

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### A. Theoretical Framework

The corpus of the study is a novel titled *Death in Venice* by Thomas Mann. This study focuses on the complicated love that Gustav von Aeschenbach feels as the result of heteronormativity which is described in the story. This study is expected to figure out the influence of heteronormativity in von Aeschenbach love story and how the character faces the queer issue he carries. Therefore, the writer chooses Queer criticism as the proper theory to support the analysis academically.

The writer is going to use the theory of heteronormativity by Michael Warner in his works entitled *Public and Counterpublic* and *Sex in Public*. Nevertheless, other statements for queer study are also used as the supporting explanations that help the writer to do this analysis.

#### 1. Queer

Queer comes from Germanic term means *strange* or *weird* (Miriam Webster vol. 12). Later, this term is used to mention some people who - according to heterosexual society- are different. This consideration comes

because of the existence of heteronormativity that glorifies and propagates the specialty of heterosexuality.

In *Queer Theory An Introduction*, Jagose states that once the term 'queer' was, at best, slang for homosexual, at worst, a term of homophobic abuse, however, in recent years 'queer' has come to be used differently, sometimes as an umbrella term for a coalition of culturally marginal sexual self-identifications and at other times to describe a nascent theoretical model which has developed out of more traditional lesbian and gay studies (1). In other words, queer has experienced a transition of meaning in which in the past, it is considered to identify the homosexual people, while nowadays, it used as the identity in which homosexual, bisexual, and transgender experience movement in the modern era.

According to UC Berkeley Gender Equity Resource Center's online source, *queer* is an umbrella term to refer to all LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender) people. It is a political statement, as well as a sexual orientation, which advocates breaking binary thinking and seeing both sexual orientation and gender identity as potentially fluid ([www.ucberkeleygenderresourcecenter.org](http://www.ucberkeleygenderresourcecenter.org)). It means that nowadays in the modern era, queer has been the term to identify LGBT people as the part of society who has the same right as the heterosexual people, not the outsiders. The term *umbrella* that is used in this definition means group and also movement that embrace anyone who is included as different such as homosexual, transgender, and many others (1).

Queer theory appears because there are many issues about sexuality which is different from the traditional heterosexual issue. For instance, gay and lesbian issues that appears in some western countries. Those issues do not only appear in the real life, but also in literary work. As the result, many theorists have interest in studying the phenomenon such as Judith Butler, Gayle S. Rubin, and Michael Warner.

According to Dr. Mary Klages in *Queer Theory*, the word "queer" in queer theory has some of these connotations, particularly its alignment with ideas about homosexuality, it is a brand-new branch of study or theoretical speculation; it has only been named as an area since about 1991 and grew out of gay/lesbian studies, a discipline which itself is very new, existing in any kind of organized form only since about the mid-1980s (1). It means that queer is the new theory that concerns with all issue about sexual minorities such as homosexuality that has not been studied before 1991. In other words, the term 'queer' is also used to call some people who have different sexual tendency from the straight, it is also discipline knowledge to study that such issue.

According to Rosenberg in *Definition of Queer*, the introduction of the word queer evoked an entirely different debate in the English speaking countries, where many lesbians, gays and transgender people took umbrage at a word that was so strongly associated with a negatively charged history (1). In other words, queer relates to the movement of some people who are called gay, lesbian, homosexual, transgender, and many others which at first are considered

as a negative phenomenon. Therefore, Rosenberg uses phrase *charged history* which means memorable.

Meanwhile according to Lois Tyson in her work *Critical Theory Today*, queer is the new field of literary theory, which is based on the insights of deconstruction and is relevant to issues of heterosexual identity as well as to issues of gay and lesbian sexual identity (339). In other words, Tyson defines queer as the new branch of literary criticism which focuses on the issue of sexual minorities such as lesbian, gay, transsexual, and many others which appears in the literary works and how the issues is represented throughout the works.

## 2. Heteronormativity

It is necessarily to recall again that heteronormativity propagates heterosexual married. The appearance of heteronormativity causes marginalization or discrimination toward the queer people in social life. As the result, many queer people are treated badly and unfairly because heteronormativity becomes the strong norm that is glorified by society.

According to Michael Foucault in his work *The History of Sexuality* or *Le Historie de La Sexualite*, heteronormativity originally comes from the aristocrat family in the UK in the nineteenth century (1). In that recent time, the royal family should do heterosexual marriage in order to get descendant or the heir of the crown. They believed that if a member decides to be homosexual

person, he/she will not get the pure blood or pure royal descendant. As the result, Victoria, the Queen of England propagated this norm and made it as the doctrine which should be obeyed by all people, especially their citizen to avoid the existence of the queer or homosexuality inside their kingdom. However at that time, this norm had not been called heteronormativity yet. In the early 1991, Michael Warner introduced this term (Klages 1).

According to Michael Warner in *Public and Counterpublic*, heteronormativity is the institutions, structures of understanding and practical orientations that make heterosexuality seem not only coherent – that is, organized as a sexuality – but also privileged.” (355). It means that heteronormativity is a tool that is not only to promote heterosexuality as the value, but also as the precious gift, or privileged. Therefore, in a society that glorifies the essence of heteronormativity perceives heterosexuality as the virtue that everyone should embrace.

In *Public and Counterpublic*, Warner also states that heteronormativity has little visible relation to sexual practices. Things as life narratives or family relations, can be heteronormative, while in other contexts sexual acts between men and women do not necessarily have to be heteronormative. Heteronormativity is therefore a concept distinct from heterosexuality (355). In other words, heteronormativity is not only about sexual practice, but also about how people should behave as the civilized heterosexual or the noble men, such as marriage between man and woman or the opposite marriage.

In addition, in *Public and Counterpublic* Warner defines that heteronormativity as more than ideology, prejudice or homophobia (359). He means that heteronormativity is produced and reproduces itself in almost every aspect of society, in nationality, the law, the state, in business, medicine and education, even in romance and family life to name but a few (361). In other words, beside appearing in sexual issues, heteronormativity exists in almost every aspect of life both in visible or invisible ways and it often influence the way people perceive and considered sexuality.

In *Death in Venice*, the reflection of heteronormativity can be seen in the anxious feeling that Gustav von Aeschenbach feels when he realizes that he is falling in love with the ravishing Tadzio. He is afraid that his feeling is not right. He is also worried about people's reaction if they know he loves that boy for he understands that society around him consists of heterosexual people. Von Aeschenbach believes that it will affect his reputation as the famous and cultivated writer if he becomes a homosexual. As the result, von Aeschenbach keeps his love for Tadzio in silence.

### **3. Homosexuality**

According to UC Berkeley Gender Equity Resource Center Sexual, homosexuality is an emotional, and/or romantic attraction to the same sex (1). It means that any interest in the same sex person both sexual and emotional means homosexuality.

According to Judith Butler in her work *Gender Trouble*, homosexuality is almost always conceived within the homophobic signifying economy as *both* uncivilized and unnatural (168). It means that the term homosexuality is used by some homophobic people to identify any value that is considered as the wrong or uncivilized homosexual behavior.

Another definition of homosexuality is defined by Michael Foucault in his work *The History of Sexuality*. In this book, Foucault stated that "homosexuality appeared as one of the forms of sexuality when it was transposed from the practice of sodomy into a kind of interior androgyny, a hermaphroditism of the soul. The sodomite had been a temporary aberration; the homosexual was now a species" (6). In other words, homosexuality is anything that relates to the sodomite activity that is identical with the sexual action between man and man or same sex couple. Besides, homosexuality also relates to the issue about hermaphroditism such as transgender or the behavior of someone which is different from what his or her gender is expected.

Homosexuality is included in queer since many people who do not glorify it perceive it as peculiar behavior or anomaly. The existence of homosexuality is often considered as the bad habit and those who have this tendency are considered as the sinner. During Victorian era, homosexuality was prohibited and anything that related to it was banned or prohibited, too. Therefore, any handwriting or literary work that contains homosexual issue was

censored and anyone who glorifies this sexual orientation will be punished in brutal ways (Foucault 2).

Meanwhile in Annamaria Jagose's *Queer Theory An Introduction*, Judith Butler states that homosexuality—like heterosexuality—comes to be understood as the effect of signifying practices, an 'identity effect' that concentrates at certain bodies: "Homosexual", like "woman", is not a name that refers to a "natural kind" of thing' (91). It means that the term homosexual is used to identify some people according to their behavior. For instance, a man who acts as woman is considered as homosexual. Another example is a person who is interested to other same sex person. He or she is considered as homosexual.

In *Critical Theory Today*, Lois Tyson states that the term *homosexuality* is used to call some men who allowed themselves to be penetrated by a man during sex and behaved in a traditionally feminine manner—submissive, coy, flirtatious, “soft”— (329). It means that homosexuality is identical with man who behaves as woman and he has sex with another man. As the result, homosexual is only used to call man who has sexual tendency to another man.

In this modern era, homosexuality is no longer the peculiar thing because the rights of the homosexual people have been admitted. Even in some countries, the same-sex marriage has been official (www.ucberkeleygenderresourcecenter.org.)



Heteronormativity becomes the counterpart of homosexuality because it propagates the importance of heterosexuality. In other words, heteronormativity fights against homosexuality.

The character that carries homosexual issue in *Death in Venice* is the main character Gustav von Aeschenbach. His sexual and emotional interest in Tadzio is the reflection of homosexual value that the writer can find from the novel.

## **B. Related Studies**

This thesis has similarity with some journals which explores heteronormativity. The first journal is written by Birgit Hofstatter named *The Concept of 'Heteronormativity' and its Methodological Implications*. This journal contains the explanation of definition about heteronormativity. Because this journal is about the research of some school students who asked about gender, it also contains the explanation about how heteronormativity influence people's gender since childhood. Even though this journal explores heteronormativity in human's real life, it can be the supporting study for this thesis because it contains the specific discussion about the influence of heteronormativity toward gender and sexuality.

The second journal that relates to this thesis is titled *Doing Family: Decentering Heteronormativity in 'Marriage' and 'Family' Therapy* by Jacqueline Hudak, M.Ed., Ph.D. and Shawn V. Giammattei, Ph.D. This journal

focuses on the concept of heteronormativity that forms a relationship called *family*. The term family here means a relationship which is considered as the kosher thing in heteronormativity view since it contains of the opposite-sex parents and their children and each of the member behaves as their sex appears. For instance, the male members should be masculine and the females should be feminine. The concept of family here means beyond than just marriage relationship. The family here means how each member glorifies heteronormativity as the determiner of their social gender, condition of their health, and many others. Regardless of the fact that this journal explores heteronormativity as the applied science, it can be the supporting study for this thesis because it gives the preliminary explanation about heteronormativity, as well as containing the explanation about the operation of heteronormativity in marital life.

The third journal that relates to this study is titled *Transcending Heteronormativity in the Classroom: Using Queer and Critical Pedagogies to Alleviate Trans-Anxieties* that is written by Karen E. Lovaas, Lina Baroudi, and S. M. Collins. This journal explores about the value of heteronormativity that can be found in classroom in some Junior High School in the United States of America. This journal finds that some context of homophobia such as the propaganda of the inferiority of being homosexual and how that sexual orientation often causes some dangerous illness. Although heteronormativity in this study appears as the applied science, the definition of its value as the determiner of human's life style can be the supporting idea for this thesis

because it shows how heteronormativity appears and influences people's social life.

The fourth journal about heteronormativity is titled *Heteronormativity at work: Stories from Two Lesbian Academics* by Lynne Giddings and Judith K. Pringle. This journal contains the confession of two female students, who are a pair of lesbian couple in their office. As homosexual couple, both of them are often discriminated and underestimated by many people around them, especially their co-workers. These women get the different right from other workers since they are considered as queer. Even though this journal has no specific explanation about heteronormativity, the description about the condition of the objects (the lesbian couple) gives the readers enough explanation about the oppression toward homosexual people as the result of heteronormativity. In other words, this journal can be the supporting study for this thesis.

The fifth journal is written by Marius Crous named *Male-male Relationship in J.M. Coetzee's Disgrace*. Similar with this thesis, this Crous' journal analyzes the same-sex relationship in J.M. Coetzee's *Disgrace* that end in tragic. In other words, both this study and the journal explore the reflection of the influence of heteronormativity that becomes the counterpart of homosexual love in literary work. In other words, this thesis and the journal may support each other to analyze the influence of heteronormativity toward same-sex love in literary works.

The last article is titled *Duality and Ambiguity in Britten's Death in Venice* that is written by Lucy Y. Liu. However, this article explores the musical drama of *Death in Venice* by Britten instead of the novel by Thomas Mann. Similar with this study, Liu's journal contains the ambiguity of the complicated love that Gustav von Aeschenbach feels for Tadzio. Heteronormativity, once more, become the main theme of this journal as the cause of the love's complication. Liu also adds that heteronormativity causes the love of von Aeschenbach becomes ambiguous because in one side, he cannot deny that what he feels is the pure love. Meanwhile on the other side, von Aeschenbach tries to deny his feeling and does not consider it as love. This second side is caused by heteronormativity as the value or hegemony that is propagated in people's life. However, Liu does not use the theory of heteronormativity by Warner as the writer uses for this thesis. Moreover, different from this thesis that focuses on the description about von Aschenbach's feeling and thought. Liu's work rather focuses on te dialogue and expression of von Aschenbach in the drama. Overall, both this thesis and this journal support each other since both of them explore the same issue; heteronormativity as the cause of Gustav von Aeschenbach's complicated love.



## CHAPTER III

### ANALYSIS