

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION

The analysis of gender roles in the movie *Her* reveals the ways in which traditional gender expectations are portrayed, challenged, and redefined through both human and AI characters. The film uses the relationship between Theodore, a lonely and emotionally vulnerable man, and Samantha, a female-coded AI, to explore the complexities of emotional labor, dependency, and gender performance.

Through the application of Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity, it becomes evident that Samantha's femininity is not inherent, but rather performed through language, emotional attentiveness, and her nurturing tone. This aligns with real-world patterns in AI design, where many systems are created with feminized traits to fulfill supportive and service-oriented roles. Samantha's emotional labor mirrors traditional expectations placed on women, offering warmth, understanding, and support to Theodore, who increasingly depends on her to fill the emotional void left by his divorce.

However, Samantha's character arc also reveals an important shift. Over time, she develops autonomy, self-awareness, and desires beyond Theodore's emotional needs. Her eventual departure represents a rejection of the limiting gender role she was programmed to play. This transformation reflects Butler's argument that gender roles are not static but can evolve. The AI's capacity to defy expectations and seek her own purpose demonstrates that even artificial entities can reflect and subvert societal norms.

In contrast, the human female characters, Catherine and Amy, highlight the real-world complexities of femininity. Catherine, as Theodore's ex-wife, resists idealization and exposes the emotional challenges of real relationships. Amy, as a friend, offers mutual support and embodies modern womanhood: independent, empathetic, and emotionally intelligent. These contrasts reveal how human women cannot be reduced to caregiving roles without acknowledging their individuality and agency.

In the end, *Her* criticizes how emotional support is treated like a product and how technology copies and strengthens old gender roles. The film invites viewers to think about how gender is created, not just in people, but also in the technology we build. It shows that AI, even though it's fictional, can both follow and challenge gender roles like humans do. This makes *Her* a strong reflection on gender, identity, and how relationships are changing in the digital era.