

The Effort of Gender Stereotypes Eradication as Reflected on Kimberly Brubaker Bradley's *Ballerino Nate*

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Abstract

*Gender issue is still a thing that pays a lot of attention in a society where consistency of the grouping of gender has been discussed for generations as a long-handed social category. This results in human who have been reflected to understand their grouping early based on their gender identity, but this will give a negative impact on someone. Kimberly Brubaker Bradley in her work *Ballerino Nate* tells the story of discrimination against gender through the rejection that should be a dancer and join dance which is for women and not for men. The question is: How *Ballerino Nate* Kimberly Brubaker Bradley may contribute to gender stereotypes eradication? By qualitative research method is used to explain the perspectives of Ben who is against Nate's desire and Nate's parents and another person who supports Nate to be a dancer. In conclusion, *Ballerino Nate* the work of Kimberly Brubaker Bradley shows the perspective of Ben's discrimination against Nate and compares the perspective of support from their parents and another person given to Nate.*

Keywords: *Ballerino Nate; Gender Stereotype; Kimberly Brubaker Bradley*

A. Introduction

Ballerina Nate is one of short stories written by Kimberly Brubaker Bradley. It tells how two brothers in a family have two very different characteristics. It was shown when they came home from kindergarten when his younger brother, Nate gave his mother a permission letter to take ballet classes. He was teased by his brother, Ben who is also still in kindergarten but one year older than Nate. Ben disagrees and shows a mocking response to his little

brother's decision by saying ballet is a stupid thing.

Ben's existence in the *Ballerino Nate* story can be reflected in the current day. A typical 5-year-old is aware of various gender stereotypes and tends to support these stereotypes rigidly and absolutely until about 7 years of age (Ruble et al. 2006; Trautner et al. 2005). The representation of the problem of gender grouping is still happening today, so many of us still feel excluded from people's lives when we do a hobby or work that crosses

gender, ranging from being considered strange, isolated, and abnormal as human beings so that they are considered as someone which requires further treatment. In gender rules, society believes that a man must be a man and not a woman, otherwise, women must become women (Feasey, 2008: 3).

Gender stereotypes seem to have been defined as a set structured by personal innate beliefs about men and women (Ashmore & Del Boca, 1979: 222). Where a consistency of gender grouping has been passed down from generation to generation, it is categorized as a social category that has long been entrenched. This has resulted in humans having been reflected to understand their grouping from an early age based on their gender identity. This grouping develops into an idea of how gender is distinguished based on personality, behaviors, and principles. Therefore, the question is, how Ballerino Nate Kimberly Brubaker Bradley may contribute to gender stereotypes eradication? By comparing the dialogue between roles starting from Nate, his brother, parents, and people

around him. Nate stories and situations of gender grouping that still occur today are expected to add new insights and better views so that in the future these things are no longer considered taboo and for individuals who choose decisions that are considered to be out of gender stereotypes they can still get their views and good treatment.

B. Research Method

The researchers use the qualitative method with the aim of describing or analyzing the incidence of gender stereotypes in Ballerina Nate by Kimberly Brubaker Bradley. Online scripts and journals are keys to assist researchers in understanding the problem. The steps in analyzing data cover repeatedly reading the main source of data, searching and reading previous journals to find comparisons, differences, or similarities related to the problem under study.

C. Results and Discussion

Gender stereotypes reflected by Ben in Kimberly Brubaker Bradley's *Ballerino* Nate

"We're going to ballet"

"Yuck" said Nate Brother, Ben

"What is ballet?" asked Nate.

"Stupid Stuff" said Ben.

"Girls in dresses"

Stereotypes is a grouping phenomenon based on a person's character and gender. In the dialogue above, Nate, who is a male gender, wants to go to the ballet venue, but it is opposed by Ben, Nate's brother. Ben thinks that ballet is an activity carried out by women, this actually has a discriminatory impact on Nate which is done by Ben. Gender has been constructed as part of each society throughout history, a view that is consistent with the belief that gender is something that people do rather than part of what people are (West & Zimmerman, 1987). Ben thinks that Nate should choose an activity that should be chosen by a boy instead of ballet where ballet should be an activity that should be done by a woman.

"Boys can't be ballerinas.

They never, ever, ever can"

Ben knew almost

everything. Nate chewed the

inside of his lips. What if

Ben was right?

Decreased self-confidence and the emergence of doubt can arise from the surrounding environment. Nate, who begins to doubt his wishes and thinks that Ben is right in what he said, it should be a woman who should be a ballerina and not Nate who is a man.

"One thing I know about

ballerinas,"

"They all have to wear pink

shoes"

Nate was horrified

The dialogue above shows how Nate begins to doubt and be confused about his desire to become a ballet dancer. Ben constantly urges and intimidates Nate with an understanding of ballerina that is a complete contrast to what boys usually do. Men must work heavy jobs, men must be smart in calculating, and men must be able to earn more money than women and

can become leaders (Zuhro, 2018). With such stereotypes, men have an obligation to be able to do everything and are different from women who are not required to be able to do everything, so men cannot do what they want to do. Nate wants to be a dancer but is rejected by the stereotype that supports ballet dancers only for women.

Against Gender Stereotypes by Nate in Kimberly Brubaker Bradley's Ballerino Nate

*"I want to learn ballet,"
Nate said when he get home
"You can't" Ben said.
"You're a boy."
"But I want to," Nate said*

The dialogue spoken by Nate's younger brother shows that Nate really wants to join ballet and pursue his desire to become a ballet dancer because from the start he did not have the support of his older brother, Ben. The stereotype conveyed by Ben shows that the behavior of a man is not suitable to be a dancer, let alone a ballet dancer. Gender roles have predefined and envisioned

contents within the social culture and individuals intrinsically possess habits, moods, attitudes and evaluations that express society's expectations, concerning the individual's gender (Ersoy, 2009: 213-215). Nate thinks all of Ben's words are true because his brother is considered to know everything better than him. The form of gender grouping that has been conveyed by his brother makes Nate think again and again that there are gender boundaries and that men can never become ballet dancers like what his brother, Ben said.

*"Boys don't dance," said
Ben.
"Yes, I do," said Nate.
"Watch!" He jumped into
the air and spun around,
and came down on his toes
like a real ballerina.*

This can be reflected that what is often caught by our minds is the behavior that the majority should only do by the majority group. For example, the behavior of the majority and often carried out by women is dancing, dancing is always identified with women, if there are men who

dance sometimes they are always underestimated because they are considered to be doing what is not usually done by the majority behaviour (Vinlandari & Gunawan, 2020). Meanwhile, interest in dance is actually not only felt by women but also men.

Dance, gender, and culture are things related to each other. Gender literacy which is minimally accessed by the community is still one of the main causes. This also makes someone who when expresses what he wants to do but it is not usually done by the behavior of the majority, it will tend to invite rejection. Whereas correct knowledge of gender is very important so that we do not misunderstand in accepting the concept which for some people is still considered new and taboo. (Khutniah & Eny Iryanti, 2012). In gender, there is a division of roles between men and women socially, culturally, and naturally.

"Boys can't be ballerinas!"

"Yes, they can," said Nate

Nate continues to strive to realize his dream of becoming a

dancer, despite being constantly teased and opposed by Ben. Gender roles can change because they are influenced by ideology, economy, customs, religion, society, culture, ethnicity, time, place, and advances in science and technology (Putraningsih, 2000). Therefore Nate constantly persuades his mother to want to give Nate's permission and find him a ballet class and with that, he can prove that what his brother says is not true, this is one of Nate's actions against the gender stereotypes expressed by his brother.

Stereotypes Eradicate in Kimberly Brubaker Bradley's *Ballerino Nate*

The lack of public access to gender literacy is still one of the main causes. This also makes people's knowledge incomplete so they tend to invite rejection. Whereas correct knowledge of gender is very important so that we do not misunderstand in accepting the concept which for some people is still considered new and taboo. An individual identifies two traits of masculinity and femininity, at a high or low level, one gender role trait

high and other gender role traits may have low levels, both masculinity and femininity are simultaneously high positivity. Individuals of the gender have flexibility in all behavioral traits it is very adaptive (Hyeon et al, 2016)

In Kimberly Brubaker Bradley's work *Ballerino Nate*, the dialogue between the mother and father contradicts Ben's dialogue with the decision of his younger brother, Nate. The father and mother actually gave full support to Nate's decision without having to label Nate with the existing stereotyped groupings as Ben said. This reflects how Nate and his parents are trying to eradicate pre-existing gender stereotypes. This is also reflected in the dialogue,

"But I want to," Nate said.

"Can I, Mom, can I, please?"

"Classes don't start in the summer," Mom said.

"But maybe in the fall. I'll find out how old you have to be."

Nate's mother supports what Nate wants, in the dialogue above,

Nate's mother does not deny or refuse despite Nate's desire to become a ballet dancer. Nate's desire is to have full support and find Nate a ballet dance class that is held in the summer. This shows how Nate's mother has the nature of supporting and opposing gender stereotypes that say ballet dancers should be women.

"And I don't want to wear a dress!" sobbed Nate

"You won't have to," said Dad.

"Why did you think so?" He looked at Ben.

"Ben?"

"All ballerinas wear pink shoes and dresses," said Ben.

"That's not true," said Dad

"I promise."

This dialogue shows that the father has another perspective in responding to Nate's decision, in contrast to Ben, the father is very supportive so that Nate does not think about the worst possibilities for what his brother said. This shows that the father has the attitude to eradicate existing gender stereotypes so that Nate does not immediately

believe in his brother's line of thought. Masculinity and femininity are part of a large structure that is not a coherent object (Denisa et al, 2020).

"And all ballerinas are girls," said Ben.

"Most ballerinas are girls," said Dad.

"Not all Nate, tell me, how many girls played on Ben's Little League team?"

"Two," said Nate. He sniffed

"So most of Ben's Little League team was boys," said Dad.

"Can girls play Little League?"

"Yes," said Nate. He felt a little better.

Nate's parents fully support Nate's wishes. This shows the attitude of parents who support, facilitate, and motivate children. In gender stereotypes, the surrounding role is very influential on all gender issues. In the dialogue above, it can be seen that Nate's family environment supports Nate's wishes, even though Ben, Nate's brother,

discriminates against Nate's wishes. Ben's stereotype of Nate gets rejected by Nate's parents and they try hard to get rid of the stereotype so that Nate can be confident in what he wants. Gender stereotypes have a negative influence such as reducing self-confidence, bullying, discrimination, and a bad influence on one's mentality. This shows that gender stereotypes are not good or positive, but discriminatory and selfish thoughts. The emergence of discrimination in a society can be caused by history, socio-culture, beliefs, religion, personal problems and the emergence of discrimination can also be due to the patriarchal system that has existed for a long time (Alvira et al, 2021).

The man lifted Nate's chin.

"Men can't be ballerinas, because the word ballerina means 'woman dancer'," he said.

"I just call myself a dancer. But if I wanted to use a word like ballerina, I'd say Ballerino. Ballerino is the word for men."

Four stereotype components (traits, role behaviors, occupations, or physical characteristics) were asked to estimate the probability that the stimulus person had each of the other components. (Deaux & Lewis, 1983) Nate who wants to become a ballet dancer gets support from his parents and a male character who works as a ballet dancer who is also known as Ballerino. After getting explanations and support from both parents, Nate finally became confident in his desires, and he wanted to show off his knowledge that ballet dancers were not always women. This shows the eradication of gender stereotypes carried out by both his parents and a male character where Nate becomes confident in his desires.

In this story, stereotypes are successfully eradicated by the support of Nate's parents. Kimberly Brubaker Bradley tells stories about gender stereotypes in picture books that aim to be read by children, so that understanding of discriminatory stereotypes can be eradicated from an early age. This shows the importance of knowing about the

stereotypes that have a bad influence on them so that they can express and carry out their hobbies according to their wishes.

D. Conclusion

Researchers found a lot of data that refers to gender stereotypes carried out by Ben. This data has been packaged into 3 sub-chapters, namely the first stereotypes and discrimination from Ben's character, the second is Nate's desire to oppose gender stereotypes, the last is the efforts of Nate's parents and those around them who want to eradicate and erase the gender stereotypes expressed by Ben. The story is well packaged with the aim of eradicating an understanding of gender stereotypes that will cause discrimination, bullying, and negative effects on one's mentality.

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