

A Critical Stylistic Analysis of Ideologies of Masculinity and Femininity in *Folktales of Egypt* (1980)

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Abstract

This study examines how Egyptian folktales construct ideologies of femininity and masculinity. It looks into gender representation in El Shamy (1980) *Folktales of Egypt*. Drawing on Jeffries' (2010) critical stylistic model, the present study utilizes two major tools of textual-conceptual function, namely: i) naming and describing, and ii) representation of actions, events and states. It sets off with a content, thematic analysis of the selected folktales. It primarily explores linguistic encoding of value systems and beliefs indexed via linguistic resources. The selected tools of conceptual-textual function reflect culturally-entrenched ideologies. Findings show that naming strategies label men according to their occupational roles. Women, on the other hand, are mainly labelled according to their domestic roles. In terms of describing strategies, folktales associate men with strength, courage and power, whereas women are primarily associated with beauty and resourcefulness in few cases. Moreover, men are seen as agents, capable of action, whereas women are basically represented, rather than being in action. It is commonly agreed that folktales reflect, and reproduce ideologies within a community. Unveiling the ideologies residing in folktales can hence explain many of the present time's prevailing beliefs and values.

Keywords: Critical stylistics, Egyptian folktales, ideology, femininity, masculinity

Introduction

A folktale is defined as “a traditional story that people of a particular region or group repeat among themselves” (Cambridge Dictionary). This definition reflects the role folktales play in identifying people into groups of the same traditions, cultures, and more importantly the same beliefs. Setting off from this perspective, studying folktales can be a window into studying the prevalent ideologies of those peoples at a particular point of time; and further examine the

springboard of some of the ideologies that identify them across different points of time.

Folktales, whether in their oral or written forms, have been studied within a myriad of disciplines including, but not limited to, literature, anthropology, culture studies, as well as linguistics (Chen, 2009; El Anteel, 1987; El Shamy, 1995, 2006; Garry, 2017; Goldberg, 2003; Goody, 2010; Gottshall et. al, 2004; Haring, 2002; Magos, 2018; Mphasa, 2015; Morsi, 2011; Pritchard, 2020; Propp, 1968; Saleh, 1971, 1997; Thomson, 1955; Trousdalle and McMillan, 2004; Vejvoda, 2004; Younis, 1985). The present study approaches folktales using the model of critical stylistics, which involves “application of stylistics to critical analysis of texts” (Jeffries, 2010, p. 12). In fact, the guiding objective of the study is in line with all critical approaches to text readings, as put by Simpson (1993); namely, “to probe under the surface of language, to decode the stylistic choices which shape a text’s meaning (Jeffries, 2017, p.16).

In this paper, I argue that these texts reiterate ideologies of gender, where ideology is seen as referring to “ideas that are shared by a community or society” (Jeffries, 2017: 5). These folktales could be seen as representing what are possible and acceptable performances of masculinity and femininity, which “congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance of a natural sort of being.” (Butler, 1990: 33). These ideologies manifest themselves either in the form of the recurring themes/ motifs, or in the form of linguistic resources that index masculinity and femininity ideologies.

Critical stylistic (CS), as its name suggests, is concerned with examining the concepts studied under critical discourse analysis (CDA) such as power and ideology, utilizing a stylistic analysis which is seen as insightful and efficient with non-literary texts as it is with literary ones (Jeffries, 2014, p. 408). At the outset, Jeffries emphasized the role language plays in communicating, reproducing, constructing, and most importantly embedding ‘ideas, and in particular those ideas that are shared by a community or society which are termed ideologies’ (2017, p.5). Simpson (1993) sees ideology from a critical linguistic perspective as a “term [that] normally describes the ways in which what we say and think interacts with society. An ideology therefore derives from the taken-for-granted assumptions, beliefs and value systems which are shared collectively by social groups” (p.5).

Whereas stylistics has always been a discipline interested in linguistically examining literary texts, critical discourse analysis (CDA) has been a model of critically investigating other types of discourse, namely political and media texts. CS stands out as a synergy of both disciplines, with the ultimate objective of critically reading any type of text (fiction or non-fiction), to uncover the ideologies latent within the text by employing a linguistic toolkit.

Theoretical preliminaries

Critical Stylistics

Critical stylistics was originally inspired by the developments in cognitive stylistics and works like that of Semino and Culpeper (2002) or Stockwell's (2002) on cognitive poetics, which considered how it was the reader/ hearer that constructed the meaning by decoding the linguistic resources of texts. Critical stylistics is a term coined by Jeffries (2007); who developed this model "to provide tools to analyse the different ways in which texts allow/ ask us to conceptualize those topics they are addressing, and to provide some means of accessing this representational practice through the linguistic features" (2017, p. 14). It could thus be seen as a synthesis of stylistics and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Whereas CDA primarily aimed at investigating the socio-political aspects of a text, critical stylistics is basically concerned with textual analysis using objective analytical tools, which then reflects power relations (Tabbert, 2015, p. 45). As clearly stated by Jeffries (2014), CS is "[an] endeavour to see the power in language" (p. 408).

Critical stylistics proposes a model equipped with analytical tools that are compiled from different models. These tools are named textual-conceptual functions whose aim is to examine textual features in order to determine 'what the text is doing ideationally and thus ideologically'. As put by Jeffries (2014), this set of functions "produces a view of the world (or text world) which reflects the opinion of the producer (or narrator)" (p. 415). These functions include tools that index how entities are named or described, how actions and states are ideationally represented, how relations of equivalence and contrast are encoded, the role of presuppositions and implicatures in encoding meaning, as well as other six tools of exemplifying and enumerating, prioritizing, negating, hypothesizing, presenting speech and thought of other participants, and representation of time,

space and society. This list is not comprehensive as more tools can be added and adapted to different languages and different genres (Jeffries, 2007, p.17).

Folktales:

Greenwood Encyclopedia of Folktales and Fairy Tales defines the folktale as “a form of traditional, fictional, prose narrative that is said to circulate orally” [2, p. 363]. Folktales are typical popular stories that are culturally entrenched among a group of people; they are seen as a cumulative record of a society’s history. It is commonly passed on orally from grandparents and parents to children over many years. Over the generations, simple stories nested in the culture of the common people served to teach, entertain, and explain the world to the next generation. Folktales are characteristically anonymous, timeless and placeless which makes them all-time favorites. Each country has its own folktale tradition, which is considered as a part of its popular culture.

Folktales have triggered the interest of researchers from different scholarly backgrounds. Folklore studies, sometimes referred to folkloristics, had different research interests, including, but not limited to, studying the archetypes of folklore, the major themes prevalent in this form of popular culture, the most significant motifs, the major syntactic or linguistic features, or the role of folklore within a community. Folktales are seen as a means of reinforcing people’s cultural attitudes and ways of life by strengthening the notion of togetherness (Stein & Swedenburg, 2005). It has the power to safeguard the cultural identity of a nation and is hence essential for supporting and preserving heritage, as described by Alkhamash (2014) who sees that “oral literature and folklore, can also act as forms of cultural resistance for Palestinians, a zone for affirming their identity against oblivion” (p.13). El Gohary (2006) considers studying folklore as the gateway to understanding popular culture and existing social structures and as an index of the attitudes, directions, and factors of cultural changes within a society (p.12). Morsi (2011) regards folktales as expressive of heritage and national identity. In other words, folktales are seen as a springboard for many of the popular traditions, beliefs and ideologies within a society.

Within the structural strand of studying folktales, Propp’s (1982) study of the history and structure of folktales remains a seminal work. A Russian Formalist, Propp in his *Morphology of the Folktale* (1928) attempted setting a typology of Russian folktales in terms of plots and character types. Based on his

analysis of 100 famous Russian folktales, he identified 31 basic structural elements and seven character types. The translation of the book into English in 1958 gave the whole study of folktales a new impetus, which has remained vivid and spread among a myriad of disciplines and researchers of different interests.

Similarly influential was the work of Thomson (1958) on the most prevalent motifs in folk literature. In his six-volume catalogue, Thomson compiled, classified and indexed the different motifs found in folk literature, mainly in Europe. His index included motifs such as mythological motifs, animals, the dead, magic, chance and fate, etc.

From a thematic perspective in the Arab and Egyptian arena, the study of the prevalent motifs and recurrent themes and character types abound. The works of Morsi (1975), El Anteel (1987), Saleh (1971), El Shamy (1995, 2006), Ibrahim (1974) and Younis (1985) are only a few among a long list of works dedicated to studying different folkloric forms including prose narratives, ballads, verbal duelling, ritualistic songs, poems, proverbs, as well as other culturally-bound forms.

Data description

The data under investigation consists of nine folktales compiled and translated in El-Shamy (1980) *Folktales of Egypt*. El-Shamy is a leading figure in folkloristics, with more than eight works dedicated to Egyptian and Arab folkloric studies. In his work with Garry (2005), El Shamy saw the importance of studying “Egyptian folk culture that permeates the entire society if one is to know the mind and soul of Egypt ” (p.18).

Folktales of Egypt (1980) includes seventy folktales, gathered, then translated by El-Shamy, following numerous field trips taken by him and his team “to record folktales among the Egyptian fellahin, and various ethnic groups such as Nubians, the Bedouins and Nomads” (Dorson, 1980, p. xxxviii) from 1968 to 1972. El-Shamy annotated these folktales based on some 800 Arab, African, and ancient Egyptian variants he identified. He divided them into eight categories such as fantasy tales, tales about religious themes, humorous narratives and jokes, local belief legends and personal memorates, as well as other themes. As clearly stated by El Shamy himself “[T]he stories in this book were selected on the basis of their readability and representation of a specific genre, social institution, or aspect of

culture” (1980, p. liv) The book was seen as a groundbreaking work, which shed due light on contemporary Egyptian folktales, and their relation to the rooted culture. Perkins (198?) saw the book as rendering a valuable service to enriching western knowledge of “all facets of contemporary Egyptian culture [and] the roots of this culture.”

The data under investigation belong to the first set of folktales entitled *Fantasy Tales*, which in turn includes nine tales. This set was particularly chosen as it mainly centred around male-female relation, with motifs of love-hate relationships featuring prominently. Other folktales centre around different types of themes or motifs such as Tales Based on Religious Beliefs, Realistic and Philosophical Tales, or Axes, Saints or Cultural Heroes. The selected folktales are best representative of the research objectives, namely unveiling the ideologies of masculinity and femininity, as instantiated in Egyptian folktales.

Methodology

As elaborated, the study focuses primarily on the first set of nine folktales, gathered under the common theme of ‘fantasy tales’. The researcher examines the linguistic resources used in the tales, which reveal the underlying folk ideologies about men and women. Using the CS toolkit, the researcher starts by examining how male and female entities are named and described. In the light of Jeffries (20210) model, each noun, noun phrase, modifier and instance of nominalization with either male or female referent are identified.

In analysing the types of nouns used to refer to women and men in the data, I draw upon Hellinger et al.’s (2001) categories of linguistic gender construction: grammatical gender, lexical gender, social gender and referential gender. In the analysis, social and referential gender are primarily highlighted.

Arabic is a gender language; that is to say, a language which assigns gender to all its categories whether nouns, verbs, adjectives, prepositions, or even conjunctions. In Arabic, grammatical gender manifests in the set of grammatical morphemes (mostly bound) that indicate whether the noun labels a man or a woman. Examples include the use of /ة/ or *taa’ el ta’neeth* (feminine gender marker) with nouns (and adjectives) in case they refer to a female. It also includes adding /ات/ (*alif we taa’*) as suffixes to mark nouns for feminine gendered plural,

and /ن/ (noon) as suffixes to mark gendered tense (present/ past/ future/ perfective) verbs.

On the other hand, lexical gender refers to nouns which are quintessentially feminine or masculine such as mother or father. As elaborated, in Arabic, every noun is categorised in terms of the female-male dichotomy, even without being morphologically marked. However, as Hellinger et al. (2001) note, gender-specific terms require ‘corresponding satellite forms’, manifested in Arabic in personal and relative pronouns, as well as gender morphological marking on verbs and adjectives.

Kramarae & Treichlerc (1985) define social gender as “the socially imposed dichotomy of masculine and feminine roles and character traits” (173). As seen by Hellinger et al. (2001), it has more to do with the ‘stereotypical assumptions about the appropriate social roles for women and men’ (p.11). Examples of social gender abound in the data where ‘doctor’, ‘guard’, ‘jewel dealer’, ‘soldier’, ‘midwife’ and ‘maid’ are different nouns that index gender, based on culturally entrenched ideologies.

Finally, referential gender refers to actual referent of a particular lexeme, thus a word can simultaneously have social and referential gender. This is a useful category for describing nouns that usually index femininity, but here has a male referent. This category hardly exists in the data, where the noun, ideologically associated with a male referent, does have a male referential gender.

This is followed by categorising the identified lexical resources under the category of naming (in case of nouns, noun phrases, etc.) or the category of description in case of modifiers, predicates, etc.). This categorization is further put in terms of the semantic categories of social and referential roles for both men and women. An analysis of the findings ensues from examining the naming and describing textual-conceptual function. It is worth noting that other entities mentioned in the tales, such as animals, things, or even groups of people, are not taken into consideration since they fall beyond the scope of the study.

Then, transitivity is examined, being the grammatical aspect that accounts for agency, responsibility, and accountability. By using Halliday’s (2014) transitivity toolkit, the analysis reveals which type of processes are most frequently associated with male and female characters. This part of the analysis would inform whether or not male and female characters are framed equally as

agents, or there is a power imbalance in terms of agency and responsibility. Once more, processes that pertain only to men and women are examined, whereas other processes that involve phenomena, or things are excluded from analysis.

For the purposes of finding and annotating transitivity processes in the Folktales corpus, the UAM Corpus Tool Version 6.2e was used (O'Donnell, 2008). UAM provides both manual and (semi)automatic annotation of texts using preset schemes at different levels, e.g., phrase, sentence and clause. The tool has also been proven useful in analysing literary texts (Bhatti et al., 2019; Anjum, 2021; Iqbal et al., 2022). After removing irrelevant text, e.g., titles and subtitles, introductions, and definitions, the remaining corpus contained 1993 sentences, that is 29050 tokens. After downloading the tagged data, the annotation was manually reviewed to 1) check for any inconsistencies and 2) divide the data into male-focused and female-focused subsets. A sample analysis of the data is provided in Figure 1.1.

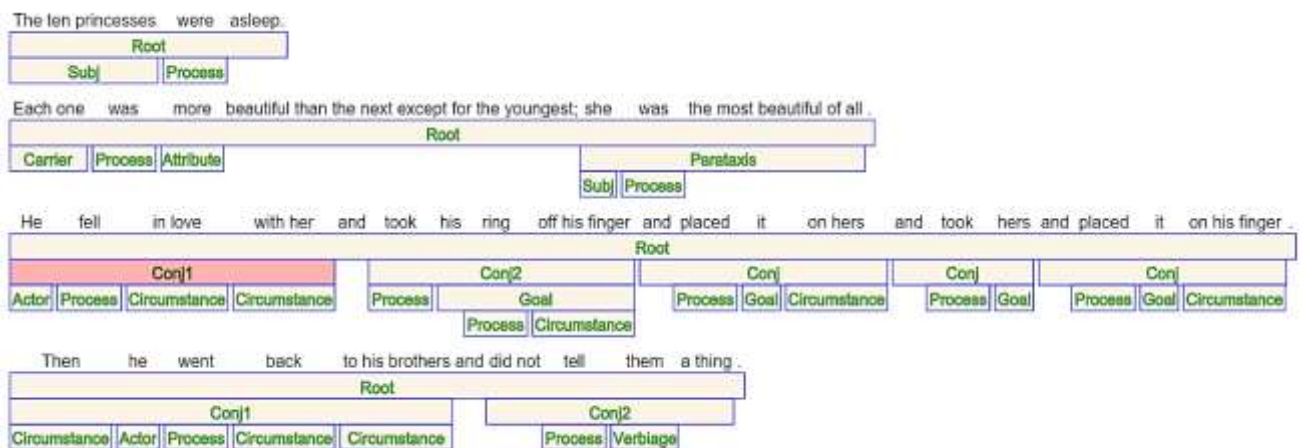


Figure 1.1 A sample analysis of the Folktales Corpus using UAM Corpus Tool.

It is worth noting that these two conceptual-textual functions of naming and describing as well as representation of actions, events, and states have been particularly chosen as they proved to be the analytic toolkits that best address the linguistic resources in the data. The researcher attempted employing other functions (equating and contrasting, implying and assuming, hypothesising), yet the linguistic resources instantiating them hardly featured in the data, hence yielding no significant findings.

Analysis

All nine folktales that constitute the data of analysis have a male-female relationship as one of the central themes. *The Black Crow and the White Cheese*, *The One Sesame seed*, *The Royal Candlestick*, *Louliyya*, *Daughter of Morgan*, and *The Promises of the Three Sisters* have the love/ marriage relationship as the central theme, the other four folktales have such a relationship as a main motif. All nine folktales witness some sort of love relationship between a clever male and a beautiful female, that always ends in marriage. Besides this line of thought in the tales, other male and female figures appear; namely: kings, wives of kings, sons of kings, daughters of kings, merchants, fishermen, and old women who have some sort of supernatural powers. The presence of this myriad of male and female figures in the selected data makes it representative of the ideologies pertaining to masculinity and femininity in this genre, as instantiated through the critical stylistic analysis.

The analysis section highlighted how the text's linguistic choices represent the world of the selected data, with ideological consequences. As elaborated in the Methodology section, I examined the data using the textual-conceptual tools of naming and describing as well as representing actions, events and states.

1. Naming and Describing

Jeffries (2007) contends that “one of the potentially most influential choices any writer makes is the names s/he uses to make reference” (p. 63). Naming includes choosing a suitable reference according to register and formality, linguistically manifested in noun phrases which can be modified in different ways. They could be modified by an adjective, definite or indefinite articles, prepositional phrases, or relative clauses.

In this part of the analysis, I focus on how male and female entities are either named or described; linguistically realised in the form of nouns, noun phrases, attributive adjectives, as well as predicative descriptions. Drawing on Hellinger et al. (2001), special focus is given to social gender; since the translation of texts into English turns most of the nouns and adjectives used into ‘gender-neutral’ or ‘gender-indefinite’, hence obscuring both grammatical and lexical gender in almost all cases.

Within this function, the analysis takes into consideration the nouns, and noun phrases used to name female and male characters of the folktales, the type of semantic categories involving males and females, and the ideological implications of the noun chosen to refer to a particular gender entity. The analysis also examines the types of adjectives used to describe male and female referents and the type of relevant ideologies about males and females that they promote.

1. Naming

Looking at the semantic categories that involve men and women, it can be seen that men are put in different roles: domestic roles, royalty, official roles, occupational roles, whereas women are mainly seen within the semantic category of family. Table 1 shows the common nouns (and the frequency of their occurrence) used to refer to men in comparison to women in terms of semantic categories

Semantic Category	Men	Women
Domestic role	Father (7), brother (2) husband (2), son (5), lover (1), brothers-in-law (1), sons-in-law (1), a'm (uncle) (1),	Wife (8), mother (7), sister (4) daughter (7), fiancé (1), bride (1), , step mother (1), aunt (1)
Royalty roles	King (9), Sultan (1)	queen (1), Princess (1)
Occupational roles	vizier (5), ministers (1), judge(1), marriage sheikh (2), 'ma'zoon'(2), robber (2),thieves(2), soldiers (2), lupine vendor (1), goldsmith (1), horsemen (1), fighters (1), jewel dealer (1), religious sages 'aulama (1), guards (1), executioner (1), Fisherman (3), merchant (4), water carrier (1), doctor (2), oil vendor (1), servants (2), guards (1), tobacco seller (1), carpenter (1), tailor (1), builder (1)	Midwife (2), maids (3)
others	Dervish (1)	

Table 1. Common nouns used to refer to female and male characters in terms of semantic categories

In the light of Table 1, it can be said that strategies of naming used indicate that men are often labelled according to their occupational roles, which is directly related to the social and referential gender. Women, on the other hand, are mainly labelled according to their domestic roles within the family semantic category.

By examining the previous tabled data, there appears to be a strong presence of occupations associated with men. Indeed, a number of occupational terms could be described as indicating social gender. Apart from the lexically marked nouns that index gender in the data such as ‘fisherman’ and ‘midwife’, all other occupational terms can directly index gender. For example, whereas a term like ‘servant’ is more likely to be interpreted as having female reference, ‘religious sages’, ‘goldsmith’ and ‘merchant’ are more likely to be perceived as male. Drawing on the same line of thought, the two occupational roles that associate with females in the folktales (‘maid’ & ‘midwife’) are either very poorly paid, or low-skilled, in comparison to the occupational roles associated with males such as ‘vizier’, ‘jewel dealer’, ‘fighter’, or ‘tailor’.

This can be taken as a reflection of the gender ideology that men are more competent, let alone physically stronger; therefore, roles like ‘doctor’, ‘jewel dealer’, ‘merchant’, and of course ‘soldier’ and ‘fighter’ come to be associated with men rather than women. This, as well as, the overall naming strategies that restrict women in particular semantic categories, can be seen as reifying gendered scripts, hence culturally entrenching these stereotypically gendered roles. In fact, this could explain why in contemporary popular culture, people have lower expectations concerning the role of men with the domestic domain than they do with women. Similarly, people have lower expectations concerning the role of women in the public domain, or as breadwinners.

Another naming strategy that features prominently across the whole data is that almost all male protagonists are given proper names: Clever Muhammad (3), Clever Hasan, Sidi El-khidr, Ailm-el-ghaib, Sheikh Mahmoud, Hasan, Yousif and Morgan. Meanwhile, only two folktales have proper nouns labelling female characters; namely Louliyya and Sit-el-Hosn. This could be seen as an interesting feature which extends to the present time, where lay women, especially in lower

socio-economic classes, are hardly called by their first names. Women are usually referred to either in relation to a husband or a son.

This naming strategy is enhanced by examining the articles and pronouns used in noun phrases with female referents. Jeffries (2010) contends that the use of articles and pronouns reflects the ideology of female representation. Drawing on this tradition, it is observed that female characters are usually referred to by common nouns, preceded by indefinite articles such as ‘a girl’, ‘an old woman’, or are named in relation to the male character using a possessive determiner as in ‘his wife’, ‘his daughter’ or ‘his mother’.

1. “But the only one who can tell you how to free your brothers...is a girl that el Suhsah keeps as a captive” (*A Trip to Wag-el-Wag*).
Even in *Louliyya, the Daughter of Morgan* and *The Promises of the Three Sisters*, the wife of the King is not named as Queen, but rather ‘his wife’, nor the daughter as princess:
2. It chanced that for that year it was the turn of the king’s daughter. (*A Trip to Wag-el-Wag*)
3. Once there was a king and his wife who did not have any children. (*Louliyya, the Daughter of Morgan*)
4. When they told the king, “Your wife gave birth to a puppy and a kitten” (*The Promises of the Three Sisters*)
5. The Sultan’s daughter is going to the bath. (*The Grateful Fish*).

The analysis of naming strategies reflects how male and female characters are represented. It shows how males are ideologically constructed as competent, skilled entities, and in high-rank positions, whereas almost all female characters are ideologically referred to in terms of their domestic roles only.

In the following section, the relevant strategy of describing is analysed to see how it complements or deviates from the naming strategy.

2. Describing:

The kinds of adjectives used to describe an entity or event reveal the writer’s attitudes towards it. Looking at the kinds of adjectives used to describe male and female entities in the folktales provides an indication of the kinds of behaviours and attributes that are presented as desirable by folktales.

The majority of modifiers used to describe female characters pertain to physical appearance, whereas male characters are described according to behaviour or personality. Table 2 shows the semantic categories of adjectives (and the frequency of their occurrence) modifying male and female characters in the data.

Semantic category	Frequency of modifiers for male characters	Frequency of modifiers for female characters
Personality & behaviour	Good (1), intelligent (2), gallant (1), generous (2), Clever (4), sweet (1), furious (1), notable (1), knowledgeable (1), jealous (1), polite (1)	Innocent (1), virgin (1), angry (1), furious (1), jealous (2), clever (1)
Physical appearance	Handsome (2), beautiful (1)	Beautiful (9), pretty (1)
Social classification	Young (3), old (1),	Old (5), black (1), young (1)
Wealth	Rich (1), poor (3)	
Physical power	Strong (2), tough (1)	

Table 2. Semantic categories of adjectives modifying male and female characters in the data

Table 2 shows that modifiers describing personality traits with positive connotations, ‘clever’, ‘intelligent’, ‘generous’ show higher frequency than those pertaining to physical appearance or social classification with male characters. This somehow reiterates how a male’s physical appearance is of low significance in mainstream Egyptian culture, duly reflected in common Egyptian proverbs.

In comparison, women are mainly modified in terms of their physical appearance ‘beautiful’ which is a recurrent adjective across all folktales.

6. So Clever Muhammad went to the bank and found the girl (the king’s daughter) sitting alone crying. She was very beautiful. Her beauty was indescribable. (*The Black Crow and the White Cheese*).

7. One time the king was going through the town with his vizier. He saw a woman who was truly beautiful. (*The One Sesame Seed*).

The second most frequently used adjectives describing female characters represent them in terms of social classification, particularly age. Old age here has rather positive connotations, equated to either resourcefulness, kindness, or wisdom:

8. The sultan ordered all doors and windows closed.... At last an old woman said, "If there is anybody hiding here, I can bring him out" (*The Grateful Fish*).

9. One old woman told him, "Between you and the dancing bamboo is three years' travel." (*The Promises of the Three Sisters*).

Analysing the strategies of naming and describing indicates that men are most often labelled according to social roles and occupations, and most frequently described in terms of behaviour and personality, rather than physical appearance. Women, on the other hand, are often labelled according to their domestic roles, and most frequently described in terms of their physical appearance.

The conceptual-textual function of 'naming' and 'describing' reflects culturally-entrenched ideologies. The folktales encode how males and females are referred to, described, and hence represented in folk culture. The choice of noun indicates which aspects of female and male identity the folktale wishes to be foregrounded. For example, a noun like 'handsome' and 'beautiful' focuses on physical appearance, 'father' and 'wife' on relationship roles, and 'merchant' or 'midwife' on occupational roles.

The following section looks into the syntactic structure of clauses that have male and female entities as participants, in the light of the transitivity system proposed by Halliday (2004) as another textual-conceptual function of CS.

2. Representing actions, events and states:

2.1. Transitivity system:

As commonly agreed among critical linguists, how actions and events are linguistically instantiated can encode, and later embed ideologies. This instantiation is realised lexico-grammatically via the transitivity system; which Jeffries considers one of the textual-conceptual functions of critical stylistic analysis. She stresses that "it is useful for pointing out how the world is being presented by a text or a group of texts" (2014, p.44). Jeffries sees that "Halliday's

transitivity system is the model which most accurately represents this strand of meaning” (2014, p.38). Halliday’s model is both comprehensive and detailed. In Halliday’s theory, grammar and lexis are meaning-making resources. How a clause is structured represents three types of meaning: the ideational, the interpersonal and the textual. The ideational meaning, instantiated via the transitivity system, is concerned with representing the world: its participants, their actions, and the surrounding circumstances. Hence, how this representation is linguistically encoded reflects the ideology of utterance’s creator. On the other hand, the interpersonal is concerned with enacting relations between participants, in terms of power relations, solidarity, social distance, imposition, etc. The textual meaning organises how the ideational and the interpersonal meanings are organised across the text.

Transitivity analysis, the core of Halliday’s theory, primarily revolves around the choice of the verb, the process in Halliday’s terms. It construes experience via different process types, material, mental, verbal, relational, behavioural or existential, with a set of corresponding participant roles as well as circumstances. These process types have the power to “create the impression of much (or little) activity; more talking than acting; a static scene with little going on; events beyond human intervention – or accidental actions. The choice of the main verb in a clause can alter the potential perception of the process by recipients of the utterance/text” (Jeffries, 2014, p.413). This manipulation of representation of the world, in CS, is a tool of uncovering the ideologies within the text. Since transitivity is primarily concerned with “who does what to whom”, it makes it possible to analyse power relations and types of actions done by/to men and women within the folktales. Coffey (2013) sees that analysing the syntax of the text facilitates observing “how texts employ linguistic devices to direct, question and inform the reader, and so is extremely useful for exposing ideology in texts” (p. 72). For example, if a participant within the material process-based clause is frequently construed as a goal, rather than an actor, this is taken as an instantiation of passivity. Similarly, if a particular participant frequently occurs with stative verbs, this is taken as an instantiation of lack of agency or action, etc.

Looking at Fig. 2, the data show that material, mental, and verbal processes feature consistently. This could be taken as a typical feature of tales, which include different forms of adventures made by the protagonist, the clever male. Similarly, the role of speech and verbal interaction between the story

characters helps advance the events and also unveil hidden thoughts. Finally, mental processes in the data are mainly those relevant to perception, ‘saw’, ‘heard’, ‘looked’, ‘felt’, then those related to boulomaic modality such as ‘want’, ‘need’, ‘hope’, etc. As shown in Fig. 2, male entities dominate all types of processes, even the verbal, revealing a clear type of power imbalance between the roles played by males and females in the folktales.

Comparing the gender-based representational meanings across data reveals that male entities feature in 2144 material processes, compared to 199 for females. Across all nine folktales, the clever, strong, brave male carries the participant role of Actor in the majority of processes, whereas either another male or a female takes the role of the Goal. This lexico-grammatical linguistic choice again indexes how male characters are seen as action advancers, with positive agency attributed to them. Looking more closely at those material processes reveals that the most common themes of material process involve a male Actor moving/travelling from one place to another either willingly as in the folktales of *Trip to Wag-el- Wag*, and *The Black Crow and the White Cheese* or unwillingly as in *The Magic Filly*, *The Grateful Fish*, *The Magharbi’s Apprentice* and *The Royal Candlestick*. Material processes involving some sort of physical strength come second in frequency of occurrence as in:

9. “Then he (Hasan) called for the forty thieves to enter one by one, and one by one he cut off their heads” (*The Trip to Wag- el Wag*)
10. “Clever Muhammad kept on hitting them with his sword until he defeated them” (*The Magic Filly*).

On the other hand, examining material processes involving female Actors reveals a high proportion of stereotypical gendered practices as in the following examples:

11. “When she was out, her daughter—the man’s daughter—was cleaning the house” (*The Black Crow and the White Cheese*)
12. The boy watched all night . Finally the girl , the king's daughter, threw herself at the boy” (*The Royal Candlestick*).

Equal disproportion is clear in the representation of male and female characters as participants in mental processes; whereas male characters feature as Sensors in 213 instances of mental processes, female characters feature in only 22 instances. This partly reflects a male dominance over the folktales on the one hand, hence subduing the female presence in general. On the other hand, it also

reflects how males are represented as more proactive mentally. It is also worth noting that mental processes with female characters as Sensors show a high frequency of desiderative mental processes as in:

13. “Your mother wants to send you to your death” (*The Black Crow and the White Cheese*)

14. “I want a bracelet like this one” (*The Trip to Wag-El Wag*)

15. “I want the dancing bamboo” (*The Promises of the Three Sisters*).

Needless to point out that all such needs and desires are fulfilled by the male characters via the material processes.

Moving to verbal processes, data still show significant inconsistency in male and female verbal presence. This comes in contrast to the folkloric belief that females generally are more talkative. This data does not particularly denote that males are more talkative, but that the male voice dominates the narratives, giving smaller room for female opinions, thoughts, and feelings to be represented verbally. The same applies to the relational processes, where males are more significantly represented, basically in intensive relational processes as either Carriers or Attributes or in possessive relational processes as in:

16. “the boy was very clever and that he was going to become something very important” (*The Magharbi’s Apprentice*).

17. “Our king has a daughter who does not speak” (*The Royal Candlestick*)

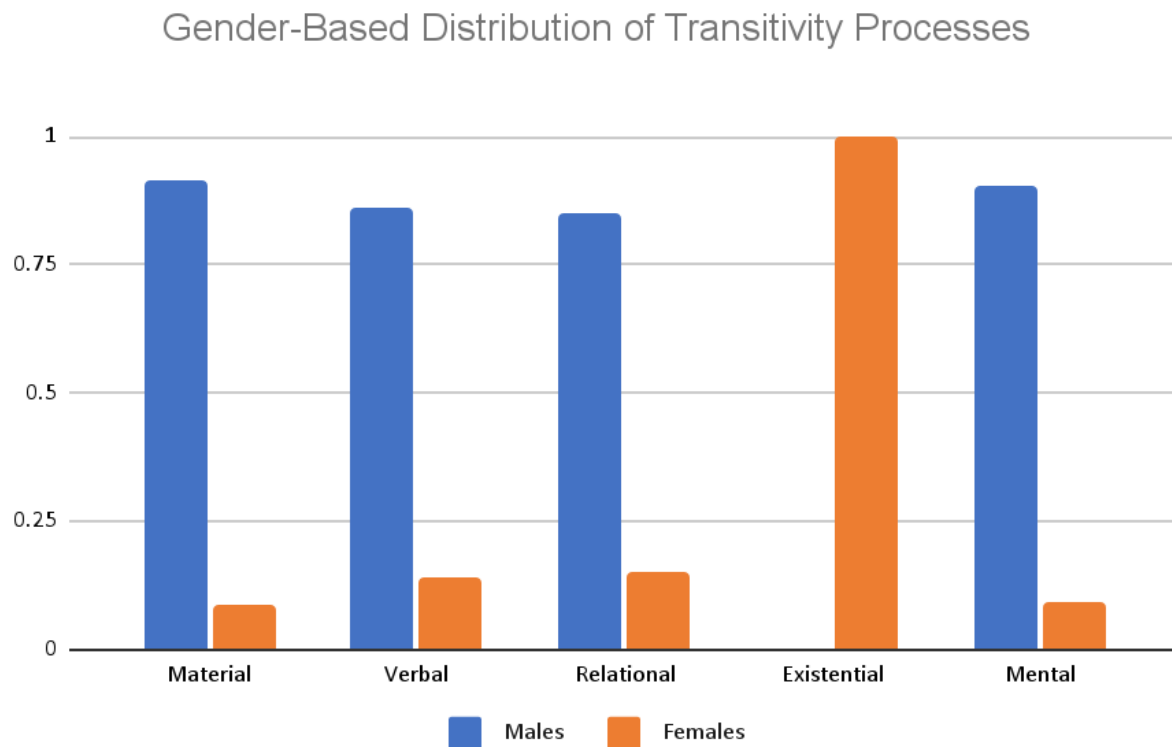


Figure 2. Gender-based distribution of transitivity processes

Drawing on the critical stylistic analysis using the transitivity toolkit, the data unveil i) the percentages of representation of the male and female story characters; ii) the inconsistency in the representation, with significant male dominance over the events through mental processes, states through relational processes and actions through material processes.

Discussion

van Dijk (1998, 2002, 2006, 2022) defines ideology as a system of beliefs shared by members of a social group, that also has the same culturally shared knowledge, which he calls '(cultural) common ground'. van Dijk also contends that this cultural common ground may be the "foundation of all cognition across and between different groups" (2022). This definition shows how important it is to examine the ideological representations of entities within a society, since it not only gives a better understanding of this society, but it also helps in understanding how these ideologies may direct the attitudes and control the actions of those members.

Looking at the analysis of the nine folktales under investigation, the conceptual-textual analytic toolkit shows how ideologies of masculinity and femininity are constructed. In terms of naming and description within the semantic categories identified, the researchers found that men are mainly named using nouns relating to their occupational roles, whereas women are named using nouns relating to their social roles, particularly within the semantic category of the family relations. This directly reflects how language encodes social gender, and in turn indexes the roles that are seen as more suitable for male and females within the society. As for describing, adjectives modifying men mostly pertain to their behaviour or power, whereas women are mainly seen through the lens of their physical appearance. These two features seem to extend up till this moment in Egyptian society, where beauty is a major criterion of a woman's worth, whereas wealth and power is a man's worth.

Looking at how transitivity choices help in establishing ideologies of the text, the data show how male characters are mostly represented as proactive entities in Actor, Sayer, Senser, or Carrier participant roles, whereas female characters are represented as passive entities in Goal, Recipient, or Possessed roles. This, to a considerable extent, reiterates the stereotypical gendered roles found in today's society. The dominance of these transitivity choices indexes explicitly and implicitly the socio-cultural expectations of masculinity and femininity within the story world and, in turn, in the real world. Whereas these folktales encode those beliefs and values, they discursively reproduce at least some of these ideologies with the community.

Looking at the data with a theoretical orientation, it could be proposed that one more textual-conceptual function be added to Jeffries' set of critical stylistic tools of analysis. Jeffries (2010) contends that she makes "no claim of comprehensiveness, ...and that it would be possible for others in the future to add further tools of this kind without abandoning the basic model" (2010, p.15). The textual-conceptual tool proposed here is that of intertextuality.

Intertextuality is a term originally coined by Kristeva (1980, p.66), and which resonates ideas and thoughts proposed by Bakhtin (1986). It refers to the connectedness between texts, and even words through direct or indirect allusions. Norrick (1989) sees that "intertextuality occurs any time one text suggests or requires reference to some other identifiable text or stretch of discourse spoken,

or written” (p. 123-130). From a CDA perspective, Fairclough contends that intertextuality generates representations which may bring recipients ideologically closer to the producer’s perspective and organise people into communities (1992, pp.133-136). Both Norrick and Fairclough’s views are typically instantiated in the selected data, where intertextuality features in six out of the nine studied folktales. Intertextuality occurs with different types of texts: religious, literary and folkloric; calling for decoding some shared ‘cultural common ground’ to fully interpret the intended meanings. This reiterates the role of intertextuality in unveiling latent ideologies, which are discursively reflected and reproduced within the folktales.

Intertextuality with religious stories occurs in *The Trip to Wag-el Wag* where Hasan’s story directly intersects with that of Prophet Moses and Prophet Joseph; in *The Black Crow and the White Cheese* where Ailm-el-ghaib’s character draws directly on Prophet Joseph’s character, and finally in *Louliyya, Daughter of Morgan* where the story of Yousif (Arabic for Joseph) draws on the story of Prophet Joseph as well. These instances of intertextuality sets more importance to the male characters of the folktales; it even adds on a mystic or reverend feature to them by bringing along allusions to these sacred figures. Ideologically, males are featured as gifted with inspiration, which guides their actions, and hence make them unquestionable.

On the other hand, intertextuality with a literary/ folkloric text occurs in *Louliyya* folktale, where Louliyya’s character draws on Rapunzel’s who lets down her long hair through the window of the ‘high, high, high’ palace. This again reiterates i) the helplessness of the female entity, and ii) how her beauty is a source of pride and sorrow. On a different note, in *The Promises of the Three Sisters*, there exists an intertextual reference to the story of Moses’ mother, where, in the folktale, the midwife “puts the infants in a box and nailed down the lid and threw it into the river” to be later found by a fisherman and his wife. This encodes the resourcefulness and wit as a recurrent feature associated with female characters. One final intertextuality instance occurs in *The Royal Candlestick* with *Pygmalion*, where “the worshipper saw the girl before his eyes, almost perfect and dressed, but with no soul. He prayed to God to give a soul to this girl...the doll became a human being”. This again draws on how males are ideologically represented as proactive, with full agency, especially when compared to the female entities represented.

According to Jeffries (2010), textual-conceptual tools are primarily meant to “answer the question of what any text is ‘doing’” (p.15). Here intertextuality, with its loaded allusions and interconnections with texts, invites readers to see the entities within the new text in the light of the original text, percolating all relevant meanings, associations, and connotations.

Conclusion

The present study looked into a selected sample of folktales to unveil the ideologies of masculinity and femininity in this very widespread form of popular culture. Folktales have always been a springboard of deeply-entrenched beliefs and traditions, being both timeless and placeless. Egyptian folktales, as sampled in El Shamy’s collection *Folktales of Egypt* (1980), cover a myriad of motifs and character types. In the selected collection, fantasy tales, male and female characters are particularly prominent with love, marriage and giving birth as major storylines. Adopting the critical stylistics framework, the present study utilises two textual- conceptual functions as tools for analysis of the folktales; namely: the naming and describing tool and representing actions, events and states tool. Both tools help uncover how the naming and describing strategies used to either refer to or describe the main male and female characters reflect the sets of ideas, beliefs and attitudes, i.e. ideologies, about masculinity and femininity in those folktales. Moreover, using the ideational metafunction or the transitivity system for analysing the syntactic patterns similarly shows how male characters dominate all types of processes, whether material (action), mental and verbal (events), and relational (states). Looking more closely at the different participant roles, male characters are mostly Actors, Sensers, Sayers or Carriers/ Possessors, whereas female characters are Goals, Recipients, Possessed. In other words, in terms of both process types and sentence structure, males enact agency more fully than females. This language-based analysis encodes the ideologies latent in the selected folktales, which reflect a clear instance of imbalance in power (even in terms of numbers of characters), restricting females to domestic fields and giving due importance to their physical, rather than mental, abilities. The findings of this critical stylistic analysis could be scaffolded by examining a bigger number of Egyptian folktales.

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A Critical Stylistic Analysis of Ideologies of Masculinity and Femininity in *Folktales of Egypt* (1980)

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تحليل نقدي أسلوبى لأيدولوجيات الرجولة والأنوثة في قصص فولكلورية مصرية (1980)

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المستخلص

تعنى هذه الورقة البحثية بدراسة بناء أيدولوجيات الأنوثة والرجولة في القصص الفولكلورية (الحكايات الشعبية) المصرية حيث تحلل التمثيل الجندي في كتاب *Folktales of Egypt* (قصص فولكلورية من مصر) الذي جمعها وترجمها الدكتور حسن الشامي عام 1980. يأتي هذا التحليل في ضوء النموذج الأسلوبى النقدي الذي وضعته جيفريز (2010) وأدواته النصية المفاهيمية المتعددة ومن أهمها أدوات التسمية والوصف وكذلك أداة التعدي في الأفعال حيث تبدأ الدراسة بتحليل محتوى تسع قصص مختارة من المجموعة القصصية ثم فحص النصوص المختارة باستخدام الأدوات سابقة الذكر لكشف الأيدولوجيات وتمثيلها لغويا. وقد أوضحت نتائج الدراسة أن استراتيجيات التسمية تميل الى تسمية الرجل وفقا لوظيفته بينما تسمى المرأة وفقا لدورها في بيتها سواء كانت أما أو ابنة أو شقيقة وهكذا. أما بالنسبة لاستراتيجيات الوصف فأغلبها يتمحور حول وصف الرجل في ضوء قوته البدنية أو ثروته بينما توصف المرأة فقط في ضوء شكلها الخارجى. وعلى صعيد آخر، أظهرت الدراسة أن الأفعال المرتبطة بالرجل هي تلك الأفعال التي تتم عن حركة ومسؤولية بينما أغلب الأفعال المرتبطة بالمرأة فتظهرها ساكنة ممثلة لا فاعلة. وهنا تخلص الدراسة الى أهمية القاء مزيد من الضوء على القصص الفولكلورية المصرية لكونها معيننا زائرا بالأيدولوجيات والمعتقدات والمنظومات القيمية للمجتمع.

الكلمات الدالة: قصص فولكلورية مصرية، النموذج الأسلوبى النقدي، أيدولوجيات الأنوثة والرجولة.