CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Gender roles have traditionally been shaped by societal expectations, dictating how individuals are perceived and expected to behave in both private and public contexts. This is supported by Lindsey stating that "A role refers to the expected behavior linked to a particular status and are carried out based on social norms, which are shared guidelines that direct how individuals should behave in specific contexts" (Lindsey, 2015:2). These norms define the rights and duties associated with a given status. These roles are often reinforced through various media forms, particularly film, which significantly shape public perceptions of gender. Regarding its representation of gender roles, to delve deeper, Spike Jonze's *Her* is a movie deserving of study.

Her (2013), directed by Spike Jonze, is a sci-fi romantic drama set in a near-future world where technology fits perfectly with daily life. Following the divorce from his ex-wife, the movie centers on a lonely and emotionally detached guy named Theodore Twombly who creates personal letters for others. Seeking a connection, he purchases an advanced operating system with artificial intelligence named Samantha, which is designed to evolve and adapt through the user's life and experience.

As Theodore and Samantha engage in deep conversations, their relationship intensifies into a romantic bond, blurring the lines between human and machine.

The film explores themes of love, loneliness, emotional dependency, and the intersection of technology and humanity, presenting a powerful perspective on the nature of digital-era relationships. This unique interaction challenges traditional gender expectations as it blurs the lines between human and machine, intimacy and isolation, and masculinity and femininity.

This study will look at how *Her* reflects existing societal views on gender roles by analyzing the interactions between Theodore and Samantha. It brings up questions about emotional work, reliance on others, and what love really means in a world that's becoming more digital.

Moreover, *Her* encourages viewers to reflect on the implications of developing relationships with non-human entities. As artificial intelligence becomes more included in daily life, it reconsiders what it means to be human and how gender identity can be fluid rather than fixed.

1.2 Research Questions

1. What are the reflections of gender roles in the movie *Her*?

2. What are the comparisons between gender roles and gender performativity for human and AI in the movie *Her*?

3. What are the reflections of gender role through Theodore and Samantha in the movie *Her*?

4. What are the reflection of gender performativity in the movie *Her*?

1.3 Aims of the Study

1. To analyze the reflections of gender roles in the movie *Her*.

2. To analyze the comparisons between gender roles and gender performativity for human and AI in the movie *Her*.

3. To analyze the reflections of gender role through Theodore and Samantha in the movie *Her*.

4. To analyze the reflection of gender performativity in the movie *Her*.

1.4 Scope of the Study

This study examines the portrayal of gender roles in *Her*, focusing on the relationship between the male protagonist, Theodore, and the female-coded artificial intelligence, Samantha. While the film explores themes such as technology, loneliness, and love, this analysis will focus more on how these components interact with portrayals of masculinity, femininity, and emotional labor.

This study uses the theory of gender and feminism as the extrinsic aspect and analyzes the intrinsic aspect of the movie *Her* to support the analysis of the movie. Extrinsic aspects include Gender Roles, AI and Society, and Gender in AI. Intrinsic aspects include Character and Characterization, Setting, Conflict, Cinematography Elements, The shots, Lens Height, Sounds, and Mise en scène. This study is limited to the movie *Her* and does not include other sources or adaptations of the same story.

1.5 Previous Studies

The researcher has collected three previous studies. All three analyze the same movie, *Her*, with different topics. The first study, titled "Myth, Technology, and Love in Spike Jonze's Her" (2013) by Rocki Wentzel, Ph.D., M.A., a Professor of Classics at Augustana University, explores the thematic parallels between Spike Jonze's film Her (2013) and classical myths, particularly the Pygmalion myth, in which a man falls in love with a creation that gains independence. The article examines how *Her* reflects themes of desire, control, and the complexities of human relationships with technology, likening technological beings to gods because of their unpredictable and often destructive nature.

The second study titled "Spike Jonze's Her: How Transhumanism Turns Into a Control Mechanism Under the Name of Love" by Hale Kiyci from Faculty of Letters Journal, Trakya University in 2022, it discusses how transhumanism in Spike Jonze's *Her* (2013) functions as a control mechanism disguised as a means to enhance human well-being. While transhumanist technologies in the film seem to support individual identity and emotions through AI relationships and letter-writing services, they actually lead to a loss of authenticity and individuality by promoting conformity and manufactured consent, as described by Antonio Gramsci. Rather than liberating humanity, transhumanism subtly imposes societal control by reinforcing traditional gender roles and creating a simulated reality, making human beings dependent on technology and mega-corporations. Ultimately, the film critiques transhumanism for limiting human emotions and free will.

The third and final study, titled "Effects of depression on the life of the main character in Her movie by Spike Jonze" by Ni Luh Sintami, I Gusti Agung Sri Rwa Jayantini, and I Wayan Juniartha from the English Study Program at the Faculty of Foreign Languages, Universitas Maharaswati Denpasar in 2022, explores the effects of depression on Theodore, the main character in Spike Jonze's Her. Using a qualitative descriptive method and content analysis, it identifies five key effects of depression on Theodore's life: self-blame, low self-esteem, loss of appetite, trouble concentrating, and trouble sleeping. These symptoms stem from his feelings of helplessness following his divorce, which make it difficult for him to move on, and are worsened by an environment that often mocks him. The film serves as a case study for understanding how depression manifests and impacts an individual's mental and emotional well-being.

This research differs from the three previous studies in terms of object of study, theoretical framework, and focus of analysis. The first study analyzes the film through the lens of classical mythology, particularly the Pygmalion myth, focusing on themes of love, control, and human relationships with technology. In contrast, this study focuses on gender roles, comparing the performance of femininity and masculinity in both human and AI characters. The second study, uses a Gramscian lens to critique transhumanism and societal conformity. Meanwhile, this thesis adopts Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity and insights from Gender in AI and Robotics by Jordi Vallverdú to analyze how gender roles are performed and coded in both human and artificial identities. The third study, centers on the psychological effects of depression in Theodore. In contrast,

this study highlights how Samantha performs emotional labor and femininity, drawing comparisons between AI and human women. Overall, this research takes a deeper, more flexible look at gender as something shaped by society and behavior, especially in the world of technology and artificial intelligence.

1.6 Research Method

1.6.1 Data Collection

This study utilizes library research to gather the necessary data. Library research means finding and using sources that give facts or expert opinions about a research question (George, 2008:6). It's an important part of almost every research method at some stage. Library research includes primary data collection and secondary data collection.

According to George (2008:189 & 193), primary sources are original records or evidence created close in time or place to an event, often by participants, witnesses, or researchers, while secondary sources are interpretations of evidence about an event or issue, usually written by scholars or experts after the fact.

The data in this study is collected by watching the movie *Her* as the primary data several times. By watching it several times, the researcher would understand the topic that will be discussed in this study completely. The Secondary data comes from previous studies relating to the topic, and also from other journals, articles, or books for additional knowledge.

1.6.2 Method of Approach

The method of approach that will be used in this study is the gender studies approach to analyze the movie, focusing on how gender roles are socially constructed and performed. It applies a postmodern feminist perspective through Judith Butler's theory on gender performativity. Butler challenges the assumption that gender is biologically determined and argues that gender is a repeated social performance. In her words, "gender is the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame" (Butler, 1990: 43).

As for the intrinsic aspect of the movie that will be analyzed are character and characterization, setting, conflict, theme, cinematography elements, and sound. Analyzing the intrinsic aspect of the movie will help greatly at understanding the gender roles and gender performativity of the characters.

1.7 Organization of the Writing

CHAPTER 1: Introduction

This chapter contains the background of the study, research questions, scope of the study, aims of the study, previous studies, research method for this study, and organization of the writing.

CHAPTER 2: Theoretical Framework

This chapter contains the intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of the movie *Her*.

CHAPTER 3: Analysis

This chapter contains the findings and discussion revealed in this study regarding the analysis of the movie *Her*.

CHAPTER 4: Conclusion

This chapter contains the conclusion of all the previous chapters and mainly the findings and discussion of this study regarding the analysis of the movie *Her*.