

# **THE REPRESENTATION OF GENDER STEREOTYPE IN BOROSON'S *THE GIRL WITH GHOST EYES* NOVEL**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The study entitled “The Representation of Gender Stereotype in Boroson’s *The Girl with Ghost Eyes* Novel” is aimed at describing how gender stereotype representation is portrayed in the novel and analyzing how it affects the main character’s resistances in order to develop her character. In analyzing the problems, a theory from Ridgeway (2000) about one of the elements of stereotype is the one that represents gender and from Foucault (2001) about power resistance are applied. The approach that the writer used in this study was a qualitative approach by analyzing the data in the form of dialogues and narrative text in the story. The study revealed that there are gender stereotype representations such as the main character is portrayed as weak, domestic, and dependent. As the result, it shows that the main character successfully breaks the stereotype by developing her character and skills. Keywords: *Character, Gender, Gender Stereotype, Novel, Power Resistance.*

## **ABSTRAK**

Studi berjudul “The Representation of Gender Stereotype in Boroson’s *The Girl with Ghost Eyes* Novel” bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan bagaimana gambaran stereotip gender digambarkan di dalam novel dan menganalisis bagaimana gambaran stereotip gender mempengaruhi ketahanan karakter utama untuk perkembangan karakternya. Dalam menganalisis masalah-masalah tersebut, teori dari Ridgeway (2000) tentang salah satu elemen stereotip adalah yang mewakili gender dan dari Foucault (2001) tentang resistensi kekuasaan diterapkan. Pendekatan yang digunakan penulis dalam studi ini adalah pendekatan kualitatif dengan menganalisis data dalam bentuk dialog dan teks naratif dalam cerita tersebut. Studi ini mengungkapkan bahwa ada gambaran stereotip gender seperti karakter utama digambarkan sebagai seseorang yang lemah, pelayan rumah, dan orang yang bergantung pada orang lain. Sebagai hasilnya, studi ini menunjukkan bahwa karakter utama berhasil mematahkan stereotip dengan mengembangkan karakter dan kemampuannya.

Kata Kunci: *Karakter, Kekuatan ketahanan, Gender, Gender Stereotip, Novel.*

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

In our daily life people are taking gender for granted, it is very instant to recognize a person as man or woman, girl or boy. Gender also includes norms, behaviors and roles associated with being a woman, man, girl or boy, as well as relationships with each other as Poppa & Gavriľiu (2014: 1200) state that gender is not biological but it refers to a socially constructed set of behaviour patterns. Since gender is socially constructed, the construction itself goes on through various technologies of gender such as media television or films, and individual discourses e.g. theory with the power to control the field of social meaning Poppa & Gavriľiu (2014: 1200) also state that the way gender is represented in the media does have an influence on how we perceive gender roles. Thus promote, produce, and implant the representations of gender.

The difference between sex and gender is sex means biological attributes of two sexes between male and female while gender refers to social constructed roles, behaviors, expressions and identity of men and women or boy and girl. It means that being a man or woman is not a fixed state, a man means that one is likely to be masculine and being a woman means that one is also likely to be feminine. The distinction between men and women leads to inequality, gender stereotype, and rights deprivation which mostly happens to women, as Lorber (2001: 193) states that gendered behavior builds up masculine dominance and feminine subordination. It can be seen that the common of social construction encourages the society to see gender differences and ignore the overlap, people are seem to approve what is considered normal for men and women or boys and girls because the whole gendered social order is set up for men and women to feel and act differently.

### 1.2 Statements of the Problem

Based on the explanation above, the problem to be analyzed in this study is formulated as follows:

1. How does the representation of gender stereotype portray in *The Girl with Ghost Eyes* novel?
2. How does gender stereotype affect the resistances of the main female character in *The Girl with Ghost Eyes* novel?

### 1.3 Scope and Limitation of the Study

The scope of this study is literature focused on a novel entitled *The Girl with Ghost Eyes* written by Boroson which published in 2015. This study is limited to analyze the representation of gender stereotype and how it affects the main character's resistances which are depicted in the story. Theories from Ridgeway (2001) and Foucault (1980) are used to support this study.

### 1.4 Objectives of Study

The objectives of this study are answering the problems that have been mentioned before, which are:

1. To describe the representation of gender stereotype in *The Girl with Ghost Eyes* novel.
2. To analyze the effects of gender stereotype toward resistances of the main female character in *The Girl with Ghost Eyes* novel.

### 1.5 Functions of the Study

The functions of this study are:

1. To share knowledge about gender, gender roles, gender identity, and gender stereotype.
2. To give a reference for next researchers who are interested in analyzing the representation of gender and its effects related to resistances.
3. To create the readers' awareness especially women readers to have courage to fight against stereotype.

## RELATED STUDIES, REVIEW OF LITERATURE, AND THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

### 2.1 Related Studies

There have been some similar studies that have the same topics as this study. This chapter explains about the studies which have similarity. They are:

The first study was taken from University of Muhammadiyah Semarang, conducted by Nurfadilla (2018) entitled "The Representation of Gender in Disney's Snow White and The Seven Dwarfs and Mirror Mirror Movie". The present study is aimed at investigating the gender stereotypes representation in both of the movies using the chosen theory of gender stereotypes aspects by Golombok and Fivush (1994), also analyzing the gender development traits ascribed to character of Snow White in the movies. This study uses descriptive qualitative approach in relation to investigate and analyze the object material which are Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs (1937) and Mirror Mirror (2012) movies. The data were gained by doing observation. And to figure out the research question, the writer uses content analysis and employs the theory of gender stereotypes aspects (Golombok and Fivush, 1994) which are physical appearance, personality traits, attitudes and interest, social relations and occupation. This study uncovers the gender representation ascribed to Snow White in two version of the movies. The result shows that, in the first version, Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs (1937) is still presented gender stereotypes by ascribing femininity to Snow White, the character imaged as domestic, Review of Literature

In this part, the writer includes some definitions, opinions, and theories about the study of gender, the representation of gender stereotype, resistance, novel and its elements that are appropriate with the topic to complete this study.

### **2.2.1 The Study of Gender**

Gender refers to a matter of the social relations within which individuals and groups act. Gender must be understood as a social structure, it is a pattern in our social arrangements, and in everyday activities and practices which those arrangements

govern. Butler (1990: 6) states that gender is culturally constructed, hence gender is neither the causal result of sex nor as seemingly fixed as sex. Gender is a social structure that involves a specific relationship with bodies, how the idea of cultural patterns simply express bodily difference. The connection to the distinction between male and female bodies is social practices that sometimes exaggerate, deny, and complicated. The bodies are brought into social process in which social conduct does something with reproductive differences. Gender concerns the way human society deals with human bodies, and the many consequences of that dealing in our personal lives.

### **2.2.2 Representation of Gender Stereotype**

The representation of gender perhaps comes from cultural expectation that affects the society's view about gender in which gender is seen deeply entwined with social hierarchy such as status beliefs. Status beliefs are shared cultural schemas about the status position in society of groups such as those based on race, gender, education, ethnicity, or occupation. In status beliefs, assumptions about the evaluative ranking of one group compared to another are reflected in and legitimated by presumptions about differences in competence among people from those groups. Cultural expectation demonstrated that when people interact in regard to collective goals, status beliefs shape the enactment of social hierarchies among individuals, affecting influence and leadership. Through their impact on goal-oriented interaction in the workplace and elsewhere, status beliefs affect many processes by which individuals are given access to rewards, evaluated, and directed toward or away from positions of power, wealth, and authority which means that there is possibility that stereotype is shaped.

### **2.2.3 Power Resistance**

As in Literature women who live in a patriarchal society is often portrayed through stereotypes, the stereotypical

images of woman are the opposite of good womanhood. The image of good womanhood is connected to the image of the good wife and the good mother, who stays at the “woman’s natural sphere of activity, while men are given more power to dominate and have more freedom. According to Borkowski (2011), “Power is the capability to affect others’ actions, thoughts, and emotions” (as cited in, Cenkci 2018: 19). The misuse of power that men hold, gives impacts in many aspects and one of them is oppression and abusive treatment from the powerful over the powerless, a man over woman, a class over another, the master over the slave, husband over wife, and etc, in which it can make a resistance arises. Every interaction in power relation is therefore predicated on resistance. The freedom that lies in the resistance to every power relation thus becomes a necessary condition of making the subject react in the name of power, reproducing and strengthening the norm. In this way, the subject is both the target and the vehicle of power.

## 2.2 Theoretical Framework

In this study, a theory from Ridgeway (2001) and Foucault (1980) are used to analyze the representation of gender stereotype and how it affects character development of the main character of the story. In analyzing the representation of gender stereotype, the first theory used was by Ridgeway (2001: 64). He states that the elements of stereotypes that are likely to be most strongly enforced are those that represent the status difference between the Gender, Status, and Leadership group and its enactment in social hierarchies. This theory supports how gender representation is tend to have stereotype of each sex in which unfortunately happens against women. They get more negative stereotype and are banned for participation and development in a history, property possession, economic, and etc.

The second theory used was from Foucault (1980: 142), to analyze how stereotype affects character development

the writer found that this theory is fit to support this study. Foucault claims “There are no relations of power without resistances, they are formed right at the point where relations of power are exercised”. The relation between power and resistance is one of acts which contributes to the stereotype in male-dominant society and development of an individual’s self-concept. It would be better for both gender men and women to develop their characteristics or personality traits beyond the clusters without pressure of a given cultural norms.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Approach of the Study

This study used qualitative method, which is based on the information with developing explanation written in the essay form. Qualitative research investigates meanings, interpretations, symbols, and the processes of social life. As Creswell (2014: 32) states, qualitative is an approach to understand human problem in the society in which the processes are including data collection, analysis of text or picture and interpret the meaning of the data. Qualitative research means that the writer try to understand and interpret the data in thesis approach, the data were taken from events and issues linked to what happen in daily life and explain a reflection of what is happening based on their experience as they observe the real situation as represented in the literary works.

### 3.2 Data Source

In this study, the data that was taken in the form of narrations and dialogues, from Boroson’s novel entitled *The Girl with Ghost Eyes* in which the novel was published in 2015. Technique of Collecting Data

The techniques of collecting data in this study that the writer used are:

1. Reading the novel carefully in order to understand the content of the story well.
2. Focusing on reading the dialogues many times to get more understanding of the story in detail.

3. Identified the dialogues that contain data of masculine qualities.
4. Collecting data from dialogues and narrative text in the novel, some articles, journals, and books to support the analysis of this study.

### 3.3 Method of Data Analysis

The data that have been collected are analyzed and classified based on the story include dialogue or the plot in the novel and theory related to the problem of this study. Firstly, identified the representation of gender stereotype that implied from the novel and secondly explained gender stereotype writer's analysis according to expert's theory in clear explanation. The writer analyzed the classified data by using the theories from Ridgeway (2000) and Foucault (1980). And then the writer presented the analysis in the form of an essay

## FINDING AND ANALYSIS

This chapter is divided into two subthemes, in the first subtheme the writer will be describe the representation of gender stereotype portrayed in *The Girl with Ghost Eyes* novel and for the second subtheme the writer will be analyzing the main character's resistances toward gender stereotype. First of all, the writer would like to tell the plot of the novel, the author of this novel presents the main female character Xian Li-Lin as a very strong, brave, independent, feisty Chinese girl and a young widow. She is able to see spirits and demons and she also practices Chinese magic and martial arts. Li-Lin and her father try to fight evil spirits that harm the people in the town, with paper talismans, magic gourds, and peachwood sword they imprison them and destroy them. The plot thickens when Lin-lin has to cope with the spirit world, and then discover who wants to harm her father and the reason, which leads to further complications.

### 4.1 Representation of Gender Stereotype Portrayed in the Novel

There are some representations of gender stereotype that are portrayed in the

novel and in this subtheme will be divided in to two, they are representation of gender stereotype in gender identity and gender role.

### 4.2 The resistances of Xian Li-Lin

This subtheme explains about the resistances that are presented by the main female character as she reacts toward stereotypes. It has been mentioned in the previous pages about representation of stereotypes in gender roles and gender identity that are constructed by the society in which demand each individual to act and behave based on their sex such as women.

#### 4.2.1 Resistance by Self-Empowering

The first resistance of Xian Li-Lin is that she becomes an active person. An active person tends to engage in many actions, has too much things to do, and involve in many organizations. As in the novel, the author shows the main character as an active person. It can be seen from the quotation, "*And yet I had to do something. I couldn't sit back and let Tom Wong slaughter innocent men*" (Borosan, 2015: 168).

#### 4.2.2 Resistance by Rebellious Against

The next resistance is by rebelling against and becoming assertive, it means that people who are assertive try to show confidence and standing up for one's personal rights in an honest and direct way. They are not frightened of what they want or believe. "*I do not hide from monsters, but facing them here, on the streets, I couldn't hope to win. I could only fight and die*" (Borosan, 2015: 105). This quotation is when Xian Li-Lin fights with four monsters and a spirit that lives in Liu Qiang's arm. She is about to lose the fight however she tries to remember what she has learned from her father about how to be a good fighter, she believes that she is able to win and then ends all of the monsters.

One of the most interesting resistance by rebelling against of Li-Lin is she also tries to be brave, it can be seen the quotation, "*His magic may be a great deal stronger than mine, but he's still human. I can break his bones. I can slit his throat*"

(Boroson, 2015: 62). This passage explains when Li-Lin is going to make Liu-Qiang pay for what he did to her. He cut Li-Lin's stomach skin in a fight, as has been mentioned before that Liu-Qiang is stronger than her, she is not afraid to fight him. She thinks that Liu-Qiang is only a human and he must be having a weakness so that she is sure she can beat him. It can be seen that Li-Lin successfully breaks stereotype or the social construction of gender roles where women are seen as weak living creatures, however the author of the novel presents her as a brave fighter who is fearless to fight against her enemy. Moreover, it is also proved in the quotation, "*I had defeated Tom Wang in a fight, bested Liu Qiang's magic, killed his evil arm, and demolished the Kulou-Yuanling*" (Boroson, 2015: 263). In her combat with Tom Wong, Liu-Qiang, and Kulou-Yuanling, she beats all of them. Li-Lin is only a young widow while her enemies are all men who are more powerful, however she defeats them by her own self. It clearly shows that she is not just resisting by develop her character but also her skills and become such a brave and fearless person. She does not just accept the social construction of gender roles of what a woman supposed be, she tries to prove to her father, her dead husband, and other people that woman can do what a man do, even more than that.

The next example that shows Li-Lin breaks the stereotype of women gender roles is in the quotation, "*I shot a kick at the back of Tom's knee. It connected and his leg grave out under him. He dropped to one knee and I coiled my rope dart's cord around his throat, cutting off his circulation*" (Boroson, 2015: 111). In this case, Xian Li-Lin is fighting with Tom Wong and in the end she is able to knock him out. As in some societies, women's activities are limited, they are not allowed to expand their activities outside the house, and everything must be under the father or husband's control so that sometimes women's skills are lower than men's. However, it can be seen that she has an

ability to fight and use her skill to beat her enemy in order to protect herself and her father.

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

### 5.1 Conclusion

Based on the analysis that has been done, *The Girl With Ghost Eyes* novel by M. H. Boroson tells about how men dominate the society gives them power to control and underestimate not only the main character but also women in the story. Society treats Xian Li-Lin unequal because she is a young widow and assumed will bring bad luck while widowers are not getting the same treatment, they are still be respected and able to continue his carrier. The society also has some sort of a call or label "Sangu" for women in which the label itself is inappropriate to be given on someone. Woman is underestimated even when the person has a great skill where it is so rare for women who have ability to fight against the evil spirits in that society. They are expected to be quiet, and the way society sees women is harmful and has restricted women's voices to stand up and defend themselves.

It can be concluded that the story of the novel portrays representation of gender stereotype. We can see that where the main character is described as inferior by some men because of her gender and status as a widow. The men give her a label and she is marginalized for being a widow, they underestimate her even when she has a great skill when it is so rare for women who have an ability to fight against the evil spirits. Moreover, woman's menstruation period is seen as a barrier in performing her action, and society assumes that the only good woman is the woman who can keep quiet which clearly shows how gender stereotypes are represented in the story. However, Xian Li-Lin successfully breaks those stereotypes by resisting through develop her characteristics and skills. She learns from what her father taught her, and how she has the positive attitudes of mind to break the negative stereotype of women

which has been embedded in the culture and with all of the efforts she make turn her to be a strong, courageous, smart, independent woman.

## 5.2 Suggestion

For the next researchers who are interested in analyzing representation of gender stereotype and how it affects to character development of the victims. It is suggested that they should completely understand the concept of gender representation, gender stereotype, and character development. As this study are used the theory of Ridgeway (2000) and Foucault (1980), and then the writer suggests that it is important for the next writers or researchers to find other appropriate theories that support the analysis and the other objects that relate to the problems. Last but not least, the writer hopes that this study would be useful and will be beneficial for the next writer to do their research.

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