



Gender Performativity in Children Picture Books *Introducing Teddy* and *Julian is A Mermaid*

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Abstract. *This study aims to analyze the interpretation of the issue of gender performativity in the two picture books, *Introducing Teddy* (2016) and *Julian Is A Mermaid* (2018), written by Jessica Walton and Jessica Love. From the data analysis, it was found that these two picture books portray how gender performativity exists in society. Identification of social construction is also discussed in these two picture books. The presumption of the binary system is that women should align with her gender that is feminine, while men should be masculine. This process is called gender performativity of gender which was asserted by Judith Butler theory. The result of this research reveals that the gender performativity and gender construction in the two picture books surrounded all aspects of human life. The society constructed color, appearance, traits, acts, gestures, roles, and stereotypes based on individuals' gender category. It is also found that the characters from the two picture books were gender fluid with certain stages conforming to the performativity but also to the gender construction.*

Keywords : *feminine, gender construction, gender performativity, masculin, sex, society.*

Abstrak. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisa interpretasi isu performativitas gender dalam dua buku bergambar, *Intruducing Teddy* (2016) dan *Julian Is A Mermaid* (2018), ditulish oleh Jessica Walton dan Jessica Love. Dari analisis ditemukan bahwa kedua buku tersebut menggambarkan bagaimana performativitas gender ada di masyarakat. Identifikasi konstruksi sosial juga dibahas dalam buku tersebut. Anggapan bahwa sistem biner dimana perempuan harus selaras dengan gendernya yakni feminim, sedangkan laki laki harus maskulin. Proses inilah yang disebut performativitas gender yang ditegaskan oleh teori gender Judith Butler. Hasil penelitian mengungkap bahwa performativitas gender dan konstruksi sosial gender dalam kedua buku tersebut melingkupi semua aspek kehidupan manusia. Masyarakat mengkonstruksi warna, penampilan, sikap, tindakan, gester, peran dan stereotip berdasarkan kategori gender individu. Ditemukan pula bahwa karakteristik buku gambar tersebut bersifst gender fluid dengan tahapan tahapan tertentu sesuai performativitas tetatpi juga dengan konstruksi gender.

Kata kunci : feminin, konstruksi gender, performativitas gender, maskulin, seks, masyarakat

1. INTRODUCTION

Gender is an inherent problem for both men and women, which is constructed socially and culturally. The difference is the gender characteristics themselves, both masculine and feminine. Masculinity is that men are considered strong, rational, and assertive, so often in society there is a gender bias that men are considered taboo when doing housework such as cooking, cleaning the house, and taking care of children. While femininity, namely women are known to be gentle, emotional, motherly, affective, and irrational which often occurs gender bias, such as women who doubt their ability to occupy a position in work.

Jovi Adhiguna was born on June 24, 1990 and has a career as an influencer in Indonesia. The 173 cm tall guy has Dutch and Chinese ancestry. Jovi is Sarah Ayu's older brother, who both had careers as influencers in 2015, Jovi was originally known for passing a glimpse on YouTube of Sarah Ayu with the appearance of blue hair to the length of the buttocks. YouTube

viewers Sarah later called her a bit like Kylie Jenner. Jovi Adhiguna then started to create YouTube content about various things such as fashion, make-up, and traveling. He admitted that he didn't really care about the number of viewers or likes of his content. Jovi Adhiguna is known as a successful F&B entrepreneur. Jovi Adhiguna admits that he began to appear eccentric from childhood. But just after high school, Jovi and his mother visited a psychiatrist to find out who he was. From the results of the examination, it is known that the Y chromosome is more dominant than X even though Jovi is a man.

The impact of the non-conformance of the prevailing norms in society regarding the concept of masculine and feminine is one-sided discrimination. This can be prevented by educating and nurturing children by educating individual characteristics, not taking sides with what gender is inherent it is, but teaching what is the gender performance of each individual in order to implement gender equality between men and women. The term sex and gender sound identical, but sex and gender actually refer to a wholly different concept. Sex refer to the biological distinction between men and women according to their genital organ. Sex is therefore more natural than societal. The other hand, gender typically refers to the social process of dividing up people and social practices along the lines of sex identities (Basley 2005, 11).

Jovi Adhiguna then labeled himself as androgynous. However, the gender on Jovi's ID card is still male. Jovi Adhiguna's androgynous status is actually related to his love for women's clothes. According to Jovi, men should also be free to wear women's clothes while women are also free to wear men's clothes. Jovi is even still sitting in the 'male way'. However, there has also been a rejection of Jovi Adhiguna's feminine style. Jovi was once rejected by Balikpapan residents at the Market World 2019 event related to the LGBT issue.

The notion of Gender in literary works today also can be traced in stories intended for young children, one of which is found in children picture books in *Introducing Teddy* and *Julian Is a Mermaid* children picture books intended for children that are shown in many countries which contain arguably gender elements. Those books are written by Jessica Walton and Jessica Love officially premiered on May 25, 2016, and April, 2018.

Jessica Walton is a queer, disabled writer and speaker. They co-wrote an episode of *Get Krack!* focused on disability, which aired on ABC in 2019. They are the authors of graphic novel *Stars In Their Eyes*, with artwork by Aśka (Fremantle Press 2021) and *Introducing Teddy*, illustrated by Dougal MacPherson (Bloomsbury 2016). Jess also has two short stories for teens and kids published in Australian anthologies *Funny Bones* (Allen and Unwin 2019)

and *Meet Me at the Intersection* (Fremantle Press 2018), as well as poetry in a few anthologies, magazines and journals. Then, Jessica Love is the author and illustrator of *Julian is a Mermaid*.

She studied printmaking and illustration at the University of California, Santa Cruz and then went on to study Drama at Juilliard. Her literary works *Julian is Mermaid* also won many awards, they are Winner of the Stonewall Book Award, 2019, Winner of the Klaus Flugge Prize, 2019, New York Public Library's 100 Best Books for Kids, Society of Illustrators Silver Medal and last but not least Time Magazine's 10 Best YA and Children's Books of the year.

2. GENDER STUDY

Gender, according to Butler, performing acts of masculinity is not a prerequisite of maleness, nor do acts of femininity qualify performance of femaleness. Likewise, subverting stereotypical gender roles is not a requirement of being gender queer. However, there are certain societal expectations associated with the performance of gender. Masculinity and femininity are concepts in opposition. What masculinity is, femininity is the opposite. What femininity is, masculinity is not. Being masculine is intricately tied to being men, in ways femininity is not tied to being a woman. Masculinity must be proven, and constantly reasserted, and heterosexuality is a cornerstone of masculinity. Femininity is tenderness, patience, kindness, and so on. The opposite is masculinity.

Furthermore, Butler stated that gender and desire are flexible, free-floating, and not caused by other stable factors. Gender is a choice or gender is a role or gender is a construction that one puts on as one puts on clothes in the morning. That there is a one who is before this gender, a one who goes to the wardrobe of gender and decides with deliberation which gender it will be today. Gender is a kind of imitation that produces the very notion of the original as an effect and consequence of the imitation itself. When feminist theorists claim that gender is the cultural interpretation of sex or that gender is culturally constructed. Whether gender or sex is fixed or free is a function of a discourse which, it will be suggested, seeks to set certain limits to analysis or to safeguard certain tenets of humanism as pre suppositional to any analysis of gender.

In this book, Butler also explains if gender is the cultural meaning that the sexed body assumes then gender cannot be said to follow from sex any one way. When the construction of gender is theorized as radically independent of sex, gender itself becomes a free-floating artifice with the consequence that man and masculine might just as easily signify a female body as a male one, and woman feminine a male body as easily as a female one. Butler state's gender

is not a noun, but neither is it a set of free-floating attributes, for we have seen that the substantive effect of gender is performatively produced and compelled by the regulatory practices of gender coherence. The considered not only that the ambiguities and incoherence within and among heterosexual, homosexual, and bisexual practices are suppressed and redescribed within the reified framework of the disjunctive and asymmetrical binary of masculine or feminine, but that these cultural configurations of gender confusion operate as sites for intervention, exposure, and displacement of these reifications.

Within the term of Butler's theory, it is clear that the presence of power dynamics within sexuality is in no sense the same as the simple consolidation or argumentation of heterosexist or phallogocentric power regimes.

3. GENDER IDENTITIES

This study engages with the concept of gender identity by Judith Butler in her book, "Gender Trouble". Gender identity, according to Butler is something one does, an act doing rather than a being. It means there is no gender identity behind the expression of gender, that identity is performatively constituted by the very expression to be its results. Gender is not formed from a God but grows from the living environment. Furthermore, gender is not to culture as sex is not to nature; gender is also the discursive cultural means by which sexed nature or natural sex is produced and established as discursive before culture, a politically neutral surface on which culture acts.

thus, Butler continues to explain gender is socially created roles, feelings, and behaviours deemed appropriate for men and women by society. Behaviours that are consistent with society's expectations gender normative. Gender identity a person's sense and definition of their gender. Being masculine or feminine is attached to an individual through a variety of cultural understanding towards this gender. Gender is a social construction which means that gender develops through values within society, beliefs, and preferred ways of organizing collective life. There is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender itself and gender is a performance we did at a certain moment.

Sketch of gender gives Butler's theory a clue to understanding the political reasons for the substantialization view of gender. Gender can donate a unity of experience, of sex, gender, and desire. The internal coherence or unity of either gender, man or woman, thereby requires both a stable and oppositional heterosexuality. The project of criticizing phal logocentrism or heterosexual hegemony it is not failed, as a political critique could effectively undo the cultural construction of the feminist critic's sexuality. The typology of gender and sexuality needs to

give way to a discursive account of the cultural production of gender. The recourse to original or genuine femininity is a nostalgic and parochial ideal that refuses the contemporary demand to formulate an account of gender as complex cultural construction.

4. GENDER PERFORMATIVITY

In children pictured books are presented gender is biased into the person of each of the social spheres of their life. As states by Butler (1990) if gender is the cultural meaning that the sexes body assumes, then gender cannot be said to follow from sex in any one way. Gender performativity in children's picture books showed how insecurities the character is about gender. The feeling of discomfort makes them feel like they are not in their own life. It causes, in social life, to affect the formation of gender. The pattern of gender in social life is something that was formed from birth by god. But Butler(1990) argues gender can donate the unity experience, of sex, gender, and desire, only when sex can be understood in some sense to necessitate gender where gender is a psychic and or cultural designation of the self and desire where desire is heterosexual and therefore differentiates itself through an oppositional relation to that other gender its desire. The implications in this book are what Butler says about gender, that gender is formed not from social laws and patter but on their social life.

The idea of gender identity emphasizes Judith Butler's idea of the concept of gender performativity. Butler (1990) defines gender as the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory system that frame congeals over time to produce the appearance of substances, of a natural sort of being. Study about gender identity is point identification. The process of gender can define masculinity or femininities by the characters. Moreover, Butler believes that different environments bring different characters, cultures, and experiences which emerge different impacts on gender development. Therefore, gender does not mean something formed from God an different means about sex.

5. EFFECT OF GENDER PERFORMATIVITY

The effect is the impact that results from something that has happened before which gives rise to an outcome. It makes something good or bad., depending on how someone responds. As Butler explains (1990)the notion of an abiding substance is a fictive constructions gender sequence, then it seems that gender as substance, the viability, of man and woman as nouns, is called into question by the dissonant play of attributes that fail to conform to sequential or casual models of intelligibility. The influence of gender impacts that are

introduced early on directly teaches young children to know the difference not from their form as a man or woman but from someone's performance. The biggest effect is the acceptance or rejection of gender performance to a child. Good acceptance or positive acceptance of gender, affect children by opening up the insight that gender is not just something formed.

Moreover, the effect can also harm a child. One of the worst things is the very real rejection of a child. The children can be deeply traumatized by something that is not normal for them. The unfamiliarity also makes children feel uncomfortable and feel unequal. In rejection of gender can cause physical and mental trauma of a person. The best way for children to understand that gender performativity in someone is absolute and a right for anyone. Discrimination or rejection is indeed a common thing but gender should not be underestimated. This is something that can be important enough to be introduced to children.

Also, gender is differences in roles, rights, obligations, powers, and opportunities between man and woman in social life. Whether gender is fixed or free is a function of a discourse which, it will be suggested, seeks to set certain limits to analysis or to safeguard certain tenets of humanism as presuppositional to any analysis of gender (Butler, 1990). Gender performativity commonly explains specifically that gender cannot be equated with sex.

Gender roles are different from sex. Gender is more about the nature or behaviour of a person to be masculine or feminine. Masculinity or femininity cannot be judged physically, the perspective is seen from the way someone represents themselves.

6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this study, the writer used the qualitative approach. The data are being collected by reading, understanding, and analysing the object through the documents, and journal articles. According to Patton (1987) indicates that three things occur during analysis: data are organized, data are reduced through summarization and categorization, and patterns and themes in the data are identified and linked. Qualitative research used to dive deeper into the problems of the study and it has always been taken from the text. Qualitative research is the method to complete understanding and social phenomena and social behaviour. Thus, this approach helps to solve the problems of this study.

7. DATA AND COLLECTION METHOD

In collecting data in this study, the most important observation is by reading the children's picture books as the primary sources and collecting the related theories of the quotations from the experts on the books. According to Cresswell, he states that "document

analysis refers to printed materials, images, literary works, film or other types of record . Method of Data Analysis In analysing data, the writer focused on the analysis of the character who reveals the depiction of gender performativity. The writer also focused on how gender identity impacts childhood life.

8. FINDING AND ANALYSIS

A set of behavior and traits of masculinity and femininity into performing that rule individuals are considered only based on their biological sex are a way to consider as to conceal the naturalness of gender itself. Therefore, this chapter explains how characteristics and performativity of gender are represented through the characters in *Introduction Teddy* (2016) and *Julian is a Mermaid* (2018) by Jessica Walton and Jessica Love which discrete categorization of performativity of males and females. The distinct characteristic and performativity between male and female characters in the two picture books are analyzed based on their appearances, traits, and social roles from the narrative and illustrative elements in the picture books.

Introduction Teddy (2016) is the story of Errol and his teddy bear Thomas. One day, Thomas seems depressed. Errol asks what the matter is, but Thomas is afraid if he reveals his problems, Errol would not want to be his friend anymore. In fact, Thomas confesses he is a girl and he wants to be called Tilly. Errol responds no matter if Thomas is a girl or boy, they are still friends. Other moments Errol decided to invite his friend Ava. Errol tells his teddy has a new name, Tilly.

Then Tilly shifts her bow tie on to her head as a bow and makes Tilly happy to wear whatever she wants. Tilly and Errol play as usual. The end of the story, the four friends are enjoying their tea party. Errol with Tilly and Ava with her robot.

Julian Is a Mermaid (2018) is a story of a young Afro-Latin boy named Julian who so much loves mermaids and he decided to be one. One day, Julian and his Abuela take the subway home from the pool, he sees three beautiful mermaids from his subway seat. Julian was amazed at their dress. After Julian and Abuela arrive home, he dreams of being a mermaid. Beautiful transformation depicts his daydream illustrated. When Abuela wants to take a bath and leaves Julian alone, Julian's imagination allows transform into a mermaid by using leaves and flowers taken from Abuela vase to make a headdress and Abuela's white curtain for his mermaid tail. He continues using the make-up while looking in the mirror to ensure he looks like a perfect mermaid before Abuela returns. Then, Abuela sees him, she looks surprised but still composed

because she was noticeable. In fact, Abuela gives a string of pearls to Julian to place around his neck and takes him to join the other mermaids in New York's Annual Mermaid Parade. Julian Happy wore the costume to look like a mermaid in the parade. His dream day comes true and to be part of another mermaid too.

9. GENDER CONSTRUCTION IN PICTURE BOOKS

Gender is not formed from a God but grows from the living environment. Furthermore, gender is not to culture as sex is not to nature; gender is also the discursive cultural means by which sexed nature or natural sex is produced and established as discursive before culture, a politically neutral surface on which culture acts. Halberstam (1998) argues, however, that even biological sex is socially constructed and that masculine and feminine behaviours may be rooted in physiology as well. The word gender can also be used as a morphological form in some languages (such as the masculine or feminine used for syntactic meaning in French). Being masculine or feminine is attached to an individual through a variety of cultural understanding towards this gender. Masculinity And femininity are taught to individuals through various cultural means so that people are encouraged to follow the gender rules that society prescribes for them.

Furthermore, Errol as an owner of the teddy bear named Thomas, also used the blue color. That clearly represents that color affects gender construction as if using "force" that he is a man who must use blue as a symbol. On the other hand, the blue color of the clothes Errol is wearing is the one that his parents gave him. Children have not been able to determine what clothes they want to wear and they buy according to their personality and as a benchmark for their identity to society. Thus, gender construction is very visible with a compulsion to wear blue as an identification that he is male.

10. GENDER PERFORMATIVITY IN PICTURE BOOKS



Picture 1. Teddy

It is known there are several kinds of ways to defend against something, especially gender performativity. They are verbal action and verbal words. The analysis of the way characters against gender performativity will be seen in the analysis below.

Teddy is to be teddy girl Tilly. Thomas said to Errol that he felt that he was a female teddy bear not a male teddy bear, and he wished that it was Tilly not Thomas. He felt happy when Errol accepted him no matter if he was a boy or girl teddy by hugging him. Not have a gender identity before committing an act associated with a particular gender. Gender is always an act, however, not an act by the subject which can be stated to have existed before the act. If gender is a performative act, then it only exists while it is being done. So, if the inner truth of gender is just a fabrication and true gender identity is just a fantasy that is institutionalized and inscribed on the surface of the body, then true gender cannot be big or wrong, it is the result of the production of the truth effect of primary and stable identity discourse behave in a certain way, capable of influencing the norms of what is appropriate for that sex.

Moreover, Performativity tends to be assertive sentences such as declarations. In this case binding the actions taken not only showed. the power of performativity is taken into account in this case for show identity. To determine the identity, a person has the right to choose the



gender he deems appropriate. Gender something that cannot be formed and determined but based on certain provisions repeatedly and reliably. Performability is a declaration of identity professional. This is done firmly and repeatedly as a form of their gender performativity, in order to be accepted by society. next up is Julian, in *Julian is a Mermaid*. Julian dressed up like a mermaid, because he really liked mermaids. He uses a headband of flowers and leaves, tying the curtains to make it into a long tail like the mermaid she sees and imagines. In fact, Julian also dressed up in a mirror to

Picture 2. *Julian Is A Mermaid* Pg. 20-21

make sure that he was ready to become a mermaid. Seeing the mermaids, he saw on the subway inspired him to dress up and dress up to look like the mermaids he had seen before. This

happened because in Julian he had an interest in dressing up and stylish like a beautiful mermaid with perfect clothes and makeup. Julian loves being able to dress up and express his imagination to be able to dress and act like a mermaid. Nevertheless, this assumes that Julian shows his gender performativity in action by dressing up as a mermaid that he thinks so far.

Next, in the book *Julian Is a Mermaid*. Abuela caught Julian who was dressed like a mermaid. Julian got dressed while Abuela was taking a shower. Upon his return Abuela saw that Julian had dressed up and dressed like a mermaid.



Picture 3. *Julian Is A Mermaid* Pg. 24-25

Seeing that Abuela showed a slightly angry expression to Julian, by returning to get dressed after bathing. Upon his return, Abuela gave Julian a surprise, which was a pearl necklace, to complete the outfit he was wearing. This indicates that Abuela accepts and understands the gender performativity that exists in Julian. Julian was very happy with the reception he received from Abuela. Julian who was initially scared because of the expression on Abuela's when he found himself dressed up and dressed like a mermaid. Giving him a pearl necklace, Julian knew that Abuela had accepted him dressed, dressed and dressed like a mermaid. Abuela invites Julian to a festival on a beach. Julian wondered where he would be taken by Abuela dressed like that. Abuela replied casually that he would find out later by seeing

11. CONCLUSION

From the analysis and findings of the previous chapters it is concluded that gender performativity occurs because of social factors where the offender feels no matter femininity or masculinity on their male or female body. Gender can be interpreted as differences in roles, functions, status and responsibilities to men and women as a result of social construction culture that is embedded through the process of socialization from one generation to the next. The condition of women and men enjoying the same status are equal and have the same conditions to fully realize human rights and their potential for development in all fields of life.

However, those phenomena are illustrated by the two picture books entitled *Introducing Teddy* and *Julian Is A Mermaid*. Gender performativity can be represented by expressions, scope, gesture, statements and other aspects.

The characters in *Introducing Teddy* and *Julian Is A Mermaid* proves that a male or female is not a problem for gender performativity. Masculine or feminine is something that has been formed in both men and women. It is just a matter of how one plays a role in society. Both tend to be masculine and feminine. The tendency to compartmentalize gender roles creates an uncomfortable feeling on the stereotypes that are labelled. The function of performativity in gender is precisely to show what role you want to convey to the community and show it. They can resist in their own way. They resist feeling sad, guilty and fright on the rejection that arises when feelings want to tell what they feel. On the other hand, when acceptance is obtained, the burden that has been borne all this time seems to disappear and I am very happy because I can express myself freely without fear.

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