



GENDER PERFORMATIVITY IN BANG SALLEH/SALLY BUTLER GLASSES ON UPIN & IPIN SERIES

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Abstract

This article focuses on looking at gender performativity, a feminist theory approach put forward by Judith Butler on the character Bang Saleh or also called Bang Sally, in the Upin Ipin series. Upin Ipin is a popular children's animation series from Malaysia. In this animated series which is aimed at children and comes from a country with a majority Muslim population, it will see how the character Bang Saleh/Bang Sally is presented and how gender performativity in the character is. The method used in this article is descriptive qualitative. In this study, it was found that the character Bang Sholeh/Sally showed performance with gender as a woman but was still within the corridors of law and religion in Malaysia. Hence, the character still had to perform as a man. Here it is seen that Bang Sholeh/Sally has a different gender identity.

Keywords: Performativity, Gender, Feminism, Identity, Upin & Ipin

Introduction

Gender known to humans is women and men based on their body anatomy. Humans are taught to behave according to the gender they have according to their respective body anatomy. Sexually, humans are made up of males and females. However, gender does not determine one's social status (Eckert, P., and McConnell-Ginet, 2003). If it's a boy, they will be taught to act like a man, and if it's a girl, they will be taught to act like a girl. This action will be carried out from childhood to adulthood and successively enters the psychological stage. This differentiation will affect the psychological development of children. In the end, it will affect the social behavior of the child until adulthood (Burr, 2002).

Some people think that gender should not limit human behavior. Gender does not have to do with objects or color choices. Pink is no longer the color of a 'woman', and blue is not only for men. Women are now playing with toy cars but men are also allowed to play with dolls or cooking. Habituation in terms of gender is no longer about feminine or masculine things, and it has spread not only on social media, TV series for adults. Gender bias has now begun to emerge in children's TV series, even those produced by Asian countries with Muslim populations, such as Malaysia with the Upin & Ipin series.

Upin & Ipin is an animated television series for children. Upin & Ipin tells the story of two small twins with shaved heads who were left for dead by their mother's father. Upin & Ipin live and are raised by their grandmother and an older sister named Kak Ross. Upin & Ipin



has been broadcast on TV9 Malaysia since the month of Ramadhan 2007. The contents of the latter series were not only the teachings about Islam but also on ethics, manners, awareness of differences, and children's creativity (Arlena, W. M., and Kurniasari, 2013).

Upin & Ipin achieved such great success that it was broadcast in other countries, such as Indonesia. Even though it displays Islamic content, in Upin & Ipin's story, there is a character named Bang Sholeh or Bang Sally who has a gender bias character. Research on gender bias in the Upin & Ipin series has been analyzed and only presents the variety of gender biases in the series. This research uses the Gender Bias theory and only describes the gender bias found in Upin & Ipin. The gender bias that emerges through the characters in this series is obtained through dialogue and imposition figures (Hidayat & Nur, 2019).

Upin & Ipin's success reached neighboring countries, even Hong Kong, Vietnam, Thailand, and Indonesia. Moreover, since 2008, the series is aired by Disney Channel Asia, which has networks in several countries, namely Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Brunei, Thailand, Philippines, Vietnam, Cambodia, Hong Kong, and South Korea. Disney Channel is one of the television networks that broadcast special children's shows (Hidayat & Nur, 2019).

Upin & Ipin is a mandatory show for children and parents feel that Upin & Ipin is a 'safe' and educational show because it contains religious teachings and good manners. However, now television is no longer just a spectacle that entertains but also provides lessons. Children's TV shows are sometimes assumed to contain negative instructions; for example, the content is about gender issues (Lavery, 2013). In fact, for children television can be a medium that helps them learn something new, and provides stimulation that influences their development (Hurlock, 1978).

By the time they enter elementary school, most people have begun to construct concepts of identity and understand differences in gender expectations in society (Levy, G. and Barth, J., & Zimmerman, 1998). This is seen as dangerous for heterosexuals, because the media, especially television, spreads ideology against children. Traditional media, in general, propagate ideology (Hall, 1976).

Society views gender variations (outside of feminine and masculine) as something strange and abnormal because these people contradict the social construction that has been adhered to and carried out by heterosexual societies. This problem then triggers the emergence of the term "gender deviation" or "gender identity disorder" (Razan, 2018). So that their gender identity becomes a big question among heterosexual people who only recognize the feminine gender (generally associated with the female sex) and masculine (generally associated with the male gender).

In previous studies, research on Bang Salleh/Sally's gender identity was carried out using the semiotic approach of Roland Barthes. This research on the character of Abang Salleh explores the emergence of signs of gender expectations influencing the design of his character. This study formally describes the results of Roland Barthes' Semiotics analysis and Manga Matrix. The findings in this study Abang Salleh have many markers of feminine traits that meet gender expectations in women, but at the same time, still have traits that exist in male characters (Pramata, 2023). However, this research has not been able to fully determine the gender identity of Bang Salleh/Sally.



The controversy over the character of Bang Salleh/Sally appearing in children's shows in Muslim-majority countries has received fierce debate. Some consider this a good start for introducing gender to children (Amandangi, 2021). But not a few also disagree because this is a gender deviation. Then what gender identity does Bang Salleh have? In this study, the identity of Bang Salleh will be determined using the Gender Performativity approach according to Judith Butler.

Theoretical Framework

Gender is an innate determination, but how individuals see themselves as masculine or feminine is the individual's decision. Butler. Individuals cannot be assumed to have a certain gender identity just because they are born male or female. That is, gender identity is socially constructed and consists of what individuals display (Sumardiono, 2022).

Judith Butler is a prominent philosopher and gender theorist who has made significant contributions to understanding gender as a performative construct. According to Butler, gender is not an innate characteristic or biological fact but rather a social and cultural construction continuously carried out and enforced daily.

In her seminal work "Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity," Butler argues that gender is not something we have but something we do. Butler's concept of performativity describes the way gender is created and reinforced through repeated acts of performance. He suggested that gender is not something that individuals have but rather something that is created through their actions and interactions with others. Through these repeated performances, gender becomes normalized and institutionalized in society. For example, the act of dressing up, wearing certain clothes, or speaking in a certain tone of voice can be seen as a show of gender.

These shows are neither neutral nor natural. They are shaped by cultural norms and expectations about what it means to be masculine or feminine. Butler's theory of performativity also sheds light on how gender is not fixed or unchanging but rather subject to change and transformation. By challenging and subverting these gender norms through acts of resistance and subversion, individuals can disrupt the performative actions that create and reinforce gender. In doing so, they can create new possibilities for gender expression and identity. Overall, Butler's concept of performativity has been influential in shaping our understanding of gender as a social and cultural construct that continues to be created and strengthened through our daily actions and interactions. Response regeneration

The distinction between gender and sex is used to make a separation between the sexed body on the one hand and the gendered behavior of people on the other hand. Butler says that the distinction between sex and gender is intended to show that biological sex does not determine gender. "If sex and gender are radically distinct, then it does not follow that to be a given sex is to become a given gender; in other words, 'woman' need not be the cultural construction of the female body, and 'man' need not interpret male bodies" (Butler 1999, 142). This distinction argues that gender is not as stable as sex and that gender is socially constructed (Butler 1999, 9). More on the notion that gender is socially constructed.

Moreover, Butler suggests that "sex is as culturally constructed as gender" and she concludes that if that is the case, then gender and sex are the same (Butler 1999, 10-11).



She calls sex a cultural norm because sex is no longer treated as something that is determined by the body (Butler 2011, xii). In our culture at this point it is a cultural norm that everyone should either be of the male or female sex, only these two sexes exist. That is why babies who are born with ambiguous genitalia are being operated on to normalize their genitalia, to make their bodies male or female. Likewise, some transsexuals want to get operated on their genitals to make them the gender they know they are. Since the sex of people is being changed to fit the current norms, Butler sees sex as socially constructed.

I think that Butler is trying to deconstruct the concepts of gender and sex because in her view the norms of gender and sex are the norms of the ones who are in power. What they view as right, is seen as right by most people in society. Examples of these norms are the idea that heterosexuality is normal and homosexuality deviates from that norm or the idea that there are only men and women. Ideas about which traits are associated with each gender are socially constructed (Ton, 2018).

Thus, it can be concluded that according to Butler, Gender and Sex are two different things. Gender is based on the performance of an individual, while sex is based on a person's gender.

Method

To test the hypothesis, which is the result of theoretical deduction, the method used in this research is descriptive qualitative. The data obtained is qualitative data sourced from the Upin & Ipin series regarding Bang Sholeh/Sally.

The data analysis method is a set of methods or research techniques that are an extension of the human mind because its function is not to collect data but to look for relationships between data that will never be stated by the data itself (Faruk, 2012). The method used is a syllogism. Seeing the existing logic of the data with the theoretical basis put forward.

Findings and Discussion

Masculine Performativity

In the Upin & Ipin Series, a character named Bang Salleh. This shows that Bang Salleh's parents named their child according to the gender of their child, namely boy. The name Salleh is a name that has masculine characteristics, Salleh means a devoutly religious man, whereas, for a devoutly religious woman, the name will be sallahah, having the ending 'ah' behind it.

This shows the social condition of the Bang Salleh family, namely, in Malaysia, they are members of a Muslim family. It can be seen in their behavior of praying, fasting, tarawih prayers, and Eid. In giving names to their children, the Salleh family tends to be orientated in Arabic. Gender can be said to be a grammatical subcategory in flexed language that is capable of distinguishing between genders. Related to gender are masculine and feminine forms.

Arabic as one of the Semitic languages does not recognize gender division in the form of neuter. This language only knows two forms, namely muzakkar and muannas. Muzakkar is a word that denotes a masculine type or that is considered masculine while muannas is a word that denotes a feminine type or that is considered feminine (Muhammadun, 2016).



This gender marker appears in the name Salleh, which means men are devoutly religious, and if the name is Sallehah, it means the women are devoutly religious.

All the people in Bang Salleh's circle also showed their approval of Salleh's name attached to him.



Figure 1 Opa Calling Salleh

From figure 1 above, you can see a video clip showing that Opa called Bang Salleh as Salleh. However, the look on Bang Salleh's face did not like him when he was called Salleh. Bang Salleh emphasized again that her name was Sally. Overall, physically, Bang Salleh/Sally is a male figure who is tall, white, and has many extraordinary talents. It is described that Bang Salleh/Sally is capable of mastering IT.

Feminine Performativity

In the Upin & Ipin Series, Bang Salleh's character shows that he is well aware that he is named Salleh, which means a male name, but there are many scenes showing Bang Salleh's rejection of the name Salleh, Bang Salleh is always angry when another character calls him Bang Salleh. Bang Salleh corrected and asked himself to be called Sally.





Figure 2 Bang Salleh says her name is Sally

Figure 2 above shows that when Bang Salleh is called by the name Salleh by someone else, Bang Salleh rejects the call and states that his name is Sally. Bang Salleh/ Sally even spells the letters of his name. This action shows that Bang Salleh/Sally performs feminine, Bang Salleh/Sally rejects the name Salleh which shows a masculine side, and labels her name with Sally to make it more feminine.



Figure 3 Bang Salleh/ Sally

The figure above shows the figure of Bang Salleh/Sally. From the picture above it is clear that the sex of Bang Salleh/Sally is male. However, upon closer inspection, the use of a bright red bandana does not make it look fierce, instead, it looks feminine. Bang Salleh/Sally's eyebrows are scraped off at the ends so that they become sharp, and this shows a feminine performance. Tight shirts are worn by a man, not to show his muscles, but when used by Bang Salleh/Sally, they show their feminine side by showing their curves.

On his long arms, it shows that his body is tall and manly, but the gesture that Bang Salleh/Sally has, namely by raising the right little finger, and resting the back of his hand on his hip, shows a feminine impression. Bang Salleh/Sally's waist also swayed slightly to show that Bang Salleh/ Sally wanted to show a feminine performance.

Long legs and slightly tiptoed symbolizes the beauty of the flamingo's long legs, flamingo itself is a pink bird that gives a feminine impression. The sandals chosen by Bang Salleh/Sally are bright yellow sandals with thick heels, this is the choice of sandals made by women, here Bang Salleh/ Sally shows a feminine performance.

Sally often extends her fingernails and colors them, in the episode Finger Fingers Salleh she uses pink for her nails, and the movements of her hands look curved, different from other male characters depicted in the Upin & Ipin series (Seruni, 2023). This shows that Bang Salleh/ Sally dressed up and decorated her body excessively. Whereas, in the



heterosexual world, the act of dressing up is closely related to feminine acts committed by women. Men are often required to understand that being a man means not being feminine and only showing masculinity according to traditional norms (Levant, R., et.al. 2007).

Bang Salleh/ Sally has a lot of talents, one of which is talent in the IT field. The IT field itself is usually worked on by many men, with male characters who are nerds.



Figure 4 Bang Salleh/ Sally works using a laptop.

The picture above shows one of Bang Salleh/Sally's abilities, namely in the field of technology. However, it can be seen from the choice of decoration on Bang Salleh/Sally's laptop that there are pink cherry blossoms and matching colored headsets. This shows that Bang Salleh/Sally performs as a feminine gender.



Figure 5 Bang Salleh/ Sally mopping the floor.

The picture above shows one of Bang Salleh/Sally's hobbies, namely cleaning, specifically mopping the floor. The act of mopping the floor is not an act that shows a special gender impression because everyone, both men and women, will mop the floor. What is highlighted here is Bang Salleh/Sally's gesture in mopping the floor, namely while singing

loudly and waddling. When after mopping, there was a rooster and Upin & Ipin running around with dirty feet, Bang Salleh/Sally screamed and shouted.



Figure 6 Bang Salleh/ Sally screamed

From the picture above, it can be seen that when the mopping was finished, chickens and children were running around with dirty feet, and the expression that Bang Salleh/Sally made was screaming loudly, swaying when started.



Figure 7 Screenshots of Laptop Bang Salleh/ Sally's Handcraft Sales

The picture above shows a screenshot of a laptop selling handcrafts online by Bang Salleh/Sally. Bang Salleh/ Sally posed with tears in his eyes and showed his work. All lamas are colored pink as a background with all-pink decorations. This shows the feminine performance performed by Bang Salleh/Sally.

The next picture shows Bang Salleh/Sally's house which is decorated with pink wall paint and various photos displayed on the walls with red frames showing a harmonious

impression with pink walls. The pink wall paint is combined with a lighter pink wallpaper. For the sofa, Bang Salleh/ Sally chose a salmon pink sofa that harmonizes with the wall paint of her house.



Figure 8 Bang Salleh/Sally's House Interior

On the pink sofa, some pillows are blue in color but have pink hearts on them. The tablecloth used is a simple rectangular tablecloth in pink with dark pink accents. The choice of this pink color is a form of feminine performance from Bang Salleh/Sally.



Figure 9 Bang Salleh Shopping in the Mall

The picture above shows when Bang Salleh/ Sally was walking around shopping at the mall. From the picture above, it can be seen that Bang Salleh/Sally's hands show a feminine gesture.

Based on the analysis of the two gender performativities presented by Bang Salleh/Sally, it shows that Bang Salleh/Sally does feminine gender performativity or as a whole Bang Salleh/Sally identifies himself as gender feminine, namely as a woman. Based on the theory of gender performativity from Judith Butler's point of view, it is identified that Bang



Salleh/Sally wants to be identified as a woman. Butler's concept of performativity describes the way gender is created and reinforced through repeated acts of performance. He suggested that gender is not something that individuals have, but something that is created through their actions and interactions with others (Butler, 1999).

Bang Salleh/ Sally performed as a girl and even got angry. When he was called Salleh, Bang Salleh/ Sally emphasized being called Sally. With her make-up, pink nail ornaments, body movements, and body movements, Bang Salleh/Sally identifies herself as a woman. The choices of pink which tend to be the color of women also show that Bang Salleh/Sally performs as a woman and this is repeated over and over again to convince the people around her that she is of the female gender.

However, Bang Salleh/Sally lives in Durian Runtuh, Malaysia. Malaysia is a country with a majority Muslim population. Islam is the most widely practiced religion in Malaysia. There are 61.3% of the country's citizens who are Muslim from the total population. Almost all of them are Sunnis and follow the Syafi'I School (Pratiwi, n.d.).

The people around Bang Salleh/Sally are heterosexual people so they consider the performance shown by Bang Salleh/Sally to be an act that deviates from Bang Salleh/Sally's gender. This is shown by the nickname 'Bang' which is still attached to Bang Salleh/Sally. In the end, this gender decision rests with the decision of the ruling. In the Bang Salleh/Sally problem, Bang Salleh is a female gender who is in a heterosexual environment and identifies herself as the male gender. The norms of gender and sex are the norms of those who are in power (Ton, 2018). So that the environment where Bang Salleh/Sally is more powerful in determining the gender identity of Bang Salleh/Sally is male.

This refers to the latest episode of Hari Raya Fitri, Bang Salleh/Sally showing a change to become more masculine. This was welcomed by the neighborhood where Bang Salleh lives.



Figure 10 Bang Salleh/ Sally on Hari Raya Fitri

From the picture above, Bang Salleh/Sally looks more masculine. This shows a change in Bang Salleh/Sally's performance due to environmental conditions. Even though the color



of the clothes he was wearing was still pink, his body gestures started to look masculine by opening a snack box for Opa.

Conclusion

Performativity carried out continuously by the character Bang Salleh/Sally shows that she carries feminine characteristics, even identifying herself as 'Sally' or in this case the opposite of Salleh, her real name. Bang Salleh/ Sally actually shows feminine performativity, with her style of dress, the choice of colors for her pink furniture, and decorating herself with pink nails. Overall, the performance that Bang Salleh/ Sally constantly performs is gender-feminine performativity.

However, Bang Salleh/Sally's environment, which is a heterosexual environment, did not support it until Bang Salleh/Sally changed slowly towards masculine performativity. Although the feminine performance is still strong, it is performed by Bang Salleh/Sally.

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