

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a background of the study, research questions, objectives of the study, the significance of the study, and scope and limitation of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

Children's literature is a subcategory of literature written explicitly for children (Gultom & Setyami, 2022:137). It reflects the experiences of its readers, addressing their challenges and shaping their understanding of the world. Children's literature not only entertains and educates but also plays a crucial role in developing children's identities (Gopalakrishnan, 2011: 247). However, children's understanding of literature primarily revolves around fairy tales and folktales, often lacking a deeper understanding of the broader context in which these stories exist. Children's literature is constantly exposed to levels of these genres, such as classic fairy tales or girl's stories such as *Cinderella* and *Snow White*. These stories are engaging and filled with elements of magic, moral lessons, and memorable characters and it is different with adult literature.

Children's literature differs from adult literature in that it has distinct aspects when viewed through the eyes of its intended audience (Hunt, 2006:16). Children's literature is a subset of written content explicitly aimed at children. It is designed to fit young readers' specific requirements, talents, and reading preferences while also appealing to adults who might read it to or with children. The emphasis on character development and moral ideals is a distinguishing aspect of children's literature. Most children's books contain important themes and ideas that educate and impact children's minds. One of the ideas that impact children's minds and is important is feminism.

Feminism is an important context in children's literature and has been recognized as essential in children's literature because there has been an issue with equality in these popular stories (Santiago, 2020:81). Feminism is important in

Children's literature, particularly fairy tales, aims for fairness and equality between genders. This is crucial because many popular children's stories struggle with gender roles related to male and female characters.

Gender roles are an essential part of culture (Gazda, 2015:9). This notion means gender roles are crucial aspects of culture that determine expectations and behaviors regarding individuals based on their gender. These roles include the social norms and responsibilities often associated with being male or female. For example, in many cultures, men are expected to be strong and assertive, while women are encouraged to be thoughtful and caring. These roles can affect many aspects of life, from family dynamics and career choices to social interactions and personal identity.

Shaping gender identities or gender roles in children's Literature has primary significance (Jabeen & Mehmood, 2014:240). These roles describe the social expectations and norms of being a boy or a girl. They often feature characters who exhibit traits and behaviors typically associated with their gender, such as strong, adventurous boys and caring, empathetic girls. These expressions can significantly impact children's perceptions of themselves and others, reinforcing or challenging stereotypes. Therefore, authors and educators need to make a variety of children's books that break traditional gender roles. This lets the children see their different identities and roles in society.

Cekiso (2013:201) notes that the roles of females in society are often depicted as victims, rarely triumphing unless beautiful, and are characterized as passive, submissive, and dependent on male figures. A common gender role in children's literature is where the female is limited to more traditional and passive roles. Feminism and the thought of gender roles have become important topics in children's literature, especially in fairy tales. This implies that stories for kids are presently regularly outlined. The children's literature that draws attention to the issue of gender roles is Charles Perrault (*Cinderella (Cendrillon)*, *The Sleeping*

Beauty in the Wood and *The Fairies*) and Brothers Grimm (*Cinderella (Aschenputtel)*, *Rapunzel*, and *Snow White*).

This study also compares more than two children's literature to know the similarities of a specific topic, gender roles. Comparative children's literature is a natural site in which to tease out the implications of these recent developments (O'Sullivan, 2011:189). This study compares six children's literature in one area of comparative children's literature because it is relevant within this study to find the similarities of gender roles of female characters in six children's stories. In other words, comparative children's literature compares one literary work to another to find differences, similarities, or unity between them. This was done to introduce and provide an overview of society's perspectives on the gender roles of female characters. In accordance with this explanation, this research finds how the similarities of gender roles of female characters depicted in the stories by Charles Perrault and the Brothers Grimm with the titles of the stories by Charles Perrault (*Cinderella (Cendrillon)*, *The Sleeping Beauty in the Wood* and *The Fairies*) and Brothers Grimm (*Cinderella (Aschenputtel)*, *Rapunzel*, and *Snow White*).

The stories by Charles Perrault (*Cinderella (Cendrillon)*, *The Sleeping Beauty in the Wood* and *The Fairies*) and Brothers Grimm (*Cinderella (Aschenputtel)*, *Rapunzel*, and *Snow White*) is a captivating anthology of timeless fairy tales that have charmed readers for a generation. Thus, the writer chooses those stories because those stories portray gender roles in female characters. Perrault's and Grimm's stories, often emphasize traditional femininity and societal expectations of the female characters. Thus, analyses of children's stories can show how women are portrayed similarly across different cultures and time periods. This helps to understand the typical roles and expectations for women in fairy tales.

Building on the previous explanation, gaining insight into historical perceptions of gender roles and comparative children's literature study in children's literature involves an examination of fairy tales by Charles Perrault and the Brothers Grimm. These timeless stories have been passed down through the centuries, reflecting the conventional norms and values of the times they were penned and

shaping societal attitudes regarding gender roles and behavior. Thus, analyzing these stories can help children learn more about how gender roles are created, upheld, and occasionally challenged, how gender dynamics have changed over time, and how the similarities portrayed of gender roles of female characters in children's literature between Charles Perrault and Brothers Grimm.

The writer included three previous studies in this research. The first previous study, titled "*Interpretation of Gender Roles Projected In Children's Literature*," written by Avni Bhatia, was published in 2023 in the International Journal of Advances in Engineering and Management (IJAEM) (Bhatia, 2023). This study aims on the handful of classic fairy tales apropos gender roles portrayed in them. Unlike the previous above, this study used different data and also focused on the gender roles of female characters and compared the gender roles portrayed of female characters in some classic fairy tales in children's literature, *Cinderella*, *Snow White*, and *Other Stories* by Charles Perrault and Brothers Grimm. The second study, titled "*Comparative Children Literature in Three Children Stories from The Devil's Christianity Perspectives*" by Muna Alfadhilah was published in 2019 (Alfadhilah, 2019). This study focuses on explaining the character good versus the different cultures in different countries in the three children's stories: *The Devil and Kate*, *The Devil and His Grandmother*, and *Billy Duff and The Devil*. Unlike the previous above, this study used different data and also focused on gender roles in the female characters and compared the gender roles portrayed of female characters in some classic fairy tales in children's literature *Cinderella*, *Snow White*, and *Other Stories* by Charles Perrault and the Brothers Grimm. Third, the previous study entitled "*The Representation of Gender in British and German Children's Literature after 1950: A Comparative Study of Six Selected Children's Books*" This study written by Hollie Adams, was published in 2016 (Adams, 2016). This previous study compared selected classics from two periods in postwar British and German children's and analyzed gender representation in order to find whether traditional gender roles and norms have been abandoned for a progressive, gender-neutral type of literature. Unlike the previous above, this study focuses on another source of data to analyze gender roles in the female characters and compare gender

roles portrayed of female characters in some classic fairy tales in children's literature of *Cinderella*, *Snow White*, and *Other Stories* by Charles Perrault and The Brothers Grimm.

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the background of the study, this study is a representation of gender roles and a comparative children's literature study of gender roles of female characters in children's literature using stories by Charles Perrault (*Cinderella* (*Cendrillon*), *The Sleeping Beauty in the Wood* and *The Fairies*) and Brothers Grimm (*Cinderella* (*Aschenputtel*), *Rapunzel*, and *Snow White*) consists of questions related to the condition of consequent depicted in the children literature. The questions are presented as the following:

1. What are the gender roles of female characters portrayed in the children's literature by Charles Perrault and Brothers Grimm?
2. How are the similarities of gender roles of female characters portrayed in the children's literature by Charles Perrault and Brothers Grimm?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

In line with the previous statement of the research questions, the objectives of the study aim to:

1. To describe the gender roles of female characters portrayed in the children's literature by Charles Perrault and Brothers Grimm.
2. To describe the similarities of gender roles of female characters portrayed in the children's literature by Charles Perrault and Brothers Grimm.

1.4 Significance of The Study

The results of this study give some significance, not only theoretically but also practically. The theoretical significance of this study is aimed to enrich the theoretical bases of literary studies, especially those that are related to the representation of gender roles and comparative study of gender roles of female characters portrayed in children's literature, especially in fairy tales by Charles Perrault and Brother Grimm that refer to the theories of *Children's Literature: An*

Issue Approach by Masha Kabakow Rudman (Rudman, 1995) and other theory of *Comparative Children's Literature* by Emer O'Sullivan (O'Sullivan, 2005). Meanwhile, the significance of this study in practical is to contribute to the reader, especially English learners who are interested in children's literature gender roles, and comparative in children's literature topics. Also, it becomes a reference for readers, especially students of the English Department at Universitas Trunojoyo Madura.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study

The scope of this study focused on the analysis representation of gender roles and comparative of gender roles portrayed of protagonist and antagonist female characters in stories by Charles Perrault (*Cinderella (Cendrillon)*, *The Sleeping Beauty in the Wood* and *The Fairies*) (Perrault & Grimm, 2008) and Brothers Grimm (*Cinderella (Aschenputtel)*, *Rapunzel*, and *Snow White*) (Grimm & Grimm, 2014). This study's limitation focused on using theories such as *Children's Literature: An Issue Approach* by Masha Kabakow Rudman (Rudman, 1995) and other theories of *Comparative Children's Literature* by Emer O'Sullivan (O'Sullivan, 2005).