

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1. Background to the Study

Gender refers to the characteristics of women and men that are socially constructed. This consists of norms, behaviors, and roles related to being a woman or a man as well as relationships with each other. As a social assemble, gender varies from society to society and might alternate over the years. Gender is hierarchical and produces inequalities that intersect with other social and economic inequalities. Gender-primarily based persecution intersects with other elements of persecution, consisting of ethnicity, socioeconomic status, disability, age, geographic region, gender identity, and sexual orientation, among others. That is known as intersectionality. Gender interacts with but is not the same as sex, which refers to the different biological and physiological traits of women, males, and intersex individuals, which includes chromosomes, hormones, and reproductive organs. Gender and sex are associated with but different from gender identity. Gender identity refers to someone's deeply felt, internal, and personal experience of gender, which may also or may not correspond to the person's body structure or distinctive sex at birth (Parfitt, 2015).

Gender is also used to illustrate the distinctions in behavior among women and men can be described as masculine and feminine. The gender distinctions increase the problems of male and female where male is related to masculinity and female is related to femininity. In every

construction, the biological distinctions between men and women is defined into social tags and illustrations. Feminist writers insist that biological variations are intensified by masculinity and femininity in the social portrayals. A pattern of distinctions by way of gender is recognized while the person is both masculine and female. As an example, crimson and blue are gendered colors, the former seemed feminine and the latter as masculine. In addition to being "sturdy" and "tough" is masculine. Being "vulnerable" and "smooth" is related to a feminine person. There are other numerous different characteristics that are classified as masculine and feminine (Mishra et al., 2015).

In the past, masculinity and femininity are standards that represent the social consequences of being male or female the traits and characteristics which describe men and women provide men advantages over ladies. Nowadays, these social labels of masculinity and femininity are blurring. There is a continual transition in the conceptualization of human entities as influenced by entirely biological or social influences. Women's objectives have shifted; women's lives and positions have widened (Mishra et al., 2015).

There are several movies that portrayed the non-stereotypical gender when feminine and masculine terms are getting blurred. For example, *Mulan*, *Brave*, *The Hunger Game*, *Hidden Figures*, *Little Women*, *Ocean 8*, and many more. In this research, the writer will analyze the gender performativity portrayed in *The Half of It* (2020) Movie. *The Half*

of It is a 2020 coming-of-age comedy drama film directed and written by Alice Wu. The cast are Leah Lewis, Daniel Diemer, Alexxis Lemire, Enrique Murciano, Wolfgang Novogratz, Catherine Curtin, Becky Ann Baker and Collin Clou as the supporting roles. The film released by Netflix on May 1, 2020 and gets many positive reviews. The film is awarded by The Founders Award for Best Narrative Feature at the 2020 Tribeca Film Festival (Winterhalder, 2004).

The story follows a Chinese American protagonist. The character is a high scholar, Ellie Chu, who lives in the fictional, very white town of Squahamish with her widowed father. She is in love with a girl named Aster Flores, but instead of pursuing her feelings, she helps a boy woo Aster via love letters and text messages. The Protagonist Ellie does not have stereotypical traits as a woman in the common belief. Her character, personality, and traits are blurred between feminine and masculine stereotypes.

Gender performativity is something that we often hear about these days. Even though we live in a country that upholds heterosexuality, in today's era of globalization where foreign cultural influences can enter easily, we cannot turn a blind eye to the circumstances around us. It is interesting to be discussed because this movie has a coming-out-age genre. We can see the reflection on many things in our lives that are easy to find in coming-out-age movies. This movie brings queer and gender performativity, from this movie we can see and learn how to start learning

to understand about ourselves - our true desire, sadly sometimes we are eager to learn about everything but ourselves. This movie also portrays the process that people - especially queer people - go through as they work to accept their identity and have the courage to share that identity openly with other people.

2. Statement of the Problem

To help the writer analyzes the film, the writer composes the statement of the problem as the following:

1. How is gender performed in Ellie as the main character in *The Half of It* movie?
2. How does the society treat Ellie in *The Half of It* movie as the impact of her performativity?

3. Objective of the Study

Based on the statement of the problems, the writer's objectives of the study are:

1. To analyze the gender performativity represented in Ellie as the main character in *The Half of It* movie.
2. To find out how the society treats Ellie when she performed her gender performativity.

4. Scope of the Study

This study is limited to discuss how gender performativity is represented in the main character, Ellie Chu in Alice Wu's *The Half of It* by observing the main character's behaviors, speeches, acts, personalities, and how she dressed. Also, the impacts of the main character's gender performativity in how the society around her reacts.

5. Significance of the Study

The writer hopes by doing this research will help the students especially those who study English Literature of the Faculty of Language and Cultural Studies to comprehend gender performativity. Furthermore, this thesis educates more people about the theory of gender performativity, which will be useful to understand the conceptual meaning or perspective of oneself and others. Besides that, this research can increase the reader's knowledge about the queer topic. The writer hopes that the reader could be involved to raising awareness about these issues and helping to reduce the persecution or other bad treatment faced by Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ) communities. Also, the writer is convinced that the study will give life lessons that are very beneficial for the writer as well as the reader later.

6. Approach to the Study

This study applies the context-oriented approach. The term context-oriented approaches refer here to a heterogeneous group of schools and methodologies which do no longer regard literary texts as self-contained,

impartial works of art but attempt to area them inside a bigger context. Relying on the motion, this context can be history, social and political background, literary genre, nationality, or gender (Klarer, 2004). The theory that the writer used in this thesis is using Judith Butler's Queer Approach: *Gender Trouble*. Gender is performatively constituted through the very 'expressions' which are stated to be its consequences. She pressured, however, that individuals do no longer exist before or independently of the genders they "perform": gender is constantly a doing, although no longer a doing by a subject who might be stated to preexist the deed. Individual identity (the subject) is itself performatively constituted. It follows that people do not "select" their genders and cannot assume or discard or significantly alter them at will simply by way of behaving (or not behaving) in certain ways (Butler, 1990).

This research used the qualitative method. The research is done by finding the correlation between data that represents the correlation of the fact as explained in the theory. To make good and valid research, the researcher did several steps. The first step is the writer watched *The Half of it* movie as the main source of observation. The writer also used the film script to assist the writer in gathering data, especially the utterances of the characters the writer wanted to observe. Secondly, the writer identified the object observation related to behaviors, actions, intentions, reasons, and effects and made it into a list. The third step is the writer analyzed the list using context-oriented approach and Judith Butler's Gender Performativity

theory as the main theory. Lastly, the writer made the conclusion from the data that had been collected.

7. Organization of the Paper

This paper divided into five chapters. The first chapter is the introduction that includes the background of the study, statement of the problem, the objective of the study, the scope of the study, the significance of the study, approach to the study and organization of the paper. The second chapter consists of the biography of the Alice Wu as the scriptwriter and the director of the film and synopsis of *The Half of It* movie. The third chapter consists of the previous study, the definition of popular culture and film, the definition of gender, and gender performativity by Judith Butler. The fourth chapter consists of analysis of the gender performativity that represented by the main character of *The Half of It* movie and the and how society treats her in *The Half of It* movie as the impact of the performativity. Finally, the last chapter is the conclusion of the analysis and suggestion.