

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Literature plays a huge role in humanitarian causes. Literature discusses various issues. This helps people to understand the various problems that exist in society. With literature it is expected that the readers can become more aware of the problems that exist and understand the various solutions that can arise (Klarer, 2004). One of the literary issues that can be examined in literary works is the issue of gender equality, which is part of feminist issues. Through literary works, the issue of gender issues that arise in society will be more easily understood. Literature then becomes the key to how equality of gender is communicated in society.

Literature is a creative endeavour that aims to communicate and express human feelings. Because humans are social beings, there are a lot of stories and inspirations out there, including literary works like novels, poetry, and other kinds of expression (Fithratullah & Kasih, 2018). Literary works exhibit beauty in an artistic setting (Novanti & Suprayogi, 2021). Literature is also a language art form. Literary works represent a language or tradition and human traditions (Mahsyur, Fithratullah, Kasih, 2023).

Speaking of literature, movies are also part of literature. Movies and popular literature have a strong relationship. In addition, movies can also be associated

with personal memories. (Fithtratullah & Kasih, 2018). A movie is a picture of an idea that is displayed in moving images and displays social phenomena that are multi-interpreted (Sikov, 2011).

Gender equality in literature can be easily represented through film. Film is considered the most effective communication tool to provide education about gender equality (Sikov, 2011). Through these media, people are expected to understand the conflict and solution that may arise in society. Through the expressions of the characters in the film, the delivery of hearing, sound techniques, lighting and other characteristics used in the film (Sikov, 2011).

Gender equality refers to ensuring that people of all genders have equal rights, opportunities and treatment in all areas of society-political, economic and social. It includes efforts to achieve equality and justice for all people, regardless of gender, with the aim of eliminating prejudice and discrimination that may be directed at a person because of their gender identity or expression. According to the World Economic Forum (2023), gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but also a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world. A study by Naila Kabeer published in *Feminist Economics* highlights that gender equality is essential for economic development and social progress (Kabeer, 2016).

In order to achieve gender equality, it is necessary to question established conventions, address structural injustices, support women's emancipation, and

fight for the rights of disadvantaged gender identities (Usman, 2021). Feminism is an ideology that has developed in various parts of the world, including in Indonesia. Feminism has also entered the spaces of life, including in literary works. Basically feminism is an ideology that empowers women. Women can also be subjects in all fields by using their experiences as women and using women's perspectives that escape the mainstream patriarchal culture that always moves from a male point of view. According to different dictionaries, the word "feminist" is frequently understood as a noun or adjective related to feminism (Usman, 2021).

Equality is frequently the motivating factor behind the idea that gender concerns are societal injustices. The social framework of society still harbors a great deal of gender discrimination, particularly against women. The ingrained patriarchal culture in the societal structure is the primary element that frequently justifies this discrimination. Men are the ones who dominate, control, and take advantage of women in patriarchal cultures. Gender discrimination affects many facets of the social network, including politics, education, family, and culture.

Toy Story 4 (2019) is a 2019 American animated comedy-drama film produced by Pixar Animation Studios for Walt Disney Pictures. It is the fourth instalment in Pixar's *Toy Story* series and the sequel to *Toy Story 3* (2010). The story opens with a flashback where an adult Andy gives his toys to a young girl named Bonnie. Woody, who has not been played with by Bonnie lately, begins to fret, especially when he learns the fact that Bonnie, who is starting school, is not allowed to bring

toys. With that anxiety, Woody decides to go to school to accompany Bonnie. While at school, Bonnie made a new toy from a white plastic spoon which she later named Forky. Because it was made with her own hands, Forky became a very precious toy for Bonnie. Bonnie kept Forky with her even when she slept. However, Forky felt otherwise. Forky felt that he was just trash. Woody, who always loved his owner, tried to convince Forky to stay by Bonnie's side. One day, Forky allegedly ran away. Woody was looking for him so he had to go through an unexpected adventure. Woody and Forky are trapped in an antique shop called Second Chance which makes them have to face Gabby Gabby and his army. This journey also makes Woody reunite with his idol, Bo Peep and various new characters such as Ducky, Bunny, Duke Caboom and Giggle McDimples.

In *Toy Story 4* (2019), the character of Bo Peep undergoes a significant transformation, which illustrates the shift towards gender equality and leadership. Bo Peep evolves from a traditional soft porcelain figurine to a tough, independent character who takes responsibility and leads fearlessly. Her portrayal challenges traditional gender roles and demonstrates the importance of empowering female characters in leadership roles. The film provides a powerful platform to discuss and analyse feminist perspectives on the representation of gender and leadership in animated films, making *Toy Story 4* an interesting subject to explore further.

Previous research on *Toy Story* and gender equality offered a broad spectrum of insights. Li (2022) analysed the application of Foucault's theory to the change in gender representation in Pixar's *Toy Story* series. The analysis and comparison of

how male and female characters' power relationships are portrayed in images was the main focus of this study. The power dynamics between the *Toy Story 1* (1995) to *Toy Story 4* (2019) movies were explained by this study. Farhanita and Kurniawan (2024) using Martin & Rose theory further analyzed the negotiation of power between the main characters in *Toy Story 4* (2019), showing how Bo Peep asserted her influence. Luisi (2018) used Grounded Theory and Gaze Theory to examine six themes of gender interaction in the Toy Story trilogy, revealing how female characters are traditionally portrayed as emotional or romantic supporters of male characters.

However, despite these contributions, the specific study of gender equality within *Toy Story 4* (2019) has not yet been thoroughly examined. While some research has addressed the evolution of female characters and their roles within the broader franchise, the intricacies of how gender equality is represented in the most recent installment remain largely underexplored. This gap in the literature suggests a need for further analysis of *Toy Story 4* (2019), particularly in terms of how power relations, character development, and gender dynamics are represented in comparison to earlier films in the series. By focusing on *Toy Story 4* (2019), future research can provide deeper insights into how the franchise reflects or challenges norms around gender equality.

1.2 Research Question

According to the background of the study, the research formulated into the questions,

How is gender equality in *Toy Story 4* Movie portrayed?

1.3 Research Objective

According to the research questions, this research has objectives to portray gender equality in *Toy Story 4* (2019) movie? This study is also to identify feminist perspectives that can be applied to analyse gender equality in animated films.

1.4 The Use of the Study

There are several uses that can be obtained from conducting this research.

1.4.1 Theoretical Use

Future researchers who want to research further are about understanding gender in society with literature and gender issues that will be known with society. This study provides an opportunity for future research that integrates feminism theory by defining how the movie *Toy Story 4* (2019) reflects a gender equality perspective. This study can be used as a resource by future researchers who want to use the lens of feminism to explore more deeply the relationship between literature and feminism.

1.4.2 Practical Use

This research can help us understand how human thought can communicate various gender issues that can be found by society. Thus, this research can also

add insight into gender issues seen from a feminist perspective and can be easily understood by society.

1.5 The Scope of the Study

This study specifically focuses on gender equality in the movie Toy Story 4 (2019). The researcher will apply liberal feminist theory. Liberal feminism is a subset of feminism that emphasizes achieving gender equality between men and women through the principles of liberal feminism. According to liberal feminists, equality would be achieved and there will be no perception of gender inequality if society embraces both positive masculine and feminine characteristics (Tong, 2009). Positive masculine and feminine traits combine to form eleven traits. According to Brannon (2015), these qualities are independence, strength, confidence, assertiveness, power, sensitivity, responsibility, independence, and indifference.