

GENDER PERFORMATIVITY IN CHAINANI'S *THE SCHOOL FOR GOOD AND EVIL* NOVEL

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ABSTRACT

It is started since the canonical story of Adam and Eve, individuals are labeled right after their birth as, “it’s a girl” or “it’s a boy”. This binary system of women (girl) and men (boy) continues to have a default setting that women should align with her gender that is feminine, while men should be masculine. The presumption of the default alignments also intersects to the expectation of individual’s sexuality, that is, heterosexual. The situation then dichotomizes people’s normality. This process is called social construction of gender which was asserted by Judith Butler. This research analyzed gender construction in *The School for Good and Evil* novel by Chainani using Judith Butler’s Gender Performativity theory. There were two discussions taken in the research. First is the identification of social construction in the novel. Second is the identification of how the two main female characters perform their gender despite the social construction of gender inscribed to them. The research used qualitative method. The researcher used a close reading process to do the data collection technique. The result of this research reveals that the social construction of gender in the novel were surrounded all aspects of human life. The society constructed body features, appearance, roles, traits, sexuality, and punishment based on individuals’ gender category. It is also found that the two main female characters were gender fluid that at certain stages they were conforming to the construction but also negating the construction.

Keywords: gender construction, heterosexuality, homosexuality, performativity, sex

ABSTRAK

*Sejak lahirnya cerita Adam dan Hawa, manusia diberikan label “bayi laki-laki” atau “bayi perempuan” sejak mereka lahir. Sistem biner perempuan (wanita) dan laki-laki (pria) ini terus menerus dilestarikan dengan pengharusan seajarnya aturan jenis kelamin dan gender. Perempuan harus menjadi feminin, laki-laki menjadi maskulin. Asumsi adanya kesejajaran antara jenis kelamin dan gender ini berpotongan dengan ekspektasi seksualitas, yakni untuk menjadi heteroseksual. Situasi ini mendikotomi nilai normalitas. Proses ini yang disebut Judith Butler sebagai konstruksi sosial terhadap gender. Novel *The School for Good and Evil* dianalisis menggunakan teori*

Judith Butler mengenai konstruksi gender pada masyarakat di novel tersebut. Ada dua pembahasan pada penelitian ini. Pertama adalah identifikasi konstruksi gender yang terdapat pada novel. Kedua adalah identifikasi bagaimana dua tokoh utama perempuan pada novel ini merepresentasikan gender mereka terlepas dari konstruksi sosial yang ada. Peneliti menggunakan metode kualitatif, dan pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui proses membaca secara cermat. Hasil penelitian menemukan bahwa konstruksi sosial atas gender terdapat pada seluruh aspek kehidupan. Masyarakatnya mengkonstruksi bentuk tubuh, penampilan, peran, kodrat, dan hukuman bagi pelanggarnya berdasarkan jenis kelamin/gender yang dimiliki seseorang. Pada pembahasan kedua ditemukan bahwa dua tokoh utama wanita pada novel memiliki fluiditas gender. Kedua tokoh ditemukan pada beberapa poin tertentu mematuhi konstruksi gender namun juga menegasinya.

Kata kunci: heteroseksualitas, homoseksualitas, jenis kelamin, konstruksi gender, performativitas

A. INTRODUCTION

Since the canonical story of Adam and Eve, individuals are labeled right after their birth as, “it’s a girl” or “it’s a boy”. This binary system of women (girl) and men (boy) continues to have a default setting of that women should align with her gender that is feminine, while men should be masculine. The presumption of the default alignments also intersects to the expectation of individual’s sexuality, that is, heterosexual. The situation in turn dichotomizes people into the categories of normal and not normal.

The School for Good and Evil is a children fantasy book published in 2013. It tells a story of two girls in a fairy tale world to conquer their fates. The story is rather distinctive compared to popular fairy tales. Unlike Little Mermaid, Beauty and the Beast, Sleeping Beauty, and many more, revolve their story around two human that are categorized as male and female, The School for Good and Evil represents two girls as the main characters seeking their happily ever after ending for each other.

This research is aimed to identify the social construction of gender in *The School for Good and Evil* novel society, to give insight of how the two main characters perform their gender within the constructed gender norms in the novel, and to draw a conclusion if the two main characters are conforming or non-conforming to the construction.

This research contributes in academic realm as the source of information about a study of sex or gender construction in the specific novel of *The School for Good and Evil*. This research is also expected to contribute in providing information about how The School for Good and Evil’s main characters perform their gender. In addition, this research is expected to provide insight on how the characters are performing their gender in ways that might be conforming or non-conforming to the social construction of gender.

B. RELATED LITERATURE

1. Gender and Literature

Literature today is taken to be a written work with imaginative composition, even though earlier even until today in some culture, literature was oral. Back to 2500 years ago, critical analysis towards literature has been widely conducted by some of the greatest thinker from Plato, Aristotle, even to modern figures such as Locke, Kant, Freud, Sartre, and many more. Critical interpretation and reflection to certain context are important to help readers in interpreting individual lines or words meanings in literature. In addition, Fowler explains that literature is evidently a form of representation, imitation, depiction, and the embodiment of human's life or society (130).

There are four qualities of novel which suggest connection of novels to life: its narrative form, flexibility, popularity, and its concern to individuals. "Each of these qualities participates in an initial view of the novel as related to lived experience and peculiarly opens to gender-based interpretation" (Hoffman 255). Thus, Gender analysis is also part of how readers can interpret novels or literature.

2. Gender Construction

Gender construction has been developed among many different societies. There are several purported qualities of men with masculinity and women to femininity. To this system, society's expectation is taken to be bipolar, that is, if one is masculine thus, he is not feminine, and vice versa. The social construction of gender covers gender-related attributes, such as roles, traits, and physical appearance (Kite 215).

Anthropologists Marilyn Strathern and Carol MacCormack argued that culture figures nature as female in the need of superiority offered by culture that is figured as male, active and abstract (qtd. in Butler 48). Later, this concept gives birth to how decision making in the society is made. The decision is made by men because their gender category, masculine, is associated with reason and mind.

There are stereotypes of the division of women and men that could be easily identified. Color coding is one of the popular stereotypes. After the birth of a child, she/he will be given label as a boy or a girl. The parents and people around the baby will give toys, accessories, and clothing with the color that they think fit the sex of the child, pink for a girl, blue for a boy. Jo Paoletti explains that in the first 20th century, gender difference in dressing color starts emerging. In the 1940, pink and blue colors have a strong relation with gender and have not expired until today (15). "Blue has been the symbol of masculinity and strength, while pink represents sweets and femininity" (Yoon 15). It explains the condition where sex and gender are two linear and related things. Judith Butler opposes the idea that sex and gender are related. Judith Butler is known for her Gender Performativity theory which claims to "counter those views that made presumption about the limits and property of gender" (Butler vii).

She argues that women do not need to be always in constructed female bodies, and men do not need to be in male bodies. This formulation says that

bodies can be the occasion for different genders or that genders itself does not need to be in the usual two (Butler 142-3). To say that one is a female and a male based on their reproductive organs is a cultural construction. This repetitive act that defines certain body parts as an identity to category of sex is derived from hegemonic cultural laws. "The 'naming' of sex is an act of domination and compulsion, an institutionalized performative that both creates and legislates social reality" (Butler 147).

The legislation of gender in social construction produces an illusion of disparity and hierarchy which in bigger perspective creates category of normality. The body figures that fall out of the construction are constituted as not normal human. It creates a domain of dehumanizing beings solely on the arbitrary basis that is either sex or gender.

3. Gender Performativity

Sex and gender are culturally constructed. Identity has always been assured through the stable concept of sex, gender, and sexuality. The term of "incoherent" or "discontinuous" gendered is labeled to people who appear to be a person, but failed to conform the gendered norms that are defined by culture (Butler 23). It implies that certain identities cannot be considered to exist due to its incoherency toward culturally constructed gender concept. For example, the quality of being feminine is conceptualized culturally that it is the identity of women. Individuals who perform to be feminine but physiologically perceived as men are labeled as discontinuation. They failed to conform the gendered norms.

The duality of sex or gender has always been retained through the repetitive act of heterosexual desire. The practice of this coercive normality ensures the different terms of feminine and masculine is exercised. "This conception of gender presupposes not only a causal relation among sex, gender, and desire, but suggests as well that desire reflects or expresses gender and that gender reflects or expresses desire (Butler 30)". Abiding masculinity and femininity have been an effort to conceal the proliferation of gender performativity and all gender possibility that might emerge outside the regulated norms created by the society.

Understanding the concept of performativity by Butler is expected to establish an understanding of changing the limitation constructed by culture. Individuals should start to do, to perform, different gender. In her account, gender is not as fixed as sex, but rather learned and practiced. She argues that everyday action, utterances, gestures, representation, dresses, and behaviors, have worked to produce the preserved binary system of gender. If individuals understand that gender is not a noun, but rather a doing, eventually they will understand that gender is fluid. It is not a situation that body is fixing the state of gender, it shows that in gender, individuals are subject that are always in process.

All in all, this theory of gender is the fundamental analysis to the novel studied. The research used the established gender norms created by the society in the novel to see how the society constructed normality upon the characters in the novel analyzed. The theory is used to answer what constructions made by the

society in the novel and how the two main characters perform their gender despite the institutionalized gender norm in the society they lived in.

C. RESEARCH METHOD

This research used qualitative method. Qualitative research is the most common method used in literary research to identify social condition, norms, gender, gender role, ethnicity, religion, and many more. The result of this research is presented in a form of words, not numeral explanation as in quantitative research (Faruk 25).

The analysis was done through finding the correlation between data that represent the correlation of facts as explained in the theory (Faruk 22). The research is designed to discuss upon gender process. This process, however, could not get very far if the recognition of sex of the hero/heroine is not significant (Elliot 114). Thus, the research was designed to identify how social situation constructs gender based on the sex of the characters in the novel.

Primary source was a detail work published by the author we are studying (Elliot 12). Hence, the main data source of this research was the novel *The School for Good and Evil* by Soiman Chainani. The researcher used all the dialogues, narration, acts performed by characters as the primary source of this research. The secondary data used were the previous researches and journals that were related or similar to the research.

In the process of collecting the data, the researcher did a close reading. "It is a process of reading the literary works closely through its significant linguistic units within the literary text as the source, based on the theoretical framework used" (Faruk 169). The close reading technique is done to obtain data from the research object. The data collection technique was applied through a library research; thus, the collected data are called library data.

Data analysis is aimed to discover the relation between relatable data that would not be revealed by the data per se (Faruk 25). In the process of analyzing data, the researcher used the theory to interpret the data and to find the relation between the data and the theory. At the first part, the researcher identified data that represented the social construction of gender in the novel using Gender and Sex theory as explained in the second chapter of this thesis. The second part of this research is to answer the research question is the identification of how Agatha and Sophie as the main character performed their gender despite the cultural construction enforced by the society in the novel toward them. This analysis used Gender Performativity theory developed by Judith Butler.

D. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings are presented in two parts based on the research questions presented. In the first part, the researcher presents how the society in the novel constructs man and woman using Gender and Sex theory presented in Chapter II. In the second part, the researcher discusses how Sophie and Agatha perform their gender using Gender Performativity theory.

1. Social Construction of Gender Represented in Gavalton and the School for Good and Evil Society

Kite explains that roles, traits, and physical appearance are parts of social construction of gender (215) which in both settings, women and men are inscribed to do, to look, and to behave, as what have been repeatedly done by the societies.

Below are the social construction of gender found in *The School for Good and Evil* novel society.

a) Binarism of Sex

There are two places taken as the setting of the story in *The School for Good and Evil*, Gavalton Village and The School of Good and Evil. In both societies, they conditioned individuals into certain constructions of gender. Butler claims that, gender and sex are socially constructed. It happened in both societies in the novel that they perpetuated the condition where gender is the causal result of sex. In the first part of the findings, it is discovered that there is binary opposition of sex and gender.

Butler explained that in the social construction of gender, an infant is not yet categorized as human until the society succeeds to retain the answer whether the infant is a boy or a girl (142). In the researched novel, the researcher found several identifications of sexes within the novel.

“The **men** sharpened swords, set traps, and plotted the night’s guard, while the **women** lined up...(10)”

“A group of **boys** chained their bodies together, a few **girls** hid on the school roof (10)”

Binarism is a concept of making something over two things but predicated on a stable opposition. The labels presented in the quotation above show the prevalence of the binary system of gender category. It shows the oppositional relation between two genders that in each name, they have their own opposition. This arbitrary binary opposition of individuals’ is merely based on their sex or based on individuals’ body configuration.

b) Body Features

The second social construction of gender found in the novel is the construction of body features. There are qualities of individual’s body that is expected to be linear to their gender category.

“Hair shiny and thick, muscles taut through shirts, skin smooth and tan, beautiful and attentive like princes should be” (2).

“All the princesses in storybooks had the same perfect proportions; thick thighs were as unlikely as hooked nose or big feet” (5).

The quotations present how sex is shown to be bipolar, man and woman. In this bipolarity of sex, the respective sex is required to fulfill the social construction of gender made by the society. The first quotation presents how a man, especially a prince, should look like.

The second quotation presents the other side of sex that is woman. The data presents women as princesses who are described as having the same proportions; thin, small, and nice nose. The narrative presents that woman who is thin, small, and has a nice nose as perfect in proportion. The narrative of “perfect” reflects how the acceptance and the construction to it, is conserved.

c) Color Coding

In the first 20th century, gender difference in dressing color starts emerging (Paoletti 15). In this term, body is inscribed to cultural meaning of identifying gender and sex. “Blue has been the symbol of masculinity and strength, while pink represents sweets and femininity” (Yoon 15).

“The villagers were staring at them like the solution to a mystery. Good in pink, Evil in black” (12).

Sophie, a girl, is conforming the construction that pink represents her femininity as a girl is represented as good, while Agatha, who is not conforming, wears black instead as a girl is labeled as evil. Men on the other side, is characterized in blue color.

“The west doors flew open to sixty gorgeous boys in sword-fight. Sun-kissed skin peeked through light blue sleeves and stiff collars; tall navy boots matched high-cut waistcoats and knotted slim ties” (77).

The quotation above presents how men are portrayed to dress in blue colors, representing masculinity. It is portrayed side by side with strength, represented by sword-fight between the boys which depicts how the society in the novel upholds the system where color is also an attribute to gender category.

d) Division of Gender Roles

Gavaldon’s society performs how gender and sex are having a mimetic relation to gender. The quotation presents the division of roles undergone by the people is based on what sex label is attached to the society per se. Women are domesticated while men are doing outside and more physical activity. Women in the quotation are taking care of the kids, represented by “mothers” while men are guarding the village.

“The men sharpened swords, set traps, and plotted the night’s guard, while the women lined up the children and went to work. ... Mothers begged the best-behaved children to curse or kick their sisters, the worst were bribed to pray in church... (10)”

e) Gender-based Facility

Besides the social construction of gender is taken up to how men and women should act and fulfill each role, they are also situated in facility and access which are divided into two categories of sex.

“Inside, the girls’ Groom Rooms resembled a medieval spa, with three aromatic bath pools.... The boys’ Groom Rooms focused more on fitness, ..., gymnasium with Norse hammer, mud wrestling pit, saltwater lap pool, ... (125-6)”

The facilities infer what is expected to be seen from both sexes. Women/girls are constructed to visible in beauty and softness while men/boys are to fitness and strength.

f) Gender Traits: Female to Beauty and Male to Rationality

The institutionalized gender performative is repeated in the novel even to the traits of individuals. As women are associated with their femininity and beauty, the women are portrayed to do things that are less powerful than men with their masculinity. The girls were doing their best to impress men who might lead them to their happily ever after. The narrative is depicting how the perpetual cultural construction of women could only get their happiness from the other stake instead of themselves. They get this through their suitors, the men to become their true loves.

“The next morning, fifty princesses dashed about the fifth floor as if it was their wedding day. On the first day of class, they all wanted to make their best impressions on teachers, boys, and anyone else who might lead them to Ever After.” (92)

The men make decision in leading the people, the men also make decision in Balls. Before they go to a Ball, they are required to pick a girl to be their partner to attend the party. What girls do in the narrative is a passive movement to attract the men to propose them. They flirt, they scheme, but they do not make any decision.

“I won’t let you go” (said Agatha)

“I’m the *man* here, not you!” replied Tedros” (453).

g) Man to Save, Woman to Wait

Butler claims that “the body and nature are considered to be the mute facticity of the feminine, awaiting signification from an opposing masculine subject” (48). It means that in social construction of gender, the feminine are being a

passive object just waiting to be saved by the opposing gender, the masculine. The quotation below explains how this concept is perpetuated.

“Everboys each carried a blue kite-shaped shield matching their navy cloak and a single weapon; most had chosen bows and arrows, though Chaddick and Tedros had opted for heavy training swords. Nearby, Evergirls quietly practiced their animal calls and tried to look as helpless as possible so boys would take them under their wings.” (316)

They were constructed and told perpetually that boys will be the one who saves them. The girls were not one to save themselves. It is narrated in the data, “they try to look as helpless as possible so boys would take them under their wings”. The narrative “under their wings” is a representation of protection they expect from male figures. This protection has been explained in the figure of fathers and princes.

It explained that the relation between men and women is transactional. The men would be the suitor of the women. This is the reason that caused the Evergirls in their first day of school groomed themselves to impress the boys. It is what Butler claimed as “the body and nature are considered to be the mute facticity of the feminine, awaiting signification from an opposing masculine subject”. Within the novel, it is presented that the girls are positioned to be subordinated to boys. It is manifested through the narration and dialogs that show the girls were always tried to impress the boys. They tried to impress the man, to reach a happily ever after that they have been inscribed to be passive. They were told and educated to be passive while men to be active. They were trained to be helpless. The passivity was hoped to earn the signification from the masculine subject.

h) Alienation toward Deviance

The division of school for good and school for evil in the novel is shown to perform different regulation and standard of normality. In the School of Good, there is a separation of classes based on the student’s gender. In the School for Evil in contrary, has no regulation to separate the two genders.

“For the third time that day, Agatha arrived to find a class was Girl Only. Surely the School for Evil didn’t see the need to decide what was a “Boy” skill or “Girl” skill” (127).

As Agatha was attending her third girl only class in the narration, it is shown that The School of Good is divided into class for girl only or boy only. This division did not happen in The School of Evil. As the nature of human that prefers good rather than evil, the idea of not separating the class into boys and girls only happened in the evil side. It implies that non-binary gender system is undesired, it is characterized to evil. On the other hand, conforming to the binary gender system is characterized on the good side.

2. Agatha and Sophie's Gender Performativity

Sophie and Agatha are two prominent characters in *The School for Good and Evil* novel. They are two girls in their teen age lived in the society and perform their identity repetitively despite the norm established.

a) Agatha and Sophie's Dressing

Sophie also did grooming which represents repetitive act of women in the society. Agatha on the other side, even though she is a girl, she is described inversely with Sophie. She did not wear any pink nor did grooming. She did not represent masculinity either. She wore shapeless black dress. As shown in the previous data where it is mentioned that the society was looking at them and judged, one represented good, one was evil.

“Two hours rigorous grooming later, she stepped from the house in breezy pink dress, sparkling glass heels, and hair in impeccable braid” (4)

“Her hulking black dress, shapeless as potato sack, couldn't hide freakishly pale skin and jutting bones” (9)

b) Feminine Sophie and Agatha

Sophie and Agatha as the main characters of the story are described as girls. As the construction of the society established, Agatha and Sophie were expected to be feminine as a gender matrix to their sex. It is found that both girls show their femininity.

“‘It doesn't matter if you're a Never, Ever, or Whatever. In the end, the fairest of them all wins.’ She glossed her lips and gave them a smack” (251).

Sophie's continual repetitive act of maintaining her beauty can be considered as her way in conforming the gender reality that has been accepted among the society. Agatha as the main character even though characterized as evil is portrayed feminine as well.

“I wish I could help you,” she said.

“I wish I could help us all go home.”

The gargoyle lay its head in her lap. As the burning menagerie closed in, a monster and child wept each other's arms. Agatha felt its stone touch soften (139).

Agatha with her pure, soft and nurturing traits has affected the gargoyle, the gargoyle felt comfort in Agatha's lap and soon it was transformed to another being

as the skin is described got soften. The data shows how Agatha despite the label also carries the traits of femininity.

c) Heterosexual Desire

Agatha and Sophie in the novel are also described having heterosexual inclination within themselves.

“Gazing at him, Sophie felt her own destiny lock into place. *He’s mine*” (79).

The quotation above presents Sophie’s desire to her opposing gender. It is clearly identified through the pronoun used in the narration “He”. There are two parts of the sentence that shows Sophie’s desire. The first, it is the narration that says Sophie felt that the man is her destiny. The idea of heterosexual desire is signified by the feeling of admiration, thinking that the man is her destiny is the sign of her desire.

Agatha who is also the main character in the story shows her inclination to heterosexual matrix as well.

“Tedros said, hands gripping her waist. Her stomach exploded with butterflies” (404).

It gets more progressive how Agatha performed her gender through her sexuality expression. It was Agatha’s natural body reaction that tells her inclination to her desire to man. It is described that she felt her stomach was exploded with butterflies. The feeling that is often times associated with the feeling of falling in love.

d) Declination toward the Constructed Gender Roles

Previously, we Agatha and Sophie are proved to be conforming toward the construction of gender that is regulated by the society they were in. However, there were more acts that also represent their discontinuity toward the regulated gender norms established.

“She had never once cooked a full meal for him (*her father*), even after her mother died” (3).

This narrative above reveals two things, first is how woman’s responsibility is inherited from mother to her daughter. This relational role is solely based on the sex identified from the individual. Because Sophie was born as a girl as the society identified her, she has the linear role of her mother who also possessed the same sex as her. Second, as female is culturally constructed to take care of the family through taking care and educating the children and also cooking for the prosperity

of the family. Sophie in this quotation is proven to be non-conforming toward the said construction. Sophie has never once cooked full meal for her father. She did not feel responsible to do so.

“That’s not true Tedros! No princess would risk her own life! Even your truest love—“

Tedros glowered red hot. “Then why did she?” (338)

The quotation emphasizes Agatha’s declination toward the constructed gender roles. Agatha’s defiance to the custom that governs her based on her sex is emphasized by Sophie’s remark when she said that no princess would risk her life. The remark accentuates that princess was intended to be helpless and therefore to be helped not to help. It is the job of a prince, a man, to protect and to save the woman. Agatha showed herself to save Tedros, a prince, and acted protecting instead of being a passive object as expected by the society.

e) Questioning the Construction of Gender

Agatha’s position upon the gender norms defined by the culture is clear. She thought that the limitation of gender performed repetitively by the culture is unfair and illogical.

“... in Good Towers, the boys went off with swords while girls had to learn dog barks and owl hoots. No wonder princesses were so impotent in fairy tales, she (Agatha) thought” (128).

Agatha’s view on what female are inscribed to do and to learn was negative, she was against it. Sophie too, even though she had always repeatedly acted timid and feminine, but she developed to be against the construction as well. She questioned the formulation that was made by the society about giving protection and life as presented in the data below.

“So, if princes rescue princesses, now I wonder...,” Sophie said, Circus Crown sparkling on rain-soaked hair. “Who rescues princes?” (435)

Having always been raised in a society where women were dictated to be passive while men to be active actor, Sophie sarcastically asked who would save the men if they happened to be in danger. It can be inferred that both Agatha and Sophie were in the same disagreement toward the society’s consensus about gender binary and limitations.

f) Homosexual Desire

In perpetual fairy tales true love happens only from women and men, Agatha and Sophie went against it. They were the true love to each other and proved it through breaking a curse with their true love kiss.

“Sobbing, shaking, Agatha kissed Sophie’s cold lips” (487).

“We think we know who we are. We tear life apart into Good and Evil, beautiful or ugly, princess or witch, right or wrong... But what if there are things in between?” (423)

Agatha also questioned the formulation by believing that there might be in something in between in individual’s identity in the second quotation. In practice, Agatha and Sophie have performed progressive gender acts. At the beginning, they were conforming to the gender construction they were inscribed to. Then, started questioning the construction, and finally performed what they wanted to perform and embrace the fact that they were different.

The most interesting part of the findings is the fluidity of Gender Performativity performed by the main characters. Sophie in several quotations found in the findings enacted her conformity to the gender traits established. She followed the prevalence of women to beauty and even to the color of her dresses. She was also found to be conforming to the duality of sex as her heterosexual desire is exercised. It is not exclusive to Sophie only, Agatha as the other main character also performed her conformity through her nurturing nature and her heterosexual desire.

However, both of the main characters started to develop their declination toward the gender construction at the second half of the story. They are presented not doing what the society expected them to do. Sophie has never cooked; Agatha does not look like a girl and careless to her beauty. Further in the end of the story, Agatha and Sophie fell in love with each other that it was figured out that they are the true love for each other. The desire to the same sex is called homosexuality which is a form of a discontinuation to the heterosexual normative inscribed by the society. Agatha and Sophie’s discontinuation are what Allen called as alteration of gender performativity. Agatha and Sophie have subverted the heterosexual matrix inscribed to them.

E. CONCLUSION

The findings and discussion chapter covered the two main research problems. First, the researcher identifies the social construction of gender in the novel. Second, the researcher explains how the two main characters performed their gender despite the social construction of gender they were inscribed to.

Butler believes that gender is repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts that is legislated by culture. Body is a passive recipient of cultural inscriptions. The phenomenon where gender is socially constructed in a way that it

was being repeatedly done and performed by society happened in *The School for Good and Evil* society. Principally, the society in the novel dichotomized its people based on their anatomical quality, their sex, into female and male.

The dichotomy has resulted in the separation of roles, traits, and behaviors based on individuals' gender. In the novel, men were portrayed to be masculine while women to be feminine. They were even coded based on color. Women and men were also differed in making decision. As men were associated with reason and mind, men were the only stake that holds the access to make decision. Women were not allowed to make one. Men were also constructed to be active. They were expected to fight, to give protection, and to save women. In contrary, women were constructed to be weak, to expect, to stay pretty, and passive.

Agatha and Sophie are the main characters that were progressive. They presented themselves as discontinuation of the social construction. They performed themselves out of their gender category which represented what Butler thought that gender ought not to be construed as a stable identity. The discontinuation that Agatha and Sophie performed has proven that gender is always doing. It changes over time and might differ from individuals.

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