

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

Nowadays, there are so many phenomena about gender identity. Several gender identities are set up determining your gender choice apart of sex you have had. Borders mostly disappear. The changing of society's culture in modern era affects people's life styles. Until these days, there are only two genders and sexes seemingly socially accepted: male and female / man and woman. Those sexual and marital relationships are normal when two people in different genders; and that each gender has natural roles in life.

Heteronormativity is a norm in the society that states sexual relationship must be among opposite sex (Beasley, 2005 p.109). It is used to describe and explain about the "idealistic" of gender role according to heterosexual people about their nature sexes. Sex and gender are not the same. Sex is an identification regarding to genital born sign category; gender is construction process with particular social category. Gender is more about the performative of each person. According to Judith Butler in her book *Gender Trouble* (1999), femininity and masculinity are not expressions of 'nature', they are 'cultural performances in which their "naturalness" [is] constituted through discursively constrained performative acts . . . that create the effect of the natural, the original, and the

inevitable (xxvii). Thus, Butler states that gender is more about you do, not what you are.

Butler said that heteronormativity is relatively new (1999). Queer study is recently new, in which it comes from the concept of feminism. Many feminists and queer theorists reject essentialism in favor of social constructivism. They believe that words such as homosexual, heterosexual, male and female are socially constructed distinctions subject to change. Heteronormative society believes that either man or woman must follow their gender roles based on their nature sex that they have had. If you have a penis, you must do masculine behaviour, meanwhile if you have vagina as your genital, you must do femininity prevailing in society. The norms about gender roles are still considered in society as a mindset towards the ideal concept of spouse relationship among heterosexual people. Critics about this phenomenon create stigma making self-expression and sexual interest become difficult.

Tomboy is a French movie written and directed by Céline Sciamma, and produced by Bénédicte Couvreur. The director, Céline Sciamma, wants to make a drama of childhood – transgender in child. Pyramide Distribution distributed this film on April 20, 2011. This movie has succeeded to win six awards in LGBT theme festivals in 2011. *Tomboy* film won Golden Duke, the main prize of the official competition of the 2011 Odessa International Film Festival, and Zoé Héran nominated for the Young Artist Award as Best Leading Young Performer in an International Feature Film.

This film tells about a 10-years-old girl named Laure, played by Zoé Héran, who wants to be a boy and enjoys some boyish freedoms. Even though in this film tells about Laure as a child who has short haircut, always wears plain shirt, shorts, sneakers, and far from a touch of pink or Barbie icon that identically as a girl's symbol, yet we can consider that she is a girl from the film's title.

In the film, Laure and her family have recently moved in a new neighbourhood. She introduced herself as a boy named Mikaél to her neighbourhood kids and girl neighbour named Lisa (Jeanne Disson). Laure lives with her father (Mathieu Demy), pregnant mother (Sophie Cattani) and a younger sister named Jeanne (Mallon Lévana). Laure pretends to be a boy and plays soccer with her boyfriends. She learns about common behaviour of boys, how to spit like a boy, and even often gussy up like a boy. She takes care to her sister Jeanne and protects her sister as a brother supposed to do. The theme of this film is about the confusion of Laure's gender identity as a transgender child.

The writer wants to analyse about heteronormativity toward transgender child in France movie entitled *Tomboy* because many people still recognize that transgender is only experienced by adults and this film wants to crack that stereotype. Furthermore, heteronormativity will be analysed by using queer theory of Judith Butler.

Queer theory aims to reveal the social stigma towards the relationship among sex, gender, and performativity in public context and understanding about gender and performative identity. Based on Ault cited in Angela Dwyer's journal

'It's Not Like We're Going to Jump Them': How Transgressing Heteronormativity Shapes Police Interactions with LGBT Young People (1996), queer itself is noticed as anyone whose proclivities, practices, or sympathies defy the strictures of the dominant [heteronormative] sex/gender/sexual identity system' (322).

In Laure's case as a tomboy girl, it also relates to performative identity prevailing in heteronormative society. Performative identity is more concern on performative of gender which is belonged to human being whoever follows or not the traditional gender roles toward his or her biological sex. It wants to describe how heteronormativity can influence the way of treating someone marked as "abnormal" if he or she does not follow the traditional gender role of heteronormative society. Gender is the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being (Butler, 1999 p.43).

The writer uses this film as the source of the data for the analysis because there is a phenomenon in heteronormative society about gender and sex. Stereotyping about gender role becomes a problem for Laure character to interact with her neighbourhood and the resistance of her gender ambiguity from her family and society. This film tells about transgender in child experienced by Laure character toward her performance as a tomboy girl to follow the traditional gender role of her heteronormative surroundings.

1.2. Statements of the Problem

Based on the background above, the queer study of heteronormativity of transgender child in the inside of *Tomboy* movie is worth to be analysed. There are two following statements proposed in this study:

1. How is heteronormativity portrayed in the movie?
2. How does Laure negotiate heteronormativity as a transgender child?

1.3. Objectives of the Study

This study aims as to reach several objectives which are expected. There are two following objectives of the study according to the statements of the problem in this film:

1. To reveal how heteronormativity is portrayed in this film
2. To see the negotiation of heteronormativity of Laure as a transgender child

1.4. Significance of the Study

This study aims to examine how heteronormativity of transgender child is portrayed in *Tomboy* movie itself. This study also observes how Laure/Mikaél character negotiates her gender identity as a transgender child and the acceptance of society towards her gender ambiguity when she pretends to be a boy. Gender ambiguity is a condition when a person that looks both male and female, in other words u cannot tell which they are. It most commonly occurs when someone is wearing clothing that would be suitable for both males and females, but it is not

restricted to this (urbandictionary.com). It describes in how the readers of the study have a deep understanding about heteronormativity and transgender child in society, nowadays.

There are several heteronormativity thoughts about transgender in child acted by Zoé Héran in Laure/Mikaél character in this movie. This study proposes to make the readers improving knowledge about heteronormativity of tomboy girl in social life nowadays. Besides, this study is also expected to contribute to Cultural Studies in Faculty of Humanities of Airlangga University in study of the queer theory.

1.5. Organization of the Study

The first chapter of the paper consists of background of the study, statement of the problems, objectives of the study, significance of the study, scope and limitation, theoretical background, method of the study and organization of the paper. The first chapter will be guidance in doing the thesis and reading the paper.

The second chapter consists of theoretical framework and related studies. It will elaborate the theory and review some related studies that linked with this study. This chapter provides the tools of the study.

The third chapter concerns with the research method in doing this research. It deals with every step done in making the analysis. It starts from choosing the data, gathering them and analysing them. This chapter provides the ways of the study.

The fourth chapter will focus on the analysis in order to answer the statement of the problems give in the first chapter. The last chapter will conclude and summarize the entire study.

1.6. Definition of Key Terms

Child : Those persons under the age of 14 (social.un.org)

Queer : Anyone whose proclivities, practices, or sympathies defy the strictures of the dominant [heteronormative] sex/gender/sexual identity system' (Dwyer, 1996 p.322)

Heteronormativity : Norm in the society that states sexual relationship must be among opposite sex. (Beasley, 2005 p.109)

Tomboy : A woman or girl who acts masculine and has behaviour like a man.

Transgender : Appearing as a wishing to be considered as, or having undergone surgery to become a member of the opposite sex

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW