THE ANALYSIS OF A TRANSGENDER IDENTITY IN THE NOVEL “THE DANISH GIRL”
BY DAVID EBERSHOFF

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Abstract. This thesis analyzed of transgender identity in the novel “The Danish Girl” by David Ebershoff. It used queer theory as literature approach. The purpose of this research were factors Einar Wegener as the main character in The Danish Girl novel became a transgender and how does the main character life as a transgender depict in this novel. The method of this research was descriptive qualitative method. The source of the data of this research was the novel The Danish Girl by David Ebershoff which was published in 2000 and consists of 29 chapters and 310 pages. While, the instrument of this research was note taking. The technique of the data analysis of this research was linked to the theory, concept, and method. It found two factors that causing being transgender, they are biological factors and environmental factors which environmental factors include family, friends, and doctor. Moreover, the main character’s life as a transgender depict in this novel shows transition, transgender life, and transforming attitude.

Keywords: Transgender, Factors, and Queer theory

INTRODUCTION

Transgender is a world issue that is being phenomenon to be discussed. Some people believe that transgender is commonly known as third gender besides woman and man. It is the word to describe for people who do, feel, think or look different from gender which has been established since birth. The term transgender focuses on individuals whose gender identity conflicts with Biological assignment or societal expectations for gender expression as male or female. (Wilchins, 2002: 48). Therefore transgender do a surgery to make genital changes and lifestyle changes that against with their biological gender.

According to The World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH) 2015, transgender is one form of Gender Dysphoria. Gender Dysphoria is a general term for those who experience confusion or discomfort about their gender-birth (Yash, 2003: 17). Those who feel the discomfort with their gender, will perform a sex change operation or so-called transgender. But their step is not just there, after doing an operation of genital change then subsequently performed a change identity, Those who dare to do transgender or replacement surgery sex, is not included in the category of same-sex enthusiasts (homosexual /lesbian) but because it has a disorder in its sexual orientation or feel trapped in the gender. One of the causes of transgender is two hormonal influences that structure the human genital characteristics, and this is not a mental illness.

Transgender is not a new phenomenon in the world. This phenomenon has been started to be available for a long time moreover, it becomes an issue for some researchers to study this problem in decade. The presence of a transgender issues creates several researchers to do a research because it tells tending to crossing with the norm customary in the religion has been community groups which is already exist in the world. So that their existence often get protest, contention, and delivery to a controversy.
In the world history, transgender started from behavior for a long time. It was started that the king Henry III from France who live in the span of the time between 1551 until to 1589 was a transgender, as illustrated in their long wearing a long robe with women seem to outnumber his man (crossdresser). it is known that the era of the former there is a transgender, And in the era of now the transgender trying to the more in admit attract the the, to get equality.

Transgender and social life is connected each other, and social life could not be seperated from a literary work, Plato said that literature is the reflection of society whereas all aspects in life can be written in literature, Gunawan also proposes that literary research intend to the literature as social fact and human mental fact (Endaswara, 2003: 4). The Danish girl story novel first edition by David Ebershoff published in 2000, tells about first transgender in the world that make David Ebershoff as an Author’s inspired by the life of Lili Elbe, one of the first people to have gender reassignment surgery, In Lili’s case, she was the first known recipient of sex re-assignment surgery in Copenhagen, Denmark. This matter, in fact, related to the self-perceived of Lili herself to show her consciousness in convincing her true identity to people around. As Elizabeth Loftus proposes: — they have tendency to search evidence for supporting their prejudice. It is not easy to throw away the convictions before long. That is because we intended to verify those conviction (Semium, 1993:530).

This transgender phenomenon interests to be analyzed the reason for someone becomes transgender. Therefore, this article would like to find out the factors Einar Wegener as the main character in The Danish Girl novel became a transgender and how does the main character life as a transgender depict in this novel.

RESEARCH METHOD

The study used descriptive qualitative method. Erickson and Susan Stainback (2003) state that one way in qualitative research is careful recording or what happens in the setting by writing field notes and interview notes by documentary records obtained in the field. The source of data in this research is The Danish Girl novel by David Ebershoff. The novel published in 2000 as the first Novel by david ebershoff. The novel contains 29 chapter and 310 pages.

The research used note-taking as the instrument in collecting and analyzing the data. The research highlights several notes with different colors. The blue one consists of the data for factors that cause transgender, the yellow one consists of data for how does the main character live in the Danish girl by David Ebershoff. So, the total instruments for this research were two notes.

In collecting data, the researcher used several procedures namely; reading The Danish Girl novel carefully and understood the whole story in the novel, Identifying the causes of transgender in the novel, taking notes of the quote that shows the causes and effect of Lili Elbe, classifying which one showed the causes and effect of Lili Elbe as transgender woman in the novel.

This research used qualitative because it described a transgender identity in the novel “the Danish girl” by David ebershoff, this data used queer theory to analyze the causes and effects that were closely dealt with the reader’s understanding of the novel and their opinion of transgender as the central problem in the novel.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Factors are causing being a transgender.

1. Biological factors

Genetic and physiological factors are factors that exist in the individual because there are problems, among others, in the arrangement of chromosomes, hormonal imbalances, brain structures, brain neurological disorders.

Not once before - and not even tonight with Henrik’s hand sweating in his palm – did Einar ever consider abnormal of off
the mark. His doctor, when he'd gone to him last year with a question about their inability to produce children, had asked, 'Do you ever long for someone other than your wife, Einar? For another man perhaps?' 'No, never. Not at all,' he replied. 'Your inklink is wrong.' Einar told the doctor that he, too, became disturbed when he saw the men with the quick, frightened eyes and the excessively pink skin loitering near the toilets in orstedsparken. Homosexual! How far from the truth! (D2 Chapter five P:57)

the datum in above states that Einar is doubt and feel something wrong with him, that is a biological disorder so he try to checks himself to the doctor to see things that can only be seen with medically.

2. Environmental factors.

Environmental factors include erroneous education in childhood by allowing boys to develop in women's behavior, during puberty with disappointed and traumatized homosexuals, trauma to sexual intercourse with a boyfriend, husband or wife. According to Stryker (2003), environment can be the factors of transgender identity. If we analyze deeply, the environment can be a passive subject, so the possibility is small in influence someone. However, in the environment there are gender roles conveyed by family, friends, or certain people.

3. Family

His wife knew first. ‘Do me a small favour’ Greta called from the bedroom that first afternoon. ‘Just help me with something for a little bit?’ ‘Of course’ Einar Said, his eyes on the canvas. ‘Anything at all’ (D4 chapter one P:1)

Gender role is also a factor that causes transgender. Men are considered responsible for taking care of the family financially. And in essence men do not do household chores or care for children and it is always the duty of a woman or wife, Einar does the work Greta has to do. He took care of Greta clothes and did household chores while he was busy with his paintings and obsessed with being an artist.

‘Does that mean you don’t want to try on her dress?’ when she said the word ‘dress’ his stomach filled with heat, followed by a clot of shame rising in his chest. ‘No, I don’t think so,’ Einar Said. (D5 chapter one P:10)

Einar who has believes that he is actually a woman looking for a woman's true identity by seeing many girls doing certain actions such as walking, style, work, and so on. In the novel, Greta who initially considered her husband's actions as a joke and as an act to helping his wife to completing the painting. This can be seen in the datum above.

‘Does that mean you don’t want to try on her dress?’ Shows that Einar wife shows a support for Einar and never object to the husband using women's clothing, where Einar already has a tendency to be very feminine, ‘his stomach filled with heat’ where there is something strange that feels Einar which of course offers from the wife can arouse einar's desire to behave like a woman.

Einar shows love when using women's clothing according to the wife's request, as we can see in datum below:

‘Do you like it’ Greta asked. He tough about saying no, but that would have been a lie, He liked the dress, and he could nearly feel the flesh beneath his skin ripening. (D6 chapter one P:11)

When Greta asked the question, he is very doubtful about the wife's question and the answers to be given, but Einar Wegener's inner desire is very comfortable to wearing woman dressing which is a hidden desire in his self.

Greta said, her voice soft and careful and unfamiliar, “Why don’t we call you lily” (D7 chapter one P:13)

As can see from the datum above, “Why don’t we call you lily” the wife of Einar Wegener who made einar feel if there’s something was trapped in Einar's body as a man, and Einar felt that his wife's
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statement was a form of support for him as a lily. Gerda did not understand that her appeal for help can be the boomerang for Lili to wake up from her long sleep.

From these data, we can conclude that when someone doing certain behavior, it will emphasize typically roles.

‘I’ve been thinking about her’ Einar said. ‘Who’s that? ‘Little lili.’ ‘Then why don’t we see her again?’ Greta said, her face barely lifting from the puzzle, her finger, smudged with newsprint, brushing at the chickenpox scar. (D8 Chapter two P:22)

According to the data, ‘Little lili’ Einar has begun to be aware of the presence of lili that are already inside him, which is the result of the wife who is still unaware that is a form of mistake that is not deliberate. ‘Then why don’t we see her again?’ a statement of support from Greta who is still not aware of the disorder that her husband will suffer.

Finally, Lili appear in their lives which will be an inner disturbance between Greta and Einar.

The girl – did Greta know her? – smelled of mint and milk
‘lili?’ Greta finally said
‘it’s wonderful book.’ Lili said
‘I don’t want to disturb you,’ Greta said. (D9 Chapter two P: 23)

According to dialogue Greta was not sure what her husband wanted her to do next. She was told that this was important to Einar, that she should follow his lead - not a natural impulse for Greta. And Greta is still looking for what he did to a figure of a mistake or just for a fantasy of an art

‘The strange thought of Lili and Henrik on a public bench in the shadow of rosenborg slot’s turrets, caught up with her. Greta suddenly asked, ‘Tell me, Lili. Have you ever kissed a man?’ ‘Lili stopped’, Her lace limp in her lap. (D10 chapter six P:63)

Until the end, Gerda regret for what she has done to her husband because she has made her husband change. ‘Tell me, Lili. Have you ever kissed a man?’ this question made Greta felt she should never have found Lili.

4. Friend

Society including friend can also influence someone become transgender. In this case, Anna, Hans & Henrik friend of Greta and Einar, make Einar feel happy because she praise the beauty of Einar even though such praises only apply to women in general.

‘Take a look at einar” Anna said
‘You’re a whore, You’re one of a beautiful whore’(D11 Chapter one P: 12)

Here, Einar is grateful for Anna's praise even though it sounds very rude. Einar was even more pleased when she heard the ridicule given by Anna. This situation is very convincing to explore its transgender identity.

5. Doctor

The way in which we gain new knowledge of our organs during painful illness is perhaps a model of the way by which in general we arrive at the idea of our body. Lili realized herself as a fully woman even though her sex is still a man's sex. Transgender necessarily does not look differently gendered but by definition feels differently gendered from her birth-assigned sex. It demands some recognition of the category of corporeal interiority (internal bodily sensation) and of its distinctiveness from that which can be seen (external surface).

In her consultation with Dr Hexler the week before, he had said there was a possibility of a tumour in the pelvis that could be causing both infertility and Einar's confused state of masculinity. ‘I've never seen it myself, but I've read about it. It can go undetected, with its only manifestations being odd behavior’ (D16 Chapter twelve P:110)

It describes that Einar's problem according to the doctor is just a chemical imbalance in his body. The confused state of masculinity and the infertility cause his body feels pain. According to the doctor, it can be cured.
Meanwhile, for Einar it cannot be cured easily because what he felt is something that someone else could not imagine.

**The main character life as a transgender in the novel.**

Living a life as a transgender is not an easy thing. According to The World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH) 2015 there’s a more characteristic identity after they become transgender like a (transition, transgender life, difficulties transgender can face, & transforming attitude). Many people still look down on the existence of transgender and make transgender become a Very sidelined matter in community life, but we never know how a transgender can express or live like a human with the right gender like men or women?

1. **Transition**

   ‘Greta?’ Einar said again. *He was leaning against the rack of sample dress. The Chinese screen was still lying against the sofa. ‘You won’t mind if lili visits us here?’* (D17 Chapter 7 P:74)

   Einar finally got used to the transition from man to woman as evidenced by the datum which states: *He was leaning against the rack of sample dress* and this Einar’s question ‘You won’t mind if lili visits us here?’ Hopes that lili can exist in his life.

2. **Transgender life**

   After three years in Paris, Greta had never worked harder in her life. In the mornings, when Lili was out doing the shopping or bathing at the pool. (D19 Chapter fourteen P:129)

   *When Lili was out doing the shopping or bathing at the pool* how intend him to learn what women do and start to love woman role. Which is shopping with lili look in Paris. The following datum shows how Einar intensely mimic how women act. Being in crowd but he did not stop to follow what women do.

   ‘Lili’s new job at fonnesbech’s department store, standing behind the parfume counter. ‘They hired me because I speak French’ Lili explained, still in her coat. (D20 Chapter twenty-five P:265)

According to datum above Lili can find work even though a lily is a transgender, but it proves that lilies have skills so that people can consider their performance regardless of the background of the Lili as a transgender.

3. **Transgender attitude**

   ‘I should be going,’ Lili said. *She moved to kiss hans goodbye. (D23 Chapter Twenty-five P: 267)*

   This datum *She moved to kiss hans goodbye* shows that male transgender behavior becomes female. Where the Einar as lili is very comfortable with the new gender that he has. He felt free to express himself.

**CONCLUSION**

In Ebershoff’s “The Danish Girl” movie, it is found several factors that cause transgender which are implicitly delivered by the author in the storyline. There are two factors and how does the main character life as a transgender related to the reason for someone become transgender that occur in the novel, they are:

1. Factors that causing transgender are:
   a. Biological factors of transgender people is the factor where the transgender felt they have unbalanced hormone which sometimes resulting pain in his body.
   b. Environmental factors where is environmental like family, friends, and other people are many factors that occur to Einar, which causes behavior changes Einar turns into transgender.

2. The main character life after they become transgender In “The Danish Girl” novel there’s a more characteristic identity after they become transgender that is (transition, transgender life, and attitude transformation).

   In the end, it can be concluded that the phenomenon of transgender in the movie is the reflection of the social environment of David Ebershoff as the author of the story. Transgender is social phenomenon that exist since many years ago and people mark transgender in LGBT studies. However, some people may not approve
the act, but still some people respect them. As one of LGBT supporter who noticed phenomenon of transgender in his social environment, Ebershoff observed transgender people and presented it through his story in the movie.

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