

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

When a child was born the doctor or midwife will take a quick glance at the baby's genital and declares if the baby a boy or a girl. However, today we did not flash our genitalia at each other but we unconsciously used observation to determine someone's gender, like from their clothes, body shape, voice, face shape, mannerisms and behavior. We also used them to signal others about our gender. Gender is a social system that people used to differentiate roles, appearance, characteristics, behaviors and most importantly identities by using sex which tells the cultural meanings and norms about sex and gender onto human bodies. As a part of daily life, people will not question the assumption and presumption of gender and just thought about it as a common thing that easy to overlook, unless when there is confusion on one gender that appeared as vague and ambiguous. Everyone has a sense of his or her "gender" and it will develop during early childhood as a result of parental rearing practices and societal influences and strengthened during puberty by hormonal changes. This sense of gender is also known as gender identity (American Psychological Association: 2006)

Gender identity is what defined and differentiate one person to another. As it is related to the gender roles that people have to perform in the society and when they do not fit to their own gender roles they will get discriminated. The society's gender roles are classified by a woman needs to be feminine and a man needs to be masculine. There are three crucial stages of gender identity development, which are obtaining the exact gender labeling, gender stereotyping and gender constancy (Brannon, 2005:139). It started with gender labeling which people know as male or female, men or women, then gender stereotype referred to the activities that are suitable for men and women. The last is gender constancy which a person should be consistent about his or her gender.

There are only two sexes that humans are born with, men and women but in addition on men and women there are also transvestite or cross dresser and transsexual or those who went through surgery to change their sex, basically people who could not play roles as their assigned gender or lost the constancy of their own gender, categorized as gender identity disorder. In other words, gender identity disorder is feelings of unhappiness or distress about the incongruence between the gender signifying parts of one's body, one's gender identity, and one's social gender or it is also known as a condition sometimes called "gender dysphoria" (Stryker, 2008: 13). So in a way gender identity disorder or gender dysphoria is when one's gender identity and biological sex are not congruent and those individuals may identify as transsexual or as another transgender category.

Transgender is a term used to describe people whose gender identity (sense of them as male or female) or gender expression differs from that usually associated with their birth sex. Many transgender people live part-time or full-time as members of the other gender. Basically a transgendered person manifests a sense of self, the physical characteristics and/or personal expression commonly associated with a sex other than the one he or she was assigned at birth. When one's gender identity and biological sex are not congruent, the individual may identify as transsexual or as another transgender category (cf. Gainor: 2000 in APA: 2011). A transitioning transgendered person is one who is modifying his or her physical characteristics and manner of expression to – in a way – satisfy the standards for membership in another gender. Generally those whose identity, appearance, or behavior falls outside of conventional gender norms can be described as transgender. However, not everyone whose appearance or behavior is gender-atypical will identify as a transgender person.

The transition that transgender went through had effects not only on the said transgender but also those around them. On one side when a transgender, for example a male-to-female (MTF) transgender, he first felt uncomfortable with his body, he tried to change it by wearing a dress at first that also known as cross dresser, after a while the cross dressing act was not enough and he tried to change his sex through surgery. During this phase, people around him can either support or shunned him and the risk of going on a sex-changing surgery can be dangerous (APA: 2011).

Nowadays, transgender has also emerged as a subject of increasing the social and cultural interest in the world; because of this transgender people are becoming more socially visible in the society as the information on gender identity and transgender itself more versatile and available to educate the public. This meant that transgender people have many opportunities to meet new people and the public have a basic knowledge on what gender identity and transgender is. That and for those who wanted to go through a sex changing surgery, the great development in the medical field allowed them to have surgery with less risk than before.

As the information about transgender are very easily to get, more and more transgender people came out then because of that many popular representations of transgender are apparent in TV drama, sitcom and reality TV, while the 'trans confessional' is a chat-show staple. Tabloid journalists and magazine feature writers increasingly search for Trans people for 'real life' stories, and television documentary and broadsheet journalism has focused upon the experiences of both female and male Trans people. Transgender characters have had central roles in recent mainstream films or TV Shows, like Unique Adams who is a transgender female character in Season three of *Glee*. Then there is also Laverne Cox who born on May 29, 1984, in Mobile, Alabama, and is a transgender actress and even though was born biologically male; she had always felt herself as a female, not really seeing a difference between boys and girls. She was often taunted and harassed mercilessly for being feminine, though she was

able to hold onto her love for the arts. Now she who is studied dance for years is became a really famous star by doing TV work that included *Law & Order* episodes and the reality show *TRANSform Me*. She stepped into the limelight in a major way with her role on the Netflix series *Orange Is the New Black*, eventually becoming the first openly transgender person in history to be nominated for an Emmy. Cox has continued to be an advocate for Trans and LGBT rights while appearing in additional screen projects such as *The Mindy Project*, *Doubt* and *Grandma*.

Other than Cox there is also Angela Morley who was born as Walter “Wally” Stott at March 19th 1924. She is a British Composer and Conductor. She attributed her entry into composing and arranging largely to the influence and encouragement of the Canadian light music composer Robert Farnon. In 1972, Morley underwent sex reassignment surgery. Later in life, she lived in Scottsdale, Arizona.

Other than using media, the transgender also used illustration that is found in literary works, such as novels. One of the novels that described the life of transgender is *The Danish Girl* by David Ebershoff. Ebershoff is an author who released four books; one of them is the #1 bestseller *The 19th Wife* which was made into a television movie that aired around the globe. Ebershoff’s books also have been translated to more than twenty languages thus got him named as the one of 100 influential LGBT people twice by the Out Magazine.

The Danish Girl is a novel by American writer David Ebershoff, published in 2000 by the Viking Press in the United States and Allen & Unwin in Australia. *The Danish Girl* won the Rosenthal Foundation Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters and the Lambda Literary Award. It was also a finalist for the Tip-tree Award, the New York Public Library's Young Lions Award, and an American Library Association Award, and was a New York Times Notable Book. This novel also has been translated into more than ten languages and is published in paperback by Penguin and has been adapted into a feature film directed by Tom Hooper with the same title, starring Eddie Redmayne as the transgender character Lili Elbe (Einar Wegener), Alicia Vikander as Greta Wegener, Matthias Schoenaerts as Hans Axgil and Ben Whishaw as Henrik.

It is being said that *The Danish Girl* by David Ebershoff as a one of the most unusual and passionate love stories of the 20th century as it was loosely inspired by a true story. As *The Danish Girl* is a delicate, elegant novel about the search for one's true self when one's body, as an external encasement, doesn't mirror what is on the inside; in short, when a man is born a man in body but not in spirit. It is also about what makes a marriage and how far a woman will go to let her husband find his true self, knowing that she will likely lose him in the process. The story started with a question, a simple favors asked by a wife of her husband while both are painting in their studio, setting off a transformation neither can anticipate. Uniting fact and fiction into an original romantic vision,

The Danish Girl eloquently portrays the unique intimacy that defines every marriage and the remarkable story of Lili Elbe, a pioneer in transgender history, and the woman torn between loyalty to her marriage and to her own ambitions and desires.

1.2 Problem

Based on the background of the study, the research question is “How is Einar’s transgendered transition portrayed in the novel?”

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the transition of the transgendered character in the novel.

1.4 Scope of the Study

To limit the study, the study will focus on the dialogue and narration representing the transition that occurred on the transgender character which being portrayed in *The Danish Girl* Novel.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is significant to broaden the knowledge and understanding about transgender study that exist in many modern stories, such as novels. This study is also expected to broaden the horizon in certain term on English dealing with the LGBT study of transgender. Besides, it is hoped that the result of the study will be valuable for English Department of State University of Jakarta readers, especially who are interested in doing a similar study, to develop the previous related studies.

1.6 Previous Related Studies

The first previous research is "**Gender Identity Disorder in Julie Anne Peters' Luna**" by Annisa (2014) from English Department of State University of Jakarta. She analyzed the gender identity disorder of the main character in Luna by using Judith Butler theory. The conclusion of this study that the gender identity disorder revealed because of the difficulty that the main character experienced internally and externally – from the main character's immediate family also from the desire that the main character had to come out. The contribution of this research in this study is that this study has a better understanding on the gender identity disorder or gender dysphoria (another name of transgender) and the effect to the transgender character and the society.

The second is "**Sexuality and Gender in Jeannette Winterson's two Novels: *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* and *Written on the Body***" by Özge Yakut (2011) from Middle East Technical University. He analyzed the categories of sexuality and gender through an analysis of Jeanette Winterson's well-known novels, *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* and *Written on the Body*, against the background of Butler's concept of performativity and Cixous's *Écriture Feminine*. He argued that the display of Winterson's deconstruction and dissolution of the patriarchal categories in her novels and to emphasize her escape from the binary charade, in a fictional universe, with references to Butlerian performativity and Cixousian *Écriture Feminine*. This research helped

to understand more on the Performativity theory which will be used as the tool on this research.

The final research paper is entitled “**The Struggle and The Effects of Being Transgender as Depicted in Julie Anne Peters’ *Luna***” by Alvita Abidati (2014) from Brawijaya University. She wanted to identify how are the struggle of transgender in dealing with negative treatments from the society and the effects of those treatments toward his psychological condition, as represented by Luna, in Julie Anne Peters’ *Luna*. She, in her paper, concluded that Liam is a transgender, named Luna. Every time he comes out as Luna, he gets some negative treatments such as bullying, mocking, transphobia and harassment, treatments that can make him wanted to commit a suicide. However, at the end Liam can encourage himself after meeting another transgender who supports him to be transgender and to do sex reassignment surgery. Gradually he has his new identity developed. This research tried to help to understand about the transgender itself and the struggle that transgender people experienced in life, both from the inside and the outside.

While those three previous studies have some similarities with this research, this research will focus on the transition process on the transgendered character himself (Einar Wegener).