

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Gender, as a concept, is not limited to biological differences between men and women. It extends to a set of social roles, behaviors, and attributes that a society considers appropriate for men and women. According to Blackstone (2003), gender is understood as the traits, meanings, and social values that society attaches to individuals based on their sex. This means that gender is a social construct that influences how individuals express themselves and how they are perceived by others. Societies often have specific expectations about how men and women should behave, which can lead to stereotypes and limitations on personal choices.

Gender stereotypes have been around for a long time and can be found in almost every society across the world. They shape how people expect men and women to act, think, and feel. For instance, society often expects men to be tough, strong, and in control of their emotions, while women are usually seen as caring, nurturing, and more emotional. These expectations can limit people by making them feel like they can not act the way they really want to or be true to themselves. Even though many movements have worked to fight against these stereotypes and push for gender equality, they still affect many areas of life, such as how families function, how children are treated at school, and how men and women are viewed in the workplace. These gender stereotypes can be found

everywhere, especially in media like movies and TV shows, where they continue to influence how we perceive men and women.

According to Hentschel et al. (2019), “gender stereotypes are generalizations about what men and women are like, and there typically is a great deal of consensus about them” (p. 2). These stereotypes simplify and fix certain traits as inherently male or female, often linking masculinity with strength, aggression, and dominance, and femininity with care, passivity, and nurturing. According to Butler (1999), gender is not an inherent trait but a set of repeated actions that are culturally enforced, and these actions produce the very idea of gender itself. Butler argues that “there is neither an ‘essence’ that gender expresses nor an objective ideal to which gender aspires.” Instead, gender is “a construction that regularly conceals its genesis” (Butler, 1999, p. 178). This is reinforced through performative acts that create the illusion of stability. She further emphasizes that gender performance occurs under ‘duress’ due to societal pressures, often with punitive consequences for those who fail to conform to accepted norms.

Gender stereotypes not only exist in theory but also play out in real-world situations, often leading to unfair treatment or discrimination. A notable example of this occurred in the UK, where the gender pay gap has been a long-standing issue. In 2019, a BBC report highlighted how women in the UK were still earning significantly less than men for doing the same work, with a gender pay gap of around 10.4% in favor of men. This disparity persists even though equal pay laws have been in place for decades. The pay gap is just one clear example of how

gender stereotypes continue to influence modern society, with women often being seen as less capable or less deserving of equal pay simply because of their gender. These issues reflect how deep-rooted stereotypes can shape not only individual lives but also large institutions and systems, affecting women's economic independence and status in society.

Another real-world example of gender stereotypes is the incident involving Serena Williams at the French Open in Paris, France, at Stade Roland-Garros in 2018. Serena, who is one of the most famous female tennis players in the world, once wore a specially designed catsuit to help her after experiencing health complications after giving birth. However, after appearing in the catsuit, she was criticized by tournament organizers for violating the dress code. The organizers considered that the outfit did not comply with the dress code that applied to the tournament. This is highlighted because many male players in tennis often have more freedom in choosing what they wear, without experiencing the same criticism. This injustice shows how dress codes in sports can reinforce gender stereotypes. Meanwhile, female athletes like Serena feel they have to fight harder to express themselves, even though they are doing the same things as their male counterparts. Serena herself stated that the catsuit was not just clothing, but also functioned to maintain her health. This case reminds us that even though we live in a modern era, there are still many challenges that women have to face in the world of sports and in many other fields.

The film *Ferdinand* (2017) addresses similar themes related to gender stereotypes, but in a more subtle and symbolic way. Ferdinand is an animated

movie about a bull who doesn't fit the traditional expectations of masculinity. Unlike other bulls, Ferdinand is gentle and prefers to smell flowers rather than fight in the bullring. Throughout the film, Ferdinand faces pressure from society to act like a "real bull," which means being aggressive, violent, and competitive. However, Ferdinand refuses to conform to these expectations and instead stays true to his peaceful and kind nature. This storyline challenges the stereotype that males, including animals like bulls, must always be strong, dominant, and aggressive to be respected. The film uses Ferdinand's character to show how damaging these rigid ideas about masculinity can be and encourages viewers to embrace individuality rather than conform to societal pressures.

This study will analyze the film *Ferdinand* (2017) through the perspective of Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity because the film raises important questions about how gender stereotypes affect individuals and limit their true identities. The film illustrates how societal norms push individuals, especially males, to act in ways that may not align with their true selves. In the film, the issue of gender stereotypes is explored through the main character's struggle to break free from the expectations placed on him simply because of his gender. The theory of gender performativity, introduced by Judith Butler, helps to explain this, as it suggests that gender is not something we are born with, but something we are taught to "perform" based on societal expectations. Ferdinand's refusal to conform to the aggressive behaviors expected of him highlights this idea, showing that one's gender doesn't define how they must act. In the end, Ferdinand proves that strength doesn't always come from aggression or physical

dominance, but from being true to oneself. This film serves as a powerful message that challenges traditional gender roles and encourages both men and women to express themselves freely without being restricted by outdated stereotypes.

1.2 Statements of the Problem

Based on the background of the study, the writer describes the formulation of the problem as follows:

1. How is the issue of Gender Stereotypes depicted in the film *Ferdinand* ?
2. How does the main character deal with the gender stereotypes in the film *Ferdinand* ?

1.3 Scope and Limitation of the Study

The scope of this study is literature that focuses on analyzing the animated film *Ferdinand* (2017). Furthermore, the limitation of this study is the analysis of gender stereotypes, particularly focusing on the portrayal of masculinity through the character of Ferdinand using Judith Butler's theory on gender performativity and the social construction of gender roles.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

Based on the statements of the problem above, the objectives of analyzing gender stereotypes in the film *Ferdinand* are:

1. To explain how the issue of gender stereotypes is depicted in the film *Ferdinand*.
2. To explore how the main character deals with the gender stereotypes presented in the film *Ferdinand*.

1.5 Functions of the Study

The researcher aims to provide both theoretical and practical contributions through this study, which are explained as follows:

A. Theoretical Functions

This study aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of how gender stereotypes, especially masculinity, are represented in the animated film *Ferdinand* (2017). By examining the character's experiences with societal expectations, this research explains how movies can either support or challenge traditional views of masculinity. In addition, this study is expected to serve as a reference for future research related to gender stereotypes and media representation.

B. Practical Functions

The practical functions of this study are directed toward both writers and readers. For writers, this research provides insights that can help them create more realistic characters who reflect the complexities of gender and challenge harmful stereotypes. For readers, this study enhances their understanding and encourages them to think critically about the portrayal of gender stereotypes. By analyzing the film *Ferdinand* (2017), readers can understand how media representations shape perceptions of masculinity and femininity, which influence societal norms and expectations. This understanding is expected to empower them to challenge harmful stereotypes in their daily lives.

1.6 Systematical Presentation

This thesis consists of five chapters that are systematically structured as follows:

The first chapter is the Introduction, which presents the background of the study, research questions, scope and limitations, objectives, significance of the study, and systematical presentation. It introduces the issue of gender stereotypes, explains the selection of the film *Ferdinand* (2017), and outlines the relevance of Judith Butler's theory.

The second chapter includes related studies, review of literature, and the theoretical framework. This chapter looks at previous research related to gender stereotypes, comparing it with the current study to show both similarities and differences. It also provides a review of important theories from experts, especially focusing on Butler's concept of gender performativity. Quotes from these sources are included to support the analysis, and Butler's theory is explained as the main framework used to examine the portrayal of gender in the film *Ferdinand* (2017).

The third chapter details the research approach, data sources, data collection methods, and data analysis methods. It explains the approach used for analyzing the gender roles in the film *Ferdinand* (2017), and describes the sources of data, which include the film and supporting literature. It also outlines how the data was collected and the specific methods used to analyze it, with a focus on applying Butler's theory to the film's content.

The fourth chapter consists of the data findings and analysis, where the collected data are presented and analyzed in essay form with pictures. Data from the film *Ferdinand* (2017) are examined using Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity as the main framework to analyze the portrayal of gender stereotypes in the film.

The fifth chapter of this study consists of the conclusions and suggestions. It provides conclusions based on the findings and analysis presented in the previous chapter. Furthermore, this chapter summarizes the overall results of the study and offers suggestions for readers and future researchers who intend to conduct similar studies on gender stereotypes and media.