A Masculinity of Gender Stereotypes in *Brave* Motion Picture

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Abstract

Movies are a potent medium for learning, as they are not only accessible but also have the capability to shape behaviour and provoke meaningful conversations. It is crucial to recognize that not all cinematic content promotes positive examples; some scenes reinforce negative portrayals and harmful stereotypes. This study decisively examines the gender dynamics in the Walt Disney Company film "Brave," which exemplifies the persistent issue of gender stereotypes in media. The primary objective of this research is to assertively analyse the gender roles depicted in children's films, with a particular focus on Merida's character in "Brave." A qualitative research approach is adopted, employing a thorough methodology that includes multiple viewings of the film, detailed summary readings, extensive note-taking, script interpretation, identification of key terms and dialogues, and review of pertinent academic journals and articles online. This study delves into the gender dynamics presented in the Walt Disney Company's animated film "Brave," which serves as a compelling example of the lingering issue of gender stereotypes in media. The primary goal of this research is to critically assess the gender roles depicted in children's films, with a particular emphasis on the character of Merida in "Brave." It seeks to understand how Merida challenges traditional gender expectations and whether she ultimately conforms to established gender norms. The research questions are designed to scrutinize the characteristics of Princess Merida. The findings reveal that Merida embodies ten distinct masculine traits, illustrating her complexity as a character who defies conventional expectations of femininity.

Keywords: Gender Stereotypes, Masculinity, Motion Picture.

1. INTRODUCTION

The motion picture as one of the scholarly works has been made for visual enjoyment's significance. The class of activity has pulled in scholarly consideration due to its developing notoriety and victory as an excitement and stylish sort. Movies and tv cartoons can provide certain messages to children whether expressly or verifiably such messages can be valuable and instructive (Saguni, 2014) (Saguni, 2014). The utilization of pictures shown through characters and identities certainly plays a part in pulling in the consideration of the gathering of people. The characters fit the class or topic of the dramatization and motion picture according to (Chaniago, 2017), animated films have important educational value by teaching social norms and certain values, and by sending diverse cultural messages to children of all ages.

However currently, children are bombarded by animated films with mixed messages, images, and representations about gender, and this has built a world of innocent childhood dreams. Masculinity and femininity are images that are constructed by society not based on identity, according to Coates being masculine means being assertive, being interested in things rather than people, being analytical and manipulative, and being able to get things done (Saguni, 2014).

Princess Merida is unwilling to follow the laws and customs that have been established in the kingdom. Princess Merida is prone to acting in ways that enrage Queen Elinor. When it was forbidden for her to hunt inside the forest or practice archery, she would constantly dispute with her mother. However, her mother, Queen Elinor, did not want her daughter to behave like a male. She wanted Princess Merida to behave properly as a good princess.

Merida was consistently advised by Queen Elinor to act appropriately, serve as a positive role model for the community, and be a decent person. She constantly advised the princess to rise and shine, not sleep in, play an instrument, keep herself clean, be careful, be patient, and be a perfect person (Irmawati et al., 2023).The film centres on the character of Merida, She lives with her mother Ruler Elinor, her father, Ruler Fergus, and her three small brothers. Ruler Elinor instructed her how a good princess was assumed to be. Merida is distinctive from other Disney princesses. She comes as an effective and free hero. Her figure gives the impression that ladies don't continuously need to be ladylike. In this way, Courageous can be analysed from a gender perspective, because it dares to show the modern design of female representation within the Disney princess arrangement.

Based on previous studies, The result in the film *Paafekuto Warudo* (2020) examines the representation of masculinity of men with disabilities based on the semiotic theory of the Roland Barthes model. In this study, the masculinity of the male protagonist Itsuki Ayukawa, who has a disability, is described. The study shows that Ayukawa's representation of masculinity includes six out of seven concepts of

masculinity according to Chafez. These concepts are physical, functional, sexuality, intellectual, interpersonal, and personal character. Emotionality is a concept that affects people with disabilities, and they tend to be more sensitive compared to men without physical limitations. Additionally, signs of masculinity are revealed through the main character, Arthur Curry, in the 2018 film *Aquaman*.

Analyze the hero masculinities representation in Sultan Agung and *Wiro Sableng's* movie, his research was conducted using qualitative descriptive methods and semiotic analysis of the Roland Barthes model which describes the meaning of denotation and connotation signs, The findings of this study found that the masculinity of the film Sultan Agung is shown by the main character, namely, leader, strong, *Brave,* fatherly, important, angry and assertive.

The difference between this research and the previous study is the theory used, the previous study used theory from Roland Barthes, while this research used theory from Parvez, and also the difference is in the characters analysed, from the previous study the characters analysed were men while in this research they were women.

2.   LITERATURE REVIEW

Masculine is a concept that exists as a social concept in society. Davies said masculinity and femininity are not personal properties but rather structural properties of society, these two concepts are conditioned and emerge from social interactions (Padmi, 2018). Female masculinity challenges traditional gender roles and expresses gender as a cultural dynamic that can be adopted or discarded. Female masculinities can take various forms and are often recognized in society as tomboy, butch, drag king, dykes, and so on. This gender performativity involves. The embodiment of masculine behaviours and roles within femininity and the female body. Particularly focuses on butch performativity, in which butch lesbians adopt masculine appearance and behaviours, such as dressing like men, minimizing feminine aspects of their bodies, and operating within masculine values (Padmi, 2018).

2.1 Masculine Women

According to Parvez (2021), Physiological and psychological characteristics of masculine women include:
a) **Masculine face:** Masculine women have square jaws, and broad foreheads, and may exhibit heavier eyebrows and larger chins, ears, and noses.
b) **Male gait:** They take purposeful, small steps, keep their arms close to their bodies, and have a less fluid gait.
c) **Deep voice:** They may have deeper voices and speak loudly to assert dominance.

d) **Psychological traits:** Masculine traits can be influenced by hormones, but psychological characteristics can be adjusted.
e) **Dominance and aggression:** They may exhibit aggression, and dominance, and engage in activities like martial arts.
f) **Masculine interests:** Masculine women often have interests associated with men and prefer socializing with men.
g) **Independence and self-reliance:** They value independence and self-reliance, seeing dependence as a sign of weakness.
h) **Ambition:** They are often ambitious, prioritizing self-improvement and efficiency.
i) **Rationality:** They lean towards logic over emotion, emphasizing analysis over intuition, and are proficient at controlling emotions.

2.2 Stereotypes

The term stereotype originates from two Greek words stereos, meaning solid and rigid, and typos, meaning model. Stereotypes involve attributing specific characteristics to an individual or a group of people based on subjective categories, simply because they belong to a particular group (in-group or out-group). These attributions can be positive or negative (Rahayu et al., 2019).

2.3 Gender Stereotypes

Gender stereotypes can be described as beliefs about the characteristics and appropriate activities associated with men or women. These stereotypes create distinctions between typical "masculine" and "feminine" traits in society and are oversimplified generalizations about gender attributes, including differences and roles of individuals or groups. They categorize men and women into two distinct categories, masculine and feminine.

Gender stereotypes encompass various elements, and several theories support the ideas proposed by Brannon. These elements include physical characteristics, occupations, traits, and behaviour. Physical characteristics refer to one's appearance, while occupations relate to one's job. Personal traits are individual characteristics, and past behaviour refers to one's actions.

2.4 Film

Film emerged as a part of mass culture and developed along with urban and industrial society. Films serve as cultural statements that convey messages from filmmakers to audiences within a region, nation, or even worldwide. They are a means of quickly communicating messages and are closely tied to everyday life. For the audience to easily accept the message in a film, the role of the writer is crucial in immersing the audience in the story being told. The message conveyed by the writer produces a story with meaning that can be beneficial to the audience. Furthermore,

films provide entertainment that conveys enjoyable aspects of life, fulfilling inner satisfaction. The elements that make up a film include shots, scenes, and sequences.

2.5 Motion Picture

Motion pictures, commonly known as movies, serve as significant works of visual enjoyment. They have become one of the most effective tools for business marketing and communication. As a form of visual media, motion pictures play an important role in the modern entertainment and marketing industries. Movies are crucial for enhancing business marketing efforts. By utilizing the visual and storytelling capabilities of films, businesses can capture attention, forge emotional connections, and strengthen their brand identity in a highly competitive landscape.

This type of medium has drawn scholarly attention due to its growing popularity and success as an engaging and stylish form of expression. Additionally, movies and television cartoons can convey important messages to children, whether explicitly or implicitly. Such messages can be both valuable and educational (Saguni, 2014).

2.6 Previous Study

Based on previous studies, The result in the film *Paafekuto Warudo* (2020) examines the representation of masculinity of men with disabilities based on the semiotic theory of the Roland Barthes model. In this study, the masculinity of the male protagonist Itsuki Ayukawa, who has a disability, is described. The study shows that Ayukawa's representation of masculinity includes six out of seven concepts of masculinity according to Chafez. These concepts are physical, functional, sexuality, intellectual, interpersonal, and personal character. Emotionality is a concept that affects people with disabilities, and they tend to be more sensitive compared to men without physical limitations. Additionally, signs of masculinity are revealed through the main character, Arthur Curry, in the 2018 film *Aquaman*.

This study decisively analyses the representation of hero masculinities in the films "Sultan Agung" and "Wiro Sableng." Utilizing qualitative descriptive methods and a semiotic analysis grounded in Roland Barthes' model, it thoroughly examines the meanings of denotation and connotation in signs.

The findings unequivocally demonstrate that the masculinity portrayed in "Sultan Agung" is embodied by the main character, showcasing leadership, strength, bravery, fatherly qualities, significance, anger, and assertiveness.

This research distinctly sets itself apart from earlier studies in two critical ways: the theoretical framework employed and the characters analysed. While previous research relied on Roland Barthes' theories and focused exclusively on male characters, this study boldly adopts Parvez's theory and centres on female characters.

Notably, both this study and earlier research converge in their methodological approach, as they both effectively utilize qualitative methods for analysis.

3.   METHODS

Qualitative research involves collecting and analyzing non-numerical data (e.g., text, video, or audio) to understand concepts, opinions, or experiences. It can be used to gather in-depth insights into a problem or generate new ideas for research.

This qualitative study analyses the character of Merida in the film "Brave" using Parvez's theory. The study specifically focuses on the portrayal of masculinity and will use content analysis of the film's scripts as its data source. The data will include text from the movie script that portrays masculinity in "Brave". Additionally, secondary sources consisting of materials related to masculinity and gender stereotypes will be utilized.

The study aims to analyse scenes and dialogues involving the main character, Merida, using Parvez's theory. The primary data source is the script of the Disney movie "Brave", while the secondary sources will be related materials from various references. In this study, researchers will analyse the portrayal of masculinity in the film "Brave" through the characters' dialogue and gestures.

The data is text taken from a movie script that consists of words, dialogues, phrases, or sentences that show the masculinity of the character in the film. The secondary source are related material from various references like previous studies, journals, a thesis, and a dissertation ascribed to the issue of masculinity and gender stereotypes.

3.1 Data Collection

The Data was collected through observations including images and audio visual recordings, supported by relevant literature sources. In this study, the researcher collected data by downloading and watching the Brave movie. They recorded scenes and dialogue relevant to the research question and then analysed the data.

In this study, the researcher utilized some techniques for collecting the data, which are elaborated as follows:

a) Finding the Brave movie
   The researcher downloads the Brave movie
b) Watching the movie
   The researcher watched the Brave movie and took the scenes related to the research question.

c) Reading and capture

The researcher read and captured dialog in the figure as a form that shows data in Brave movie and take a note.

d) Identifying the data

Identifying the meaning that was found in Brave movie After finding the data completely, the last step of data was analysis in this study.

3.2 Analysis Data

The researcher analyses it by categorizing, elaborating, and arranging patterns. In the process of conducting content analysis, the study uses masculinity identity development as a key indicator. The research utilizes content and descriptive analysis to illustrate masculinity in The Brave film, gathering and examining data related to the character Merida. This involves observing Merida's dialogue, body movements, and narration in the film, analysing the data using Parvez's theory, and drawing conclusions about Merida's portrayal of masculinity.

The author uses this method to describe the figure of masculinity in The *Brave* film is presented descriptively in the form of text or draws the results of the analysis in sentence form and uses appropriate words easy to understand.

After collecting the data, the researcher analyzes the data involved in activities such as categorizing in conducting content analysis using Parvez's theory, the study encoded masculinity identity as an indicator of the study.

a) Prepare the data that has been collected on the character Merida in *Brave* movie.

b) Researchers will observe the results of data collected regarding Merida's dialogue, body movements, and narration in the film *Brave*.

c) Analyzing data with Parvez's theory, and explain the result.

d) And give a conclusion from the analysis of the masculinity of Merida's character in *Brave* movie.

4. RESULTS

This section contains findings and discussion which are the answers to the study questions about the representation a masculinity of Merida in Brave Movie. The findings would be displayed in written form obtained from data analysis supported by several theories mentioned. The data were analyzed using the Parvez theory there are nine areas of Parvez's masculinity concept.
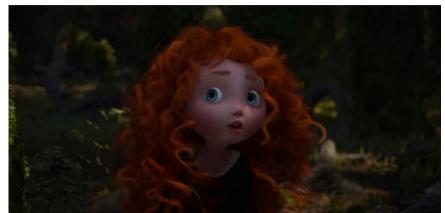
Figure 4.1 Little Merida enters the forest. (Source: Brave, DVD, 2012)

Merida can be seen when she was little, with facial features with thick eyebrows, and flowing and messy hair. If related to Parvez's theory, it is explained that masculine women have a masculine face with a square jaw, prominent jawline, and wide forehead. Their face shape is more square than round, and they tend to have thick eyebrows. Additionally, they may have smaller eyes but larger chins. It can be said according to Parvez's theory that Merida has a masculine female character, namely a masculine face.

Figure 4.2 Adult Merida. (Source: Brave, DVD, 2012)

Merida is seen as an adult, her face has not changed much since childhood, her eyebrows are thick, her jaw is prominent, and her hair is still messy without wearing makeup. The author analyzes Parvez's theory based on the theory attractive women who exude masculinity typically have a manly face with square jaws, a pronounced jawline, and a broad forehead. Their face shape is more squeamish than roundish, and they are likely to have heavy eyebrows. Based on theory Merida has a masculine women character, namely a masculine face.

Figure 4.3 Merida walking. (Source: Brave, DVD, 2012)

Merida walking into the palace, you can see Merida's walking movements, with clenched hands, hips not swaying, looking straight ahead, and big footsteps. associated with Parvez's theory which states that masculine women have the characteristics of a man's gait, namely taking slightly swaying steps while bringing his arms close to his body. They avoid shaking their hips, take bigger steps when walking, and are less fluent in walking, their gait seems less graceful and more tense, based on these characteristics Merida has a *male gait*.

Figure 4.4 Merida Climbing. (Source: Brave, DVD, 2012)

Merida climbs the Cliff with her bare hand, this shows that Merida has a strong physique that women in general don't have, and climbing cliffs is usually done by men. According to Parvez's character masculine women have character *male gait* this is related.

They take little swaying steps while keeping their arms close to their bodies. They avoid hip swaying, take larger steps when walking, and lack walking fluidity, their gait appears to be less elegant and more strained. Based on theory the attitude of Princess Merida is included in *masculine gait*.

Figure 4. 2 Merida is angry (Source: Brave DVD, 2012)

"Merida is upset with her mother because she dislikes wearing dresses. According to Parvez's theory, Merida exhibits a more *masculine gait* because she prefers clothes that allow her to move easily, rather than feminine attire."

Figure 4. 6 Merida laughed. (Source: Brave, DVD, 2012)

Merida is laughing out loud because she saw her father being attacked by a bird and trying to avoid the bird, then Elenor's mother scolds Merida by saying that daughters are not allowed to laugh loudly, connected with the Parvez theory of masculine women with deep voice characters explaining that, women with masculine characters tend to have a deep voice and tends to speak loudly, it can be said that Merida has masculine characteristics, namely a deep voice.

Figure 4.7 Merida Laughed. (Source: Brave, DVD, 2012)

King Fergus found out that Queen Elenor was cursed to become a bear, then King Fergus wanted to look for Queen Elenor in the forest, Merida was locked up by King Fergus in her room because it was too dangerous for Merida to go into the forest.

Then an angry Merida shouted at her maid to open her room "Maudy please help me, quickly". This scene also shows how Merida's character has a loud and loud voice, based on Parvez's theory, Merida has a *deep voice* character.

Figure 4.8 Merida and Horse. (Source: Brave, DVD, 2012)

Merida and her horse enjoy nature and fresh air on the hill while carving her bow with a knife, Merida is very comfortable with this condition where women generally have difficulty adapting to natural conditions and are quite sensitive.

Based on Parvez's theory, masculine women have psychological characteristics that allow for a certain level of adjustment, in contrast to physiological characteristics,

which cannot be changed. Even if internally a person feels otherwise, strategically she can choose to show gender-specific behaviour if masculine dominant usually tends to like sports, courage, and assertiveness. Merida has a *Brave* nature.

Figure 4.9 Merida playing darts on a horse. (Source: Brave, DVD, 2012)

Merida enters the forest riding her horse while shooting archery, based on Parvez's theory men have the psychological characteristics of liking sports and liking the outdoors, it can be seen that Merida likes archery, where this sport is rarely played by women, meaning that Merida has the typical psychological characteristics tend to be masculine

Figure 4.3 Merida Save his Mother. (Source: Brave, DVD, 2012)

Merida intervened when her father, mistaking her mother for Mordu, was about to harm her. This aligns with Parvez's theory, suggesting that Merida exhibits masculine psychological traits due to her *Brave*ry.

Figure 4.11 Merida Archery. (Source: Brave, DVD, 2012)

Merida opposes the match and tries to thwart it by challenging the prince who proposed to her and showing off her darts. Based on Parvez's theory, the conditions above mean dominance, power, aggression, and authority, so the meaning of this scene shows a firm side in challenging her suitors. On this basis, Merida has the masculine character of *dominance* and *aggression*.

Figure 4.12 King Fergus and Merida (Source: Brave, DVD, 2012)

King Fergus gave her a bow the size of a small child, seen in the sentence where he gave her a small bow which indicates that he supports Princess Merida so she can play with arrows like her, basically little girls usually like dolls, in this case based on Parvez's theory it is said that women are masculine has the characteristics of being interested. Masculine, Masculine women have interests related to men, such as sports, bodybuilding, cars, bicycles, fishing, and camping. For feminine people, it is difficult to follow this hobby which is very contradictory to Merida, therefore Merida has masculine interests.

Figure 4.13 Merida escaped. (Source: Brave, DVD, 2012)

Merida runs away from the palace because she is disappointed with her mother's attitude in forcing her to marry, Merida goes away sobbing on her horse. Based on Parvez's theory, masculine women have the character of independence and self-reliance, because in this case Merida's attitude is said to be independent, she dares to go alone to calm herself and because in this case Merida's attitude is said to be independent, she dares to go alone to calm herself and maintain her principle that she does not want to get married, in this case, it is implied that Merida has an *independent* and *self-reliance*.

Figure 4.14 Merida was attack by Mordu. (Source: Brave, DVD, 2012)

Merida receives an attack from Mordu and manages to escape from Mordu. According to Parvez Women who identify as masculine place a high value on independence and self-reliance. This is related to Merida, Merida has character *Independence and self-reliance*. Can see Merida being attacked by Mordu and Merida manages to avoid the attack and escape from Mordu based on Parvez's theory. Merida's

attitude is independent, she can protect herself from attacks and pressure under certain conditions without any help.

Figure 4.15 Merida angry. (Source: Brave, DVD, 2012)

Merida couldn't control her emotions and ended up arguing and shouting at her mother, Elinor. Elinor, feeling ashamed of her daughter, never expected Merida to behave in such a manner. However, Merida, without feeling guilty at all, tells her mother that she will never be like Elinor and even goes as far as saying "I would rather die than be like you!" Merida is very ambitious, and the situation escalates when she slashes her family's rug with a sword. Based on theory Parvez masculine women have character ambitious to defend to decision. This scene illustrates that he doesn't feel like he's breaking any rules. She is very *ambitious*.

Figure 4.16 Merida voice his opinion. (Source: Brave, DVD, 2012)

In front of her future fiancé, Merida stands with unwavering determination in her eyes as she passionately articulates her belief that every individual has the power to shape their own destiny. She echoes her rational nature, leaving an air of conviction and independence hanging in the room.

Figure 4.17 Merida and Elenor. (Source: Brave, DVD, 2012)

At the end of the story, Merida succeeds in making her mother believe that Merida can choose her fate. The dialogue above illustrates Merida's *rationality*, Merida never gives up and always believes that fate can be changed based on the theory Parvez Merida has a character namely is rational. Merida controls their emotions and doesn't allow them to rule Merida.

The portrayal of masculine characters in the movie *Brave* differs from traditional Disney princess films, portraying a princess with unique characteristics. This suggests that *Brave* aims to redefine the conventional image of Disney princesses. This film tries to fix some of the important missing parts in the Disney films by creating Merida.

5. DISCUSSION

The concept of masculinity is a social and cultural construct that defines the perception of male traits and behaviours in society. It has evolved over time, influenced by the media. Historically, masculinity was associated with traits like physical strength, dominance, and a lack of emotional expression, and it was often linked to achieving objectives and the well-being of others. The portrayal of masculinity in the film "Brave" is intriguing because it challenges the traditional view of masculinity being exclusively male. It highlights that women can also possess masculine traits, and that masculinity is not confined to men. As society becomes more diverse, we can observe significant female figures who exhibit traditionally masculine traits. A study based on Parvez's nine characteristics of masculine traits found that the character Merida possesses all nine of these traits. The observations of Merida's attitude toward gender stereotypes revealed that she defies these stereotypes by embodying masculine traits such as a masculine face, male gait, deep voice, psychological traits, dominance and aggression, masculine interests, independence, and rationality.

6. CONCLUSION

This study concludes The film "Brave" challenges the socially constructed identities of women by portraying its main character, Merida, as embodying masculine traits. This challenges gender stereotypes and promotes feminist ideologies. The film serves as a platform for spreading feminist ideology, especially to children and individuals in patriarchal societies.

In conclusion, the film Brave successfully dismantles the socially constructed identities of women that confine and compromise their individuality. From nine characteristics of masculinity traits based on Parvez, the study found that Merida's character has all character also nine characteristics of masculinity. the results of observations on Merida's attitude toward gender stereotypes show that she did not fall into gender stereotypes because her have nine masculine traits in her character (Masculine face, male gait, deep voice, psychological traits, dominance, and aggression, masculine interests, independence, rationality).

The study found stages were by Merida in her effort to deal with gender stereotypes. How Merida struggles to achieve liberation by changing her fate presents powerful feminist ideologies of the possibility for women to overthrow the tyrannical patriarchal rule. This means that for a long time, there have been many examples of masculine women whose impact has been very good, this also becomes knowledge for society that patriarchy should not be applied between men and women.

The film Brave also became a forum for information and the spread of ideology feminist. Film as part of the product Popular culture is very helpful in spreading that ideology, what's more in animated format which category touches various age groups

so children or any age group that is not included in the adult category can also learn and know about things that are different from what they see every day, especially children who live in a social group with background patriarchal culture.

Through the film Brave, they then have a chance to compare life philosophies they experienced with what ideology wants to convey feminism, that there is nothing wrong with attitude and performance "unusual" culturally because different performativity doesn't mean abnormal.

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