

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

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

1.1 Background of the Study

Literature can be classified into various genres, one of which is children's literature. Since the beginning, children's literature has aided in the development of its reader's minds. An important question arises: Have these developments been positive or negative? Through the evolution of children's literature, have gained insights into what constitutes "good" children's literature (Santiago, 2020:81). This shows that by researching the origins and evolution of children's literature, academics and researchers have developed a greater comprehension of the traits and attributes that contribute to the effectiveness, significance, and advantages of particular children's books for young readers. These observations may concern a range of topics related to children's literature, including literary style, themes, characterization, illustrations, and the message that is intended to be conveyed.

Since before the 16th century, children's books have been evolving in developed nations like the United States. Because of this, children's books of all kinds continue to evolve in America, and the fact that they exist greatly aids in classroom teaching and learning activities. Children's literature is regarded as one of the most prominent doors through which a child is first introduced to and exposed to the world around them. This influence on the child's development and shaping of ideologies has been brought to the attention of many intellectuals and educationalists. Children's literature is usually considered to include books, stories, magazines, and poems that are created specifically for children and young adults. It encompasses all forms of expression that use words to construct a distinctive and imaginative world, not only written works.

Children's literature plays a crucial role in shaping the literary experiences and cognitive development of young readers (Ismail, 2023:593). The exploration of well-crafted stories provides children with a platform to engage with characters, events, and ideas. This engagement allows them to reflect on their own experiences and challenges their perspectives. Children should be thrilled to discover the contents of books they enjoy in order to encourage their interest in reading. Children typically enjoy picture books because they can visualize and analyze stories, understand plot points, and acquire coping mechanisms through pictures. For instance, a children's book describing the life cycle of a butterfly. One of the story points may be about a little protagonist who finds a caterpillar in their yard and gets enthralled with how it changes into a butterfly. As the narrative develops, the protagonist discovers the phases of metamorphosis via conversations with an elderly gardener or via own investigation and observations. Every stage of the butterfly's life cycle—from egg to caterpillar to chrysalis to adult butterfly—is illustrated in vivid detail throughout the book. In addition to adding to the storytelling experience, these visuals help young readers comprehend the scientific ideas being covered. The book may also have interactive components that let readers interact with the content directly, like DIY butterfly gardens or drawing exercises. Children gain coping skills like patience, persistence, and creativity in addition to learning about the science of butterfly metamorphosis through the use of these interactive elements. Children can also learn subjects that are not visible or experienced in the actual world. The fact that children's storybooks have distinct characters and are unique from other literary works does not take away from The attraction of children to read books.

Children's literature serves multiple purposes in the development of children some of them are to shape and develop children's character, provide a gateway to scientific inquiry, lower anxiety towards learning content material, stimulate emotions, imagination, cognitive development, and moral reasoning, and allow children to connect with spiritual experiences (Pulimeno et al., 2020:16). Children's literature serves a variety of functions for kids that go

beyond simple amusement, and it is essential to their complex development. It is a vital instrument for developing and molding kids' personalities. Young readers come across a range of characters in the stories who must overcome obstacles, make choices, and gain life lessons. Children learn empathy, sympathy, and a sense of right and wrong from these stories, which frequently impart moral lessons and social conventions. Furthermore, because children's literature presents scientific ideas and discoveries in an interesting and approachable way, it serves as a doorway to scientific investigation. Children's literature plays a crucial role in introducing scientific concepts and discoveries to young minds in an accessible and captivating manner. By weaving scientific ideas into engaging narratives, children's books not only entertain but also educate, sparking curiosity and laying the groundwork for further exploration. Through colorful illustrations, relatable characters, and simplified explanations, these books break down complex concepts into bite-sized pieces that are easy for young readers to grasp.

Moreover, children's literature fosters a sense of wonder and curiosity about the world around them, inspiring children to ask questions and seek answers. Whether it's exploring the wonders of outer space, delving into the mysteries of the natural world, or uncovering the principles of physics and chemistry, these books ignite a passion for learning and discovery. Furthermore, children's literature serves as a gateway to scientific investigation by encouraging hands-on exploration and experimentation. Many books include interactive elements such as experiments, activities, or discussion prompts that encourage readers to apply what they've learned in a practical way. This hands-on approach not only reinforces understanding but also cultivates critical thinking skills and a scientific mindset. In essence, children's literature serves as a doorway to scientific investigation by making science accessible, engaging, and fun. By capturing the imagination of young readers and nurturing their curiosity, these books lay the foundation for a lifelong love of learning and exploration. Learning becomes less daunting and more pleasurable when material is presented in a realistic and entertaining way. Children are more likely to see learning as an

enjoyable adventure than as a chore when they read stories that include educational material. This process of engaging with literature allows children to navigate complex emotions, develop empathy, and gain a deeper understanding of themselves and the world around them.

In children literature, there's are many aspects that influence children through their life, one of them is gender stereotypes. Preconceived notions or stereotyped opinions about traits, qualities, or roles that are associated with men and women, or about the roles that men and women should or should not play, are known as gender stereotypes (hentschel,2019). These stereotypes, which can be both favorable and bad, might impede people's ability to grow as people, achieve their professional goals, and make life decisions. People often absorb gender stereotypes, which can affect how they view themselves and who they are. They continue to have an impact on people throughout their lives and are taught by both the media and their immediate surroundings. People take in these cultural norms at a young age, which shapes their conception of what it is to be a man or a woman. Because people may adapt to social norms rather than embracing their true selves, these preconceived conceptions might impede personal growth and expression. Gender stereotypes have a lasting and widespread effect on people's life, impacting their relationships, careers, and general well-being, among other areas. For people to be able to express their gender identity in an authentic way and for society to be more inclusive and egalitarian, these prejudices must be challenged and destroyed.

One of the kinds of gender stereotypes is gender roles play a crucial role in shaping culture by influencing the expectations, behaviors, and identities of individuals based on their assigned sex (Gazda, 2015:26). These roles are cultural expectations and standards that define how individuals should behave and who they should be based on the sex assigned to them. These roles are an essential part of culture and have a significant impact on how individuals relate to and view one another. Gender roles cover a broad spectrum of areas, such as relationships, employment, family, education, and personal expression (Butler, 1990). The way

gender roles define what is expected of people's actions and obligations is one of their most important characteristics.

Historically, people in civilizations have been assigned certain tasks and responsibilities based on their gender. For instance, men have traditionally been expected to take on more prominent roles in the workforce or to act as the family's guardians and providers, while women are typically expected to handle caring and household duties. These expectations have the power to mold people's decisions and the roles they play in different situations. Furthermore, gender roles have a big influence on people's identities. Gender roles indeed have a significant impact on people's identities, shaping how individuals perceive themselves and are perceived by others within society. Here are some examples of identities influenced by gender roles: Gender Identity, sexual orientation, Social Roles and Expectations, self-expression, and Intersectional Identities

Expectations and conventions set by society might cause people to form a self-concept that is consistent with the roles that are associated with their gender. Boys, for instance, might be pushed to display features linked to stoicism and strength, whereas girls might be encouraged to embrace traits related to nurturing and empathy. An individual's hopes and objectives, as well as their self-concept, might be influenced by these social expectations. It's crucial to remember that gender roles are not universal and that they differ greatly throughout cultures and historical times. Furthermore, the harm and limits brought forth by inflexible gender roles are becoming increasingly acknowledged. In an effort to build more inclusive and fair communities, modern endeavors aim to question and dismantle established gender norms. This entails advocating for gender parity, endorsing a range of gender identities, and motivating people to express themselves true to who they are, regardless of the sex they are assigned.

Finally, gender roles are an essential component of culture that influence people's identities, expectations, and behaviors depending on the sex to which they are ascribed. Gender roles are impacted by social, historical, and cultural

variables and have a profound impact on many facets of peoples' life. In order to build more inclusive and equitable communities, there is a growing recognition that traditional gender roles need to be challenged and redefined as societies continue to change.

Gender roles are learnt from a young age and are influenced by the dominant cultural norms. gender roles are learned through reinforcement, punishment, and modeling. Children are rewarded and reinforced for behaving in concordance with gender roles and punished for breaking gender roles. They also learn many of their gender roles by modeling the behavior of adults and older children. Gender roles in society dictate how we are expected to act, speak, dress, groom, and conduct ourselves based on our assigned sex. These roles can vary between societies, ethnic groups, and cultures, and they can also change over time. over time, also prompting a critical examination of feminism within children's literature.

Gender stereotypes and feminism in children's literature are related in a number of ways. Feminist theory has been applied to children's literature to challenge and change gender stereotypes, focusing on issues such as gender behavior, gender oppression, patriarchy, and sexual norms (Santiago, 2020). Little children's self-identity and self-image are shaped in part by gender stereotypes in children's books, which frequently reinforce social norms and expectations. Illustrations, recurrent readings, and the focus on particular gender roles and traits can all contribute to the perpetuation of these preconceptions. Children's feminist literature is an effective way to introduce the principles of gender equality and feminism to young readers. Because they read a lot of literature, children are especially susceptible to the widespread gender stereotypes found in patriarchal media. For this reason, children's feminist literature can be extremely influential in forming their viewpoints and attitudes.

Feminist children's literature helps young readers to examine and let go of any learned prejudices by exposing them to various narratives that question

traditional gender roles and praise the power, independence, and equality of all genders. By cultivating critical thinking, empathy, and a profound comprehension of the significance of gender equality, it sows the seeds for a future generation that is more inclusive and equitable and adopts feminist ideals. Children become champions for a just and fair society where everyone's potential is acknowledged and valued through these stories, in addition to learning the importance of varied perspectives and experiences.

One of the children's literatures that draws attention to the issues of gender role stereotypes and feminism is "*Amazing Grace*" written by Mary Hoffman and illustrated by Caroline Binch. I choose this book because it is more than just a picture book for kids. This book explores feminist ideals, which are beneficial in teaching the next generation about gender equality and the virtue of respecting everyone, regardless of gender. This book may teach kids about justice, women's rights, and shattering gender stereotypes through powerful stories and characters. In addition, this book helps kids feel included and respected in society, regardless of their gender or origin. Children may cultivate inclusive, sympathetic, and diversity-respecting attitudes by reading books like this, which will lay a strong basis for building a more equitable and peaceful society down the road.

Children's book illustrations are an essential part of the text, adding to the storytelling experience and drawing young readers into a picture book. Illustrations in children's picture books play a significant role in shaping the story and the reader's experience (Uglow, 2009). Complement the text, illustrating the characters and settings, or they can take a more prominent role, with the pictures coming first and the text serving to support the images. Beyond being merely decorative, pictures serve a variety of purposes by providing visual clues that support character development, comprehension, and emotional resonance. They give background, scene, and mood that make the story come to life—especially for younger readers who might still be honing their reading abilities. Children are drawn into the world of the story by illustrations that arouse curiosity, ignite the imagination, and inspire awe. Furthermore, inclusive and varied pictures support

representation by allowing kids to recognize themselves in the stories they read, which develops empathy and an awareness of other people's perspectives and cultural customs. In order to attract their audience, skilled illustrators use a variety of techniques, styles, and mediums, such as emotive characters and dynamic compositions, vivid colors, and minute details. In the end, images are a potent weapon in children's literature that enhances reading enjoyment and forms enduring memories in the minds of young readers.

Grace, a young girl with a passion for performing, is the primary character of this children's picture book. Grace likes to play a range of characters, including courageous pirates and princesses from fairy tales. Her free time is often spent with her supportive grandmother, who nurtures her self-belief and encourages her creative spirit. Grace eagerly decides to audition for the lead role in her school play as Peter Pan. She decides to audition for the role of Peter Pan, but some of her classmates voice doubt about whether a girl can play this typically male figure. Grace is motivated to audition and demonstrate her talent by her grandmother's encouragement and unwavering persistence. Grace ultimately wins the main part of Peter Pan, demonstrating her exceptional acting skills. This fantastic book shows how similar we are to one another while promoting dialogues about race and encouraging readers to hold onto their ambitions regardless of what others may think.

The touching story "*Amazing Grace*" inspires kids to follow aspirations in spite of prejudices and societal norms. It encourages self-assurance, tenacity, and the notion that anybody can realize goals with commitment and self-belief. Grace's passion and will are perfectly captured in the story's exquisite illustrations. Young readers are encouraged by this novel to question preconceptions, embrace their uniqueness, and remember that they may be anything they want to be. After reading the preceding description, it is intriguing to look at gender stereotypes in the children's picture book *Amazing Grace* by Mary Hoffman in order to obtain insight into historical conceptions of gender roles and stereotypes of female characters in children's literature. By dissecting these narratives, we can discover

more about how gender stereotypes have evolved over time as well as how gender norms are constructed, maintained, and occasionally challenged.

Recently, the writer provided four previous studies in this study. The first previous studies entitled *The Representation of Gender roles in Children's Literature Kingdom Tale Collections* by Atiq Aqiqotul Hasanah that was published in 2022 (Hasanah, 2022). This study focuses on the analysis of the female characters in "Kingdom Tale Collection". The second previous studies entitled *Comparative Children Literature in Three Children Stories from The Devil's Christianity Perspectives* by Muna Alfadhilah and Imron Wakhid Harits that was published in 2019 (Alfadilah & Harits, 2019). This study focuses on to explain the character good versus had also the different cultural in different countries in the three children stories The Devil and Kate, The Devil and His Grandmother, and Billy Duff and The Devil. Third, the previous study entitled *Masculinities in Kiswahili Children's Literature in Kenya* written by James Ogola Onyango was published in 2007 (Onyango, 2007). This paper seeks to critically interrogate the physical, social, economic, and political manifestations of masculinities in selected Kiswahili children's books from Kenya. The last previous study is entitled *Once Upon A Time: Exposing Sexism in Children's Literature* written by Courtney Gazda it was published in 2015 (Gazda, 2015). This thesis has acknowledged the views of sex and gender in American society with clear-cut examples of gendered stereotypes and sexism that follow, the history of children's literature and its gendered effects, and how all of those things impact children in restricted ways for both girls and boys.

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the background of the study, this study is representation of female character in children literature used *Amazing Grace* book consist of questions related to the condition of consequent depicted in the children literature. The question is presented as the following:

1. How is the main female character portrayed in the children's picture book entitled *Amazing Grace* by Mary Hoffman?
2. How are the gender stereotypes portrayed of the main female character in the children's picture book entitled *Amazing Grace* by Mary Hoffman?
3. How are the relation between picture book and gender stereotypes of main female character in the children's picture book entitled *Amazing Grace* by Mary Hoffman?

1.3 Objective of the Study

In line with previous statement of research question, the objective of the study aims to:

1. To describe how main female character is portrayed in the children's picture book entitled *Amazing Grace*.
2. To identify the gender stereotypes experienced by the main character in the children's picture book entitled *Amazing Grace*.
3. To identify the relation between picture book and gender stereotypes experienced by the main female character in the children's picture book entitled *Amazing Grace*.

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 enrich the theoretical bases of literary studies, especially those that are related to the gender roles stereotypes, and representation of female character found in children's literature, especially children's picture book that refers to the theory of Structure of Gender Stereotypes: Interrelationship Among Components and Gender Label by Deaux & Lewis, (1984), Talking About Books: Strong Female Characters in Recent Children's Literature by Heine et al., (1999), and other theory You've Come a Long Way, Baby--or Have You? Research Evaluating Gender Portrayal in Recent

Caldecott-Winning Books by McDaniel & Davis, (1999). The practical goal of this study is to provide assistance to the reader, particularly English language learners who are interested in children's literature and gender identity issues, in order for the reader to gain a better understanding of gender roles and stereotypes traits present female characters in children's literature. Additionally, it serves as a resource for readers, particularly for English Department students at University of Trunojoyo Madura.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the study

Actually, there are lots of other choices for children's picture books. But of the many books that exist, the author is interested in choosing this book, the reason the author chose the book "*Amazing Grace*" is because this book has an inspiring story. The limitations of this research are to find out what are types of gender-roles stereotypes found in the main female character of children's picture book entitled *Amazing Grace* using theory, and how the female characters portrayed in the children's picture book entitled *Amazing Grace*. This study using some theories such as Structure of Gender Stereotypes: Interrelationship Among Components and Gender Label by Kay Deaux and Laurie L. Lewis (1984), Talking About Books: Strong Female Characters in Recent Children's Literature by Pat Heine, Christine Inkster, Frank Kazemek, Sandra Williams, Sylvia Raschke, Della Stevens (1999), and other theory You've Come a Long Way, Baby--or Have You? Research Evaluating Gender Portrayal in Recent Caldecott-Winning Books by (McDaniel & Davis, 1999).