

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Literature is one of the basic aspects of life that develops successively with human's civilization. Literature cannot be separated from the life of the society. There are numbers of literary works that have been generated from many different societies. Literary works have different characteristics due to the influence of different geography, age, culture, ideology, language, experience, and other aspects of life. It can be understood that literary works are able to be called as the mimetic of the world. According to M.H. Abrams, art works (including literary works) can be viewed from universe dimension which means that art works are the imitation of reality (Prochazka, 2015: 9-10). Literature, according to Eagleton, cannot be defined objectively. He states that, "It leaves the definition of literature up to how somebody decides to *read*, not to the nature of what is written" (1996: 7). By such an argument, it can be concluded that when one reads a particular literary work, she/he can decide which perspective she/he uses. That is why, the writer would like to choose a particular literary work and analyze it from the writer's chosen perspective.

The chosen literary work is a novel authored by David Ebershoff entitled *The Danish Girl*. *The Danish Girl* is a novel that pays much attention to gender issue, especially in a matter of transgender. The issue on transgender in this discussion is closely related to a phenomenon called 'queer'. Originally, the word 'queer' is defined as 'odd' or 'singular' as it firstly appeared in *Oxford English Dictionary* in 1508 (Bennett and Royle, 1995: 187). However, its meaning has

subsequently turned into another sense which is 'homosexual' as its entry in *Oxford English Dictionary* in 1922 due to the complex historical process related to several people (commonly males) who have different sexual preference which is considered 'queer' by 'straight' people (*Ibid.*). Early in its appearance, the phenomenon of queer brought up a number of problems that 'queer' people should have faced, for instance problems of social life, political life, economical life even marriage. Hence, the writer chose this novel in order to analyse and to highlight the 'queer' characteristics of the main character. The reason is that gender has recently become a crucial issue for university students. By conducting more research on gender issue, it is expected that the students would be more thoughtful in looking at the complex nature of human's identity rather than taking harsh and imprudent value judgment.

1.2 Research Questions

The analysis of *The Danish Girl* generates several research questions that will be answered through several analyses. The writer puts forward three research questions, which are:

- a. What makes Einar Wegener brings his feminine identity into real life by appearing as Lili Elbe?
- b. How is Einar Wegener's inner turmoil depicted in determining his gender identity?
- c. How is the development of Einar Wegener's sexual preference portrayed before and after he brings up the figure of Lili Elbe into real life?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are:

- a. To analyse the triggers why Einar Wegener reveals femininity.
- b. To analyse how Einar Wegener determines his gender identity.
- c. To analyse the development of Einar Wegener's sexual preference.

1.4 Methods of the Study

This thesis will use the method of close reading. Close reading is conducted in order to obtain as many information as possible to support a comprehensive analysis including intrinsic and extrinsic elements. The intrinsic elements are useful to analyse character, conflict, and plot. The analysis of character and characterization covers the characteristics of the main character and the change of author's perspective in characterizing Einar Wegener as the main character. The discussion on the issue of conflict will cover internal and external conflicts experienced by the characters. The discussion on setting will cover both setting of time and place. Finally, the discussion on plot will look closely at the story's chronological order.

The discussion on extrinsic elements of the novel will make use of queer theory. In this discussion, the writer will refer to Judith Butler's queer theory. The writer will focus on particular criticism regarding the problem of identity and performativity according to Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990). The explanation of identity and performativity itself will be discussed in chapter three.

1.5 Organization of the Thesis

This thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter one elaborates the introduction of the thesis. It contains the background why the writer chooses the research topic, several research questions which build the core discussion of the thesis, objectives of the study which contains purposes of conducting this research, methods of the study which contains the particular methods to discuss the analysis, and organization of the thesis.

Chapter two contains the supporting data from the chosen literary work. It includes biography of the author and synopsis of the novel. Biography of the author is obtained from both internet sources and the novel. Meanwhile, synopsis of the story is arranged by the writer herself.

Chapter three contains the explanations of theoretical frameworks used to analyze both intrinsic and extrinsic elements of the novel. The discussion on the intrinsic elements includes the discussion of character, conflict, and plot. The discussion on extrinsic elements will make use of queer theory.

Chapter four contains a thorough discussion or analysis in order to answer the research questions. It consists of the analysis of intrinsic and extrinsic elements of the novel.

At last, chapter five contains the conclusion of the thesis.