who wish to affirm this through medical facilitation.

Furthermore, it should be noted that many children and adolescents often do present signs of gender dysphoria before the onset of puberty (Ehrensaft, 2018; Giorbano, 2014; Hines, 2007). A point that will be taken up in the next section, but is relevant to state here is that those who demonstrate the most extreme and persistent forms of gender dysphoria are typically the strongest candidates for pubertal suppression, and subsequently gender-affirming hormone therapy, as they are the ones who demonstrate the most consistency in maintaining their affirmed gender well-past the pubertal stage (Giorbano, 2014; Steensma et al., 2013). As such, children and adolescents who experience intense and continuous gender dysphoria in early childhood are the ones who commonly persist in their transition through adulthood (Giorbano, 2014; Steensma et al., 2013) making their gender dysphoria and affirmed sense of gender identity very real. Thus, this clearly underscores the salience and urgency in early intervention for those who exhibit intense gender dysphoria in early childhood and who are persistent in their requests for medical care.

Persisters and desisters.

In medical and clinical realms, gender dysphoria has largely been categorized along two dimensions: persistence, wherein gender dysphoria in childhood persists into adolescence and adulthood; and desistance, wherein gender dysphoria appears present in childhood but abates during or shortly after adolescence usually resulting in the individual identifying with assigned gender (Steensma et al., 2013). Another predominant area of contention in regard to early medical intervention is that pubertal suppression and hormone therapy may be overly premature given that there is a substantial number of children and adolescents who desist in their gender dysphoria following puberty (Giovanardi, 2017). Research has found that a significant minority (2-27%) of children and adolescents who experience gender dysphoria will continue to do so after puberty (see Steensma et al., 2013). The primary concern here is that children and adolescents may experience regret should their gender dysphoria and/or incongruence desist and they decide that they no longer desire medical and surgical modifications.

This is a valid concern and it is acknowledged that gender dysphoria does indeed desist after puberty for many and may also desist after they have sought and received hormonal treatments. The consequences of this outcome are not overlooked and that this is indeed recognized to be a significant shortcoming of early medical interventions. However, although research on persistence and desistence of gender dysphoria is relatively limited, findings to elicit distinct characteristics of persisters and desisters that are argued to alleviate apprehension related to early medical intervention. In line with much previous research, Steensma et al. (2013) found several distinctive characteristics between the two groups. Compared to desisters, persisters generally expressed much more intense feelings of gender dysphoria in childhood, persisters generally engaged in greater instances of non-conforming behaviour, and persisters indicated that

they *were* the ‘other’ gender, rather than *desiring* to be the other gender. Thus, remaining cognizant of these distinct behaviours and traits of gender-variant children is also critical when exploring each case. Steensma et al. (2013) emphasize the salience of explicitly asking dysphoric children questions related to these characteristics (e.g. what gender they are) when assessing the likelihood of the persistence of gender dysphoria. Again, this becomes less of an issue as to how many children desist in their gender dysphoria after puberty, and more about validating those who do exhibit traits characteristic of persisters, and exercising particular caution and care when working with this population as adverse effects are potentially possible.

Adverse effects and benefits.

Another aspect of early medical intervention for gender dysphoric children and adolescents involves concerns over the potential adverse effects pubertal suppressants, in particular, may have on the body’s development in terms of bone mineralization and brain development (Giovanardi, 2017). Initially, the first adolescents who received puberty-suppressing hormones had been extensively far in pubertal development (Delemarre-van de Waal, 2014). More recently, however, guidelines have shifted to allow access to this intervention to begin soon after the onset of puberty, which means that children and adolescents are beginning this treatment at substantially younger ages which is why this has become of increased concern more contemporarily. At this juncture, research on the effects of pubertal suppression on bone mineralization and brain development is still in its infancy, thus far more research is indeed required before these arguments can be fully addressed. However, as more research becomes available it is increasingly understood that puberty suppressants do not pose a risk to bone mineralization and bone development in that termination of suppressants and/or administration of hormone therapy thereafter will result in a ‘catch-up’ phase; further research is

still required for brain development (Cohen-Kettenis, Delemarre-van de Waal, & Gooren, 2008; Giorbano, 2014; Giovanardi, 2017). Indeed, aside from inconclusive results on adverse effects on mood, research continues to suggest that, when done correctly and under the supervision of medical experts, gender-affirming hormone therapy is relatively safe and poses minimal risks of adverse side effects (Weinand & Safer, 2015). More research is needed now that treatment is being pursued at increasingly younger ages, however.

It is clear that the scarcity of research into early medical care for dysphoric children and adolescents makes it challenging to appease the various arguments presented. Despite this dearth of literature, current available research from the past 10 years has underscored the benefits and effectiveness of early medical intervention in relation to psychological well-being; much of which has been outlined in this section. Studies also indicate that the pursuit of medical intervention in childhood and adolescence has resulted in improved mental well-being throughout pubertal suppression, an increasingly affirmed sense of gender identity, and the decline of gender dysphoria (Giorbano, 2014; Giovanardi, 2017). Moreover, it is argued that to *deny* medical intervention to children and adolescents who actively seek this care, may be detrimental particularly in the event that their gender dysphoria *does not* desist (Giorbano, 2014) Indeed, in delaying and denying children and adolescents early medical support, we can induce factors that only serve to harm them in the long-term.

By neglecting to take seriously the necessity of early intervention, not only do we engage in unethical practice, but we also put these individuals at risk of experiencing encumbering feelings of gender dysphoria, potentially increase the prevalence of mental health issues (such as depression and anxiety), risk the pursuit of treatment from unlicensed practitioners, needlessly complicate the process of seeking medical intervention in the future, and place these individuals

at greater risk for harmful behaviours and suicidality (Cohen-Kettenis, Delemarre-van de Waal, & Gooren, 2008; Giorbano, 2014; Giovanardi, 2017; Irving & Lehault, 2017; Olson, Forbes, & Belzer, 2011). As such, it is argued that the concrete adverse effects of denying treatment to children and adolescents who necessarily seek and require this care, outweigh the potential risks that pursuit of this treatment may pose (Giorbano, 2014). Thus, considering that options for gender variant and trans children and adolescents are grossly limited, rather than strictly gatekeeping access to hormone therapy, emphasis is stressed on working closely with children and adolescents and their families while positioning them as possessing autonomy and authority related to their gender subjectivities. Again, best practices are profoundly difficult to establish at this time since the implementation of these interventions is relatively recent; this is indeed an area to be re-visited as the insufficient research leaves more questions than answers at this juncture (Crall & Jackson, 2016; Giovanardi, 2017; Mahfouda et al., 2018).

It is paramount to emphasize these ethical issues surrounding the medicalization and pathologization of transpeople to underscore the realities of the lived experience of many gender non-conforming and transchildren and to contextualize some of the salient and controversial concepts that will be evoked throughout this analysis. As such, highlighting these ethical tensions is critical as they evoke important considerations as to how ‘access’ to certain gender subjectivities materialize in the ‘real world’; which will likely be salient for many gender variant child readers of the texts I analyze. Indeed, many gender non-conforming and transchildren will undoubtedly encounter many of these ethical considerations throughout their lived experiences.

In order to set the tone for the remainder of this research, I will now transition into the theoretical and methodological foundations of this dissertation. To reiterate, the research questions guiding this work are as follows:

- *How is gender discursively constructed within children's picture books on gender variance?*
- *How do characters constitute and navigate their gender subjectivities and subject positions within the narratives of the texts?*
- *Subsequently, what subject positions are available for readers to identify and align themselves with within these texts?*

Again, the first two of these questions will be addressed within the analysis chapters, whereas the final question will be addressed within the chapter on implications.

Chapter III: Theoretical and Methodological Underpinnings

Theoretical Framework and Key Concepts: Feminist Poststructuralism

This research project is informed by feminist poststructuralism; a theoretical perspective that has evolved from poststructuralism and postmodernism (Weiner, 1994). The term 'poststructuralism' is plural, and, as such, does not represent one particular theory, nor possess a single, fixed meaning (Blaise, 2005; Weedon, 1987). Poststructuralism, in the general sense, dismisses conceptions of a fundamental, objective, absolute 'truth', or, in other words, a universal reality (Frost & Elichaoff, 2014; Gavey, 1997). In this research, my usage of poststructuralism is rooted in feminist underpinnings and has a predominant focus on gender, as, according to Blaise (2005) "post structuralism becomes feminist when matters of gender and a commitment to change are of central concern" (p. 15).

Indeed, feminist poststructuralism (FPS) is conceived as the 'form' of poststructuralism that can facilitate various feminist objectives (Weedon, 1987), and provides a theoretical foundation through which an exploration of gender subjectivities in relation to language and the larger social world is achieved (Gavey, 1997). As such, feminist poststructuralism employs its ideology in investigations of social and political constructions of gender (Blaise, 2005). Feminist poststructuralist perspectives emphasize various, inconsistent, and fluid subjectivities and notions of agency (Osgood & Robinson, 2017), and observe historical discursive relations and social practices (Weedon, 1987). FPS also addresses the social and institutional context of textuality as a means to consider power dynamics of daily life (Weedon, 1987). Poststructuralists ponder questions surrounding how meanings change, how particular meanings have materialized as normative while others become inferior, as well as how power is constituted within language (Scott, 2003). Applying these inquiries to the foci of gender, FPS would ponder

these areas with a concentration on gender identity, embodiment, and expression. Since conceptions of gender vary between language [and discourse], poststructuralism acknowledges that meanings are engrained within these spaces (Weedon, 1987).

As can be deduced from above, a key focus of feminist poststructuralism is language. FPS sees language as a tool through which an analysis of social organization, social meanings, power, and individual consciousness can be acquired (Weedon, 1987). Language, from a poststructuralist lens, is not simply in reference to terminology, vocabulary, or grammatical principles, but, rather, it is a “meaning-constituting system” through which meaning is created and social conventions are structured; language is a mechanism through which people embody and conceive of their world (Scott, 2003, p. 379). Language is seen to embody what is, and is not, conceived as being socially acceptable within our respective environments, and is the mechanism through which established ‘truths’ about the social world are expressed (Weedon, 1987). Indeed, the ways in which individuals experience their social worlds is never independent of language (Gavey, 1997). Language both shapes and creates our conceptions of aspects within our worlds and produces contextual meanings. Through this process various terms and phenomena become valorized through language and, subsequently, sociocultural meanings become elicited. The notion of language in feminist poststructuralism is complex, however. FPS views language as being historically and socially embedded within discourse, and positions discourse as constructing meaning (Hines, 2007; Weedon, 1987). Thus, FPS looks at relationships between language, discourse and how these create meaning. Moreover, FPS dictates that language, in the form of opposing discourses, positions us as conscious thinking subjects, and permits us to understand and transform our social worlds (Weedon, 1987).

The notion of 'discourse' [i.e. the value-laden meanings engrained within language] is complex and will be taken up further in the section on methodology. However it is important to briefly consider how the notion of discourse is connected to poststructuralist theorizing. As mentioned, poststructuralism seeks to dismiss conceptions of an absolute 'truth' or universal reality. In discussing discourse in relation to this, Foucault (1980b) contends that "each society has its regime of truth […] that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true" (p. 131). He further expands on this point by speaking of discourses' 'battles for truth' which refers to the ways in which discourses compete based upon the "ensemble of rules according to which the truth and the false are separated" (p. 132). Thus, since individual discourses purport unequivocal understandings of themselves as true, they are subsequently in a form of 'competition' for dominance and power over notions of 'truth'. Discourses, then, fundamentally diverge from one another in that they posit varying 'truths'. Foucault is quick to clarify that this battle for 'truth' is not intended to suggest that there is a definite 'truth' to be revealed, but rather, it is a battle which concerns the status of 'truth' and the sociopolitical influence that it possesses. Discourses, then, purport particular 'truths' of reality that will vary based on the sociopolitical and sociocultural contexts from which they derive. Considering this diversity in meaning, discourses cannot be read to be 'true' as the conditions which define them vary from context to context. As such, studying discourse serves to elucidate the myth of 'truth', which poststructuralism fundamentally strives to do.

Thus, a feminist poststructuralist framework in particular, is fitting to my research as it allows for an extensive exploration into the ways that language and discourse pertain to gender and gender identity. In discussing the salience of the relationship between language and gender, Krasny (2013) postulates that "language and social discourse […] are primary means of

maintaining [gender] order" (p. 10). She further writes that "language remains a primary means through which we conceive of our gendered selves" and through which we navigate our "gendered relations" with other individuals (p. 139). This is critical to my research in that I navigate the ways in which characters in my selected texts use language and discourse to maintain and resist gender norms and 'rules'. As Stephens (2005) reminds us, the exchange between authors and their audience occurs within "complex networks of social relations by means of language" (p. 73). Not only do I focus upon the ways in which the *characters* use language to navigate their subject positions, but I also look to the ways that the language of the text works to inform the subject positions of its *readers*. Indeed, language in texts fosters readers to consider and construct their own subjectivity through the ways in which they relate to the language used and the possibilities it creates (Stephens, 2005).

As I have proposed in my research questions, and will further outline in the section on methodology, my research primarily analyzes the ways in which gender is discursively constructed within my sample of children's books, how characters situate their subjectivities, and what subject positions these books provide for children to take up. Many of the books in my sample are either autobiographical, inspired by true events, or (co)authored by the child protagonist upon which the story is based, and many of also utilize an auto-diegetic (first-person child) narrator (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2001). Thus, the narratives are internally focalized wherein they elucidate the protagonists' emotions, thoughts, and feelings (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2001) and are reflective of a genuine lived experience. Indeed, since these texts convey either an introspective or first-person narration, the protagonists' subjective accounts are able to be preserved through the verbal and visual elements of the texts (Nikolajeva, 2002). As such, these texts often strive to create reader alignment with the discursive framings of the narrative of the

story, through identification with characters (McCallum & Stephens, 2011). Thus, it is especially important to analytically observe what subject positions are represented in these texts, as these can serve to normalize and/or marginalize certain conceptions around gender (McCallum & Stephens, 2011). Through the presence (and absence) of particular subject positions, some become privileged, some become marginalized, and some become challenged. Thus, utilizing FPS as a framework to underpin my research invites me to examine the ways in which language precipitates discursive framings and subject positions through which the subjectivity [of characters] is experienced (Weedon, 1987).

Considering my emphasis on how gender is socially organized, FPS is particularly fitting as understanding how discourses function is salient in understanding how gender is socially contested (Blaise, 2005). FPS also seeks to reveal how discourses operate to normalize particular forms of gender, which FPS conceives of as a facet of inequity (Blaise, 2005). Through my usage of FPS as a framework, I am able to perceive the ways in which gender discourses within these texts are constructed, reified, and/or contested. Thus, my use of feminist poststructuralism to frame my research is critical in my attempt to illuminate areas of gender inequity for children. Further, looking to the ways language and discourse inform the subject positions we take up, feminist poststructuralism (and poststructuralism, more generally) is also largely concerned with the intricacies of language and discourse in relation to subjectivity.

FPS is particularly fitting for this research as it recognizes that there is no single form of being, but rather, there are a diverse range of gender identities that we embody (Blaise, 2005). Indeed, FPS invites notions of pluralities and diversities as opposed to unities and universals, and provides progressive ways of considering gender without reversing pre-existing hierarchies or reinstating them (Scott, 2003). Thus, FPS allows for an elucidation of the various positions and

perspectives of subjects as well as the power dynamics that inform and allow these positions (Robinson, 2013). I emphasize the ways in which discursive formations both position and allow characters to be positioned within their texts. In detailing their experiences, a central aspect of the characters' narratives is often focused around their personal gender identities and expressions; FPS is again particularly apt here as this framework looks to the ways gender identity is continuously shaped by and within one's societal context (Martin, 2011). Thus, this framework allows me to underscore the roles of language, discourse, and context when analyzing characters' gender identities, embodiments, and expressions.

Moreover, feminist poststructuralism seeks to dismantle rigid, dualistic discourses of gender, and instead embrace and explore the multiple realities of gendered subjectivity (Blaise, 2005). This is imperative to my research as I explore the ways that gender is constructed when pervasive and cisnormative discourses are, presumably, not present. By this I mean that, considering that the books selected will encapsulate gender variance and gender diversity, it can be inferred that gender will be approached in a manner that attempts to subvert dominant, rigid, and polarized constructions of gender. The emphasis of multiple subjectivities within feminist poststructuralism is pertinent as this is a central theme within notions of gender variance.

Poststructuralist analyses generally attempt to deconstruct identity categories and consider difference without undermining the subjective experiences that comprise difference (Hines, 2007). Thus, it is important to note that feminist poststructuralism's emphasis on deconstructing discursive constructions around subjectivity is not intended to devalue or dismiss the lived experiences of individuals. As such, I would like to emphasize that by engaging with feminist poststructuralism's emphasis on social constructs and dismantling notions of 'truth' this does not by any means indicate that I am negating that gender is *true* for many individuals. I do

not attempt to suggest that gender is not real, as this would be entirely antithetical to my attempt to affirm the lived experiences and subjectivities of all individuals. Rather, I underscore the notion that gender *is* true for many, and through FPS, I emphasize the ways in which this 'truth' is often contingent upon and informed by hegemonic and dominant discourses**.** In other words, our subjective experiences are true and exclusive to *us*, but our available subject positions, from which our experiences and subjectivity stems, are influenced by larger discourses. Importantly, however, although our subject positions have been and will continue to be shaped by our respective societal contexts, this does not devalue the agency we possess in positioning ourselves as gendered subjects. A critical facet of poststructuralism is that it strives to understand the positionality of individuals within society, as well as the ways in which they are "both governed by and resist specific forms of power" (Weedon, 1987, p. 74). Thus, the agency children exhibit while navigating their subjectivity is an area I emphasize throughout this work.

The notion of agency and 'choice' is deeply embedded within conceptualizations of subjectivity. A common misinterpretation of poststructuralism's positioning of subjectivity involves the assumption that the emphasis on the influence of dominant discourses in shaping our subjectivity indicates that subjects possess little power and agency in this process (Belsey, 2002). Weedon (1987) emphasizes that although subjectivity is entrenched within discursive practices, the subject nevertheless exercises autonomy and agency in navigating their subjecthood. Subjectivity does not imply that one is passive in the construction of their identity but, rather, that individuals engage in a conscious and reflexive process wherein they actively comply with or resist dominant discursive positions (Blaise, 2005; Hall, 2004; Weedon, 1987). This recognition of the agency of the subject invites discussions as to how subjects can resist power and dominant discourses to elicit social change (Hall, 2004). The notion of subjecthood,

here, is critical to my research as I analyze the ways in which characters within my sample of texts take up their own subject positions (while either complying with or resisting dominant discourses), and I also examine the subject positions that the texts themselves provide for child readers to take up. Although the preferred term in this dissertation is subjectivity, I do, at times, use the term identity. My reasoning here is in line with N. Browne (2004) who attests that the usage of this term is unproblematic provided that "we are conscious of the process by which we create our identities […] and are aware of the unstable nature of our concepts of 'self'" (N. Browne, 2004, p. 61); which is precisely my intention.

My research possesses a strong focus on childhood and children's subjectivities in relation to gender identity and gender expression, which merges the fields of early childhood studies as well as feminist studies. Utilizing FPS as my framework provides me with opportunities to investigate the ways in which children navigate themselves through discourses of gender (Blaise, 2005), and the tools that they use to do so; this is particularly salient as bridges between feminism and conceptualizations of childhood is an aspect in need of exploration. As will be outlined in the next section, my theoretical orientation of FPS is also well aligned with my methodological framework of Critical Discourse Analysis as this framework is commonly used to examine identities and subjecthood and has a primary focus on language (Ainsworth & Hardy, 2004; Fairclough, 2012).

Methodology: Critical Discourse Analysis

The qualitative methodological framework for this study is informed by discourse analysis (DA), which is understood as a methodology used to elicit how forms of discourse manifest themselves within texts (Nikander, 2008). DA is, fundamentally, "the study of the meanings we give language and the actions we carry out when we use language in specific

contexts" (Gee & Handford, 2012, p. 1). Discourse analysis does not seek to reveal any single universal 'truth' (Rose, 2007), but rather purports to analyze specific data that pertains to a particular theme or concept (Gee, 1999). As stated previously, feminist poststructuralism possesses a strong concentration on language, discourse, and multiple subjectivities; as such, discourse analysis is understood to be aptly compatible with feminist poststructuralism given its focus on discourse and language (Gavey, 1997). When embarking on my research, a methodological approach that is attuned with the foci of my theoretical positioning is vital in ensuring efficient cohesion between the two.

Discourse analysis involves research that is attentive to the social context of language and discourse, as well as to their relationships with institutions of power (Gavey, 1999). Discourse analysis looks to the ways that meanings, representations, language, and aspects of reality are engrained within discourse as language "generates" and consequently "constitutes the social world" as well as "social identities and social relations" (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 9). Feminist poststructuralism's concentration on language in relation to gendered realities allowed me to infuse this theoretical lens within my methodological framework of discourse analysis. An awareness of the salience of social context of language enables us to understand the contextual nature of discourse, which is pertinent to my research. As such, discourse analysis allows us to comprehend the construction of discourse through social context, how discourses shift, and the ways in which they materialize (Bischoping & Gazso, 2016). In the simplest of forms, a 'discourse analysis' involves, as the name suggests, the analysis of discourse. However, operationalizing 'discourse' is complex as there exist varying definitions as to what constitutes this term.

Considering that 'discourse' is understood and utilized differently by various disciplines (Sunderland & Litosseliti, 2002), discourse analysis, then, is surely a broad methodology. Indeed, Cameron (2001) conceives of discourse analysis as an umbrella term, encompassing a wide variety of forms, dynamics, practices, and procedures. The primary form of discourse analysis that I employ within this research is that of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). According to van Dijk (2015), CDA is "discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social-power abuse and inequality are enacted, reproduced, legitimated, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context" (p. 466). For Fairclough (2003), CDA is the "analysis of the dialectical relationships between discourse (including language but also other forms of semiosis [...] and other elements of social practices" (p. 205); semiosis refers to "all forms of meaning making — visual images, body language, as well as language" (Fairclough, 2001, p. 122). CDA is distinct from other forms of discourse analysis in that it is *critical*. Fairclough (2001b) uses the term 'critical' to depict the elucidation of "connections which may be hidden from people – such as the connections between language, power and ideology" particularly pertaining to how dominance and inequality "are enacted, reproduced, and resisted" (p. 4). Therefore, CDA seeks to surpass descriptive accounts of language, discourse, power, and ideology, and rather, endeavours to reveal and explain the ways that these are related and interdependent on one another. Indeed, van Dijk (2015) agrees in stating that this approach seeks to "understand, expose, and ultimately challenge social inequality" (p. 466). Thus, CDA transcends a more general form of discourse analysis in that it is focused on connecting language, power, and ideology to the wider societal context. CDA then, is an approach that is ultimately investigative, interpretive, and transgressive.

Discourse.

The associations between language and society is central to CDA, and this approach establishes a robust relationship between the two. Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999) posit that CDA facilitates theorizations between social theories and linguistic theories in that it is the "mediation between the social and the linguistic" (p. 16). Thus, the fusion of the social and linguistic creates a smooth synergy wherein CDA is established. However, in addition to language relations, CDA has a prime focus on *discourse* —as its name infers— which is distinct from language. When we use language, we intentionally select words that infer meaning based on what we are attempting to communicate to others. CDA asserts that text, whether in the form of words, speech, or images, is never neutral, and always infused with meaning and value-laden (Bischoping & Gazso, 2016); this is where discourses are born. Discourses are manifested through language's ability to embody particular relations, activities, and identities (Gee, 2005). Through discourse, values become attributed to language, which further valorizes its place in the wider societal context. The ways in which we speak or write about a subject is reflective of not only our own views on the subject, but also representative of the broader sociocultural and sociopolitical discourses on that subject based on the language we choose to utilize. For example, terms such as 'biological sex' and 'assigned sex' both refer to a similar concept, but the choice of language used to describe each of these are reflective of two dichotomous sociopolitical discourses. Thus, the language we use is discursively constituted within broader social foundations.

Discourse is typically understood to go beyond text in that it is reflective of dominant and hegemonic undertones in language. In very simple terms, discourse is "a way of speaking, writing, thinking, feeling, or acting that incorporates particular ideas as 'truths'" (Blaise, 2005, p.

16). Discourses are principally "the means by which human meanings, beliefs, and values are communicated and replicated" (Hall, 2004, p. 131). Discourse, then, emphasizes the dominant *meanings* that are born out of language use. N. Browne (2004) suggests that discourses are akin to 'lenses' in their construction of reality in that they govern what we see and we do not see [as 'truth']. Indeed, through the meanings attributed to them, discourses shape social reality and are reflective of the ways in which they construct the world. Discourses not only *shape* the social worlds within which they exist, but they too are *shaped* by this very same environment. In light of this point, Foucault (2002) asserts that discourses are "practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak" (p. 54). In other words, discourses are necessarily constituted by the social contexts from which they derive, and they also subsequently serve to construct social life based off of their existence. Indeed, in CDA, discourse is not only seen as reflective of the social world, but it is viewed as actively constructing it (Aguinaldo, 2012). As such, it investigates the ways in which discourse governs social life (Ainsworth & Hardy, 2004; Blackledge, 2012) wherein particular constructions of people and social phenomena are materialized through language and discourse and creates normative and non-normative formations (Lock & Strong, 2010). Accordingly, this approach analyzes the ways that available discourses create versions of the world through which certain aspects are privileged and normalized, while others are invalidated and dismissed (Aguinaldo, 2012).

Fairclough is well-known for his proposed connection between discourse and social practice. By 'social practice', Fairclough refers to a "relatively stabilised form of social activity" (Fairclough, 2001c, p. 231), which infers established activities and norms. For Fairclough (2003) discourse is constituted within social practice in three forms: in the social activity of a practice, in the representation of a social practice, and in the constitution of identities. According

to Fairclough (1995), a discourse is “a way of signifying a particular domain of social practice from a particular perspective” (p. 14) and is “language used to construct some aspect of reality from a particular perspective” (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999, p. 63). The notion of a ‘particular perspective’ is salient here in that it emphasizes that discourses are context-specific; this could be in terms of specificity pertaining to culture, society, academic discipline, and so on. Furthermore, different discourses may utilize the same words but use them differently (Fairclough, 2003, p. 131). Discourses, then, are variable and contingent upon the socio-political and socio-cultural contexts from which they derive. Given this variability in meaning, discourses are not ubiquitous as their conditions differ from context to context. Moreover, due to this variability, discourses are not ‘equal’ in terms of power, which creates tension amongst them (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002).

Fairclough (1992) also refers to the ‘orders of discourse’ in loosely referring to these as ‘discourse types’ which simply denote which types of discourse are used within their respective domains and the relationships between them, including how fixed or fluid they may be. Fairclough (2003) posits that an order of discourse refers to the ways various discourses and genres are “networked together” (p. 206) and is a particular combination of “genres, discourses, and styles which constitutes the discoursal aspect of a network of social practices” (p. 221). Thus, orders of discourse can be thought of as communities of discourse in a sense wherein each community possesses its own rules as to which kind of discourses can be a member of each community. Fairclough (1995) also refers to orders of discourse as “domains of hegemony and hegemonic (ideological) struggle” (p. 25). Again, thinking of the example of discourse communities, each community strives to create a dynamic of authenticity and superiority, in a

sense. Orders of discourse can be thought of in a similar way in that they strive to establish dominance within and between communities.

Discourses as engaging in ideological struggle regarding dominance evokes the concept of power. The notion of power is a central concern of CDA in regard to how this conditions social life (Wodak, 2001b). Our knowledge as to what confers social life is often evoked from the discourses we are exposed to within our respective environments. Discourses can further be thought of as “ways of constituting knowledge, together with social practices, forms of subjectivity and power relations which inhere in such knowledges and the relations between them” (Weedon, 1987, p. 108). Indeed, Jorgensen and Phillips (2002) attest that “discourse contributes to the construction of social identities; social relations; and systems of knowledge and meaning” (p 67). Thus, discourses influence the ways in which we conceive not only of the world, but also of our place within it. Although a ubiquitous definition of discourse does not exist, there appears to be a general consensus that ‘discourse’ pertains to relations between language, meaning, power, and subjectivity. The primary facet of discourse is that it is more than language and text, and that “it is this ‘more’ that we must reveal and describe” (Foucault, 2002, p. 54). This is where CDA becomes pivotal.

Fairclough has established a foundational three-dimensional framework for CDA emphasizing the analysis of connections between: texts (i.e. writing, speech, language, images), features of discourse practice (text production, distribution, and consumption), and sociocultural practice (social organization, norms, values) (Fairclough, 1995, 2010). In short, this framework exemplifies the interrelations between language, discourse, and the social world. In line with this model, my research analyzes the written text within my sample of picture books, elicits the discursive foundations of these texts, and then connects these to the broader social context. I

have employed Fairclough's framework to guide my analysis to achieve a more comprehensive understanding [i.e. the 'more'] of how my texts worth to produce, reproduce, and/or resist dominant discursive ideologies within the broader society. As will be evident from my analysis, the discourses within my texts, both depict and resist dominant conceptions of gender, but nonetheless serve to reinforce gender 'rules' through their discursive framings.

Similar to Fairclough's model, Wodak (2001b) outlines three fundamental concepts that are central to CDA: "the concept of power, the concept of history, and the concept of ideology" (p. 3). In terms of power, CDA asserts that discourses are born out of and reproduce systems of power wherein they fortify normality and difference, and privilege and oppression. In regard to history, CDA views discourses as constituted by their historical contexts (Wodak, 2001b); this also speaks to the ways in which discourses evolve as time progresses. Lastly, pertaining to notions of ideology, CDA asserts that "dominant structures stabilize conventions and naturalize them" (Wodak, 2001b, p. 3), inferring that ideological meanings are constructed as natural and these influence the taken-for-granted facets of dominant discourses. These three concepts are integral to my research as I analyze the ways that gender is discursively represented in my texts in regard to *power* (i.e. which gendered ways of being are privileged, which are oppressed, and how these discursive constructions of gender exemplify power over others), the *history* of the discursive framings of gender within my texts (e.g. where these discursive constructions of gender originate, and what forms of interdiscursive relationships exist between them), and which gender *ideologies* are sustained, reified, and/or challenged (e.g. which discursive conceptions of gender are reinforced, reinscribed, and/or resisted in my texts). Thus, a CDA of my sample of texts allows for a rich exploration as to how gender discourses are constituted within these sources as well as how this is reflective of the broader social world.

Ideology.

Ideology, as mentioned above, is a salient characteristic of CDA. Sometimes, the notion of ideology is used interchangeably with the concept of discourse, but the two are distinct terms. van Dijk (2006) contends that an ideology is a shared representation of a social group regarding its “fundamental conditions and ways of existence and reproduction” (p. 116), and works to structure its “identity, action, aims, norms and values, and resources as well as its relations to other social groups” (p. 115). McCallum and Stephens (2011) similarly assert that ideologies are “systems of belief which are shared and used by a society […] which pervade the talk and behaviors of a community, and form the basis of the social representations and practices of group members” (p. 370). For van Dijk, ideologies are created, conveyed, and changed through discourse. A simple way of considering the relation between ideology and discourse is to envision ‘ideology’ at the top of a pyramid, with discourse positioned on the lower subsequent level (and then with language subsumed under this as well). Similar to the ways that language constructs discourse, is the manner in which discourse informs ideology. Also, in the same way that discourse is reproduced through social practice, ideology is too, constituted via the social practices of its group members (van Dijk, 2006).

A key aspect of ideology involves the ways that ideologies precipitate polarizing positions between groups; van Dijk (2006) refers to this as dichotomies between ‘ingroups’ and ‘outgroups’. The notion of ingroups and outgroups is particularly imperative to CDA in that CDA is focused upon eliciting unequal power relations, and views these relations as a product of ideology (Wodak, 2001b). Indeed, CDA essentially entails investigating the interrelatedness of ideology and power within society, as well as exploring the ways in which discourse influences, manifests and exposes these relations (Breeze, 2011). The focus here is the ways in which

certain ideologies become dominant and privileged, while others are deemed inferior and 'other'. van Dijk (2006) notes that ideologies and discourses are often presupposed and taken-for-granted, with their meanings automatically and implicitly understood. It is these 'taken-for-granted' conceptions of social life that CDA seeks to problematize in its aim to expose power relations (Ainsworth & Hardy, 2004).

We often tend to align ourselves with and utilize language that most closely reflects our internal ideological assumptions and values; and this sends a message to others as well. In relation to ideology and literature, regardless of whether a text attempts to reproduce or resist dominant belief systems of a society, it will always convey an ideological position to its readers as ideology precisely manifests in the language, discourses, images, story, and character relations that it puts forth (McCallum & Stephens, 2011). Thus, in regard to my sample of picture books, the text (words, speech, images) that have been selectively utilized by authors will represent their own ideological conceptions as well as those belonging to the larger sociocultural climate. As such, in my analysis, I seek to analyze the ways in which language is utilized in my sample of picture books, the underlying discursive framings and ideological connotations that are present, and how this works to either sustain or dismantle inequities in relation to gender subjectivity. Furthermore, since texts are often sources of struggles for dominance for discourses and ideologies (Wodak, 2001b), I attempt to view the ways discourses and ideologies differ from one text to the next.

Intertextuality and interdiscursivity.

Two aspects of CDA analyses which distinguish it from other forms of analysis are the intertextual and interdiscursive nature of its scope (Meyer, 2001). Interdiscursivity and intertextuality are routinely used in CDA, and although there are many similarities between the

two, they are fairly distinct. The term intertextuality is commonly associated with Norman Fairclough who has worked extensively on this concept, however it was initially developed by Julia Kristeva in the late 1960s. Kristeva described intertextuality as entailing “the insertion of history (society) into a text and of this text into history” (Kristeva, 1986, p. 39 as cited in Fairclough, 1992). The historicity of text is salient here as the ‘insertion of history into a text’ refers to the ways in which a text itself is constituted by former texts, whereas the ‘insertion of text into history’ is in reference to the ways a text is both embedded within a former history and serves to preserve as well as add to this history while making a contribution to a ‘future’ history of texts, wherein this cycle becomes repeated.

Intertextuality, then, entails the modes through which one text both influences and is influenced by other texts (Gee, 1999; Fairclough, 2003; Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002; Rose, 2007; Rose, 2013; Sunderland, & Litosseliti, 2002) and views texts as being constituted by facets of other texts, with each text possessing several elements of the others. Simply put, intertextuality is fundamentally “the presence of actual elements of other texts within a text” (Fairclough, 2003, p. 39) which considers the ways a text both produces new discourses and reproduces existing discourses of former texts, through text and imagery. Imagery is an element of texts that should not be taken for granted when considering intertextuality as images are significant tools through which intertextuality manifests (Rose, 2007). Considering that my focus in this analysis is on children’s books rather than novels or other forms of texts, imagery will be particularly salient in my analysis. Intertextuality focuses on the heterogeneity of texts, meaning that texts are intrinsically diverse. Given the diverse and heterogenous nature of texts, they can encapsulate contradictory elements and possess multifaceted intertextual dynamics (Fairclough, 1992).

Interdiscursivity precipitates from the concept of intertextuality. The two share a symbiotic relationship as interdiscursivity is directly influenced by intertextuality (Fairclough, 1995, 2010; Phillips & Jorgensen, 2002) wherein the interdiscursivity of a text is "part of its intertextuality" (Fairclough, 2001, p. 124). In the same way that intertextuality maintains that texts are constituted by one another, interdiscursivity posits that discourses are precipitated by the amalgamation of other discourses. Interdiscursivity is the constitution of a text from diverse discourses and genres (Fairclough, 1995, p. 135), and entails attention to the ways a text integrates different genres and discourses within itself (Fairclough, 2003). In short, interdiscursivity is when discourses appear within other discourses (Baxter, 2008; Sunderland & Litosseliti, 2002). As will be evident within my analysis, an example of this would be the ways in which many of my texts combine discourses of childhood with trans and queer discourses in their discursive framings of gender variance to create a 'new' discourse of childhood gender variance. It is through this fusion where boundaries shift both within and between different orders of discourse to create sociocultural change (Phillips & Jorgensen, 2002).

Similar to the emphasis on historicity in intertextuality is the facet of interdiscursivity which posits that all discourses are embedded within socio-historical contexts and must be understood in relation to this (Fairclough, 1995, 2010). This is particularly salient in my analysis as my sample of texts encompass many different discourses surrounding gender identity and expression; both within and between texts. As has been outlined in my historicization of 'gender', the orders of discourse that constitute this concept are diverse. As such, my sample of texts sometimes address one, several, or neither of these. Given the nature of the themes of these books [i.e. that they are *explicitly* focused around edifying themes of gender variance], certain discursive framings are often overt, yet when examining the interdiscursive nature of the text as a

whole, it is evident that there are often conflicting implicit discursive framings enmeshed elsewhere in the text.

Before moving further, it should be noted that although CDA is the primary form of analysis I undertake, at various points in this research I do utilize discourse analysis in looser terms as I have found that particular areas of my analysis cannot necessarily be addressed by nor directly subsumed under CDA. For example, when discussing discourses of how children choose new names when they transition, or when discussing discourses surrounding children's emotions, these do not necessarily correspond with CDA as they entail notions of authenticity, feelings, rational decision making, and meaning of experience, which are not always conceived of as compatible with certain idiosyncrasies of CDA. Precisely, discourse analysis' aim to deconstruct subjectivity and identity to challenge the notion of an 'inherent' or 'true' self, it may seem contradictory in instances where I underscore essential and authentic lived components of characters' subjectivities. Nonetheless, essential experiences of gendered subjectivity are a central focus of several of my texts and I analyze them with integrity.

Indeed, as Rubin (1998) contends, discourse analysis [particularly as informed by Foucauldian orientations] tends to "undermine the authority of individual speaking subjects" (p. 264) and is "not concerned with the life experience of the people who inhabit [trans] subject positions" (p. 265). As such, discourse analysis subsequently does not always attend to the agency of the subject in processes of subjection. Rubin acknowledges that subjects and knowledge are constituted by discourse, however he critiques the ways in which discursive approaches to understanding gender fundamentally erase trans subjectivity in neglecting to consider the essential and interior components as well as the lived experiences encapsulated within transpeople's lives. As Rubin states: "subjectivity may be discursively constituted, but it

remains meaningful" (p. 279). Indeed, he further states that one's sense of self cannot be "denied, abandoned, or refuted simply because we become aware of its socially constructed nature" (Rubin, 2003, p. 182). As such, he suggests that discourse analysis could benefit immensely from integrating an approach to interrogating trans subjectivities which recognizes that internal essences and lived experience are, too, seen as constituting gender subjectivity.

As such, it is imperative for me to note that my discourse analysis does not seek to dismiss or trivialize the lived experiences of the subjectivities of the children within these texts. While I emphasize the ways in which discourses shape subjecthood and subjectivity, I do not overlook how the lived experience of the subject can fundamentally influence the ways that gender is embodied and experienced. Thus, my broader engagement with discourse analysis in many parts of my research allows me to better attend to these notions of children's subjectivity as represented in the texts I analyze. That being said, I nonetheless often draw upon the particularities of CDA within my dissertation (e.g. the critical focus, commitment to social change, and writings of associated scholars); albeit less rigidly and less comprehensively than a typical CDA researcher. In line with Rogers' (2011) discussion of analysts' association with different forms of discourse analysis, I agree that it is less significant as to how one labels their analysis than it is to comprehend and acknowledge that there are distinctions between these labels. As such, within this section and throughout my analysis, I oscillate between references to discourse analysis and CDA, as appropriate.

Methods

Methods of research entail the techniques and procedures utilized in data collection and data analysis (Crotty, 1998). In considering the methods to be utilized in a study, it is critical for researchers to consider both *why and how* they have chosen their particular methods of choice

(Bessell, 2009). In doing so, it is important to acknowledge the ways in which the chosen methods for a study complement the broader theoretical and methodological underpinnings of the research itself (Bessell, 2009; Harcourt, Perry, & Wallet, 2011). As outlined previously in this chapter, the theoretical framework informing this research is that of Feminist Poststructuralism (FPS), while the methodological framework for this research is that of a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). In order to create unity between these underpinnings and the methods used in this search, in the following section I expound the methods I have engaged with in this analysis and, where appropriate, I explicate the ways that these have been informed by and correspond to FPS and CDA.

Sampling.

Materials for this study were systematically selected based on the following criteria: 1) all books must include at least one character that is explicitly depicted as either gender variant, gender non-conforming, or gender non-binary in gender identity and/or gender expression, 2) all books have been published within the twenty-first century, and 3) all books must contain human characters as protagonists (i.e. no animal protagonists). The rationale for this criteria is to ensure that (1) the books have an explicit focus on gender that overtly discusses issues of gender variance, gender non-conformity, and/or gender fluidity in relation to gender expression and/or gender identity; (2) the titles are relatively recent in terms of their date of publication so that an analysis of more contemporary texts is possible; and (3) the texts offer depictions of characters that are as concrete as possible in terms of their relevance to children's lived subjectivities as the notion of subjectivity is central to both FPS and CDA. Given that terms surrounding gender diversity are vast, and due to the growing number of terms used to address these issues, the key words that I used to guide my searches were as expansive as possible. In conducting a

preliminary search online, it appeared that the books I was interested in for this research are most commonly organized as belonging to categories with labels such as: gender, gender identity, gender variance, gender diversity, gender difference, transgender children, contemporary, and non-traditional. As such, these key words were used as an initial starting point in my search. On this note, it is important to acknowledge that considering that my search was done entirely in English, all of the books in my sample were books written in English, and were primarily published in Western contexts.

Rose (2007) suggests that when engaging in the data collection of books, it is important to have a narrow starting point in your search and then expand your search through the references to other sources that are found within your initial sources. In line with this procedure, I began by conducting a quick internet search for children's picture books based on my key terms, wherein I visited several websites independently and then began visiting additional websites based on recommendations within each individual website; this created a snowball sampling technique. From this procedure I was able to develop quite an extensive list of texts as I visited multiple websites and continued to do so until I found no new or relevant titles. Through this initial search I was able to find other comprehensive resources with suggested reading lists. Two effective sources that I consulted in my search were Thomas' (2018) work entitled *A to Zoo: Subject Access to Children's Picture Books* as well as Naidoo's (2012) text entitled *Rainbow Family Collections: Selecting and Using Children's Books with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Content*. Both of these resources contained an extensive list of various types of children's literature pertaining to the topic at hand.

Following this, I progressed toward library searches. Upon searching library websites, such as that of the Toronto Public Libraries (TPL), additional tags and key words were

suggested. Additional tags that I found and used on the TPL website included: sex differences; sex roles; social acceptance in children; individual differences; individuality; self-esteem; self-esteem in children. I then conducted an internet search once again with these new tags in an attempt to see if any new titles would arise. I was also mindful of the keywords that authors used to describe and categorize their own books (e.g. gender expansive; gender-free; gender-independent) and added these to my search as well. When embarking on a discourse analysis, one of the challenges that many analysts experience is deciphering when to terminate the data collection process (Rose, 2007). In my case, books of this nature were fairly limited and I reached the point where I began finding the same titles regardless of the novice key words I used; this is the point at which I stopped my data collection process. In qualitative research, this is known as saturation. The concept of saturation takes many forms, has different meanings to researchers, is underreported, and sometimes misunderstood (Mason, 2010; Morse, Lowery, & Steury, 2014; O'Reilly & Parker, 2012). As such, there is no one-size-fits-all meaning or method to achieving data saturation (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Saturation fundamentally involves exhausting one's sampling, coding, or analytical methods so that no other information can be obtained or generated. In my research, I achieved sample saturation as I embarked on data collection until there were no more sources to be found. As such, I did not have a minimum or maximum number of texts that I sought to find, I simply utilized all existing texts that I could find. I will make reference to saturation once more when outlining my analytical methods.

Barring a few books that I had read previously, the vast majority of the texts found throughout my search were unfamiliar to me, or only familiar to me in their title. Thus, it was pertinent for me to assess the content of these texts and engage in a vetting process prior to their inclusion in my sample. I originally read the description of each book, however in order for me

to get a comprehensive sense of what the books entailed, I performed a ‘skim’ reading of each book. When faced with navigating copious amounts of data, skim reading allows readers to attend to the most salient parts of a text and distinguish the elements that are most relevant to the scope of their reading (Duggan & Payne, 2011; Liu, et al., 2014). This involves the reader making inferences about the entire text, based upon the salient elements that they attend to (Duggan & Payne, 2011). This was done electronically for books that were accessible online wherein I viewed the electronic version of the book or visited children’s channels on YouTube where I was able to access videos of individuals reading these books aloud (with images visible). Other times—and most frequently—I visited various branches of Toronto Public libraries and skimmed through the books before either eliminating or including them from my sample. Certain books were neither available for preview online nor in libraries (i.e. they had been checked out, there was a waitlist, or the library did not own them); in such cases I purchased the books to examine them.

Given the short page count of most of these books, my ‘skim’ was largely comprehensive and involved a fairly thorough examination of each book. After a lengthy process of consideration, I was left with a sample of 30 titles. Although the quality of a discourse analysis precedes over the quantity of texts (Rose, 2007), I nonetheless strived to ensure that I had a significant number of texts so as to acquire a rich understanding of the topic at hand. Given the limited quantity of books available on this theme, I felt that my sample of books was substantial. It should be noted that my final book sample contains 30 titles, however some of these were added during the process of analysis in cases where I came across a recently published or newer book. Meyer (2001) affirms that data collection in CDA is not required to be completed before analysis begins as sometimes after the primary collection and analysis, new material is found,

new questions arise, and new categories are formed which can involve a re-examination of former data. This is precisely the way that this analysis unfolded and, as such, this process was extremely iterative and involved many moving parts.

Composition of books.

The composition of my texts based on the representations of the main characters are characterized as follows: transgirls (14), transboys (7), gender non-conforming boys (8), and non-binary/gender-fluid (3)— a complete overview of character subject positions is provided in Appendix F. The categorization of ‘gender non-conforming’ boy encompasses characters that are cisgender but do not conform to traditional conceptions of gender *expression*; the categorization or ‘transgirl’ and ‘transboy’ encompasses characters whose gender variance pertains to their gender *identity*. Non-binary and gender-fluid characters are those who identify with gender but in non-binary and/or fluid ways. In terms of the connection to the issues presented in the books, 3 texts were co-written by child authors who are the protagonists of their books, 6 books were written by parents about their own children, 4 were written by practitioners who work with gender non-conforming and trans children, 12 authors belong to the LGBTQI2SA community, and the remainder of the books did not include related information. Thus, the overwhelming majority of the authors of these books had some sort of connection to the narratives within them. It is also important to note that each of these books can be subsumed under *inclusion literature* (Andrews, 1998; Davison, 2016). Although the usage for this term is typically with reference to picture books on disability, I apply this term here as inclusion literature fundamentally includes books that endeavour to introduce a sensitive topic, raise awareness around it, and ‘teach’ children about this particular issue (Davison, 2016). Picture books featuring gender variant and gender non-conforming children where the narrative is

entirely unrelated to gender—otherwise known as immersive fiction (Davison, 2016)—are fundamentally non-existent.

In terms of the lengths of my sample of books, generally speaking, the vast majority of picture books tend to contain thirty-two pages, with longer picture books— which are less common— containing between 48 to 64 pages (Anderson, 2013). The breakdown of page counts of the books within my sample is as follows: 26 pages (1), 27 pages (1), 28 pages (1), 32 pages (11), 34 pages (3), 36 pages (4), 40 pages (6), 41 pages (1), 44 pages (1); for detailed information regarding which specific texts are associated with which page count, please refer to Appendix C. Additionally, children's picture books do not generally include page numbers (Anderson, 2013). Unnumbered pages can create challenges when providing quotations from these texts, however given the limited number of pages of the book in its entirety, locating quotations and images is nonetheless relatively simple. It should be noted that, given that this is a sample of picture books, the amount of text per page is minimal (each page generally does not exceed four to five sentences) as the majority of the pages are primarily composed of imagery.

Considering the age of the targeted reader is salient in the analysis of a text. In a minority number of cases, recommended age ranges were provided by the authors of the books in my sample. However, with the majority of my texts, this information was not present in the book itself. As such, I endeavoured to find this information elsewhere. In most cases, I viewed the recommended age suggestions from a source where the book was available for access or purchase (e.g. Amazon.com). Interestingly, the recommended age suggestions varied depending on the source providing the recommendation. The recommended ages of my texts range from ages 3 to 12, with the most common age ranges being ages 4-8 with 15 titles, followed by ages 3-7 with 6 titles. For a breakdown of recommended ages for each text along with the sources for

these recommendations, please refer to Appendix D. In terms of the ages of the actual main characters in the book, only seven of the texts in my sample provided this information. The breakdown of the ages of main characters is as follows: 4 years (1), 5 years (1), 7 years (2), 9 years (1), "about your age" (1). The ages of main characters tend to correspond with the ages of the target audience for the most part. Interestingly, the text which states that its main character is "about your age" is ambiguous as this could be in reference to anyone (including a parent or educator reading the book). It is implied, however, that this is with reference to a child reader, further emphasizing the notion that children are presumed to have a form of connection or resonance with characters of these books. The ages of protagonists can be found in Appendix E, while complete book information including title, authors, illustrators, descriptive information, and year of publication can be found in Appendix C.

Analytic procedures.

A common misconception of CDA is that there is a single, particular method of embarking on one's analysis, however there is no single method for undertaking CDA (Fairclough, 2003; Rogers, 2011; Meyer, 2001; Weiss & Wodak, 2003). Thus, its execution can come in many forms as it is a "loosely interconnected set of different approaches" (Fairclough, 2012, p. 19). CDA neither purports nor refutes any particular theoretical framework and is compatible with many various theoretical orientations to research. Moreover, there are no established procedures for data collection or data analysis in CDA nor is there a suggested trajectory between the two (Meyer, 2001). Given that CDA researchers may belong to many different fields, it does not strive to contribute to any particular discipline or paradigm (Fairclough, 2003; Meyer, 2001). In fact, van Dijk (2001) states that CDA "should be essentially diverse and multidisciplinary" (p. 96). Analyses in CDA, then, are variable and contextual based

on the analyst's research objective. Indeed, Jorgensen and Phillips (2002) assert that analyses are best completed when they are aligned with the goals of the particular research project. Thus, as there is currently no explicit agreement as to how to analyze discourse (Gee, 1999; Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002), there is a fair amount of flexibility when engaging in the analysis of data. Although there is not a single method for analysis in CDA, analyses tend to entail two facets: firstly, the analysis ascertains the various discourses in the chosen data, and, secondly, the analysis "identifies subjectivities and subject positions made possible within these discourses" (Aguinaldo, 2012, p. 772). These are precisely the two foci that have informed my analysis, and they are directly connected to the research questions that have informed my study.

At this point, I would like to briefly acknowledge the notion of warranting within my research. According to Wood and Kroger (2000), warranting entails "providing justification and grounds for one's claims" (p.163). In conventional positivist research this is commonly understood in terms of reliability and validity, however with research that relies on multiple interpretations of meanings and does not seek to push forward an element of 'truth' (such as in discourse analysis), this is complex. As stated previously, discourse analysis does not attempt to convey a single notion of 'truth' (Rose, 2007); thus, it would be contradictory to suggest that any one analysis is fundamentally 'true'. Wood and Kroger suggest, however, that an analysis can be warrantable in terms of being trustworthy and sound. The authors suggest that demonstration is a primary requirement for warrantability and is critical in descriptions of the analytic procedures.

Demonstration entails underscoring how interpretations and claims are grounded in the text and analytical procedures (Wood & Kroger, 2000). As such, they assert that it is paramount for discourse analysts to outline the steps taken throughout the analysis to ensure soundness in the work. Warranting, then, is less about substantiating the actual interpretations of the analysis,

and more about substantiating the process of developing those interpretations through the analytical process. Explicating the salience of the guiding questions guiding the analysis, underscoring how particular patterns/themes were identified or why others may have been excluded, as well as demonstrating coherence in the analytical techniques are particularly important to consider in the warrantability of a discursive analysis (Wood & Kroger, 2000). As such, I provide a comprehensive overview of the analytical procedures involved in this discourse analysis, and indicate the ways in which the process has been grounded in accordance with my methodological orientation.

The analytic procedures which have guided this analysis have been influenced by Fairclough (2001) as well as Wodak (2001a). Firstly, Fairclough proposed a problem-oriented approach to CDA wherein it is advised to: 1) establish a social problem with semiotic elements, 2) identify dominant genres and discourses that constitute this semiosis, 3) examine the variations and diversities within and between these genres and discourses, and 4) consider the resistance exhibited through the dominant genres and discourses (Meyer, 2001). As stated previously, the social problem informing this analysis entails that the lack of representation of LGBTQI2SA characters in children's literature— and more specifically, the marginalization of gender non-binary children within the literature that is available— creates limited opportunities for children to connect and identify with characters in these texts, and further privileges and normalizes certain forms of gender variance over others. I approached my analysis with this issue in mind and this is what principally directed the analytical process.

I should note that the notion of non-binary forms of gender is not explicitly stated within my research questions; the reason for this is due to the fact that I was interested in looking at how *all* forms of gender were represented within these texts, and *then* applying this to non-binary forms

of gender. In other words, rather than solely endeavouring to examine non-binary representations of gender within my sample, I was interested in the construction of gender in a broader sense, from which I would then draw my observations of gender non-binary representations. I felt I would be remiss in focusing solely on non-binary representations, as I felt I would omit the larger perspective of which forms of gender are prevalent and privileged within these texts. As Rose (2007) suggests, one should distance themselves from all preconceptions they may possess regarding their chosen data, and, as such, I aimed for a broader framing of my research question which would facilitate a more organic analysis.

After having completed step 1 of Fairclough's model, I embarked on stages 2-4; which was an iterative rather than linear process. My approach to this portion of the analysis was multimodal. I began by undertaking an initial 'skimming' of each text to establish a sense of what discourses each book entailed. This 'skimming' involved me doing a light (yet comprehensive) reading of each book to acquire the main message(s) the author had attempted to convey and to extract the most salient messages of the book. As stated, skimming allows a reader to decipher as to which aspects of a text are critical to their reading purpose (Duggan & Payne, 2011; Liu, et al., 2014) and facilitates the development of the reader's assumptions and impressions of the text (Wodak, 2015). I began by reading each book thoroughly and comprehensively, while making notes on common and uncommon discursive themes present within each; these themes involved quotations, descriptions, images, semiotic properties, and symbols used throughout each book. I strived to remain cognizant of my research questions as I coded my data, as coding in discourse analysis is often guided by theoretical assumptions and research questions (Nikander, 2008). Following this, several coding charts began to form organically at which point I further categorized and congregated my data into themes based upon

the discursive constructions that were present. The analytic technique that was utilized to extract the central discourses from the data involved thematic decomposition; which encompasses discursive approaches and thematic analysis, and is positioned within a wider discursive framework that perceives meaning as being socially constituted within linguistic as well as other signifying practices (Burman and Parker, 1993 as cited in Gurevich et al., 2007). Discursive 'themes' in this case, refers to consistent patterns identified in the data (both within and across texts) that can be conceived as being situated within a wider 'discursive field', which elicits both subjective as well as social meanings (Aguinaldo, 2012; Gurevich et al., 2007).

Following this initial coding stage, I then engaged in a second close reading of each of the books wherein I re-read each text while referring to my charts to guide my reading. Moreover, I attended to both the visual and verbal elements of each text, oscillating constantly between the two. This practice allows a reader to initially interpret both the words and images, and then reinterpret each of these individually as well as simultaneously, with each re-reading allowing for more comprehensive interpretation (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2001; Nodelman, 1988). Since visual imagery is salient in allegorizing gender through elements such as colour, clothing, hairstyle, etc. (Nikolajeva, 2002), I ensured that I was particularly attentive to these elements when observing their discursive features. Throughout this coding process, new discursive categories were added, some recategorized, some separated, and others combined together. This allowed me to provide more concise, yet comprehensive discursive themes; which, subsequently, would be more appropriate for both the reading and writing of my project. If a new theme arose which I had not considered prior to this, I went back and re-read and coded all books for that theme. Nikander (2008) reminds us that coding in any discourse analysis is never a straightforward endeavour. Indeed, this process involved several months of reading and coding

in order to complete the entire sample set of books. Between stages I often paused the coding process for one week, before returning to repeat this to allow myself distance from the process. Rose (2007) suggests that this process is best done when one takes their time, and allows for opportunities to engage with the data with 'fresh eyes', as this may allow one to consider information they may have otherwise not noticed. At this point, it appeared that there were no more 'new' discursive themes or data to be extracted from my texts and it appeared that I had exhausted all possibilities in relation to my scope, so I engaged in one final reading. It should be noted that this process was repeated during moments where I discovered new themes upon beginning my analysis and when I added new titles to my sample throughout the analysis. Rose (2007) emphasizes the importance of allowing the details within one's data to guide this process, wherein one may find themselves re-reading and re-coding multiple times throughout the endeavour, and this is precisely what I did. Returning to the notion of saturation, this is where I achieved thematic saturation as no new themes or codes were able to be observed or generated from my data (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006).

Once the coding of the data and the establishment of discursive themes was complete, I engaged in a series of rigorous analyses. This is where Wodak's (2001) 'triangulatory' approach to CDA was useful. This model entails focusing on: 1) the immediate language and/or text, 2) the intertextual and interdiscursive dynamic of the text and discourses, 3) the extralinguistic social variables, and 4) the wider sociopolitical and/or historical dynamics pertaining to the discourses. This is when I began attending closely to the intertextual and interdiscursive features of my sample. As such, contradictions, inconsistencies, and discrepancies, along with similarities and uniformities, were identified within and between texts and discourses. There were many similar interdiscursive and intertextual properties between my texts, which were

precipitated by both language use and imagery. In accordance with this approach, I also considered the ways in which my discursive themes were representative and engrained within broader sociopolitical relations and examined the ways in which the discursive constitutions of gender in my texts are connected to broader sociocultural discursive framings of gender. As has been outlined earlier, texts implicitly and explicitly represent and reproduce beliefs of the author as well as dominant sociocultural values of the society within which the book is established.

It is within this stage that I began to address my second and third research questions, as I analyzed how subjectivity was underscored and conveyed within my sample of texts. In line with Nodelman and Reimer's (2003) suggestions, when analysing my data I considered questions that attended to "what emotions and desires are relevant to each kind of character and what kinds of personal attributes, attitudes, and possessions are necessary for a character to be recognized as a particular kind of 'subject'" (p. 159). I also considered how protagonists constitute and navigate their subjectivities throughout my texts as the analysis of subjectivity is a key focus of both my theoretical orientation (FPS) as well as my methodological framework (CDA). To this end I looked to the ways that characters used language and available discourses to position themselves as subjects, which complements facets of both FPS and CDA.

Indeed, in relation to the notion of subjecthood and subject positions, FPS has a strong concentration on deconstructing assumptions regarding language, meaning, and subjectivity (Weedon, 1987). As such, I analyzed the ways in which protagonists in my sample of books use language and discourse to inform their subjectivities. Stephens (2005) suggests that the most fundamental facet of children's literature is subjectivity and the representation of the self, a view similar to that of Sims Bishop's notion of mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors, that was noted earlier. The characters within my sample comprise a variety of gender identities and

expressions, thus my analysis examined the ways in which these characters were positioned within their respective texts, as well as the ways in which they actively positioned themselves.

Feminist poststructuralism was particularly suitable here as it "allows for critical multiple readings of what it means to be a child" and elicits an understanding of the historical, socio-cultural, and political contexts within and between texts (Robinson, 2013, p. 4). Not only did I analyze the ways in which subject positions were constituted within each text, but I also looked to the ways at the ways this was done *between* texts, which further elicits common discursive themes and framings. Indeed, I examined which gender subject positions were discursively constructed within and between these texts, and which were not. More specifically, I explored the contingencies of subjectivity that appeared within the discourses of these texts, emphasizing how discursive formations of subjects can remain inclusive to some in particular, while exclusionary to others. FPS was also apropos here as FPS analyses of gender "illuminate the role of power in the construction of subjectivities and how it subordinates and marginalizes boys and girls" (Flax, 1990, as cited in Blaise, 2005, p. 20). Thus, my objective was not to simply view the process of establishing subjectivity, but to also uncover how this process works to create notions of superiority and inferiority with respect to subjectivities that are privileged at the expense of others being oppressed. Furthermore, I discursively analyzed whether gender in these texts is still constructed along polarities (i.e. dichotomous representations of gender as *either* cisgendered *or* transgendered), or if gender is constructed as belonging to a spectrum wherein cisgender, transgender, genderqueer, gender non-binary, genderfluid, a-gender, and genderless identities and expressions are (equally) represented. Representations of relationships, families, and notions of heteronormativity have been analyzed where present, and the intersections between discourses of gender and sex were elucidated. Following this, I then connected my

findings to the broader sociocultural horizon where associations were made between the text and broader discursive framings of society.

It should be noted that I considered written text and images equally throughout my analysis. Jorgensen and Phillips (2002) emphasize that discourse analysts must be cognizant of and acknowledge the particular features of visual images as well as to the relationship between the text and these images. Indeed, the visual imagery within children's picture books (which are usually found on every page) are equally as significant as the text in the telling of the story or elucidation of the concept as text and illustrations possess a complementary relationship (Edward, 2013). Painter et al. (2012) refer to this as a 'bimodal' relationship wherein written text and images work together to facilitate meaning. Thus, the text and visual imagery within the selected children's books were viewed in a symbiotic fashion, wherein they were conceived of as mutually dependent upon one another. As will be seen, my analysis will at times oscillate in focus between text and imagery, whereas other times they will be attended to collectively.

In this chapter, I underscored the theoretical orientation of feminist poststructuralism and methodological framework of Critical Discourse Analysis which guide the research within this dissertation. I have outlined some of the key principles guiding these underpinnings to contextualize my research, and I have emphasized the ways that they have informed my analytical procedures. My analysis has been divided into the two successive chapters, with each chapter responding to one of my initial two research questions. In these following two chapters, I provide a comprehensive analysis of my sample of texts while engaging in a discussion of my findings. My third research question is addressed within Chapter VI which discusses the implications of my research.

Chapter IV: Analysis A – Discursive Constructions of Gender

It is important to note that this dissertation draws upon various discursive framings pertaining to gender expression and gender identity in its analysis. Often times, conflicting discourses are presented as they are contingent upon the texts from which they derive. In this research, I do not intend to put forth any theories on gender variance, nor do I explicitly condone or condemn any that have been evoked within my analysis. Like many cisgender individuals, I have never been asked to consider whether my own gender is socially constituted or biologically innate, and have not been expected to engage in these discussions until the notion of gender variance was at stake (see Rubin, 1998; 2003). In this dissertation it is not my intent to explicitly position myself in alignment with any given theory of gender and/or gender variance as I am still very much in the process of making sense of gender in relation to myself. Furthermore, given that my analysis fundamentally strives to elucidate how gender is discursively conveyed within my sample of texts while exploring the subjective experiences of the characters that comprise them, I do not conceive of my personal perspective as being particularly pertinent in this case. Indeed, arguing for or against a particular positioning on gender and gender variance would be relatively counterproductive to my dissertation as my research strives to recognize and validate all experiences and conceptualizations of these topics. Moreover, I do not suggest that any subject positions are more subversive or more valid than others as I conceive of all lived experiences depicted within my sample of texts as worthy of representation (Rubin, 1998).

As such, this research does not argue for or against the discourses that are elicited, but is rather interested in a critical analysis and dialectical elucidation of these. My objective here is simply to engage in a Critical Discourse Analysis that is informed by a Feminist Poststructuralist Framework to elicit which discourses are present in these texts. Throughout this analysis I

continuously refer to concepts closely aligned with CDA and FPS, such as discourse and subjectivity, to maintain consistency and coherence between my analysis and the theoretical and methodological underpinnings of my research. The illumination of the discourses present in my texts evokes considerations of whether children are exposed to one discourse more than another, if discourses are equally represented, and if there are alternative discourses to balance dominant ones. Furthermore, I do not solely analyze which discourses are present within my texts, but I also analyze those which are *missing*.

I should note that my analysis uses the terms transgender as well as gender non-conforming and gender variant; I use each of these terms to refer to the ways the respective characters have been represented within my texts. To this end, I also refer to each character based on the pronouns used within their texts. For instance, in some cases, characters' pronouns shift throughout the storylines based on when a character has transitioned, while in other cases pronouns remain consistent regardless of whether or not a character has transitioned (for example, "she was now a boy", rather than "*he* was now a boy"). As such, my usage of a character's pronouns is always consistent with the usage within each respective text. As well, I oscillate between the terms 'transchildren' and 'transpeople' regularly in this analysis; not necessarily to differentiate between the two, but to centrally position children as people.

Given that the targeted audience for these titles is young children, it can be presumed that the ways in which gender is depicted and conveyed through both written text and images, will differ compared to children's literature that has been written for adolescents or young adults. Indeed, explanations provided for a single topic in a text will vary based on the intended audience (Rose, 2007). As such, despite the complex nature of the topics discussed, the language used in these texts is often simplified but is nonetheless connected to wider

sociopolitical discourses regarding gender variance. My objective pertaining to the dissemination of this material is to keep this audience in mind in that my research not only accommodates other scholars interested in this work, but that it also reaches the children and caregivers for whom this research may also be relevant. As such, I endeavour to write this analysis in the hopes that it is accessible to those outside of academe as well, as van Dijk suggests that CDA findings should be accessible to the social groups that are focused upon in one's research (Meyer, 2001).

The amount of detail provided for each character that is analyzed aligns with the amount of information provided within each respective text; some texts provide vast intricate details pertaining to the development of their character and, thus, have more detailed analyses. Others contain shorter and more ambiguous character portrayals, and this is subsequently reflected in the depth of their analysis. For the sake of brevity, I refer to books by title in this section, and while I do provide a little context into books where appropriate, a detailed summary of each book's storyline and plot can be found in Appendix C. As well, it should be noted that I address various quotes and narratives multiple times in cases where they speak to more than one discourse. The analytical style of this analysis varies by section in that in some sections, scholarship and literature are dispersed throughout the analysis and speak to particular texts distinctly, whereas in other sections a direct analysis of multiple texts is provided, followed by the inclusion of scholarship to address these in their entirety. Implications pertaining to the findings in this analysis will be outlined in the discussion section in Chapter VI.

As stated, this analysis is presented in two major chapters—1) discursive constructions of gender, and 2) discursive constructions of character subjectivities—each of which contains several sub-sections. Each of the two major chapters directly pertains to the initial guiding

research questions, as these were used as a foundation from which the discourses were derived. As such, I would like to provide a disclaimer that this analysis does not address every aspect of gender that the books encompass, as only certain findings were able to be established based upon the proposed research questions. Other elements of the texts that do not pertain to the research questions have been unexplored (for example, experiences of bullying, responses from family members, etc.), thus this analysis does not claim to present an all-inclusive analysis of each text, but rather provides a comprehensive analysis of the texts exclusively in relation to the research questions. Each chapter of this analysis contains several discursive themes which have been subsumed under the overarching research focus for each section. The first of which is presented below and addresses the first research question which asks: *how is gender discursively constructed and constituted within children's picture books on gender variance?* This first chapter encompasses subsections of 'the gender within', 'the gendered mind and brain', the 'reflection', and 'the body'.

This particular chapter focuses on the central discursive themes that have been identified in the data pertaining to the ways in which gender variance is constructed. Each theme is accompanied by quotations and/or images from my sample of texts so as to underscore the salient text and imagery that constitute each respective theme. The discursive themes in this chapter are each related to the first guiding research questions: *how is gender discursively constructed and constituted within children's picture books on gender variance?* which informed this part of the analysis. Several of the established themes are found within particular books only while others are collectively found across all books. In some cases, mentions of gender were explicitly stated with definitions and overt explanations, and in other cases this was done more implicitly as a part of the storyline. Moreover, particular quotes may appear in multiple sections

of this analysis as some have been subsumed under more than one single discursive theme. Lastly, I would like to provide a disclaimer stating that the analysis that follows contains copyrighted material. It utilizes this material strictly for the purpose of research, education, and review; all of which constitute fair dealing of such copyrighted material as declared in section 29 of the Canadian Copyright Act. The fair dealing of copyrighted work for the purposes outlined above is not an infringement of copyright law. All copyrighted illustrations have been referenced appropriately both within the analysis as well as in Appendix B.

The Gender Within

One prevalent discourse that was found amongst titles encompasses what Overall (2009) refers to as the 'gender within' discourse. This discourse is primarily with reference to the gender identity of transpeople and posits that gender is intrinsic to an individual and that it is something one is internally born with. This reflects an essentialized account of gender wherein gender is experienced as an essential and inherent trait of the individual. What this fundamentally suggests is that there is a 'core' gendered essence that exists within an individual (Rubin, 2003). Indeed, Stein (2018) discusses this where she states that many transpeople "describe their gender identity as something that comes from within […] over which they have little choice, an inner essence of which they are the sole, legitimate interpreter" (p. 139). Others refer to this as the 'born that/this way' discourse or as Rubin (2003) refers to it, the 'inside/outside' discourse. I have chosen to adopt the 'gender within' title as this most accurately represents the ways in which it is represented within my sample of texts.

The 'gender within' is illuminated in the book *Everybody Thought I was a Boy!* where the protagonist, a 5-year old transgirl named Sam, shares that her father has advised her that "being a real girl is about how you feel on the inside." This dialogue comes after Sam is bullied in

Kindergarten by her peers as they state that she can never be a "real girl". Sam also describes that a counsellor provides a similar response to her, where she informs readers that: "she said everyone's body looks different but it's how we feel on the inside that makes us a boy or a girl." When this discourse references the body, some relate this to the concept of the psyche where "two-way translations between the mind and body take place" (Fausto-Sterling, 2000a, p. 24). The notion of the body will be taken up further in a later section, however the salience of the term *inside* here, suggests that one's 'real' gender is not dictated by how others perceive them but rather what they feel internally.

The notion of one's internalized gender is also evident in the autobiographical book *It's Okay to Sparkle*, where Avery, states: "kids like me are happier when people around us treat us like the boys and girls we are on the inside." This quotation differs slightly from those above in that Avery expresses a sense of pleasure upon having her internal gender identity recognized by others. The interdiscursive nature of Avery's quote is apparent when compared to Sam's quote in that Sam's father states that 'real' gender is precipitated based on one's internal feelings regardless of the ways others perceive them, whereas Avery's quote suggests that gender does indeed reside within the individual, yet there is a certain validation achieved when others too recognize and acknowledge this internalized gender. It is evident through Avery's quote that her gendered-self requires its authenticity be recognized by others (Rubin, 2003). The overarching discourse of 'gender within' is present amongst both texts, however one of these emphasizes that external validation is salient in one's acceptance of the self, whereas the other does not.

In *Truly Willa,* another autobiographical book, Willa shares her journey as a transgirl, and in narrating the challenges faced in comprehending her assigned gender, Willa tells readers "inside my feelings I am a girl." Despite facing adversity in her journey, Willa informs readers

that she embraced her identity and "kept on being the girl I felt I was inside." Rubin (2003) speaks of the significance of acknowledging one's internal gender in that "the need to selfactualize, or realize the "inner letter" that is written inside of each one of us, is stronger than almost any impulse we know" (p. 182). This is evident here, in Willa's statement, and can also be observed in another quote by Avery where she states: "when I was born, doctors said I was a boy. But I knew in my heart I was a girl." These two passages show the resilience and dedication by the protagonists to acknowledge, or self-actualize, their 'inner letter' written inside of them, which also touches on the notion of authenticity, which Rubin refers to as the quest to affirm the innermost self. Indeed, for Avery the innermost self is experienced to be deeply rooted within her (Rubin, 2003). One's innermost self is something that only an individual knows to be true as it cannot readily be perceived by others. Rubin (2003) suggests that "the ability of the self to recognize itself is a significant and necessary achievement that must precede intersubjective recognition" (p.15). In other words, Avery's ability to recognize her inner self as a girl prior to having this affirmed by anyone else was the first step in her self-actualization process (i.e. the pursuit of her perceived authentic self). As will be elicited further within this analysis, for some, this quest to self-actualize may entail a 'transition' from one gender to another, whereas for others it may entail an affirmation of the gender one has felt all along.

The 'gender within' discourse is apparent here as these quotations elicit the ways in which one's sense of gender resides within the individual. Another instance of this is found in the book *Be Who You Are*, where the main character, Hope (born Nick), is presented as having her true gender identity emerge from within. This is evident in the passage where it is stated that "he knew that his body looked like a boy, but it just didn't fit the way he felt inside." In *But, I'm Not a Boy*, the protagonist, Sarah (born David), also discusses her gender emanating from within

in the following narration: “even her body tried to tell her that she was a boy, but she knew this wasn’t true. At least not on the inside, where it counts most of all.” It is apparent that gender residing inside an individual is a key characteristic of the ways in which gender is represented within several of these texts, and represented as a salient facet of the protagonists’ lives.

The notion of gender as something ‘within’ or ‘inside’ of an individual infers that this is innate and internal; and fundamentally natural and essential. In *Jacob’s New Dress*, gender expression is described in the following manner: “gender expression is an important part of every person’s identity, and it’s inborn—not something we choose.” Gender expression here is presented as being “inborn” suggesting that there is a biological or natural essence of gender. In stating that this is a part of ‘every person’s identity’, this also assumes that gender is something that is important to all individuals. The use of this term also conveys that gender is already present in an individual at birth, or, in other words, it is presented as something which individuals are born with. Serano (2013) describes that the ‘born that way’ discourse is profoundly denounced by what she terms ‘gender artifactualism’. Gender artifactualism, as coined by Serano, dictates that “gender identity and expression are cultural artifacts that have no biological basis and that serve the sole purpose of maintaining the gender system” (p. 120); a view which she perceives to be largely incorrect . For many, this is akin to the notion of gender critical feminists and Trans-Exclusive Radical Feminists (TERFs) as both object to the notion that gender entails an internal component for trans (or other) individuals. Gender artifactualists concede that gender is a cultural artifact, that transpeople erroneously perceive gender to be ‘real’, and that transpeople reinforce the gender system (Serano, 2013). This view has previously been outlined in Chapter II where the work of Raymond and Jeffreys has been charted.

Butler (2006) too questions the notion of an internal essence of gender. When speaking to the well-renowned quote by de Beauvoir (1952): “one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman” (p. 330), Butler (2006) states that it is the element of ‘becoming’ that is the means for the construction of gender. Butler (1990, 1999) views gender as being a construct encompassed by traits that individuals perform, enact, and imitate but do not intrinsically possess. As such, she suggests that gender is both produced and sustained through the repetitive performance of gendered behaviours. For Butler, the constant performance of these sedimented gendered acts, expressions, and behaviours work to perpetuate its maintenance within society and subsequently substantiates the notion of gender itself. Importantly, Butler’s notion of gender performativity, does not infer that it is akin to a ‘performance’, but rather that it is *performative*, meaning that gender is reified by means of being performed and re-performed (Butler, 1990, 1997, 1999). Thus, according to Butler, gender itself is not in actuality a ‘truth’, but only perceived to be ‘true’ as a result of its continued repetition.

Since gender, for Butler, is a ‘doing’ and a ‘becoming’ as opposed to a ‘being’, the notion of an intrinsic essence to gender is fundamentally paradoxical. Indeed, she states that distinctions between an interior ‘truth’ of gender and an exterior ‘truth’ creates a contradictory crossroad where no fundamental ‘truth’ can be established. For Butler, one’s sense of authenticity can only precipitate from the options of authenticity within one’s societal and cultural context, thereby repudiating the notion of a ‘true self’ (Butler, 1997). Moreover, she refers to an internalized sense of gender as a “hallucinatory effect of naturalized gestures” (1999, p. xv) and states that the performativity of gender creates the “illusion that there is an inner gender core” (1997, p. 144). Although Butler does not explicitly target trans experiences in her work (in the ways emanated by Raymond and Jeffreys, for example), the terms “hallucinatory”

and “illusion” are still eerily similar to rhetoric that is used to describe psychosis, which can allude to a dangerous and pathologizing inference regarding the trans experience of ‘the gender within’. As such, Butler has been criticized by many for these conceptions of gender, particularly considering that she is not a member of the trans community. Some argue that she not only denounces ‘the gender within’ discourse in her theory of gender performativity, but that she attempts to negate a central element of trans experience in an effort to make it incomprehensible (Elliot, 2010). However, Butler’s point can also be read as her asserting that one is only able to ‘know’ their gender through interactions with others and through the navigation of pre-existing discourses. The idea that one understands their gender to exist ‘within’ infers that they have learned and internalized what constitutes this gender. In other words, the understanding of what it means to innately embody a particular gender cannot be wholly intrinsic as what precisely constitutes a particular gender must first be learned.

Regardless of criticism and pushback, the notion of gender as deriving inherently within trans individuals nonetheless holds true for many belonging to this group (Risman, Myers, & Sin, 2018), and for some, the recognition of trans identities as a natural phenomenon is the basis of receiving recognition and access to therapy and surgical procedures (Elliot, 2010). Overall (2009) notes that for many trans individuals, gender is inherent to the individual and is not something that spontaneously develops but, rather, is always present “from birth or perhaps even before” (p. 16), a view that is echoed by Stryker (2008) and Fausto-Sterling (2012). This is unequivocally stated in the book *I am Jazz* where, upon disclosing to her audience that she is a transgender girl, Jazz states “I was born this way!” The ‘born this way’ discourse is one that is commonly (but not universally) observed by many transpeople in that they feel that their gender identity is present at or prior to birth; an understanding that has been vehemently opposed by

many gender critical feminist and queer scholars. This fundamentally speaks to the infamous quote by Simone de Beauvoir (1952) where she states: “one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman” (p. 249). This resistance stems from understandings of gender as socioculturally characterized wherein the ‘born this way’ discourse is said to undermine the role of social learning, socialization, discursive influence, and context. Thus, these understandings challenge the notion of a prediscursive gendered self. Importantly, some who purport this view assert that these gendered ‘essences’ and identities evolve over time and that they are not necessarily fixed or static (Rubin 1998, 2003). They are experienced inherently and intrinsically, however they are simultaneously malleable and shifting.

Without using precisely the same language, this is also expressed in *Phoenix Goes to School* where, despite being assigned male at birth, 7-year old protagonist, Phoenix, tells readers “I know I am really a girl. I’ve always been this way.” The notion of the sense of gender ‘always’ being internally present is also apparent in *Be Who You Are* where upon learning that his sister is transgender, Hope’s brother asks “why don’t you feel like a boy anymore?” Hope responds to this by stating “I never felt like a boy inside. I have always felt like a girl.” Hope’s brother use of the term ‘anymore’ suggests that there was the assumption that something had *changed* for Hope and that she initially identified with the gender assigned to her at birth. Hope clarifies that this is not the case and that her internal sense of being a girl was always present. For the characters outlined in this section, an internal sense of gender is fundamental in their self-identification and their affirmed sense of gender. As it stands at the current juncture, responses to an innate source of gender remains contested with some purporting a natural essence, whereas others maintain that gender is namely a sociocultural construct (Stryker, 2017).

The Gendered Mind and Brain

Discussions of an innate gender often evoke questions as to where this internal sense of gender precisely resides. Branching off of the discourse of the 'gender within', a second discursive theme that was found amongst titles where gender was constructed as specifically located within the mind and brain. The question of whether the mind and/or brain 'has' a gender (or sex) has been an eternal source of debate amongst feminist and trans scholars and activists. Some use the terms mind and brain interchangeably, while others exemplify the distinction in that the mind is a non-material entity whereas the brain has physical properties. According to Overall (2009), the mind is entirely a material entity and located within the brain itself.

Hines (2010) states that the mind "hold[s] the key to a coherent gendered 'self'" (p. 2). This is apparent in *But, I'm Not a Boy* where the inner thoughts of Sarah (born David) are illuminated in Figure 1[1]. This image depicts the way that Sarah envisions herself as a girl; the image in her mind is clear, confident, and secure. The image of Sarah affirmed as a girl in her mind is juxtaposed against the image of her troubled eyes and crestfallen expression which represents her sense of dysphoria. Sarah's mind holds her 'coherent gendered self' as Hines describes.

This is also seen in two double-spread images in *The Gender Fairy*, where thought-bubbles depict the minds of the two [nameless] young trans protagonists, both of whom were assigned an incorrect gender at birth. The narration dictates that neither of these two children felt that anyone knew how they felt "inside" and both descriptions are complemented with accompanying thought-bubbles of the minds of each respective character. Figure 2 depicts a

[1] Figure 1 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was an illustration of Sarah's mind which depicts her and two girl peers dressed in purple dresses and hats while playing with dolls. Original source: Leone, K., & Pfeifer, A. (2014). *But, I'm Not a Boy*. CreateSpace Publishing.

despondent child whose dynamic, feminine-presented gendered self is unaffirmed by others, whereas Figure 3 presents an irate child whose boisterous, masculine-presented gendered self is too, unaffirmed. The use of the thought-bubbles here is salient as visual text is sometimes "the best way to convey a character's inner life—vague, unuttered wishes, fears, daydreams, and other complex psychological states" (Nikolajeva, 2002, p. 94).

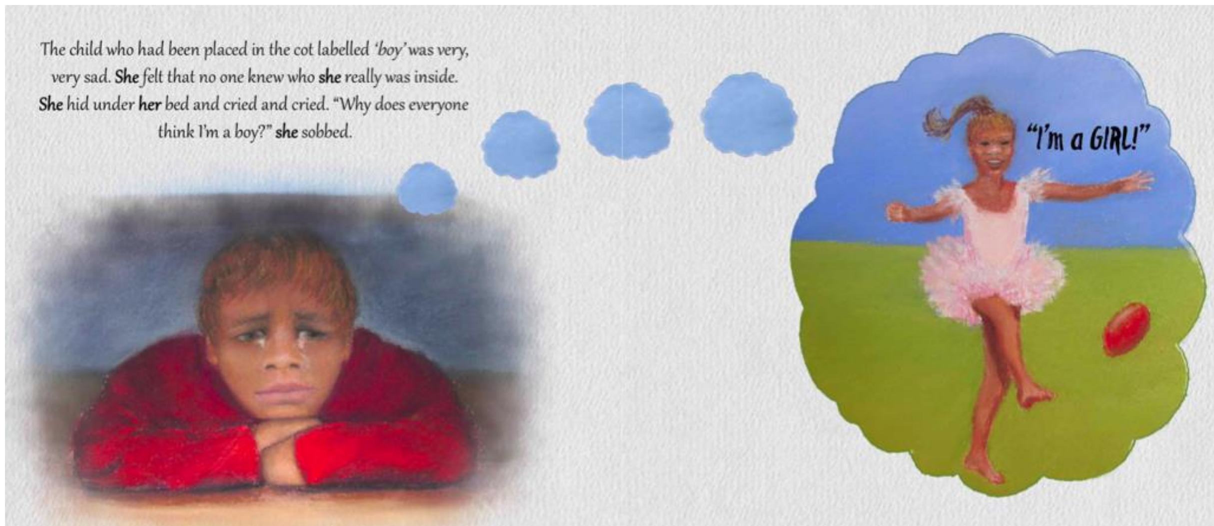

Figure 2. One protagonist mentally envisions herself as the girl she sees in her mind. From *The Gender Fairy*, by J. Hirst and L. Wirt, 2015, Australia: Oban Road Publishing. Copyright 2015 by Oban Road Publishing. Reprinted with permission.

Figure 3. Another protagonist mentally envisions himself as the boy he sees in his mind. From *The Gender Fairy*, by J. Hirst and L. Wirt, 2015, Australia: Oban Road Publishing. Copyright 2015 by Oban Road Publishing. Reprinted with permission.

Hines' view is also echoed by Zack (2009) who suggests that the mind possesses a fundamental understanding of an individual as 'male or female' and can subsequently establish whether this is coherent (or incoherent) with the entire person as a whole. As such, she states that the mind is the space which delineates one's gendered proclivities. Fausto-Sterling (2012) concurs and concedes of gender as an internal experience and one that derives from the mind of the beholder. This internal understanding of gender as inherent to the beholder may be understood to precede the individual (i.e. before birth) or may be understood as being formed through one's negotiation with discourses, interactions with others, and sociocultural understandings of gender (or perhaps a combination of the two), however as stated in Chapter III, the experience of this internalization of gender is what is significant here. Despite the discursive elements at play, the lived experience of this sense of gender as existing within the mind is nonetheless incredibly salient for these individuals.

The experience of gender as residing inside of an individual is also present in *The Adventures of Tulip: Birthday Wish Fairy*. In this text Tulip is a wish fairy that grants wishes to those who send in letters to the Wish Fairy Headquarters. Upon receiving a letter from a child named Daniel who sent in a wish requesting to become 'Daniela', Tulip seeks advice from the Wish Captain who explains that:

> Sometimes, someone was born looking like a boy, but had the heart and mind and soul of a girl inside. Or they might be the reverse: the body of a girl, with the spirit and thoughts and feelings of a boy.

Tulip responds to this information by affirming that "David is a girl inside." This text provides a slightly more explicit representation of the term 'inside' in that it is in reference to one's heart, mind, soul, and spirit, which are used almost interchangeably in this passage.

To this end, Rubin (2003) conveys that one's internal identity is encompassed by what might be considered a soul or self. He states that an individual's core gender is "situated inside oneself, a gendered soul" (p. 145). In this sense, it is the intrinsic soul that encompasses gender, which is touched upon in the above quote. This quotation is also precisely in-line with the "True Gender Self Model' that Ehrensaft (2013) has developed in her work with gender non-conforming and transchildren. This model decrees that for all children the "primary location of gender is within the mind." For Ehrensaft, the mind strives to achieve "an inner sense of self as male, female, or other, based on one's body, thoughts and feelings, and absorption of messages from the external world" (p. 12). Ehrensaft notes the salience of the mind and 'feelings' here which is also apparent in the Wish Captain's explanation. For Ehrensaft, although gender resides within a child's (or individual's) mind, there is nonetheless a social or socio-cultural facet of the way the mind works to crystallize this gender. Indeed, she states that the mind develops its inner gendered sense of self "based on one's body, thoughts and feelings, and absorption of messages from the external world (p. 12). She refers to the gendered mind as being influenced by one's 'gender web' which involves elements of nature, nurture, and culture (Ehrensaft, 2013). For Ehrensaft, although gender manifests and resides within one's mind, the constitution of this gendered mind is influenced by both biological and socio-cultural factors.

In *Truly Willa*, Willa touches on the notion of a gendered brain as she explains how gender for transchildren materializes:

> Sometimes when a baby is made, if it is a boy baby like I was, the body is made for a boy, but when the brain is made, the brain which is how that baby will feel, does not always match. That's when a child like me is made. It happens to girl babies too. Everyone thought I was a boy because of how my body looked, but in my brain, where my feelings come from, I feel I am a girl, and that's where it matters.

Similar to the above quotations regarding the mind as a space for one's gendered 'feelings', Willa positions feelings as deriving within the brain. This language is very similar to a quotation in *Phoenix Goes to School* where the author provides an informative passage for adults stating that "sometimes how we look on the outside doesn't match how our brain feels on the inside." Again, these passages both position gender as residing within the brain, and position the brain as an entity which is capable of 'feeling' gender. Furthermore, in Willa's case, she states there was an incongruence with her brain and body *when* the brain was *made*, inferring that this occurred in utero and is a predominantly biological occurrence. As outlined previously, some scholars and activists (some of which Serano refers to as gender artifactualists) object to this positioning, which Mallon (2009) notes often precipitates strong emotional responses from transpeople as discussions of nature, biology, and the 'realness' of gender repeatedly question the authenticity of their internal sense of gender.

The notion of a gendered brain is further evident in *Be Who You Are* where it is stated that the main character Nick (who later transitions to Hope) "felt like he had a girl brain." The image, pictured below[2], depicts Nick blissfully smiling as the vision of himself as a girl in a dress surrounds his pink-coloured brain. When Nick is asked to draw a self-portrait at school, the narration states that "Nick drew what he looked like in his brain." Nick's teacher responds to his drawing by saying "You're a boy Nick. Draw a boy." Confused, Nick later asks his parents "why doesn't the teacher understand my girl brain?" The phrasing of Nick having a "girl brain" elucidates a controversial issue within trans and gender studies, which will be outlined shortly.

2 Figure 4 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was an illustration of Nick smiling with a pink thought-bubble indicating his brain which contained an image of a person in a dress. Original source: Carr, J., & Rumback, B. (Illustrator). (2010). *Be Who You Are!* Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse.

The phrasing utilized here invokes a different facet of the brain/mind discourse. Rather than focusing on the brain as a possessor of gendered feelings, this language explicitly positions the character's brain as belonging to a particular gender. This is also present in *I am Jazz* where Jazz considers that she has a "girl brain but a boy body." As stated previously, the discourse of the gendered mind and/or brain involves a long history in feminist and trans scholarship and has been subject to extensive debate. Research on 'sex' differences in the brain date back over the past 200 years (Rippon, 2019). While a comprehensive overview of the past and current research on gender differences in the brain is beyond the scope of this analysis, some context into the issue is warranted to better comprehend the wider sociopolitical issues engrained within this discourse.

This notion of a gendered brain is resisted by some for the reason that it is seen as reifying and reinforcing a biological deterministic view of gender which feminism has historically strived to dispel. Inferring that there are inherent and natural differences between males and females is seen to have been a cornerstone for patriarchal relations which preserves stereotypical archetypes and proclivities. As has been outlined in Chapter II, essentialist conceptualizations of gender, or in other words, ascertaining that there are particular 'essences' associated with males and females, is viewed by many to have directly contributed to notions of inferiority of girls and women and the superiority of boys and men (Girshick, 2008; Hill, 2006; Martin, 2011; Rippon, 2019; Werhun, 2009). This is particularly evident in the images present above from *The Gender Fairy* where the two protagonists are positioned with accompanying images of their minds. The child who was assigned male at birth but identifies as a girl "hid under her bed and cried and cried" whereas the child who was assigned female at birth but identifies as a boy "shouted at the sky." This representation alludes to broader Western

sociocultural archetypes of femininity and masculinity wherein girls are perceived to be weak, emotional, and express sadness when upset, whereas boys are expected to be stern, aggressive, and express anger when upset (Brody, 2001; Jacobson, 2011; Latu, Mast, & Kaiser, 2013). The 'female' brain has also been associated with friendship and mothering (Rivers & Barnett, 2011), which is depicted in the images from *But, I'm Not a Boy* where the image of Sarah's mind emphasizes appearance and nurturance through the depiction of dolls and clothing. This is particularly troubling for feminists who have strived to problematize discourses that conceive of gender as intrinsic (Overall, 2009).

Thus, the gendered brain discourse has created a profound rift between those who wish to move away from discourses surrounding a gendered mind and brain, and those who wholeheartedly feel a connection to their internal sense of gender. In the same way that biological determinism countered myths of homosexuality as perverse and contagious (see Rohy, 2014), it too serves to dispel myths of the same sort pertaining to trans identities. Biological understandings of transness help to negate harmful and inaccurate conceptions of transpeople while also providing reassurance and validation for many belonging to this group. However, they can also serve to reinforce pathologization and medicalization of these groups (Barasch, 2018).

Scientists tend to rely on the visibility of differences in the brain to postulate that brains are inherently gendered (Fausto-Sterling, 2000a). For instance, some research has found brains of transgender adolescents to be structurally and functionally similar to the gender they identify with as opposed to the one they were assigned at birth (see Bakker, 2018; Kruijver et al., 2000), while other research indicates that transgender individuals' brains are more similar to those of their assigned gender, although differences are still present (see Luders et al., 2009).

Relationships between gender, brain structure and function, and physiology are complex and often complicated to interpret. Elliot (2010) and Overall (2009) have asserted that even if researchers were able to determine a structural biological feature in the brains of transpeople, it would have to be further established that these would be present in all transpeople. Similarly, Rippon (2019) argues that barring differences in brain size, 'male' and 'female' brains are quite similar to one another, and that differences in brain structure cannot be generalized to an entire gender group. She contests that despite differences that have been found, there is still considerable overlap between 'male' and 'female' brains and that there are more similarities than differences.

Joel et al. (2015) suggest the lack of conclusive support for a definitive gendered brain amongst cisgender groups further complicates this matter for transgender individuals as these two categorizations are often compared to one another in research. Rippon (2019) also emphasizes the notion of social influences in stating that although some gender differences have been found in the brain, the overemphasis and overgeneralization on this is remiss in that it does not take into account socio-cultural and individual factors that also contribute to gender identity. She states that the gendered brain discourse often neglects to consider the role of the adaptability of the brain's structure and function in a changing world. Altinay and Anand (2019) have too demonstrated findings which support the notion of 'brain gender' but emphasize that this works in unison with social factors. Mohammadi & Khaleghi (2018) take this up further and have suggested that gendered differences in the brain may be attributed to what they term the culture-behaviour-brain (CBB) model which focuses on the ways culture influences behaviour which then influences the brain's composition. While many still advocate for and actively search for evidence of a dichotomous understanding of the (trans)gendered brain, other research suggests

shifting away from dimorphic views and moving toward a spectrum-like conceptualization of the brain which underscores the notion of a brain mosaic (see Joel et al., 2015). As such, the ongoing debate as to whether or not the brain or mind truly has a gendered component is still afoot as there is currently no consensus nor satisfactory conclusive research at this juncture (Altinay & Anand, 2019; Bettcher, 2009; Browne, N, 2004; Di Ceglie, 2014; Elliot, 2010; Shrage, 2009).

Regardless of which 'side' one takes to be more valid it is paramount to consider a few things. The fact that the brains of transgender individuals are compared to the brains of cisgender people positions the cisgender brain as the default and the norm. Studies that show that if the brains of transgender individuals are close to the brains of their affirmed identity (which use the brains of cisgendered people to compare) are celebrated but if they are shown to either be similar to brains of those with their assigned gender or unsimilar to the brains of cisgendered folk, they are seen as less legitimate. There are also indications that research findings are contradictory and inconsistent, methodologies are sometimes flawed, and sample sizes are too small. Also, research which considers the effects of pubertal suppressants and hormones on brain structure is also still very much in its infancy (Barasch, 2018). Moreover, research in this realm generally entails arguments either for or against a 'female' brain *or* a 'male' brain; thus research considering those who do not identify as having either of these is largely scarce (Altinay & Anand, 2019; Barasch, 2018).

Indeed, for those who are gender non-binary, genderqueer, gender-neutral, gender-fluid, or agender, for example, the notion of having a gendered brain or mind would not be particularly applicable as many individuals from these groups do not fall within the typical male/masculine and female/feminine categorizations that current brain research focuses upon. The notion of a

‘female’ or ‘male’ brain reinforces gender permanence which does not consider those for whom gender is not fixed. The notion that the ‘source’ for a true gender is within the brain and/or mind could be interpreted as a defining characteristic of trans identity. This contributes to the discourse that those who do not align themselves with binary forms of transness are less ‘legitimate’ the traditional binary categorizations of gender. For some transpeople, a self-affirmed declaration of one’s gender identity, irrespective of one’s physical characteristics, is sufficient. Also, if research were unable to find any support for gender attributes in the brain of transpeople, would this make them *less* authentic? For some, findings of a biological basis in the brain for trans identities creates a sense of comfort and validation, but if this were not the case would they feel even further pathologized? The notion of science conferring the authenticity of one’s gender can be troubling for those who do not experience gender as a fixed biological phenomenon.

The Mirror

As has been elicited through the ‘gender within’ and ‘gendered mind and brain’ discourses, it is clear that the texts mentioned discursively construct gender as residing internally within a child. Similar to the notion of the brain and mind constituting the notion of gender as within an individual, the notion of an inside gender invokes questions as to what encompasses the ‘outside’. This is where the third, and very prominent, discursive theme of what I have termed ‘The Mirror’ was found within several texts. The interdiscursive nature of ‘the mirror’ and ‘the gender within’ both posit that gender is something that is innately experienced. ‘The Mirror’ specifically positions one’s internal gender as being a true reflection of them; yet a reflection that only they can perceive. The mirror juxtaposes the way one perceives their gender ‘inside’ with the way it is perceived by others on the ‘outside’. The utilization of mirrors in visual text can foster and facilitate understandings of a first-person perspective, similar to a self-

portrait (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2001). Indeed, the symbol of 'the mirror' here is representative of what Overall (2009) refers to as a metaphor of masquerade wherein one's true self is hidden behind a mask of the wrong gender. Overall notes that this is fundamentally when one's body does not reflect their 'core self', which is precisely what all of the presented images serve to elicit. This also encompasses Rubin's (2003) inside/outside metaphor where one's internal sense of their gendered self neither matches their external body nor the outsider's view of their material body.

This is cursorily apparent in *Truly Willa* where Willa states "I felt I was a girl inside, even if the outside me did not match." Here, Willa makes reference to an 'inside' and 'outside' version of herself similar to Rubin (2003)'s 'inside/outside' metaphor, and expresses a sense of incongruence between her internal sense of gender (her "inside") compared to her external body (her "outside"). This view is also apparent in *Be Who You Are* where it is stated that Nick was insistent on telling others that "he felt like a girl inside and wanted to live the way he saw himself." The notion of wanting to live in a manner that expresses the way Nick "*saw* himself" alludes to the fact that his internal sense of gender was not something that others were aware of and that there was a disconnect between the ways in which Nick perceived himself compared to the manner in which others perceived him, further reiterating Stein (2018)'s indication of the 'sole, legitimate interpreter'.

Although the body is not mentioned here explicitly, the accompanying images elucidate what is inferred by the text. In the first two images below, the reader is invited to capture a glimpse of the way Nick 'sees himself'. It is clear that the way Nick felt internally did not correspond to his external physical form. The mirror is used here to illustrate how Nick sees himself internally while contrasting this with the way he appears to others, external to the

reflection. Figure 5[3] shows Nick reaching out his hand to his reflection (Hope) to establish a connection. Interestingly, the facial expressions depicted differ from one another in that Nick, on the outside of the mirror, displays a slight smile, while Hope, behind the mirror, has an expression of wonder upon her face. This is similar to the image in Figure 6[4] where Nick stares at his reflection of Hope in the mirror where both versions of the character smile. In Figure 7[5], Nick has finally transitioned to Hope and it is evident that an alignment between Hope's internal gender and exterior appearance has been achieved, and now others perceive her as the way she has always seen herself.

The symbolism of the mirror is not specific to the Nick/Hope image in this text as this symbolism was found within several texts. Bittner, Ingrey, and Stamper (2016) contest that for gender non-conforming and trans individuals, mirrors importantly serve to represent both incongruence as well as validation pertaining to embodiment. They argue that the way one perceives themselves involves how one wishes to be perceived by others and that this is integral to one's gender identity formation. We see this directly in the images above, particularly in the last image where Hope's parents are included in the image, further validating her identity as it is now apparent to them as well.

[3] Figure 5 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was an illustration of Nick with short hair, dressed in a white t-shirt and grey pants, reaching his hand out to a mirror that shows a reflection of him with longer hair, in a white and polka dot patterned dress. Original source: Carr, J., & Rumback, B. (Illustrator). (2010). *Be Who You Are!* Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse.
[4] Figure 6 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was an illustration of Nick looking into a mirror which shows his reflection as a girl. Original source: Carr, J., & Rumback, B. (Illustrator). (2010). *Be Who You Are!* Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse.
[5] Figure 7 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was an illustration of Hope and her parents looking into a mirror as her reflection finally matches her physical appearance. Original source: Carr, J., & Rumback, B. (Illustrator). (2010). *Be Who You Are!* Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse.

In *But, I'm Not a Boy*, 'the mirror' is also present in Figure 8[6] where Sarah looks on at her reflection in the mirror. The narration reads: "the little girl was sad because nobody knew she was a girl and everybody thought she was a boy, and she didn't know what to do." Here, the text of "nobody knew she was a girl" accompanied by Sarah gazing at herself in the mirror encompasses Stein's notion of the child as the 'sole interpreter' once again. Sarah is the only individual aware of her identity as a girl, which is depicted in the visual representation of her internal reflection in the mirror. Similar to the image of Nick/Hope, Sarah too reaches out to touch the hand of her reflection, as her reflection naturally does the same. The image produces a sense of Sarah as striving for equilibrium between the two versions of herself, yearning to be united with the person on the other side of the mirror.

Although not showcasing its protagonist, *Stacey is Not a Boy* too utilizes 'the mirror' when introducing readers to different gender identities. In Figure 9, a person is seen staring into a mirror with their hands making contact with the reflection in the same way that Nick/Hope and Sarah demonstrate in the images above. With Nick/Hope and Sarah, the most apparent differences between the character and their reflection are changes to hair and clothing. In this image, however, the individual's hair is the only feature to be transformed in the reflection.

Figure 9. An individual peers into the mirror at their reflection while holding out a hand in unity. From *Stacey's Not a Girl*, by C. Keo-Meier, J. Yang, and N. Lam, 2016, Houston, TX. Copyright 2016. Reprinted with permission.

[6] Figure 8 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was an illustration of Sarah, dressed in a t-shirt and shorts, yearnfully gazing into the mirror while looking at her reflection which is depicted in a blue dress. Original source: Leone, K., & Pfeifer, A. (2014). *But, I'm Not a Boy*. CreateSpace Publishing.

‘The Mirror’ makes a presence in *The Adventures of Tina and Jordan* which details the story of Tina, who must navigate her desire to live as a boy while attempting to appease her parents who do not approve of such behaviour. Two images of the mirror are present in the text; one exuding an expression of revulsion, with the other depicting joy. Figure 10[7], in which Tina is wearing a feminine dress, is accompanied by text stating: “she did not like the clothes that her Mommy would dress her in. She did not like being told to act like a girl.” Contrastingly, Figure 11[8] presents Tina dressed in a cowboy hat which seems to have precipitated a reflection of herself as a legitimate cowboy. The caption for this image reads: “she could not understand why, but wearing the cowboy hat made her feel strong. She looked at herself in the mirror and liked what she saw.” After concealing her hair beneath her cowboy hat, the text informs readers that “she felt good because she looked like a boy.” Similar to the first image in *Be Who You Are* in which Nick and his reflection project different facial expressions, the images of Tina are not identical to her reflections in the mirror in either of the illustrations. This creates an image of Tina’s reflection as simultaneously attached yet detached from herself in that the image is a reflection of her innate self, but tends to emphasize her internal feelings more prominently.

The mirror is also present in *It’s So Gay and It’s Okay* where two images compare and contrast protagonist Jamie’s sense of self in two different forms of apparel. Figure 12 displays Jamie, a gender variant boy, as he dresses for the first day of school. The image of Jamie peering

[7] Figure 10 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was an illustration of Tina wearing a pink dress and looking at her mirrored reflection in discontent. Original source: Lam, J. (2013). *The adventures of Tina and Jordan*. Xlibris.

[8] Figure 11 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was an illustration of Tina proudly donning a cowboy hat and vest while peering into her smiling reflection of herself as a boy. Original source: Lam, J. (2013). *The adventures of Tina and Jordan*. Xlibris.

at his pink shirt in the mirror is accompanied by text stating: "it's the first day of school and Jamie is feeling very excited. […] He even wears his favorite pink shirt to school." Jamie appears chipper and confident with his jovial smile and poised body posture. Following his experience of being bullied by his peers at school for his choice of pink apparel, Jamie decides to alter his appearance. In Figure 13, Jamie is presented with a perturbed expression on his face and his arms falling to his side. The caption reads: "Jamie puts on a black shirt that he does not like but he feels like he has to. It is because he does not want the other boys at school to laugh at him again." Although Jamie is not a transgender child, the two images convey his dichotomous views of himself through the use of the mirror. The mirrors project either a sense of congruency or incongruency in relation to Jamie's identity in the same manner as the texts previously discussed.

Figure 12. Jamie wears a pink shirt and peers into his reflection with a contented expression. From *It's So Gay and It's Okay*, by W. Wong, 2014, Lulu Publishing Services. Copyright 2014 by Lulu Publishing Services. Reprinted with permission.

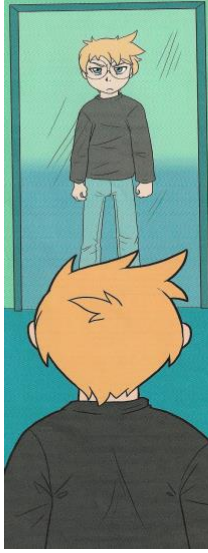

Figure 13. Jamie wears a black shirt and peers into his reflection with a discontented expression. From *It's So Gay and It's Okay*, by W. Wong, 2014, Lulu Publishing Services. Copyright 2014 by Lulu Publishing Services. Reprinted with permission.

In *When Kathy is Keith*, an image of Kathy looking at herself in the mirror (Figure 14) presents a despondent Kathy observing an awed reflection of herself as Keith. The text states: "Kathy looks at the mirror every day. She sees a girl in the mirror, but she knows the mirror has made a mistake, because the person in the mirror is not a boy." The mirror here continues to allegorize an internal/external sense of identity for Kathy, however the use of the term "mistake" elicits a slightly new element to this. Overall (2009) states that some transpeople experience a feeling of their body failing to "reflect their core self as the result of a mistake" (p. 14). The term 'mistake' here evokes the notion that there is something 'wrong' with the alignment of Kathy's internal/external gender as the mirror is not emitting the correct image — namely, what is on the 'inside'. This is further addressed in the next section.

Figure 14. Kathy looks into a mirror which reveals her affirmed gender as a boy. From *When Kathy is Keith*, by W. Wong, 2011, Xlibris Corporation. Copyright 2011 by Xlibris Corporation. Reprinted with permission.

It should be noted that the symbol of the mirror was present in several other texts, however it was used in a slightly different manner compared to the usages above. Returning to *Stacey is Not a Boy*, the symbol of a mirror is used again, this time with the book's protagonist, Stacey, who is a gender non-binary child. In this instance, however, it is not used to illustrate an internal sense of gender, but, rather, to exemplify Stacey's ambivalence regarding the impending future state of their body. In the caption accompanying Figure 15, Stacey states: "I feel OK about my body now, but I really do not want to get boobs when I get older." Rather than simply having Stacey look down at their chest without the mirror, the image positions Stacey as being confronted directly with their reflection. Similar to the usage of the mirror in the above texts, there is an element of a lack of control here as Stacey views their body with angst, grips their chest anxiously, and appears apprehensive at the thought of a prospective future bodily incongruence. The mirror does not represent an internal sense of gender here, but instead, accentuates the salience of the physical body in relation to gender; a theme which will be explored at a later point in this analysis.

Figure 15. Stacey apprehensively looks on at their reflection in the mirror while clutching their chest. From *Stacey's Not a Girl*, by C. Keo-Meier, J. Yang, and N. Lam, 2016, Houston, TX. Copyright 2016. Reprinted with permission.

Similar to the scene in *It's So Gay and It's Okay*, in *Phoenix Goes to School*, Phoenix, a transgirl, is apprehensive about her first day of school. Her ambivalence stems from the fear that other children will not accept her as being a transgender child. In Figure 16, Phoenix looks on at the reflection in the mirror with a trepidatious expression upon her face. The accompanying text reads: "today is my first day of school. I'm scared to wear my dress to school." The narrative is similar between texts where Jamie looks into the mirror contemplating his choice of apparel to wear to school, however the difference is that Phoenix expresses apprehension in clothes that are *comfortable* for her, whereas Jamie expresses a related sentiment while dressed in clothes that he is *uncomfortable* in. Each of these texts underscores the salience of others' interpretations of the characters' sense of gender, further emphasizing Bittner, Ingrey, and Stamper's (2016) point regarding the desire to be perceived by others as one perceives themselves. These texts also touch on Girshick's (2008) postulation that there is an interrelatedness between one's internal gender and how one's body is perceived and received by others.

Figure 16. Phoenix looks at her reflection in the mirror pondering how her peers will respond to her appearance. From *Phoenix Goes to School*, by M. Finch, P. Finch, and S. Davey, 2018, Philadelphia, PA: Jessica Kingsley Publishers. Copyright 2018 by Jessica Kingsley Publishers. Reprinted with permission.

These excerpts also correspond to Butler (2006)'s view that the conditions that we use to judge the coherence of gender of any individual not only govern the recognizability of that person but too influence the manner in which we perceive ourselves in terms of our feelings, the body, and "in moments before the mirror" (p. 184). In these two texts, both Jamie and Phoenix make judgements as to what constitutes the coherence of gender for others –Jamie understands what constitutes a coherent gender for the "other boys" similar to Phoenix's understanding of what constitutes coherent gender for the other children at school—which informs their understandings as to what constitutes a coherent gender for themselves. As children who do not fit within the confines of what constitutes a normative coherent gender, their perception of themselves is too influenced by this as they each gaze at their reflection, which Butler refers to as a 'moment before the mirror'.

As stated previously, in addition to exemplifying incongruence, mirrors can too represent congruence and/or certainty. This is evident in *Jessie's Hat Collection* where Jessie looks on at

her reflection in the mirror with a self-assuring smile. Figure 17[9] is found on the very first page of the book as the author introduces the character to readers. The caption of this image simply states: "Jessie has a huge hat collection." It is later made clear that Jessie's hat is a significant part of her identity as well as her journey to becoming a transboy, which provides further context into the image. Here, both her posture and confident smile elicit a sentiment of pride for Jessie. The additional hat hanging from the top side of the mirror along with its beams of light shining down onto Jessie's reflection creates an image of Jessie that is confident and self-assured. This image evokes a meaning similar to that in *It's So Gay and It's Okay* where Jamie's sense of confidence and comfort in his pink shirt are transparent in his reflection in the mirror.

Lastly, in *Meet Polkadot*, the book focuses on Polkadot's experience of being a non-binary transgender child while educating readers about various aspects pertaining to gender identity and expression. The symbol of the mirror is used here, however it is to de-emphasize the primacy of gender and to underscore the many other aspects of one's identity that are present in their reflection. In Polkadot's statement that "gender identity is one truth about ourselves, but it doesn't reflect ALL that is true and great about ourselves", the accompanying image (Figure 18) alludes to intersectionality, presumably inviting the reader to consider how other identity categories serve to comprise one's identity alongside gender. Butler (1999) emphasizes this in stating that it is impossible to detach gender from the political and cultural intersections that are present in one's life as these are through which gender is principally shaped and sustained. The text in the mirror surrounding Polkadot's reflection includes the following words: they, them, polkadot, white, child, U.S. born, able, low-income, and "documented"; thereby underscoring the

[9] Figure 17 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was an illustration of Jessie confidently peering over her shoulder at her reflection in the mirror. Her hat lays on the corner of the mirror, shining down on her reflection. Original source: Barnes, N. (2018). *Jessie's Hat Collection.* Olympia, WA.

many different categories that coincide with Polkadot's gender to influence their identity and positionality as Butler has noted. This is the only text to allude to the other intersectional categories of a character's identity.

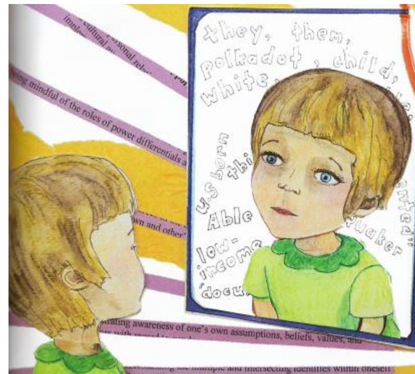

Figure 18. Polkadot stares into the mirror as terms of the intersectional categories of their identity surround their reflection. From *Meet Polkadot*, by T. Broadhead, 2013, Olympia, WA: Danger Dot Publishing. Copyright 2013 by Danger Dot Publishing. Reprinted with permission.

In the preceding sections on 'the gender within' and 'the gendered mind and brain', and 'the mirror' gender is primarily emphasized as residing internally. Although these sections allude to the external elements of gender, they do so in a fairly implicit manner. As such, this may evoke a certain level of ambiguity in meaning, demanding that readers carefully navigate the symbolism of the visual text in relation to the verbal text in order to acquire a comprehensive understanding of the message being conveyed (Nikolajeva, 2002). In the following section on 'the body', however, the external attributes of gender are more concretely underscored as they relate to the material and physical components of the body of characters.

The Body

The notion of the 'body' is a topic that has been at the subject of extensive scholarly inquiry and debate. Two prevalent paradigms of the body include: the naturalistic and/or physiological, and the socially and/or culturally constructed. Naturalistic theories of the body

contest that it is an a priori biological unit; this is where notions of sex-based differences are conceptualized (Moss & Dyck, 2002). Social constructionist theories of the body dictate that the body is a product of social construction and an outlet through which social and cultural inscriptions are placed (Moss & Dyck, 2002), and that the body is socially constructed and in turn socially experienced (Turner, 1996). Naturalistic conceptualizations of the body have been condemned as being too impressionistic and advocating the body as deterministic, emphasizing constricted relationships between biology and behavior. Contrastingly, social constructionist views are more widely acknowledged as they stress the influence of dominant discursive practices that serve to sustain and regulate the body, however have been resisted by some as they sometimes minimize biological variation. Contemporarily, many schools coalesce aspects of each of these approaches when conceptualizing what the body entails. There is an obvious physical and biological manifestation of the body as it is essentially a concrete and tangible entity, however, how we conceive, legitimize and regulate the body varies based on social and cultural components. As has been elicited, discussions of the body become more complex when trans and gender non-conforming individuals are involved.

Common between both of the above discourses regarding 'the gender within' and 'the mirror' is the notion that the bodies of some transpeople do not correspond to their gender inside (Rubin, 2003). The body has been found to be an overwhelmingly prevalent concept amongst texts in this sample. The ways in which the body is conceptualized varies, thus, within this section of the analysis, several sub-discourses will be examined which are all subsumed under the overarching theme of 'the body'. The interdiscursive nature of these allows for them to be collectively grouped together under this heading, while also distinguishing between their distinct features. The discourses present within this section are very closely related to the concept of

gender dysphoria — feelings of distress or discomfort generally associated with one's body not being aligned with one's internal sense of gender (Keo-Meier & Ehrensaft, 2018; McNabb, 2018), which was also present in some instances of the discourse of 'the mirror'. Before moving forward, it is imperative that I note that not all trans children (or transpeople for that matter) experience gender dysphoria, and that although many transpeople experience their sense of gender as an internal occurrence, not all associate gender as being linked or connected to their physical body.

The first heading within this section, 'the wrong body', chronicles characters' experiences that they have been born with an external body that does not match their internal sense of gender, and is, thus, 'wrong'. The 'wrong body' discourse does not specify which regions of the body are 'wrong', but rather, speaks of the body as an entire entity. The second heading, 'the sexed body', builds off of the notion of the wrong body in that characters' feel as though their external body does not match their internal sense of gender, yet in this section specific areas of the body are described and usually involve the genitalia.

The wrong body.

Fausto-Sterling (2000a) writes, that "the mind translates physiology into an interior sense of self" (p. 24) and suggests that this creates a harmonious relationship between one's 'inside' and 'outside. When the two do not align, however, this can create a sense of inconsistency and conflict. As was previously alluded to in *When Kathy is Keith* in the quote "the mirror has made a mistake, because the person in the mirror is not a boy", the notion of inconsistency here —or as it is termed, a "mistake"—between the 'inside' and 'outside' infers that there is something 'wrong' with the external reflection of Kathy's body. Rubin (2003) refers to this as a 'betrayal' of the self wherein one's body neglects to represent one's internal gender identity, disuniting the

cohesion between the inside and outside self. The notion of a mistake and/or betrayal is deeply engrained in the discourse of the 'wrong body' which was concretely elicited in several texts.

Hines (2010) suggests that the discourse of the 'wrong body' refers to "a state of discord between 'sex' (the body) and gender identity (the mind)" (p. 2) and represents a "vehicle in which the essential self is trapped" (p. 60). This dissonance is seen when revisiting the quote from *Be Who You Are*, where the narration states: "he knew that his body looked like a boy, but it just didn't fit the way he felt inside." This quote on its own does not explicitly elicit the discourse of the 'wrong body', however, later in the book Nick (later, Hope) visits Dr. Bee — who is described as "a friend"— and it is stated that this doctor "talked with kids who felt like they were born in the wrong body." The "wrong body" here, may refer either to external genitalia (a penis and/or a vagina) or to internal organs (a uterus, and/or prostate, etc.). By contextualizing these two quotes, it is clear that Nick's initial dysphoria in his body contributed to the conceptualization of him as possessing the 'wrong body'. There is a direct association with the body and/or sex, and Nick's gender identity. Stating that one has been born into the "wrong" body, implies that one's gender identity must correspond with a particular body and/or sex.

This dissonance is also noted by Stein (2018) who states that the 'wrong body' discourse is born out of an inconsistency between the inner mind and outer body. Paraphrasing a quote from a transgender interviewee in Stein's research, the body is seen as a "site of error/conflict" whereas the mind is seen as a "site of deep abiding truth" (p. 65). Fausto-Sterling (2012) too agrees that the 'wrong body' discourse fundamentally involves "a sense of self (identity) that is invisible" (p. 58). Thus, the discourse of the 'wrong body' is inherently connected to all three previous discourses of 'the gender within' and 'the gendered mind' and 'the mirror wherein the

interdiscursive and nuanced elements between and within each of these discourses become evoked.

The discourse of the 'wrong body' is further taken up in the following quote: "feeling like a girl wasn't Hope's choice at all. It was just who she was. She didn't choose to be born in the wrong body." In addition to referencing the wrong body, the element of 'choice' is elicited in this quote which presents the notion of a lack of control and infers a certain destined characteristic to Hope's circumstances. Stein (2018) states that for many transgender people, the idea that being transgender is a choice is deeply unsettling. She states that "one does not choose to be transgender; one *is* transgender" (p. 111). The phrasing of the lack of choice combined with the notion that Hope was "born into the wrong body" both relate to the 'born that way' discourse that was previously outlined.

Henry (2017), Hines (2007), and Cromwell (2006) all suggest that although many transpeople identify with the notion of being in the 'wrong body', for some, this discourse does not fully encompass the many moving parts of their trans experience. A participant in Henry's interviews with transpeople conceives of the 'wrong body' discourse as a misconception and urban myth which has been hyperbolized in discussions of trans identities. The participant states that although there are indeed elements of gender dysphoria associated with the bodies of transpeople, this discourse is largely sensationalized. In interviewing transgender individuals, Hines (2007) too found that many conceive of the transgender experience as complex and often involving nuance and fluidity in the way one feels. For those who do not conceive of their bodies as *either* male *or* female, the 'wrong body' discourse can appear quite abstract in that it neither addresses the broader spectrum of gender diversity, nor the idea of variance or a non-binary identity. Indeed, while some transpeople experience extreme discomfort and dysphoria

pertaining to their bodies, others do not experience discomfort at all. Girschik (2008) explains that these varying experiences may pertain to how individuals valorize the body in relation to gender. For many, the 'wrong body' discourse often involves a juxtaposition wherein a 'right' body is sought (Fausto-Sterling, 2012; Hines, 2007; McDonald, 2006; Stein, 2018).

The contrast between a 'right' body and a 'wrong' body has been resisted by some trans, queer, and feminist scholars and activists. Green (1997) states "these bodies (and experiences and identities) are not wrong. They are different" (p. 18, as cited in Cromwell, 2006). The 'wrong body' discourse, for some, can be seen as further invalidating and illegitimating bodies that do not conform to particular standards, and reinforces particular (binary) ways of being. Some choose to reframe this to subvert dominant constructions of what a body ought to be (Cromwell, 2006). On a related note, Stone (1991) argues that this discourse can fail to consider "the complexities and ambiguities of lived experience" (p. 295) when one moves from one 'body' to the other. For some, the idea of a 'wrong' body and a contrasting 'right' body, oversimplifies the many moving parts of one's subjectivity and does not take into account those whose bodies may have elements of both congruency and incongruence. Similarly, Bornstein (1994) proposes the position of the "gender outlaw", which refers to trans individuals who neither identify nor align themselves with binary categorizations of gender, which the 'wrong body' discourse often reifies. The 'wrong body' discourse looks at the body as a unified entity, which is grounded in the understanding that the trans body, as a whole, is misaligned with one's gender identity. Historically, those who experienced feelings of being in the 'wrong body' were deemed as 'true' transpeople (Cromwell, 2006). This has been exclusionary and invalidating towards transpeople who may not associate gender identity as being connected to the body as the

'wrong body' discourse is not relevant. These latter points will be taken up further in other sections of this dissertation.

The sexed body.

When considering the last two discursive themes elicited— i.e. 'the mirror', and the 'wrong body'— it is apparent that bodies, here, are often depicted as representative of one's core self (Rubin, 2003). Moving from a generalized notion of the 'wrong body', discursive framings of the body as more concretely tied to sex were also highly prevalent amongst texts. The 'sexed body' discourse builds off of the 'wrong body' discourse in that it focuses on the connection between gender identity and a material corporeal body. In the 'sexed body' discourse, the body is more overtly presented, and the relationship between gender and sex is far more apparent.

As I have underscored earlier in this dissertation, the notion of a 'sexed' body is a relatively new phenomenon as until the 17th century, bodies were not defined as having a stable or single 'sex'. The 'sexed body' discourse infers that bodies are centrally distinct based upon categorizations of 'sex'. The notion of 'sexing' the body to precipitate the 'sexed' body refers to the ways in which bodies in general are presumed to belong to a particular sex, as well as the manner in which particular body *parts* are linked to a particular sex (Bettcher, 2009). This is how classifications typically manifest in a dichotomous manner (i.e. the 'male/boy' body versus the 'female/girl' body; and 'male/boy' parts versus 'female/girl' parts). The fusion of both sex and gender here (i.e. female + girl) elicits the notion of the 'sexed body' as often inextricably tied to gender (which will be elucidated further shortly). There are various elements that constitute each respective sexed body, some of which include hormones, chromosomes, internal and external reproductive features, and secondary sex characteristics (Bettcher, 2009). Within my sample of texts, the 'sexed body' discourse is sometimes tacitly referenced in relation to the body as a whole, whereas other times it is more explicitly alluded to or described with respect to

particular parts of the body. Throughout all titles utilized in this section, the only explicit element of the sexed body mentioned are the genitalia; other components that comprise sexed bodies— e.g. hormones, chromosomes—are not denoted within texts. The various modes through which this discourse was constituted across titles are discussed below.

Revisiting several earlier quotes that were explored in the previous sections, the 'sexed body' is alluded to in *I am Jazz* where Jazz states that she has "a girl brain but a boy body", in *The Adventures of Tulip: Birthday Wish Fairy* where the Wish Captain explains that "sometimes, someone was born looking like a boy, [but had the heart and mind and soul of a girl inside]" or that someone might have "the body of a girl, [with the spirit and thoughts and feelings of a boy]", and in *Truly Willa* where Willa states "I also knew I had been born with the body of a boy." In each of these quotes, there is a distinct conveyance of the characters' bodies as sexed, albeit without using direct terminology or specifications pertaining to what particular elements of the body are being referenced (e.g. genitalia). The particular phrasings of "boy body", "looking like a boy", "body of a girl", and "body of a boy" denote that there is a (binary) distinction between the materiality of 'girl' and 'boy' corporeal bodies, and that there is a presumed universal form of each of these. The Wish Captain's phrasing of a child "*looking* like a boy" (emphasis added) along with the statement that Nick's body "*looked* like a boy" (emphasis added), implies that this is something that can be visually observed. Although the body is clearly referenced in this passage, no specific details are included as to what elements of the body this entails.

What is most interesting in these passages, is that only terms 'boy' and 'girl' are used, as opposed to sex-based terminology such as 'male' and/or 'female'. As such, through these excerpts it can be deduced that gender and genitalia are seen to be inherently interconnected.

The terms 'sex' and 'gender' are very often used interchangeably (Stryker, 2008), which would explain the seemingly symbiotic relationship being purported in these quotes. In research conducted by Kessler and McKenna (2006), participants were asked to engage in 'The Ten Question Gender Game' wherein interviewers told the participants that they were thinking of a 'person' and it was the participants responsibility to ask ten questions to establish the person's gender. The researchers found that in most cases, genital attribution decreed gender attribution. In other words, when participants were given information regarding the 'person's' genitalia, this was often interpreted as sufficient in designating the individual's gender. As such, genitals were seen to be the primary markers of one's gender, or as they phrase it, "the essential insignia of gender" (p. 173). Thus, within these texts possessing the *body* of either a *girl* or *boy* is seen to dictate one's membership in and alliance to these categories; genital status confers gender status.

As noted earlier, Butler (1990) touches on the relationship between sex and gender in her theorization of sex as "always already gender" (p. 11). Butler argues that since gender entails the sociocultural meanings that are ascribed to sexed bodies, then gender cannot be presumed to precipitate from sex as it is created through social conventions. She attests that there exists a "radical discontinuity between sexed bodies and culturally constructed genders" (p. 10) in that it cannot be assumed that constructions of boys/men or girls/women will necessarily attach themselves to the sexed bodies of 'males' and 'females' respectively. She further contests that it is curious to "define gender as the cultural interpretation of sex, if sex itself is a gendered category" and states that sexed bodies are discursively created through sociocultural constructions of gender. For Butler, there is no natural, real, or prediscursive 'sex' as the construction of sex is symbiotically constructed along with gender; a viewed too shared by Fausto-Sterling (2000a), Overall (2009), and Weedon (1987). Considering that gender is

normatively construed along binary categorization, it follows that sex too would take the same shape.

According to Butler (1993) this construction of sex as intertwined with gender serves to normatively produce the bodies it governs. In other words, what constitutes sex is shaped by discourse and this regulates the bodies to which sex belongs. As such, sex is not a "condition of a body, but a process whereby regulatory norms materialize "sex" and achieve this materialization through a forcible reiteration of those norms" (Butler, 1993, p. xii). Thus, sex regulates which bodies are normatively considered intelligible, and subsequently, livable. Indeed, the dominant conception of sex as fixed, immutable, and inherently tied to gender is what reifies those who do not align themselves with this sex/gender dichotomy as deviant and fraudulent (Shrage, 2009). This is patently exemplified in these texts as the characters disclose their feelings of estrangement in relation to the incongruity between their assigned sex and gender identity. The explicit mention of their bodies as categorized along dominant conceptions of what a 'normative' body entails.

As was outlined in the sections on the theoretical and methodological frameworks of this study, the ways in which even the most seemingly minute details of language are utilized can substantially influence meaning. This is increasingly apparent in *My Favorite Color is Pink* where the main character, Patrick/Patty, states: "most people can't tell that I have a 'boy' body." The simple usage of single quotations around 'boy' infers that the text does not endorse the notion that there is a universal boy body, yet acknowledges that Patrick's/Patty's body does fall into categorizations of what is normatively considered a 'boy' body. This usage presumably recognizes that the 'sexed body' entails a process of 'sexing' the body according to sociocultural

prescriptions of what a normative body entails (Butler, 1990, 1993; Bettcher, 2009; Fausto-Sterling, 2000a), yet also acknowledges that the character is still embedded within this process.

In *It's Okay to Sparkle*, Avery too alludes to the categorization of sexed bodies in stating that: "I may have what some people think of as boy body parts, but that's not wrong. That's okay." First, the phrasing of "what some people *think* of as boy body parts" (emphasis added) alludes to the way that particular body parts are commonly conceived of or *thought* to be specific to a particular gender. The key words in this sentence are "what some people think of as"; without this phrasing, the sentence would read "I may have boy body parts", which would infuse this statement with a fundamentally different meaning. Differentiating between "boy body parts" and "what some people think of as boy body parts" emphasizes the recognition of the sexing of the body which was alluded to above in reference to Butler. Secondly, Avery's statement that her possession of said body parts is "not wrong" but "okay" transcends the 'wrong body' discourse in that her body parts may not be what are normatively associated with her gender, but this does not delegitimize her gender identity; contrary to the 'wrong body' discourse discussed previously. For Avery, there does not seem to be an apparent incongruence with her body and her gender identity; she seemingly accepts her body parts without implying that this should be different.

In contrast to the discursive framings outlined above wherein characters alluded to a *birth* sex and/or body, the discursive framings here infer an *assigned* sex. A similar framing of the body is also evident in *Everybody Thought I Was a Boy* where Sam tells her readers about her parents' response when she initially told them she was a boy in her toddler years (once she was able to verbally speak) by stating: "they were confused because they thought my body meant I was a boy." This quote is preceded by Figure 19, which depicts the birth of Sam in the hospital

where the caption reads "when I was born, the nurse told my parents I was a boy." Shelissa, Sam's pet turtle, can be seen in the foreground asking the nurse "how do you know?" The nurse is pictured holding up Sam, who is seemingly nude. Sam's nude appearance infers that the body is salient in this moment of gender declaration.

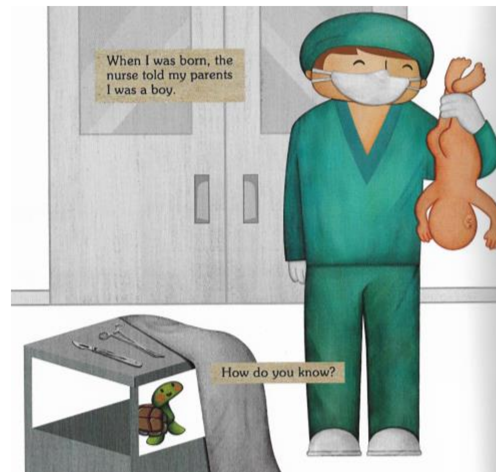

Figure 19. A nurse holds up the newly-born protagonist, Sam, while marking the assignment of Sam's gender as a boy. From *Everybody Thought I Was a Boy!*, by A. Varasteh and S. Pardakhtim, 2018, Australia: Anisa Varasteh. Copyright 2018 by Anisa Varasteh. Reprinted with permission.

This imagery is also apparent in *My Dad Thinks I'm a Boy* where Stephie narrates to her audience: "when I was born, the doctor was a bit confused and thought I was a boy since my body looked like many boys' bodies." An image accompanying this text (Figure 20[10]) includes a doctor lifting up Stephie, who appears to be nude, and uncertainly declaring her gender while observing her pubic area. Each of these titles attempts to illustrate the medical norm of assigning a gender to an infant based on their anatomical features.

In a few titles, the 'sexed body' was not referenced by mention of the body itself, but rather through elucidating the ways different bodies take up the washroom space— I use the

[10] Figure 20 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was an illustration of a doctor holding up the newly-born protagonist, Stephie, while observing her genitalia and assigning her as a boy. Original source: Labelle, S. (2017). *My Dad Thinks I'm a Boy*. Montreal, QC: Les Éditions SGL.

terms washroom, bathroom, restroom, lavatory, and toilet synonymously in this section in line with Cavanagh (2010). The book *Be Who You Are* encompasses a scene in which Nick states that he is not permitted to use the girls' bathroom, which infers the notion of genitalia, albeit cursorily. In the accompanying image to this narrative (Figure 21[11]), Nick appears to be exiting the boys' restroom as he gazes over at the children lined up to use the girls' restroom.

Similarly, in *But, I'm Not a Boy*, the notion of the body is also positioned in relation to the site of the washroom. When describing the ways in which Sarah is misgendered by her family and friends, the text states: "even her body tried to tell her that she was a boy, but she knew this wasn't true." Again, the notion of the body is not dissected further here, however an accompanying image (Figure 22[12]) which depicts Sarah longingly gazing at the girls' washroom as she is forced to enter the boys', tacitly infers that the body, here, is too in reference to the character's genitalia. In *I am Jazz*, protagonist Jazz also tells readers about her experience of being coerced into using a bathroom other than the one of her choice in stating that: "at the beginning of the year they wanted me to use the boys' bathroom" which she explains "didn't feel normal to me at ALL." Although it is not stated explicitly, Jazz's discomfort with using the boys' bathroom is understood to stem from her gender dysphoric feelings of her body being unaligned with her affirmed gender. Through this quote, Jazz describes being forcibly placed in a space where she is categorized based upon her body. In each of these texts, the imagery of the washroom space allegorizes the body— namely, the genitalia—without explicitly describing it.

[11] Figure 21 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was an illustration of Nick exiting the boys' washroom while longingly gazing over at the girls lined up outside of the girls' washroom. Original source: Carr, J., & Rumback, B. (Illustrator). (2010). *Be Who You Are!* Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse.

[12] Figure 22 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was an illustration of Sarah yearnfully looking over at the girls' washroom as she enters the boys' washroom space. Original source: Leone, K., & Pfeifer, A. (2014). *But, I'm Not a Boy*. CreateSpace Publishing.

The site of the bathroom is utilized more concretely in *A Girl Like Any Other* where the main character tells readers: "I am still a girl like any other, even if I have to use the teacher's washroom, because some parents don't want me to use the girls." Figure 23[13] depicts two peers mocking the main character as she approaches the staff washroom. Interestingly, the staff washroom appears to be gender-binary (i.e. for women and/or men), but does not appear to be gender-specific as the generic stick symbols are placed alongside one another indicating that either member may use this space. It is not indicated in the text as to why the staff are provided with a shared washroom space, but the children are not.

For the majority of gender-conforming children, using standard gender-designated washrooms is often an uncomplicated and gender-affirming experience (Davies, Vipond, & King, 2017, p. 3). For trans and gender non-conforming children, however, using public washrooms can conjure feelings of shame and trepidation, as well as resistance or ridicule from others (Cavanagh, 2010; Davies, Vipond, & King, 2017; Girschick, 2008). This is evident in all three texts as both Nick and Sarah are presented as experiencing ambivalence when using the bathroom, whereas the character from *A Girl Like Any Other* overtly experiences both resistance and ridicule from her peers. The domain of the bathroom is salient to the discourse of the sexed body as this is a space where children's bodies come under extensive regulation and are directly segregated based upon sex. The bathroom space neither considers one's gender *identity* nor their gender *expression* but fundamentally underscores one's genitalia and reinforces cisnormativity and cissexism (Browne, K, 2004; Overall, 2009). In all three of these texts, the characters are coerced to confront a concrete dissonance between their gender identity and their assigned sex

[13] Figure 23 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was an illustration of two peers jeering at the protagonist as she enters the school's staff washroom. Original source: Labelle, S. (2013). *A Girl Like Any Other*. Montreal, QC: Les Éditions SGL.

due to the way that the washroom space is regulated; the space does not permit bodies that are non-cisgender. This contributes to the restroom as a space where sex both substitutes and constitutes gender, and a sexed site that functions to intensify surveillance for transgender and gender non-conforming children while further reifying the binary of the (cis)female and (cis)male (Browne, K, 2004; Cavanagh, 2010). As is observed in these images, those who do not conform to these dichotomies are displaced in this policing of sex. This regulation of bodies produces rest rooms as "sexed sites and spaces" which contribute to the ways in which "sexed bodies and spaces are maintained by sexed regimes of power" (Browne, K, 2004, p. 342).

Markers of gender on bathroom doors serve to regulate bodies and either gender or de-gender bodies by asserting which bodies are enabled to enter these spaces, distinguishing between the 'real' and the 'false' (Browne, K, 2004). If one identifies as a girl but does not have the normative anatomical features and genitalia associated with the female body, they are de-gendered in the sense that their affirmed gender is not recognized simply due to their genital status. This process most frequently occurs through the use of symbols and words placed upon the entrance of the bathroom site. As can be seen in the images above from *But, I'm Not a Boy* and *A Girl Like Any Other*, bathrooms are labelled and categorized through the use of standard male and female stick symbols. In *Be Who You Are*, the marker of gender is language: 'girls' and 'boys'. In addition to symbols of gender, gendered language (i.e. terms such as 'boy' and 'girl) in these spaces refer more to sex than gender, and are employed to convey information regarding genital status (Bettcher, 2009). Both of these markers necessarily work to delineate sex based off of their binary classifications.

Cavanagh (2010) refers to the site of the public toilet as "designed to discipline gender" through their "gendered codes of conduct and the hygienic and panoptic designs" (p. 5).

Cavanagh's mentioning of 'panoptic designs' is in reference to Jeremy Bentham's concept of the Panopticon, which was taken up further by Foucault. Foucault (1979) explains the ways in which surveillance, site structure, and power dynamics, govern the behaviours of subjects. In short, a panoptic design entails an institution, mechanism, or space which serves to surveil and regulate bodies in accordance with dominant expectations of social conduct. A key facet which constitutes panopticism is the fact that subjects are cognizant of the possibility of surveillance, whether or not it actually occurs, and regulate their behaviour based on this prospective surveillance. Foucault (1979) states that in panoptic designs:

> He [sic] who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection. (pp. 202-203)

Irrespective of whether or not one is being surveilled, the power of the potential of surveillance fundamentally influences their behaviour; the subject takes on "both roles", being both the individual being surveilled, but the one who engages in the surveillance of one's self (i.e. self-surveillance). Foucault (1979) expands on this stating that: "surveillance is permanent in its effects, even if it is discontinuous in its action; that the perfection of power should tend to render its actual exercise unnecessary" (p. 201). Thus, power need not be exercised in order to be maintained, the possibility of this power (of surveillance) is sufficient in constituting a self-governed subject.

Although in true panoptic design, a subject would not necessarily know for certain as to whether or not they were being surveilled, the images above evoke a panoptic essence in that the presence alone of the bodies around the main characters are enough to govern their actions. In relation to this, Foucault (1979) notes that "the more numerous those anonymous and temporary observers are […] the greater [the] anxious awareness of being observed" (1979, p. 202). The

text references the site of the washroom specifically, however in each of the images, the characters are never depicted alone in this space; the presence of other peers is what particularly amplifies the essence of surveillance and observation.

Cavanagh (2010) extensively applies Foucault's theorizing of panopticism to the bathroom site emphasizing the ways in which the notion of being surveilled governs trans and gender non-conforming bodies within this space. She postulates that through this surveillance, the washroom becomes a site wherein particular bodies are often rebuked if they are observed using the 'wrong bathroom' (Cavanagh, 2010). The notion of potential reprimand is clearly elucidated in each of the three images, indicating the ways in which the power of surveillance and presumed discipline serves to govern their conformity. Children are cognizant of the regulations of washrooms and navigate themselves accordingly within this [sexed] space (Davies, Vipond, & King, 2017), exemplifying themselves as sexed subjects. In each of the images above, other 'real' bodies surround the main characters, implicitly surveilling them and making the characters aware of their own bodies in relation to the space. A particularly compelling aspect of this is that these 'real' bodies do not overtly police the main characters, but their presence in this space is automatically read as a mechanism through which the power dynamics of this space are maintained; whether they intend this or not. According to Foucault (1978), "power is not an institution, and not a structure […] it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society" (p. 93). This 'strategical situation' is evident in these cases as there is no explicit enforcement of power here (i.e. a washroom guard or a person of 'authority'), yet all of the individuals within the space work to maintain relations of surveillance, power, discipline, and obedience without explicitly enforcing this. As dysphoric as the characters feel not entering their affirmed washroom, they nonetheless navigate themselves

according to the rules of the space as they become unequivocally aware of their 'outsider' presence and the power relations that this precipitates.

The lavatory is also present in *It's Okay to Sparkle* in Figure 24 which depicts Avery posed in front of a girls' bathroom. The image is complemented by text wherein Avery fervently explains to her readers that: "some people say that I don't go in the right restrooms, but who cares about my body parts? I want my privacy in the bathroom just like you. Besides, I don't ask what's in your underwear." Here, similar to Cavanagh's (2010) mention of the 'wrong' bathroom, Avery is cognizant of the notion of a 'right' washroom and the ways in which this is constituted by the body. She attempts to convey the absurdity of sex-segregation by emphasizing that using a washroom to perform a vital biological function should be a straightforward endeavour which should result in neither discrimination nor shame (Girshick, 2008). Her statement: "I don't ask what's in your underwear", further elicits the redundancy of genital status when using a toilet.

Figure 24. Avery stands outside of a girls' washroom. From *It's Okay to Sparkle*, by A. Jackson & J. Udischas, 2017, Kansas City, MO: Debi Jackson. Copyright 2013 by Debi Jackson. Reprinted with permission.

In all of the above images, the character is a *binary* transgender child; meaning that they align themselves within dichotomous categorizations of either transboy or transgirl (i.e. nothing in between or beyond these identities). In *Meet Polkadot,* Polkadot is a non-binary transgender

child who also attempts to illustrate the irrelevance of sex in the washroom space by telling readers: "in the bathroom I don't need to use a gender, I need to use a toilet." For Polkadot, it is not possible to choose between sex/gender-designated bathrooms as they do not self-identify as 'boy' nor 'girl'. Had Polkadot been offered to use the staff washroom as was the case in *A Girl Like Any Other*, this would have been a largely demeaning experience for although this bathroom combined the standard 'woman' and 'man' symbols within a single space, there was no place for anyone who did not identify with either of these. For a child like Polkadot, the standard restroom site renders them unintelligible and deprives them of a safe space to engage in the fundamental biological functions that all individuals should be able to carry out with dignity.

Indeed, the washroom space becomes complex for those who do not align themselves with either dichotomous gendered symbol upon most washroom doors and thus cannot 'fit' into either of these spaces due to neither identifying as boy/man nor girl/woman. Indeed, for those who are intersex, non-binary, genderqueer, agender, or gender-neutral and who may not identify in accordance with binary understandings of sex and gender, using public bathrooms can be a particularly dehumanizing and degrading experience as they are placed at the crossroads of these spaces and remain fundamentally invisible. Non-binary individuals, for example, can experience more distress and anxiety when using public toilets particularly when non-binary identities are socially unacknowledged (Clucas & Whittle, 2017; Browne, K, 2004; Murjan & Bouman, 2017). Research, although limited, suggests that trans, non-conforming, and non-binary children may avoid using these spaces altogether out of fear of repercussions (Barrow & Apostle, 2018; Stein, 2018). I would argue here as well, that those who identify as agender or genderless too would face similar challenges as they strive to exist outside of gender altogether. It is important to note that this experience may also apply to trans individuals who *do* identify within binary parameters

of gender (i.e. either a transboy/man or transgirl/woman) but are not easily 'read' by others as either of these if they perhaps express their gender in a non-conventional fashion. At any rate, the space of the public restroom often discriminates against individuals based upon both sex and gender identity.

The 'sexed body' discourse, as outlined in the instances above, has been constituted more explicitly as represented in several other titles. In a double-spread in *About Chris*, the main character, Chris—a transboy—explains his body to his teacher in Figure 25[14] by stating: "it's like this Ms. Nina… from my belly button down—I'm a girl." Chris continues in Figure 26[15] by stating: "but from my belly button up—I'm a BOY!" Although no particular body parts are explicitly described in this quotation, the insinuation of this declaration is more specific in that they underscore which areas of the body are associated with each respective gender. Chris' "belly button down" as delineating him as a girl presumably references 'female' genitalia (i.e. a vagina), but could also imply internal anatomical features (such as a uterus or fallopian tubes, for example), while Chris' "belly button up" as demarcating him as a boy could be in reference to his brain/mind and/or his (presumably pre-pubescent) chest. Interestingly, in Figure 25 Chris' hand is positioned as pointing in the general vicinity of the genitalia, while in Figure 26 Chris' hand extends past his ear and in close proximity to where his brain would be located. Moreover, despite Chris noting that he is, seemingly, half a boy and half a girl, his teacher later affirms in the story that "the real you – is a boy!" indicating that irrespective of Chris' lower genitalia, the upper parts of his body are what genuinely confer his gender identity as a boy.

[14] Figure 25 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was an illustration of Chris explaining to his teacher that he is a girl from his 'belly button down'. Original source: Benedetto, N. (2015). *About Chris*. Daniel L. King.
[15] Figure 26 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was an illustration of Chris explaining to his teacher that he is a boy from his 'belly button up. Original source: Benedetto, N. (2015). *About Chris*. Daniel L. King.

Although the area of the chest is ambiguously alluded to in the above text, this area is explicitly referenced in *Stacey's Not a Boy*, where Stacey discusses their feelings about their body with a doctor by stating: "I feel OK about my body now, but I really do not want to get boobs when I get older." Figure 15, which has already been featured in this analysis, depicts an ambivalent Stacey holding their chest with an expression of trepidation upon their face. Stacey is a non-binary, gender-neutral character for whom the thought of developing breasts is deeply unsettling. Upon close observation, two small plasters can be seen on the right side of the countertop alongside a used roll of a larger bandage, while what appears to be two bandage wrappers appear on the left side of the counter closest to Stacey. It is elusive as to whether or not Stacey has used the bandages to cover up their nipples or if the presence of these items is meant to communicate the possibility of covering their chest in the future. The positioning over Stacey's chest makes it difficult to ascertain if there are bandages underneath, however it can be presumed that if the bandage and plasters were applied that there would be no need for Stacey to cover their nipples with their hands. Moreover, the fact that the image complements Stacey's discussion of their apprehension of developing breasts when they are older implies that the inclusion of the plasters and bandage is meant to depict how Stacey expects to mitigate this in the future.

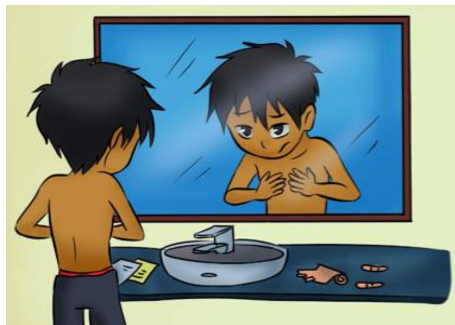

Figure 15. Stacey apprehensively looks on at their reflection in the mirror while clutching their chest. From *Stacey's Not a Girl*, by C. Keo-Meier, J. Yang, and N. Lam, 2016, Houston, TX. Copyright 2016.

Shortly thereafter, Stacey informs readers that the doctor has told them: “there is medication that you might take when you are older to make sure that you do not grow boobs.” There is no further indication of this in the text and it is not made apparent as to how Stacey nor their parents feel about this option. What is interesting is that the onset of Stacey’s prospective menstrual cycle (or any other aspects of pubertal development) are not mentioned. The fact that Stacey is a gender non-binary child, this text elicits a critical point in that the notion of dysphoric breast development need not be exclusively linked with binary transgender boys (as is typically the case). Since breasts are “visible signifiers of femininity” in many cultures, any individual across the gender spectrum seeking to distance themselves from archetypes of femininity may endure dysphoric feelings pertaining to the chest (Stein, 2018, p. 47); this includes non-binary, non-conforming, gender-neutral, and gender-fluid individuals, amongst others. Both *About Chris* and *Stacey is not a Girl* illuminate the sentiment that breast development can feel like a betrayal of the body and precipitate sentiments of shame for many trans individuals (Girshick, 2008; Stein, 2018). Indeed, for many trans individuals (particularly transmen) the notion of breasts can invoke feelings of dysphoria. If pubertal suppressants are taken prior to the onset of puberty, this can halt or decelerate the development of breasts. When breasts have already developed, some transpeople undergo ‘top surgery’ wherein developed breasts are surgically removed. When surgery is not desired or not possible, some may resort to ‘binding’ their breasts as this is a less intrusive and less expensive endeavour. Binding involves flattening the breasts through the use of bandages, wraps, or specialized binding apparel. Stacey’s usage of bandages and plasters to conceal their breasts mirrors the ‘binding’ process; albeit with prepubertal breasts.

Specific parts of the ‘sexed body’ are also referenced in *A Girl Like Any Other* in several scenes. The (nameless) protagonist discusses the role of her genitalia with respect to her

assigned gender by stating: “my parents didn’t know I was a girl yet, and dressed me like a boy because I have a penis.” The penis is further referenced when the protagonist later states: “Josephine [a friend] knows that I have a penis and that it doesn’t make me a boy.” She subsequently also states that “despite the fact that I have a penis, I am a girl.” Contrary to the discursive framings in *About Chris* and *Stacey is Not a Girl*, the text here transcends fixed linkages between sex and gender. Through its discursive formations of the penis as irrelevant in the protagonist’s self-identification as a girl, the text provides an edifying dismantling of dominant discourses around the ‘sexed body’ and deconstructs the salience of sex and being necessarily intertwined with gender identity. In the character’s declaration that “despite the fact that I have a penis, I am a girl”, the rigid interdependence upon sex/genitalia and gender is shattered, creating new ways of conceiving of what can confer an intelligible and legitimate body. Stein (2018) writes that dominant conventions of masculinity and biology often infuse our understandings that an authentic male or boy must possess a penis, however, as this text underscores, the presence or absence of particular genitalia generally has little to do with the attribution of gender.

The text later dissects this further when the protagonist tells readers that: “often, girls have a vulva and boys have a penis. But it’s not always true: sometimes, boys have a vulva and girls have a penis. It’s just like that.” This passage is accompanied by an image (Figure 27[16]) of a (presumably) transboy and (presumably) transgirl gazing down at their respective genitalia with expressions of ambivalence. Similar to the other excerpts mentioned in this text, this quotation fundamentally transcends the notion of one’s genitalia as conferring their gender.

[16] Figure 27 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was an illustration of two children looking beneath their clothes at their genitalia. Original source: Labelle, S. (2013). *A Girl like Any Other*. Montreal, QC: Les Éditions SGL.

Bettcher (2009) describes the symbiotic relationship between genitalia and gender identity that is precipitated via dominant sex classificatory processes. In conceptualizations of the 'sexed body', the body as an entire entity is conceived of as having a sex (i.e. a 'girl body'), but specific body parts are too perceived as being sexed; "females are female in virtue of having female genitalia, and genitalia are female by virtue of being associated with the bodies of people we call females" (Bettcher, 2009, p. 181). This process is disrupted in the quotation above as the protagonist contests dominant associations of sex and genitalia with gender identity. By asserting that discourses surrounding 'authentic' bodies can be shifted, this text recognizes bodies as fundamentally active. This quotation also alludes to Butler's (1990) notion of sex as "always already gender" (p. 11) as was described earlier by reinforcing Butler's suggestion that if the seemingly unalterable features of sex are capable of being challenged, then perhaps sex is actually socioculturally constructed in a similar manner to that of gender; thus, perhaps there is no fundamental difference between the two after all. Acknowledging that conceptions of sex are engrained within social discourse, infers that they can, in turn, be subversive to the very structures that define them. By removing binaries and introducing intersections amongst bodies, this text portrays forms of bodies that are unfixed and imperceptible. These quotations also reflect a passage by Foucault (1991) in which he writes "nothing in man [sic]—not even his [sic] body—is sufficiently stable to serve as a basis for self-recognition or for understanding other men [sic]" (pp. 87-88). For both Foucault and the protagonist of *A Girl Like Any Other*, neither self-recognition nor the gender attribution of others can be reducible to sex or any other perceived 'natural' traits of the body.

Bettcher (2009) too queries the fundamental meaning of sex. She states that in most cases, the distinctions between sexed bodies usually entail differences in reproductive capacities.

She does not deny that variation in particular body parts serve divergent bodily functions (e.g. reproductive functions), however she questions whether this warrants the classification of bodies into binary categories of sexed body parts. She states that sexed categories are inundated with social meanings which transcend issues related to reproductive differences and questions how necessary these are in our understanding of bodies comprehensively. She asks: "are we all just the same underneath or behind our sexed parts, or are there fundamental differences between people with different configurations of sexed parts?" (Bettcher, 2009, p. 180). In other words, she questions how salient the distinctions are that we ascribe to sexed bodies. She suggests that although there are components of science and bodies' physical properties that inform our conceptualizations of sex, it is primarily our sociocultural conceptions of gender that we use to define sex.

Discourses of the 'sexed body' that seek to dismantle naturalized and binary representations of the body typically set out to 'queer' sex and gender, and are not condoned by all. Some feminists and scholars have argued that suggesting that sex and gender are constituted within dominant sociocultural discursive practices fundamentally undermine feminist objectives to validate categories such as 'women' to elucidate women's historical and contemporary oppression and to pursue social justice in liberation of this group (Hall, 2009). Since a key leading impetus in the feminist movement was, and is, the emancipation of women, trivializing the gender of a woman/girl, and subsequently contesting the notion of sex, is perceived as an impediment to the progress of this liberation. Moreover, sex (and gender) categories are salient features of many people's lived experiences. Many transpeople actively seek to position themselves within these dichotomous classifications in attempts to affirm their identities and right to live as girls/women and boys/men. Namaste (2000, 2005) discusses this in asserting that

conceptualizations of gender and sex as social constructs does not consider the lived experiences and sentiments of transpeople. The underlying message in queer perspectives on sex/gender is sometimes read as inferring that in order to be politically enlightened, one must denounce any internal sentiments of an association between sex and gender, and any desire to modify their body to more accurately align with their gender; disavowing salient aspects of how they experience their own body (Elliot, 2010; Namaste, 2005).

The fact that many trans individuals feel a deep and abiding connection to their sex and gender (as do many non-trans individuals) is sometimes conceived of as less progressive and accuses them of reifying the system of sexing bodies. For many transpeople, however, theorizations of sex and gender as irrelevant and as social constructions delegitimizes experiences and facets of trans identity which are integral to their lives (Elliot, 2010). Indeed, close readings of the text quotations utilized in this section (the 'sexed body') combined with those found in sections of analysis prior to this, it is evident that the notion of a 'sexed body' is fundamental for many characters. As was evoked, some characters overtly problematize fixed conceptions of sex, but for others sex, the body, and gender are deeply intertwined within their sense of self. The discursive parallels between and amongst the book titles noted in this section elucidate central rifts that are common in scholarship and theorizations of the 'sexed body'.

Although it is beyond the scope of this research, it is worth briefly noting that discourses of the 'sexed body' become further complex when considering bodies which cannot be categorized along rigid polarized classifications; for example, intersex bodies. Bettcher (2009) poses questions pondering whether bodies and body parts (e.g. breasts, penises, vaginas) can truly be seen as either male or female when they are found in bodily categories outside of those to which they are designated. She avows that discourses for sexing bodies become dismantled

when bodies transcend the rigid dichotomous categorizations they are generally confined to. The categorization of sexed bodies into dichotomous categories trivializes the array of variance that exists both between and amongst bodies and disregards the idiosyncrasies and nuance that are lost in conceptualizations of sex as binary. Other notable contributions to discussions of intersex and bodies come from Fausto-Sterling who has postulated that the body is too complex to simply be reduced to two sexes; she argues that there is considerable nuance between bodies and that rather than the two standard sexes, bodies are actually comprised of at least five sexes, if not more (see Fausto-Sterling 1993, 2000a, 2000b). Whittle (2006b) too poses an interesting query as to how we can define bodies when "over 60 intersex conditions" have been found and "one in every two hundred babies is born with a question mark over their 'sex'" (p. 201). On a similar note, Wilchins (2002) underscores how naturalized dichotomous categorizations of sex inform understandings of intersex individuals as possessing an underlying "real" sex, which frequently results in intersex infants being operated upon without their consent. Intersex individuals contest sexual dimorphism whereas trans individuals challenge conceptions of spontaneous linkages between sex and gender (Browne, K, 2004). These passages can also be applied when considering the role of sex in genderqueer and non-binary identities, wherein sex categories are often futile. Considerations of non-binary individuals in relation to sex and gender will be taken up further at later points in this dissertation.

In this first chapter of my analysis I responded to the research question: *how is gender discursively constructed within children's picture books on gender variance?*, and it was elucidated that gender was primarily discursively constructed as an element which resides within an individual. One's true gender was often portrayed as being only visible to each respective character through the symbolic inclusion of mirrors as representing a child's gendered

'reflection' wherein only the character was able to perceive their authentic self. Once characters have their gender identities and expressions affirmed through the use of name changes and the transformations of hair, clothing, and belongings, those around them were afforded with the opportunity to perceive characters as they had already conceived of themselves. Moreover, at times, a character's affirmed gender identity or expression negatively influenced the ways in which they perceived their physical body in regard to their assigned sex, often evoking sentiments of being in 'the wrong body'.

I will now move into the next chapter of my analysis and discussion on the discursive constructions of character subjectivities which responds to my second research question (*how do characters constitute and navigate their gender subjectivities and subject positions within the narratives of the texts?)* and underscores the various ways in which characters constitute, negotiate, navigate, and express an awareness of their gendered subjectivities.

Chapter V: Analysis B- Discursive Constructions of Character Subject Positions

As outlined in Chapter III, a large focus of both feminist poststructuralism and Critical Discourse Analysis is the notion of subjectivity. Weedon (1987) asserts that these terms are integral to [feminist] poststructuralism as they transcend humanist constructions of individuals and propose subjectivity as precarious, contradictory, and "constantly being reconstituted in discourse" (p. 33). In poststructuralism, subjectivity is conceived of as a product of discourse (Weedon, 1987). As previously stated, the term subjectivity is related to the notion of identity but is distinct in that it emphasizes the *process* through which identity becomes crystallized (Browne, N, 2004; Gavey, 1997; Weedon, 1987). Identity and subjectivity are often used synonymously, however identity refers to a "particular set of traits, beliefs, and allegiances that, in short- or long-term ways, gives one a consistent personality and mode of social being", whereas subjectivity refers to "a degree of thought and self-consciousness about identity, at the same time allowing a myriad of limitations and often unknowable, unavoidable constraints on our ability to fully comprehend identity" (Hall, 2004, p. 3). Subjectivity, then, is far more intricate than identity in that it encompasses "negotiation with broad cultural definitions and our own ideals" (Hall, 2004, p. 134).

Indeed, from a [feminist] poststructural lens, rather than conceiving of a character within one of my texts as having an identity as a girl (for example), the emphasis instead is on the *discursive construction* of their identity as a girl (Bischoping & Gazso, 2015). Subjectivity entails the ways in which we actively consider our identities and what elements comprise them by negotiating between our personal predispositions and broader discursive elements. The "limitations" and "unavoidable constraints" that Hall speaks of, inhibit us from entirely apprehending our identities as a result of both the restrictions we face in establishing them as

well as the sanctions we may experience throughout this process. As such, subjectivity underscores how identity is formed as well as the role the subject possesses in its development (Hall, 2004). N. Browne (2004) relays that subjectivity entails an individual's "personal and social identities" which materialize through the process of being made a subject (p. 61). Foucault (1982) avows that there are two interpretations of the term 'subject': the first suggests that one is "subject to someone else by control and dependence", whereas the second indicates that one is "tied to [their] own identity by a conscience of self-knowledge" (p. 212). He suggests that each of these entails the subjugation of an individual to [a form of] power through which they become a subject. The subjugation that Foucault speaks of above is also known as subjection, and encompasses the process through which an individual is constituted as a subject. Subjection, according to Butler (1997), infers "the principle of regulation according to which a subject is formulated or produced" (p. 84). In other words, one becomes instituted as a subject through their engagement with power as it pertains to their subjective sense of self.

Through the process of subjection and by becoming a subject, an individual subsequently becomes aligned with a particular subject position which is contingent upon their status as a subject. Daag and Haugaard (2016) state that the process subjection "entails an overlap of power, truth, and meaning with the process of self-creation" (p. 396). As such, the formation of subject positions encompasses an intricate process through which discourse, power, and subjectivity coalesce. One's subject position exemplifies their status as a subject within the broader sociopolitical context of their social world. For instance, a character in one of my texts may identify as a girl, gender non-conforming girl, or transgender girl, but what this signifies in terms of their subjectivity and status as a subject in relation to dynamics of power is what informs their subject position.

Subject positions are made possible through discourses (Davies & Harré, 1990). As such, the discourses of gender variance within these texts dictate which subject positions may precipitate through them. Davies and Harré, (1990) suggest that subject positions encapsulate a "conceptual repertoire and a location for persons within the structure of rights for those that use that repertoire" (p. 46). Similarly, Daag and Haugaard (2016) attest that subject positions also "represent institutionalised forms of identification allowing for successful interaction in particular contexts" which "provide us with the content of our subjectivity [through a] limited set of concepts, images, metaphors, ways of speaking and self-narratives that we adopt as our own to make us ontologically secure as social-beings-in-the-world" (p. 401). Subject positions, then, contain a particular repository of characteristics and loci that belong to these subject positions. This process further influences the way we perceive ourselves as subjects and navigate the social world.

Returning to the notion of subjectivity in relation to discourse, we are reminded that discourse refers to manners of speaking, interrelating, or thinking that are comprised of discursive 'truths' that circumscribe what one can or cannot say or do (Paechter, 1998). Discourses and social practices subsequently shape individuals' experiences and subjectivities. Discourse is principally an array of meanings, images and assertions that collaborate to establish an object or group of individuals in a particular fashion, which privileges specific systems of being while marginalizing others (Breheny & Stephens, 2007). 'Discourse', here, is aligned with Foucauldian underpinnings in that it essentially produces realities, subjects, subjectivities, and positionalities that have a material dimension (Gurevich et al., 2007). Discourses are also often hierarchized, and encompassed within an assemblage of power relations (Foucault, 1978). Considering that power is conceived to be omnipresent and centrally infused within discourse,

knowledge, and ‘regimes of truth’ (Foucault, 1991), there is no single trajectory through which the process of subjugation crystallizes as it is contingent upon the way that power has manifested into the subject’s existence. Moreover, given that discourses often compete with one another and sometimes “create distinct and incompatible versions of reality” (Davies & Harré, 1990, p. 45), subjectivity, too, consequently entails contradictory elements.

Some argue that the emphasis of poststructuralist frameworks on language, discourse, and power are remiss in that they do not consider agency, embodiment, and the emotional resonance associated with gendered subjectivity (Hines, 2007). Davies and Harré (1990), however, posit that an advantage of a [feminist] poststructuralist orientation is that it acknowledges the power that discourses possess in constituting an individual’s subjectivity through subjugation, yet also recognizes the agency that individuals have within this process. Indeed, they aver that “the constitutive force of each discursive practice lies in its provision of subject positions (p. 46)” as navigating contradictory discursive practices demands a conscious, agentic subject. As such, in this analysis, while I underscore the critical role that language, discourse, and power possess in the institution, negotiation, and navigation of gendered subjectivity, I also address the salience of the emotional, mental, and spiritual manifestations that are precipitated through them and the active role that characters signify in the constitution of their gendered subjectivities.

The present chapter of the analysis seeks to explore the gendered subjectivities of characters through addressing the following research question: *How do characters constitute and navigate their gendered subjectivities and subject positions within the narratives of the texts?* This chapter is separated into three distinct categories: constituting subjectivity; subjective awareness; and navigating subjectivity—each of which discusses varying elements of characters’

gender subjectivities and subjective experiences. Each of these sections stands alone, however in order to fully understand characters' gendered subjectivity, the entire section must also be considered as a whole.

Constituting Gendered Subjectivity

This section explicates the ways in which characters' subjective experiences of their gender and overall gender subjectivities are underscored within texts. An exploration of how characters constitute their subjectivity as well as their understandings of themselves as gendered subjects is elicited. There were many idiosyncratic discursive elements between texts, however three main discursive sub-themes evoked in this section include: "girl stuff", "boy things", and "somewhere in between or beyond." Facets of these themes are listed in relation to one another as well as in relation to the characters to which they pertain. Rather than thematically organizing this section by the items which are spoken of (e.g. dresses, sports), I have created the overarching themes mentioned above to outline these elements as they exist within specific texts. This better contextualizes the items and explicates their salience to the subjectivity of each respective character. The primary constitutive elements of characters' subjectivities are highlighted and analyzed further at the end of each section.

"Girl Stuff": Dolls, Dresses, and Dancing

For characters that were either gender non-conforming boys or transgender girls, primary elements constituting characters' gendered subjectivities included characters' interests in conventionally feminine items. These were referenced in various ways, however an overarching discursive theme was the notion that these interests were "girl stuff"; a term which informs the title of this sub-section. Constituents were often evoked by mentioning explicit association with a particular gender (e.g. 'girl stuff', 'girl clothes', being 'girly'), emphasizing the salience of

these items to characters' gender subjectivities. The primary recursive facets of subjectivity included a penchant for 'girl clothes' and accessories (i.e. skirts, dresses, jewellery), an affinity for dolls and other forms of 'girl' play, a proclivity towards the colour pink, and finally, a passion for dancing (in particular, ballet). These affinities were portrayed as integral in constituting the subjectivities of characters as they were the defining elements of characters' understandings of themselves as gendered subjects. Although in some instances other hobbies and broader interests are touched upon, as will be elucidated, it is those which are characterized as *gendered* that are presented as underscoring the gendered subjectivities of characters.

To begin, in *Jacob's New Dress*, Jacob is a young boy who enjoys wearing dresses but experiences condemnation from his friends and father. A description of the boy that Jacob's character is based upon—Sam—states that since his preschool years he "had long hair, wore dresses, and loved the color pink." It is stated that this in addition to these things, "Sam also liked traditional 'boy' things, like knights, castles, and dinosaurs." In this passage, a clear distinction is made between traditionally girl and boy "things". This becomes further apparent when a friend of the protagonist, Jacob, asks: "why do you always wear the girl clothes?" Interestingly, Jacob's friend's phrasing of "girl clothes" as opposed to simply stating "dress" signifies the act of Jacob's inclination to wear dresses as a gendered act, and a feminine one, more specifically.

Jacob's desire to wear dresses is so integral to his subjectivity that he repeatedly experiences a "can't-breathe feeling" each time he is discouraged from this behaviour. The text does not elucidate this further, however my reading of this suggests that it is anxiety-related as Jacob's health is never in question outside of these moments. Weedon (1987) attests that the "discursive constitution of subjectivity addresses and constitutes the individual's mind, body and

emotions" (p. 112). This has already been discussed within the sections on 'the gender within' and 'the gendered mind', however it too is present here in the ways that Jacob expresses the visceral and emotive facets of his gendered subjectivity. For Jacob, the thought of not being able to express his gender through his choice of clothing (i.e. his dress) is so distressing that it manifests through a somatic modality. The metaphorical use of the notion of breathing underscores the centrality of Jacob's gender expression to his overall being.

A partiality for wearing 'girl clothes' is seen to signify gender subjectivity in *My Princess Boy* more concretely where the narrator of the story (the protagonist's mother) tells readers that the Princess Boy likes to play dress up in "girly dresses", and that "he is the happiest when looking at girls' clothes." Interestingly, the choice of clothing is not specified, but rather his preference for this apparel is grouped within the category of 'girl clothes' similar to that in *Jacob's New Dress*. The narrator also discloses that the Princess Boy "likes pretty things", "likes to climb trees in his Princess Boy tiara crown", and that "pink is his favorite color." The narrator also describes his proclivity for "pink bag[s]", "sparkly dress[es]", and "girl things." An accompanying image (Figure 28[17]) of the Princess Boy envisioning said "girl things" namely illustrates purses and jewellery. For the Princess Boy, his penchant for 'girl things' are a defining element of his subjectivity as a gender non-conforming boy.

A similar discursive framing is present in *I am Jazz* where protagonist Jazz mentions the centrality of traditional 'girl things' to her subjectivity as a transgirl. Jazz explains to readers that her favourite colour has always been pink, and that "[she] hardly played with trucks or tools or superheroes. Only princesses and mermaid costumes", which her brothers tells her are "girl

[17] Figure 28 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was an illustration of the Princess Boy envisioning 'girl things' such as bracelets, necklaces, watches, and purses. Original source: Kilodavis, C., & DeSimone., S. (Illustrator). (2010). *My Princess Boy*. New York, NY: Aladdin.

stuff". Jazz also states, "my sister says I was always talking to her about my girl thoughts, and my girl dreams, and how one day I would be a beauuuutiful lady." This text is accompanied by an image (Figure 29) of Jazz dressed in a princess grown attempting to perform a pirouette as her sister looks down at her while brushing her hair in front of a vanity. In this image, both Jazz and her sister actively constitute their gendered subjectivities in accordance with broader discursive framings of femininity as associated with beauty and elegance. The text does not specify what particular "girl thoughts" and "girl dreams" Jazz is referring to, however the latter portion of this sentence infers that they are likely in regard to her appearance as a girl.

Figure 29. Jazz performs a pirouette alongside her sister who brushes her long hair. From *I am Jazz*, by J. Herthel, J. Jennings, and S. McNicholas, 2014, New York, NY: Dial Books for Young Readers. Copyright 2014 by Dial Books for Young Readers. Reprinted with permission.

Weedon (1987) notes the salience of discourses in the construction of subjectivity in stating that subjectivity materializes "through the identification by the individual with particular subject positions within discourses" (p. 112). For Weedon, individuals constitute themselves as subjects based upon the prospects made possible through dominant discourses. In this text, Jazz's insistence on wearing dresses, and having "girl thoughts" and "girl dreams" of her growing up to be "a beauuuutiful lady", infer that these are elements which Jazz understands to be inherent to girlhood. As such, in order to constitute her subjectivity as a transgirl, she

negotiates the discursive features of these facets and situates herself amongst them. This is also apparent in the scene where Jazz reveals that prior to having her gender affirmed she was permitted to wear dresses at home, but was required to wear her "boy clothes" outdoors which made her angry. Jazz understands her gendered subjectivity as a transgirl to be made possible through the donning of 'girl' clothes, and subsequently does not feel that her identity as a girl is fully affirmed when she is coerced into wearing 'boy clothes' despite internally identifying as a girl.

Long hair was seen to be a marker of femininity and gender subjectivity for Jazz. The significance of long hair is also present in the very brief role of Jordan in *The Adventures of Tina and Jordan*, whose markers of gender subjectivity are the fact that he wears a pink towel on his head to represent long hair, and that he plays with dolls. Jordan tells Tina: "I like to pretend I'm a girl and that's why I like to wear a towel on my head. Don't you think it makes me look like I have long hair?" Similar to Jazz instituting her subjectivity by utilizing discursive elements as to what constitutes girlhood, Jordan actively engages in this too by creating a marker of femininity (i.e. the towel) in lieu of growing out his actual hair. Although the main character in this story is Tina—who is discussed in the sub-section below—the text does include this cursory look into Jordan's subjectivity. Figure 30[18] illustrates Tina and Jordan having a conversation in the park. Jordan uses the towel to artificially create long hair to allegorize his femininity, whereas Tina wears a hat to conceal her hair as she wishes to evade associations with femininity (this is discussed later on). Each of these characters actively utilizes their existing knowledge of

[18] Figure 30 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was an illustration of Tina and Jordan conversing while Tina conceals hr hair with a cowboy hat and Jordan uses a pink towel to represent the long hair he yearns to have. Original source: Lam, J. (2013). *The Adventures of Tina and Jordan*. Xlibris.

discursive formations of femininity to position themselves within their respective subject positions.

In *Truly Willa,* 'girl things' are also listed as a constituting element of Willa's subjectivity. Willa informs readers of her unyielding affinity for "pushchairs and dolls" as well as her fondness for "pink and playing with girls and their toys." The use of the term *their* to describe girls' toys, alludes to Willa's understanding of the toys she likes as belonging to girls as a larger category. Willa demonstrates a clear perception of the classification of girls as homogenous, which is central to her subjectivity as a transgirl. To this end, Willa expresses: "when I went shopping with my mum, I always chose whatever was pink and sparkly, just like all the other girls I knew." For Willa, the perceived shared behavioural traits of her and her female peers are integral to her self-positioning within this category. Moreover, upon the affirmation of her true gender, Willa announces that she "bought paint, new bed sheets and cushions, new furniture, new pictures and accessories… everything to make it the little girls [sic] room [she] had always wanted." Willa's transformation of her room elicits the ways that her subjectivity as a transgirl is contingent upon the way she expresses herself in-line with colours and materials she perceives to be associated with girlhood. Willa goes into further detail disclosing that her new room was "'purple and bright pink with hearts, stars, butterflies, flowers, and fairies."

Upon affirming her gender identity, transforming her room was one of the first activities she engaged in. Thus, the renovation to the "little girls [sic] room" she had always desired was paramount to her subjective experience as a transgirl. In addition to this, Willa explains that her living as a girl was also constituted when she "wore [her] first bikini at the beach, had [her] ears pierced and grew [her] hair long." All of these elements that Willa describes as being inherently

tied to girlhood indicate the salience of her affiliation with these in her journey in becoming a transgirl. Willa conceives of these as defining markers of femininity; her subjectivity as a transgirl is made possible through these discursive elements as she perceives them as constituting her subject position.

Similar to Willa, Avery, in *It's Okay to Sparkle,* chronicles her experience in becoming a transgirl by outlining the defining characterizations of her journey. Her subjective experience is incredibly similar to that of Willa, albeit less detailed. She describes her happiness when playing dress-up in pre-school as this allowed her to dress-up in "girl dresses." Rather than simply using the term 'dresses', Avery's phrasing of "*girl* dresses" underscores the salience in the connection of dresses to femininity; a primary characteristic of her identity. Again, similar to Willa, Avery contests that when she was permitted to "live as a girl", she "started to dress like a girl", and "finally got to pick new clothes and grow [her] hair long." Although the details of what dressing "like a girl" entails are not explicitly stated, the imagery in Figure 31, presented alongside Avery's mentioning of her selection of new clothing, depicts items such as a pink skirt, pink jacket, pink dress, pink shoes, pink pants, and pink dress. Hall (2004) states that engagement with clothing—a "manifestation of gendered discourse"—has a profound influence on one's subjectivity (p. 96). Avery's assertion that these materials are part and parcel in dressing *like* a *girl* further underscores the salience of these clothing items to her subjectivity. Willa expressed the understanding that 'girl clothing' principally characterized notions of girlhood, and thus, constituted her subjectivity in accordance with these meanings just as Willa and the other characters have. Avery states that she also likes pretending she is a ninja and princess, and also enjoys trampolining, gymnastics, dance, Tai Kwon Do, and being a member of the Girl Scouts,

however it is the proclivities listed above that are represented as central to her subjectivity as a transgirl.

Figure 31. Avery is seen surrounded by pink clothing and a pink purse which represent her subjectivity as a girl. From *It's Okay to Sparkle*, by A. Jackson & J. Udischas, 2017, Kansas City, MO: Debi Jackson. Copyright 2013 by Debi Jackson. Reprinted with permission.

In the book *When Kayla was Kyle*, Kyle experiences challenges due to his penchant for particular 'girl things' in his quest to becoming a transgirl. During play time in class when "the boys ran to the trucks and the girls ran to the dollhouse", Kyle hears his father's words in his head saying "the boys won't like if you do girl stuff." The text does not specify exactly what constitutes this, however, based on this quote, playing with dollhouses (and dolls) is presumably the "girl stuff" his father is referring to. Returning to Weedon's (1987) assertion as to how one's subjectivity can manifest at the emotional level, this is apparent when Kyle explains that being coerced to "live as a boy", made him feel as though he was a "mistake", and expressed that he could not "live like this anymore." Immediately following this, other elements of Kayla's subjectivity are elucidated, including her transition to "dresses, skirts, and shoes" as well as receiving "a new hairstyle and manicure." Thus, the "girl stuff" which Kayla had been incessantly discouraged from embodying are precisely the things that constitute her subjectivity as a transgirl. It is through the pursuit of these elements that her gender subjectivity is instituted.

Similar discursive themes are also evident in *A Girl Like Any Other,* albeit less directly. The protagonist expresses her frustration with the fact that her parents incessantly "dressed [her]

like a boy" and attests: "unlike other girls, I had to ask repeatedly for dresses and skirts", which she later refers to as "girls' clothes." Through this narrative, the protagonist seemingly suggests that requests for clothing items such as dresses and skirts are a prerogative for cisgender girls and that, despite her identity as a transgirl, she is not automatically entitled to these items in the same way. She states that she had to insistently explain to her parents that she was a girl and not a boy. This is encapsulated in Figure 32[19] where the protagonist is seen instructing her parents (who are not in view) of her gender. She points to the letter "F" which implies 'female" and seemingly allegorizes the gender of 'girl'. Male and female symbols are distinguished here with the 'male' symbol presenting a blue stick person with a baseball cap, and the 'female' symbol exemplifying a pink stick person with two pigtails and a skirt or dress. Upon close inspection of this image, it is evident that the protagonist, and the female symbol to which she points, are very similar in appearance with their pigtails and feminine attire. It is implied that the protagonist wishes to distance herself from traditional qualities of what normatively constitutes boyhood, and instead embrace traditional qualities of girlhood.

Upon describing the response from her peers pertaining to her play preferences, she states that she was teased from playing "girl games" and withdrew during playtime. What "girl games" refers to is not specified, however the corresponding image to this passage portrays two boys playing with a plane and castle contrasted against two girls playing with a doll and stuffed animal. Presumably, it would appear that the latter are the play materials that the protagonist is interested in. In Figure 33[20], the protagonist is seen isolated in the background with a disgruntled

[19] Figure 32 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was an illustration of the protagonist distinguishing between a male and female stick figure by pointing to the female stick figure indicating that she is a girl. Original source: Labelle, S. (2013). *A Girl like Any Other*. Montreal, QC: Les Éditions SGL.
[20] Figure 33 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was an illustration of the protagonist frustratedly sitting isolated in a corner as her male peers play with castles and swords and her female peers play with dolls. Original source: Labelle, S. (2013). *A Girl like Any Other*. Montreal, QC: Les Éditions SGL.

expression along with her pink purse and doll alongside her. The inhibition of her desire to align herself with the other girls and play these "girl games" is a facet of her subjectivity that is largely unaffirmed.

This experience is replicated in Figure 34[21] where the protagonist approaches a group of girls in anticipation that they may invite her to make friendship bracelets with them. She states that they will not include her due to their perception of her as "not a real girl"; this narrative is apparent in the image as the girls gaze up at the protagonist with expressions of disdain, curiosity, and astonishment. Again, a critical aspect of the protagonist's subjectivity as a transgirl is a sense of belonging with other girls; something that she is repeatedly denied. This image bares similarities to a moment in *When Kayla was Kyle,* where Kyle distances himself from the "boy's circle." Kyle seeks to isolate himself from his expected play group as his subjective sense of gender does not align with this, whereas in Figure 34 the protagonist seeks to unite herself with the group of girls to further consolidate her identity. In both of these instances, the shared identity of the group serves as a validating factor for each character's subjectivity. In these instances, the characters' subjectivities were so central to their sense of self that they sought out friendships and alliances to build a sense of communities for themselves and a sense of solidarity with others.

In explaining her subjective experience to readers, the protagonist informs readers that: "some girls like games and clothes associated with boys, while some boys like games and clothes associated with girls." The 'games and clothes' referred to here as well as in the above quotes, are presented as primary defining characteristics of gender subjecthood. Although the

[21] Figure 34 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was an illustration of the protagonist approaching a group of girls making bracelets in an attempt to join them and gain acceptance as a girl. Original source: Labelle, S. (2013). *A Girl like Any Other*. Montreal, QC: Les Éditions SGL.

protagonist's subjectivity is comprised of identifications and alignments with traditionally feminine things, she does explain to readers that "all girls are different" and "all boys are different." Comparable to Avery, the protagonist here also describes other elements of her personality including her liking of cereal with tomato slices, making friendship bracelets, dancing the Tango, and bread with mustard, however it is her identification with traditionally-categorized feminine signifiers that designate her subjectivity as a transgirl.

In the very short book *My Favorite Color is Pink*, protagonist Patty shares some of her interests with readers stating "I love playing dress-up, picking flowers, playing baby dolls, having tea parties, and dancing ballet." Her affections are very similar to those expressed by the other characters, including her affinity for the colour pink, which is explicitly denoted in the title of the book. Although these are not labelled as 'girl things', Patty attests: "other people wish that I would dress and act like a boy." The juxtaposition of her feminine proclivities with the statement about the pressure from others to "dress and act like a boy" suggests that her behaviours not aligned with conceptions of being a boy, and are instead associated with girlhood. The activities which Patty lists are central to her subjectivity, which Patty's father affirms by declaring to her: "the real you is a pretty girl." Similar to Jazz's associations of femininity with discourses of appearance, Patty too aligns her gendered subjectivity (i.e. the "real" Patty) by emphasizing her beauty. In spite of the resistance and confusion expressed by others, these defining elements are what constitute Patty's subjectivity as a transgirl.

Comparisons between characters' expected 'masculine' behaviours with those of their expressed 'feminine' behaviours and attributes is also present in *Made by Raffi*, and *But, I'm Not a Boy*. In the first book, Raffi is a gender non-conforming boy who has an aversion to the typical rough-and-tumble play and bravado associated with boyhood. The narration states: "Raffi didn't

like noise and rough play. So at playtime Raffi liked to sit by himself, or find a teacher to stand with just for a little peace and quiet." Upon coming across a teacher knitting a scarf, Raffi develops a tremendous passion for knitting. After being teased by his peers for this behaviour, Raffi asks his mother: "Why do I like to sing and draw and knit? Do you think I'm… girly?" Although the characteristics of Raffi's personality that are described are not explicitly labelled as 'girl things', the question of whether his interest in these activities makes him "girly" positions these as "girly" behaviours.

Raffi's proclivities are indicative of what Myers (2012) refers to as a "feminized masculinity" wherein boys are sensitive and non-athletic (p. 140). His gravitation towards activities conventionally associated with femininity and girlhood precipitate the negotiation of his own gendered subjectivity. Kelly (2014) has suggested that since knitting has traditionally and contemporarily been overwhelmingly interpreted as a domestic and feminine craft, it holds potential to be reconceptualized to construct alternative forms of masculinities and femininities. She suggests that when knitting is taken up by males, this both serves as an act of resisting dominant notions of masculinity as well as an act of distancing its compulsive associations to femininity. Raffi's question to his mother as to whether he is "girly" for his interest in knitting illustrates this point very well. Although the question is not addressed in full, his engagement with knitting serves to subvert associations of knitting with femininity, particularly as he becomes accepted upon knitting a royal prince cape—a seemingly masculine item. Raffi contravenes strict feminine associations of knitting all the while challenging notions of masculinity in his identity as a boy. For Raffi, his pursuit of knitting challenges the types of interests and hobbies boys could embrace and, subsequently, what these interests dictate in terms of masculinity and femininity (Kelly, 2014). Discourses of non-traditional forms of

masculinities serve to subvert the dominant gender order and transgress hegemonic forms of masculinity (Butler, 1999; Connell, 1987)

The character Sarah in *But, I'm Not a Boy*, too shares Raffi's sentiments. The book chronicles Sarah's many trials and tribulations in her experience of becoming a transgirl. The text outlines Sarah's contempt when her father would attempt to teach her to play baseball and when "all the little boys from her block [would] ask her to play war or to wrestle." The narration expresses that she wished "instead of throwing a ball, that they would dance and twirl" and proclaims that she "didn't like playing war, and she hated fighting more." In many cases, when the masculine expectations of Sarah are presented, they are subsequently contrasted with her feminine desires, elucidating the categorical differences between the two. For example, upon her father asking her for help with building a treehouse, it is noted that "Sarah didn't want to learn how to build a tree house; she wanted to be in the kitchen with her mom so she could learn how to make cupcakes and other things." Similarly, when Sarah's mother lays out an outfit for her to play rodeo with her friends, the text states: "she didn't want to wear a hat and vest and boots. She wanted to wear a pretty dress and stockings and tiara. She didn't want to be a cowboy; she wanted to be a princess." There is a clear collocation between Sarah's expected behaviours with those that she internally desires.

This symbolism is also present in many images in the story. For example, Figure 35[22] illustrates a downcast Sarah apathetically playing baseball with her father, whereas Figure 36[23] contrastingly depicts Sarah envisioning dancing with her father in bliss. This is also present in

[22] Figure 35 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was an illustration of Sarah, dejectedly playing baseball with her father. Original source: Leone, K., & Pfeifer, A. (2014). *But, I'm Not a Boy*. CreateSpace Publishing.

[23] Figure 36 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was an illustration of Sarah, blissfully envisioning dancing and twirling with her father. Original source: Leone, K., & Pfeifer, A. (2014). *But, I'm Not a Boy*. CreateSpace Publishing.

Figure 37[24] where a despondent Sarah is seen sitting while resting her face upon her hands, while a hologram-like imaginary image of Sarah dressed in a princess/fairy outfit sits alongside her. In addition to Sarah describing her subjectivity through the utilization of language, this was also done through other modes such as the use of "clothing, gestures, and non-verbal manifestations" within the illustrative components of the texts (Hall, 2004, p. 131). In the images above, readers are able to apprehend the ways in which Sarah constitutes her subjectivity through non-verbal forms. Through these illustrations, Sarah's propensity toward traditionally feminine elements as a clear fundamental attribute of her subjectivity is apparent in her body language and expressions. This has been a trend in many of the images outlined in the analysis as characters can be seen embodying their conceptions of femininity through clothing, accessories, hairstyle, body posture, and various activities.

As illustrated in many of the images throughout the book, Sarah's unaffirmed existence is met with despair and intense angst. The story states that Sarah "wished she could play with other girls where they could all play dress up and be taking care of their dolls together, and then she'd be happy as well." This represents Weedon's (1987) suggestion that in utilizing discourses to constitute one's subjectivity, one derives a sense of equilibrium and pleasure from this. Sarah is unequivocally dejected when she does not embody the characteristics she understands to be related to girlhood. Furthermore, she does not fundamentally express happiness until the moment her identity as a transgirl is affirmed by her parents and she is able to dress in the attire of her choice, and engage in the activities she prefers. For Sarah, being coerced into engaging with facets of masculinity make her inherently miserable and it is not until she freely embodies

[24] Figure 37 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was an illustration of Sarah hopelessly sitting on her bed as a faded image of the girl she wishes to be sits beside her. Original source: Leone, K., & Pfeifer, A. (2014). *But, I'm Not a Boy*. CreateSpace Publishing.

the elements she aligns with femininity that her authentic happiness is evoked as it is stated that following this she "lived happily ever after."

Particular traditional characteristics of femininity are also salient in Hope's story of becoming a transgirl in *Be Who You Are*. Prior to the affirmation of her gender as a girl, markers of her gender subjectivity include wearing dresses (princess, ruffled, polkadot), a gold crown, and a wig with long blonde hair. In Figure 38[25], similar to the image of Jordan using a pink towel to represent long hair, Nick (not yet, Hope) is seen wearing a blonde wig in an attempt to embody the archetype of long hair that is deeply entrenched in conceptions of femininity.

Upon the affirmation of herself as 'Hope', she proclaims: "I don't want to be called a boy anymore, and I don't want to dress like a boy, either." For Hope, clothing and gender are inextricably linked; when coerced to wear pants she states: "I don't want to dress like a boy." Rather than saying 'I don't want to dress in pants', Hope specifies that she does not want to dress "like a boy". Hope conceives of the fundamental differences between Nick-the-boy and Hope-the-girl as primarily related to gender expression, and particularly regarding clothing choice.

Gender expression pertaining to clothing is also a prevalent theme in *It's So Gay and It's Okay* where Jamie's sense of self is also defined, in part, by his choice of clothing. For Jamie—a gender non-conforming boy—in addition to playing with dolls, playing with his best friend Amy, and wearing his favourite pink shirt all bring him unequivocal happiness. When he is bullied by his peers for this behaviour, he relents to appease them and states that the suppression of his desires makes him feel "lonely, sad, and worried." Moreover, Jamie "feels like he is no longer himself." Upon further reflection, it is stated that Jamie "remembers how happy he used to be

[25] Figure 38 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was an illustration of Nick dressed in a pink dress and blonde wig, expressing his desire to live as a girl. Original source: Carr, J., & Rumback, B. (Illustrator). (2010). *Be Who You Are!* Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse.

when he was being himself." Jamie eventually embraces these propensities and expresses "who he truly is." Again, notions of happiness and emotive responses to discursive elements which constitute one's subjectivity are elucidated here as the salience of these discursive constituents is critical to the sense of self and well-being of Jamie in that that a life without them is seemingly insufferable.

It should be noted that the use of the term 'gay' in the book's title, *It's So Gay and It's Okay*, is never explicitly discussed in the context of the story, but is overtly alluded to in one particular scene. In this scene, a peer, named David, sees Jamie sitting by himself and asks if he would like to play with him. Jamie mistakes David for a girl and states "I can't play with you. It's *gay* to play with girls." Upon learning that David is, in fact, a boy, Jamie asks "aren't you afraid other boys might laugh at you if you look like this? They will say you're *gay*." As can be seen in Figure 39, David has long blonde hair and is dressed in a floral t-shirt and red shorts. Jamie's mentioning that playing with girls and dressing in a traditionally feminine manner are "gay" is indicative of the ways that gender variance is often automatically linked to sexual orientation and also alludes to the use of 'gay' as a homophobic slur.

As has been discussed in chapter II, regardless of the clear distinctions between sexual orientation and gender identity, gender variant behaviour is commonly mistaken for evidence that a child is non-heterosexual (Friddle, 2017; Mallon & DeCrescenzo, 2006). As was also discussed these erroneous discourses have informed conceptions of femininity and boyhood with many fearing that allowing boys to engage in conventionally feminine ways of dress or playing will 'turn' these children gay. The term "so gay" is certainly used to denote sexual orientation, but is also often used to convey something as strange, stupid, or undesirable (Lalor, 2007), uncool (Rasmussen, 2004), and fundamentally negative (Nicolas & Skinner, 2012). It is not

clear as to the what the term ‘gay’ infers in this book, however, interestingly, David does not refute this claim, but instead tells Jamie “This is me. It’s so *gay* but it’s *okay*.” Whether David is using the term gay to imply that this is his sexual orientation, or if he is attempting to reclaim the pejorative use of the term to refer to effeminate boys, is not apparent. However, it is evident that David is inferring that there is nothing wrong with being “so gay” whether this be in terms of one’s orientation or what is commonly negatively associated with this term.

Figure 39. David, dressed in a floral shirt and red shorts, extends his arm out to Jamie who is sitting dejected and isolated . From *It’s So Gay and It’s Okay*, by W. Wong, 2014, Lulu Publishing Services. Copyright 2014 by Lulu Publishing Services. Reprinted with permission.

From a Foucauldian perspective, the experiences of Sarah, Hope, and Jamie can be captured by a quote from Foucault (1982) which states that discourse and power “categorizes the individual, marks [them] by [their] own individuality, attaches [them] to [their] own identity, imposes a law of truth on [them] which [they] must recognize and which others have to recognize in [them]” (p. 212). For Foucault, the notion that these characters align themselves with particular categories of femininity and classify themselves and their identity in relation to the ‘laws of truth’ associated with these categories would signify the ways in which they are constituted as gendered subjects. As per Foucault’s quote, self-affirmation is insufficient for these characters as they strive to have their identities recognized by others as well. What is

unequivocally apparent for these characters, is that their individual subjectivities overwhelmingly contribute to their sense of self and sense of positioning within the world.

In both *The Only Boy in Ballet Class* as well as *Ballet Boy*, the gendered subjectivities of the protagonists are centrally salient to their conception of self. Each of these books discusses the stories of two young boys whose subjectivities as gender non-conforming boys are constituted by their passion for dancing. For Tucker in *The Only Boy in Ballet Class*, ballet "feels right to him […] like breathing." Similarly, protagonist Mitchell in *Ballet Boy* describes ballet as a "passion that united [his] body and soul." The intertextual similarities illustrating the salience of ballet to the boys' identities are uncanny as they are written by different authors. Both texts present main characters dressed in a white t-shirt and black pants dancing alongside ballerinas in pink leotards and tutus, all while smiling with their eyes closed in a similar jeté posture; their bliss is evident in Figures 40 and 41.

Figure 40. Tucker performs a jeté alongside two girl ballerinas in pink tutus. From *The Only Boy in Ballet Class*, by D. Gruska and A. Wummer, 2007, Layton, UT: Gibbs Smith. Copyright 2007 by Gibbs Smith. Reprinted with permission.

Figure 41. Mitchell performs a jeté alongside three girl ballerinas in pink tutus. From *Ballet Boy* by A. Gladwin, 2018, CreateSpace Publishing. Copyright 2018 by CreateSpace Publishing. Reprinted with permission.

In alignment of this sub-section's discursive theme of "girl stuff", in Figure 42 Tucker's peers taunt him by stating "dancing is for girls!" whereas in Figure 43 Mitchell's peers tease him by stating that "ballet is for girls!" Again, the intertextuality in the imagery is remarkably similar, with both characters seated in their classrooms as their peers chuckle at their 'feminine' proclivities. Both texts also present a male figure (Tucker's uncle and Mitchell's father) as resistant and unaccepting of their affinities for ballet. For both characters, their passion for ballet is so rich that it consumes their thoughts for much of the story and has a pivotal effect on their overall mood and well-being.

Figure 42. Tucker's peers taunt him for his adoration of ballet. From *The Only Boy in Ballet Class*, by D. Gruska and A. Wummer, 2007, Layton, UT: Gibbs Smith. Copyright 2007 by Gibbs Smith. Reprinted with permission.

Figure 43. Mitchell's peers jeer at him due to his interest in ballet. From *Ballet Boy* by A. Gladwin, 2018, CreateSpace Publishing. Copyright 2018 by CreateSpace Publishing. Reprinted with permission.

Through these titles, characters are all presented as having robust traditionally feminine proclivities. Whether this be in the form of colour, clothing, behaviour, or play, these are all

presented as defining characteristics of these characters' gender subjectivities and what it means to them to be a transgirl or gender non-conforming boy. By stating that these elements are what constitute characters' conceptions of them 'looking like a girl', 'feeling like a girl', and 'living like a girl', the facets themselves are paramount to their considerations of femininity and girlhood. The facets mentioned of characters' subjectivities are indicative of wider Western sociocultural discourses of femininity and girlhood; particularly in Canada and the United States. Indeed, the recursive and interdiscursive evocations of 'girl things' such as the colour pink, dresses, skirts, dolls, timidity, and long hair, fundamentally evoke broader discourses of femininity and girlhood as embedded within archetypes of beauty, nurturance, grace, and obedience. Girlhood and femininity have traditionally been unequivocally associated with domesticity and nurturance (Smith, 2010), as well as modesty, timidity, and obedience (Kilvington & Wood, 2016) as was evoked in these texts. In their comprehensions of these discourses, transgirls and gender non-conforming boy characters actively distanced themselves from discursive elements of masculinity and, instead, embraced the respective discursive elements of femininity that were central to their subjectivities which further served to constitute their subjecthood and fundamental sense of self. Corresponding to the theme of 'girl stuff' is the contrasting theme of 'boy things' which is outlined next.

"Boy Things": Sports, Speed, and Superheroes

Similar to the ways that transgirls and gender non-conforming boys character subjectivities were instituted by associations with 'girl stuff' such as 'girl clothes', accessories, dolls, the colour pink, and ballet dancing, the subjectivities of transboys and gender non-conforming girls were too characterized by their unabiding proclivity toward items associated with conventional masculinity. In this sub-section, recursive elements which comprised

characters' subjectivities included 'boy things' such as video games, combat play, short hair, 'boy' clothing, tools, hats, cars, sports, speed, and superheroes. Similar to the representations in 'girl stuff', it is through the explicit associations of these traits with boyhood and masculinity (i.e. 'boy things') that represent their salience to characters' gendered subjectivities. As such, characters' gendered subjectivities in relation to masculinity and boyhood are discursively constructed in alignment with these archetypes.

In *Stacey is Not a Girl*, protagonist Stacey is unsure as to what their gender identity is. Stacey tells readers: "I just know that I am not a girl, but I am not sure that I am a boy." In describing to readers what defines their subjective sense of gender, Stacey contests: "I mostly like to play with boys. My favorite colors are blue, red, and green." Figure 44, which supplements this text, depicts Stacey playing videogames with several boy peers. The colours which Stacey lists as their favourites are seen across the image with each boy in either red or blue, along with the sofa, which centers the image, in green. The colours, the mannerisms, body language, and facial expressions are a shared experience for all boys in this image, garnering a sense of connectedness. The rowdy representation of Stacey and their friends is in direct contrast to the ways many of the girls are presented in the preceding sub-section where demure and elegance are emphasized.

Figure 44. Stacey and three boy peers play videogames together. From *Stacey's Not a Girl*, by C. Keo-Meier, J. Yang, and N. Lam, 2016, Houston, TX. Copyright 2016. Reprinted with permission.

Stacey equally discusses the things they like along with the things which they do not. For example, in expressing their contempt for feminine-type items, Stacey states: “when I was little and my parents tried to put barrettes in my hair or make me wear dresses, I would jump up and down and say ‘no way!’” In Figure 45, Stacey takes readers along the trajectory of costumes they wore for Halloween throughout the years, wherein a list of mermaid, leprechaun, wizard, football player, and Peter Pan are all listed chronologically. The only feminine-type costume listed is that of the mermaid which was presumably assigned to Stacey before they could speak and reject this.

Figure 45. Stacey chronicles their many Halloween costumes over the years: a mermaid, leprechaun, wizard, football player, and Peter Pan. From *Stacey’s Not a Girl*, by C. Keo-Meier, J. Yang, and N. Lam, 2016, Houston, TX. Copyright 2016. Reprinted with permission.

Once Stacey was able to articulate their aversion to feminine-type garments, they were able to establish a sense of agency in selecting attire that best fit their subjective sense of self. For example, when Stacey is confronted with wearing a jumper to school, they balk and unyieldingly refuse to do this. Figure 46 exemplifies Stacey’s abhorrence toward this garment by depicting their visceral response to this. Stacey’s body language is similar to that of a wincing or flinching motion representative of repulsion and repugnance. Once Stacey’s mother speaks to the school principal requesting a modification, Stacey is seen alongside girl peers, confidently donning the revised version of the uniform in the form of overalls (Figure 47). The

image depicts Stacey assuredly stretching their suspender straps; a gesture often affiliated with confidence and buoyancy. This is the only instance in which Stacey's clothing preference is explicitly discussed, however an implicit allusion to this is present throughout the book as Stacey is consistently seen wearing a blue sports jersey with the number 13. The fusion of Stacey's constant donning of their jersey along with a few instances of a soccer ball in the background of certain images subsequently underscores Stacey's passion for sports without explicitly referencing it.

Figure 46. Stacey balks at the uniform she is expected to wear to school, which is a jumper dress. From *Stacey's Not a Girl*, by C. Keo-Meier, J. Yang, and N. Lam, 2016, Houston, TX. Copyright 2016. Reprinted with permission.

Figure 47. Stacey's mother is pictured negotiating with the school's principal regarding student uniforms. Stacey is pictured in overalls amongst their girl peers who are in standard jumper dress uniforms. From *Stacey's Not a Girl*, by C. Keo-Meier, J. Yang, and N. Lam, 2016, Houston, TX. Copyright 2016. Reprinted with permission.

Upon disclosing to their parents that they do not "feel like [they are] a girl", Stacey's mom consoles them by saying: "you can be a girl and like *boy things*, like a tomboy" (emphasis added). Similar to many of the texts listed in the sub-section above, the behaviours and interests Stacey exhibits are conceived of as gendered and belonging to a particular group; in this case

"boy things." Stacey's father asks them if they think they are a boy, to which Stacey responds: "I, I don't know…I just know I am NOT a girl." Despite their fondness for traditional masculine behaviours and expressive characteristics, and their aversion to those that are traditionally feminine, Stacey refuses to categorize themself as a boy (this is taken up further in the following sub-section).

A salient element that has been elucidated here in regard to the constitution of Stacey's gendered subjectivity is not only their partiality towards 'boy' things, but also their *aversion* for things associated with girlhood and femininity. The juxtaposition of masculinity against femininity was present in the former sub-section on "girl stuff", however it appears to be more common in this sub-section. Connell (1987) notes that hegemonic masculinity—masculinity that is socioculturally conceived as dominant—tends to regulate femininity as well as other 'inferior' forms of masculinity. As such, hegemonic masculinity often materializes in contrast to femininity and alternative forms of masculinity, and often prevails over them (Connell, 1987). Indeed, the frequent juxtapositions of masculinity against femininity is representative of the fact that, along hypermasculine and hyperfeminine classifications of gender, masculinity has traditionally been seen as the antithesis of femininity [and vice-versa] (Fausto-Sterling, 2000a). This will continue to be apparent in this sub-section as when archetypes of masculinity are referenced, they are commonly done so in contrast to characteristics of femininity.

The aversion to feminine qualities of behaviour and activities juxtaposed against the pursuit of 'boy things' is also a prevalent theme in *The Adventures of Tina and Jordan*. Tina's story suggests that "'her family taught her that she was supposed to do girl things like play with dolls and wear pretty dresses." The notion of "girl things" is concretely described here along with the characteristics this entails; these are similar to those outlined in the sub-section on the

discursive theme of "girl stuff." Correspondingly, Tina asserts that "she did not like being told to act like a girl." Again, the notion of 'acting like a girl' corresponds to engaging in feminine behaviour and exhibiting an interest in 'girl things', which Tina is unequivocally uninterested in. The text states that instead, "Tina enjoyed climbing tress. She also liked playing with toy cars." Another quotation conveys that "she liked getting dirty and getting grease under her fingernails. Her favourite part was fixing things with her Daddy's tools!" An image accompanying this text (Figure 48[26]) positions Tina wearing a cap backwards while standing in front of a car as she holds a wrench in one hand and gestures a symbol of strength using both arms. As will be evoked again shortly, strength appears to be an important attribute in Tina's subjective understanding of herself in relation to her masculine gendered subjectivity.

In the previous sub-section it was noted that long hair served as a symbol of femininity in situating Jordan's behaviour of pretending to be a girl; this symbolism is also apparent in Tina's behaviour of "pretend[ing] she was a boy" in that she attempts to evade this marker of femininity. Tina becomes drawn to one of her father's cowboy hats as it "made her feel strong." Upon donning the cowboy hat, Tina ponders "maybe if I hide my hair under my hat, I will look better." After concealing her hair under the hat, the text states "Tina felt very good. She felt good because she looked like a boy." Weedon (1987) contests when discourses work to institute an individual's subjectivity, "they [discourses] require activation through the agency of the individuals whom they constitute […] as embodied subjects" (p. 112). Much in the same ways that this was seen when characters in the preceding sub-section actively utilized gendered discourses of femininity and girlhood to constitute their gendered subjectivities, characters in this

[26] Figure 48 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was an illustration of Tina proudly holding a wrench in one of her arms and holding up a fist of strength with the other. Original source: Lam, J. (2013). *The Adventures of Tina and Jordan*. Xlibris.

sub-section too employ discursive framings of masculinity and boyhood to negotiate their own gendered subjectivities. Tina's affinity for cowboy hats is embedded within a larger discourse of masculine strength as is evident through the text's mention that her cowboy hat "made her feel strong" and "look like a boy." Here, Tina makes a direct association between her cowboy hat, strength, and boyhood and negotiates her subjectivity in relation to these. By "pretend[ing] to be a boy" in-line with these behaviours, Tina actively embodies specific characteristics associated with boyhood in constituting her own subjectivity.

Tina's negotiation of characteristics of strength and assertiveness is also apparent in a scene involving Tina dressing as a Sheriff and visiting a playground nearby. Tina notices a boy named Jordan who is being bullied for wearing a pink towel on his head and playing with a doll, and steps in to defend him. Tina's role in protecting Jordan involves her "acting very tough" and shoving one of the children while telling them to leave. Figure 49[27] depicts two boys fearfully seated on the ground as Tina towers over them with her hands firmly placed upon her waist, holding her head up high. A sliver of Jordan's face is present, with an awestruck and relieved expression upon his face; once the boys leave, Jordan exclaims "you are my hero." For Tina, it appears that machismo, tools, and cars are all central to her conceptions of what encompasses being a boy; which she actively seeks to do from the outset of the story. The tacit message in this case is that to be a boy is to exhibit strength and courage—which is fundamentally, *not* to be feminine. In this constitution of Tina's subjectivity along discursive features of traditional masculinity, she is situated *outside* of those of traditional femininity. Hence, to be masculine, in this text as well as many others, is fundamentally *not* to be feminine.

[27] Figure 49 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was an illustration of Tina towering over two boys in defence of Jordan who is being bullied by them. Original source: Lam, J. (2013). *The Adventures of Tina and Jordan*. Xlibris.

The sense of security and self-assurance that Tina's hat evokes pertaining to her gender expression and/or identity is also present in *Jessie's Hat Collection*. From baseball caps, to camouflage hats, to train engineer caps, Jessie's hats are a major contributor to her understanding of herself as a gendered subject. For Jessie, hats are a symbol of safety and authenticity that precipitate feelings of her authentic gendered self. It is stated that Jessie keeps her hat on at all times as she "doesn't like to take her hat off even in the bath." On one particular occasion where "Jessie's mom made her take off her hat and wear a dress" it is revealed that "Jessie cried and cried." Figure 50[28] illustrates this moment, with Jessie donning a pink dress and pink shoes while intensely sobbing as she sits on a set of stairs. This image shares elements with that of the image of Stacey who evidently feels uncomfortable and awkward by the simple thought of wearing a dress. This again highlights the ways in which the classifiers of one's subjectivity materialize in that they have a profound effect on one's emotions, well-being, and sense of self (Weedon, 1987). For Jessie, who frequently wears "blue jeans and t-shirts", being physically placed in a dress amplifies this discomfort and creates a visibly distressing situation for her.

Similar to Tina's gravitation towards activities her father enjoys, Jessie too "loves sports and watches games with her dad." Similar to the visual depiction of Stacey playing video games with several boy peers, in Figure 51[29] Jessie and her father exhibit similar rowdy characteristics as they watch sports on their couch. The book does not list which sports Jessie enjoys watching, however it seems to be a moment of bonding between her and her father as they share a common interest. Jessie sharing interests and finding solidarity with male counterparts is also expressed

[28] Figure 50 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was an illustration of Jessie sitting along a set of stairs in tears when she is forced to wear a dress. Original source: Barnes, N. (2018). *Jessie's Hat Collection.* Olympia, WA.
[29] Figure 51 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was an illustration of Jessie and her father excitedly watching a sports game together. Original source: Barnes, N. (2018). *Jessie's Hat Collection.* Olympia, WA.

in the narration that "Jessie's friends are mostly boys" and that she enjoys playing army with her brother. Figure 52[30] portrays Jessie and her brother engaged in a game of "army" where her brother is seen using a gun and Jessie is seen making a fist and cheering him on. Jessie uses her relationships with her peers, father, and brother, to negotiate archetypes of combat and athleticism—traits perceived to be inherent markers of traditional masculinity (Keddie, 2003)—which are salient to her subjectivity.

In addition to these interests, the text overtly describes the partiality Jessie has towards her hats. Upon acquiescence from her parents to live as a boy, the narration avers: "Jessie was so excited that she decided to bring two hats to school the next day, one hat for the morning, and one hat for after lunch." Considering that this is the first instance of Jessie living as her affirmed gender, it is clear that this salient not only to her gender expression, but also to her gender identity. Now that Jessie is able to 'come out' as a boy to her peers, she feels compelled to dress in a way that best epitomizes his gender identity. Hats, then, are a primary constituent of Jessie's gender subjectivity. Jessie's affinity for t-shirts, jeans, and hats, are not explicitly labelled 'boy things' in the text, however it is stated that she is bullied at school for "looking like a boy", thus discursively reinforcing the notion that the way Jessie presents himself is conceptualized in relation to an overall boyhood.

Many of the discursive elements that constitute the subjectivities of Stacey, Tina, and Jessie, are also present in *Jack, Not Jackie*. Rather than the story being told from the perspective of the main character (Jackie, later Jack), it is narrated from the viewpoint of Susan, Jack's sister. Susan tells readers that "as soon as Jackie can walk, she runs" elucidating Jackie's active and

[30] Figure 52 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was an illustration of Jessie and her brother playing a game of army together. Original source: Barnes, N. (2018). *Jessie's Hat Collection.* Olympia, WA.

boisterous demeanour. To this she adds "good thing she loves her dinosaur Band-Aids!" simultaneously underscoring Jackie's rowdy tendencies as well as her liking of dinosaurs; which are commonly associated with boys. In Figure 53, Jackie is seen confidently running ahead of Susan with a mischievous smile upon her face, while Susan apprehensively treads behind, seemingly struggling to keep up.

Figure 53. During a family outing at the park, Jackie runs fast ahead while Susan struggles to catch up. From *Jack, Not Jackie* by E. Silverman and H. Hatam, 2018, New York, NY: Little Bee Books. Copyright 2018 by Little Bee Books. Reprinted with permission.

Susan subtly acknowledges Jackie's masculine exuberance by telling readers that when she says "let's be kitty-cats. Meow meow meow", Jackie responds by saying "woof woof woof." The underlying implication here tacitly references the ways cats are associated with passivity, timidity, and aloofness (similar to Susan), while dogs are associated with being frisky, assertive, and social (similar to Jackie). To further illuminate this, Susan states: "my sister Jackie also loves mud. Mud puddles, mud pies. Mud mud mud" to which her own response is "Ick!" Here, once again, archetypes of masculinity and femininity become contrasted against one another. Susan's more gracious demeanour is juxtaposed here against Jackie's more exuberant disposition. Figure 54 portrays Jackie gleefully jumping and splashing in a mud puddle while Susan stands next to her ambivalently wiping mud off of her face. Again, the two siblings are contrasted against one another illuminating the distinctions between them. This is also apparent when Susan puts ribbons in Jackie's hair while suggesting they play forest fairies, to which

Jackie responds “eww!” as she removes the ribbons and insists on being a “Superbug” instead. Susan understands Jackie’s fondness of playing with dirt, mud, and bugs to be a salient part of her subjective sense of gender. Jackie’s penchant for ‘boy’ things is regularly juxtaposed against her sister’s disposition towards feminine items where Jackie is portrayed as faster, more daring, and more agile, whereas her sister is depicted along traditional conceptions of a girl as irrational, fearful, and passive (Osgood & Robinson, 2017).

Figure 54. Jackie joyfully jumps in a puddle of mud as Susan stands still and slowly wipes the splashing mud off of her face. From *Jack, Not Jackie* by E. Silverman and H. Hatam, 2018, New York, NY: Little Bee Books. Copyright 2018 by Little Bee Books. Reprinted with permission.

Jackie’s gender identity becomes more apparent as the story progresses. For example, Figure 55 depicts an instance where Jackie is given a dress for her birthday but throws it in the air and wails in sorrow. This image shares similar elements to those in *Stacey Is Not a Girl* and *Jessie’s Hat Collection* where the characters express deep disdain for the dresses they are expected to wear. In this image, Jackie is seen profoundly distressed by this as her family looks on apprehensively. Her mother assures her that she can wear “whatever feels right”, and similar to Tina’s donning of her father’s cowboy hat, Jackie quickly puts on her father’s hat and vest. Jackie “rubs her chin and says “Hmmm””, seemingly emulating a ‘thinking’ gesture. Susan responds to this by saying: “just like Daddy.” Presumably, Jackie’s embodies her father’s characteristics while dressed in his apparel. This moment is depicted in the main image on the cover of the book (Figure 56). The image on the cover is contrasted against pink clothing items

such as a floral top, pink ballet shoes, and a pink dress; those that Jackie is expected to wear but has no desire for. The name ‘Jack’ is written in blue text, while the name ‘Jackie’ appears in pink; reflecting the colours traditionally associated with boys and girls, respectively. The notion that dressing like her father (or in a masculine-type manner more generally) “feels right” is the first concrete indication of Jackie’s gender identity.

Figure 55. Jackie screams and cries after having been given a pink dress for her birthday. From *Jack, Not Jackie* by E. Silverman and H. Hatam, 2018, New York, NY: Little Bee Books. Copyright 2018 by Little Bee Books. Reprinted with permission.

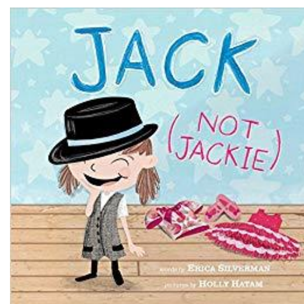

Figure 56. Jackie smiles blissfully while wearing a grey vest and top hat as the pink feminine clothes she has eschewed lay on the floor behind her. From *Jack, Not Jackie* by E. Silverman and H. Hatam, 2018, New York, NY: Little Bee Books. Copyright 2018 by Little Bee Books. Reprinted with permission.

Susan continues to chronicle Jackie’s proclivities and informs readers that when they go shopping for clothes “Jackie runs to the boys’ section.” On one particular occasion, Jackie selects shorts, a shirt, a baseball cap, and a tie. Susan is overly resistant to this and declares “ties are for boys!” Jackie remains unrelenting and further slowly begins to express her authentic gender in a manner that aligns with her identity as a boy. This book juxtaposes Jack’s

'masculine' attributes against Susan's 'feminine' character; emphasizing the fundamental differences between the two. Jack's gender is something he expresses from the top of his hat, down to the details of his Band-Aids.

Following Jack's penchant for mud and bugs, comes Chris' affinity for mud and cowboy boots in *About Chris*. The story of Chris is told by his Pre-Kindergarten teacher as she depicts the things that constitute his subjectivity as a transboy. The story details specific proclivities of Chris which are central to his subjectivity including that he "loved trucks, cars, Legos, mud and art, and cowboy boots" and that he 'drew superheroes everyday." Each of these articles are traditionally affiliated with boyhood and are commonly categorized as boy 'things'. In Figure 57[31], Chris is seen holding up a drawing of himself as a superhero. Superheroes, being associated with qualities such as strength, heroism, and defence, likely represent qualities that are central to Chris' conception of himself.

These qualities are also elicited in descriptions of Chris stating that he is "the fastest cheetah, the fiercest lion… and king of the hill." Chris is also described as "the leader of the pack." Each of these classifications position strength, agility, and dominance as central characteristics of Chris' subjectivity. Chris positioned as the "leader of the pack" and "king of the hill" both emphasize traditional masculine traits of dominance and leadership. Figure 58[32] and Figure 59[33] depict Chris as the "fastest cheetah" and "fiercest lion." Chris' facial and bodily expressions of dominance and fortitude are salient features of these images. Similar to Jessie's

[31] Figure 57 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was an illustration of Chris proudly holding up a self-portrait of himself as a superhero. Original source: Benedetto, N. (2015). *About Chris*. Daniel L. King.

[32] Figure 58 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was an illustration of Chris running at top speed while dressed as a cheetah. Original source: Benedetto, N. (2015). *About Chris*. Daniel L. King.

[33] Figure 59 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was an illustration of Chris making a fierce facial expression while dressed as a lion. Original source: Benedetto, N. (2015). *About Chris*. Daniel L. King.

propensity toward combat and battle, Chris too exemplifies these traits through his play. In his quest to be the ‘leader of the pack’, ‘king of the hill’, ‘the fastest cheetah’, and ‘fiercest lion’, Chris exemplifies archetypes of strength, competition, and dominance when constituting his subjectivity as a transboy in that he demonstrates a distinct association between masculinity and characteristics such as competitiveness, bravado, and leadership (Keddie, 2003), and subsequently ‘activates’ these discursive features through his explicit alignment with them as he constitutes his subjectivity.

Figure 60[34] which depicts Chris dressed as a pirate for Halloween also presents Chris along these dimensions. This image illustrates Chris with a fierce expression upon his face while brandishing a sword. Again, defence, dominance, and power are once again elucidated through this image.

Similar to the ways masculinity and femininity are juxtaposed against one another in other texts, this is also apparent in a double-spread where the text states: “while some kids drew flowers + rainbows on their faces… Chris drew scars!” The images accompanying these captions portray three girls dressed in ‘feminine’ attire, drawing hearts, rainbows, flowers, and stars on their faces (Figure 61[35]), contrasted with Chris’ drawing of scars and a black eye upon his own face (Figure 62[36]). These images seemingly present cisgender girls as possessing a predisposition to delicate, pretty, and dainty items, with Chris (a transboy) having an inclination towards violence and danger. Through this imagery, Chris actively positions himself within discourses of masculinity by eschewing associations with discursive elements of femininity

[34] Figure 60 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was an illustration of Chris displaying machismo while dressed as a pirate and holding up a sword. Original source: Benedetto, N. (2015). *About Chris*. Daniel L. King.
[35] Figure 61 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was an illustration of three of Chris’ girl peers drawing flowers and rainbows on their faces. Original source: Benedetto, N. (2015). *About Chris*. Daniel L. King.
[36] Figure 62 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was an illustration of Chris smiling with facial stitches, a black eye, and missing teeth. Original source: Benedetto, N. (2015). *About Chris*. Daniel L. King.

wherein archetypes of masculinity are generally not compatible with contrasting archetypes of femininity (Myers, 2012).

Lastly, similar to Jack, two elements that critically constitute Chris' sense of himself as a gendered subject are his hair and his name. It is stated that Chris requests a "GIJoe buzz cut", only to be met with refusal from his mother. Although Chris already has short hair, his desire for shorter hair appears to critical. Figure 63[37] depicts Chris angrily seated at a hair salon, envisioning himself with a buzz cut, smiling blissfully. The mention of "GIJoe buzz cut", as opposed to simply a 'buzz cut', suggests that his desire may be informed and influenced by G.I. Joe action figures, serving as an exemplar and role model for Chris. G.I. Joe characters are too associated with qualities of combat, militancy, and dominance.

The notion of 'boy things' and 'girl things' are elicited here through the depictions of Chris, but also at the end of the book where the author provides 'Wonder Wisdom' questions for children to consider. One consideration poses: "I wonder why Chris dresses like a 'boy'", whereas another ponders: "I wonder why Chris gets upset… when someone finds out he has a 'girl' name." Each of these positions Chris along the lines of 'boy' versus 'girl' characteristics, and invites readers to consider the centrality of Chris' proclivities to his subjectivity as a transboy.

The idea of 'boy things' is also briefly alluded to in the short and simple story *When Kathy is Keith*. This short story introduces readers to Kathy who insistently tells her friends, teachers, and parents that she "is a boy, not a girl." This story is fairly concise and does not provide much detail into the intricacies of Kathy's subjectivity, however once Kathy is permitted

[37] Figure 63 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was an illustration of Chris seemingly frustrated that his mother will not allow him to cut his hair the desired way that he envisions in his mind, as represented by a thought-bubble of him with a buzz-cut. Original source: Benedetto, N. (2015). *About Chris*. Daniel L. King.

by her parents to “live her life as a boy”, the two sole attributes which change for Kathy are her name (to Keith) and that she can now “wear boy’s [sic] clothes at home.” What comprises ‘boy clothes’ is not explicitly stated, however upon the affirmation of their gender, this character is seen to transition to transition to a t-shirt and shorts (Figure 64), compared to the red dress and bow that they had been dressed in throughout the majority of the book.

Figure 64. Keith smiling while wearing ‘boy clothes’ which entail a blue and white striped t-shirt and beige shorts. From *When Kathy is Keith*, by W. Wong, 2011, Xlibris Corporation. Copyright 2011 by Xlibris Corporation. Reprinted with permission.

As stated, the text does not explicitly state the signifiers of Keith’s gender identity as a boy, however visual elements of the text’s imagery suggest what these may be. It is stated that Keith changes his name (from Kathy) along with changing his apparel, however in Figure 64 it is also evident that Keith has gotten a haircut. Shorter hair seems to signify Keith’s identity as a boy in the same way that long hair was affiliated with girlhood in the previous sub-section. Moreover, Figure 65 which depicts a distressed Kathy in her bedroom, illustrates a robot and airplane upon a ledge in the background of the image. Again, there is no explicit mention of these items within the story, however their strategic inclusion in this image infers that they are central to the character’s interests.

Figure 65. Kathy sits on her bed in her room with an expression of apprehension. From *When Kathy is Keith*, by W. Wong, 2011, Xlibris Corporation. Copyright 2011 by Xlibris Corporation. Reprinted with permission.

Finally is an abstract tale of Andrea who lives on planet Tenalp, where for one day each year, everyone and everything is backwards. Although this includes aspects of the environment, the main focus is the way this impacts gender and how on Backwards Day "all the girls turn into boys, and all the boys turn into girls" which manifests in "tall bearded people in dresses and skirts. And pretty longhaired people in suits and work coveralls." Moreover, "players all have high voices, and ballerinas have hairy chests."

The book states that "Andrea loved to be a boy on Backwards Day. She wanted to be a boy everyday." Since Andrea does not feel like a girl, Backwards Day is the only day on which she feels 'right' due to the fact that she is able to transform into a boy. For Andrea, being a girl "always felt uncomfortable, like last year's too-short pants"; thus, there is a figurative understanding conveyed here that being a girl does not 'fit'. Andrea's general proclivities include that she "kept her hair short and always wore dirty sneakers or cowboy boots." Furthermore, it is expounded that "she loved fishing and exploring and playing baseball" and, similar to Stacey and Jessie, "almost all of her friends were boys." These affinities are central to her understanding of her gender subjectivity.

One Backwards Day Andrea does not turn into a boy, but rather remains a girl. The day after, however, Andrea turns into a boy and remains that way for the rest of the year. It is implied that this is the day Andrea had her gender affirmed. Andrea promptly changes her name to Andy, and is now referred to as 'he'. The book states that "Andy-the-boy was much, much happier than Andrea-the-girl had ever been." Interestingly, although Andrea is portrayed in-line with traditionally masculine attributes, it is articulated that "Andy mostly did the same things and liked the same things as he had as a girl." Presumably, this indicates that Andy was always a 'boy' internally, despite being labelled as a girl. Admittedly, this text does not concretely chronicle what transgender or gender non-conforming subjectivities entail as it is unequivocally abstract in content, and does not address how Andrea switched from girl to boy, and vice versa, if she had been engaged in the same activities all along. It is presumed, then, that Andrea's internal sense of gender would have shifted on Backwards Day, however this is not entirely comprehendible as it does not explain why Andrea remained upset on the days she was a girl.

In this sub-section, transboys and gender non-conforming girls actively negotiate their gendered subjectivities in accordance with dominant discourses of masculinity. The accompanying elements with which they align themselves are all embedded within larger Western sociocultural discourses of masculine strength, assertiveness, competition, aggression, agility, courage, construction, and dominance (Kilvington & Wood, 2016; Martin, 2011; Osgood & Robinson, 2017; Smith, 2010) which serve as cornerstones of conventional masculinity and boyhood. The interdiscursive features both between and amongst discourses of 'girl stuff' and 'boy things' elucidate the similarities of conceptualizing gender both within and across these discourses. When considering these two sub-sections collectively, in many cases, discursive constructions of masculinity were explicitly dependent upon the discursive constructions of

femininity, and vice versa. In other words, discourses of "girl stuff" were made possible through discourses of "boy things", and the same was true for the reverse of this. For this reason, the interdiscursive features of each discourse were contingent upon the other.

As noted in chapter III, interdiscursivity refers to the appearance of discourses within other discourses (Baxter, 2008; Sunderland & Litosseliti, 2002). As such, discourses of femininity ("girl stuff") were present in discourses of masculinity ("boy things"), and vice versa, as each of these exists in relation to the other. To conceptualize 'girl stuff', a consideration of 'boy things' in relation to this is necessary, as is the case for the reverse. The associations of particular activities, interests, and behaviour as constituting characters' subjectivities is not problematic, however some children may read this as reinforcing the notion that certain behaviours and proclivities are *only* for a particular gender. Although no texts explicitly state that particular behaviours are solely to be executed by members of a particular gender, texts that reify conceptions of 'girl stuff' and 'boy things' may subsequently fortify gender-categorized behaviour which can be challenging for gender non-binary children to interpret. On this note, the next section details the proclivities of characters who are either gender-neutral, gender-fluid, and/or transgender in ways that are less traditional and categorically non-binary.

Foucault (1978) importantly underscores that for discourses to produce and operate, they must embody specific elements. In order for regulation around the propriety of discourses to function, perpetuate society and permeate throughout a social context, they must remain within relations of power and work as performative entities. The repetition of the regulations that work to restrict particular behaviours and desires are the very forces that work to maintain and reify their domination throughout society. Discourses are only able to be produced as so far as they are *re*produced (Sunderland, Catalano, and Kendall, 2009), much like a performativity of

discourse. Indeed, Foucault (1978) asserts that although discourse transmits, produces, and reinforces power, it too "undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it" (p. 101). In these two sections on 'girl stuff' and 'boy things', characters utilized existing dominant discourses of masculinity and femininity to concurrently transgress cisnormative discourses of girlhood and boyhood. In other words, although they utilized discourses of conventional masculinity and femininity to constitute their subjectivities, this was still done outside of cisnormative conceptions of gendered subjectivity. Characters challenged the notion of *who* could embody particular elements of masculinity and femininity and did not restrict these to cisgender children. In their non-conformity to cisnormative conceptions of gender propriety, characters actively positioned themselves within dominant discourses of masculinity and femininity to subsequently resist notions that assigned gender must be equivalent to expressed and/or internalized gender.

“Flowers and Rainbows”

As was elicited in the two preceding sub-sections on “girl stuff” and “boy things”, characters utilized dominant discourses to institute their own gendered subjectivities. In this sub-section, however, the subject positions constituted by these discourses are subverted. Throughout this sub-section, characters engage in what Foucault (1978) refers to as ‘reverse’ discourse. Reverse discourse seeks to deconstruct and counter dominant discourses, challenge meaning and power, and “enable the production of new, resistant discourses” (Weedon, 1987, p. 110). According to Weedon, discourses “can offer the discursive space from which the individual can resist dominant subject positions” as “resistance to the dominant at the level of the individual subject is the first stage in the production of alternative forms of knowledge or where such alternatives already exist, of winning individuals over to these discourses and gradually increasing their social power” (p.111). Indeed, in this sub-section on “flowers and rainbows”, the dominant discourses of masculinity and femininity which served to institute characters’ subjectivities in the former sub-sections are challenged and contested through the characters’ navigation of their subjectivities. Instead, the gendered subjectivities of characters are constituted by their internal sense of gender combined with diverse behaviours, expressions, and proclivities, as opposed to being circumscribed to traditional archetypes of gender. In short, they further question and challenge conventional categories of boyhood, girlhood, and those between and beyond. It should be noted that this category was overwhelmingly underrepresented within my sample of texts and, as such, is the shortest of the three sub-sections. As will be evident shortly, out of all 30 texts, only six titles depicted characters who were not defined according to conventional archetypes of masculinity or femininity. This is a salient finding of this analysis and is discussed further throughout this section as well as in the next chapter.

To begin, I refer back to *Stacey's Not a Girl*, where Stacey, who does not identify as a girl, recognizes their profound interest in conventional 'boy things' but actively resists the dominant conception that they must necessarily be a boy due to these interests. The fundamental feature of this text is that Stacey's aversion to feminine items (i.e. 'girl things') as well as the disavowal of their identity as a girl ("I am NOT a girl") does not necessarily position them as inclined to assume the identity of a boy. Stacey has eschewed their assigned gender identity as a girl, however resists the adoption of the identity as a boy solely due to their masculine proclivities. For Stacey, they are unsure if they are a boy, but they know for certain that they are not a girl. The book does not state how Stacey knows she is not a girl, but it is presumably related to their aversion to feminine activities as how Stacey feels 'inside' or what their *internal* sense of gender identity is not mentioned. Nonetheless, it is inferred that having an explicit gender identity is not salient to Stacey as the conclusion of the book states that they are "just going to be a kid." Stacey's masculine attributes and propensity toward 'boy things' are prominent characteristics of their gendered subjectivity, however this subjectivity need not be ascribed a label nor an alignment with a particular gender. It is here that gender is also conveyed as both fluid and inessential, as Stacey's decision to simply "be a kid" implies that they do not need to choose a gender now, or potentially ever; a possibility that is critical for child readers who also share this dilemma to consider.

In *Are You a Boy or Girl?*, protagonist Tiny— a gender-fluid character—is also depicted as not possessing the desire to definitively align themself with a particular gender. Tiny is described as having varying interests—none of which define them as either a boy or girl. Tiny tells readers "'dressing up is my favourite thing to do" and explains their adoration for pretend play wherein Tiny and their sister pretend to be animals, doctors, cowboys, butterflies, and wild

creatures. Tiny describes that they enjoy fancy dresses and toys, and that their favourite sport is football, favourite food is spaghetti, and favourite t-shirt is green. Tiny is often depicted in green, grey and orange clothing; which are commonly categorized as gender-neutral colours. During one particular instance, Tiny's sister asks them "are you a boy or are you a girl today?" The scene ends before Tiny can respond, however the overarching implication in this text is that the answer does not matter.

When Tiny is constantly bullied by a peer named Buster who teases Tiny about being neither a boy nor a girl, Tiny's teacher repeatedly asks Buster "why does it matter if they are a boy or a girl?" Here, Tiny's teacher utilizes a gender-neutral pronoun of 'they' to acknowledge Tiny, which also embraces gender-fluidity. Through Buster's incessant questioning of Tiny's gender it is evident that he is uncomfortable with not being able to neatly place Tiny into a dichotomous categorization of either boy *or* girl (Paechter, 2003). In Figure 66, Tiny de-emphasizes the salience of particular characteristics as defining their gender by asking Buster: "what does it mean to be a boy or girl? I like eating cakes, playing football, dressing up, and watching the stars." With a pensive expression, Buster responds by stating "oh… me too." Here, Tiny actively negotiates and resists dominant discourses of gender as binary and as defined by archetypes of masculinity or femininity and contributes to Foucault's notion of 'reverse discourse'. For Foucault "there will always be resistance, revolt, struggle against social imposed constraints, renewed dialogue and the transformation of social forms. The agent of change here is the concrete, resisting human being" (Falzon, 1998, p. 52). Thus, it is the active role that Tiny takes in resisting prescriptive discourses that makes this resistance possible.

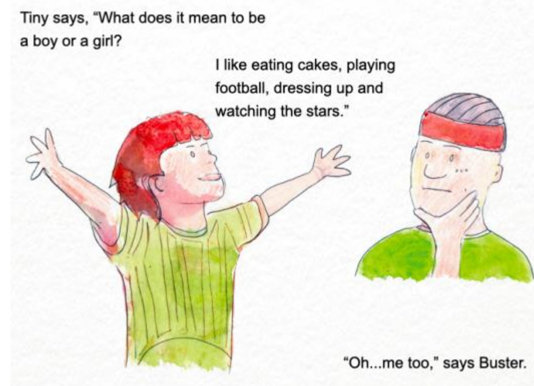

Figure 66. Tiny describing their interests and elucidating that these are not tied to their gender. From *Are You a Boy or Are You a Girl?*, by S. Savage and F. Fisher, 2017, Philadelphia, PA: Jessica Kingsley Publishers. Copyright 2017 by Jessica Kingsley Publishers. Reprinted with permission.

In this text, gender is not defined by what Tiny does or does not do, nor what Tiny does or does not like. Rather, the text emphasizes and embraces the variance and diversity in all of Tiny's proclivities as a *person* rather than as a boy or a girl. The final words of this book are spoken by Tiny where they say "I am me!" The end of the book poses some critical questions for children to ponder by asking children: "how are girls and boys different?", "do you think that Tiny is a boy or a girl?", "does it matter if Tiny is a boy or a girl?", "should Tiny be allowed to play football and dress up as a fairy?" These questions are not a part of the story, but are rather intended for children to critically reflect on either on their own or with an adult.

This theme is also present in several other titles. For example, in *My Dad Thinks I'm a Boy*, protagonist Stephie who is a transgirl, explains to readers that her father thinks she is "a boy named Stephen who likes wrestling and fishing." She informs readers of her authentic interests by describing her love of "bugs, Ninja Doc, and all sorts of books." In the double-spread in Figure 67[1] where Stephie discloses to readers that she is a girl, this text is contrasted with light

[1] Figure 67 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was an illustration of Stephie making a silly facial expression in the foreground as the text in the background tells readers that she is a girl. Original source: Labelle, S. (2017). *My Dad Thinks I'm a Boy*. Montreal, QC: Les Éditions SGL.

red beams, purple font, and illustrations of various insects. In contrast to insects allegorizing notions of masculinity and boyhood in *Jack, Not Jackie* and *About Chris*, insects here are utilized to portray a non-traditional transgirl, and are not explicitly used to allegorize her gender, rather they do just the opposite; they exemplify that her interests do not define her gender. Stephie further states: ‘the thing I like the most is watching horror movies late at night”, and, similar to Tiny, her “‘favourite thing to eat is spaghetti.” The mention of both Tiny and Stephie’s favourite foods as spaghetti is not simply a declaration of interest in cuisine, but can rather be read as elucidating the diversity in characteristics that comprise personhood irrespective of one’s gender. In both of these titles, the emphasis is seemingly to underscore the many elements of Stephie and Tiny’s subjectivities, without overtly linking these to their gender identities. This is also implicitly present in the way Stephie is dressed. Stephie’s preference for clothing is not explicitly indicated, however she is regularly portrayed in various clothing items such as overalls, t-shirts, shorts, skirts, tutus, and a space sorceress costume, which further implicitly elucidates that Stephie’s subjectivity as a transgirl is not contingent upon any particular gendered interests or expressions. Rather, a primary element of her subjecthood that is discussed is how she internalizes and navigates her subjectivity based on how others—namely her father—respond to her gender identity as a transgirl (this is discussed further in the next section).

As can be observed, Figure 67 depicts Stephie in pigtails, dressed in a blue Ninja Dog t-shirt and green skirt, while making a silly expression. The portrayal of Stephie in this image, as well as throughout the book itself, fuses elements of masculinity and femininity, often juxtaposing the two. For example, Figure 68[2] illustrates Stephie dressed in more traditionally

[2] Figure 68 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was an illustration of Stephie dressed in purple and pink, lifting up a rock to expose mud and bugs underneath. Original source: Labelle, S. (2017). *My Dad Thinks I’m a Boy*. Montreal, QC: Les Éditions SGL.

feminine colours (purples and pink), however this is juxtaposed with her playing with rocks, mud, and bugs—activities traditionally associated with masculinity. Similarly, in Figure 69[3], Stephie is seen wearing a pink shirt and tutu skirt (traditionally feminine attire), while reading a book about space (an interest traditionally categorized as boyish). Thus, Stephie transgresses traditional notions of femininity in her subjectivity as a transgirl in the fusion of various elements as constituting this subjecthood. In this transgression, Stephie elucidates the ways that discourses of gender "provide for a range of subjectivities for us to take up, allowing individuals to be positioned or to position themselves in a variety of ways." (Blaise, 2005, p. 17)

Comparably, in *Everybody Thought I was a Boy*, protagonist Sam—a transgirl—also evades traditional elements of femininity when describing herself to readers. Sam describes that she enjoys playing football and dancing with her sister, loves "mermaids and mermen", adores the colour yellow, and that she is contemplating between being an artist and being a scientist as her future career. Similar to Stephie, Sam's subjectivity as a transgirl is not defined by any particular interests that are constitute her as a transgirl, but rather her lived experiences and navigation of her subjecthood in response to her surroundings. Sam's clothing preference is not overtly mentioned in the text, however some images depict her dressed in sport apparel, whereas others portray her in more feminine attire (see Figures 70 and 71). Once again, similar to Stephie, regardless of the ensemble these girls don, their hair is always in two pigtails, which is the sole, subtle, 'feminine' element that is constant throughout each story.

[3] Figure 69 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was an illustration of Stephie dressed in a pink t-shirt and pink tutu reading a book about space to distract her from the 'father-and-son' wrestling match her father has asked her to attend with him. Original source: Labelle, S. (2017). *My Dad Thinks I'm a Boy*. Montreal, QC: Les Éditions SGL.

Figure 70. Sam plays soccer with her sister; both are dressed in sports attire. From *Everybody Thought I Was a Boy!*, by A. Varasteh and S. Pardakhtim, 2018, Australia: Anisa Varasteh. Copyright 2018 by Anisa Varasteh. Reprinted with permission.

Figure 71. Sam and her sister wear purple and pink tutus and dance as ballerinas. From *Everybody Thought I Was a Boy!*, by A. Varasteh and S. Pardakhtim, 2018, Australia: Anisa Varasteh. Copyright 2018 by Anisa Varasteh. Reprinted with permission.

Phoenix, in the book *Phoenix Goes to School*, is also a transgirl who describes herself to readers by stating: "I build marble runs and play my drums. I'm racing cars and drawing moons and stars. I'm twirling, dancing, and doing handstands. Building towers and drawing flowers." She adds that she loves dresses because of the way they "swish and swiggle" as she walks. Phoenix's adoration for a vast range of flowers can be interpreted as symbolic of the diversity in her own gender subjectivity. In Figure 72 and Figure 73, the captions jointly read: "I love flowers. There are so many different sizes and colors. Tall and small and each with a special scent! The purple ones are my favorite." The corresponding representations of Phoenix signify the way she describes the flowers in that she is dressed in various items from sweaters, t-shirts, and shorts, to skirts, blouses, and dresses; each in varying shades, prints, and colours. There is

no ‘standard’ form for Phoenix as the idiosyncratic elements of her gender expression are accentuated. Similar to both Stephie and Sam, the only constant element that remains unchanged is her hairstyle. The presentations of Phoenix as distinct and divergent in each image alongside the text emphasizing the varying ‘sizes’ ‘colours’, and ‘scents’ of flowers, can be read as emblematic of the many nuances of her experiences in relation to girlhood.

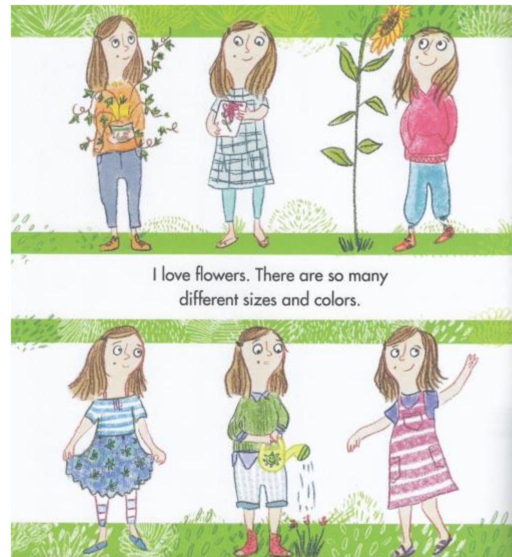

Figure 72. Phoenix is seen in a range of outfits as she interacts with various flowers. From *Phoenix Goes to School*, by M. Finch, P. Finch, and S. Davey, 2018, Philadelphia, PA: Jessica Kingsley Publishers. Copyright 2018 by Jessica Kingsley Publishers. Reprinted with permission.

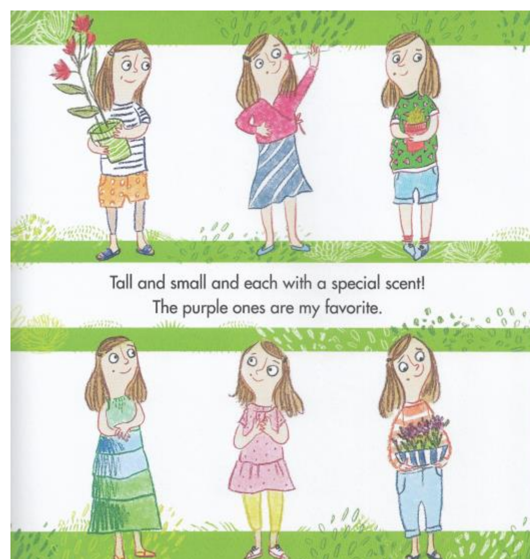

Figure 73. Phoenix is seen in a range of outfits as she interacts with various flowers. From *Phoenix Goes to School*, by M. Finch, P. Finch, and S. Davey, 2018, Philadelphia, PA: Jessica Kingsley Publishers. Copyright 2018 by Jessica Kingsley Publishers. Reprinted with permission.

This is also exemplified in a scene where Phoenix expresses her trepidation regarding wearing a dress on the first day of school. Phoenix's mother tells her "be yourself and always listen to your heart" and encourages her to "remember the pretty flowers that are all different and beautiful in their own way." Here, the notion of Phoenix 'being herself' while simultaneously considering the ways that flowers are "different and beautiful in their own way" infers that this is significant in Phoenix's own conception of her subjective sense of being a girl. This is further elucidated at the end of the book in the section "for grown-ups" where it is stated that "some people think there is only one way to be a boy or a girl, but there are actually many different ways", as well as in the section "for kids" where the author asks children to consider "are the different ways that we express ourselves like the different colors of the rainbow?" The implications here are not solely that there are multiple modes through which an individual expresses their own gender, but also that there are variations in the ways in which individuals express gender within and across gender categorizations (i.e. the category of 'girl'). Since this seems to be common across many texts within this sub-section, the title of this theme—flowers and rainbows—is representative of this diversity. Similar to the Sam, Stephie, and Tiny, Phoenix does not institute her gendered subjectivity in accordance with dominant characterizations of femininity or masculinity, but rather pushes the boundaries as to what constitutes girlhood and boyhood. Through her mentions of the diverse interests she possesses, Phoenix does not rely on dominant discursive constructions of femininity to constitute herself as a transgirl.

Similar to Phoenix's enjoyment of the ways her dresses "swish and swiggles" when she walks, Morris in *Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress*, likes the "swish swish swish"

sound his dress makes. Morris, who is a gender non-conforming boy is not defined by any other feminine behaviours or characteristics other than his adoration for his tangerine dress. The book prefaces his interest in the dress by listing that Morris likes: Sundays, Mondays, pancakes, school, painting, puzzles, apple juice, and singing. It is not until after these enjoyments are listed that it is revealed that "most of all, Morris likes the dress-up center. And the tangerine dress. Morris likes the color of the dress. It reminds him of tigers, the sun and his mother's hair." There is nothing about the feminine elements of the dress that are alluded to nor are any allusions present regarding potential feminine characteristics that Morris embodies when he wears the dress. Morris simply likes the dress because of its colour and the ways its colour represents things he loves. It is further stated that Morris likes the "swish, swish, swish" and "crinkle, crinkle, crinkle" sounds the dress makes. Moreover, to complement his attire, Morris wears heeled shoes along with the dress. He selects these shoes as he enjoys the way they "click, click, click" as he trots across the ground.

An interesting observation when examining books in the "Flowers and Rainbows" sub-section compared to those in the "Girl Stuff" and "Boy Things" sub-sections is that in the former, all characters engage in cross-gender play whereas in the latter two, most characters engage in same-gender play, which is often explicitly listed as a constituent of their gender subjectivity. The characters comprising "Flowers and Rainbows" never explicitly state their preferences in peers, however the imagery in each text elicits that for each of these children, their peer circles—whenever present—are as diverse as their proclivities (see Figures 74, 75, and 76).

Figure 74. Phoenix and three peers observe rocks and bugs outdoors. From *Phoenix Goes to School*, by M. Finch, P. Finch, and S. Davey, 2018, Philadelphia, PA: Jessica Kingsley Publishers. Copyright 2018 by Jessica Kingsley Publishers. Reprinted with permission.

Figure 75. Tiny plays and dances with three peers. From *Are You a Boy or Are You a Girl?*, by S. Savage and F. Fisher, 2017, Philadelphia, PA: Jessica Kingsley Publishers. Copyright 2017 by Jessica Kingsley Publishers. Reprinted with permission.

Figure 76. Sam plays with teddy bears and blocks with two other peers. From *Everybody Thought I Was a Boy!*, by A. Varasteh and S. Pardakhtim, 2018, Australia: Anisa Varasteh. Copyright 2018 by Anisa Varasteh. Reprinted with permission.

In this section, characters that do not constitute their gendered subjectivities in accordance with dominant discourses of masculinity or femininity are underscored. An important item to note is that, although these characters do not constitute their subjectivities along dichotomous lines, only two characters (Stacey and Tiny) are fundamentally non-binary, as the remaining characters in this section identify with binary gender categorizations (i.e. Sam, Stephie, and Phoenix identify as transgender girls, while Morris identifies as a gender non-conforming boy). The implications of this are discussed in the section following the analysis. Although characters in this sub-section do not subvert binary classifications of gender, they nonetheless, actively negotiate the broader discursive elements of gender subjectivity and transgress them by reconstructing these to situate themselves accordingly. Indeed, McCallum

and Stephens (2011) suggest that transgression requires agency, but also the status of an individual as a subject. As such, in order to transgress, one must exhibit an awareness of one's subjectivity as located within broader socio-cultural discursive fields as well as a sense of agency in that these very discursive fields can be dismantled and resisted. (McCallum & Stephens, 2011). Characters transcend the notion that to align themselves with a particular gender requires one to embody particular elements of behaviours, interests, styles of dress, and general appearance (Schwartz, Luyckx, & Vignoles, 2011). Through their resistance to and subversion of dominant discourses, some characters created new ways of conceptualizing conventional notions of gender, some fused facets of masculinity and femininity together, and others transcended these altogether.

It is imperative to acknowledge that in constructing these 'new' and resistant discourses, this does not simply replace former dominant discourses, as characters continue to be marginalized by them in the broader scope of social life. Within and between texts, as well as within the broader Western sociocultural context, gender is still viewed from a cisnormative lens, and is conceptualized as something that everyone experiences. Indeed, "the possibility of resistance is an effect of the processes whereby particular discourses become the instruments and effects of power" (Weedon, 1987, p. 111) as resistance and transgression are often dependent upon the very elements that constitute them (McCallum & Stephens, 2011). In other words, it is through the presence of dominant discourses of gender that the contrasting discourses within this section are possible. Yet, dominant discourses are just that—*dominant*. The introduction of a 'reverse' discourse will not replace those which are dominant, as this necessitates a process of discursive power negotiation. Indeed, recall Foucault (1980b)'s assertion that discourses are in a constant battle for 'truth'; truth, here, referring to the status and social power the discourse

possesses. It is through this power that dominant discourses are able to create dominant prospects for subjecthood (Weedon, 1987). Thus, for a new discourse to 'reverse' the power engrained within a dominant discourse, this will involve a sociopolitical shift wherein the 'status' of the discourses becomes interchanged. Clearly, this cannot be undertaken at an individual level as it needs to be addressed at the systemically wherein former dominant discourses fundamentally lose their discursive power. That said, however, resistance to dominant discourses is the primary step in the creation of new and alternative forms of knowledge in "winning individuals over to these discourses and gradually increasing their social power" (Weedon, 1987, p. 111).

Lastly, it is critical to underscore that in spite of subjects in feminist poststructuralism being conceived of as socially constructed and constituted within broader discursive fields, they too exist as "thinking, feeling subject[s] and social agent[s], capable of resistance and innovations produced out of the clash between contradictory subject positions and practices […] [and are also] able to reflect upon the discursive relations which constitute [them]" (Weedon, 1987, p. 125). Indeed, one's gendered subjectivity centrally entails the "personal, psychic and emotional investment" of an individual (p. 79). Foucault did not assert that discourses are simply projected onto docile subjects, but he rather acknowledged that subjects are active in their interactions and negotiations with discourses (Hall, 2004) as has been elicited throughout this section of the analysis. The rift regarding the extent to which subjects are defined by discourses and the extent of agency they possess in situating their own subjectivity is part and parcel with discussions and theorizations of subjecthood with theorists and scholars working to reconcile between the two (Hall, 2004), however through this analysis it is apparent that characters actively and reflexively navigated the discursive practices constituting their subject positions and

negotiated between contradictory discourses to institute their own gendered subjectivities. Characters simultaneously constituted and reconstituted themselves within the very discursive fields that worked to position them (Davies & Harré, 1990).

Nonetheless, despite characters' subjectivities being embedded within larger discourses of masculinity, femininity, or neither, this does not mean that their subjectivities are not central to their conceptions of self. As has been elucidated, the subjectivities of characters were unequivocally pivotal in the ways they conceived of themselves and situated themselves within their social worlds. The discursive elements which constitute these characters' subjectivities are particularly salient as these characters have been undesirably positioned within categorizations with which they do not identify. For gender non-conforming and transchildren in these texts, 'activating' the discursive elements of the characteristics they embody is paramount as they seek to actively negotiate themselves within categories of masculinity/femininity, boyhood/girlhood to generate a sense of legitimacy and affirmation; an experience that is not encountered the same way for many cisgender or gender-conforming children. Below, I underscore how the constitution of one's gender subjectivity can precipitate the recognition of their own subjective awareness.

Subjective Awareness

An important element of the concept of subjectivity, is the subjective experience of one in relation to those around them. Davies and Harré (1990) maintain that through one's subject positions (which we have embodied as our own), we perceive of the social world from the locus of these positions based upon the discursive elements which respectively constitute them. This influences one's subjectivity so as to involve the "conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions of the individual" (Weedon, 1987, p. 32), along with their self-awareness in relation to

the social world. Thus, not only do our subject positions influence the ways we conceive of ourselves, but so too do they inform the ways we perceive our existence within the broader global context. Similarly, Wenger (1998) affirms that "we define who we are by the ways we experience our selves through participation as well as by the ways we and others reify ourselves" (p. 149). Thus, in navigating our social worlds, we garner elements of our own subjectivity through the interrelations we share with others.

This section builds off the previous sections on "girl stuff", "boy things", and "flowers and rainbows", in that it analyzes the awareness characters possess regarding their experiences of their gender subjectivities in relation to other gendered subjects; namely in comparison to those that are gender-conforming or non-transgendered. The one and only discursive theme found across texts which speaks to characters' subjective awareness is that of 'difference'. I have used this term for this theme to indicate the ways that characters feel a sense of difference in comparison to their counterparts and those around them as well as the ways in which they are perceived as different by those around them. In some cases, the term 'different' was used to describe this, whereas other times it was explicitly inferred without this phrasing. Nonetheless, this was found to be a recursive theme in instances where characters' subjective awareness was mentioned.

'Difference'.

The notion of difference is evident in *Jessie's Hat Collection* where it is stated that "the other girls don't wear hats." At this moment in the book, Jessie has not yet disclosed that she "want[s] to be a boy", and thus, still presents as a girl. Jessie navigates her life as a girl through most of the story, as it is not until the last third of the book that she comes out as a transboy. Thus, it is her experience of being assigned a girl that she navigates throughout much of the text.

Here, Jessie is aware of herself in relation to the other girls as can be seen in Figure 77[4]. Jessie––faded in the background dressed in a white T-shirt, jeans, and a blue baseball cap—peripherally looks on to a presumably cisgender girl in the foreground dressed and posed in a traditionally feminine manner. Jessie is aware of the 'difference' between her and others who are seemingly similar to her (i.e. 'the other girls'). Cromwell (2006) suggests that transgender individuals are continually aware of their subjectivity irrespective of the way they present. In other words, whether or not an individual has 'come out' as trans or not, they are perennially aware of their 'difference' in relation to those around them. This is evident here as although Jessie does not come out to her family and friends until closer to the end of the text, she nonetheless expresses an awareness of her difference even when others around her are not explicitly aware of this.

This is also present in *When Kayla was Kyle*, where protagonist Kayla shares with readers her painful journey of becoming a transgirl. When Kayla was still living as Kyle, he explained to readers: "I only look like a boy, but I'm not like the other boys." Kyle is referring to the fact that he was similar in physicality to other boys who were assigned male at birth, yet there was a distinct difference in that he did not *identify* as a boy as the others did. Like Jessie, Kyle keeps his identity a secret for much of the story, but continuously struggles internally with his difference. In a poem that Kyle develops, he writes: "Lonliness' [sic] I feel alone. no one else is like me. I am lost. no one understands me. I don't belong." Kyle's poem is reflective of the loneliness that is precipitated by his feeling of being different. For Kyle, there is difference in his dissonance of being assigned male compared to those who have also been assigned male and are cisgendered boys, and there is also difference in terms of his broader social circle where

[4] Figure 77 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was an illustration of Jessie peripherally gazing at a female peer who has long blonde hair, make-up, and is wearing a green headband and green miniskirt. Original source: Barnes, N. (2018). *Jessie's Hat Collection.* Olympia, WA.

he feels alone and as though there is “no one else like [him].” Through Kyle’s declaration that he does not “belong”, we can infer that his sense of being different negates any sense of solidarity or connection with those around him for all of his peers seem to identify with the gender they were assigned at birth.

It is displayed in the text that Kyle sits within the vicinity of the “boy’s circle” [sic] but refuses to play with the other boys, and instead, simply watches them during playtime. In Figure 78[5], Kyle can be seen woefully sitting off in the corner as he looks on at his male counterparts as they play. Kyle seeks to distance himself from the other boys due to the gendered incoherence this space elicits for him. Since Kyle “is not like the other boys” he does not feel comfortable playing alongside them as he has different interests. Kyle’s peers engage in group play wherein they form a small peer community from which Kyle is visibly excluded due to his difference.

Kyle’s peers both marginalize and tease him for his interest in “girl stuff” (as was denoted in an earlier section), serving to exacerbate his feelings of difference. In Figure 78, he is seen, once again, sorrowfully placed at a distance from his peers as they gleefully rejoice in play. Kyle is differentiated from the other boys based on his body, and from the other children more generally based on his identity. Kyle’s subjectivity as an unaffirmed transgirl is the defining feature in his sentiments of difference. For Kyle, this sense of difference results in him even doubting his legitimacy as an individual wherein he states, “I’m a mistake” wherein his difference now becomes implicitly classified as an abnormality. For Kyle, the others around him are seemingly ‘normal’ whereas he is not.

[5] Figure 78 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was an illustration of Kyle watching afar as his peers play together with cars and trucks. Original source: Fabrikant, A., & Levine, J. (Illustrator). (2013). *When Kayla was Kyle*. Avid Readers Publishing Group.

The experiences of both Jessie and Kyle are representative of Gagnier's (1991) conception of subjectivity wherein she avers:

> First, the subject is a subject to itself, an 'I', however difficult or even impossible it may be for others to understand this 'I' from its own viewpoint, within its own experience. Simultaneously, the subject is a subject to, and of, others; in fact, it is often an 'Other' to others, which also affects its sense of its own subjectivity. (p.8)

Both of these characters have an understanding of themselves as gendered subjects—Jessie as a transboy and Kyle as a transgirl despite the ways that others perceive them. At the same time, their subjectivities are too constituted by the ways in which they are 'othered' by those around them, for their subjectivities would be far different if this were not the case. For instance, Kyle's feelings of being a 'mistake' are encapsulated within these social relations and are precipitated by the responses of others to his subjectivity. As such, Kyle's subjective experience endures a cyclical formation: his subjectivity as an "I", followed by his subjectivity as influenced by those around him, which further influences his subjectivity as an "I". For these characters, their subjectivity is enmeshed within the dynamics of their social world—dynamics which they cannot escape.

The notion of being different from the 'others is also apparent in *I am Jazz* where Jazz chronicles her journey of being accepted as a transgirl. Unlike Jessie, Jazz assumes her transgirl identity all throughout the story, even stating: "'when I was very little, and my mom would say, "You're such a good boy," I would say "No, Mama. Good GIRL!" As is elucidated here, Jazz, as well as several other characters across texts, discuss their subjectivities and subject positions from an autobiographical standpoint. This is reflective of Davies and Harré (1990)'s avowal that subject positions are underscored partly by "extracting the autobiographical aspects of a conversation in which it becomes possible to find out how each conversant conceives of themselves and of the other participants by seeing what position they take up and in what story,

and how they are then positioned" (p. 48). Indeed, Jazz emphasizes her subject position as a [trans]girl by inviting readers into an autobiographical account of her subjective experience which includes the inclusion of other individuals and how *they* position Jazz. Davies and Harré (1990) also contest that subjection involves "interactive positioning in which what one person says positions another" as well as "reflexive positioning in which one positions oneself" (p. 48). This is evident in the quote above as Jazz's mother refers to Jazz as a 'boy' and fundamentally attempts to position her, which results in Jazz asserting that she is, rather, a girl and essentially positions herself. This is key example of the ways in which subjection is not simply a passive process, but one that involves self-reflection. Yet at the same time, as we will continue to see, "one lives one's life in terms of one's ongoingly produced self, whoever might be responsible for its production" (Davies & Harré, 1990, p. 48).

Jazz is overtly positioned by her mother in the preceding quote, however the ways in which she is implicitly positioned by others is apparent in the quote that follows. Despite having her gender affirmed very early on, Jazz nonetheless expresses "but I'm not exactly like Samantha and Casey'. Here, it is *through* Samantha and Casey's cisgendered subject positionings that Jazz is positioned as 'Other'; in other words, the subject position of one, works to situate the subject position of another. Figure 79, which accompanies this text, illustrates this difference by positioning Jazz standing off to the left side of the frame with a dismal expression upon her face, as her friends stand closer to the center smiling exuberantly. Jazz's body language infers discomfort as her two feet point towards one another and her hands point away from her body. Contrastingly, the body posture of Samantha and Casey convey confidence as they each stand with their legs far apart anchoring their bodies, and pose with their arms placed close to their bodies either modestly behind their back or firmly against their hips. As can be observed

through this figure, images can be highly efficient in representing spatial relationships between characters, particularly in allegorizing their relationships to one another (Nikolajeva, 2002). The observable distance between Jazz and her friends is seemingly indicative of the distance she feels in not being entirely similar to them due to what she later discloses as her "boy body."

Figure 79. Jazz stands at a distance from her girl peers as she suggests to readers that she is different. From *I am Jazz*, by J. Herthel, J. Jennings, and S. McNicholas, 2014, New York, NY: Dial Books for Young Readers. Copyright 2014 by Dial Books for Young Readers. Reprinted with permission.

Jazz's sentiments of feeling different are also present in Figure 80, where Jazz, again, dejectedly stands off to the left of the image frame as her female counterparts bask in their girlhood. In this image, Jazz illustrates a scene from her life when she was requested by her parents to present as a boy in public. In the caption accompanying the image, Jazz informs readers that "pretending I was a boy felt like a lie." Once again Jazz's body posture represents discomfort while her peers' body language projects confidence and bliss. In these two instances, Jazz recognizes herself (and her body) as distinct from the other [cisgender] girls, but frames this by using a discourse of difference rather than as wrongness (Cromwell, 2006). Based on Jazz's

understanding of ‘proper’ girlhood, she recognizes that there is a constant element which regularly situates her outside of this space.

Figure 80. Jazz stands aside as her girl peers confidently engage in ballet dancing alongside their dance instructor. From *I am Jazz*, by J. Herthel, J. Jennings, and S. McNicholas, 2014, New York, NY: Dial Books for Young Readers. Copyright 2014 by Dial Books for Young Readers. Reprinted with permission.

Interestingly, the difference that Jazz alludes to is present whether she is affirmed as a transgirl or whether she is pretending to be a boy. Her subjectivity as a transgirl manifests in a continuous awareness of her subjective difference, wherein as a boy she yearns to be a girl but knows that she is different, and whereas as a transgirl she is a girl, yet still experiences a sense of difference given the status of her body seemingly inhibits her from conceiving of herself as a ‘real’ girl. This illustrates the contradictory elements of subjectivity (Sunderland & Litosseliti, 2002) as Jazz’s subjectivity creates the constant awareness of both what she ‘lacks’ while pretending to be a boy, as well as what she ‘lacks’ as a transgirl in relation to girls who are cisgender. From a feminist poststructural lens, it is evident that Jazz’s subject position is at the junction of two conflicting forms of subjectivity (Weedon, 1987) – transgirl and cisgender girl. This is also a prime example of the ways that reverse discourse cannot displace the overriding dominant discourses of the same matter. For Jazz, her engagement in reverse discourse of resisting cisnormative conceptions of gender nonetheless places her within a curious position

wherein she resists the subject position she was placed into, yet is resisted by the subject position which she navigates and pursues.

This is an exemplary instance of the conflicting essence of discourse and that resisting one discourse does not necessarily imply that there is an 'opposite' discourse. This speaks to Foucault (1978)'s notion of tactical polyvalence wherein he states discourses are not divided between "accepted discourse and excluded discourse, or between the dominant discourse and the dominated one" (p. 100). In Foucault's terms "there is not, on the one side, a discourse of power, and opposite it, another discourse that runs counter to it" (p. 101). Rather, Foucault states, there can be common interdiscursive elements between discourses just as there can be contradictions within similar discourses. This is evident where Jazz explicates what it means for her to be a 'girl' by describing her proclivities and interests and the ways in which she aligns herself with particular archetypes of femininity and girlhood, yet in negotiating this she is met with contention from dominant cisnormative discourses which demand of her to also have 'appropriate' genitalia. The fractures between the contradicting discourses of girlhood principally render her at the crossroads of these two discourses. This creates the understanding for Jazz that her subjectivity as a transgirl may infer that she cannot be perceived as a 'real' girl.

In line with the sentiment of difference in relation to being a 'real' girl, the nameless protagonist in *A Girl Like Any Other* too shares a similar experience to that of Jazz. Throughout the story, this protagonist shows readers the many ways that she is "a girl like any other" by explaining that she eats cereal with tomatoes, brushes her long hair before school, dances the tango with her cat, and eats bread and mustard for breakfast. The texts chronicles the many commonplace activities that the protagonist engages in, similar to many other girls. The protagonist declares to readers: "even if I have a different story, I am a girl like any other."

Despite her constant assertion that she is “a girl like any other” she experiences unremitting renunciation from her female peers. As such, the book underscores her determination and resilience in handling the coerced differentiation she is confronted with. For instance, when narrating to readers that none of her peers sit alongside her on the school bus, the protagonist explains: “they say that it’s because I am not a girl like any other.”

Despite her self-proclaimed identity as a girl, her peers ostracize her simply due to their refusal to affirm this identity. When being bullied at recess, she further states: “I repeat to myself that I am a girl like any other, even when I’m being called a “girl-boy” in the school yard.” Ehrensaft (2016) discusses that transchildren often yearn to be viewed simply as girls or boys, rather than needing to distinguish themselves as ‘trans’. This, however, does not necessarily mitigate instances of ostracization, ‘othering’ and delineations as being ‘different’ that these children experience (Serano, 2013). This was certainly the case in this text as in spite of and *due to* her self-affirmed identity as a girl, the protagonist is unceasingly made aware by others that she is *not* a girl like any other in that she is principally ‘different’ due to her subject position.

Subsequently, when explaining that the girls in her class refuse to allow her to make friendship bracelets with them, she states: “they say that it’s because I am not a real girl. I know they are wrong.” Similar to the imagery in *I am Jazz*, Figure 34 (which was featured earlier) illustrates the protagonist’s counterparts engaged in an act of girlhood without any fears of judgement by others, while the protagonist peers over them yearning for acceptance only to be met with blank and censorious expressions. The shared posture of the three girls seated on their knees engaged in their activity contrasted with the protagonist standing over them seemingly creates a rift between the ‘real’ and ‘unreal’ girls. The features of this image differ slightly from

those of Jazz as here the character is seen in close proximity to her counterparts and is resisting notions of difference. However, in Figures 81[6], 82[7], and 83[8], similar elements to Jazz's images are apparent as the protagonist is positioned standing and sitting off to the side of the frame as a great distance separates her from her peers. The element of the character's difference is represented both through text and imagery in this book. For this protagonist, no matter how much she attempts to assure both herself and others that she is a 'girl like any other' she is perennially reminded of her difference.

A fitting quote by Butler (2004) states:

> To be called unreal and to have that call, as it were, institutionalized as a form of differential treatment, is to become the other against whom (or against which) the human is made [...] to be called unreal, is one way in which one can be oppressed, but consider that it is more fundamental than that. To be oppressed means that you already exist as a subject of some kind, you are there as the visible and oppressed other for the master subject, as a possible or potential subject, but to be unreal is something else again. To be oppressed you must first become intelligible. To find that you are fundamentally unintelligible [...] is to find that you have not yet achieved access to the human, to find yourself speaking only and always as if you were human, but with the sense that you are not, to find that your language is hollow, that no recognition is forthcoming because the norms by which recognition takes place are not in your favor. (p. 30)

Indeed, for this protagonist, the incessant insistence that she is not a 'real' girl that she consistently experiences from those around her constantly places her in a position wherein she is othered from a 'natural' and normalized conception of what the 'master subject' of a girl subject is claimed to be. She is recognized as a subject "of some kind" as Butler states, yet her genitalia

[6] Figure 81 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was an illustration of the protagonist standing along in a corner with her back facing two peers who taunt her. Original source: Labelle, S. (2013). *A Girl Like Any Other*. Montreal, QC: Les Éditions SGL.
[7] Figure 82 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was an illustration of the protagonist standing aside as her peers play basketball and socialize in the school yard. Original source: Labelle, S. (2013). *A Girl Like Any Other*. Montreal, QC: Les Éditions SGL.
[8] Figure 83 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was an illustration of the protagonist sitting by herself on the school bus as all of the other children sit alongside one another and socialize. Original source: Labelle, S. (2013). *A Girl Like Any Other*. Montreal, QC: Les Éditions SGL.

become weaponized by others to oppress her as a gendered subject and render her unintelligible as a girl. While she attempts to counter this by unrelentingly stating that she is a 'girl like any other', she speaks, in Butler's terms, as if she were a girl, but with the sense that she is not, with her words serving as a futile attempt to position herself amongst others within a social world that privileges the 'master' girl subject over that of her own subjectivity.

The notion of difference is explicitly referenced in *Made by Raffi* where, as noted earlier, Raffi is described as having longer hair than his male counterparts, enjoys wearing bright colours, likes to sing, draw, and—most importantly—knit. The book includes the statement that "the other kids were always tumbling about, throwing things and yelling at each other. But Raffi didn't like noise and rough play." In describing Raffi's interests, the book narrates: "WHY did he feel different from the other children at school?" Alongside this quote is Figure 84 where Raffi is seen leaning against a brick wall alongside a display board entitled "Who Am I?" The display board features the self-portraits of Raffi's peers confidently display 'who they are'. Raffi literally does not know where he fits into the picture. When pondering this question, Raffi thinks to himself "maybe everyone feels different."

Figure 84. Raffi looks at a wall of self-portraits made by other students. From *Made by Raffi*, by C. Pomeranz and M. Chamberlain, 2014, London, UK: Frances Lincoln Children's Books. Copyright 2014 by Frances Lincoln Children's Books. Reprinted with permission.

One evening while speaking to his mother, Raffi further considers his difference by noting that "the boys at school talk about football all the time." In evaluating this difference, Raffi asks his mother: "am I strange or weird? Why do I like to sing and draw and knit? Do you think I'm… girly?" The anticipatory usage of the ellipses prior to the term 'girly', suggests that this is something confounding. As such, it is apparent that for Raffi to be engaged in 'girly' activities is considered centrally different from masculinity and boyhood, and thus the unequivocal awareness of difference from his male peers becomes precipitated for Raffi. Through these excerpts, Raffi exhibits an awareness of the ways he is different from the other boys at school in that they enjoy roughhousing and playing sports, whereas Raffi prefers activities that are considered 'girly'. Here, Raffi's sentiments of feeling different from the other boys at school are similar to the feelings expressed by all of the other characters in this section wherein each child is described in comparison to 'other' children, creating a rift between the two.

N. Browne (2004) notes that "the term subjectivity serves to remind us that we are considering an individual's personal and social identities that are created through a process that involves [them] being made a subject or subjected to *other people's readings of [them] and [their] positioning within society*" (p. 61 emphasis added). Subjectivity as focused on the ways a character is read by others was present in *A Girl Like Any Other*, but is also more prevalently found in *Stacey is Not a Girl* as well as *Are You a Boy or Girl?* As noted earlier, Stacey, in *Stacey is Not a Girl*, was assigned female at birth, but neither identifies as a girl nor a boy. Stacey tells readers: "from the day I was born, I've been told that I am a girl. But, I'm not too sure about that." Stacey explains their affinity for 'boy things', which leads to them often be misgendered as a boy. Stacey speaks to this presumption by telling readers that although they know they are not a girl, they are "not too sure that [they are] a boy either."

To seek support in understanding this, Stacey and their parents attend a conference for transgender and gender non-conforming children. Following this, Stacey expresses that all of the children in attendance “seemed to know that they were either boys or girls” and internally wondered “where do I fit in?” Stacey experiences a paradoxical dilemma: in public spaces where most people are presented as seemingly cisgender, Stacey is aware of their outsider presence in that they do not identify with their assigned gender as most people appear to do. Yet, in the conference space where Stacey expects to find solidarity as all children are gender non-conforming or transgender, Stacey is still aware of their outsider presence as they do not fit into same binary categorizations with the children here either. Stacey is outcasted in *both* cisgender and transgender spaces. Similar to Jazz who experiences sentiments of difference both when pretending to be a boy and when affirming her identity as a transgirl, in all areas of their social world, Stacey is perpetually confronted with their subjectivity in contrast to everyone around them. Figure 85 portrays Stacey placed between a female and male stickperson with an ambivalent facial expression. This image illustrates Stacey’s trepidation with having to choose between being a girl and a boy and reminds them of their subjectivity as neither of these.

Figure 85. Stacey is placed between a red female symbol and blue male symbol and apprehensively looks at the male symbol. From *Stacey’s Not a Girl*, by C. Keo-Meier, J. Yang, and N. Lam, 2016, Houston, TX. Copyright 2016. Reprinted with permission.

In *Are You a Boy or a Girl?* protagonist Tiny is also a non-binary, gender-fluid child who seemingly experiences their social world as an anomaly. In Tiny’s case, however, being non-binary is not particularly troubling as Tiny expresses no desire to choose a binary gender nor to

"fit in" (as Stacey states); Tiny feels content with their gender identity despite the response from others. For example, when asked by a peer if they are a boy or a girl, Tiny responds "I am me!" Although Tiny exhibits an awareness of being 'different', this does not impact their sense of identity as they embrace who they are throughout the book. Tiny even spends a portion of the book teaching a peer who is resistant to Tiny's identity about by elucidating that there are more similarities between them than differences. For both Tiny and Stacey, their sense of self and identity is not contingent upon belonging to any gendered category as they both seek to position themselves outside of 'gender' (Clucas & Whittle, 2017).

In this sub-section, the ways in which characters' subjectivities are formed in relation to the social world which surrounds them has been elicited. Through the evocation of characters' subjective awareness, it is apparent that their subjectivity involved the active negotiation of the discursive and physical elements of their social world and surrounding contexts. In most cases, characters expressed sentiments of 'difference' and feeling othered by their peers. For many, feelings of difference were based upon normative conceptions of gender with which characters did not identify. Referencing Foucault, Hall (2004) avows that "we can only come to know our 'selves' through historically specific (and differentially valued) categories of truth, propriety, and normality" (p. 92). Hence, the characters mentioned in this sub-section express a cognizance pertaining to their subjectivities in that it is historically and socioculturally informed. These characters comprehend that their subjectivities exist exterior to the confines of normality, and as such, so do they. In the ensuing sub-section, I turn to the ways that characters actively navigate their subjectivities as a result of this experience.

Navigating Subjectivity

As has been evoked from the two previous sections on constituting subjective and subjective awareness, one's subjectivity involves establishing distinct criteria that constitutes that subjectivity as well as having an awareness of this subjectivity in relation to the those of others. As stated earlier in this chapter, subjectivity also entails one's conscious awareness and consideration about their subjective experience and identity. This self-consciousness can also influence the ways in which an individual navigates the world due to the self-awareness they possess and the ways they are received by others. In this section, the ways in which characters navigate themselves in response to their subjectivity and subjective awareness is analyzed. The emphasis here is on how the awareness of these characters as gendered subjects influences and informs the ways they negotiate their subjectivities and navigate themselves through their social worlds. As elicited in the previous section on subjective awareness, characters are presented as living in an entirely cisnormative environment, and, as such, traversing through their social environments involves the constant awareness of themselves as 'different'.

In the section above on subjective awareness, it was noted that Jazz 'pretended to be a boy' prior to having her identity as a transgirl entirely affirmed, but only does this as she was instructed to by her parents. In *My Favorite Color is Pink*, however, Patty explains to readers that in an attempt to evade bullies: "sometimes I try to be a boy. I try 'fitting in'." Patty uses the strategy of 'fitting in' to evade repercussions such as marginalization and oppression (Vern as cited in Cromwell, 2006). For Patty, this primarily entails dressing 'like a boy' as pictured in Figures 86[9] and 87[10] where Patty is apprehensively seen in a blue baseball cap, blue tank-top,

[9] Figure 86 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was an illustration of Patty displaying an expression of discomfort while dressed in a blue cap, blue top, blue shorts, blue socks, and blue and red sneakers. Original source: Benedetto, N. (2015). *My Favorite Color is Pink*. Daniel L. King.

[10] 87 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was an illustration of Patty expressing an expression of ambivalence when dressed as a superhero. Original source: Benedetto, N. (2015). *My Favorite Color is Pink*. Daniel L. King.

blue shorts, blue socks, and red shoes with blue accents in the first, and uncomfortably dressed as Superman in the second. Patty attests that this makes her feel "lost" and that she "just want[s] to be [her]self." For Patty, since the desire to appease her adversaries does not outweigh the joy she experiences when living as a girl, she continues to live as a transgirl despite the resistance she occasionally receives from peers. Since Patty has a strong support system in her parents, her decision to remain true to herself is simplified.

Attempting to fit in with other peers to elude retribution was also technique used by Roland Humphrey in *Roland Humphrey is Wearing a WHAT?* Roland is teased by his female friends for wearing pink—"a color for girls." He is encouraged to avoid colours such as pink, lilac, and magenta, and instead wear colours such as blue, gray, brown, green, and tan; as those are considered appropriate "for a little man." Following their advice, Roland decides to alter his choice of apparel the next day and "assembled an ensemble he hoped they'd deem cool." Similar to Patty, Roland attempts to fit in to avoid being bullied his peers. For both Patty and Roland, 'fitting in' requires them to dress 'like boys' and renounce their feminine attire.

Although Roland wore a pair of jeans and a "manly dark green" shirt to school the following day, his friends did not approve of the blue barrette in his hair and ridiculed his "decidedly feminine, rather girlish flavor." Upon taunting Roland for his decision, they ask "when you wear clothes for girls, how do we know you're a boy?" Roland is ceaselessly reminded of his gender identity as a boy despite his subjectivity as a *gender non-conforming* boy and is fundamentally dejected each time he shuns his true subjectivity. Figure 88 depicts Roland sitting dismally with his hands upon his face as he is dressed in "like a guy."

Figure 88. Roland, dressed 'like a guy', despondently sits on a set of stairs with his hands resting upon his face. From *Roland Humphrey is Wearing a WHAT?*, by E. Kiernan-Johnson and K. Revenaugh, 2012, Boulder, CO: Huntley Rahara Press. Copyright 2012 by Huntley Rahara Press. Reprinted with permission.

Throughout the book, Roland ponders why gendered 'rules' for boys are much more rigid than they are for girls, with boys experiencing much less flexibility in what is 'appropriate'. Figure 89 depicts Roland's sentiments as he stands between two of his female peers who are dressed in non-traditionally feminine ways. For these girls, the donning of more masculine attire is deemed as appropriate (as indicated by the smiling faces above their heads) yet, for Roland, the contrasting frowning face above his head is representative of the lack of versatility he experiences when wearing feminine attire. One night before bed, Roland further ponders the double-standards embedded within these 'rules' and considers "how much of his real self to bare." The following day at school, much to the girls' surprise, Roland arrives dressed similarly to the way he is presented in Figure 89. He tells the girls "I choose to be the me that is true." Similar to Patty, the despondency associated with 'dressing like a guy' was fundamentally not worth trading for the delight he experiences when expressing his true self.

Figure 89. Roland stands beside two girl peers and smiles while dressed in a purple t-shirt, pink tutu, purple leggings and purple shoes. From *Roland Humphrey is Wearing a WHAT?*, by E. Kiernan-Johnson and K. Revenaugh, 2012, Boulder, CO: Huntley Rahara Press. Copyright 2012 by Huntley Rahara Press. Reprinted with permission.

Being asked to change oneself and engage in 'gender-appropriate' behaviour is something that Stephie, in *My Dad Thinks I'm a Boy*, too experiences. In this story, Stephie must navigate her subjectivity as a girl alongside the subjectivity constituted by her father's ascription to hegemonic masculinity. Here, Stephie's father attempts to convince her that her identity as a transgirl is something she will grow out of and continues to interact with her as though she was his son, encouraging her to engage in "father-and-son" activities that Sophie does not enjoy. In one instance, Stephie states "I agree to go fishing with him and try to look like I'm having fun, even though I really don't like it." Other activities Stephie mentions include attending wrestling matches with her father and dressing up as a superhero for Halloween; neither of which she enjoys but agrees to simply to "make [her] dad happy." These moments are captured in the following images. In Figure 90[11], Stephie can be seen on a fishing boat with her father, apprehensively holding a worm. Her father has instructed her to use the worm as bait, however Stephie does not want to hurt it. In Figure 69, which has already been featured, Stephie appears disengaged from the wrestling match she attends with her father as she immerses herself

[11] Figure 90 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was an illustration of Stephie on a fishing boat with her father while apprehensively holding a worm who speaks the words 'help me'. Original source: Labelle, S. (2017). *My Dad Thinks I'm a Boy*. Montreal, QC: Les Éditions SGL.

in a book. In each of these images, Stephie's aversion to being coerced into these activities is apparent.

Paradoxically, despite modifying her behaviours to appease her father, Stephie informs readers that "adults often think they can decide who children should be. But that's not how it works!" Towards the end of the text, she further informs readers: "no one excepts me gets to decide who I am." It is unclear how Stephie proceeds in her relationship with her father as these comments are addressed towards readers; Stephie does not discuss this with her father, and thus it is unclear if the issue is resolved.

The desire to appease others and make them "happy" was also present in *But, I'm Not a Boy* as Sarah strives to have her identity as a transgirl affirmed and validated by those around her. Sarah's determination to please others while concealing her authentic desires is first present where the text states that "all the little boys from her block [would] ask her to play war or to wrestle, and even though she didn't want to, Sarah would go, so at least her friends could be happy." Similar to the ways in which Stephie engaged in 'masculine' activities to placate her father, Sarah too does this with her friends despite the discomfort she feels.

Also, similar to Stephie, Sarah too experiences pressure from her father to engage in 'father-and-son' activities, which she has no interest in. Contrary to Stephie, however, Sarah's father is not explicitly aware of her identity as Sarah has not yet disclosed this to anyone. Sarah describes that her father would propose that they play sports in the yard together and build a treehouse so that she could use this to play war and have snowball fights in the winter. When Sarah's father asks her if she is pleased with their construction of the treehouse, the narration states that "Sarah tried to smile but couldn't. 'Yes' she said, without really meaning it." It is apparent that both Sarah and Stephie navigate their subjectivity as unaffirmed transgirls in

attempts to appease the happiness of others, at the expense of their own. Sarah's discontent with these activities is so profound that she is unable to neither feel nor express any feelings of happiness. In Figure 35, which was discussed earlier, Sarah's visceral responses are visibly apparent as she dejectedly interacts with her father. In contrast to Stephie, however, Sarah decides to have a discussion with her father and explain to him the misery she feels when engaged in these activities and is met with acceptance and encouragement to be her authentic self.

The pressure to behave in masculine gender-conforming ways is also experienced by Kyle in *When Kayla was Kyle* when his father unrelentingly pressures him into playing basketball to avert his interest in "girl stuff" from developing further. Kyle despises basketball but pursues this as he is "determined to make his father proud." Upon asking his mother if his father would be upset with him for quitting basketball, his mother informs him that his father "might be a little disappointed" and encourages Kyle not to quit but to speak to his father instead.

The coercion to play basketball appears to have a psychosomatic manifestation for Kyle with him developing stomach-aches and experiencing his feet feeling heavy, and as a result he conceals his basketball jersey under his dress-up clothes of skirts, dresses, and tutus in an attempt to avoid his basketball game. Despite his efforts, however, Kyle's father finds his jersey and insisted that they attend the game. Irrespective of his persistence in playing basketball, he is consistently excluded from the game as his team members tease him for his feminine disposition. When explaining this to his father, he is still pressured into staying on the team and trying harder. The anguish Kyle experiences does not abate and becomes too much for him to bear with Kyle beginning to "hurt all over." He informs his parents that he "can't live like this anymore" and strikingly states that he wants to "live in heaven." For Kyle, not being able to be

himself is fundamentally a life filled with agony, shame, and misery, and one that is not worth living. Fortunately, his parents respond positively to him and work with him to affirm his true identity as Kayla.

The misery experienced by Sarah and Kyle when altering themselves is very familiar for Jamie in *It's So Gay and It's Okay* as he navigates his subjectivity as a gender non-conforming boy. Jamie's first moment of behavioural modification begins on the first day of school when he wears his favourite pink shirt, but is met with disdain and mockery from several peers at his school. In feeling that "he has no choice" but to change his appearance to evade being ridiculed, Jamie wears a black shirt on that he detests but does so as "he feels like he has to." Although his peers accept his choice of apparel, they taunt him once again upon seeing him play with his favourite toy—a feminine doll. Once again, Jamie feels as though he must denounce his affinity for dolls and, as depicted in Figure 91, he can be seen mournfully purging his closet of his dolls and of all things pink.

Figure 91. Jamie sits on his bed covering his face as a pile of dolls and pink items lay on the floor before him. From *It's So Gay and It's Okay*, by W. Wong, 2014, Lulu Publishing Services. Copyright 2014 by Lulu Publishing Services. Reprinted with permission.

Purging is a term used to refer when to gender non-conforming people expunge all of their feminine clothes to mitigate feelings of shame due to an internal repulsion towards themselves (Henry, 2017). When individuals purge they tend to anticipate that their desire to

dress in feminine attire will dissipate, however this does not fundamentally alleviate their "inner conflict" of having to navigate this desire in a world in which it is perceived as non-normative (Henry, 2017, p. 150). As will be elicited shortly, Jamie's engagement with purging his closet temporarily appeases his peers, however it only serves to exacerbate his feelings of despair, which serve to intensify his 'inner conflict'. This purging is not to be confused with the type of expulsion that was evident in texts where a child culled their former belongings when embracing their affirmed gender identity. When individuals purge, as Jamie has, they strive to suppress their desire to dress in feminine apparel in an effort to appease social condemnation of this desire (Girshick, 2008). Jamie's placement of his hands over his face as he purges his closet can be read as a regretful response to his actions, as well as self-shame for having an affinity for these items.

Following this, Jamie continues to don the black shirt "that he hates" and now brings the basketball that had been collecting dust and cobwebs in the corner of his closet, despite not knowing how to play basketball. The text narrates that Jamie "tells himself that he does not have a choice but to force himself to learn how to play." Figure 92 portrays Jamie hunched over in despair, traversing the halls of his school as his jovial peers socialize in the background. His peers are seemingly confident and at peace with their gender expression, while Jamie engages in his façade in sheer agony.

Figure 92. Jamie walks through the halls of his school hunched over in agony while clutching a basketball to his chest and holding a green backpack in his other hand. From *It's So Gay and It's Okay*, by W. Wong, 2014, Lulu Publishing Services. Copyright 2014 by Lulu Publishing Services. Reprinted with permission.

Despite all of his efforts, his peers tease him when they are made aware that his best friend is a girl, Amy. Upon being teased for this as well, Jamie ends his friendship with Amy as "he feels like he has no other choice but to never play with Amy again." Figure 93 illustrates a crestfallen Jamie, tearfully ripping apart a photograph of him and Amy. In an exploration of non-hegemonic masculinities among young boys, Renold (2004) found that boys who were 'othered' for their non-normative masculine dispositions tended to privilege dominant forms of masculinity and conceive of them as standard. These boys strived to embody the associated traits of hegemonic masculinity which involved the denouncing of feminine attributes, which included associations with girls. Jamie exhibits the awareness that in order to be accepted as a boy he must even shun his best friend simply due to the fact that she is a girl. Jamie actively navigates his subjectivity in a way similar to the boys in Renold's research in that rather than embracing his gender non-conformity, he strives to conform to dominant standards of masculinity.

Figure 93. Jamie tearfully rips apart a photo of his friend Amy and himself. From *It's So Gay and It's Okay*, by W. Wong, 2014, Lulu Publishing Services. Copyright 2014 by Lulu Publishing Services. Reprinted with permission.

Jamie continues this way until a boy named David notices him sitting alone in a corner with his head down and approaches him. David, who is also a gender non-conforming boy, has long hair, wears a purple shirt with floral designs, and pink shorts. Jamie finds a sense of solidarity with David and experiences validation for his own gendered subjectivity through the existence of David. David and Jamie have a conversation about his situation and upon David's declaration stating: "I am happy the way I am. This is me", Jamie comes to the realization that appeasing others to avoid being jeered at is not worth his authentic happiness. Following this Jamie eschews the clothes and behaviours that were imposed on him and returns to the way he was "when he was being himself."

Taking a different approach to navigating their subjectivity Raffi, in *Made by Raffi,* does not eschew his feminine proclivities, but is rather curious as to how to navigate himself within the larger social world without a proper 'label'. As mentioned in the previous section, Raffi adores wearing bright colours, singing, drawing, and knitting. Although Raffi identifies as a boy, he is constantly aware of his subjectivity as not akin to the 'other' boys and seeks solace from this. In pondering his subjectivity as a gender non-conforming boy and seeking a label for

himself, Raffi asks his mother: “Mum, is there such a thing as a Tomgirl?” For Raffi, having a classification to identify with is seemingly important to him in developing a categorization for himself. In Figure 94, Raffi can be seen asking his mother said question as he sits in bed, surrounded by a rainbow scarf he has knitted, with a pensive expression upon his face. Raffi’s questioning of if “there is such a thing” as a Tomgirl infers that he is curious as to whether a category with which he may identify possibly exists. Raffi searches for a term to define his subjectivity in relation to the discourses of boyhood and girlhood that he is familiar with. The language he creates is done in conjunction with the discursive options that are already present. His terming of a ‘tomgirl’ stems from the term ‘tomboy’ which is already infused with meaning and available to ‘take up’.

Figure 94. Raffi sits in bed speaking to his mother and ponders if there is ‘such a thing’ as a tomgirl. From *Made by Raffi*, by C. Pomeranz and M. Chamberlain, 2014, London, UK: Frances Lincoln Children’s Books. Copyright 2014 by Frances Lincoln Children’s Books. Reprinted with permission.

Speaking to this very notion, Friedman (1999) contends that individuals select categories of identity based on the possibilities before them. He asserts that although individuals can resist alignment with dominant categorizations, this proves challenging as the social world will not necessarily recognize or affirm this resistance. Such is the case of Raffi who does not align himself with dominant discourses of masculinity and boyhood, yet is subsequently othered for this. Friedman discusses the notion of choice in maintaining that:

> Choice is often an illusion. People are firm believers in free will. But they choose their politics, their dress, their manners, their very identity, from a menu they had no hand in writing. They are constrained by forces they do not understand and are not even conscious of. But even the illusion of choice is of enormous social significance. (p. 240)

The concept of choice is convoluted as although transgender and gender non-conforming subjectivities and identities are often not a 'choice', the notion of choice here entails how individuals constitute and navigate these subjectivities in relation to the broader discursive elements pertaining to them. Here, Raffi considers his own subjectivity in relation to those of his male counterparts, recognizes his 'difference', and strives to locate a label for this in negotiation with the wider discursive framings of his sociocultural context. The alignment with a gendered label can bring deep solace to individuals as it serves to represent how they identify as well as desire to be identified by others (Henry, 2017). Indeed, Raffi is aware that girls who tend to express conventionally 'masculine' traits are typically referred to as tomgirls, and subsequently uses this knowledge to ponder as to whether a 'tomgirl' is a possibility for him. This elucidates the paradoxes such as freedom versus limitation, and self-construction versus social construction as the notion of a 'tomgirl' is made possible through its dependence on the existing category of a 'tomboy', which is further made possible through its resistance to the category of 'girl'. Similar to Jamie who finds validation in learning of the possibility of his subjectivity through the existence of David, Raffi's pursuit of a categorization is indicative of the salience of this in relation to the validation of his gendered subjectivity.

In contrast to Raffi who desires a label to better navigate his subjectivity, Stacey from *Stacey is Not a Girl* feels just the opposite. As stated previously, Stacey is a transgender child who does not align with binary identifications of 'boy' or 'girl'. For Stacey, they know they are not a girl, but they are not certain this means that they are automatically a boy. Throughout the

story, Stacey ponders their subjectivity in an attempt to better understand themself in relation to the other children, however this is in regard to acquiring an understanding of why others are able to easily self-identify as a particular gender whereas Stacey is not.

Similar to the moment where Raffi wonders why he is not like the other boys and asks his mother if there is such a "thing" as a Tomgirl, when Stacey discusses their situation with their parents, her mother advises her: "you can be a girl and like boy things, like a tomboy." For Raffi, the label of a Tomgirl was solicited, but for Stacey, the label of a tomboy is resisted as they state: "Duh, mom. I know that already." For Stacey, identifying or classifying as a tomboy is not an option as this would contradict the very issue that Stacey is struggling with—not wanting to label themself at all.

Referencing Foucault, Rabinow (1998) writes that the constitution and navigation of subjectivity entails "the formation of the procedures by which the subject is led to observe [them]self, analyze [them]self, interpret [them]self, recognize [them]self as a domain of possible knowledge" where "a subject experiences [them]self in a game of truth where [they] relate to [them]self" (p. 461)." This pertains to Foucault (1988)'s notion of the 'technologies of the self' where he states that technologies of the self :

> Permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality (Foucault, 1988, p. 18).

Here, the technologies of the self refers to the ways that individuals conduct themselves in order to acquire a sense of the self by engaging in particular techniques, either individually or in conjunction with others. It involves a cognizance of one's 'self' wherein the individual is engaged in 'games of truth' (or 'truth games') in uncovering what they perceive to be their 'true' self. This endeavour fundamentally entails the making and understanding of oneself as a subject.

This is clearly apparent in the situation mentioned above where Stacey's navigation of their gendered subjectivity entails an observation of themself, analytical engagement with this observation, the interpretation of what this analysis infers regarding their social positioning, and finally, the precipitation of active knowledge pertaining to their gendered subjectivity from both an internal position as well as in relation to the wider social world. Similarly, Garnier (1991) declares that "the subject is also a subject of knowledge, most familiarly perhaps of the discourse of social institutions that circumscribe its terms of being" (p. 8). Thus, Stacey is overtly aware of the discursive facets which serve to position them within their own subjectivity. They express an explicit comprehension of the polarizing modes through which the world is gendered, and is cognizant of the ways that this situates them as they resist these ascriptions.

Indeed, throughout the duration of the story, Stacey grapples with navigating their subjectivity as a non-binary transgender child in a world where everyone else seemingly aligns with a label. Stacey is excluded from social events with friends, is rebuked by their peers' parents, and is told that they cannot grow up to be a priest as one must be a boy to be a priest. In Figure 95, Stacey is seen forsaken by their peers as they envision a birthday party from which they are omitted, simply due to them not identifying with any particular gender. Irrespective of these adversities, Stacey professes to readers: "I might not be either a boy or a girl and that's ok. Right now I'm just going to be a kid." For Stacey, labels are futile as all Stacey is principally interested in is being a child and experiencing childhood just as the rest of their peers. Stacey refuses to align themself with any category of gender and refuses to conform to normative gendered expectations in the navigation of their subjectivity. Instead, Stacey navigates their world in a way that is organic to them and rather than focusing on the ways they are or are not gendered, focuses on themself as a child.

Figure 95. Stacey sits dejectedly with their hands upon their face while envisioning their peers gathered at a party, happily celebrating a friend's birthday. From *Stacey's Not a Girl*, by C. Keo-Meier, J. Yang, and N. Lam, 2016, Houston, TX. Copyright 2016. Reprinted with permission.

In this chapter of my analysis, I explored the research question: *how do characters constitute and navigate their gender subjectivities and subject positions within the narratives of the texts?* In this section, an explicit examination of the ways in which characters constituted their gendered subjectivities and navigated these subjectivities in the social world was conducted. It was discovered that most characters constituted their subjectivities in alignment with perceived archetypes of masculinity and femininity, albeit through non-cisnormative modalities. Most transgender girls and gender non-conforming boys constituted themselves by engaging with discursive framings of 'girl stuff', whereas most transgender boys and gender non-conforming girls instituted their subjectivities in negotiation with discursive framings of 'boy things'. While the majority of titles utilized these traditional discourses of masculinity and femininity in constituting a character's gendered subjectivity, several titles nonetheless did not mention gendered constituents as informing their gendered subjectivity, but rather underscored the perceived futility of gendered archetypes in instituting one's gendered subjectivity.

In the final section of this chapter, the ways characters navigate their gendered subjectivities in response to the ways they perceive themselves as well as how they are perceived by others has been examined. This portion of the analysis underscored the dynamics through

which characters negotiated and navigated their identities to either challenge or sustain the discursive structures which informed their subjectivities (Connolly, 2017).

Regardless of how characters constituted their subjective gendered sense of selves, most indicated experiencing sentiments of 'difference' in comparison to their peers. In constituting their subject positions in juxtaposition to their cisgender counterparts, characters were often made aware of their 'difference' by the rifts between them as gender variant and those who were gender-conforming. As a result, this analysis demonstrated that characters often navigated these experiences by appeasing others' cisnormative expectations of them. Finally, the misery experienced as a result of this pacification eventually lead to the insistence that their gender identities and expressions be affirmed by those around them.

Throughout the Critical Discourse Analysis in its entirety, I have evoked the discursive representations of gender variance within texts as they pertain to protagonists, and subsequently underscored the trajectory through which characters actively constitute their gendered subjectivities, exhibit an awareness of these subjectivities in relation to their social world, and finally, how they navigate these subjectivities in response to this. The next chapter of this dissertation will respond to the third and final research question of this study (w*hat subject positions are available for readers to identify and align themselves with within these texts?)* and will focus upon the implications of this in relation to the strengths and limitations they provide transgender and gender non-conforming children.

Chapter VI: Implications

In order to fully explicate the implications of the findings above, I will now address the final remaining question guiding this research: *What subject positions are available for readers to identify and align themselves with within these texts?* This research question is being addressed in this chapter as it coalesces facets of the previous sections of the analysis and the two preliminary guiding research questions.

I must begin by stating that each of these books contain characters who explicitly transgress cisnormative expectations of their gender identities and expressions. The ways in which these texts discursively and narratively traverse the concept of gender is admirable. Gender variance is embraced, all while the intricate details of characters' experiences are underscored. Characters actively evade the prescriptive elements of gender that have been assigned to them based on their assigned gender and sex through modalities that indicate to readers that they, too, are capable of resisting gendered discourses that confine them. This being said, gender variance is nonetheless constituted in very particular ways both within and across these titles. Within these thirty texts, 32 protagonists are featured. The subsequent main subject positions available for readers to align themselves with include: transgender girls (14), transgender boys (7), gender non-conforming boys (8), and non-binary/gender-fluid (3)— a full overview of character subject positions is located in Appendix F. Although transgender and gender non-conforming categories are typically broad, the primary available subject positions within these categories are principally those who identify as transgender or gender non-conforming in binary ways (25). Out of the 32 total protagonists, only 7 are presented as not requiring traditional archetypes of gender to constitute them (yet they nonetheless embody binary

identities as either a [trans]girl or [trans]boy), and out of these 7, only three available subject positions exist of characters who are not positioned in terms of the gender binary whatsoever.

Gender-Binary Characters Constituted by Traditional Archetypes of Gender

The majority of subject positions available in these texts were primarily substantiated through their 'repository' of conventional archetypes of masculinity or femininity. Characters who belonged to these subject positions eschewed the traditional traits of the genders with which they did not identify, and embodied the conventional characteristics of those that they identified with. Characters felt a sense of incongruency when named, dressed, and/or engaged in activities typically associated with their gender at birth, and instead, found a sense of equilibrium when named, dressed, and/or engaged in activities associated with the gender they internally identified with. Despite facing adversities, characters nonetheless persisted in their quest to live as their true selves. These texts are pivotal in their critical negotiations of cisnormative narratives through which characters actively resist limiting gendered expectations of themselves by others. Through their readings of these texts, children become exposed to positive messages that gender variance and gender non-conformity are not 'abnormal' as they have historically been (and still nonetheless continue to be) conceived.

For most characters within these subject positions, gender identity and gender expression were often conceptualized as something innate and inherent within characters. Characters' gender identities and expressions were seen as fundamental elements of their emotions, spirits, and souls (i.e. 'the gender within', 'the gendered mind', and 'the mirror'). As such, for many characters, there was an evident connection between one's internal sense of gender and their corporeal body (i.e. 'the sexed body') which often subsequently precipitated a disconnection between one's assigned gender and one's assigned sex (i.e. 'the wrong body'). As stated at the

outset of this paper, historically, understandings of gender variance in terms of one being in the 'wrong body' have been largely pathologized and conceived of as deviant (Stryker, 2006). Currently, much more awareness and acceptance of such understandings have been established, yet attitudinal resistance and systemic discrimination nonetheless persists. As such, these discursive framings of gender are paramount for children who relate to these characters as they provide very much needed spaces for binary transgender and non-conforming children to see themselves represented in children's literature. The implications of the overrepresentation of such portrayals, however, will be discussed shortly.

Through these texts, children acquire an understanding that binary gender variance and non-conformity are neither deviant, nor pathological, nor wrong. Furthermore, they learn that they are not alone in their subjective experiences of gender and that there are other children (and characters) who share similar experiences. Through the experiences of 'difference' in their gendered subjectivities and the navigation of these subjectivities, characters illuminate the marginalization, bullying, and adversity faced by many transgender and gender non-conforming children. For children who have experienced resistance, ostracization, and discrimination for their gender variance, these books will be particularly paramount. Given the limited number of children's picture books on gender variance in the broader scope of all of children's literature, these books are salient for all children as they are resources through which children can identify with, empathize with, and learn about characters' subject positions. The de-pathologization and normalization of these subject positions through these texts precipitate understandings of gender that resist cisnormative conceptions that may be exposed to in other texts.

Through these texts children learn that subverting and transgressing dominant organizations of gender is something that may not be simple, but may be necessary for

transgender and gender non-conforming individuals. Characters learn to resist the prescriptive gender identities and expressions coerced upon them, albeit in strictly binary ways. The overrepresentation of binary depictions of gender non-conformity evokes the understanding of gender and sex as largely interdependent, and presumes a gendered child subject that is *either* a [trans]boy *or* a [trans]girl, with little to no room for those who exist beyond or between these. Moreover, many of these texts associate traditional archetypes of femininity and masculinity with girlhood and boyhood, which may be restrictive for those who wish to eschew these associations altogether. As such, children learn that within the subject positions available in these texts, transgressing cisnormative prescriptions largely entails renouncing the set of traits and behaviours which have been imposed upon them, yet it also involves adhering to a different set of particular characteristics and traits as well.

Again, for children who can align themselves with these subject positions, this is a positive step forward. For children who cannot relate, however, when the pool of literature (which is already limited) solely features binary gender subject positions, it contributes to a homogenized understanding of what it means to be a transgender or gender non-conforming child. For instance, a large number of trans and gender non-conforming individuals do not experience their gendered subjectivities as constituted by affinities for things of the 'opposite' gender nor do they align with notions of being in the wrong body (see Cromwell, 2006), yet these discourses comprise the majority of children's books on gender variance. There is extensive variation in how individuals who position themselves within the gender binary constitute their gender (Vincent & Manzano, 2017). Thus, these particular books do not entirely depict the extensive ways that binary gender identities and expressions can materialize past

notions of ‘girl stuff’ and ‘boy things’, but they nonetheless provide crucial spaces for children who may identify with their protagonists.

Gender-Binary Characters Not Constituted by Traditional Archetypes of Gender

For the books that feature (namely transgender) characters who do not institute themselves by means of association with specific traits, children positively learn that being a girl or boy is not always instituted by affiliations with specific characteristics or traits, but rather how one feels internally. As such, children learn that if they simply identify as a [trans]girl or a [trans]boy, this is sufficient in affirming their identity. In other words, gendered subjectivities are not depicted to be contingent upon taking up subject positions with a particular ‘repertoire’ of archetypes of behaviours. As stated above, many binary transgender and gender non-conforming children do not constitute their gendered subjectivities in alignment with conventional characteristics of their respective genders and, as such, these books underscore the one can identify as one pleases irrespective of their interests and/or behavioral traits. Through the broad range of interests described—none of which are depicted as gendered—gender non-conformity for cisgender children too becomes less stigmatized as characteristics are portrayed as neutral as opposed to being affiliated with a particular gender. Moreover, these books do not typically mention characters’ physical attributes or genitalia, conveying the notion that these need not necessarily be considered salient in constituting one’s gender identity or expression. Thus, characters here did not typically exhibit conceptions of their internal sense of gender as corresponding to their physical bodies.

For children who do identify as either [trans]girls or [trans]boys but do not subscribe to any particular gendered archetypes nor share any gendered proclivities, these books provide a space where their gendered subjectivities are captured and their subject positions are featured.

Although these books transgress notions of transgender and gender non-conforming children being necessarily constituted by conventional archetypes, again, they nonetheless only contain subject positions within which characters identify as *either* a [trans]boy *or* a [trans]girl. Indeed, although there has been significant progress in recent years in terms of increased societal cognizance and understandings of transgender and gender non-conforming individuals, they continue to be primarily [socially] represented and discussed within the gender binary (Vincent & Manzano, 2017; Bittner, Ingrey, & Stamper, 2016; Nicolazzo, 2016; Schwartz, Luyckx, & Vignoles, 2011). Vincent and Manzano (2017) attest that progressive discourses of gender variance have "challenged the rigidity of the gender binary, but not necessarily the possibility of being outside of it" (p. 12). Consequently, as is evident within this analysis, representations of children as boys *and* girls, *neither* boy nor girl, or something else altogether are seldom represented. This contributes to a transnormative understanding of gender variance. Transnormativity refers to the conception that there is one, single, 'ideal' way for transpeople to identify with and embody gender (Boldly Go, 2013, as cited in Nicolazzo, 2016). Transnormative conceptions of gender variance typically posit that there are only two recognized sexes, and, subsequently, only two recognized genders (Nicolazzo, 2016). As such, transnormative discourses suggest that gender variance manifests through fundamentally binary modes. This implicitly infers to children that gender variance is still constituted by one identifying with one specific gender identity—whether they are cisgender and gender non-conforming, or transgender. Thus, for children who identify as trans or gender non-conforming in non-binary ways, this conceptually places them on the margins of these possibilities. By seeing no representation of liminal gendered subject positions, children read these narratives as

reinforcing the fact that their social world insists they be one gender [or the other], reifying an 'either/or' dynamic of gender variance (Bornstein, 1994).

It is critical to note that the emphasis here is not the fact that individuals identify and align themselves within the gender binary that is problematic, but rather, it is the ways that transnormative conceptions of gender are overrepresented and conceived of as the epitome of the transgender and gender-conforming person's experience. This evokes transnormative discourses wherein gender variance is solely recognized in terms of binary correlations between sex and gender. Indeed, pervasive notions of gender variance as binary is rather limiting for those who do not fit into this and experience further stigmatization for this. Girshick (2008) refers to the binary as "a shackle" that inhibits diverse and various forms of transgender experience, which consequently becomes conducive to precipitating further marginalization, condemnation, exclusion, and even murder toward those who challenge it (p. 125). Similarly, Butler (2004) maintains that those who cannot position themselves within the gender binary are fundamentally rendered unintelligible. Indeed, since intelligibility is closely tied to having an 'evident' gender presentation, many non-binary individuals are perceived by others to be unintelligible (Stein, 2018), which can consequently result in extreme forms of violence involving discrimination, abuse, and even death. Again, the fact that these characters identify within a binary frame is not an issue, but when the overwhelming majority of children's books on gender variance depict it as such (29 out of 32 protagonists in this case), this is where issues of representation arise.

Gender Non-Binary Characters

As intimated above, non-binary conceptions of gender variance remain underrepresented in popular discussions of gender non-conforming and trans individuals. This was particularly evident in my sample as only three texts featured characters who did not align their gender

subjectivities with binary notions of gender. Characters here were similar to other characters whose interests and proclivities were not associated with their gender identity or gender expression, but were distinguished by their refusal to identify with binary forms of gender. For these characters, gendered archetypes did not define their gender, and their gender was not defined by any particular categorizations. Through these three books, children were provided with discursive framings that moved beyond the either/or dichotomies of gender to underscore the nuances and diversities between and within gender identities and expressions. Although these texts provide children with alternative subject positions to identify with, they nonetheless remain far and few between both in the scope of children's literature as a whole, as well as in relation to children's books specifically on gender variance. Without proper representation of non-binary and more liminal characters in children's picture books, children learn that although they exist, they are overwhelmingly underrepresented; further relegating them to the margins of gender variance.

Indeed, non-binary individuals are often the target of violent confrontations and discrimination (Suárez & Slattery, 2018) and can face double marginalization at times from both cisgender as well as transgender communities (Bergman & Barker, 2017; Henry, 2017; Nicolazzo, 2016). This very experience was explicitly underscored in *Stacey's Not a Girl* where Stacey's non-binary gender identity inhibits them from being accepted amongst cisgender peers, while simultaneously marginalizing them from transgender communities where "all seemed to know that they were either boys or girls." As a result, Stacey is principally left with no solidarity from neither their cisgender nor transgender counterparts. Towards the end of the story, Stacey comes to terms with 'not knowing' their gender identity and is seemingly at peace with this; for children traversing the range of texts on gender variance in hopes of finding themselves within

these sources, however, the outcome may not always be this simple. As stated earlier, being rendered unintelligible by others is a common experience of many non-binary individuals. This not only dehumanizes non-binary people as they are denied the category of 'human', but further makes these individuals hypervisible (Davies, Vipond, & King, 2017) as their 'neither/nor' status becomes apparent when they are 'read' against the gender binary which continues to be viewed as foundational in understandings of both cisgender and trans communities. As a result of discrimination, denunciation, and abuse, many non-binary individuals experience increased levels of distress and a lower sense of overall self-worth (Barker & Iantaffi, 2017).

Overall (2009) suggests that given the dominant associations between sex and gender in discussions of both cisgender and binary transgender subjectivities, there is principally "no conceptual space for a third sex/gender" (p. 22), or perhaps more than three. This was overtly explicated in *Meet Polkadot*, where protagonist Polkadot shares that they are "asked to choose everywhere all the time: from the bathroom to the toy aisle.. from toothbrushes to little league" and further avows "I'm not a boy or a girl [...] in my culture, there is not a lot of room for me." Overall's mention of the lack of "space" compared with Polkadot's statement of the lack of "room" elucidates the ways in which non-binary individuals can fail to exist within the sociocultural confines as to what constitutes 'legitimate' genders.

Similar to Butler (2004), Overall attests that to be intelligible as a person, one must be aligned with a recognized gender; which is typically in binary form. To move beyond that, an individual will "inevitably be subject to reinterpretation by others who will attempt to perceive the individual as a member of one or the other of the two "real" sex/genders. (p. 22). Thus, even when non-binary individuals attempt to affirm their non-binary gender identities and expressions, they may still be 'read' by those around them in terms of the gender binary, or questioned as to

where they fit into it. This was particularly evident in *Are You a Boy or Are You a Girl?* wherein Tiny is consistently questioned by peers about their gender identity throughout the book. At times, this is done in an inquisitive manner where Tiny's sister and friends expressed a genuine curiosity as to where Tiny fits into the gender binary. At other times, this was done in an abrasive manner, wherein Tiny was bullied for not exclusively identifying or expressing themself in a binary form. Similarly, the dominant associations between sex and [trans]gender combined with the emphasis on gender as intrinsic and fixed found in many texts does not leave much space for neither children whose gender is fluid and changes with time nor those who experience gender more transiently moving in and out of gender. Indeed, for some children gender development does not assume a linear trajectory resulting in a final and permanent gender identity or expression as it is entails a "recursive process that accommodates multiple and shifting identity states over time" (Schwartz, Luyckx, & Vignoles, 2011, p. 629). This subjectivity was only alluded to in where Tiny's sister asks them: "Tiny, are you a boy or are you a girl today?" Although not explicitly confirmed, the implication inferred by the use of the term 'today' suggests that Tiny's gender identity may not be fixed, but rather, shifting. Indeed, for many, gender is rather a journey than a destination, and subject positions associated with these gendered subjectivities are unequivocally missing in the books available for children.

The curiosity expressed above by Tiny's peers illustrates the lack of awareness they possessed regarding non-binary forms of gender identification and expression. In the texts depicting binary transgender and gender non-conforming characters, these characters experienced marginalization and bullying, however this was due to their peers *knowing* about what their gendered subjectivities entailed. In the case with characters who were gender non-binary, these characters were marginalized and bullied due to their peers *not knowing* about what

their gendered subjectivities entailed. This lack of awareness, validation, and representation surrounding non-binary gender identities and expressions can influence the ways in which a child experiences their very gendered subjectivity. For instance, both Murjan and Bouman (2017) and Travers (2014) suggest that some trans and gender non-conforming individuals who identify with and express gender in binary ways may feel limited by these designations out of a lack of awareness and/or apprehension surrounding non-binary and genderqueer ways of being. They suggest that with more awareness and acceptance of non-binary identities and expressions, more children might embrace less binary gendered forms of being as gender fluidity and flexibility would be more normalized. Moreover, non-binary and genderqueer individuals often feel as though they will not be conceived of as intelligible if they do not fit into binary categorizations of gender (Iantaffi, 2017). As such, some non-binary individuals may feel increased pressure to 'pass' and align themselves within the gender binary due to amplified sentiments of being Othered when juxtaposed against their binary gender variant counterparts (Nicolazzo, 2016). Again, this is not to discount those children and individuals who authentically identify with gender-binary forms of gender variance, but what these authors suggest is that some may feel limited and restricted to identify and express their gender in more diverse and variant ways due to the dichotomous ways gender variance is commonly conceived.

Dominant discourses of binary forms of gender variance as 'standard' tend to disregard the ultimate variation and diversity in gender in the human population (Serano, 2013). Indeed, studies of transgender individuals have indicated that approximately one third of transgender people neither identify as men/boys nor women/girls (Murjan & Bouman, 2017). Henry (2017) also concedes that for some gender non-binary individuals, the act of self-affirming one's identity can precipitate feelings of confidence and authenticity; this can surely be further

facilitated through increased awareness and recognition by others. Although affirming oneself as non-binary may instigate positive experiences for that individual, navigating this subjectivity in a world where one is mainly rendered intelligible if they are one gender *or* another, this can be incredibly challenging (Stein, 2018). With a lack of representation of these characters in books, children are less likely to familiarize themselves with these subjectivities, less likely to accept these subject positions in others, and less likely to feel a sense of belonging in the social world.

Agender, Non-Gendered, and Genderless Subjectivities

As has been elicited, diversity and nuance have been precipitated by the (extremely limited) three books featuring a gender non-binary character. Although limited in scope, these three texts depict non-binary subjectivities exceedingly well. These books, in addition to the remainder of the books within this sample, however, all centrally depict gender as something which is assumed for all children. Indeed, *all* discursive constructions and subject positions within these texts underscore the conception that gender is universal, fixed, and innate by suggesting that gender *is* or *will* be a significant part of a child's life. Discourses as such, render agender, non-gendered, and genderless individuals—those without gender expression and/or gender identity, who feel as though they have no gender and subsequently do not belong to any gender (Cuthbert, 2019; Henry, 2017)—fundamentally both invisible and inconceivable. While most do this implicitly, the following three quotes underscore several instances in which gender is explicitly constructed as universal [emphasis has been added in each quote]:

Jacob's New Dress: "gender expression is an important part of *every* person's identity"

The Gender Fairy: "*everyone* has a gender"

Truly Willa: "the baby *will* one day know it's [sic] 'gender'" [referring to babies in general]

In addition to the implicit inferences of gender as an intrinsic universal element of all human beings, these texts overtly depict it as such. The first two quotations suggest that gender is centrally a part of every individual's life, whereas the latter infers that although gender may not be present at birth, it is something that each individual inevitably "will one day know." All texts presume that gender is something that everyone will want to identify with or embody in one way or another, but neither acknowledge nor leave space for those who do not identify with gender at all. Most characters in these books primarily found peace in being their authentic selves which involved aligning themselves with their respective gender identities and gender expressions, and having these affirmed by others. For these children, affirming their internal gender identities and desired gender expressions was a source of solace. For children who experience feelings of discomfort *as a result* of being gendered, salvation is much more complicated. The primary message in these texts is that gender identity and expression *define* a person whether this is in normative, non-normative, binary, or non-binary ways.

These discursive messages are even present in the texts on gender non-binary characters. For instance, in *Meet Polkadot*, when asked how they respond to people asking them if they are a boy or a girl, Polkadot responds by stating: "I say, 'NO. I'm Polkadot.' This is my gender identity." Although Polkadot is a non-binary transgender child, they nonetheless have a gender. Similarly, in *Stacey is Not a Girl*, the majority of the narrative encompasses Stacey striving to figure out exactly what gender they are. Although the text concludes without Stacey affirming a definite gender, it is implied that this is something they will consider later on as Stacey states "right now I'm just going to be a kid." The words "right now" imply that this is for the present moment as it may be revisited in Stacey's future. The underlying premise is that Stacey *does* have a gender identity, but they do not yet "know" what this gender identity is nor how to label

it. Comparably, in *Are You a Girl or Are You a Boy?* Tiny is rendered unintelligible due to their non-binary gender identity. Tiny's peers continually ask if they are a boy *or* a girl, or in other words, *what* their gender is (as opposed to *if* they have a gender). Although Tiny is gender non-binary, they are also seemingly gender-fluid as their sisters asks them "Tiny, are you a boy or are you a girl *today*?" [emphasis added]. The text does not provide a response to this question, allowing readers to ponder and perhaps devise an answer for themselves, however the inference is that Tiny *does* identify with gender but that this is in a non-binary and fluid manner. Furthermore, in posing the question "what does it mean to be a boy or girl?" to a bully (Buster) and subsequently emphasizing the similarities between their interests, Tiny nonetheless emphasizes that these (non-binary and non-traditional) interests still comprise them and their peers as either boys or girls, further underscoring the salience of gender. In each of these texts, it is always assumed that despite their non-binary gender identities, the characters *must* still be one, the other, or *something* else and that there *is* a gender(s) that these characters do (or will) identify with. Indeed, as Clucas and Whittle (2017) contend, "non-binary gender is still a gender" (p. 77). Thus, for these non-binary characters, their gender identities as non-binary transchildren are just that—their gender *identities*. For those with agender, non-gendered, and genderless subjectivities and subject positions (henceforth simply referred to as 'agender' subjectivities) who do not identify with gender at all, these texts do not capture what it means to navigate an agender subjectivity in a largely gender-centric world.

At times, agender subjectivities are conflated with non-binary gender subjectivities in that the former are sometimes subsumed under the latter (Cuthbert, 2019), or the two terms are used inaccurately interchangeably. As has been elicited above, non-binary individuals still embody and identify with gender in various ways, whereas agender individuals do not. For agender

individuals, their sense of being and is not constituted by having a sense of being gendered as they live outside of and without gender (Clucas & Whittle, 2017). Thus, although agender subject positions are sometimes conceived of as akin to non-binary subject positions, the two are distinct. To conflate these two terms principally misses the mark in capturing the distinctive ways that each conceives of the notion of gender itself. For agender individuals it is precisely their dissociation from gender that chiefly defines their subjectivity.

Indeed, the same way that gender is inherent for many—even most—it is *not* inherent for others, and this is a discourse utterly missing in these texts. This is unsurprising as agender, subjectivities and subject positions remain largely invisible within popular and scholarly discussions gender and gender variance (Cuthbert, 2019) which largely emphasizes that individuals—regardless of gender identity or expression—fundamentally *have* a gender. This can be somewhat expected considering that Western society remains exceedingly gendered (Blaise, 2005), and each of these books was produced within a Western social context. Indeed, as stated at the outset of this dissertation, gender has historically been and remains a 'master status' through which individuals are socially defined and through which [Western] society is organized (Rosenberg, 2009; Stein, 2018). It is one of the most—if not *the* most—salient categorizations that individuals are defined by. As West and Zimmerman (1987) contend individuals have many social identities (or subjectivities); some transient, some permanent; some capable of being emphasized, and some capable of being minimized. Our gendered subjectivities, however, are always conceived to be present in an infinite number of circumstances, as the authors attest: "our identificatory displays will provide an ever-available resource for doing gender under an infinitely diverse set of circumstances" (West & Zimmerman, 1987, p. 139). In other words, the 'degree' of our identities as parents, siblings, friends, spouses,

lawyers, custodians, etc. may shift based upon the contexts we are placed (e.g. I may not be perceived as a 'teacher' or 'student' while asking a salesperson which cell phone I should purchase), however in all of our identities and in the circumstances that encompass them, we are still always understood to be gendered (i.e. I will still be perceived as a woman whether I am in the classroom or in a mobile store). Deutsch (2007, p. 116) also alludes to this in stating that "gender overrides any other role or status" wherein the many other identities that we possess (e.g. a parent, teacher, spouse) often become "filtered through the lens of gender." I would add that we need not even interact physically with another to have one presume our gender. Indeed, our names alone often convey a gendered categorization wherein we are perceived (either correctly or incorrectly) to be a particular gender based upon the name that a stranger may read on a class roster, a blog or academic publication, and even an email.

When navigating one's self throughout the social world, being gendered may be principally unavoidable namely due to the organization of society, the allocation of power and resources, as well as interpersonal relations (West & Zimmerman, 1987). For instance, navigating a gender-centric social world as an agender individual may influence how one navigates their agender subjectivity as they are perpetually 'gendered' by most, misread by many, and may feel the urgency to 'pass' in various situations (for example, when a public gender-neutral restroom is unavailable, or when completing a form which demands a gendered designation). Indeed, as much as gender is personal and subjective, it is also largely institutional, relational, and interactional. These relational dynamics are fundamentally what produce a naturalized perception of gender wherein identifying with gender is understood to be a presumed element of being. Thus, although gender is largely constituted through interaction, it is subsequently conceived of as a 'natural' phenomenon, despite the socially organized ways

through which it manifests (West & Zimmerman, 1987). I must emphasize that this does not mean that gender is *not* natural for some and that an internal sense of one's gender identity is futile. Rather, it is the presumption that gender *will* inevitably naturally hold true for an individual (regardless of whether one is cisgender, transgender, or other) that I bring attention to here. It is through this naturalization of gender itself that the thought of existing without or beyond gender is unfathomable to many.

To the best of my knowledge, there exists not a single children's picture book focusing on agender subjectivities. By attributing gender identity and expression to all individuals and centrally universalizing the notion of gender to all humans, those who do not identify with any particular gender subsequently become dehumanized as this is seen as an innate human characteristic. Moreover, the lack of representation of these groups is critical in that an overwhelming majority of individuals in the general population (including LGBTI2SA communities) have neither heard of non-binary people nor entirely comprehend what constitutes these subjectivities (Henry, 2017). I presume the same is true of those belonging to agender, non-gendered, and genderless subject positions. This is particularly troubling as individuals who are less familiar with and aware of these identities may erroneously ascribe them as deviant, deficient, and/or pathological (Barker & Iantaffi, 2017). Thus, the erasure of agender characters in children's literature has damaging consequences for readers as children further receive the message that they are expected to identify with a gender identity—binary or not, while children outside of these gendered subjectivities are deprived of the opportunities to learn of them.

Broad Implications

In order to interpret the broad implications of these findings, let us revisit the ever-so eloquent quote by Sims Bishop (1990) where she articulates that: books are windows "offering

views of worlds that may be real or imagined, familiar or strange", sliding glass doors which readers can metaphorically walk through to explore the "world [that] has been created and recreated by the author", and mirrors where the story becomes a reflection of a reader's subjective experiences wherein they "see [their] own lives and experiences as part of the larger human experience" (p. ix). Similar to Sims Bishop, Vardel (2002) contends that since many children's books are written from the perspective of the child and contain characters of similar ages to the book's targeted age range, children often attempt to identify with these protagonists. When the elements of the narrative closely align with the experiences of the child, the child able to express sentiments such as "that character is just like me!" (p. 173). Both Sims Bishop's and Vardel's insights underscore the criticality of children being provided with literary sources that they can 'see' themselves in and empathetically explore. Moreover, the introspective and auto-diegetic accounts of these texts invite readers to acquire a sense of intimacy with characters (Nikolajeva, 2002) which is also critical for 'outsider' children who may not personally relate to the book's narrative but can establish a sense of empathy to a character's subjective experience.

The books analyzed within this dissertation positively create well-needed spaces for the children they represent within their narratives and create edifying experiences for those outside of these subjectivities. Through these books, transgender, gender non-conforming, and cisgender/gender-conforming children alike learn that gender variance and diversity exist, are neither pathological nor abnormal, and do not essentially designate children as inferior or secondary to another. While still recognizing that these children nonetheless remain Othered within the social world (which is quite literally depicted in each text wherein protagonists exist primarily as an anomaly to the overwhelmingly cisnormative world which encompasses them), these texts too chronicle both the adverse and joyous experiences that such children may face

within these social worlds, and serve as solid sources that children can refer to for a sense of solidarity. As stated previously, in addition to books providing spaces where children can find themselves within the stories depicted, they too provide a space where all children can learn about the characters within, and are, hence, also sources which can be utilized to educate others.

As progressive and critical as these texts are, however, their individual and collective existence nonetheless exclude certain gender subjectivities outside of their narratives. Gender diversity and gender non-conformity are extensive categories (Cutherbert, 2019), yet the texts in my sample—which principally encompass notions of gender variance and non-conformity—only scrape the surface of the various ways that gender variance is embodied and expressed. In particular, non-binary children are overwhelmingly unrepresented amongst these texts, whereas agender, non-gendered, and genderless subjectivities remain nonexistent. It is acknowledged, of course, that if a book is solely focusing on a single character's experience, that representing other gendered subjectivities may not be entirely possible. However, when considering the books collectively, this issue does become apparent. For children who are able to identify with the majority of available characters subject positions, this implicitly sends the message that most other gender variant children share the same subjective experiences as they do, and that anyone 'outside' of these subject positions are 'Othered'. This is eerily similar to the ways that children's literature has historically Othered trans and gender non-conforming characters of all kinds by solely representing cisgender and gender-conforming protagonists.

By seeing their gendered subjectivities only minimally featured or not featured at all, non-binary, genderqueer, and agender children become further relegated to the margins *within* a genre that is *already* marginalized. Indeed, skelton (2015b) attests that although contemporary children's books on gender variance are pivotal in breaking down barriers between normalized

and marginalized genders, they do not tend to highlight children who identify outside of binary conceptions of gender, and, as I argue, outside of non-binary conceptions of gender. As Cuthbert (2019) also asserts, the experience of having no gender or being detached from the category of gender altogether has received very minimal recognition in comparison to that of not identifying within binary parameters of gender. Again, Cuthbert suggests that this may be due to agender subjectivities commonly being subsumed under the category of non-binary; which further evokes the necessity of agender being recognized as a subjectivity in and of itself. The presumption that one must have *a* gender, regardless of what that might be, is copious within popular discussions of gender, academic discourse, and as has been elicited in this dissertation, within children's literature on gender variance. Correspondingly, Bittner, Ingrey, and Stamper (2016) call for this "empty space" (p. 949) within children's literature to be filled with more nuanced stories featuring gender non-conforming characters who do not identify within the gender binary, as well those "beyond transgender" (p. 962). Since children's literature informs children of what is valued within their social world, for many unrepresented children this means that they have no place in it. Accordingly, Friddle (2017) maintains that children's literature featuring transgender and gender-variant characters are pivotal for children navigating and negotiating their own gender identities as underscoring the narratives and subjective experiences of children who have been marginalized and abused due to their gender expression and identity, enables them to make sense of their own lives.

As has been discussed throughout this paper, the negotiation of gender identity and subjectivity is embedded within discourse. Indeed, like Weedon (1987) who asserts that our subjective experiences and conceptions of the social world are contingent upon the discourses available to us, Davies and Harré (1990) uphold that one's subjectivity is partially dependent

upon "the positions made available within one's own and others' discursive practices" as well as "the stories through which we make sense of our own and others' lives" (p. 46). Again, like Weedon who maintains that discursive options constitute an individual as a "social agent" (p. 79), they further avow that these stories vary significantly by language used, the concepts, issues and moral judgements made relevant and the subject positions made available within them (p. 46). As has been explicated throughout this analysis, characters within these texts actively utilized available discourses and language to constitute their own subjectivities.

Considering that many of these books are either biographical or autobiographical, are internally focalized, and often employ an auto-diegetic (first-person child) narrator, this serves to increase proximity between the child protagonist and child reader (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2001) and reflects the ways in which the children behind the characters negotiated and navigated their gendered subjectivities. As such, it can be presumed that many children reading these materials will do the same, which will involve them utilizing these very sources in the process. As N. Browne (2004) contends, considering that children are active in the negotiation and positioning of themselves within gender discourses, they face significant restrictions and constrictions when the range of discourses they are provided with is limited. This consequently limits their exposure to possible alternative discourses which would precipitate additional subject positions for children to take up. In negotiating their own identities and utilizing the discourses available to them—in this case through children's picture books—children learn that certain discourses are more salient than others because they are more available and more recognized (Martin, 2011). This, yet again, underscores the salience of discourse and language in establishing one's gendered subjectivity as children require picture books with adequate discourses and language so that they can actively institute themselves as gendered or non-gendered subjects.

Chapter VII: Recommendations, Limitations, and Concluding Thoughts

Recommendations

It is clear that to address the implications underscored above that more diverse representations of gender variance in children's picture books (i.e. substantial inclusions of more non-binary and agender representations) is unequivocally necessitated. Such a suggestion, however, is merely simplistic and not instantaneously possible considering that changes as such require substantial time. This does not infer that we must simply remain lax and await the appropriate texts to surface, however. Change is quite possible through the utilization of the very literary resources which we seek to transcend. Considering that children are capable of actively constructing and reconstructing notions of gender (Morrow, 2006), there remain plenty of opportunities to actively engage with children in investigating, examining and deconstructing notions of gender with the materials that are currently available (Keddie, 2003). As Short (2001) asserts, implementing more gender-diverse selections of children's picture books into classrooms and libraries is useful, but not entirely sufficient as children should also be afforded opportunities to deconstruct and critically assess the content they read. Indeed, the limited selection of children's picture books on gender variance can certainly be used to our advantage by engaging in a critical reading of these sources.

The process of critical reading is where a reader "interacts with texts, asks questions, makes predictions, makes connections via prior knowledge and experiences, breaks down prejudices, perceives hidden meanings and builds new knowledge" (El-Hindi, 1997, p. 15). Indeed, critical reading entails questioning the text, being cognizant of one's reactions to the text, determining main ideas conveyed by the text, and examining these ideas. As such, the process of critical reading fundamentally involves synthesizing, analyzing, and evaluating what one reads

(Van Blerkom, 2012). Critical reading, then, surpasses following the storyline of a text (Ates, 2013; Rog, 2012) but entails a higher-order and complex reading process which seeks to evaluate the text as opposed to simply comprehending it. This can be explicitly taught to children in schools as a skill, or it can be part of a reading practice at home with family. Critical reading often entails reading *with* children, rather than simply *to* children, which infers a shared reading experience, however critical reading skills such as questioning, analyzing, and evaluating can be taught to children so that they can also do this independently. Critical reading fundamentally involves considering critical points and questions pertaining to the elements of the book's narrative and discursive composition, so this can be done in the company of an adult (particularly for very young children who cannot yet read independently) or while children have individual quiet reading time.

Engaging in critical reading with children also recognizes children as capable of critical thought and apt at contributing to critical discussions, and, as such, provides them with opportunities to express their conceptions and knowledge, which they are entitled to do (Matthews, 2007). Critical reading with children also mitigates the power dynamics embedded within the reading process, wherein children take an active role in the process, rather than simply having a book read to them. Engaging in critical reading with children can be done individually or as a part of a group, yet critically reading with groups of children can be particularly useful as information can be both learned and *unlearned* within group settings (Keddie, 2003). Through group critical reading, children can co-operatively discuss critical considerations in the presence of other peers; collectively asking questions, providing insights, and learning from the perspectives and subjectivities of one another. Critical reading fundamentally invites children to consider what is beyond what is included in the text.

Critically reading books with children—whether individually or in groups—can facilitate the development of critical and analytical reading skills through evaluating imagery, labeling concepts, discussing events, analyzing storylines, reflecting on feelings, posing and responding to critical questions, connecting the text's narrative to the child's lived experiences and knowledge, and fundamentally engaging in reflective and inclusive discussions (Krasny, 2013; Price, van Kleeck, & Huberty, 2009; Smolkin & Young, 2011). When critically reading books on gender variance with children, we should remain cognizant of the discursive constructions of gender within the text and raise critical questions about the ways gender is depicted or assumed (Krasny, 2013). Nodelman (2005) and Krasny (2013) both maintain that encouraging children to engage in critical reading practices and remain cognizant of the discursive elements of picture books can also facilitate an awareness of children's own personal metanarratives and empower them to navigate their own (gendered) subjectivities. Indeed, as has been elicited throughout this dissertation, books provide spaces where children can both see themselves represented within stories and see the ways others are too represented. As such, critical discussions of gendered subjectivities are important for those who are able to find their own narratives in books as they can facilitate a reflexive awareness of their subjectivities, as well as those whose subjectivities and subjecthood remain excluded from these stories as they can critically fill in the blanks of where they have been excluded while teaching others of these literary gaps. Considering that discussions around gender variance and gender non-conformity are critical in contesting and identifying stigma and discrimination (Vincent & Manzano, 2017), critical reading practices provide ample opportunities for all children to learn of and deconstruct privilege and marginalization in regard to gender relations.

Although a more diverse repository of picture books on gender variance is ideal, it has been explicated that a lack of resources need not hinder our ability to expose children to more diverse gendered ways of being (or not being). Through critical reading we learn not to take books for granted simply because they do not address certain gendered subjectivities, and instead learn to be critically resourceful with the materials we have. Critical reading can also be applied to books that do not encompass notions of gender variance, but address the concept of gender either implicitly or explicitly. In fact, reading books that may be exclusive or resistant to gender variance and non-conformity may actually provide effective learning opportunities for children. As Krasny (2013) avows, entirely eliminating books with restricting messages may actually hinder children in that this suggests that the world exists without gender discrimination (amongst other forms of discrimination). As such, it may be more efficient to critically engage with these books with children to discuss and deconstruct these issues, rather than to eliminate discussions of them altogether.

Thus, we need not remove books with gender bias or cisnormative underpinnings, as promoting a critical reading of these texts can conjure the equitable and inclusive discourses which are missing. The usefulness of critical reading is that it can be undertaken at any time with any selection of literary materials. Critical reading facilitates critical thinking and provides children with the agency to deconstruct notions of gender on their own; a skill that they can take with them through all of their reading endeavours. Thus, even in instances where children may not have *any* access to books on gender variance, this need not be considered insoluble as books of all kinds become a source for overcoming impediments to equity and justice when critical engagement is applied. Indeed, with proper improvisation and resourcefulness, we can create change within challenge.

Limitations

As much breadth as this project strived to maintain, there are still many elements left unaddressed as it is seldom possible to provide an all-encompassing, entirely comprehensive analysis of any sample of literature. I wholly acknowledge that my dissertation research does not explicitly address issues pertaining to disability, ethnicity, culture, race, sexuality, and socioeconomic status that may have been of value to this analysis. Moreover, solely due to space restraints, although this dissertation does widely discuss sex in relation to gender, it does not include a discussion of intersexed children who are frequently and unequivocally excluded from discussions of gender and gender variance as their bodily configurations are often nuanced and do not typically align with conventional characterizations of (binary) sex. As such, many of the subject positions evoked within these texts, may be difficult for intersexed children to identify with. Similar to non-binary and agender children, intersexed children may find themselves at the crossroads of gender and sex (Fausto-Sterling, 2000a, 2012) binary configurations of gender and gender non-conformity may be limiting for intersex children and they too face further marginalization due to the lack of representation of these subjectivities within children's picture books. This is an area in need of attention, and due to the intricate history intersex people have in theorizations of sex, gender, and sexuality, a more comprehensive exploration of this is unfortunately outside the scope of this analysis but remains on the horizon for future research.

Additionally, although I have cursorily alluded to intersections between sex, gender, and sexuality when providing a historical account of gender variance, a more in-depth exploration of this was outside the possibility of this research. I will, however, briefly note that although sexuality and sexual orientation were not explicitly mentioned in any books within my sample, *all* parent depictions (excluding single-parent families) were in the form of heterosexual couples.

Indeed, as can be found in the imagery in Appendix G, all family depictions where two parents are present include a mother and father. As such, heteronormative undertones were overwhelmingly prevalent across most texts. Rather than providing a diverse representation of different family dynamics (e.g. same-sex parents, culturally diverse families, extended family, blended families, fictive kin, adoptive families, multi-generational families, etc.), families were simply presented as consisting of a mother, father, child, and in most cases, a sibling or two. Interestingly, this was also the case where parents of secondary and alternative characters were present. Indeed, the parents of main characters' peers were also depicted strictly in line with heteronormative family dynamics (barring the occasional single-parent family depiction).

Moreover, as can also be observed in Appendix G, families depicted in these books were overwhelmingly portrayed as nuclear, mainstream, white, and middle-class (Nodelman, 2017). Due to the socioeconomic privilege many characters seemingly possessed, all characters who engaged in some form of 'transition' were effortlessly able to eschew their former belongings and afford to purchase an entirely new wardrobe, accessories, room décor, and/or counselling or visits with a medical professional in the affirmation of their gender. Children who read these books and identify with a character but are not able to access affirmation in the same way, may have a drastically different subjective experience in both negotiating and navigating their gender subject positions. Further to this, out of all 32 protagonists, only 4 belonged to non-white ethnocultural categories, and no characters were explicitly portrayed as disabled. This is clearly a troubling issue as although children's books featuring gender variant characters contribute to the gender diversification of characters, these books nonetheless reinforce dominant white, Western, hetero-normative, middle-class norms of family life (Stafford, 2012; Taylor, 2012).

Again, the extent of this research unfortunately does not allow for further examination of these varying intersectional elements, however it is paramount to acknowledge them at the very least.

Lastly, it should be made apparent that as exhaustive as I attempted to make my book sample, there may nonetheless exist titles that I was not able to locate. This said, my book sample was explicitly targeted at children's picture books which focused on the narrative account of a protagonist's experience of gender variance. In my search I did come across additional books which discuss gender variance—albeit without a narrative account or storyline. Narrative accounts were integral to my research as I sought to analyze characters' experience of gender variance in relation to their lived subjectivities and the ways they negotiated and navigated these in-line with dominant discourses of gender. Thus, it should be noted that the books on gender variance without narrative accounts that were excluded from my sample, may have added different analytical elements to this project. Despite these limitations, this analysis provides a thorough examination of the ways that gender variance is depicted within my sample of texts and evokes the limitations of these depictions. Although the analysis could benefit from a more intersectional approach, the benefit of this project is that such a focus can easily be taken up in a future endeavour.

Final Concluding Thoughts

This dissertation has explored the discursive ways in which gender variance is conceived across 30 picture books for children. Through the exploration of 32 protagonists, this analysis uncovers the ways these gender is discursively constructed, and the ways that characters' gendered subject positions are constituted, negotiated, and navigated from their narrative accounts. These books underscore the many experiences and processes encompassed in negotiating and navigating characters' subjectivities within a primarily cisnormative world which

is critical for readers to witness. They underscore the challenges that many gender variant children may face and provide a well-needed space for transboys, transgirls, gender non-conforming children to see themselves represented and for others to learn of their stories. However, the primary implications of this study encompass the notion that these books overwhelmingly depict gender variance as binary (both for cisgender non-conforming and transgender characters), and that gender is something with which one is expected to identify.

For non-binary children reading these books, they may learn that their subject positions are likely to be questioned or seen as less 'valid' than those who are easier able to identify with a particular gender, and may wonder why it is that they cannot or do not wish to identify within binary parameters of gender. They may see themselves represented within these texts, however the imbalance of representation compared to those that are binary transchildren may send the message that their experience is less valued and less common. As such, they may deduce that to 'choose' a binary subject position may make them appear more intelligible and valued to others and may help to evade being othered or set apart (although this certainly occurs for binary transchildren as well). Yet, for these children the fact that they *are* able to identify with gender in some capacity also preserves their integrity; albeit marginally.

Indeed, for agender children who read these books expecting to see themselves somewhere within them, they further learn that they are neither acknowledged nor valued within the narratives of these texts, and that their existence is fundamentally erased. The erasure of this group of children dehumanizes them as they are not seen as capable of existing. It further reifies dominant conceptions of gender as something that all individuals can and should express, relate to, embody, and/or identify with. Moreover, this exclusion serves to reinforce a notion of what I think of as 'compulsory gender', wherein gender and gender identity are constantly assumed

within an individual, whether that person is cisgender, transgender, non-binary, or anything else. This compulsory gender presumes that gender expression and identity are normative features of human existence and that to be without or beyond gender is well outside of the norm. As such, this conveys to children that they *must* embody gender in some form in order to be rendered both intelligible *and* human.

Given that picture books on gender variance are so few and far between at the current juncture, this raises concerns that gender non-binary and agender representations of gender are fundamentally invisible in children's picture books, leaving these groups of children without books they can identify with. These children do not get to explore their lives vicariously through characters who navigate similar gendered subjectivities and share similar sentiments and experiences to them. The absence of these characters within picture books informs children that they are neither seen nor valued in the social world. It informs them that a space which is created for children (and sometimes *by* children) does not make room for them, and that they must continue to live outside of these sites of childhood culture. This patently exposes the need for much more diverse representation of gender non-conforming children and the gendered subjectivities that encompass these groups.

Furthermore, as was evoked throughout the analysis in this dissertation, child protagonists (often writing stories inspired by their lived experiences) often utilized language and discourse to constitute their subjectivities and navigated their subjectivities in accordance with how they perceived themselves to be in relation to others. When language and discourse in the texts that are written for and by children do not offer the possibility to exist, this can serve to deprive them of their perceived right to 'be'. While it is salient that these books remind children of the significance of their affirmed genders, it is equally important that they emphasize the

significance of being 'gender-free' for those who need this liberation. A promising prospect here, however, is that this dearth of diversity need not overlook the fact that children can engage in a critical reading of the available resources wherein they critically deconstruct the available representations of gender in these texts and make space for those who are invisible within them. Through critical reading, children and adults can collectively fill in the missing blanks through critical and analytical discussions of these texts. Children's books are spaces in which gender variance can be constructed, reconstructed, resisted, and/or reinforced. As such, they often represent the social (gendered) world as it is, but also serve as a space to transform this world.

It is imperative to note that my call for alternative forms of gender variance which are outside of or beyond the gender binary is not meant to create a new discourse which positions these as superior to those which are currently available, nor is it an attempt to construct new 'norms' of gender variance which reify a hierarchy between and among the various forms they encompass. Furthermore, my calls for increasing the selection of diverse children's picture books on gender variance and engaging in critical reading with children do not attempt to suggest that this will be sufficient in combating the gender inequity, resistance, and discrimination that transgender and gender non-conforming children face as I acknowledge that this does not dismantle the social systems that fundamentally oppress these groups. Certainly, the suggestions I posit do not address the systemic and social dimensions responsible for the lack of proper representations, awareness, and acceptance of transgender and gender non-conforming children, nor will they abate all forms of discrimination and indignation that children of these groups experience on a daily basis. These suggestions do, however, precipitate change and awareness of this at a very micro level which is necessary for macro-level change.

My project is, rather, a plea for those who remain marginalized (within an already marginalized community) to experience the possibility of seeing themselves as represented within the cultures of children's literature; a space that is an incredibly salient facet of many children's' lives. Indeed, children's literature can serve a pivotal role in the "amelioration of the condition of cultural, institutional, and political neglect through which transchildren have been denied their reality, and their worth" (Norton, 2011, p. 294). As Butler (2004) reminds us, "the thought of a possible life is only an indulgence for those who already know themselves to be possible. For those who are still looking to become possible, possibility is a necessity" (pp. 30-31). To say that life is an indulgence for the transgender and gender non-conforming children that are represented within these texts would be a gross overstatement as they unequivocally experience unrelenting resistance, ostracism, and discrimination. The salient point here is that for as long particular subjectivities remain excluded from these literary sources, they remain principally impossible. My hope is that this brings us closer to achieving justice for all at the exclusion of none, where all children are 'possible'. As Thomas King so eloquently articulates, "the truth about stories is, that's all we are."

References

Aguinaldo, J. (2012). Qualitative analysis in gay men's health research: Comparing thematic, critical discourse, and conversation analysis. *Journal of Homosexuality, 59*(6), 765-787.

Altinay, M., & Anand, A. (2019). Neuroimaging gender dysphoria: A novel psychobiological model. *Brain Imaging and Behavior,* 1-17.

Anderson, E.E. (2018). The unfolding and exploration of gender from a gender affirmative perspective. In C. Keo-Meier, & D. Ehrensaft (Eds.), *The gender affirmative model: An interdisciplinary approach to supporting transgender and gender expansive children* (pp. 21-36). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Anderson, N.L. (2013). *Elementary children's literature: Infancy through age 13* (4th ed). New York, NY: Pearson Education.

Andrews, S.E. (1998). Using inclusion literature to promote positive attitudes toward disabilities. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 41*, (6), 420-426

Archard, D. (2015). Children, adults, autonomy and well-being. In A. Bagattini, & C. Macleod (Eds.), *The nature of children's well-being: Theory and practice* (pp. 3-14). New York, NY: Springer.

Arizpe, E., & Styles, M. (2003). *Children reading pictures: Interpreting visual texts*. London, UK: Routledge.

Association for Library Service to Children (2008). *Terms and criteria*. Retrieved from: http://www.ala.org/alsc/awardsgrants/bookmedia/caldecottmedal/caldecottterms/caldecottterms

Ateş, S. (2013). Critical reading and its teaching as a skill. *Turkish Journal of Education, 2* (3), 40-49.

Bader, B. (1976). *American picturebooks from Noah's Ark to the Beast Within*. New York, NY: Macmillan.

Baetens, J., & Surdiacourt, S. (2011). How to 'read' images with texts: The graphic novel case. In E. Margolis, & L. Pauwels (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of visual research methods* (pp. 590-600). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Bakker, J. (2018). Brain structure and function in gender dysphoria. *20th European Congress of Endocrinology, 56*(30.3), doi: 10.1530/endoabs.56.S30.3

Banse, R., Gawronski, B., Rebetez, C., Gutt, H., & Bruce Morton, J. (2010). The development of spontaneous gender stereotyping in childhood: relations to stereotype knowledge and stereotype flexibility. *Developmental Science, 13(2),* 298-306.

Barasch, A. (2018, June 27). Biology is not destiny: Seeking a scientific explanation for trans identity could do more harm than good. *Washington Post,* Retrieved from: https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/posteverything/wp/2018/06/27/feature/seeking-a-scientific-explanation-for-trans-identity-could-do-more-harm-than-good/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.15fe56bfd415

Barbour, R.S. (2001). Checklists for improving rigour in qualitative research: a case of the tail wagging the dog? *British Medical Journal, 322(7294),* 1115-1117.

Barker, M.J., & Iantaffi. (2017). Psychotherapy. In C. Richards, W.P. Bouman, & M.J. Barker (Eds.), *Genderqueer and non-binary genders* (pp. 103-124). London, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

Barrow, K., Apostle, D. (2018). Addressing mental health conditions often experienced by transgender and gender expansive children. In C. Keo-Meier, & D. Ehrensaft (Eds.), *The*

gender affirmative model: An interdisciplinary approach to supporting transgender and gender expansive children (pp. 71-84). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Baumeister, R.F., & Leary, M.R. (1997). Writing narrative literature reviews. *Review of General Psychology, 1*(3), 311-320.

Baxter, J. (2008). Feminist post-structural discourse analysis: A new theoretical and methodological approach?. In K. Harrington, L. Litosseliti, H. Saunson, & J. Sunderland (Eds.), *Gender and language research methodologies* (pp. 243-255). New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Belsey, C. (2002). *Poststructuralism: A very short introduction*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press

Bem, S.L. (1981). Gender schema theory: A cognitive account of sex typing. *Psychological Review*, *88*(4), 354-364.

Bergman, S.B., & Barker, M.J. (2017). Non-binary activism. In C. Richards, W.P. Bouman, & M.J. Barker (Eds.), *Genderqueer and non-binary genders* (pp. 31-51). London, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

Bessell, S. (2009). Research with children: Thinking about method and methodology, in involving children and young people in research. *ARACY/NSW Commission for Children and Young People* (pp. 17–27). Available at: http://www.aracy.org.au (accessed 10 July 2009).

Bettcher, T.M. (2009). Trans identities and first-person authority. In L.J. Shrage (Ed.), "*You've changed": Sex reassignment and personal identity* (pp. 98-120). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Bhatia, V.K. (2017). *Critical genre analysis: Investigating interdiscursive performance in professional practice*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Bischoping, K., & Gazso, A. (2015). *Analyzing talk in the social sciences: Narrative, conversation and discourse strategies*. London, UK: SAGE Publications.

Bishop, R.S. (1990). Mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors. *Perspectives: Choosing and Using Books for the Classroom, 6*(3), ix-xi.

Bittner, R., Ingrey, J., & Stamper, C. (2016). Queer and trans-themed books for young readers: A critical review. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education, 37*(6), 948-964.

Blackledge, A. (2012). Discourse and power. In C.R. McCann, & S.K. Kim (Eds.), *Feminist theory reader: The Routledge handbook of discourse analysis* (pp. 616-627). New York, NY: Routledge.

Blaise, M. (2005). *Playing it straight: Uncovering gender discourses in the early childhood classroom*. London, UK: Routledge

Bohan, J.S. (1997). Regarding gender: Essentialism, constructionism, and feminist psychology. In M.M. Gergen, & S.N. Davis (Eds.), *Toward a new psychology of gender: A reader* (pp 31-47). New York, NY: Routledge.

Bolen, D.M. (2016). Homonormativity. In A. E. Goldberg (Ed.), *The SAGE Encyclopedia of LGBTQ Studies (pp. 542-544).* Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Bolen, D.M., & McGreehan, D. (2016). Homophobia. In A. E. Goldberg (Ed.), *The SAGE Encyclopedia of LGBTQ Studies (pp. 544-547).* Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Booker, K. (2012). Using picturebooks to empower and inspire readers and writers in the upper primary classroom. *Literacy Learning: The Middle Years*, *20*(2), 44.

Bornstein, K. (1994). *Gender outlaw: On men, women, and the rest of us*. New York, NY:

Vintage Books.

Borsellino, J. (2018). *Conversion therapy is harmful and wrong—so why is it still legal in Canada?* Retrieved from Flare: https://www.flare.com/news/conversion-therapy-canada/

Boss, P. (1999). *Ambiguous loss*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Breeze, R. (2011). Critical discourse analysis and its critics. *Pragmatics*, *21*(4), 493-525.

Breheny, M., & Stephens, C. (2007). Irreconcilable differences: Health professionals' constructions of adolescence and motherhood. *Social Science & Medicine.* 64, 112-134.

Brennan, S., & Epp, J. (2015). Children's rights, well-being, and sexual agency. In A. Bagattini, & C. Macleod (Eds.), *The nature of children's well-being* (pp. 227-247). New York, NY: Springer.

Browne, N. (2004). *Gender equity in the early years*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.

Browne, K. (2004). Genderism and the bathroom problem: (Re)materialising sexed sites, (re)creating sexed bodies. *Gender, Place & Culture*, *11*(3), 331–346. doi:10.1080/0966369042000258668

Bull, B., & D'Arrigo-Patrick, J. (2018). Parenting experience of a child's social transition: Moving beyond the loss narrative. *Journal of Feminist Family Therapy*, *30*(3), 170-190.

Bulman, M. (2019). *Justin Trudeau moves forward with ban on LGBT+ conversion therapy across Canada.* Retrieved from The Independent: https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/canada-ban-conversion-therapy-lgbt-trudeau-a9247136.html

Butler, C.W., & Weatherall, A. (2011). Accomplishing a cross-gender identity: A case of passing in children's talk-in-interaction. In S.A. Speer, & E. Stokoe (Eds.), *Conversation and gender* (pp. 231-249). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Butler, J. (1988). Performative acts and gender constitution: an essay in phenomenology and feminist theory. *Theatre Journal*, *40*(4), 519-531.

Butler, J. (1990). *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Butler, J. (1993). *Bodies that matter: On the discursive limits of "se*x". New York, NY: Routledge.

Butler, J. (1994). Gender as performance: An interview with Judith Butler. *Radical Philosophy*, *67*, 32-39.

Butler, J. (1997). *The psychic life of power: Theories in subjection*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Butler, J. (1999). *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity* (2nd ed). New York, NY: Routledge.

Butler, J. (2003). Performative acts and gender constitution: An essay in phenomenology and feminist theory. In C.R. McCann, & S.K. Kim (Eds.), *Feminist theory reader: Local and global perspectives* (pp. 415-427). New York, NY: Routledge.

Butler, J. (2004). *Undoing gender*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Butler, J. (2006). Doing justice to someone: Sex reassignment and allegories of transsexuality. In S. Stryker & S. Whittle (Eds.), *The Transgender Studies Reader* (pp. 183-193) New York, NY: Routledge.

Byrd, R., & Farmer, L.B. (2015). Genderism in the LGBTQQIA community: An interpretative phenomenological analysis. *Journal of LGBT Issues in Counseling, 9*(4), 288-310.

Callahan, G. (2009). *Between XX and XY: Intersexuality and the myth of two sexes*. Chicago, IL: Chicago Review Press.

Cameron, D. (2001). *Working with spoken discourse*. London, UK: SAGE Publications.

Campbell, L., & Friedman, C. (2007). The socialization of gender. In J.E. Grusec, & P.D. Hastings, (Eds.), *Handbook of socialization: Theory and research* (pp.561-587). New York, NY: Guilford Publications.

Cavanagh, S.L. (2010). *Queering bathrooms: Gender, sexuality, and the hygienic imagination*. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

Chatton, B. (2001). Picture books for preschool children: Exploring gender issues with three- and four-year olds. In S. Lehr (Ed.), *Beauty, brains, and brawn: The construction of gender in children's literature* (pp. 57-66). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Chick, K.A., Heilman-Houser, R.A., & Hunter, M.W. (2002). The impact of child care on gender role development and gender stereotypes. *Early Childhood Education Journal, 29*(3), 149-154.

Chouliaraki, L. & Fairclough, N. (1999) *Discourse in late modernity: Rethinking critical discourse analysis*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Clucas, R., & Whittle, S. (2017). Law. In C. Richards, W.P. Bouman, & M.J. Barker (Eds.), *Genderqueer and non-binary genders* (pp. 73-99). London, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

Coates, J. (2012). Gender and discourse analysis. In C.R. McCann & S-K. Kim (Eds.), *Feminist theory reader: The Routledge handbook of discourse* analysis (pp. 90-103). New York, NY: Routledge.

Cohen-Kettenis, P.T., Delemarre-van de Waal, H.A., & Gooren, L.J. (2008). The treatment of adolescent transsexuals: Changing insights. *The Journal of Sexual Medicine, 5*(8), 1892-1897.

Cohen-Kettenis, P.T., & Pfäfflin, F. (2010). The DSM diagnostic criteria for gender identity

disorder in adolescents and adults. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, *39*, 499-513.

Connell, R.W. (1985). Theorising gender. *Sociology, 19*(2), 260-272.

Connell, R.W. (1987). *Gender and power*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Connell, C. (2010). Doing, undoing, or redoing gender? Learning from the workplace experiences of transpeople. *Gender & Society*, *24*(1), 31-55.

Connell, R. (2018). Conclusion: Reckoning with gender. In J.W. Messerschmidt, P.Y. Martin, M.A. Messner, & R. Connell (Eds.), *Gender reckonings* (pp. 331-346). New York, NY: New York University Press.

Conry-Murray, C., & Turiel, E. (2012). Jimmy's baby doll and Jenny's truck: Young children reasoning about gender norms. *Child Development, 83*(1), 146-158.

Cooley, C.H. (1902). *Human nature and the social order.* New York, NY: Scribner's.

Coolhart, D. (2018). Helping families move from distress to attunement. In C. Keo-Meier & D. Ehrensaft (Eds.), *The gender affirmative model: An interdisciplinary approach to supporting transgender and gender expansive children* (pp.125-140). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Crall, C.S., & Jackson, R.K. (2016). Should psychiatrists prescribe gender-affirming hormone therapy to transgender adolescents? *AMA Journal of Ethics, 18*(11), 1086-1094.

Cromdal, J. (2011). Gender as a practical concern in children's management of play participation. In S.A. Speer & E. Stokoe (Eds.), *Conversation and gender* (pp. 294-309). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Cromwell, J. (2006). Queering the binaries: Transsituated identities, bodies, and sexualities. In S. Stryker & S. Whittle (Eds.), *The transgender studies reader* (pp. 509-520) New York, NY: Routledge.

Crotty, M. (1998). *The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process*. London, UK: SAGE.

Cunningham, H. (2006). *The invention of childhood*. London, UK: BBC Books.

Cuthbert, K. (2019). "When we talk about gender we talk about sex: (A)sexuality and (a)gendered subjectivities. *Gender & Society*, 1-24.

Daag, J., & Haugaard, M. (2016). The performance of subject positions, power, and identity: A case of refugee recognition. *European Journal of Cultural and Political Sociology, 3*(4), 392-425.

Davies, A.W.J., Vipond, E., King, A. (2017). Gender binary washrooms as a means of gender policing in schools: a Canadian perspective. *Gender and Education, 29*(6), 1-20.

Davies, B., & Harre, R. (1990). Positioning: The discursive production of selves. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour, 20*(1), 43–63

Davis, H.F. (2017). *Beyond Trans: Does Gender Matter?* New York, NY: New York University Press.

Davison, E. K. (2016, September 26). *Disability in picture books*. Fashion eyesta: https://fashioneyesta.com/2016/09/26/disability-in-picture-books/

de Beauvoir, S. (1952). *The second sex. New York: Random House.*

Delemarre-van de Waal, H.A. (2014) Early medical intervention in adolescents with gender dysphoria. In B.P.C Kreukels, T.D. Steensma, & A.L.C. de Vries (Eds.), *Gender Dysphoria and disorders of sex development: Progress in care and knowledge* (pp.193-203). New York, NY: Springer.

Di Ceglie, D. (2014) Care for gender-dysphoric children. In B.P.C Kreukels, T.D. Steensma, & A.L.C. de Vries (Eds.), *Gender dysphoria and disorders of sex development: Progress in*

care and knowledge (pp.151-169). New York, NY: Springer.

Dockett, S., Einarsdóttir, J., Perry, B. (2011). Balancing methodologies and methods in researching with young children. In D. Harcourt, B. Perry & T. Waller (Eds.), *Researching young children's perspectives: Debating the ethics and dilemmas of educational research with children* (pp. 68-81). New York, NY: Routledge.

Dremel, A., & Matić, R. (2014). Discourse and/as social practice: The analysis of the problem of resistance and hegemony. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences, 5*(22), 155-165. Doi: DOI:10.5901/mjss.2014.v5n22p155

Drescher, J. (2014). Gender identity diagnoses: History and controversies. In B.P.C Kreukels, T.D. Steensma, & A.L.C. de Vries (Eds.), *Gender dysphoria and disorders of sex development: Progress in care and knowledge* (pp.137-150). New York, NY: Springer.

Duggan, G. B., & Payne, S. J. (2011, May). Skim reading by satisficing: evidence from eye tracking. In *Proceedings of the SIGCHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems* (pp. 1141-1150). ACM.

Eckes, T., & Trautner, H.M. (2000). Developmental social psychology of gender: An integrative framework. In T. Eckes & H.M. Trautner (Eds.), *The developmental social psychology of gender* (pp. 3-32). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Inc.

Edward, S. (2013). *Types of books for Children and teens explained*. Retrieved from: http://www.summeredward.com/2013/04/types-of-childrens-books-formats.html

Egoff, S.A. (1981). *Thursday's child: Trends and patterns in contemporary children's literature.* Chicago, IL: American Library Association.

Ehrensaft, D. (2018). Exploring gender expansive expressions versus asserting a gender identity. In C. Keo-Meier & D. Ehrensaft (Eds.), *The gender affirmative model: An*

interdisciplinary approach to supporting transgender and gender expansive children (pp.37-53). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Ehrensaft, D. (2016). *The gender creative child: Pathways for nurturing and supporting children who live outside gender boxes*. New York, NY: The Experiment Press.

Ehrensaft, D. (2013). "Look, Mom, I'm a boy—Don't tell anyone I was a girl". *Journal of LGBT Youth*, *10,* 9-28.

Einarsdóttir, J. (2007). Research with children: Methodological and ethical challenges. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal, 15(2),* 197–211.

El-Hindi, A. E. (1997). Connecting Reading and Writing: College learner's metacognitive awareness. *Journal of Developmental Education*, 21(2), 10-15.

Elliot, P. (2010). *Debates in transgender, queer, and feminist theory: Contested sites*. Surrey, UK: Ashgate.

Elks, S. (2018). *1 in 5 trans people pushed to conversion therapy in Britain*. Retrieved from The Global Citizen website: https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/uk-transgender-medics-conversion-therapy-lgbtq/

Evans, L., & Davies, K. (2000). No sissy boys here: a content analysis of the representation of masculinity in elementary school reading textbooks. *Sex Roles*, *42(3/4)*, 255-270.

Fairclough, N. (1992). Intertextuality in critical discourse analysis. *Linguistics and Education, 4,* 269-293.

Fairclough, N. (1995) *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language*. New York, NY: Longman.

Fairclough, N. (2001a). Critical discourse analysis as a method in social scientific research. In R. Wodak & M. Meyer (Eds), *Methods of critical discourse analysis* (pp. 121-138).

London, UK: SAGE Publications.

Fairclough, N. (2001b) *Language and Power* (2nd ed). New York, NY: Routledge.

Fairclough, N. (2001c). The dialectics of discourse. *Textus*, 14(2), 231-242.

Fairclough, N. (2003) *Analyzing discourse: Textual analysis for social research*. London, UK: Routledge.

Fairclough, N. (2012). Critical discourse analysis. In C.R. McCann & S-K. Kim (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of discourse* analysis (pp. 9-20). New York, NY: Routledge.

Falzon, C. (1998). *Foucault and social dialogue: Beyond fragmentation*. London, UK: Routledge

Fargas-Malet, F., McSherry, D., Larkin, E., & Robinson, C. (2010). Research with children: methodological issues and innovative techniques. *Journal of Early Childhood Research*, 8(2), 175-192.

Farr, D. (2009). Gender dysphoria. In J. O'Brien (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of gender and society* (pp. 355-356). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Fausto-Sterling, A. (1985). *Myths of gender: Biological theories about women and men*. New York, NY: Basic Books

Fausto-Sterling, A. (1993). The five sexes. *The Sciences, 33*(2), 20-24.

Fausto-Sterling, A. (2000a). *Sexing the body: Gender politics and the construction of sexuality.* New York, NY: Basic Books.

Fausto-Sterling, A. (2000b). The five sexes, revisited. *The Sciences, 40*(4), 18-23.

Fausto-Sterling, A. (2012). *Sex/gender: Biology in a social world.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Feree, M.M. (2018). "Theories don't grow on trees": Contextualizing gender knowledge. In J.W. Messerschmidt, P.Y. Martin, M.A. Messner & R. Connell (Eds.), *Gender*

reckonings (pp. 13-34). New York, NY: New York University Press.

Fine, C. (2017). *Testosterone rex: Myths of sex, science, and society*. New York, NY: Norton & Company.

Flanagan, V. (2010). Gender studies. In D. Rudd (Ed.). *The Routledge companion to children's literature* (pp. 26- 38). New York, NY: Routledge.

Foss, S.K., Domenico, M.E., Foss, K.A. (2013). *Gender stories: Negotiating identity in a binary world*. Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press Inc.

Foucault, M. (1973). *The order of things. An archaeology of the human sciences.* New York, NY: Vintage Books.

Foucault, M. (1978). *The history of sexuality. Volume 1: An introduction*. New York, NY: Vintage Books.

Foucault, M. (1979). *Discipline and punish*. New York, NY: Vintage Books.

Foucault, M. (1980a). *Herculine Barbin*. New York, NY: Vintage Books.

Foucault, M. (1980b). Truth and Power. In C. Gordon (Ed.), *Power/knowledge. Selected interviews & other writings by Michel Foucault, 1972-1977* (pp. 109-133). New York, NY: Pantheon Books.

Foucault, M. (1982). The subject and power. In H.L. Dreyfus & P. Rabinow (Eds.), *Michel Foucault: Beyond structuralism and hermeneutics* (pp. 143–186). London, UK: Harvester Wheatsheaf.

Foucault, M. (1988). Technologies of the self. In L. Martin, M.H. Gutman, & P. Hutton (Eds.), *Technologies of the self: A seminar with Michel Foucault* (pp. 16-49). Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press.

Foucault, M. (1991). "Nietzsche, Geneaology, History" in P. Rabinow (Ed.) *The Foucault*

reader: An introduction to Foucault's thought. New York, NY: Pantheon Books.

Foucault, M. (1997). The subject and power. In M. Foucault & J. Faubion (Eds.), *The Essential Works 1954- 1984*, Vol. III. *Power*, New York, NY: The New Press, 326-348.

Foucault, M. (1998). Foucault. In J.D. Faubion (Ed.) & R. Hurley et al. (Trans.) *Aesthetics, method, and epistemology: Essential works of Foucault, 1954–1984, vol. 2*, New York: The New Press.

Foucault, M. (2002). *The archaeology of knowledge.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Frawley, T. (2005). Gender bias in the classroom: Current controversies and implications for teachers. *Childhood Education, 81*(4), 221-227.

Freeman, N.K. (2007). Preschoolers' perceptions of gender appropriate toys and their parents' beliefs about genderized behaviours: Miscommunication, mixed messages, or hidden truths? *Early Childhood Education Journal, 34*(5), 357-366.

Friddle, M.E. (2017). Who is a "girl"? The tomboy, the lesbian, and the transgender child. In H. Hassel & T. Clasen (Eds.), *Gender(ed) identities: Critical rereadings of gender in children's and young adult literature* (pp. 117-134). New York, NY: Routledge.

Friedman, L.M. (1999). *The horizontal society*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Frost, N., & Elichaoff, F. (2014). Feminist postmodernism, poststructuralism, and critical theory. In S.N. Hesse-Biber (Ed.), *Feminist research practice: A primer* (2nd ed) (pp. 42-72). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Fusch, P.I., & Ness, L.R. (2015). Are we there yet? Data saturation in qualitative research. *The Qualitative Report, 20*(9), 1408-1416.

Gagnier, R. (1991). *Subjectivities: A history of self-representation in Britain, 1832-1920.* Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Gailey, N., & Brown, AD. (2016). Beyond either/or: Reading trans* lesbian identities. *Journal of Lesbian Studies, 20*(1), 65-86.

Ganesh, T.G. (2011). Children-produced drawings: An interpretive and analytic tool for researchers. In E. Margolis & L. Pauwels (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Visual Research Methods* (pp. 214-240). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Gavey, N. (1997). Feminist poststructuralism and discourse analysis. In M. M. Gergen & S. N. Davis (Eds.), *Toward a new psychology of gender*: *A reader* (pp. 49–64). New York, NY: Routledge.

Gee, J.P. (1989). Literacy, discourse, and linguistics: Introduction. *Journal of Education, 171,* 5-17.

Gee, J.P. (1996). *Social linguistics and literacies: Ideology in discourses* (2nd ed.). London: Taylor & Francis.

Gee, J.P. (1999). *An introduction to discourse analysis: Theory and method*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Gee, J.P., & Handford, M. (2012). Introduction. In C.R. McCann & S-K. Kim (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of discourse* analysis (pp. 1-6). New York, NY: Routledge.

Gergen, K.J. (2009). *An invitation to social construction*. London, UK: SAGE Publications.

Gerouki, M. (2010). The boy who was drawing princesses: primary teachers' accounts of children's non-conforming behaviours. *Sex Education*, *10*(4), 335-348.

Giordano, S. (2008). Lives in a chiaroscuro. Should we suspend the puberty of children with gender identity disorder? *Journal of Medical Ethics, 34*(8), 580-584.

Giordano, S. (2014). Medical treatment for children with gender dysphoria: Conceptual and ethical issues. In B.P.C. Kreukels, T.D. Steensma & A.L.C de Vries (Eds.), *Gender*

Dysphoria and disorders of sex development: Progress in care and knowledge (pp.205-230). New York, NY: Springer.

Giovanardi, G. (2017). Buying time or arresting development? The dilemma of administering hormone blockers in trans children and adolescents. *Porto Biomedical Journal, 2*(5), 153-156.

Girshick, L.B. (2008). *Transgender voices: Beyond women and men*. Lebanon, N: University Press of New England.

Golden, J.C., & Jacoby, J.W. (2017). Playing princess: Preschool girls' interpretations of gender stereotypes in Disney Princess media. *Sex Roles, 79,* 299-313.

Goodwin, M.H. (2011). Engendering children's play: Person reference in children's conflictual interaction. In S.A. Speer & E. Stokoe (Eds.), *Conversation and gender* (pp. 250-271). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Grant, M. J., & Booth, A. (2009). A typology of reviews: an analysis of 14 review types and associated methodologies. *Health Information & Libraries Journal*, *26*(2), 91-108. http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-1842.2009.00848.x

Green, B.N., Johnson, C.D., Adams, A. (2006). Writing narrative literature reviews for peer-reviewed journals: Secrets of the trade. *Journal of Chiropractic Medicine, 5*(3), 101-117.

Guest, G., Bunce, A., & Johnson, L. (2006). How many interviews are enough? An experiment with data saturation and variability. *Field Methods, 18*(1), 59-82. Doi:10.1177/1525822X05279903

Gurevich, M., Mathieson, C.M., Bower, J., & Dhayanandhan, B. (2007). Disciplining Bodies, Desires and Subjectivities: Sexuality and HIV-Positive Women. *Feminism & Psychology, 17*(1), 9-38.

Haldeman, D.C. (2008). Therapeutic antidotes: Helping gay and bisexual men recover from conversion therapies. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Psychotherapy, 5*(3-4), 117-130.

Halim, M. L., & Lindner, N. (2013). Gender self-socialization in early childhood. *Encyclopedia on early childhood development*, 1-6.

Hall, D.E. (2004). *Subjectivity*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Hall, K.Q. (2009). Queer breasted experience. In L.J. Shrage (Ed.), "*You've changed": Sex reassignment and personal identity* (pp. 121-134). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Hamer, N. (2017). The design and development of the picture book for mobile and interactive platforms: "You get to BE Harold's purple crayon". In N. Hamer, P. Nodelman, & M. Reimer, (Eds.), *More words about pictures: Current research on picture books and visual/verbal texts for young people* (pp. 63-80). New York, NY: Routledge.

Harris, K., & Barnes, S. (2009). Male teacher, female teacher: exploring children's perspectives of teachers' roles in kindergartens. *Early Child Development and Care, 179*(2), 167-181.

Harrison, A.C., & O'Neill, S.A. (2002). The development of children's gendered knowledge and preferences in music. *Feminism & Psychology, 12*(2), 145-152.

Hart, K. *Postmodernism: A beginner's guide*. Oxford, England: Oneworld Publications.

Hassel, H., & Clasen, T. (2017). *Gender(ed) identities: Critical rereadings of gender in children's and young adult literature*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Henry, D. (2017). *Trans voices: Becoming who you are*. London, UK: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Heywood, C. (2013). Children's work in the countryside and city. In P.S. Fass (Ed.), *The*

Routledge history of children in the Western world. (pp.125-141). New York, NY: Routledge.

Hill, D. B., & Willoughby, B. L. B. (2005). The development and validation of the genderism and transphobia scale. *Sex Roles*, *53*, 531–544. doi:10.1007/s11199- 005-7140-x

Hill, D.B. (2006). On the origins of gender. In K. Scott-Dixon (Ed.), *Trans/forming Feminisms: Transfeminist voices speak out* (pp. 39-45). Toronto, ON: Sumach Press.

Hines, S. (2005). "I am a feminist but…": Transgender men and women and feminism. In J. Reger (Ed.), *Different wavelengths: Studies of the contemporary women's movement* (pp. 57-77). New York, NY: Routledge.

Hines, S. (2007). *Transforming gender: Transgender practices of identity, intimacy and care*. Bristol, UK: The Policy Press.

Hines, S. (2010). Introduction. In S. Hines & T. Sanger (Eds.), *Transgender identities: Towards a social analysis of gender diversity* (pp. 1-22). New York: Routledge.

Hjelm, T. (2014). *Social constructionisms: Approaches to the study of the human world*. London, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

Hladíková, H. (2014). Children's book illustrations: Visual language of picture books. *CRIS-Bulletin of the Centre for Research and Interdisciplinary Study*, *2014*(1), 19-31.

Hunt, P. (2005). *Understanding children's literature*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Hupp, J. M., Smith, J. L., Coleman, J. M., & Brunell, A. B. (2010). That's a boy's toy: Gender-typed knowledge in toddlers as a function of mother's marital status. *Journal of Genetic Psychology, 171,*389-401.

Iantaffi, A. (2017). Future directions. In C. Richards, W.P. Bouman, & M.J. Barker (Eds.), *Genderqueer and non-binary genders* (pp. 283-295). London, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

Irving, A., & Lehault, W.B. (2017). Clinical pearls of gender-affirming hormone therapy in transgender patients. *Mental Health Clinician, 7*(4), 164-167.

Jackson, S. & Gee, S. (2005). "Look Janet', 'no you look John': constructions of gender in early school reader illustrations across 50 years. *Gender and Education*, *17*(2), 115-128.

Jackson, S. (2007). 'She might not have the right tools… and he does': Children's sense-making of gender, work and abilities in early school readers. *Gender and Education*, *19*(1), 61-77.

Jackson, S. (2018). Why "heteronormativity" is not enough: A feminist sociological perspective on heterosexuality. In J.W. Messerschmidt, P.Y. Martin, M.A. Messner & R. Connell (Eds.), *Gender reckonings* (pp. 134-155). New York, NY: New York University Press.

Jagose, A. (1996). *Queer theory: An introduction*. New York, NY: New York University Press.

James, A. (2007). Giving voice to children's voices: Practices and problems, pitfalls and potentials. *American Anthropologist, 109(2),* 261–272.

Jeffreys, S. (2014). *Gender hurts: A feminist analysis of the politics of transgenderism*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Joel, D., Berman, Z., Tavor, I., Wexler, N., Gaber, O., Stein, Y., Shefi, N., Pool, J., Urchs, S., Margulies, D.s, Liem, F., Hänggi, J., Jäncke, & Assaf, Y. (2015). Sex beyond the genitalia: The human brain mosaic. *PNAS, 112*(50), 15468-15473.

Johnson, A.H. (2016). Transnormativity: A new concept and its validation through documental film about transgender men. *Sociological Inquiry, 86*(4), 465-491.

Jørgensen, M.W., & Phillips, L.J. (2002). *Discourse analysis as theory and method*. London: SAGE Publications.

Keddie, A. (2003). Little boys: tomorrow's macho lads. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural*

Politics of Education, 24(3), 289-306.

Kelly, M. (2014). Knitting as a feminist project? *Women's Studies International Forum, 44*, 133-144.

Keo-Meier, C., & Ehrensaft, D. (2018). *The gender affirmative model: An interdisciplinary approach to supporting transgender and gender expansive children*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Kessler, S.J., & McKenna, W. (2006). Toward a theory of gender. In S. Stryker & S. Whittle (Eds.), *The transgender studies reader* (pp. 165-182) New York, NY: Routledge.

Kiefer, B. (2008). What is a picturebook, anyway? The evolution of form and substance through the postmodern era and beyond. In L.R. Sipe, & S. Pantaleo (Eds.), *Postmodern picturebooks: Play, parody, and self-referentiality* (pp. 9-12). New York, NY: Routledge.

Killermann, S. (2017). *A guide to gender: The social justice advocate's handbook*. Austin, TX: Impetus Books.

Kinch, J.W. (1963). A formalized theory of the self-concept. *American Journal of Sociology, 68*, 481-486.

Klein, N.L. (2011). Doing gender categorization: Non-recognitional person reference and the omnirelevance of gender. In S.A. Speer & E. Stokoe (Eds.), *Conversation and gender* (pp. 64- 82). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Krasny, K. A. (2013). *Gender and literacy: A handbook for educators and parents*. Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger.

Kruijver, F.P., Zhou, J.N., Pool, C.W., Hofman, M.A., Gooren, L.J., & Swaab, D.F. (2000). Male-to-female transsexuals have female neuron numbers in a limbic nucleus. *Journal of Clinical Endocrinology and Metabolism, 85*(5), 2034-2041.

Kuklin, S. (2014). *Beyond magenta: Transgender teens speak out*. Somerville, MA: Candlewick

Press.

Lalor, T., & Rendle-Short, J. (2007). 'That's so gay': A contemporary use of *gay* in Australian English. *Australian Journal of Linguistics, 27*(2), 147-173.

Lance, M.N., & Tanesini, A. (2005). Identity judgements, queer politics. In I. Morland & A. Willox (Eds.), *Queer theory: Readers in cultural criticism* (pp. 171-186). New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Laquer, T. (1992). *Making sex: Body and gender from the Greeks to Freud.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Lawrence, A.A. (2003). Factors associated with satisfaction or regret following male-to-female sex reassignment surgery. *Archives of Sexual Behaviour, 32*(4), 299-315.

Lev, A. I. (2013). Gender dysphoria: Two steps forward, one step back. *Clinical Social Work Journal, 41*(3), 288-296.

Liu, Y., Wang, C., Zhou, K., Nie, J., Zhang, M., & Ma, S. (2014, November). From skimming to reading: A two-stage examination model for web search. In *Proceedings of the 23rd ACM International Conference on Information and Knowledge Management* (pp. 849-858). ACM.

Lock, A., & Strong, T. (2010). *Social constructionism: Sources and stirrings in theory and practice*. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.

Lorber, J. (2018). Paradoxes of gender redux: Multiple genders and the persistence of the binary. In J.W. Messerschmidt, P.Y. Martin, M.A. Messner & R. Connell (Eds.), *Gender reckonings* (pp. 297-313). New York, NY: New York University Press

Louie, B. Y. (2001). Why gender stereotypes still persist in contemporary children's literature. In

S. Lehr (Ed.), *Beauty, brains, and brawn: The construction of gender in children's literature* (pp. 142-151). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Luders, E., Sánchez, F.J., Gaser, C., Toga, A.W., Narr, K.L., Hamilton, L.S., & Vilain, E. (2009). Regional gray matter variation in male-to-female transsexualism. *Neuroimage, 46*(4), 904-907. Doi: 10.1016/j.neuroimage.2009.03.048

Luecke, J.C. (2011). Working with transgender children and their classmates in pre-adolescence: just be supportive. *Journal of LGBT Youth*, *8*, 116-156.

Lynch, A. (2009). Intersexual, intersexuality. In J. O'Brien (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of gender and society* (pp. 469-471). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

MacNaughton, G. (2000). *Rethinking gender in early childhood education*. London, UK: Paul Chapman Publishing.

Mahfouda, S., Moore, J.K., Siafarikas, A., Hewitt, T., Ganti, U., Lin, A., & Zepf, F.D., (2018). Gender-affirming hormones and surgery in transgender children and adolescents. *The Lancet Diabetes & Endocrinology*.

Mallon, G.P., & DeCrenscenzo, T. (2006). Transgender children and youth: A child welfare practice perspective. *Child Welfare*, *85*(2), 215-241.

Mallory, C., Brown, T.N.T., & Conron, K.J. (2018). *Conversion therapy and LGBT youth*. Retrieved from UCLA School of Law, The Williams Institute website: https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/Conversion-Therapy-LGBT-Youth-Jan-2018.pdf

Malpas, J. (2011). Between pink and blue: A multidimensional family approach to gender nonconforming children and their families. *Family Process*, *50*, 453–470. doi:10.1111/ famp.2011.50.issue-4

Marten, J. (2018). *The history of childhood: A very short introduction*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Martin, B. (2011). *Children at play: Learning gender in the early years*. Staffordshire, UK: Trentham.

Mason, M. (2010). Sample size and saturation in PhD studies using qualitative interviews. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research, 11*(3).

Matthews, S.H., (2007). A window on the "new" sociology of childhood. *Sociology Compass 1(1),* 322–334.

Mayeda, G. (2009). Who do you think you are? When should the law let you be who you want to be?. In L.J. Shrage (Ed.), "*You've changed": Sex reassignment and personal identity* (pp. 194-216). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

McCabe, J., Fairchild, E., Grauerholz, L., Pescosolido, B. A., & Tope, D. (2011). Gender in twentieth-century children's books: Patterns of disparity in titles and central characters. *Gender & Society, 25*(2), 197-226.

McCallum, R., & Stephens, J. (2011). Ideology and children's books. In S. Wolf, K. Coats, P. Enciso, & C. Jenkins (Eds.), *Handbook of research on children's and young adult literature* (pp. 359-371). New York, NY: Routledge.

McDonald, M. (2006). The nonsurgical option: Deciding not to decide about gender identity. In L. Russell (Ed.), *Boundary writing: An exploration of race, culture, and gender binaries in contemporary Australia* (pp. 43-65). Honolulu, Hawaii: University of Hawai'i Press.

McNabb, C. (2018). *Nonbinary gender identities*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

McNair, S., Kirova-Petrova, A., & Bhargava, A. (2001). Computers and young children in the classroom: strategies for minimizing gender bias. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, *29*(*1*), 51-55.

Mead, G.H. (1934). *Mind, self and society*. Chicago: University of Chicago.

Mendoza, J., & Reese, D. (2001). Examining multicultural picture books for the early childhood classroom: Possibilities and pitfalls. *Early Childhood Research and Practice, 3*(2), 1-31

Messerschmidt, J.W., Martin, P.Y., Messner, M.A., & Connell, R. (2018). *Gender reckonings*. New York, NY: New York University Press.

Meyer, M. (2001). Between theory, method, and politics: Positioning of the approaches to CDA. In R. Wodak & M. Meyer (Eds.), *Methods of critical discourse analysis* (pp. 14-31). London, UK: SAGE Publications.

Mickenberg, J.L., & Nel, P. (2011). Radical children's literature now!. *Children's Literature Association Quarterly, 36*(4), 445-473.

Miller, s. j. (2016). *Teaching, affirming, and recognizing Trans* and gender creative youth: A queer literacy framework*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Mohammadi, M.R., & Khaleghi, A. (2018). Transsexualism: A different viewpoint to brain changes. *Clinical Psychopharmacology and Neuroscience, 16*(2), 136-143.

Morrow, V. (2006). Understanding gender differences in context: implications for young children's everyday lives. *Children & Society*, *20*, 92-104.

Morse, W. C., Lowery, D. R., & Steury, T. (2014). Exploring saturation of themes and spatial locations in qualitative public participation geographic information systems research. *Society & Natural Resources, 27*(5), 557-571. doi:10.1080/08941920.2014.888791

Moss, P. & Dyck, I. (2002). *Women, body, illness*. Oxford, England: Rowman and Littlefield.

Motschenbacher, H. (2016). A poststructuralist approach to structural gender linguistics. In J. Abbou & F.H. Baider (Eds.), *Gender, language, and the periphery* (pp. 65-88). Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Murjan, S., & Bouman, W.P. (2017). Psychiatry. In C. Richards, W.P. Bouman & M.J. Barker (Eds.), *Genderqueer and non-binary genders* (pp. 125-140). London, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

Myers, K. (2012). "Cowboy up!": Non-hegemonic representations of masculinity in children's television programming. *Journal of Men's Studies, 20*(2), 125-143.

Naidoo, J.C. (2012). *Rainbow family collections: Selecting and using children's books with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer content*. Santa Barbara, CA: Libraries Unlimited.

Namaste, V. (2000). *Invisible lives: The erasure of transsexual and transgendered people*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Namaste, V. (2005). *Sex change, social change: Reflections on identity, institutions, and imperialism*. Toronto, ON: Women's Press.

Nataf, Z.I. (1996). *Lesbians talk transgender*. London, UK: Scarlet Press.

National Center for Lesbian Rights (2019). *Born perfect: The facts about conversion therapy*. Retrieved from: http://www.nclrights.org/bornperfect-the-facts-%20about-conversion-therapy/

Nicolas, G., Skinner, A.L. (2012). "That's so gay!" Priming the general negative usage of the word *gay* increases the implicit anti-gay bias. *Journal of Social Psychology, 152*(5), 654-658.

Nicolazzo, Z. (2016). 'It's a hard line to walk': Black non-binary trans* collegians' perspectives on passing, realness, and trans*-normativity. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 29*(9), 1173-1188.

Nicki, A. (2006). Women's spaces are not trans spaces: Maintaining boundaries of respect. In

K. Scott-Dixon (Ed.), *Trans/forming feminisms: Transfeminist voices speak out* (pp. 151-160). Toronto, ON: Sumach Press.

Nikander, P. (2008). Constructionism and discourse analysis. *Handbook of constructionist research*, 413-428.

Nikolajeva, M. (2002). The verbal and the visual: The picturebook as a medium. In R.D. Sell (Ed.), *Children's literature in communication: Studies in narrative* (pp. 85-108). Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins Publishing.

Nikolajeva, M. (2013). Children's literature. In P.S. Fass (Ed.), *The Routledge history of children in the Western world.* (pp.313-328). New York, NY: Routledge.

Nikolajeva, M., & Scott, C. (2001). How picturebooks work. New York, NY: Routledge.

Noble, B. (2006). Our bodies are not ourselves; tranny guys and the racialized class politics of embodiment. In K. Scott-Dixon (Ed.), *Trans/forming feminisms: Trans-feminist voices speak out* (pp. 95-104). Toronto, ON: Sumach Press.

Nodelman, P. (1988). *Words about pictures: The narrative art of children's picture books*. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press.

Nodelman, P. (2005). Decoding the images: How picture books work. In P. Hunt (Ed.), *Understanding children's literature* (pp. 128-139). New York, NY: Routledge.

Nodelman, P. (2008). *The hidden adult: Defining children's literature*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Nodelman, P. (2017). Introduction: Why we need more words. In N. Hamer, P. Nodelman & M. Reimer (Eds.). *More words about pictures: Current research on picture books and visual/verbal texts for young people* (pp. 1-17). New York, NY: Routledge.

Nodelman, P., & Reimer, M. (2003). *The pleasures of children's literature*. Boston, MA: Allyn

and Bacon.

Norton, J. (2011). Transchildren and the discipline of children's literature. In M.A. Abate, & K. Kidd (Eds.). *Over the rainbow: Queer children's and young adult literature* (pp. 293-313). Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

Norwood, K. (2013). Grieving gender: trans-identities, transition, and ambiguous loss. *Communication Monographs, 80*(1), 24-45.

O'Reilly, M., & Parker, N. (2012, May). Unsatisfactory saturation: A critical exploration of the notion of saturated sample sizes in qualitative research. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 1-8. doi:10.1177/1468794112446106

Olson, J., Forbes, C., Belzer, M. (2011). Management of the transgender adolescent. *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine, 165*(2), 171-176.

Osgood, J., & Robinson, K.H. (2017). Celebrating pioneering and contemporary feminist approaches to studying gender in early childhood. In K. Smith, K. Alexander & S. Campbell (Eds.), *Feminism(s) in early childhood* (pp. 35-47). Singapore: Springer.

Overall, C. (2009). Sex/gender transitions and life-changing aspirations. In L.J. Shrage (Ed.), "*You've changed": Sex reassignment and personal identity* (pp. 11-27). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Ozkaleli, U. (2011). Butterflies for girls, cars for boys: Gender in K-12. *Social Change, 41*(4), 567-584.

Pacini-Ketchabaw, V., Nxumalo, F., Kocher, L., Elliott, E., & Sanchez, A. (2015). *Journeys: Reconceptualizing early childhood practices through pedagogical narration.* Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

Paechter, C (1998). *Educating the other: Gender, power and schooling*. London: Falmer Press

Paechter, C. (2003). Masculinities and femininities as communities of practice. *Women's Studies International Forum, 26*(1), 69-77.

Paechter, C., & Clark, S. (2007). Who are tomboys and how do we recognise them? *International Forum, 30*(4), 342-354.

Painter, C., Martin, J.R., & Unsworth, L. (2012). *Reading visual narratives: Image analysis in children's picture books*. Sheffield, UK: Equinox.

Paoletti, J. (2012). *Pink and blue: Telling the boys from the girls in America*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press

Pennington, S. (2009). Gender performance. In J. O'Brien (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of gender and society* (pp. 366-369). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Pershai, A. (2006). The language puzzle: Is inclusive language a solution?. In K. Scott-Dixon (Ed.), *Trans/forming feminisms: Transfeminist voices speak out* (pp. 46-52). Toronto, ON: Sumach Press.

Pilcher, J. (2017). Names and "doing gender": How forenames and surnames contribute to gender identities, difference, and inequalities. *Sex Roles, 77*, 812-822.

Price, L.H., van Kleek, A., & Huberty, C.J. (2009). Talk during book sharing between parents and preschool children: A comparison between storybook and expository book conditions. *Reading Research Quarterly, 44*(2), 171-194.

Rabinow, P. (1998). *Aesthetics, method, and epistemology: Essential works of Foucault, volume II, 1954-1984*. New York, NY: The New Press.

Randolph, J. (2009). A guide to writing the dissertation literature review. *Practical Assessment, Research, and Evaluation, 14*(13), Available online: http://pareonline.net/getvn.asp?v=14&n=13.

Rasmussen, M.L. (2004). “That’s so gay!”: A study of the deployment of signifiers of sexual and gender identity in secondary school settings in Australia and the United States. *Social Semiotics, 14*(3), 289-308.

Ravel, B. & Rail, G. (2006). The lightness of being gaie. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 4(1/2), 395-412.

Reis, C. (2014). Listening to the material life in discursive practices, *Tamara: Journal for Critical Organization Inquiry, 12*(2), 9-14.

Renold, E. (2004). ‘Other boys: negotiating non-hegemonic masculinities in the primary school. *Gender and Education, 16,* 247-266.

Reynolds, K. (2011). *Children's literature: A very short introduction*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Richards, C., Bouman, W.P., & Barker, M.J. (2017). *Genderqueer and non-binary genders*. London, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

Richards, L., & Morse, J.M. (2007). *Read me first for a user’s guide to qualitative methods* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Risman, B.J., Myers, K., & Sin, R. (2018). Limitations of the neoliberal turn in gender theory: (Re)turning to gender as a social structure. In J.W. Messerschmidt, P.Y. Martin, M.A. Messner & R. Connell (Eds.), *Gender reckonings* (pp. 277-296). New York, NY: New York University Press.

Rivers, C., & Barnett, R.C. (2011). *The truth about girls and boys: Challenging toxic stereotypes about our children*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

Rizzo, M.T., & Killen, M. (2018). Theory of mind is related to children’s resource allocations in

gender stereotypic contexts. *Developmental Psychology, 54*(3), 510-520. Doi: 10.1037/dev0000439

Robinson, K.H. (2005). 'Queerying' gender: Heteronormativity in early childhood education. *Australian Journal of Early Childhood*, 30 (2), 19-28.

Robinson, K. (2013). *Innocence, knowledge, and the construction of childhood: The contradictory nature of sexuality and censorship in children's contemporary lives*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Rog, L. (2012). *Guiding readers: Making the most of the 18-minute guided reading lesson*. Ontario, Canada: Pembroke.

Rogers, R., & Christian, J. (2007). 'What could I say?' A critical discourse analysis of the construction of race in children's literature. *Race, Ethnicity and Education, 10*(1), 21-46.

Rogers, R. (2011). Critical approaches to discourse analysis in educational research. In R. Rogers (Ed.), *An introduction to critical discourse analysis in education* (pp. 1-20). New York, NY: Routledge.

Rohy, V. (2014). *Lost causes: Narrative, etiology, and queer theory*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Rose, G. (2007). *Visual methodologies: An introduction to the interpretation of visual materials*. London, UK: SAGE Publications.

Rose, G. (2013). *Visual methodologies: An introduction to researching with visual materials*. Los Angeles, CA: SAGE Publications.

Rosenberg, K.E. (2009). Institution, Gender as. In J. O'Brien (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of gender and society* (pp. 464-466). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Rubin, H. (1998). Phenomenology as method in trans studies. *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and*

Gay Studies, 4(2), 263-281.

Rubin, H. (2003). *Self-made men: Identity and embodiment among transsexual men*. Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press.

Salisbury, M., & Styles, M. (2012). *Children's picturebooks: The art of visual storytelling*. London, UK: London King Publishing Ltd.

Schilt, K. (2009). Transsexual. In J. O'Brien (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of gender and society* (pp. 859-860). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Schilt, K. (2018). From object to subject: Situating transgender lives in sociology. In J.W. Messerschmidt, P.Y. Martin, M.A. Messner, & R. Connell (Eds.), *Gender reckonings* (pp. 57-70). New York, NY: New York University Press.

Scott, J.W. (1986). Gender: A useful category of historical analysis. *The American Historical Review, 91*(5), 1053-1075.

Scott, J.W. (2003). Deconstructing equality-versus-difference: Or, the uses of poststructuralist theory for feminism. In C.R. McCann & S-K. Kim (Eds.), *Feminist theory reader: Local and global perspectives* (pp. 378-390). New York, NY: Routledge.

Scott, J.W. (2010). Gender: Still a useful category of historical analysis?. *Diogenes, 57*(7), 7-14.

Sedgwick, E. K. (1990). *Epistemology of the closet.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Sedgwick, E.K. (1994). *Tendencies*. London, UK: Routledge.

Serano, J. (2013). *Excluded: Making feminism and queer movements more inclusive*. Berkeley, CA: Seal Press.

Service Ontario. (2016, March 9). *Gender confirming surgery*. Retrieved from https://www.ontario.ca/page/gender-confirming-surgery. Accessed March 2019.

Short, K.G. (2001). Why do educators need a political agenda on gender? In S. Lehr (Ed.),

Beauty, brains, and brawn: The construction of gender in children's literature (pp. 186-192). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Shrage, L.J. (2009). *You've changed": Sex reassignment and personal identity*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Shrauger, J.S., & Schoeneman, T.J. (1979). Symbolic interactionist view of self-concept: through the looking glass darkly. *Psychological Bulletin, 86*(3), 549-573.

Shilling, C. (2016). *The body: A very short introduction*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Silverstein, M. (2007). Axes of evals: Token versus type interdiscursivity. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology, 15*(1), 6–22. doi: 10.1525/jlin.2005.15.1.6

Sims Bishop, R. (1990). Mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors. *Perspectives, 1*(3), ix-xi.

Skelton, C., Carrington, B., Francis, B., Hutchings, M., Read, B., & Hall, I. (2009). Gender 'matters' in the primary classroom: pupils' and teachers' perspectives. *British Educational Research Journal*, *35*(2), 187-204.

skelton, j. w. (2015a). Not exceptional or punished. *Transgender Studies Quarterly, 2*(3), 495-499.

skelton, j. w. (2015b). Without she or he, in pictures. *Transgender Studies Quarterly, 2*(3), 500-502.

Smith, Y.L., Van Goozen, S.H., Kuiper, A.J., & Cohen-Kettenis, P.T. (2005). Sex reassignment: Outcomes and predictors of treatment for adolescent and adult transsexuals. *Psychological Medicine, 35*(1), 89-99.

Smolkin, L.B., & Young, C.A. (2011). Research directions: Missing mirrors, missing windows: Children's Literature Textbooks and LGBT Topics. *Language Arts, 88*(3), 217-225.

Stafford, A. (2012). Beyond normalization: An analysis of heteronormativity in children's picture books. In M. Webber & K. Bezanson (Eds.), *Rethinking society in the 21st century: Critical readings in sociology*, (pp. 195-202). Toronto, ON. Canadian Scholars' Press.

Steensma, T.D., McGuire, J.K., Kreukels, B.P., Beekman, A.J., & Cohen-Kettenis, P.T. (2013). Factors associated with desistence and persistence of childhood gender dysphoria: A quantitative follow-up study. *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, 52*(6), 582-590.

Stein, A. (2018). *Unbound: Transgender men and the remaking of identity*. New York, NY: Pantheon Books.

Stephens, J. (1992). *Language and ideology in children's fiction.* London, UK: Longman.

Stephens, J. (2005). Analyzing texts: linguistics and stylistics. In P. Hunt (Ed.), *Understanding children's literature* (pp. 73-85). New York, NY: Routledge.

Stewart, J. (2017). Academic theory. In C. Richards, W.P. Bouman & M.J. Barker (Eds.), *Genderqueer and non-binary genders* (pp. 53-72). London, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

Stock, K. (15 November 2018). Stonewall's new definition of 'conversion' therapy raises a few questions. Retrieved from The Article: https://www.thearticle.com/stonewalls-new-definition-of-conversion-therapy-raises-a-few-questions/

Stone, S. (1991). The empire strikes back: A posttranssexual manifesto. In J. Epstein & K. Straub (Eds.), *Body guards: The cultural politics of gender ambiguity* (pp. 280-304). New York, NY: Routledge.

Stryker, S. (2004). Transgender studies: Queer theory's evil twin. *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, *10*(2), 212-215.

Stryker, S. (2006). (De)subjugated knowledges: An introduction to transgender studies. In S. Stryker & S. Whittle (Eds.), *The transgender studies reader* (pp. 1-17) New York, NY: Routledge.

Stryker, S. (2008). *Transgender history.* New York, NY: Seal Press.

Stryker, S. (2017). *Transgender history: The roots of today's revolution* (2nd ed). New York, NY: Seal Press.

Stryker, S. & Whittle, S. (2006). *The transgender studies reader*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Suárez, M.I., & Slattery, P. (2018). Resisting erasure: Transgender, gender nonconforming, and nonbinary issues in curriculum studies. *Journal of Curriculum and Pedagogy, 15*(3), 259-262.

Sullivan, N. (2003). *A critical introduction to queer theory*. New York, NY: New York University Press.

Sunderland, J., & Litosseliti, L. (2002). Gender identity and discourse analysis: Theoretical and empirical considerations. In L. Litosseliti & J. Sunderland (Eds.), *Gender identity and discourse analysis* (pp. 3-39). Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins.

Taylor, N. (2012). U.S. children's picture books and the homonormative subject. *Journal of LGBT Youth, 9*(2), 136-152.

Tauches, K. (2009). Transgender. In O'Brien, J. (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of gender and society* (pp. 843-847). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Tice, D.M. (1992). Self-concept change and self-presentation: the looking glass self is also a magnifying glass. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 63*(3), 435-451.

Thomas, R.L. (2018). *A to zoo: Subject access to children's picture books*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO.

Thorne, B. (1997). Children and gender: Constructions of difference. In M. M. Gergen & S. N. Davis (Eds.), *Toward a new psychology of gender*: *A reader* (pp. 185-201). New York, NY: Routledge.

Tompkins, A. (2014). Asterisk. *Transgender Studies Quarterly*, *1*(1-2), 26-27.

Tong, R., & Botts, T.F. (2018). *Feminist thought: A more comprehensive introduction* (5th ed). New York, NY: Routledge.

Turner, B. (1996). *The body and society*. London, UK: Sage Publications.

Van Blerkom, D. (2012). *Orientation to college learning* (7th ed.). Boston, MA: Wadsworth.

van Dijk, T. (2001). Multidisciplinary CDA: A plea for diversity. In R. Wodak & M. Meyer (Eds.), *Methods of critical discourse analysis* (pp. 95-120). London, UK: SAGE Publications.

van Dijk, T. (2006). Ideology and discourse analysis. *Journal of Political Ideologies, 11*(2), 115-140.

van Dijk, T. (2015). Critical discourse analysis. In D. Tannen, H.E. Hamilton & D. Schiffrin (Eds.), *The handbook of discourse analysis* (2nd ed). Malden, MA: John Wiley and Sons.

Vardell, S.M. (2001). Parent characteristics in children's novels: Lessons learned. In Lehr, S. (Ed.), *Beauty, brains, and brawn: The construction of gender in children's literature* (pp. 162-175). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Vaz, P., & Bruno, F. (2003). Types of self-surveillance: From abnormality to individuals 'at risk'. *Surveillance & Society, 1*(3), 272-291.

Vincent, B., & Manzano, A. (2017). History and cultural diversity. In C. Richards, W.P. Bouman & M.J. Barker (Eds.), *Genderqueer and non-binary genders* (pp. 11-30). London, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

Waite, D. (2011). A simple card trick: teaching qualitative data analysis using a deck of playing cards. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *17*(10), 982-985.

Warnke, G. (2009). Transsexuality and contextual identities. In L.J. Shrage (Ed.), "*You've changed": Sex reassignment and personal identity* (pp. 28-42). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Weedon, C. (1987). *Feminist practice and poststructuralist theory*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell.

Weinand, J.D., & Safer, J.D. (2015). Hormone therapy in transgender adults is safe with provider supervision: A review of hormone therapy sequelae for transgender individuals. *Journal of Clinical and Translational Endocrinology, 2*(2), 55-60.

Weiner, G. (1994). *Feminisms in education: An introduction.* Philadelphia, PA: Open University Press.

Weiss, G., & Wodak, R. (2003). Introduction: Theory, interdisciplinarity and critical discourse analysis. In G. Weiss & R. Wodak (Eds.), *Gender and language research methodologies* (pp. 193-210). New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Wells, K. (2019). *Yes, Canada should ban conversion therapy.* Retrieved from The Globe and Mail: https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/article-yes-canada-should-ban-conversion-therapy/

Wender, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning and identity*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Werhun, C.D. (2009). Biological determinism. In J. O'Brien (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of gender and society* (pp. 66-68). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Whittle, S. (2005). Gender fucking or fucking gender? In I. Morland & A. Willox (Eds.),

Queer theory: Readers in cultural criticism (pp. 115-129). New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Whittle, S. (2006a). Foreword. In S. Stryker & S. Whittle (Eds.), *The transgender studies reader* (pp. xi-xvi) New York, NY: Routledge.

Whittle, S. (2006b). Where did we go wrong? Feminism and trans theory: Two teams on the same side?. In S. Stryker & S. Whittle (Eds.), *The transgender studies reader* (pp. 194-202) New York, NY: Routledge.

Wilchins, R. (2002). A continuous nonverbal communication. In J. Nestle, C. Howell & R. Wilchins (Eds.), *Genderqueer: Voices from beyond the binary* (pp. 11-17). Los Angeles, CA: Alyson Books.

Wilchins, R. (2002). It's your gender, stupid!. In J. Nestle, C. Howell & R. Wilchins (Eds.), *Genderqueer: Voices from beyond the binary* (pp. 23-32). Los Angeles, CA: Alyson Books.

Wilkie-Stibbs, C. (2005). Intertextuality and the child reader. In P. Hunt (Ed.), *Understanding children's literature* (pp. 168-179). New York, NY: Routledge.

Wille, E., Gaspard, H., Trautwein, U., Oschatz, K., Scheiter, K., & Nagengast, B. (2018). Gender stereotypes in a children's television program: Effects on girls' and boys' stereotype endorsement, math performance, motivational dispositions, and attitudes. *Frontiers in Psychology*. Doi: https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.02435

Williams, C. (2016). Radical inclusion: Recounting the trans inclusive history of radical feminism. *Transgender Studies Quarterly, 3*(1-2), 254-258.

Winters, K-L., Figg, C., Lenters, K., & Potts, D. (2017). Performing picture books as co-

authorship. In N. Hamer, P. Nodelman & M. Reimer (Eds.). *More words about pictures: Current research on picture books and visual/verbal texts for young people* (pp. 100-115). New York, NY: Routledge.

Wodak, R. (2001a). The discourse-historical approach. In R. Wodak & M. Meyer (Eds.), *Methods of critical discourse analysis* (pp. 63-94). London, UK: SAGE Publications.

Wodak, R. (2001b). What CDA is about: A summary of its history, important concepts and its developments. In R. Wodak & M. Meyer (Eds.), *Methods of critical discourse analysis* (pp. 1-13). London, UK: SAGE Publications.

Wodak, R. (2008). Controversial issues in feminist critical discourse analysis. In K. Harrington, L. Litosseliti, H. Saunson & J. Sunderland (Eds.), *Gender and language research methodologies* (pp. 193-210). New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Wodak, R. (2015). Critical discourse analysis, discourse-historical approach. In K. Tracy (Ed.), *The International Encyclopedia of Language and Social Interactions* (pp. 275-288). West Sussex, UK: John Wiley & Sons Inc.

Wood, L.A., & Kroger, R.O. (2000). *Doing discourse analysis: Methods for studying action in talk and text.* Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

World Professional Association for Transgender Health [WPATH]. (2012). Standards of care for the health of transsexual, transgender, and gender-nonconforming people (7th ed.). *International Journal of Transgenderism*, 13(4), 165-232.

Zack, N. (2009). Transsexuality and Daseia Y. Cavers-Huff. In L.J. Shrage (Ed.), "*You've changed": Sex reassignment and personal identity* (pp. 66-80). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Appendices

Appendix A: List of Titles

Baldacchino, C., & Malenfant, I. (Illustrator). (2014). *Morris Micklewhite and the tangerine dress*. Toronto, ON: Groundwood Books.

Barnes, N. (2018). *Jessie's hat collection*. Olympia, WA.

Benedetto, N. (2015). *About Chris*. Daniel L. King.

Benedetto, N. (2015). *My favorite color is pink*. Daniel L. King.

Bergman S. B., & Malik, S. (Illustrator). (2012). *The adventures of Tulip, birthday wish fairy*. Toronto, ON: Flamingo Rampant Press.

Bergman S. B. & K. D. Diamond (Illustrator). (2012). *Backwards day*. Toronto, ON: Flamingo Rampant Press

Broadhead, T. (2013). *Meet Polkadot*. Olympia, WA: Danger Dot Publishing

Carr, J., & Rumback, B. (Illustrator). (2010). *Be who you are!* Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse.

Fabrikant, A., & Levine, J. (Illustrator). (2013). *When Kayla was Kyle*. Avid Readers Publishing Group.

Finch, M., Finch, P., & Davey, S. (Illustrator). (2018). *Phoenix goes to school*. Philadelphia, PA: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Gladwin, A. (2018). *Ballet boy*. CreateSpace Publishing.

Gruska, D.E., & Wummer, A (Illustrator). (2007). *The only boy in ballet class.* Layton, UT: Gibbs Smith.

Herthel, J., & Jennings, J., & McNicholas, S. (Illustrator). (2014). *I am Jazz*. New York, NY: Dial Books.

Hirst, J., & Wirt, L. (2015). *The gender fairy*. Australia: Oban Road Publishing.

Hoffman, S., & Hoffman, I., & Case, C. (Illustrator). (2014). *Jacob's new dress*. Chicago, IL: Albert Whitman & Company.

Jackson, A., & Udischas, J. (Illustrator). (2017). *It's okay to sparkle*. Kansas City, MO: Debi Jackson.

Keo-Meier, C., Lam, N., & Yang, J. (Illustrator). *Stacey's not a girl*. Houston, TX.

Kiernan-Johnson, E. & Revenaugh, K. (Illustrator). (2012). *Roland Humphrey is wearing a WHAT?* Boulder, CO: Huntley Rahara.

Kilodavis, C., & DeSimone., S. (Illustrator). (2010). *My princess boy*. New York, NY: Aladdin

Labelle, S. (2013). *A girl like any other.* Montreal, QC: Les Éditions SGL

Labelle, S. (2017). *My dad thinks I'm a boy*. Montreal, QC: Les Éditions SGL

Lam, J. (2013). *The adventures of Tina and Jordan*. Xlibris.

Leone, K., & Pfeifer, A. (2014). *But, I'm not a boy*. CreateSpace Publishing.

Naylor, W., & Naylor, B. (Illustrator). (2016). *Truly Willa*. Middletown, DE: CreateSpace Publishing.

Pomranz, C., & Chamberlain, M. (Illustrator). (2014). *Made by Raffi*. London, UK: Francis Lincoln Children's Books.

Savage, S., & Fisher, F. (Illustrator). (2017). *Are you a boy or are you a Girl?* Philadelphia, PA: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Silverman, E., & Hatam, H. (Illustrator). (2018). *Jack, not Jackie*. New York, NY: Little Bee Books.

Varasteh, A. & Pardakhtim, S. (Illustrator). (2018). *Everybody thought I was a boy!* Australia: Anisa Varasteh.

Wong, W. (2011). *When Kathy is Keith*. Xlibris Corporation.

Wong, W. (2014). *It's so gay and it's okay*. Lulu Publishing Services.

Appendix B: List of Figures

Figure 1. Image of Sarah's mind which depicts her affirmed gender. From *But, I'm Not a Boy*, by K. Leone and A. Pfiefer, 2014, Copyright 2014 by CreateSpace Publishing.

Figure 2. One protagonist mentally envisions herself as the girl she sees in her mind. From *The Gender Fairy*, by J. Hirst and L. Wirt, 2015, Australia: Oban Road Publishing. Copyright 2015 by Oban Road Publishing.

Figure 3. Another protagonist mentally envisions himself as the boy he sees in his mind. From *The Gender Fairy*, by J. Hirst and L. Wirt, 2015, Australia: Oban Road Publishing. Copyright 2015 by Oban Road Publishing.

Figure 4. Nick envisions himself as a girl with his 'girl brain'. From *Be Who You Are*, by J. Carr and B. Rumback, 2010, Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse. Copyright 2016 by AuthorHouse.

Figure 5. Nick reaches his hand out to his reflection, Hope. From *Be Who You Are*, by J. Carr and B. Rumback, 2010, Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse. Copyright 2016 by AuthorHouse.

Figure 6. Nick looks into the mirror at his reflection, Hope. From *Be Who You Are*, by J. Carr and B. Rumback, 2010, Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse. Copyright 2016 by AuthorHouse.

Figure 7. Hope has transitioned and stares at her reflection in the mirror which finally reflects the way she feels inside . From *Be Who You Are*, by J. Carr and B. Rumback, 2010, Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse. Copyright 2016 by AuthorHouse.

Figure 8. Sarah gazes into the mirror at her reflection with a yearnful expression. From *But, I'm Not a Boy*, by K. Leone and A. Pfiefer, 2014, Copyright 2014 by CreateSpace Publishing.

Figure 9. An individual peers into the mirror at their reflection while holding out a hand in unity. From *Stacey's Not a Girl*, by C. Keo-Meier, J. Yang, and N. Lam, 2016, Houston, TX. Copyright 2016.

Figure 10. Tina wearing a dress and looking at her mirrored reflection in discontent. From *The Adventures of Tina and Jordan*, by J. Lam, 2013, Xlibris. Copyright 2013 by Xlibris.

Figure 11. Tina donning a cowboy hat and vest while peering into her smiling reflection. From *The Adventures of Tina and Jordan*, by J. Lam, 2013, Xlibris. Copyright 2013 by Xlibris.

Figure 12. Jamie wears a pink shirt and peers into his reflection with a contented expression . From *It's So Gay and It's Okay*, by W. Wong, 2014, Lulu Publishing Services. Copyright 2014 by Lulu Publishing Services.

Figure 13. Jamie wears a black shirt and peers into his reflection with a discontented expression . From *It's So Gay and It's Okay*, by W. Wong, 2014, Lulu Publishing Services. Copyright 2014 by Lulu Publishing Services.

Figure 14. Kathy looks into a mirror which reveals her affirmed gender as a boy. From *When Kathy is Keith*, by W. Wong, 2011, Xlibris Corporation. Copyright 2011 by Xlibris Corporation.

Figure 15. Stacey apprehensively looks on at their reflection in the mirror while clutching their chest. From *Stacey's Not a Girl*, by C. Keo-Meier, J. Yang, and N. Lam, 2016, Houston, TX. Copyright 2016.

Figure 16. Phoenix looks at her reflection in the mirror pondering how her peers will respond to her appearance. From *Phoenix Goes to School*, by M. Finch, P. Finch, and S. Davey, 2018, Philadelphia, PA: Jessica Kingsley Publishers. Copyright 2018 by Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Figure 17. Jessie confidently peers over her shoulder at her reflection in the mirror. From *Jessie's Hat Collection*, by N. Barnes, 2018, Olympia, WA. Copyright 2018.

Figure 18. Polkadot stares into the mirror as terms of the intersectional categories of their identity surround their reflection. From *Meet Polkadot*, by T. Broadhead, 2013, Olympia, WA: Danger Dot Publishing. Copyright 2013 by Danger Dot Publishing.

Figure 19. A nurse holds up the newly-born protagonist, Sam, while marking the assignment of Sam's gender as a boy. From *Everybody Thought I Was a Boy!*, by A. Varasteh and S. Pardakhtim, 2018, Australia: Anisa Varasteh. Copyright 2018 by Anisa Varasteh.

Figure 20. A doctor holds up the newly-born protagonist, Stephie, while observing her genitalia and assigning her as a boy. From *My Dad Thinks I'm a Boy*, by S. Labelle, 2017. Copyright 2017 by Sophie Labelle.

Figure 21. Nick exits the boys' washroom while longingly gazing over at the girls lined up outside of the girls' washroom. From *Be Who You Are*, by J. Carr and B. Rumback, 2010, Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse. Copyright 2016 by AuthorHouse.

Figure 22. Sarah yearnfully looks over at the girls' washroom as she enters the boys' washroom space. From *But, I'm Not a Boy*, by K. Leone and A. Pfiefer, 2014, Copyright 2014 by CreateSpace Publishing.

Figure 23. Two peers jeer the protagonist as she enters a staff washroom. From *A Girl like any Other*, by S. Labelle, 2013, Montreal, QC: Les Éditions SGL. Copyright 2013 by Les Éditions SGL.

Figure 24. Avery stands outside of the girls' bathroom. From *It's Okay to Sparkle*, by A. Jackson & J. Udischas, 2017, Kansas City, MO: Debi Jackson. Copyright 2013 by Debi Jackson.

Figure 25. Chris explains to his teacher that he is a girl from his 'belly button down'. From *About Chris*, by N. Benedetto, 2015, United States of America: Daniel L. King. Copyright 2015 by Daniel L. King.

Figure 26. Chris explains to his teacher that he is a boy from his 'belly button up'. From *About Chris*, by N. Benedetto, 2015, United States of America: Daniel L. King. Copyright 2015 by Daniel L. King.

Figure 27. Two children look beneath their clothes at their genitalia. From *A Girl like any Other*, by S. Labelle, 2013, Montreal, QC: Les Éditions SGL. Copyright 2013 by Les Éditions SGL.

Figure 28. The Princess Boy envisions 'girl things' such as bracelets, necklaces, watches, and purses. From *My Princess Boy*, by C. Kilodavis and S. DeSimone, 2009, New York, NY: Aladdin. Copyright 2009 by Aladdin.

Figure 29. Jazz performs a pirouette alongside her sister who brushes her long hair. From *I am Jazz*, by J. Herthel, J. Jennings, and S. McNicholas, 2014, New York, NY: Dial Books for Young Readers. Copyright 2014 by Dial Books for Young Readers.

Figure 30. Tina and Jordan converse while Tina conceals her hair with a cowboy hat and Jordan uses a pink towel to represent the long hair he yearns to have. From *The Adventures of Tina and Jordan*, by J. Lam, 2013, Xlibris. Copyright 2013 by Xlibris.

Figure 31. Avery is seen surrounded by pink clothing and a pink purse which represent her subjectivity as a girl. From *It's Okay to Sparkle*, by A. Jackson & J. Udischas, 2017, Kansas City, MO: Debi Jackson. Copyright 2013 by Debi Jackson.

Figure 32. The protagonist teaches her parents that she is not a boy but, rather, a girl by distinguishing between a male image and female image . From *A Girl like any Other*, by S. Labelle, 2013, Montreal, QC: Les Éditions SGL. Copyright 2013 by Les Éditions SGL.

Figure 33. The protagonist frustratedly sits isolated in a corner as her male peers play with castles and swords and her female peers play with dolls . From *A Girl like any Other*, by S. Labelle, 2013, Montreal, QC: Les Éditions SGL. Copyright 2013 by Les Éditions SGL.

Figure 34. The protagonist approaches a group of girls making bracelets in an attempt to join them and gain acceptance as a girl. From *A Girl like any Other*, by S. Labelle, 2013, Montreal, QC: Les Éditions SGL. Copyright 2013 by Les Éditions SGL.

Figure 35. Sarah dejectedly plays baseball with her father. From *But, I'm Not a Boy*, by K. Leone and A. Pfiefer, 2014, Copyright 2014 by CreateSpace Publishing.

Figure 36. Sarah blissfully envisions dancing and twirling with her father. From *But, I'm Not a Boy*, by K. Leone and A. Pfiefer, 2014, Copyright 2014 by CreateSpace Publishing.

Figure 37. Sarah hopelessly sits on her bed as a faded image of the girl she wishes to be sits alongside her. From *But, I'm Not a Boy*, by K. Leone and A. Pfiefer, 2014, Copyright 2014 by CreateSpace Publishing.

Figure 38. Nick dresses up in a pink dress and blonde wig to express his desire to live as a girl. From *Be Who You Are*, by J. Carr and B. Rumback, 2010, Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse. Copyright 2016 by AuthorHouse.

Figure 39. David, dressed in a floral shirt and red shorts, extends his arm out to Jamie who is sitting dejected and isolated . From *It's So Gay and It's Okay*, by W. Wong, 2014, Lulu Publishing Services. Copyright 2014 by Lulu Publishing Services.

Figure 40. Tucker performs a jeté alongside two girl ballerinas in pink tutus. From *The Only Boy in Ballet Class*, by D. Gruska and A. Wummer, 2007, Layton, UT: Gibbs Smith. Copyright 2007 by Gibbs Smith.

Figure 41. Mitchell performs a jeté alongside three girl ballerinas in pink tutus. From *Ballet Boy* by A. Gladwin, 2018, CreateSpace Publishing. Copyright 2018 by CreateSpace Publishing.

Figure 42. Tucker's peers taunt him for his adoration of ballet. From *The Only Boy in Ballet Class*, by D. Gruska and A. Wummer, 2007, Layton, UT: Gibbs Smith. Copyright 2007 by Gibbs Smith.

Figure 43. Mitchell's peers jeer at him due to his interest in ballet. From *Ballet Boy* by A. Gladwin, 2018, CreateSpace Publishing. Copyright 2018 by CreateSpace Publishing.

Figure 44. Stacey and three boy peers play videogames together. From *Stacey's Not a Girl*, by C. Keo-Meier, J. Yang, and N. Lam, 2016, Houston, TX. Copyright 2016.

Figure 45. Stacey chronicles their many Halloween costumes over the years: a mermaid, leprechaun, wizard, football player, and Peter Pan. From *Stacey's Not a Girl*, by C. Keo-Meier, J. Yang, and N. Lam, 2016, Houston, TX. Copyright 2016.

Figure 46. Stacey balks at the uniform she is expected to wear to school, which is a jumper dress. From *Stacey's Not a Girl*, by C. Keo-Meier, J. Yang, and N. Lam, 2016, Houston, TX. Copyright 2016.

Figure 47. Stacey's mother is pictured negotiating with the school's principal regarding student uniforms. Stacey is pictured in overalls amongst their girl peers who are in standard jumper dress uniforms. From *Stacey's Not a Girl*, by C. Keo-Meier, J. Yang, and N. Lam, 2016, Houston, TX. Copyright 2016.

Figure 48. After helping her father fix his car, Tina proudly holds a wrench in one of her arms and holds up a fist of strength with the other. From *The Adventures of Tina and Jordan*, by J. Lam, 2013, Xlibris. Copyright 2013 by Xlibris.

Figure 49. Tina towers over two boys in defence of Jordan who is being bullied by them. From *The Adventures of Tina and Jordan*, by J. Lam, 2013, Xlibris. Copyright 2013 by Xlibris.

Figure 50. Jessie sits along a set of stairs in tears when she is forced to wear a dress. From *Jessie's Hat Collection*, by N. Barnes, 2018, Olympia, WA. Copyright 2018.

Figure 51. Jessie and her father excitedly watch a sports game together. From *Jessie's Hat Collection*, by N. Barnes, 2018, Olympia, WA. Copyright 2018.

Figure 52. Jessie and her brother play a game of army together. From *Jessie's Hat Collection*, by N. Barnes, 2018, Olympia, WA. Copyright 2018.

Figure 53. During a family outing at the park, Jackie runs fast ahead while Susan strives to catch up. From *Jack, Not Jackie* by E. Silverman and H. Hatam, 2018, New York, NY: Little Bee Books. Copyright 2018 by Little Bee Books.

Figure 54. Jackie joyfully jumps in a puddle of mud as Susan stands still and slowly wipes the splashing mud off of her face. From *Jack, Not Jackie* by E. Silverman and H. Hatam, 2018, New York, NY: Little Bee Books. Copyright 2018 by Little Bee Books.

Figure 55. Jackie screams and cries after having been given a pink dress for her birthday. From *Jack, Not Jackie* by E. Silverman and H. Hatam, 2018, New York, NY: Little Bee Books. Copyright 2018 by Little Bee Books.

Figure 56. Jackie smiles blissfully while wearing a grey vest and top hat as the pink feminine clothes she has eschewed lay on the floor behind her. From *Jack, Not Jackie* by E. Silverman and H. Hatam, 2018, New York, NY: Little Bee Books. Copyright 2018 by Little Bee Books.

Figure 57. Chris smiles as he proudly holds up a self-portrait of himself as a superhero. From *About Chris*, by N. Benedetto, 2015, United States of America: Daniel L. King. Copyright 2015 by Daniel L. King.

Figure 58. Chris running at top speed while dressed as a cheetah. From *About Chris*, by N. Benedetto, 2015, United States of America: Daniel L. King. Copyright 2015 by Daniel L. King.

Figure 59. Chris making a fierce facial expression while dressed as a lion. From *About Chris*, by N. Benedetto, 2015, United States of America: Daniel L. King. Copyright 2015 by Daniel L. King.

Figure 60. Chris displaying machismo while dressed as a pirate and holding up a sword. From *About Chris*, by N. Benedetto, 2015, United States of America: Daniel L. King. Copyright 2015 by Daniel L. King.

Figure 61. Three of Chris' girl peers drawing flowers and rainbows on their faces. From *About Chris*, by N. Benedetto, 2015, United States of America: Daniel L. King. Copyright 2015 by Daniel L. King.

Figure 62. Chris smiling with scars, a black eye, and missing teeth. From *About Chris*, by N. Benedetto, 2015, United States of America: Daniel L. King. Copyright 2015 by Daniel L. King.

Figure 63. Chris seemingly frustrated that his mother will not allow him to cut his hair the desired way that he envisions it in his mind . From *About Chris*, by N. Benedetto, 2015, United States of America: Daniel L. King. Copyright 2015 by Daniel L. King.

Figure 64. Keith smiling while wearing 'boy clothes' which entail a blue and white striped t-shirt and beige shorts. From *When Kathy is Keith*, by W. Wong, 2011, Xlibris Corporation. Copyright 2011 by Xlibris Corporation.

Figure 65. Kathy sits on her bed in her room with an expression of apprehension. From *When Kathy is Keith*, by W. Wong, 2011, Xlibris Corporation. Copyright 2011 by Xlibris Corporation.

Figure 66. Tiny describing their interests and elucidating that these are not tied to their gender. From *Are You a Boy or Are You a Girl?*, by S. Savage and F. Fisher, 2017, Philadelphia, PA: Jessica Kingsley Publishers. Copyright 2017 by Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Figure 67. Stephie makes a silly expression in the foreground as the text in the background tells readers that she is a girl. From *My Dad Thinks I'm a Boy*, by S. Labelle, 2017. Copyright 2017 by Sophie Labelle.

Figure 68. Stephie, dressed in purple and pink, lifts up a rock to expose the mud and bugs underneath. From *My Dad Thinks I'm a Boy*, by S. Labelle, 2017. Copyright 2017 by Sophie Labelle.

**Figure 69.* Stephie, dressed in a pink t-shirt and a pink tutu, reads a book about space to distract her from the 'father-and-son' wrestling match her father has asked her to attend with him. From *My Dad Thinks I'm a Boy*, by S. Labelle, 2017. Copyright 2017 by Sophie Labelle.

Figure 70. Sam plays soccer with her sister; both are dressed in sports attire. From *Everybody Thought I Was a Boy!*, by A. Varasteh and S. Pardakhtim, 2018, Australia: Anisa Varasteh. Copyright 2018 by Anisa Varasteh.

Figure 71. Sam and her sister wear purple and pink tutus and dance as ballerinas. From *Everybody Thought I Was a Boy!*, by A. Varasteh and S. Pardakhtim, 2018, Australia: Anisa Varasteh. Copyright 2018 by Anisa Varasteh.

Figure 72. Phoenix is seen in a range of outfits as she interacts with various flowers. From *Phoenix Goes to School*, by M. Finch, P. Finch, and S. Davey, 2018, Philadelphia, PA: Jessica Kingsley Publishers. Copyright 2018 by Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Figure 73. Phoenix is seen in a range of outfits as she interacts with various flowers. From *Phoenix Goes to School*, by M. Finch, P. Finch, and S. Davey, 2018, Philadelphia, PA: Jessica Kingsley Publishers. Copyright 2018 by Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Figure 74. Phoenix and three peers observe rocks and bugs outdoors. From *Phoenix Goes to School*, by M. Finch, P. Finch, and S. Davey, 2018, Philadelphia, PA: Jessica Kingsley Publishers. Copyright 2018 by Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Figure 75. Tiny plays and dances with three peers. From *Are You a Boy or Are You a Girl?*, by S. Savage and F. Fisher, 2017, Philadelphia, PA: Jessica Kingsley Publishers. Copyright 2017 by Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Figure 76. Sam plays with teddy bears and blocks with two other peers. From *Everybody Thought I Was a Boy!*, by A. Varasteh and S. Pardakhtim, 2018, Australia: Anisa Varasteh. Copyright 2018 by Anisa Varasteh.

Figure 77. Jessie peripherally gazes at another female peer who has long blonde hair, make-up, and is wearing a green headband and green miniskirt. From *Jessie's Hat Collection*, by N. Barnes, 2018, Olympia, WA. Copyright 2018.

Figure 78. Kyle watches afar as his peers play with together with cars and trucks . From *When Kayla was Kyle*, by A. Fabrikant and J. Levine, 2013, Avid Readers Publishing Group. Copyright 2013 by Avid Readers Publishing Group.

Figure 79. Jazz stands at a distance from her girl peers as she suggests to readers that she is different. From *I am Jazz*, by J. Herthel, J. Jennings, and S. McNicholas, 2014, New York, NY: Dial Books for Young Readers. Copyright 2014 by Dial Books for Young Readers.

Figure 80. Jazz stands aside as her girl peers confidently engage in ballet dancing alongside their dance instructor. From *I am Jazz*, by J. Herthel, J. Jennings, and S. McNicholas, 2014, New York, NY: Dial Books for Young Readers. Copyright 2014 by Dial Books for Young Readers.

Figure 81. The protagonist stands alone in a corner with her back facing two peers who taunt her. From *A Girl like any Other*, by S. Labelle, 2013, Montreal, QC: Les Éditions SGL. Copyright 2013 by Les Éditions SGL.

Figure 82. The protagonist stands aside as her peers play basketball and socialize in the school yard. From *A Girl like any Other*, by S. Labelle, 2013, Montreal, QC: Les Éditions SGL. Copyright 2013 by Les Éditions SGL.

Figure 83. The protagonist sits by herself on the school bus as all of the other children sit alongside one another and socialize. From *A Girl like any Other*, by S. Labelle, 2013, Montreal, QC: Les Éditions SGL. Copyright 2013 by Les Éditions SGL.

Figure 84. Raffi looks at a wall of self-portraits made by other students. From *Made by Raffi*, by C. Pomeranz and M. Chamberlain, 2014, London, UK: Frances Lincoln Children's Books. Copyright 2014 by Frances Lincoln Children's Books.

Figure 85. Stacey is placed between a red female symbol and blue male symbol and apprehensively looks at the male symbol. From *Stacey's Not a Girl*, by C. Keo-Meier, J. Yang, and N. Lam, 2016, Houston, TX. Copyright 2016.

Figure 86. Patty displays an expression of discomfort while dressed in a blue cap, blue top, blue shorts, blue socks, and blue and red sneakers. From *My Favorite Color is Pink*, by N. Benedetto, 2015, United States of America: Daniel L. King. Copyright 2015 by Daniel L. King.

Figure 87. Patty expresses an expression of ambivalence when dressed as a superhero. From *My Favorite Color is Pink*, by N. Benedetto, 2015, United States of America: Daniel L. King. Copyright 2015 by Daniel L. King.

Figure 88. Roland, dressed 'like a guy', despondently sits on a set of stairs with his hands resting upon his face. From *Roland Humphrey is Wearing a WHAT?*, by E. Kiernan-Johnson and K. Revenaugh, 2012, Boulder, CO: Huntley Rahara Press. Copyright 2012 by Huntley Rahara Press.

Figure 89. Roland stands beside two girl peers and smiles while dressed in a purple t-shirt, pink tutu, purple leggings and purple shoes. From *Roland Humphrey is Wearing a WHAT?*, by E. Kiernan-Johnson and K. Revenaugh, 2012, Boulder, CO: Huntley Rahara Press. Copyright 2012 by Huntley Rahara Press.

Figure 90. Stephie on a fishing boat with her father while apprehensively holding a worm who speaks the words 'help me'. From *My Dad Thinks I'm a Boy*, by S. Labelle, 2017. Copyright 2017 by Sophie Labelle.

Figure 91. Jamie sits on his bed covering his face as a pile of dolls and pink items lay on the floor before him. From *It's So Gay and It's Okay*, by W. Wong, 2014, Lulu Publishing Services. Copyright 2014 by Lulu Publishing Services.

Figure 92. Jamie walks through the halls of his school hunched over in agony while clutching a basketball to his chest and holding a green backpack in his other hand. From *It's So Gay and It's Okay*, by W. Wong, 2014, Lulu Publishing Services. Copyright 2014 by Lulu Publishing Services.

Figure 93. Jamie tearfully rips apart a photo of his friend Amy and himself. From *It's So Gay and It's Okay*, by W. Wong, 2014, Lulu Publishing Services. Copyright 2014 by Lulu Publishing Services.

Figure 94. Raffi sits in bed speaking to his mother and ponders if there is 'such a thing' as a tomgirl. From *Made by Raffi*, by C. Pomeranz and M. Chamberlain, 2014, London, UK: Frances Lincoln Children's Books. Copyright 2014 by Frances Lincoln Children's Books.

Figure 95. Stacey sits dejectedly with their hands upon their face while envisioning their peers gathered at a party, happily celebrating a friend's birthday. From *Stacey's Not a Girl*, by C. Keo-Meier, J. Yang, and N. Lam, 2016, Houston, TX. Copyright 2016.

Figure 96. Jazz sitting between her father and mother. From *I am Jazz*, by J. Herthel, J. Jennings, and S. McNicholas, 2014, New York, NY: Dial Books for Young Readers. Copyright 2014 by Dial Books for Young Readers.

Figure 97. Tiny posing for a family photo with their father, mother, little sister, baby sibling, and pets. From *Are You a Boy or Are You a Girl?*, by S. Savage and F. Fisher, 2017, Philadelphia, PA: Jessica Kingsley Publishers. Copyright 2017 by Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Figure 98. Jessie hugging her father as her mother looks on. From *Jessie's Hat Collection*, by N. Barnes, 2018, Olympia, WA. Copyright 2018.

Figure 99. Sam's father happily holds her up on his shoulders as Sam and her mother smile along. From *Everybody Thought I Was a Boy!*, by A. Varasteh and S. Pardakhtim, 2018, Australia: Anisa Varasteh. Copyright 2018 by Anisa Varasteh.

Figure 100. Sam's father holds her in his arms as her mother peers over his shoulder. From *Everybody Thought I Was a Boy!*, by A. Varasteh and S. Pardakhtim, 2018, Australia: Anisa Varasteh. Copyright 2018 by Anisa Varasteh.

Figure 101. Sam surprises her family when stating that she is a girl. Her mother is reading a magazine called 'woman', her father is reading a newspaper, and her sister is playing with blocks. From *Everybody Thought I Was a Boy!*, by A. Varasteh and S. Pardakhtim, 2018, Australia: Anisa Varasteh. Copyright 2018 by Anisa Varasteh.

Figure 102. Phoenix poses with her father, mother, brother, and dog, and introduces them as her family. From *Phoenix Goes to School*, by M. Finch, P. Finch, and S. Davey, 2018, Philadelphia, PA: Jessica Kingsley Publishers. Copyright 2018 by Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Figure 103. While at the park, Jackie runs as Susan trails behind, while their mother and father sit laughing on a bench. From *Jack, Not Jackie* by E. Silverman and H. Hatam, 2018, New York, NY: Little Bee Books. Copyright 2018 by Little Bee Books.

Figure 104. Keith tries to explain to his parents that he is a boy while his father reads a newspaper and his mother prepares a meal. From *When Kathy is Keith*, by W. Wong, 2011, Xlibris Corporation. Copyright 2011 by Xlibris Corporation.

Figure 105. Keith smiles after having his gender affirmed while holding both of his parents' hands and standing in between them. From *When Kathy is Keith*, by W. Wong, 2011, Xlibris Corporation. Copyright 2011 by Xlibris Corporation.

Figure 106. Keith sits between his parents as they all smile and share a group hug. From *When Kathy is Keith*, by W. Wong, 2011, Xlibris Corporation. Copyright 2011 by Xlibris Corporation.

Figure 107. Stacey stands between both of their parents as they all hug one another. From *Stacey's Not a Girl*, by C. Keo-Meier, J. Yang, and N. Lam, 2016, Houston, TX. Copyright 2016.

Figure 108. Sarah's parents hold her between them during a group hug. From *But, I'm Not a Boy*, by K. Leone and A. Pfiefer, 2014, Copyright 2014 by CreateSpace Publishing.

Figure 109. A family portrait of Sarah, her mother, and her father, prior to the affirmation of Sarah as a girl. From *But, I'm Not a Boy*, by K. Leone and A. Pfiefer, 2014, Copyright 2014 by CreateSpace Publishing.

Figure 110. A family portrait of Sarah, her mother, and her father, after the affirmation of Sarah as a girl. From *But, I'm Not a Boy*, by K. Leone and A. Pfiefer, 2014, Copyright 2014 by CreateSpace Publishing.

Figure 111. While at the park, Raffi jumps on his father as his mother and dog playfully watch. From *Made by Raffi*, by C. Pomeranz and M. Chamberlain, 2014, London, UK: Frances Lincoln Children's Books. Copyright 2014 by Frances Lincoln Children's Books.

Figure 112. Roland poses at the beach with his father, sister, and mother. From *Roland Humphrey is Wearing a WHAT?*, by E. Kiernan-Johnson and K. Revenaugh, 2012, Boulder, CO: Huntley Rahara Press. Copyright 2012 by Huntley Rahara Press.

Figure 113. Avery and her father and mother become emotional upon Avery's proclamation that she is a girl. From *It's Okay to Sparkle*, by A. Jackson & J. Udischas, 2017, Kansas City, MO: Debi Jackson. Copyright 2013 by Debi Jackson.

Appendix C: Book Information and Story Summaries (By Year)

*Pronoun usage in summaries corresponds to usage within texts

Count	Year	Title	Main Character(s)	Author(s)	Illustrator(s)	Summary
1	2007	**The Only Boy in Ballet Class** (32 pages)	Tucker	Denise Eliana Gruska	Denise Eliana Gruska, Amy Wummer	Tucker loves to dance; although he is supported by his mother, he is repeatedly discouraged by his Uncle Frank and is marginalized and bullied by his peers at school. His safe space is his ballet class, where no one teases him despite the fact that he is the only boy in attendance. One day, his peers are short one player on their football team and ask him to join the game. His Uncle Frank provides consent on behalf of Tucker, despite Tucker not wanting to play. Tucker's ballet dance moves allow him to win the game, and, as a result, he is accepted by his peers and his Uncle Frank.
2	2009	**My Princess Boy** (36 pages)	'Princess Boy'	Cheryl Kilodavis	Suzanne DeSimone	A book about a young 'Princess Boy' as told through the point of view of his mother. This book tells the story of a mother's son who is teased and met with resistance from others for dressing like a princess and enjoying "girl things." The book explains that despite the challenges her son has faced in regard to acceptance from others, he continues to embrace himself in the face of adversity.
3	2010	**Be Who You Are** (32 pages)	Nick/Hope	Jennifer Carr	Ben Rumback	This is the story of Nick, who has always seen himself as a girl despite the fact that 'his body looked like a boy'. Nick is constantly told by teachers at school that he is a boy, which disheartens him. His parents decide to take him to see Dr. Bee, who encourages Nick to follow his inner self. He then begins his transition from Nick to 'Hope'.
4	2011	**When Kathy is Keith** (36 pages)	Kathy/Keith	Wallace Wong	Wallace Wong	Kathy tries to tell others around her that she is a boy, but she is teased and met with responses indicating that she is being "silly" and will "grow out of it."

						After seeing the sadness Kathy exudes, her parents decide to see several doctors to better understand her situation. The visits help Kathy's parents understand how she feels, and they finally accept her and support her as she transitions from Kathy to 'Keith'.
5	2012	**Backwards Day** (34 pages)	Andrea/Andy	S. Bear Bergman	KD Diamond	On planet 'Tenalp', one day a year is deemed 'Backwards Day' where everything and everyone is 'backwards' for that day only. This was Andrea's favourite day of the year as this was the only day she turned into a boy. Andrea did not like being a girl, and anxiously awaited Backwards Day each year. One year, Andrea did not turn into a boy on Backwards Day, but remained a girl. The next day, however, Andrea turned into a boy and remained that way for the duration of the year. Ecstatic, Andrea asks to be called Andy from then on. Andy's parents become concerned with the switch and take him to a 'Backwardsologist' to help them understand why this change occurred. The Backwardsologist explains that Andy is now "set right", and that this is his true self.
6	2012	**Roland Humphrey is Wear a WHAT?** (40 pages)	Roland Humphrey	Eileen Kiernan-Johnson	Katrina Revenaugh	Roland Humphrey does not understand why girls are allowed to like both 'girl' things *and* 'boy' things, but boys are not. He struggles to abide by the 'rules' dictated to him by his friends stating that: boys must like dark colours, sports, and trains, and must not like pink, or wear clothes with flowers, polka dots, or feathers. Roland decides to remain true to himself and disregard the 'rules'. To his surprise, his peers are finally able to see the absurdity of these 'rules' and embrace Roland for who he is.
7	2012	**The Adventures of Tulip:**	David/Daniela	S. Bear Bergman	Suzy Malik	Tulip, a Birthday Wish Fairy, is tasked with fulfilling the wishes of all children in the United States and Canada, on their ninth

		Birthday Wish Fairy (34 pages)				birthday. Tulip receives a wish from a child named David who wants to be 'Daniela'. Unsure of how to approach this, Tulip seeks direction from the Wish Captain, who gives him a few lessons on gender. Tulip goes on to fulfill David's wish, and follows their transition to Daniela.
8	2013	**A Girl Like Any Other** (32 pages)	(no name)	Sophie Labelle		In this story, a child tells readers of the struggles she faces in not being perceived as 'a real girl'. She discusses her experiences being teased, bullied, and marginalized at school. In spite of the adversity she faces, she embraces herself and expresses that regardless of the way she looks, behaves, or dresses, she is still 'a girl like any other'.
9	2013	**Meet Polkadot** (32 pages)	Polkadot	Talcott Broadhead	Talcott Broadhead	This book's main character, Polkadot, is described as a 'transgender child who doesn't identify as a girl or a boy'. The book highlights 'the challenges and beauty' that Polkadot endures being a non-binary, transgender child. The book also broadly introduces children to general concepts surrounding gender identities and pronouns.
10	2013	**The Adventures of Tina and Jordan** (44 pages)	Tina Jordan	Jessica Lam	Jessica Lam	A story about a child named Tina who is not happy being socialized as a girl. Tina sometimes pretends she is a boy, and enjoys climbing trees, playing with cars, and dressing up as a cowboy; however, her parents do not accept such behaviour. Tina meets a child named Jordan who is in a similar situation; he is being raised and socialized as a boy, but often pretends that he is a girl. Jordan's mother talks to Tina's mother and eases her qualms about Tina's behaviour. Tina and her mother have a talk about Tina being "different", and her mother accepts Tina the way she is.
11	2013	**When Kayla was Kyle** (32 pages)	Kyle/Kayla	Amy Fabrikant	Jennifer Levine	The story of Kayla who was born as Kyle. This book describes Kayla's journey to becoming a transgirl, including the relentless teasing and marginalization he

						experiences as Kyle. Once Kyle decides to embrace Kayla, life takes a surprising turn for the better.
12	2014	**But, I'm Not a Boy** (32 pages)	David/Sarah	Katie Leone	Alison Pfeifer	A story about a girl named Sarah whom everyone thinks is a boy. Though miserable from being called David and being told that she is a boy, Sarah continues to live as a boy to please those around her. Sarah's parents notice her constant despondence and ask her to tell them what is bothering her. Sarah discloses her true feelings to her parents, who, although initially shocked and seemingly confused, come to understand and accept Sarah for the girl she is.
13	2014	**I am Jazz** (32 pages)	Jazz	Jessica Herthel and Jazz Jennings	Shelagh McNicholas	In this story, a transgirl named Jazz's tells readers about her experiences growing up. She discusses the ways in which pretending she was a boy "felt like telling a lie", and how her transition began. Jazz uncovers the trials, tribulations, and perseverance involved in becoming her true self.
14	2014	**It's So Gay and It's Okay** (34 pages)	Jamie	Wallace Wong	Wallace Wong	Jamie loves wearing pink, playing with dolls, and playing with his best friend Amy. The children at school tease him and constantly tell him that such behaviour is "gay". Jamie surrenders and begins wearing black, playing sports, and ends his friendship with Amy. Miserable, Jamie continues on by suppressing his true self, until he meets a peer named David, teaches him a valuable lesson on remaining true to oneself.
15	2014	**Jacob's New Dress** (32 pages)	Jacob	Sarah and Ian Hoffman	Chris Case	This is a book about a boy named Jacob who navigates a world in which boys do not wear dresses. Jacob is bullied and teased by the children when he decides to wear a dress to school. Rather than relent and succumb to the wishes of his peers, Jacob perseveres and finds strength in his individuality.
16	2014	**Made by Raffi**	Raffi	Craig Pomranz	Margaret Chamberlain	Raffi enjoys singing, likes wearing bright colours, and does not enjoy noise and rough play.

		(40 pages)				For these reasons, he feels very 'different'. He often wonders why is not like the other children, and wonders if he is 'strange or weird'. Raffi finds a new passion in knitting, and although he is teased by his peers for this, it becomes the very talent that all the children admire about him.
17	2014	**Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress** (32 pages)	Morris Micklewhite	Christine Baldacchino	Isabelle Malenfant	Morris loves wearing his tangerine dress, but his friends do not approve. He is teased, ridiculed, bullied, and excluded by his peers. While some of his peers eventually come to accept Morris, one continues to insist that "boys don't wear dresses." Morris responds to this by saying: "this boy does."
18	2015	**About Chris** (40 pages)	Chris	Nina Benedetto	Nina Benedetto	Story about a transboy named Chris, as told by his Pre-Kindergarten teacher, Ms. Nina. Chris enjoys things like trucks, cars, mud, art, and cowboy boots. Chris becomes angry when Ms. Nina refers to him as 'Christina', and explains that from his belly button down, he is a girl, and from his belly button up, he is a boy. The book concludes with 'Wonder Wisdom' questions for children to consider.
19	2015	**My Favorite Color is Pink** (40 pages)	Patty/Patrick	Nina Benedetto	Nina Benedetto	Patty's experience of being a transgirl despite others wanting her to dress and act 'like a boy' due to her having a 'boy body'. The book contains 'Wonder Wisdom' questions regarding gender, for children to ponder.
20	2015	**The Gender Fairy** (36 pages)	(two characters; no names)	Jo Hirst	Libby Wirt	Two babies are born; one is labelled a 'girl', while the other is labelled a 'boy'. The children are raised and socialized according to traditional, stereotypical roles associated with their respective sex/gender assigned at birth. Both children are miserable and feel that their assigned genders are incorrect. The 'Gender Fairy' eases their concerns by telling them that only they know who they truly are, and encourages them to change their clothes, toy, and pronoun preferences to suit themselves. The story ends with

						the children asking the Gender Fairy if they are a boy or a girl, to which the Gender Fairy responds, “does it matter?”
21	2016	**Stacey’s Not a Girl** (41 pages)	Stacey	Colt Keo-Meier (Author), Nine Lam (Designer)	Jessie Yang	A story about Stacey, who is certain they are not a girl, but not certain that they are a boy. The book discusses Stacey’s experiences navigating life while navigating ‘gender’. Stacey’s parents take them to a doctor to discuss the situation and are introduced to several gender identities aside from those involving ‘boys’ and ‘girls’. The book concludes with Stacey coming to terms with not being a boy nor a girl, and stating that they are “just going to be a kid.”
22	2016	**Truly Willa** (32 pages)	Willa	Willa Naylor	Bex Naylor	In this book, Willa takes readers on her journey through life as a transgirl. She expresses that she has always felt like a girl, ‘even if the outside didn’t match’. Willa discusses the long and emotionally painful process she had to endure in becoming her true self, but now uses her story to help others who may be in a similar situation.
23	2017	**Are You a Boy or a Girl?** (28 pages)	Tiny	Sarah Savage	Fox Fisher	This is a story of Tiny’s experience identifying neither as a boy nor as a girl. The book explores Tiny’s likes and dislikes and experiences at school. A bully, named Buster, continuously teases Tiny, until one day Tiny explains to Buster what it really means to be a boy or a girl. The book concludes with Tiny’s friend, Alfie, asking if Tiny is a boy or a girl. Tiny replies “I am me!”
24	2017	**It’s Okay to Sparkle** (32 pages)	Avery	Avery Jackson	Jessica Udischas	A story of Avery’s journey through life as a transgirl. Afraid that her parents would stop loving her if she told them the truth, Avery tries to conceal her identity until she no longer can. Avery encourages children to be themselves as she discusses the challenges and triumphs of her life, from birth to present.
25	2017	**My Dad Thinks I’m a Boy**	Stephie	Sophie Labelle	Sophie Labelle	Stephie is a girl who has a big problem—her dad thinks she is a boy. In this story, Stephie

		(36 pages)				chronicles how she was misgendered by her doctor and subsequently raised as a boy. After attesting that she is, in fact, a girl, her mother understands but her father can't let go.
26	2018	**Everybody Thought I was a Boy!** (27 pages)	Sam	Anisa Varasteh	Sholeh Pardakhtim	In this story, Sam invites readers into her experience as a girl when everyone else thinks she is a boy.
27	2018	**Jack (Not Jackie)** (40 pages)	Jackie/Jack	Erica Silverman	Holly Hatam	Jack's experience of becoming a transgender boy. Told from the perspective of Jack's older sister, Susan, who experiences a difficult time with Jack's journey.
28	2018	**Jessie's Hat Collection** (26 pages)	Jessie	Nick Barnes	--	Jessie has an extensive hat collection, ranging from baseball caps, to camouflage caps, to engineer caps. Jessie's hats are so integral to her sense of self that she never removes them—not even in the shower! Jessie is aware that she is not like the 'other' girls at school and is sometimes teased for 'looking like a boy'. Upon reflecting on this, Jessie realizes that she actually is a boy and receives the support of her parents and friends in embarking on her journey to boyhood [pronouns reflect book]
29	2018	**Phoenix Goes to School** (40 pages)	Phoenix	Michelle Finch & Phoenix Finch	Sharon Davey	Phoenix loves all things from cars, to dancing, to flowers. On her first day back at school, Phoenix is apprehensive about wearing her new dress out of the fear that her peers will not accept her for being 'different'. To her surprise, she is met with wide acceptance from everyone.
30	2018	**Ballet Boy** (30 pages)	Mitchell	Anfaney Gladwin		Mitchell lives and breathes his passion for ballet. Despite the happiness he experiences from ballet, his father is resistance to his interest and his peers tease him for engaging in a 'girl' activity. Nonetheless, Mitchell perseveres and continues to pursue his dancing passion.

Appendix D: Recommended Ages for Readers

Age Range	Book Title	Recommendation Source
3-5	Everybody Thought I Was a Boy! *	Author's Recommendation*
3-7	Are You a Boy or a Girl?	Amazon: https://www.amazon.com
	Backwards Day	The Rainbow Times: http://www.therainbowtimesmass.com
	But, I'm Not a Boy	Amazon: https://www.amazon.com
	Jack (Not Jackie)	Amazon: https://www.amazon.com
	Phoenix Goes to School	Amazon: https://www.amazon.com
	Roland Humphrey is Wearing a What?	Treasury Islands: https://treasuryislands.wordpress.com
3-8	10, 000 Dresses	The Rainbow Times: http://www.therainbowtimesmass.com
	Be Who You Are	The Rainbow Times: http://www.therainbowtimesmass.com
	My Princess Boy	The Rainbow Times: http://www.therainbowtimesmass.com
	Sparkle Boy	Kirkus: https://www.kirkusreviews.com
3+	Are You a Boy or a Girl?	Book Depository: https://www.bookdepository.com
4-7	Jacob's New Dress	Publisher's Weekly: https://www.publishersweekly.com
	Made by Raffi	Kirkus: https://www.kirkusreviews.com
	One of a Kind Like Me	Out Proud Families: http://www.outproudfamilies.com
	Sparkle Boy	Amazon: https://www.amazon.com
4-8	Are You a Boy or a Girl?	The Rainbow Times: http://www.therainbowtimesmass.com
	Backwards Day	The Rainbow Times: http://www.therainbowtimesmass.com
	Be Who You Are	Amazon: https://www.amazon.com
	I am Jazz	Amazon: https://www.amazon.com
	It's So Gay and It's Okay	Amazon: https://www.amazon.com
	Jack (Not Jackie)*	Author's Recommendation*
	Jacob's New Dress	Amazon: https://www.amazon.com
	Julian is a Mermaid	Amazon: https://www.amazon.com
	Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress	Amazon: https://www.amazon.com
	My Dad Thinks I'm a Boy*	Author's Recommendation*
	My Princess Boy	Simon and Schuster: http://www.simonandschuster.ca
	One of a Kind Like Me	Amazon: https://www.amazon.com
	Roland Humphrey is Wearing a WHAT?	Diverse Kids Books: https://diversekidsbooks.org
	Sparkle Boy	Here Wee Read: http://hereweeread.com
	The Adventures of Tulip: Birthday Wish Fairy	The Rainbow Times: http://www.therainbowtimesmass.com
	The Only Boy in Ballet Class	Amazon: https://www.amazon.com
	Truly Willa	Amazon: https://www.amazon.com
	When Kathy is Keith	The Rainbow Times: http://www.therainbowtimesmass.com
	When Kayla was Kyle	Amazon: https://www.amazon.com
	It's Okay to Sparkle	Goodreads: https://www.goodreads.com
	The Gender Fairy	Sexed Rescue: https://sexedrescue.com
	The Royal Heart	Barnes and Noble: https://www.barnesandnoble.com
	Ballet Boy	Book Roo: https://bookroo.com/books/ballet-boy

4-12	It’s Okay to Sparkle*	Author’s Recommendation*
	Stacey’s Not a Girl	Amazon: https://www.amazon.com
4+	Meet Polkadot	ABC Book Reviews: http://abcbookreviews.blogspot.com
	The Gender Fairy	Amazon: https://www.amazon.com
5-6	Sparkle Boy	Barnes and Noble: https://www.barnesandnoble.com
	The Royal Heart	Amazon: https://www.amazon.com
5-7	10, 000 Dresses	Letterbox Library: https://www.letterboxlibrary.com
5-9	10, 000 Dresses	Generous Space: https://www.generousspace.ca
	Made By Raffi	Amazon: https://www.amazon.com
5-12	About Chris	Wonder Wisdom Books: http://wonderwisdombooks.com
	My Favorite Color is Pink	Wonder Wisdom Books: http://wonderwisdombooks.com
5 +	10, 000 Dresses	Beth Stilborn: https://www.bethstilborn.com
	When Kathy is Keith	Diverse Kids Books: https://diversekidsbooks.org
	Phoenix Goes to School*	Author’s Recommendation*
6-8	My Princess Boy	Kirkus: https://www.kirkusreviews.com
6-10	When Kayla Was Kyle	ADL: https://www.adl.org
6-12	A Girl Like Any Other*	Author’s Recommendation*
	Jessie’s Hat Collection	Amazon: https://www.amazon.com

Appendix E: Ages of Main Characters (as mentioned in texts)

Book Title	Character Name	Age
My Princess Boy	‘Princess boy’	4 years old
Everybody Thought I was a Boy	Sam	5 years old
It’s Okay to Sparkle	Avery	7 years old
My Dad Thinks I’m a Boy	Stephie	7 years old
Phoenix Goes to School	Phoenix	7 years old
The Adventures of Tulip	Daniel/Daniela	9 years old
Backwards Day	Andrea/Andy	“About your age”
Ballet Boy	Mitchell	‘First grade’

Appendix F: Character Subject Positions

Count	Year	Title	Main Character(s)	Subject Position
1	2007	The Only Boy in Ballet Class	Tucker	Gender Non-Conforming Boy
2	2009	My Princess Boy	'Princess Boy'	Gender Non-Conforming Boy
3	2010	Be Who You Are	Nick/Hope	Transgender Girl
4	2011	When Kathy is Keith	Kathy/Keith	Transgender Boy
5	2012	Backwards Day	Andrea/Andy	Transgender Boy
6	2012	Roland Humphrey is Wear a WHAT?	Roland Humphrey	Gender Non-Conforming Boy
7	2012	The Adventures of Tulip: Birthday Wish Fairy	David/Daniela	Transgender Girl
8	2013	A Girl Like Any Other	(no name)	Transgender Girl
9	2013	Meet Polkadot	Polkadot	Non-Binary
10	2013	The Adventures of Tina and Jordan	Tina Jordan	Tina: Transgender Boy Jordan: Transgender Girl
11	2013	When Kayla was Kyle	Kyle/Kayla	Transgender Girl
12	2014	But, I'm Not a Boy	David/Sarah	Transgender Girl
13	2014	I am Jazz	Jazz	Transgender Girl
14	2014	It's So Gay and It's Okay	Jamie	Gender Non-Conforming Boy
15	2014	Jacob's New Dress	Jacob	Gender Non-Conforming Boy
16	2014	Made by Raffi	Raffi	Gender Non-Conforming Boy
17	2014	Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress	Morris Micklewhite	Gender Non-Conforming Boy
18	2015	About Chris	Chris	Transgender Boy
19	2015	My Favorite Color is Pink	Patty/Patrick	Transgender Girl
20	2015	The Gender Fairy	(two children; no names)	Transgender Girl and Transgender Boy

21	2016	Stacey's Not a Girl	Stacey	Non-Binary
22	2016	Truly Willa	Willa	Transgender Girl
23	2017	Are You a Boy or a Girl?	Tiny	Non-Binary
24	2017	It's Okay to Sparkle	Avery	Transgender Girl
25	2017	My Dad Thinks I'm a Boy	Stephie	Transgender Girl
26	2018	Everybody Thought I was a Boy!	Sam	Transgender Girl
27	2018	Jack (Not Jackie)	Jackie/Jack	Transgender Boy
28	2018	Jessie's Hat Collection	Jessie	Transgender Boy
29	2018	Phoenix Goes to School	Phoenix	Transgender Girl
30	2018	Ballet Boy	Mitchell	Gender Non-Conforming Boy

Appendix G: Family Depictions

Figure 96. Jazz sitting between her father and mother. From *I am Jazz*, by J. Herthel, J. Jennings, and S. McNicholas, 2014, New York, NY: Dial Books for Young Readers. Copyright 2014 by Dial Books for Young Readers. Reprinted with permission.

Figure 97. Tiny posing for a family photo with their father, mother, little sister, baby sibling, and pets. From *Are You a Boy or Are You a Girl?*, by S. Savage and F. Fisher, 2017, Philadelphia, PA: Jessica Kingsley Publishers. Copyright 2017 by Jessica Kingsley Publishers. Reprinted with permission.

Figure 98[12]

[12] Figure 98 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was an illustration of Jessie hugging her father as her mother looks on. Original source: Leone, K., & Pfeifer, A. (2014). *But, I'm Not a Boy*. CreateSpace Publishing.

Figure 99. Sam's father happily holds her up on his shoulders as Sam and her mother smile along. From *Everybody Thought I Was a Boy!*, by A. Varasteh and S. Pardakhtim, 2018, Australia: Anisa Varasteh. Copyright 2018 by Anisa Varasteh. Reprinted with permission.

Figure 100. Sam's father holds her in his arms as her mother peers over his shoulder. From *Everybody Thought I Was a Boy!*, by A. Varasteh and S. Pardakhtim, 2018, Australia: Anisa Varasteh. Copyright 2018 by Anisa Varasteh. Reprinted with permission.

Figure 101. Sam surprises her family when stating that she is a girl. Her mother is reading a magazine called ‘woman’, her father is reading a newspaper, and her sister is playing with blocks. From *Everybody Thought I Was a Boy!*, by A. Varasteh and S. Pardakhtim, 2018, Australia: Anisa Varasteh. Copyright 2018 by Anisa Varasteh. Reprinted with permission.

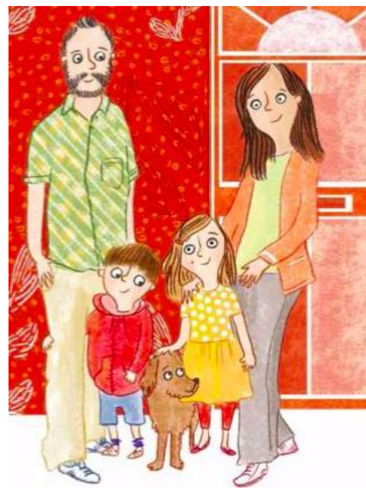

Figure 102. Phoenix poses with her father, mother, brother, and dog, and introduces them as her family. From *Phoenix Goes to School*, by M. Finch, P. Finch, and S. Davey, 2018, Philadelphia, PA: Jessica Kingsley Publishers. Copyright 2018 by Jessica Kingsley Publishers. Reprinted with permission.

Figure 103. While at the park, Jackie runs as Susan trails behind, while their mother and father sit laughing on a bench. From *Jack, Not Jackie* by E. Silverman and H. Hatam, 2018, New York, NY: Little Bee Books. Copyright 2018 by Little Bee Books. Reprinted with permission.

Figure 104. Keith tries to explain to his parents that he is a boy while his father reads a newspaper and his mother prepares a meal. From *When Kathy is Keith*, by W. Wong, 2011, Xlibris Corporation. Copyright 2011 by Xlibris Corporation. Reprinted with permission.

Figure 105. Keith smiles after having his gender affirmed while holding both of his parents' hands and standing in between them. From *When Kathy is Keith*, by W. Wong, 2011, Xlibris Corporation. Copyright 2011 by Xlibris Corporation. Reprinted with permission.

Figure 106. Keith sits between his parents as they all smile and share a group hug. From *When Kathy is Keith*, by W. Wong, 2011, Xlibris Corporation. Copyright 2011 by Xlibris Corporation. Reprinted with permission.

Figure 107. Stacey stands between both of their parents as they all hug one another. From *Stacey's Not a Girl*, by C. Keo-Meier, J. Yang, and N. Lam, 2016, Houston, TX. Copyright 2016. Reprinted with permission.

Figure 108[13]

[13] Figure 108 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was an illustration of Sarah's parents holding her between them during a group hug. Original source: Leone, K., & Pfeifer, A. (2014). *But, I'm Not a Boy*. CreateSpace Publishing.

Figure 109[14]

Figure 110[15]

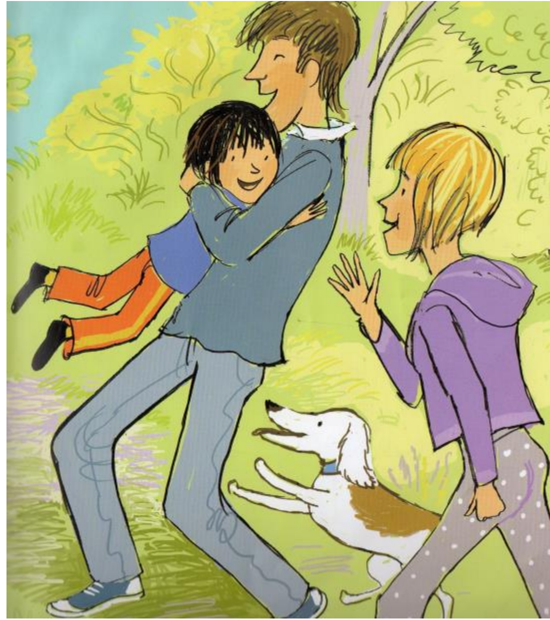

Figure 111. While at the park, Raffi jumps on his father as his mother and dog playfully watch. From *Made by Raffi*, by C. Pomeranz and M. Chamberlain, 2014, London, UK: Frances Lincoln Children's Books. Copyright 2014 by Frances Lincoln Children's Books. Reprinted with permission.

[14] Figure 109 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was an illustration of Sarah, her mother, and her father, prior to the affirmation of Sarah as a girl. Original source: Leone, K., & Pfeifer, A. (2014). *But, I'm Not a Boy*. CreateSpace Publishing.

[15] Figure 110 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was an illustration of Sarah, her mother, and her father, after the affirmation of Sarah as a girl. Original source: Leone, K., & Pfeifer, A. (2014). *But, I'm Not a Boy*. CreateSpace Publishing.

Figure 112. Roland poses at the beach with his father, sister, and mother. From *Roland Humphrey is Wearing a WHAT?*, by E. Kiernan-Johnson and K. Revenaugh, 2012, Boulder, CO: Huntley Rahara Press. Copyright 2012 by Huntley Rahara Press. Reprinted with permission.

Figure 113. Avery, her father, and mother become emotional upon Avery's proclamation that she is a girl. From *It's Okay to Sparkle*, by A. Jackson & J. Udischas, 2017, Kansas City, MO: Debi Jackson. Copyright 2013 by Debi Jackson. Reprinted with permission.

Appendix H: Glossary

Affirmed gender: The gender that an individual asserts them self to be (Ehrensaft, 2013).

Agender: An individual with no (or minimal) personal connection to or alignment with the notion of gender, and/or one who exists without gender (Killermann, 2017, p. 257); "No gender expression and/or no gender identity" (Henry, 2017, p. 120); One who does not have a gender identity (Stryker, 2017); "A person who is genderless" (McNabb, 2018, p. 241). *See also: 'genderless' and 'gender-neutrois'*

Ambivalent gender identity: Equal identification with other sex as with sex assigned at birth (Murjan & Bouman, 2017, p. 130).

Androgyne: A gender expression wherein an individual identifies as having both masculine and feminine qualities (Killermann, 2017); "Possessing simultaneously masculine and feminine traits" (Henry, 2017, p. 120); "A person who identifies as in-between or ambiguously gendered" (McNabb, 2018, p. 241).

Asexual: One who experiences little or no sexual attraction or desire (Killermann, 2017, p. 258).

Assigned gender: The gender one is assigned at birth (often based on their assigned sex) and expected to embody (Miller, 2016).

Assigned pronouns: Pronouns that others use to describe or refer to an individual based on their actual or perceived gender (Miller, 2016).

Assigned sex: the sex an individual is assigned at birth based on their genitalia (Miller, 2016). *See also: biological sex*.

Bigender: an individual who fluctuates between a masculine (i.e. man, boy) and feminine (i.e. woman, girl) identity, or identifies with both (Killermann, 2017, p. 259); "someone who has two separate genders" (Henry, 2017, p. 120); "an individual who identifies as having both masculine and feminine qualities" (Girshick, 2008); "a person who identifies as two genders, either at the same time, or moving between" (McNabb, 2018, p. 242).

Binary gender: the notion that there are only two genders (man/woman) that are derivatives of two sexes (male/female) (Stryker, 2017).

Biological sex: a term referring to the chromosomal, hormonal, and anatomical characteristics which are used to categorize a person as female, male, or intersex (Killerman, 2017, p. 259).

Cisgender: a synonym for 'nontransgender' (Stryker, 2017); an individual whose assigned sex and assigned gender identity align with one another (Killermann, 2017); "people whose gender identity "corresponds with their sex assignment at birth. (Some critics suggest that this term leaves out gender-nonconforming people who do not identify as transgender.)" (Stein, 2018, p. 297); "a cisgender person is a person content to remain the gender they were assigned at birth" (Butler,

2017, p. 182); “a synonym for non-trans people; used to describe someone who is comfortable in the gender they were assigned at birth” (Henry, 2017, p. 215); “a person who identifies as the gender they were assigned at birth; nontransgender” (McNabb, 2018, p. 243); where assigned sex and assigned gender align with one another (Iantaffi, 2017).

Cisnormativity: the conception that the majority of people are cisgender, and that alternative gender identities are inferior and unnatural (Keo-Meier & Ehrensaft, 2018; Killermann, 2017; McNabb, 2018).

Cross-dresser: an unprejudiced term to refer to those who wear gender-atypical clothing; this term was meant to replace the former pejorative term ‘transvestite’ (Stryker, 2017); “a person who wears clothing of another gender” (McNabb, 2018, p. 243).

Cross-dressing: “wearing the clothing typical of another gender” (Girshick, 2008).

Demiboy: “someone who only partially identifies as a boy or man, whatever their assigned gender at birth” (Henry, 2017, p. 120); “a person who is partially boy” (McNabb, 2018, p. 243).

Demigirl: “someone who only partially identifies as a girl or woman, whatever their assigned gender at birth” (Henry, 2017, p. 120); “a person who is partially girl” (McNabb, 2018, p. 243).

Embodiment: “the social process of bodily inscription” (Martin, 2011, p. 135).

Emphasized femininity: “discourses that position women/girls in ways that reinforce male power and emphasize compliance, nurture and empathy” (Connell, 1987, 2002) as cited in (Martin, 2011, p. 136).

Female to male (FTM): “an individual assigned female at birth but whose gender identity is male” (Henry, 2017, p. 215).

Gender: “the cultural meanings, norms, and expectations attached to sex differences, which include components such as gender role, gender presentation, and gender identity, as well as other forms of social organization. Due to efforts of transgender activists, the term now incorporates biologically based differences as well as cultural codes and expectations and encompasses a critique of the gender binary” (Stein, 2018, p. 297); “the assignment of characteristics labeled masculine and feminine expected to correlate to men and women, respectively, in a society's binary system” (Girshick, 2008).

Gender artifactualists: “gender artifactualists often discount or purposefully ignore the possibility that biology and biological variation also play a role in constraining and shaping our genders” (Serano, 2013, p. 180).

Gender bending: the practice of bending stereotypical gender appearances and mannerisms, resulting in a mixture of masculinity and femininity (Henry, 2017, p. 121); challenging ““gender notions through gender expression and appearance, usually done quite deliberately, and sometimes

done as farce or play." (Girshick, 2008); "the act of playing with one's gender expression" (McNabb, 2018, p. 243).

Gender binary: a system of viewing gender as consisting solely of two categories
(termed woman and man) (Miller, 2016); the conception that there are only two genders (Killermann, 2017); (McNabb, 2018, p. 243).

Gender confirmation surgery: surgical procedure(s) to affirm/confirm one's gender; often required to achieve legal recognition of gender variance (Killermann, 2017, p. 270); "surgical interventions to bring a person's body more in line with their gender identity" (McNabb, 2018, p. 244). *See also: 'sex reassignment surgery'.*

Gender creative: the expression of gender which encompasses individual freedom and does not conform to any one gender (Miller, 2016).

Gender dualism: "ideas which suggest that boys and girls are naturally different" (Martin, 2011, p. 136).

Gender dysphoria: "gender nonconformity that causes suffering; the diagnostic label required for gender-variant people to undergo surgery. While many medical experts believe this comes from within, it is also a product of social stigma." (Stein, 2018, p. 297); "psychiatric term used to describe a trans person who feels the gender assigned to them at birth is incongruent with their brain, which tells them they are the opposite gender – or both genders – or does not correlate as either gender" (Henry, 2017, p. 216); "dysphoria is an intense feeling of distress associated with misgendering or with one's sexed body not feeling aligned with one's gender. Not every trans person experiences dysphoria" (McNabb, 2018, p. 10); "discomfort related to bodies not matching internal sense of gender as well as associated social distress" (Keo-Meier & Ehrensaft, 2018, p. 6).

Gender equality: treating individuals equal, irrespective of gender variance.

Gender equity: treating individuals fairly by accounting for diversity with regard to gender (Browne, 2004).

Gender expansive: "anyone whose gender expression differs from what is expected, typically based on their gender identity" (Keo-Meier & Ehrensaft, 2018, p. 7).

Gender expression: "how a person display/portrays their gender to others through dress and/or societal gender roles" (Henry, 2017, p. 216); "the act of articulating one's gender through clothing, hairstyle, and other gender cues" (McNabb, 2018, p. 244) *See also: gender presentation*.

Gender-fluid: "a person who feels like a mix of some traditional male and female genders but on some days feels more traditionally male gendered and others more traditionally female gendered" (Henry, 2017, p. 120).

Genderfluidity: moving between genders (Killermann, 2017, p. 264).

Gender hybrid: "children who combine or alternate between genders, often in a binary way" (Keo-Meier & Ehrensaft, 2018, p. 8).

Gender identity: the internal perception of one's own gender and how they label themselves (Killermann, 2017, p. 263); "one's personal experience of gender. Gender identity can correlate with assigned sex at birth, or it can diverge from it." (Stein, 2018, p. 298); "a person's internal feeling of being male, female or some other gender or combination of genders" (Henry, 2017, p. 216); "the way a person feels about their gender" (McNabb, 2018, p. 244).

Gender identity disorder: "a previous classification given to trans people who expressed a desire to transition to the opposite gender of their birth. Now mainly referred to as gender dysphoria in the Western world and the majority of Europe" (Henry, 2017, p. 216).

Gender-neutral: "a neutral gender identity or expression. Some gender-neutral people identify as agender or neutrois. Also refers to spaces/language that are not gendered" (McNabb, 2018, p. 244)

Gender-neutrois: An individual with no (or minimal) personal connection to or alignment with the notion of gender, and/or one who exists without gender (Killermann, 2017, p. 257); "a term used to describe persons with a null or neutral gender (being neither male nor female)" (Henry, 2017, p. 121). *See also: 'agender' and 'genderless'*

Gender non-conforming: This term signifies a non-traditional or non-binary gender presentation. This can be in the form of one's gender identity, gender expression (Killermann, 2017, p. 263); "a broad term that covers all the individuals who appear and behave in ways that according to society's expectations, are atypical for one's originally assigned gender role" (Henry, 2017, p. 121); individuals who do not conform to binary gender roles/expression (McNabb, 2018, p. 244).

Gender normative: when gender expression or presentation conforms with society's gender-based expectations (Killermann, 2017, p. 263).

Gender outlaw: "term coined by Kate Bornstein to describe gender identity which is politicized and neither male nor female" (McNabb, 2018, p. 244).

Gender policing: "the act of imposing gender norms on another person" (McNabb, 2018, p. 244).

Gender presentation: "Includes gendered attire, but also bodily gestures, posture, manner of speech, and style of interaction, as well as secondary sex characteristics (such as facial hair)." (Stein, 2018, p. 298); "The way an individual chooses to present his/her gender to others through dress, speech, actions, and grooming." (Girshick, 2008). *See also: gender expression*.

Gender prius: "half girl/half boy" (Keo-Meier & Ehrensaft, 2018, p. 8).

Gender-queer: a term used to refer to gender expression or gender identity which is often used by those who are gender non-conforming, gender non-binary, or those who do not identify along gender-normative scripts (Killermann, 2017); Identities that signal a critical stance toward the gender binary, as well as a gender presentation that lies outside the categories of male and female.

Gender-questioning: "a person who is currently questioning or experimenting with gender identity" (Henry, 2017, p. 121).

Gender reassignment surgery: "also known as genital reconstruction surgery or gender confirmation surgery. It is the procedure (or procedures) by which a trans person's physical appearance and function of their existing sexual characteristics are altered to accord with their identified gender, including genital surgery" (Henry, 2017, p. 216).

Gender role: "Types of behaviors that are generally considered acceptable, appropriate, or desirable for people based on their actual or perceived gender identity." (Stein, 2018, p. 298); "The behaviors and ways of thinking and feeling that the culture teaches are appropriate for the different genders" (Girshick, 2008).

Gender Spectrum: "the idea that gender is not binary but rather a spectrum of possibilities" (McNabb, 2018, p. 244).

Gender Variance: "Nonconformity to gendered expectations" (Stein, 2018, p. 298); "expression that does not match cultural expectations about the gender role that was assigned to them at birth" (Henry, 2017, p. 121).

Gender Variant: those considered by others "to deviate from societal norms of femaleness and maleness" (Serano, 2013, p. 49-50). One who does not conform to gender-based expectations (Killermann, 2017, p. 264); "Gender-variant people feel that the binary gender model, or the gender assignment they were given at birth, does not adequately describe them. Gender-variant people existed before the categories transsexual or transgender were in circulation. Today some (but not all) gender-variant people identify as transgender." (Stein, 2018); "gender identities that are nonstandard" (McNabb, 2018, p. 244).

Genderism: bias against non-binary forms of gender (Byrd & Farmer, 2016); "hostility and discrimination directed at gender nonconforming people and gender ambiguous bodies" (Browne, 2004, p. 331); "an ideology that reinforces the negative evaluation of gender nonconformity or incongruence between sex and gender" (Hill & Willoughby, 2005, p. 534).

Genderized: verb referring to the act of making or judging something to be 'gendered' (Kilvington & Wood, 2016, p. 18).

Genderless: An individual with no (or minimal) personal connection to or alignment with the notion of gender, and/or one who exists without gender (Killermann, 2017, p. 257). *See also: 'agender' and 'gender-neutrois'*

Genderqueer: "the state of being beyond or between genders or a combination of genders" (Henry, 2017, p. 121); a gender identity label often used by people who do not identify with the binary of man/woman; an umbrella term for many gender non-conforming or non-binary identities (Killermann, 2017, p. 264).

Hegemonic masculinity: "discourses of dominant masculinity that position some boys/men and women/girls as subordinate or inferior" (Connell, 1987) as cited in (Martin, 2011, p. 136).

Heteronormative: “discourses that position heterosexual relationships as natural, positioning other sexual relationships as inferior or deviant” (Martin, 2011, p. 137); “the assumption that everyone is heterosexual or should be” (Keo-Meier & Ehrensaft, 2018, p. 11).

Heteronormativity: the assumption that most individuals (if not all) identify as heterosexual, and that heterosexuality is superior to any alternative form of sexual identity (Killermann, 2017, p. 264); “construction of gender and desire by which heterosexuality is positioned as the norm, against which other sexual relationships are constructed as Other, inferior, deviant (Kehily, 2001) as cited in (Martin, 2011, p. 137).

Heterosexism: the privileging and preferential treatment of heterosexual individuals (Killermann, 2017, p. 264).

Heterosexuality: a sexual orientation in which individuals are emotionally, physically, romantically, and/or sexually attracted to those of a different gender (Killermann, 2017).

Homonormativity: a term used to refer to the overrepresentation of gays and lesbians in the LGBT rights movement and the ways that queer activism primarily emphasized homosexuality. The term is also used to describe the ways in which transgender consequently became “juxtaposed against norms of homosexuality” (Bolen, 2016, p. 542). Homonormativity is seen as ‘antiqueer’ in that it is seen to reify heteronormativity and ‘correct’ or ‘normal’ ways to be gay and lesbian, and subsequently reinforces stereotypes around gender, sexuality, and race. (Bolen, 2016).

Homophobia: hatred, fear, negative attitudes, and/or discriminatory practices against nonheterosexuals and nonheterosexuality (Bolen & McGreehan, 2016).

Intergender: “a person whose gender varies from the traditional norm, or who feels their gender identity is neither female nor male, both female and male, or a different gender identity altogether” (Henry, 2017, p. 121).

Intersex: those “born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy that does not seem to fit the ‘standard’ definitions for female or male” (Serano, 2013, p. 34); “people who are born with (or develop naturally in puberty) genitals, reproductive organs, and/or chromosomal patterns that do not fit standard definitions of male or female; sometimes known as hermaphrodites. Some intersex people identify as transgender” (Stein, 2018, p. 299).

LBGTQ+: An acronym which is deconstructed as: “L = lesbian, G = gay, B = bisexual, T = transgender, Q= queer and/or questioning and + to recognize other identities and individuals not explicitly included” (Serano, 2013, p. 21-22).

Male to female (MTF): “an individual assigned male at birth but whose gender identity is female” (Henry, 2017, p. 216).

Misgendering: “this term refers to a trans person and relates to somebody using a word, especially a pronoun or form of address (whether deliberate or accidental) that does not correctly reflect the

gender with which they identify" (Henry, 2017, p. 216); "the act of improperly gendering somebody" (McNabb, 2018, p. 246).

Non-Binary: "used to describe people whose gender is not exclusively male or female, including those who identify as a gender other than male or female, as no gender, or as more than one gender." (Stein, 2018, p. 299); not part of the man/woman gender binary model" (Henry, 2017, p. 216); an umbrella term for people not exclusively male or female (McNabb, 2018, p. 246).

Outing: unsolicited disclosure of one's sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or intersex status (Killermann, 2017, p. 267).

Pangender: "people who reject the male/female gender binary because they feel that they are all gender" (Henry, 2017, p. 122); "someone who identifies as multiple or all genders" (McNabb, 2018, p. 247).

Queer: can be used as an umbrella term to refer to individuals who don't identify as straight, but also used to refer to people who have a non-normative gender identity, or as a political affiliation. Due to historically being a pejorative term, it is not embraced or used by all members of the LGBTQ community (Killermann, 2017, p. 268).

Questioning: when one is unsure of or exploring their own sexual orientation and/or gender identity (Killermann, 2017, p. 268).

Sex: "categories that describe biological differences between males and females. Includes sexed body and sex assignment. More recent interpretations suggest that such differences are not simply biological but also cultural. Sex categories, like gender, tend to be defined in binary ways, though the existence of intersex people complicates this." (Stein, 2018, p. 299).

Sex assignment: "Categorization of an individual as male or female (or at times, intersex) at birth, which "is typically determined on the basis of the appearance of the genitals" (Stein, 2018, p. 299).

Sexed body: "Physical characteristics such as genitals, presence or absence of breast tissue, facial and body hair, fat distribution, height, bone size, and other characteristics." (Stein, 2018, p. 299).

Sex reassignment Surgery: a medical term referring to a surgical procedure that alters one's anatomical sex (Killermann, 2017, p. 270). *See also: 'gender confirmation surgery'.*

Third Gender: a term for one who does not identify as either man/boy or woman/girl, but identifies with another gender. This term is also generally used to recognize the existence of three or more genders (Killermann, 2017, p. 270).

Transexual: A term describing those who identify with genders other than those assigned at birth based on anatomical sex (Killermann, 2017, p. 271).

Transgender: One who internally identifies as a gender/sex other than the one to which they were assigned at birth (Killermann, 2017, p. 272); a broad "umbrella" term that describes people who

are gender-nonconforming (Stein, 2018, p. 300); “often used as an alternative word to transsexual, it is also used by some as longhand word for trans and an umbrella term that is used to describe someone who does not conform to society’s view of being male or female” (Henry, 2017, p. 217).

Transition/ing: Used to refer to the process a trans* individual undertakes when changing their appearance and/or lifestyle to complement their trans gender identity and gender expression (Killermann, 2017, p. 271); “The process in which a person begins to live according to their gender identity, rather than the gender they were thought to be at birth” (Stein, 2018, p. 301); the process of becoming the gendered person you know yourself to be” (Henry, 2017, p. 217); “the act of transitioning from the gender assigned at birth to an individual’s true gender identity” (McNabb, 2018, p. 248).

Transman: “a person who was assigned female at birth but has a male gender identity and therefore proposes to transition, is transitioning or has transitioned to live as a man, often with the assistance of hormone treatment and perhaps various surgical procedures” (Henry, 2017, p. 217).

Transnormativity: the dominant ideology of transgender experience, identification, and narrative which assumes that legitimacy as a transperson is dependent upon discourses of biology and medicalization. The binary medical model upon which transnormativity prevails, is said to marginalize gender non-conforming individuals who cannot or do not desire medical modes to transition (Johnson, 2016).

Transperson: Used to refer to a transgender individual.

Transphobia: The fear of, discrimination against, or hatred of trans* people (Killermann, 2017, p. 271); (McNabb, 2018, p. 248); “Negative attitudes, including hatred, disgust, and fear, evoked by or directed toward trans people.” (Stein, 2018, p. 301); “a fear, dislike or intolerance directed towards trans people” (Henry, 2017, p. 218).

Trans(s)exual: “is an acute form of gender dysphoria where a person’s perception of their gender is opposite to their biological sex. It is a medical term used to describe people whose sex and gender do not match up. Transsexual people may feel as if they were born in the wrong body (see transgender)” (Henry, 2017, p. 217) [??]; “An individual who feels his/her gender identity does not align with his/her physical body, as traditionally defined.” (Girshick, 2008); “an umbrella term for people who do not identify with the gender they were assigned at birth; people with this identity often pursue medical and surgical transition” (McNabb, 2018, p. 248).

Transwoman: a person assigned male at birth who has a female gender identity and proposes to transition, is transitioning or has transitioned to live as a woman (Henry, 2017, p. 217).

Two-Spirit: a term used by First Nations and Indigenous communities referring to individuals who possess qualities of both a masculine and feminine gender (Killermann, 2017) or live outside the gender binary (Girshick, 2008); “an umbrella term for First Nations and Native American gender and sexual identities unique to these cultures” (McNabb, 2018, p. 249).