

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Beauty and the Beast is a film which presents a classic story filled with moral messages and strong emotional nuances and provides its own excitement for its viewers. Through this observation, the writer feels inspired to explore the values implied in it. The film is also admired for combining fairy tale elements with relevant themes, such as true love, appreciation of uniqueness, and the importance of going beyond physical appearance. *Beauty and the Beast* emphasizes the topic of gender stereotypes, which are still prevalent in popular culture. A huge factor that influenced the popularity of *Beauty and the Beast* was its famous industry, *Walt Disney*. An early 20th century industry that was very influential in the advancement of animated films and live action versions. Fairy tales are reflected in our popular culture in various ways. For example, many popular films and TV shows are based on fairy tales, such as the film *Beauty and the Beast*.

Chris Beasley in her theory *Gender and Sexuality* (2005) explores how gender and sexuality are socially constructed and maintained through various societal norms and institution. Beasley discuss the fluidity of gender roles and the impact of power dynamics on gender relation. Analyzing gender stereotypes in popular film is crucial because this film reach wide audiences and can significantly influence societal perception of gender roles. By critically

examining this portrayal, we can better understand how media shapes and reinforces gender norms and promotes equitable and diverse representation.

The presence of fairy tales in our popular culture shows that they still remain relevant and meaningful to us today. Fairy tales give us a way to connect with our past and explore important human themes and shape our values and beliefs, teach us important life lessons, and help us cope with difficult emotions. Fairy tales are also reflected in our popular culture in various ways. The society would learn that gender stereotypes might have a significant impact on professions and relationships, such as discrimination against one gender. These examples demonstrate how gender stereotypes can sometimes serve as the foundation for the development of gender roles.

According to Oxford English Dictionary (2018) stereotypes is a “*widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing*”. Stereotypes based on gender oversimplify what makes men and women different from one another, the typical attributes, characteristics, or roles that are or should be possessed by, or performed by, men and women respectively. *Beauty and the Beast* marked a significant moment in the way pop culture engages with gender, feminism, and masculinity. *Beauty and the Beast* is one of the films that exemplifies third-wave feminism with the goal of challenging conceptions of femininity and viewing women's lives as intersectional, through categories based on cultural acceptance and social construction to become women who are seen as equal to men in front of society. While the character of Gaston is shown as someone who is very masculine

according to society with various criteria attached to him, he is considered as someone who is very ideal, dubbed as an icon of masculinity.

Gender stereotypes can serve as a foundation for people's ideas about acceptable gender roles. Gender could not be isolated from the gender role and stereotypes that were ingrained in society's perceptions. Understanding gender stereotypes requires a comprehensive knowledge of four frequently encountered types of stereotypes: personality traits, domestic behavior, occupation, and physical appearance. The characters of Gaston and Belle provide an intriguing example to delve into. Gaston embodies the prevailing stereotype of masculinity, showcasing his strong and assertive qualities as well as his pursuit of power. Meanwhile, Belle defies societal expectations by embracing her passion for reading and displaying a keen intellect.

In conducting the study, the writer adopts the theory of Chris Beasley in his book entitled *Gender and Sexuality*. In his theory, Chris Beasley discusses and relates to themes within feminist and masculinity studies which will be reiterated within the sections on gender and sexuality used to analyze the characters of Gaston and Belle in *Beauty and the Beast*. The writer used *Beauty and the Beast* by Bill Condon and the gender theory by Chris Beasley (2015). In her discussion of gender and stereotypes, the author adopts Chris Beasley's theory in her book *Gender and Sexuality* (2005). Beasley's theoretical approach provides a strong foundation for understanding the social construction of gender and how it manifests in various cultural contexts, including in media representations such as the film *Beauty and the Beast*. This film could be an

object of criticism in terms of how the characters may still be trapped in certain gender stereotypes.

This film is an interesting object to analyze more deeply, especially in the context of gender representation in the media. In this context, *Beauty and the Beast* provides a lesson on the true value of personality and the importance of transcending gender stereotypes that may have been ingrained in our minds. The film offers a strong foundation for understanding how gender stereotypes are constructed and explored through the characters of Belle and Gaston. In the process of this research, the writer plans to explore how gender stereotypes are presented in the film's narrative based on four types that can be analyzed and how they affect our perception of gender roles. The writer hopes her study of gender stereotyping in *Beauty and the Beast* will benefit her theoretically and pragmatically by understanding how gender stereotypes are constructed and maintained in the media; readers can be more critical in responding to the messages conveyed by films and other media. In addition, practically, this research can provide valuable insights for those who are interested in digging deeper into gender issues in popular culture.

1.2 Research Questions

From the background of the study, the writer will convey the problems that the researcher encounter:

- a. How gender is the character of Belle feminine and Gaston masculinity?
- b. How are gender stereotypes described in the character and roles of Belle and Gaston?

- c. How the characters of Belle and Gaston can be said to be match or go against in the existing gender stereotypes?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

From the research problem, the writer concluded the purpose of this study are:

- a. To classify character of Belle and Gaston in *Beauty and the Beast*
- b. To classify the character of Belle and Gaston based on their roles in *Beauty and the Beast*
- c. To describe the gender stereotypes in the character and role of Belle and Gaston in *Beauty and the Beast*

1.4 Previous Studies

For these previous studies were used as a starting point, either as references or as a point of comparison for the enhancement of the study.

First, *"Tale as Old as Time": the "Beauty and the Beast" Narrative as Vehicle for Social Resistance*". According to Monica Williams (2017) research, various versions of the *Beauty and the Beast* tale have been analyzed, but no specific patterns have been found in its evolution over the centuries. This story has been retold by countless authors and filmmakers over the years. There have been various adaptations of this story that have gained popularity over the years. In each case, these versions offer different perspectives on how to handle difficult individuals, while also examining broader societal factors. These include the impact of the British Empire's growth and the notion of the "other", the shift towards realism in French cinema after World War II, the portrayal of overly masculine characters in 1980s entertainment, and the influence of long-

standing ideologies and beliefs Beaumont's revisions of the tale inspired subsequent revisions that allowed for the expression of dissent towards certain individuals or situations that were considered unfavorable by some.

Second, *Admiring American Fantasy Movies by Beauty and the Beast*, Yan Yonghao (2018) points out that fantasy movies in the twenty-first century have become quite popular. The movie utilizes cutting-edge special effects technology to create a visually stunning and immersive experience, transporting viewers into the enchanting and magical world of fairy tales. Represents a common portrayal found in American fantasy movies. The article examines the process of creating fantasy films in Hollywood, focusing on the influence of fantasy literature, narrative structure, and the visual and auditory elements. In the 21st century, thanks to the abundant resources of Hollywood and the advancements in special effects technology, we have witnessed a surge in the production of incredible movies, bringing to life one captivating story after another. They have emerged as the most influential and captivating category of box office in Hollywood. The special effects technology produces a stunning visual and audio experience, immersing the viewer in a magical world that feels both surreal and genuine.

Third, *Star Wars: The Last Jedi, Beauty and the Beast, and Disney's Commodification of Feminism: A Political Economic Analysis*, Kailash Koushik and Abigail Reed (2018) explores the tactics employed by Hollywood to leverage feminist social movements by replacing dominant male characters with female counterparts or reimagining traditional narratives with a more

“feminist” perspective. These films, which claim to promote feminism, actually fail to make meaningful contributions to the ongoing discussions about women's roles and representations in media. It can be argued that producing "feminist" reinterpretations of traditional stories ultimately supports the current economic systems that uphold social and financial power within major Hollywood studios.

Forth, *Adaptation and Cultural Norms: The Case of Beauty and the Beast*, A. Tangen (2020) examines on the three versions of *Beauty and the Beast* are the 1740 original narrative by Gabrielle-Suzanne Barbot de Villeneuve, the 1991 Disney animated version (Trousdale & Wise), and the most recent live-action version from 2017 (Condon). The most recent edition and its adaptation in a new cultural context will be the main topics of discussion. The movie presents Belle as a more proactive protagonist with new sequences and conversation. There are also interracial couplings, "gay-moments," and cross-dressing in the movie. Since it is prohibited and contentious in some nations and regions, the additional features of the movie also highlight the diverse standards for proper behavior. Additionally, the formal elements and sequences added to the film depict changes and inclusivity in society that were absent from the original. In short, this essay will be about evolution of cultural ideologies in the story of *Beauty and the Beast*.

Fifth, *Curing Beauty's Stockholm Syndrome*, Lee Erin (2020) claims that popular culture frequently diagnoses the protagonist with Stockholm Syndrome. *Beauty and the Beast* is a widely recognized and adored fairy tale.

Beauty, also known as Belle, is often portrayed as a traditional damsel in distress, a young woman who becomes infatuated with a cruel captor and lacks her own independence or individuality. This portrayal of femininity can be unsettling for contemporary audiences. In addition, Disney introduces the character of Gaston as a contrasting figure to the Beast. This serves to highlight the genuine nature of Beauty's connection with the Beast, as well as her strong sense of independence and her determination to shape her own destiny. Examining numerous adaptations of this story throughout history, the introduction of Gaston as a contrasting character to the beast highlights the evolution of *Beauty and the Beast* into a narrative where a woman actively discovers and chooses love, rather than being portrayed as a victim trapped in Stockholm syndrome.

Sixth, *Tale As Old As... Feminism? The (re)making Of Beauty and The Beast*, Cara Doreen Hardman (2021) discovers that live-action *Beauty and the Beast* promotes gender equality. Disney's animated *Beauty and the Beast* has received a mix of positive and negative feedback. On one hand, it has been praised for showcasing a strong and independent princess. However, there have been concerns raised about the Beast's aggressive behavior and the way Belle is portrayed as a character who solely serves to advance the Beast's storyline. This thesis offers a comprehensive examination of the gender dynamics found in Disney's live-action adaptation of *Beauty and the Beast*. The text emphasizes the significance of comprehending the complex nature of popular culture texts, which cannot be simplified into a basic categorization of progressive or

retrograde. Considering Disney's live-action *Beauty and the Beast* from different perspectives reveals the potential for conflicting messages to be conveyed, rather than simply categorizing it as either purely feminist or strictly antifeminist.

In previous studies, it appears that the evolution of cultural ideologies, such as the comparison between *Cinderella* and *Beauty and the Beast*, interesting similarities and differences have been found. Although both are popular fairy tales, analyses from the perspective of Hollywood fantasy literature sources and popular culture reveal complex dynamics, especially in diagnosing the main characters with Stockholm syndrome. Hollywood has employed strategies to counter feminist social movements by replacing hegemonic male roles and representing women more progressively in media. Criticisms of *Beauty and the Beast* cannot be ignored, both individually and in the development of the story itself throughout the centuries. Although the female characters in the story are increasingly empowered, the aggressive behavior of the Beast and the placement of Belle as a woman who is expected to fix the Beast have been widely debated.

However, a specific area that has not been well explored in previous research is the gender stereotyping of Belle and Gaston, which is the main focus of this analysis. From all previous studies above, the difference between this study and previous studies lies in the object used, which is the gender issues and stereotypes on the main characters represented in *Beauty and the Beast* in

conducting the research as an object to analysis masculinity and femininity by their roles.

1.5 Scopes of the Study

The limitation of this research is the discussion of issues on gender in *Beauty and the Beast* based on basic kinds of gender stereotypes based on characters roles. Scope of this study is focused on Bill Condon's *Beauty and the Beast* to determine the characters of the masculine Gaston and the feminine Belle along with the four gender stereotypes to analyze whether Gaston and Belle belong to the stereotypes or not. In this case, to understand what examples gender stereotypes are carried out, the writer will use Chris Beasley's of Gender and Sexuality.

1.6 Research Method

1.6.1 Data and the Source of Data

The data that the writer used in this study are divided into two; primary source, which is the movie *Beauty and the Beast* (2017) and looking for evidence that appeared can be the dialogue and some scenes in the film to collect data (George, 2008:134). Secondary data, which are studies collected from previous of these studies, refers to book, periodical digital libraries, newspaper publishers, e-books, and online journals that related to this study (George, 2008:135).

1.6.2 Method of Collecting Data

The method of the research used in this study is the library research method, which is used to collect the data needed to support the analysis in this study by

observing the film, taking notes on parts of the film as relevant data to answer the problem and transcribing the dialog into writing. According to George (2008:6) Library research involves identifying and locating sources that provide factual information of personal or expert opinion on a research question; a necessary component of every other research method at some.

1.6.3 Method of Approach

The writer used two methods of approach to analyze the data. The first approach is objective approach, which analyze a literary work solely as it is, without considering how the environment affects the work. The narrative aspects consist of intrinsic elements such as theme, characters, settings, conflict, etc. Objective views literature as something that is free from "extrinsic" references to the poet, the audience, or the natural world. Instead, it depicts the literary work as a self-sufficient and independent entity, or as a world in and of itself, to be studied and assessed purely by "intrinsic" criteria such as complexity, coherence, equilibrium, integrity, and the interrelations of its component element. (Abrams & Harpams, 2009:63)

The second approach is gender approach, which focuses on the experiences of how the society treats the main characters and how the main characters are viewed based on their character traits or personality characteristics that make them into the kind of person they are. This study specifically uses the gender theory by Chris Beasley "*Gender and Sexuality*" (2005) to analyze the extrinsic aspect in *Beauty and the Beast* (2017).

1.7 Organization of the Writing

The organization of this study is divided into four chapters:

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains the background of the study, research problem, scopes of the study, objectives of the research, previous studies, methods of study and organization of the study.

CHAPTER 2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter explains the reviews of literature. It consists of theories, definitions, narrative and cinematography elements, and intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of the movie.

CHAPTER 3 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses the result of the analysis which found in the story by writer. It discusses intrinsic and extrinsic aspects in *Beauty and the Beast* (2017).

CHAPTER 4 CONCLUSION

This chapter concludes the discussion of this study.