

Clary Fray's Femininity and Masculinity the Main Female Character in Cassandra Clare's Novel "The Mortal Instruments: City of Bones"

Alda Fakhrizal Khafidzy
Usma Nur Dian Rosyidah
English Department, Universitas Airlangga

Abstract

Gender is a cultural concept constructed by society to define man and woman. This study aims to analyze the gender performance of the main female character in Cassandra Clare's *"The Mortal Instruments: City of Bones."* Clary Fray, the female protagonist who is determined to save her missing mother, is portrayed as a feminine-masculine character through her performance by joining *Shadowhunter*. As the qualitative method and Gender Performativity by Judith Butler are applied to the discussion, the study discovers that Clary Fray learns to behave in a certain way by imitating some figures to attain a certain ideal of beauty in order to be accepted by society.

Keywords: femininity, gender performance, masculinity

1. Introduction

Femininity and masculinity are terms for gender identity used in society to define man or woman. Gender and sex are completely different things. Gender refers to cultural concepts which attempt to make a distinction in terms of roles, behavior, mentality, and emotional characteristics of men and women in society while sex is a biological organ. Therefore, it is expected for a male to respond to masculine traits and behave like a man while female define themselves as feminine and behave like a woman. According to Jan E. Stets and Peter J. Burke, it is possible whether female define herself as masculine or male define himself as feminine.

In our society today, there is a huge pressure from all sides to conform to a certain ideal of beauty. Media also play its role to set up a certain ideal of the physical and non-physical appearance of men and women should look like. Men and women have been represented by the media in accordance with the cultural stereotypes to reproduce the traditional gender roles. The concepts of gender have taken over the society's point of view, even in the making of a literary work, such as a novel, one of the products of the mass media also plays a major role in shaping the society's view on the construction of gender. It is a media to present the visual or non-visual depiction of masculinity and femininity in narrative aspects. Therefore, there is one literary work which depicts the issue of gender stereotype is Cassandra Clare's *The Mortal Instruments: City of Bones* the novel.

The Mortal Instruments: City of Bones is a fantasy novel written by Cassandra Clare in 2007. It is a novel series of *The Mortal Instruments* which originally entitled *The Mortal Instruments: City of Bones*. It is the first book from the series of *The Mortal Instruments*. The author, Cassandra Clare, is an American who was born in Teheran, Iran. She is not only writing her own urban fantasy and supernatural series of *The Mortal Instruments* novel, but she also writes the other series as well, such as *The Infernal Devices*, *The Bane Chronicles*, *The Dark Artifices*, and many more. The first book of *The Mortal Instruments: City of Bones* is also adapted in a movie version. The film adaptation was released on August 21, 2013. It is directed by Harald Zwart and starring Lily Collins as the main character. *The Mortal Instruments* tell the story of the 'Nephilim' through the eyes of New York teenager, Clary Fray. The 'Nephilim' is a secret organization devoted to defeating demons or named 'Shadowhunter'.

The Mortal Instruments: City of Bones the novel was nominated for several accolades as a New York Times Bestseller, a Georgia Peach Book Award Honor Book for Teen Readers, as a finalist for the Locus Award for Best First Novel of 2007, an American Library Association Teens Top Ten Award winner in 2008, winner of the 2010 Abraham Lincoln Illinois High School Book Award, a Texas TAYSHAS title in 2010, and winner of the 2010 Pacific Northwest Library Association Young Reader's Choice Award. It is also shortlisted for the 2010 Evergreen Young Adult Book Award and for the 2010 Colorado Blue Spruce Young Adult Book Award.

The representation of gender issues which is portrayed by the main characters in the novel is considered as the interesting object to be analyzed. Therefore, gender representation is related to the ways of thinking, acting and feeling of men and women which are expected and accepted by the people in a society (Baldwin, et. al 293). It is when a male has to be 'man' and female has to be 'woman'. Those are the concepts constructed by the society to define the characteristics of male and female. This study focuses on the novel version of *City of Bones* that was published in 2007. Furthermore, this study only concerns the main woman character in *City of Bones*, because the portrayal of the gender stereotype's phenomenon in the novel is described by their characterizations as the main characters. In *The Mortal Instruments: City of Bones* novel, there is an impression that Clary is described as a feminine and masculine character. The writer expects to discover the representation of femininity and masculinity through the main female character's performativity in the novel.

The study shows that masculinity and femininity are defined in many ways. It is related to traditional gender roles which define men as rational, strong, protective, and decisive whereas women as emotional, weak, submissive and nurturing (Tyson). Masculinity and femininity are used to define how men and women should act and behave. The society also plays the role in constructing these ideal concepts of men and women. Thus, men are associated with masculine traits and women are associated with feminine traits are ideally the concept that is constructed in social, cultural, and religion.

Masculinity and femininity have become an interesting topic of analysis in the field of feminism considering most of the studies only focuses on female or male character, such as, how femininity is portrayed, woman's struggle, representation of a woman, and etc. The study about masculinity and femininity that is portrayed by the main female character is conducted based on feminism which always focused on the oppression of women in the patriarchal society. However, it is rare to see how a woman can have both masculinity and femininity traits in order to be recognized as equal to a man.

There have been several previous studies conducting a similar topic to this study. The first is entitled *Submission to Gender Performance in The Hunger Games* by Jennifer Gilmore (2013). She investigated the depiction of the characters of Katniss Everdeen in *The Hunger Games*, a heroine who refuses to conform to traditional expectations of gender. She applied the gender performativity by Judith Butler to see how Katniss's identity is constructed in the novel. She found that *The Hunger Games* trilogy reinforces the idea that gender identity is a performance. Moreover, the character of Katniss reinforces what pop culture foists upon women every day.

The second is an article entitled *Dissolution of Gender Binary and Stereotypical Femininity through Exploration of Cinematic Heroines in the 1990s Filmic Texts* by Chi-Chung Chia (2013). The writer investigated the portrayal of female characters in *Thelma & Louise* to find the issue such as female violence, revenge, and gender equity. *Thelma and Louise* portrayed as the women who free themselves from the constraint of conventional expectation of femininity to cultivate their desire and imagination. The film shows the female act of subverting gendered expectation through violent retaliation as a gesture of undermining the stereotypical patriarchal fantasy and ideology of gender and womanhood. The female characters in the film show that the traditional gender binary system is gradually falling apart through a cinematic representation of new female heroes who subvert the patriarchal construction of femininity by combining masculine and feminine traits.

Next, Eta Farmacelia Nurulhady (2014) possessed a research entitled *Gender Performance in Elizabeth Gaskell's Ruth*. The author applied gender performance theory by Judith Butler to analyze the novel. The main purpose of this study was to see the Victorian English perspective on gender as a social

construct. This study focus on the heroine, Ruth, who was judged by her gender performance and must bear punitive consequences. She is also considered as violating the rules related to her being a female member of the society by performing particular traits and acts opposite to her gender. However, Ruth eventually managed to gain her respectable place in society by performing as a respectable woman and she is judged by what she performs.

The last related study was written by Siti Fatimah (2013) from UNIKOM entitled *Gender Issue on Dorian Gray Character in the Novel "The Picture of Dorian Gray" by Oscar Wilde*. She investigated how masculinity and femininity were described through Dorian Gray and their impacts. She found that the main character Dorian Gray learns to behave in a certain way to be accepted by society. Thus, Lord Henry, a man he met in London helped him to pursue his obsessiveness in beauty and youth by combining his masculinity and femininity. Thus, he is also considered as bisexual. This study is closely related to the study that the writer intended to conduct. Similarly, this study applied the framework used by Siti Fatimah to analyze the masculinity and femininity through main female character as an opposite to Siti Fatimah's works on the main male character.

This study used the related studies above due to the similarity of the main theme, namely gender issues. Nevertheless, this study applied a similar theory and different data source to preserve its originality. The difference between other works is the existence of a male companion that helps the female main character to achieve her goal. Thus, the writer wants to reveal the femininity and masculinity through her performativity in the novel of *The Mortal Instruments: City of Bones* by using Judith Butler's gender performativity.

Moreover, the main female character in this novel shows her negotiation toward the construction by society in the novel. All of those previous studies above are focused only on how women are represented in literature except the last one which is a man and this study wants to reveal the gender issues through the main female character and to see how gender issues are portrayed in the novel by the author. Therefore, it is also expected that this study will give the information to the reader about gender issues that are reflected in the novel and to give the understanding of masculinity and femininity.

2. Methodology

To conduct the study of gender representation portrayed by the main characters in Cassandra Clare's *City of Bones* novel is needed as the only source of data. Published in 2007, the data are taken from the novel itself in the form of supporting quotation. Descriptive analysis is used by the writer to conduct this study. It is an analysis that is done by getting the information based on the previous studies which have been done by the previous writer and to outline the understanding of feminist literary criticism in order to facilitate the reader to understand the contents.

As for the theoretical framework, the writer uses the gender theory by Judith Butler (1990). Gender is constructed socially that defines the masculinity and femininity. It shapes a person's identity through the social constructions about gender roles. According to Butler, "*gender is an identity tenuously constituted in time, instituted in an exterior space through a stylized repetition of acts.*" (1990: 140). Gender is not naturally constructed but socially and culturally constructed. The construction of gender can be changed from time to time and place. In other words, the construction of gender in the western country will be different in any other eastern country or even in the third world country. The cultural background of the people who live in those places also influences it. Gender is not a fixed identity, it can change through times and also fit with the repetition of behavior or manner. Gender identity appears due to the repetition of an act done by the person.

The techniques that are used to conduct this study is close-reading every part of the novel several times. Then, every part of the novel is analyzed which is related to the issue in order to answer the research problem. The last is formulating the conclusion as the final part that is aimed to give more understanding about the result of this study.

3. Discussion

Gender and sex are different things. Sex is related to male and female biologically whereas gender is a social construction that makes up the characteristics of men and women. Society decides what being male or female means, and males are expected to be masculine while females are expected to be feminine. However, it is possible for one to be female and see herself as masculine or male and see himself as feminine. The social construction of masculinity and femininity also can be seen in the novel written by Cassandra Clare through some of its main characters, entitled *City of Bones* which is also a series of *The Mortal Instruments*' novel.

In *The Mortal Instruments: City of Bones*' novel, there are several main characters, which are, Clary Fray, Jace Wayland, Simon-Lewis, Alec and Isabelle Lightwoods, Magnus Bane and Valentine Morgenstern. However, the analysis only focuses on the main woman character named Clary Fray. Clary Fray was a fifteen-years-old teenage girl who was always together with her best friend named Simon-Lewis. Just like any other teenage girl who desperately looking for her true-self as a woman which means that she is in the stage of puberty where she is trying to find herself, so she is shy, a book lover and a geek. Clary also admires another girl who was more adorable than her according to the image of the ideal beauty of how a woman was supposed to be.

The first evidence when Clary performed masculinity is when Clary and Jace arrive at the cemetery where the Bone City lies deep underground. She steps down from the carriage by herself. She refused the help offered by Jace by saying, "*you didn't have to.*" Jace's action by offering his hand to help Clary down shows that he is like a man who supposed to help a woman down from the carriage by saying, "*I would have helped you down*" (178). However, Clary rejects his help to show how she can be independent. From the evidence, Clary shows her independent toward others. Not to be easily dependent on the others is one of the masculine traits. Moreover, she does not want to be considered weak just because she is a woman. This is shown further in the conversation when Jace asks her, "*You want me to hold your hand?*" Clary put both her hands behind her back like a small child. "*Don't talk down to me*" (180). Jace always sees her as a woman who needs his help. However, Clary always shows that she can take care of herself in many situations. Although from the text she acts like a small child, she asserts that she does not need to be helped by saying, "*Don't talk down to me*" (180). Her independent-ness also can be seen from the next text when she is in the Bone City. Jace once again tries to help her by asking, "*Is your arm all right? Let me see,*" he demanded, seizing her wrist. "*Ouch! It's fine. Don't do that, you're making it worse,*" Clary said, trying to pull away (186).

From the conversation, it looks like that Clary feels like does not need to be helped by others although her hand is bleeding. Society deemed her to be a woman who should be passive and need to be protected by a man. Jace sees her as a woman who always needs him. He is protective towards her because he does not want her to get hurt and as a man who is supposed to protect her. The way Jace grips her hands shows his domination over Clary. It also reemphasizes from the text: *he demanded, seizing her wrist*. However, her reaction towards Jace shows that she does not want to be protected. Moreover, she has control over her own body by not letting others control her. However, people will misjudge her base on her action that considered as a violation toward patriarchy.

Further evidence that shows Clary's action towards patriarchy is when Jace considered her as a rebellious woman. Jace once noted that she is kind of girl who does not fond of listening to what others say by saying, "*I should have warned her about your habit of never doing what you're told*" (63). It is when Clary woke up from her sleep due to her injury. She is told by Isabelle to wait in the infirmary until Hodge has arrived. However, she wandered around the Institute instead of took a rest and waited in the infirmary. The society in the novel expected Clary to behave like a good woman, otherwise, she will be judged as a bad woman just like what Jace thought about her. From the evidence, it seems that having "*habit of never doing what you're told*" for a woman has a negative impact in society because a good woman supposed to be submissive (Tyson). She is expected to wait and obey to what others say yet she tried to break the traditional roles by not being submissive. Another evidence when she does not want to

listen to what others say seen when Hodge told her the truth about her mother and Clary interrupted him by saying, (...) "*And I don't want to hear any more*" (149).

Further evidence that portrayed Clary as a strong woman as she killed the *Ravener*. It is a kind of lower rank demon and usually controlled by a warlock. Clary unintentionally killed it by using the sensor; a device used by *Shadowhunters* to detect the demonic's presence. The demon died due to the angelic runes engraved all over the sensor. Clary never thought that she could kill the *Ravener* demon by herself considering only the *Shadowhunters* could do it and being *Shadowhunters* is needed to be able to defeat the demon and to find her missing mother. She killed the demon even though she only a *mundane* or an ordinary human. The doubt raises as Isabelle says, "*But you're a Mundie*" to Clary (117). They assume that Clary is just an ordinary girl who did not have the ability to do that and indirectly felt discriminated that is impossible for the ordinary girl like herself to be able to do that. In addition, a word 'Mundie' can be associated with female traits or typical weak woman compared to the *Shadowhunter* which can be associated with the male in terms of capability in killing the demon. However, Clary shows that she wanted to be respected equally not because she is a 'mundane' but as a 'Nephilim' too. "*No,*" Clary said. "*I'm not. I'm Nephilim—just like you*" (299).

In the novel, 'Mundie' or 'mundane' has a negative connotation in the *Shadowhunters*' point of view. 'Mundane' is considered as a lower class in the *Shadow World* compared to any other races. For Clary that has *The Sight* and could see the *Shadow World* is regarded as something rare phenomenon. *The Sight* is actually one of her very first ability possessed by Clary which is rare. Moreover, after she discovered *The Sight* then she was able to learn the *Shadowhunters*' runes even the ancient runes not written in the *Gray Book*. Runes or Marks is a kind of magical symbols in the form of tattoo-like taught by Angel Raziel. In other words, only *Shadowhunters* who can apply the marks of an Angel otherwise it will kill *mundane* or even turn them into *Forsaken*. However, Clary is different compared to ordinary *Shadowhunters* who are able to learn more than one rune from the *Gray Book* because most of *Shadow hunters* only taught one rune from the book at a time when they grew up.

Clary Fray's character represents the fluidity of gender where the female can be either feminine or masculine. The idea of femininity and masculinity can be supported by Deleuze's notion of transformativity, signifying a new emergent system "*by bringing together two systems—the masculine and the feminine, which turn out not to be mutually exclusive, but in fact surprisingly complementary and compatible*" (quoted in Jo-Anne Shirley Goodwill 86).

4. Conclusion

From the result, it can be concluded that the main female characters of City of Bones' novel are represented as new femininity. Even though the characters seem a bit masculine and independent, she is still obeying the patriarchal system. The main female character is still devoted to the main traits of traditionally feminine traits, such as domesticated. Therefore, the main female characters experienced discrimination because she was just an ordinary girl and everyone at first assuming her to be an ordinary human. She has never felt like she fit in which is something that is on a teenagers mind all the time. It seems that becoming a *Shadowhunter* is the way that the main female character can strive to achieve the equity of woman. She goes from an ordinary girl to a heroine with all this responsibility and these new powers that she does not yet understand. What makes her strong is the presence of men behind them and her relationship with other male characters. The female character shows both many of masculine and feminine traits and how she able to cope with the society ideal beauty where the beautiful woman should have a long black hair, have a tall and willowy body, and a graceful way of walking. It is also shown that the main female character Clary Fray learns to behave in a certain way to be accepted by society. She really shows some masculinity through the way she thinks, behavior, and so on. She learns it from Jocelyn and Isabelle. Thus, she imitates both of them to attain a certain ideal of beauty. She starts out as a stereotypical teenage girl trying to make her way through high school. She does not consider herself to be beautiful and compares herself to her mother who is very beautiful until she discovered a new world where the gender identity of women is equal to men. They are trained and held just as high in society as males are.

In this novel, a woman is still portrayed as a weak figure that always needs the help of a man even in the other hand; a woman wants to look strong and equal in front of a man. As strong as any woman trying to be independent still they require acknowledgment and protection from a man.

5. Works Cited

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